Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area Findings Document

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 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."[1] In 1996, Congress officially designated nine National Heritage Areas (NHAs), with federal funds provided over subsequent years. Oversight of these programs was assigned to the National Park Service (NPS), with the exception of one NHA, Silos & Smokestacks, that was assigned to the United States Department of Agriculture. In May 2008, Congress mandated that an evaluation, under NPS's auspices 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 Essex National Heritage Commission in eastern Massachusetts. Westat, under contract with the Center for Park Management (CPM), has conducted two of the evaluations to date -- Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA) headquartered in Waterloo, Iowa, the focus of the current report; and, the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area (ACNHA) in Augusta, Georgia. Evaluations of the six remaining NHAs are pending.

This document reports the findings from the evaluation of the SSNHA coordinating entity's administration of the heritage area. SSNHA is a 37-county region in Northeast Iowa covering over 20,000 square miles. The heritage area preserves and tells the story of American agriculture and its global significance through partnerships and activities that celebrate the land, people, and communities of the area.

This section of the document begins by providing a description of the National Heritage Areas, followed by the purpose for the evaluation, and a description of the methodology that was used to evaluate the SSNHA. Section 2 of the document provides an introduction to the SSNHA and its coordinating entity, and the coordinating entity's relationship with partners and with NPS, and highlights the key findings of the evaluation. Section 3 provides an overview of the authorizing legislation, the heritage area's mission and vision, the goals and objectives of the heritage area, and the organizational structure of the coordinating entity and its community partnerships. Section 4 provides a detailed review of SSNHA activities and the coordinating entity's effectiveness in meeting goals and objectives, Section 5 describes the public and private investments that support SSNHA activities and how the coordinating entity utilizes these investments, and Section 6 assesses the sustainability of the coordinating entity.

[1] National Park System Advisory Board. "Charting a Future for National Heritage Areas." Available online at http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/NHAreport.pdf

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 unique natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources that have been shaped by the area's geography and history of human activity.

Establishment of a heritage area is a Congressional designation that creates a boundary around a cohesive collection of places, landscapes, organizations, municipalities, private homes, and businesses. A coordinating entity or management entity is typically the organization within that boundary that is tasked by the United States Congress 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 coordinating the development and implementation of a management plan that will achieve the goals specified in the heritage area's enabling legislation. It also manages the federal funding provided to or earned by the heritage area. The coordinating entity may be a federal commission, state agency, local university, local government, or nonprofit. 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 leaders.

1.2 Purpose of Evaluation

As noted earlier, Public Law 110-229 enacted on Mary 8, 2008, directs the Secretary of the Interior to evaluate the nine National Heritage Areas established in the Omnibus Parks Act of 1996 no later than three years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates (in 2012 for SSNHA). The purpose of the evaluation is to inform the Secretary's report to Congress, and the actual language from Public Law 110-229 is 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 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 Evaluation Methodology

In order to comply with the Congressional mandate for evaluation of the NHAs, NPS partnered with the Center for Park Management (CPM), a division of National Parks Conservation Association. CPM, in turn, subcontracted with Westat to conduct this evaluation. CPM's mission is to promote and enhance management capacity within NPS. Westat, the evaluation subcontractor, is an employee-owned research firm with expertise in program evaluations across a broad range of subject areas. The evaluation team was guided by the NPS Evaluation Working Group, a group of NPS coordinators for NHAs and a Park Superintendent. In the following sections, we describe the evaluation methodology, the role of each party in the evaluation, and the context within which the evaluation was conducted.

1.3.1 Methodology

The methodology was designed to maximize both the use of existing data and the ability to measure specific outcomes of the SSNHA coordinating entity's activities. The period covered by the evaluation is the ten years during which SSNHA has received federal funding, 2000-2010.

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?

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

3. How do the coordinating entity's management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its 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 concerning SSNHA. The evaluation also incorporated a collaborative approach with project stakeholders to ensure that its findings are relevant to all and grounded in the local knowledge of the site. To guide the development of the evaluation design and plans for implementation of the evaluation, we included the perspectives of CPM, the NPS Evaluation Working Group, the NPS Comptroller, the NPS liaison with each heritage area, and NHA leadership. The tailored data collection tools for SSNHA and this report reflect the comments provided by CPM, the NPS Evaluation Working Group and the NHA evaluation site. The following sections describe each phase of the evaluation.

Site Introduction and Background Research

During the initial phases of the evaluation process, Westat contacted the SSNHA coordinating entity staff to discuss preliminary planning details and initial background research requests. Over the course of one onsite face-to-face meeting, multiple email exchanges, and several telephone conversations during July and August 2010, Westat introduced the evaluation team and evaluation methodology to the staff of the SSNHA coordinating entity.

During the onsite face-to-face meeting in July 2010, Westat project staff worked with the coordinating entity staff and an NPS staff member to develop a logic model for SSNHA's review. Figure 4-1 is the final logic model that guided the development of the data collection protocols. Also, at this time, roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in this evaluation were discussed. The evaluation team provided to the SSNHA coordinating entity an evaluation methodology (Appendix A) and data collection protocols (Appendices B, C, D and E).

Data Collection

Data collection methods included reviews of documents and financial audits, in person and telephone interviews with key informants from the coordinating entity and its partner organizations, and intercept interviews with and data collection information forms completed by visitors to partner sites. A protocol guided the data collection, outlining the domains and measures of interest to collect from each identified source. During data collection, evaluation staff used topic-centered guides for conducting interviews and abstracting documents. Data collection began in August 2010 and was completed in October 2010.

Individual interviews were conducted with five coordinating entity staff and a group interview was conducted with five members of the Board of Trustees to gain an understanding of the background and history of SSNHA, the coordinating entity's activities and investments and their associated outcomes, and the coordinating entity's contribution to sustainability of NHA activities.

Interviews were conducted with nine representatives from partnering organizations and with representatives from the Iowa State Preservation Office and the Iowa Tourism Office. Of these 11 representatives interviewed, four members belong to SSNHA's Partnership Panel. Interviews discussed the organization's work and relationship with the SSNHA coordinating entity and how it has evolved over time. To select partner sites, Westat carefully analyzed the characteristics of the partner sites including type of partner (if relevant), year designated partner, location of the site, whether and what kind of SSNHA grants the partner had received, and what SSNHA themes the partner exemplified. Based upon our own review and input from the site, the evaluation team met with the following sites for partner interviews: Grout Museum, Cedar Falls Historical Society, Farm House Bed and Breakfast, Carrie Lane Chapman Catt Girlhood Home, Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Four Mounds Inn, National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium and Mathias Ham House, Cascade Historic Limestone Kiln, and Living History Farms. A few of these partners interviewed also served on the Partnership Panel along with the State Preservation Officer and a representative of the Iowa Division of Tourism.

Community intercept interviews and information collection were conducted with 24 visitors at the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium, and Living History Farms. After interviewing these partner organizations, the evaluation team was able to speak with visitors. The intercept interviews and information collection provides the evaluation with community insight on public awareness of the heritage area and whether their' visits to the partner site increased their knowledge and understanding of aspects of the SSNHA story.

See Appendices B, C, D, and E for the management interview protocol, partner interview protocol, Board of Trustees interview protocol, and partner site visitor interview protocol and information card.

Data Analysis

The focus of the data analysis was to document the extent to which the SSNHA coordinating entity had achieved its organizational and programmatic goals as articulated in the mandating legislation and the SSNHA foundational documents. Where feasible, findings discussed here have been triangulated; that is, information has been documented from multiple sources. In addition, where feasible, 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 limitation of the evaluation methodology is the limited data collection from the community. Community input was collected from a small number of visitors to partner sites through the completion of information cards and informal qualitative interviews. The visitors from whom data were collected were selected for convenience on the day that the evaluators visited rather than as a representative sample of all tourists, local residents, and volunteers. Time and resource limitations prevented a broader selection of community representatives. The data thus provide insights into community visitor awareness of the NHA

and the themes, but do not provide a definitive understanding of the extent to which the NHA has had an impact on community knowledge, attitudes, and involvement in the NHA.

1.3.2 Roles

The Center for Park Management

CPM served as a consultant to NPS for the NHA evaluations. CPM reviewed the evaluator's products, interfaced with NPS, and participated in evaluation site visits.

Westat

Westat served as the external evaluator. Westat revised the methodology used in the Essex National Heritage Area evaluation, prepared and revised a logic model to guide the evaluation in collaboration with the SSHNA staff, prepared the data collection protocols, collected and analyzed the data, and prepared this document.

NPS Evaluation Working Group

The NPS Evaluation Working Group provided advice and resources for the evaluation team and oversight of the entire evaluation process. The NPS Working Group included the NPS National Coordinator for Heritage Areas, the NPS Assistant National Coordinator for Heritage Areas, the NPS Regional National Heritage Area Coordinator for the Midwest Region, the NPS Regional National Heritage Area Coordinator for the Southeast Region, the NPS Regional National Heritage Area Coordinator for the Northeast Region, and the NPS Superintendant, Salem Maritime and Saugus Ironworks National Historic Sites. The NPS Evaluation Working Group met weekly throughout the evaluation process, involving CPM and Westat as needed.

Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area

The coordinating entity staff of SSNHA (the Executive Director, Program and Partnership Director, Finance and Office Manager, Marketing and Communications Manager, and Education and Interpretation Manager) played key roles in facilitating this evaluation. They provided data, helped with scheduling and planning site visits, identified contacts for interviews, provided feedback on the evaluation process, and participated in interviews. The coordinating entity staff collaborated with the evaluation team to develop the NHA logic model. The coordinating entity staff was not involved in the development of the methodology or data collection protocols though they were provided an opportunity to comment. SSNHA coordinating entity staff had the opportunity to review this document for factual accuracy after the draft was completed by Westat in December 2010.

1.3.3 Context

This evaluation of SSNHA and the work of its coordinating entity 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 Essex National Heritage Commission (ENHC). This was the first evaluation of the nine National Heritage Areas 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 their 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 in order 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 SSNHA and ACNHA build on CPM's evaluation of Essex National Heritage Commission. The focus of these two evaluations continues 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 and its coordinating entity. The CPM/Westat evaluation differs from the first CPM evaluation in that the CPM/Westat evaluation focuses on developing a replicable model of evaluation that can be conducted by NPS. This model is based on triangulated qualitative data collection through topic-centered interviews and document review. It does not include large-scale surveys because of cost and OMB Paperwork Reduction Act issues.

Section 2:
Overview of Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area

Since the 19th century, agriculture has been the heart of Northeast Iowa's economy. Silos dominated the landscape with farms providing nourishment not only for families living on the farm, but feeding the nation and the world. Over time, communities in northeast Iowa experienced the growth of agribusiness and the landscape was peppered with the arrival of factories with smokestacks. By the mid-1980s, northeast Iowa had been hard hit by the Midwest farm crisis. This crisis resulted in a decline in the strength of the agriculture industry, significant job loss, and a significant population loss accompanying the loss of jobs.[2] SSNHA's mission is to preserve the story of American agriculture and its global significance, in the face of these rapid changes, through partnerships and activities that celebrate the land, people and communities of the area. This section of the document provides an introduction to the SSNHA coordinating entity and the heritage area and a description of the coordinating entity's relationship with partners in the heritage area community and with NPS.

2.1 Introduction to SSNHA

The Silos & Smokestacks organization began in 1991 as an economic revitalization program for downtown Waterloo, Iowa. The group soon discovered that there was a rich variety of resources beyond the city limits of Waterloo, IA that encompassed a broad vision of the significance of agricultural heritage. In 1992, the group formally established themselves as Silos & Smokestacks, a privately financed 501(c)(3), non-profit partnership dedicated to recognizing, preserving, promoting and celebrating northeastern Iowa's contribution to world agriculture. In 1994, the National Park Service identified this northeastern region of Iowa as a potentially significant area and in 1995, a special resource study was conducted by the National Park Service (NPS). The special resource study acknowledged the national significance of the resources and heritage of the region and identified the region as a working landscape where residents have formed cooperative efforts to celebrate their heritage, revitalize their communities, and conserve natural and cultural resources. Then, in 1996, Public Law 104-333 designated nine National Heritage Areas including America's Agricultural Heritage Partnerships. This heritage area operates under the name of Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area and is referred to as SSNHA in this document. Because of the heritage area's strong tie with agriculture, this law also located SSNHA with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In 2000, the Omnibus Parks Technical Corrections Act changed authorization for this NHA from the Secretary of Agriculture to the Secretary of Interior because SSNHA's efforts were more in line with the national heritage area program operated by NPS. A cooperative agreement with NPS, established in 2000, details this relationship. As explained in Section 1, this evaluation covers 2000-2010.

SSNHA currently encompasses 37 counties and covers 20,000 square miles in northeastern Iowa. (See Figure 2-1.) Within SSNHA is an extensive network of sites and communities preserving and telling the

[2] Drabenstott, Mark. "Past Silos and Smokestacks: Transforming the Rural Economy of the Midwest" The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Heartland Papers, Issue 2, 2010.

story of American agriculture in Iowa. The coordinating entity does not own or operate any historical sites; instead, it is charged with carrying out the work of the heritage area by creating and supporting a network of sites, activities, and events that will interpret and educate people about American agriculture, agribusiness, farm life, and rural communities — past and present. The coordinating entity works with communities to develop, interpret, and preserve the region's agricultural heritage by providing grants, technical assistance, educational assistance, capacity building and awareness-building activities.

Figure 2-1. SSNHA Map

2.2 SSNHA's Relationship with Partners and NPS

2.2.1 Partner Relationships

Strong partnerships were the foundation of the original authorization for SSNHA under the auspices of USDA and have remained no less important for SSNHA during the 10 years of NPS funding. The 1996 designation of the Silos & Smokestacks organization as a national heritage area specified that it was to be a partnership of federal, state, and local agencies; private enterprise; professional associations; and volunteer organizations. After the reassignment from USDA to NPS, the emphasis on the critical role of partners in this national heritage area remained.

SSNHA's partners are the link to the agricultural history that SSNHA works to preserve and interpret. Partner sites interpret varied components of the agricultural history playing a critical role in the ability of

SSNHA to fulfill its mission and accomplish many of its goals —a role that the coordinating entity itself does not play as it has chosen not to own or operate any historical sites. Leaders from partner sites also serve on the SSNHA's Partnership Panel which is described in greater detail in Section 3.3. Section 3.4 provides a detailed description of the SSNHA partnership network and their relationship to SSNHA's goals and objectives. The importance of the partners' contribution to the sustainability of the heritage area is discussed in Section 6 of this document.

2.2.2 SSNHA/NPS Relationship

The partnership between the coordinating entity and NPS and the NPS heritage area coordinator for the Midwest has been valuable for the operation of the SSNHA. NPS has been extensively involved with SSNHA, especially in its early inception, providing guidance and technical assistance. This assistance has included support for administrative functions and planning, aid in identification of the area's resources, assistance in preserving and conserving these resources, and assistance in interpretation techniques for the region's heritage story. Additionally, NPS, especially the heritage area coordinator for the Midwest, has offered assistance not only to the coordinating entity, but to communities in the heritage area, SSNHA partners, and potential partners. NPS' assistance to these community members has helped to strengthen their capacity for heritage preservation and interpretation. This assistance has consisted of facilitating meetings with heritage area community stakeholders, offering customized technical assistance to sites, and the delivery of trainings and workshops.

SSNHA also collaborates with two NPS sites within the 37 county region, Herbert Hoover Historic Site and Effigy Mounds National Monument. These collaborations involve reciprocal provision of technical assistance and use of the NPS sites for programming. More about these collaborations can be found in Section 4.2 of this report.

2.3 SSNHA Timeline

Appendix F provides a detailed timeline of the key events and investments that have influenced SSNHA over time. This timeline also encapsulates many of SSNHA programmatic activities and outcomes that will be discussed throughout this report. The following are a few highlights of SSNHA's history:

- **1980s:** The Farm Crisis heavily impacts the agriculture and agriculture industry dependent community of NE Iowa
- **1996:** Congressional designation as a National Heritage Area under the USDA
- **1997:** Partnership Management Plan completed
- **1999:** CampSilos, an educational website for teachers and students, is launched

- **2000:** SSNHA authorization is transferred to NPS with the first receipt of federal funds; the Partnership Panel is established

- **2001:** The grant-making program is established with its first round of funds allocated to the heritage area partners

- **2001-2002:** SSNHA Partner Designation Programs launched

- **2003:** 45 partner sites designated

- **2004:** The Partnership Management Plan is revised

- **2004:** SSNHA Interpretive Plan and Wayside Companion Guide are developed

- **2006:** The Education Scholarship Fund is established creating new heritage area education programs; First SSNHA gateway signs are placed on the interstate

- **2007:** 104 sites are designated as heritage area partners

- **2008:** SSNHA region is affected by severe floods

- **2009:** SSNHA establishes a new partner site designation process

- **2010:** SSNHA 108 Partner Sites designated

2.4 Key Findings

The key findings from the SSNHA evaluation are organized by the three questions derived from the legislation, Public Law 110-229, 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 areas management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

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

As outlined in Table 2.1, the four legislated purposes for SSNHA were articulated into five goals which framed our inquiry. The fifth of these goals, sustainability, is addressed under the third evaluation question. **Over the last ten years, SSNHA coordinating entity has attended to each of its legislated purposes and goals outlined in the management plan through the federal resources provided. It has used much of its funding to provide technical assistance and grant support to heritage area communities: to build their capacity to support the interpretation of America's agricultural story; to develop and preserve heritage resources; to operate as a strong partner in the heritage area; and, to provide a quality and consistent visitor experience.** This evaluation was limited in its ability to assess whether the coordinating entity has increased public awareness, interest, and visitation to the heritage area. Further details regarding the effectiveness of the coordinating entity's activities are included in Section 4 of this document.

A more complete assessment of each of the goals and level of accomplishment is as follows:

- ***To present the complete story of America's agriculture and agriculture industry to residents and visitors through balanced and cohesive interpretation across the heritage area.*** This evaluation, through multiple data collection sources and methods, found strong evidence that SSNHA has clearly accomplished this goal. **Since 2002, the coordinating entity has offered forty-seven trainings for 1,946 residents, awarded 327 grants totaling $1,548,211, and, conducted 22 teacher trainings with a total of 967 attendees. Moreover, the coordinating entity has disseminated numerous best practice resources, operated an educational website for teachers and students, and has engaged in numerous individual consultations**. While there is no formal database tracking the number of individual consultations or sharing of resources, data from interviews with coordinating entity staff and partner site representatives clearly indicate this is a significant undertaking. All of these activities and resources have included a focus on interpreting the story of America's agriculture. Partner representatives highlighted the particular value of pairing technical assistance with the grants. One partner representative, for example, noted that the receipt of individual consultations and provision of best practice materials (i.e., signage guidelines), combined with the grant funds, helped them explicate their interpretive plan and create a more complete visitor experience. Recently, the coordinating entity also has implemented educational activities aimed at accomplishing this management goal, such as teacher trainings and camps for school-aged children. Due to time limitations, the evaluation team could not interview teachers who attended the trainings or students who attended camp activities. Therefore, no conclusions could be reached about the value of these educational activities, but a review of these activities demonstrates they are aligned with the SSNHA mission and management plan goals.

- ***To increase public awareness, interest in, and visitation to the heritage area***. This evaluation found considerable support for the implementation of an array of activities to market the heritage area, but was more limited in its ability to measure their impact on creating awareness, interest, and sparking visitation to SSNHA. According to the analysis of four years of data collected by the coordinating entity, **trends indicate that the heritage area is receiving approximately three million visitors per year.** Since the coordinating entity was not able to collect data from

the full-range of partners or the same sample of partners over time, it is therefore, not possible to measure whether the heritage area has sparked visitation. Activities directed at raising awareness among the general public include websites, the Visitor's Guide, signage and logo materials, and public appearances. The highway signage was mentioned as a source of identification by SSNHA Board of Trustees and Partnership Panel members, partner site representatives, and the community visitors. **The website receives about 300,000 visits per year, and the Visitor's Guide is widely distributed, with 70,000 guides at 400 locations.** While the signage, logo materials, and National Park Passports were well received by all the partner site representatives interviewed, the evaluation was limited in collecting broader community data on the activities' ability and effectiveness in raising awareness in the public. **The coordinating entity also operates Camp Silos, an educational website for teachers and students, with approximately 36,000 visits per month, resulting in 480,000 visits per year. The website has an average visit time of 3 to 5 minutes.** The evaluation did not have data on the number of repeat users, page views or comparative data from other educational websites, but the Camp Silos has attracted a large number of visitors with **an above average visit time for websites overall**.

With respect to assessing the general awareness of the public, the evaluation was only afforded the opportunity to assess a small convenience sample of visitors (n=24) at four partner sites. **Of the 15 visitors that were from Iowa or a neighboring state, most had some name familiarity with SSNHA through the general exposure of residential life or through signs or brochures. Many of these respondents were not familiar with what SSNHA is nor did they relate the heritage area to agriculture. All of the visitors, including those from outside of heritage area, were asked if their visit to the partner site increased their understanding or appreciation for aspects of agriculture heritage, and the majority of these visitors indicated that the visit increased their appreciation by "some" or "a lot."**

- ***To enhance the capacity of communities to preserve and develop heritage resources and become stronger partners.*** Since the coordinating entity itself does not own or operate any historical sites, partners are the link between the coordinating entity and the area's agricultural heritage. **At the time of this evaluation, the heritage area had built a large regional network of partners with 108 formally designated partners**. According to the majority of partner representatives interviewed, the technical assistance is perceived to be the most valuable assistance offered by the coordinating entity, especially for rural communities with distressed economies. Also, partner site representatives were consistent in their reports of the positive impact the coordinating entity had on their capacity. **Through the provision of targeted technical assistance and grants, the coordinating entity is reported to have helped build the local capacity of communities in the heritage area**. Also, over the course of several interviews, **the coordinating entity was referred to frequently as the catalyst that started the process of community awareness and revitalization and the programs encouraged communities to think about long-range plans and goals for their sites. In addition, several representatives noted that SSNHA grant dollars allowed them to demonstrate regional buy-in that, in turn, helped them to leverage further investment from other funders and provided valuable seed money in helping them launch specific projects and exhibits for**

heritage development. For example, one partner site cited how the SSNHA grant dollars helped them attract other funders to invest in a new project to capture the oral history of farmers.

- ***To build partner capacity for providing consistent quality visitor experiences throughout the heritage area*. The coordinating entity created a solid foundation for the accomplishment of this goal through: the establishment of a thematic framework for the interpretation of agricultural heritage; and, the provision of grants and technical assistance focused on interpretive planning.** The coordinating entity's grants and technical assistance activities are developed and offered to build partner capacity to attract visitors and improve the quality of their visit to the site. Several partner site representatives noted that it was not until their relationship with the coordinating entity began that they understood the importance of developing visitor experiences. Through a small number of conversations with visitors to four of the partner sites when asked, if their visit to the site increased their understanding or appreciation of agricultural history themes (e.g., Fertile Lands, Farmers and Families), **the majority of partner site visitors indicated that the visit increased their appreciation by "some" or "a lot."** Some visitors spoke about how the information learned was an especially important resource for children; while they had an understanding of farms and agriculture from growing up in the area, their children did not have the same exposure or knowledge about their agricultural heritage.

Table 2.1 provides a crosswalk between the purposes for SSNHA as specified in the authorizing legislation and the goals for the coordinating entity as stated in its current management plan. The table also presents the SSNHA programs that address each of these purposes and goals.

Table 2.1. Crosswalk of Heritage Area Purposes, Goal, and Current Activities

Purposes as Specified in Legislation	Management Plan Goals	Current SSNHA Activities
To interpret, retain, enhance, and promote the unique and significant contributions to national and international agriculture of certain natural, historic, and cultural resources within Waterloo, Iowa, and northeast Iowa	1. Interpretation and Education — to present the complete story of America's agriculture and agriculture industry to residents and visitors through balanced and cohesive interpretation across the heritage area 2. Market the Heritage Area — to increase public awareness, interest, and visitation to the Heritage Area	Technical Assistance Programs Education Programs Public Awareness Programs
To provide a partnership management framework to assist volunteer associations, private businesses, political subdivisions of the State, and the State of Iowa in developing and implementing Management Plan policies and programs that will assist in the interpretation, retention, enhancement, and promotion of the cultural, natural, and recreational resources of northeast Iowa		Management Activities
To allow for local, State, and Federal contributions through limited grants and technical assistance to create America's Agricultural Heritage Partnership through cooperative agreements among volunteer associations, private businesses, political subdivisions of the State, the State of Iowa, and residents of the area	3. Build Local Capacity — to enhance the capacity of communities and local businesses to preserve and develop heritage resources and to become stronger partners in regional tourism efforts; 4. Build Partner Capacity for Quality Visitor Experience — to provide consistent quality visitor experiences throughout the Heritage Area	Technical Assistance Programs Grant Programs
To provide for an economically self-sustaining Partnership for the educational and inspirational benefit of current and future generations concerning the story of American agriculture	5. Resources: Working toward Sustainability — to obtain and allocate funding to support Heritage Area projects and sustain the Silos & Smokestacks organization	Efforts to form SSNHA Foundation

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

Based on an analysis of the available information, the coordinating entity has successfully met the 50% federal funding match requirements per OMB regulations. Since 2000, the coordinating entity has received $7.9 million of investments, which does not include the partner match funds that do not flow through the coordinating entity, but are provided to grantee partners to support local heritage area efforts. The majority of the funds that are directed to the coordinating entity's programmatic activities are

NPS funds. Over time, the amount of non-federal external funding for the coordinating entity has decreased. Also, **since 2000, coordinating entity expenditures have totaled $7.7 million.**

In examining the use of investments, the evaluation concludes that the coordinating entity has been fiscally responsible in expending these funds for programmatic activities that address goals and objectives specified in the authorizing legislation and management plan, as addressed in evaluation question 1. The largest program expenditures have occurred in the areas of awareness building activities, the grants program, technical assistance activities, and educational programs. Farm tourism, a group travel program sponsored by coordinating entity, was discontinued in 2008. This program was a substantial financial investment and was discontinued because SSNHA leadership found, that despite efforts, it was difficult to determine its impact on visitation. With the phasing out of Farm Tourism, the coordinating entity directed expenditures to enhance heritage area educational offerings. Section 5 of this document provides a detailed overview of investments received by coordinating entity and its use of the financial resources received.

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

NPS, with the assistance of the stakeholders from many National Heritage Areas, defined sustainability for an NHA as "…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."

In terms of the heritage area management structure, **the evaluation found that the SSNHA coordinating entity is staffed and has the governance in place to work with heritage area communities to develop, interpret, and preserve the region's agricultural heritage.** Over time the coordinating entity incorporated adaptive management techniques in refining their management plan and organizational structure, and in delivering services to meet the evolving needs of heritage area partners.

The SSNHA partnerships contribute towards the sustainability of the coordinating entity by participating in leadership activities, strategic planning sessions, and meeting with potential donors or state officials to advocate for the heritage area. Interviews with management staff from the coordinating entity and partner site representatives indicate that these partner sites will still continue to operate even if the coordinating entity does not sustain into the future but the quality of the partner site's interpretation of the agricultural heritage will be compromised without future financial and technical support from the coordinating entity.

Public Law 110-229 enacted on May 8, 2008 states that authority for Federal funding to SSNHA terminates in 2012. **The SSNHA coordinating entity is currently almost fully dependent on federal funds and faces challenges to sustainability if those funds expire as set in 2012.** A review of the SSNHA financial records indicates that SSNHA's dependence on federal assistance has grown over time,

with funds from non-federal sources decreasing after the receipt of federal funds. By 2009, only 3% of the operating expenses were covered by non-federal funds. Interviews with the Executive Director, corroborated by interviews with the Board of Trustees, suggest there may be possibility for future sustainability with the charitable donation of an estate to create an SSNHA foundation. It is not certain if and when this will occur. Section 6 of this document assesses the degree to which SSNHA exhibits the components required for maintaining a successful and sustainable coordinating entity.

Section 3: SSNHA Structure and Organization

This section of the document provides an overview of the authorizing legislation that established SSNHA and the heritage area's mission and vision. Once designated as a heritage area, the coordinating entity developed a Partnership Management Plan detailing the goals and objectives for the heritage area and associated plans for achieving these goals. Section 3.2 discusses these goals and objectives and how the coordinating entity modified its plan over time. Section 3.3 provides an overview of the organizational structure of the coordinating entity and its partnership with heritage area communities.

3.1 Authorizing Legislation and NHA Vision and Mission

In authorizing America's Agricultural Heritage Partnership (a.k.a. Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area), Public Law104-333 stated that, "…the story of American agriculture is nationally significant and that without some assistance from the Federal Government, the cultural and historical resources of the area may be lost."[3]

Public Law 104-333 also stated the purposes for this NHA were to accomplish the following:

(1) to interpret, retain, enhance, and promote the unique and significant contributions to national and international agriculture of certain natural, historic, and cultural resources within Waterloo, Iowa, and northeast Iowa;

(2) to provide a partnership management framework to assist volunteer associations, private businesses, political subdivisions of the State, and the State of Iowa in developing and implementing Management Plan policies and programs that will assist in the interpretation, retention, enhancement, and promotion of the cultural, natural, and recreational resources of northeast Iowa;

(3) to allow for local, State, and Federal contributions through limited grants and technical assistance to create America's Agricultural Heritage Partnership through cooperative agreements among volunteer associations, private businesses, political subdivisions of the State, the State of Iowa, and residents of the area; and

(4) to provide for an economically self-sustaining Partnership for the educational and inspirational benefit of current and future generations concerning the story of American agriculture.

Unlike other NHAs that were assigned to the Department of Interior, Public Law 104-333 designated that Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA) should function within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). SSNHA was unique in its agricultural focus and for this reason was

[3] From P.L. 104-333, Division 2, Title VII, signed November 2, 1996

the only NHA assigned to the USDA. Additionally, the law required the development of a Partnership Management Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture by 1999; set the parameters for the creation of a management entity; and, authorized USDA's Secretary to appropriate up to $1 million dollars annually, for the development and implementation of the Partnership. This appropriation required a comparable nonfederal match and could not exceed $10 million through the year of 2012. Over time it became apparent that SSNHA's efforts were more in line with the national heritage area program operated by NPS. The Omnibus Parks Technical Corrections Act of 2000 changed authorization for SSNHA from the USDA to the Department of the Interior (DOI), with the same authorization that the DOI can appropriate up to $1 million annually with a comparable nonfederal match. A cooperative agreement with NPS, established in 2000, details this relationship.

SSNHA's Mission and Vision

According to its mission statement, SSNHA "…preserves and tell the story of American agriculture and its global significance through partnership and activities that celebrate the land, people and communities of the area." SSNHA's vision is for

> "… a partnership of communities, sites, businesses and local residents who value their region's agricultural history. The partnership preserves and promotes the story of American agriculture and makes a positive economic impact on the region by encouraging tourism and heritage based development. Visitors to the heritage area see and experience the story of American agriculture through an integrated story tied to every site, and told at every site. Their visit leaves them with an understanding of the value and importance of American agriculture through outstanding authentic experiences. Individuals from around the world and of all ages learn about American agriculture and its significance through virtual tours. A sense of ownership of the Heritage Area rests in the communities, residents and stakeholders of the region, and they provide direction and planning, and together will achieve the heritage area's mission."

Under the guidance of the coordinating entity, the agricultural heritage of the area is explored through the interpretation of six themes, as described in Figure 3-1. Each theme draws attention to different features of the area's heritage. Taken together the themes form an intellectual framework that allows visitors to unite the varied stories presented by the sites and build a greater understanding of the role of agriculture in American life. The coordinating entity has also created, or helped to create, a physical framework to tie the partner sites' stories together. The components of this physical framework have included a template for consistent signage, guidance in tailoring exhibits at partner sites, visitor kiosks, brochures, tours, and an educational website.

Figure 3-1. SSNHA Themes

Theme	Description
The Fertile Land	Examines the prehistory and natural history of the region
Farmers and Families	Examines the people who farm the land
The Changing Farm	Examines the evolution of farms over time
Higher Yields: the Science and Technology of Agriculture	Examines the revolutions in agriculture
Farm to Factory: Agribusiness in Iowa	Explores the evolution and role of agribusiness in shaping the character of the region
Organizing for Agriculture: Policies and Politics	Examines the efforts made by Iowans to shape agriculture related policies

3.2 SSNHA Goals and Objectives

In September 1997, the original *Partnership Management Plan for SSNHA* was created by coordinating entity staff and an independent task force of heritage area community stakeholders to establish the organization's priorities, goals, and strategies. In response to the economic climate where rural communities in Iowa were struggling with a loss of jobs and population and facing challenges to maintaining their quality of life, the management plan established the heritage area as a regional tourism program. By implementing a place-based development strategy, the coordinating entity planned to build upon the community's strengths by showcasing and interpreting stories of American agriculture and create a regional network of partner sites to tell the story. These efforts would lead to community revitalization and business and economic development. This section of the document details the goals and objectives established by SSNHA's management plan and how and why these goals were revised over time.

The original *Partnership Management Plan* established eight goals:

1. Create, sustain, and convey an extraordinary agricultural heritage tourism "product" for northeastern Iowa;

2. Focus and improve the visitor experience by enhancing existing attractions, building selected new attractions and linking them thematically to shape and make the vital story of America's agricultural heritage;

3. Interpret the fascinating history and personal impacts of America's agricultural heritage by coordinating and enriching Partnership programs;

4. Implement the Heritage Byways program. Link attractions along convenient, well-identified, and enjoyable travel routes for motorists, hikers, and bikers;

5. Promote the Partnership's visitor experience to target audiences and aggressively monitor the impacts for continuous improvement;

6. Contribute to revitalized communities through effective and economically self-sustaining agricultural heritage tourism products, programs, events and festivals;

7. Fund the Partnership's sites and programs through technical support based on local initiative in planning for vitality, self-sufficiency, and contribution to the story of America's agricultural heritage; and

8. Facilitate, coordinate, and cooperate in marketing the Partnership's agricultural heritage initiatives in northeastern Iowa.

According to interviews with coordinating entity staff, as the coordinating entity continued to develop its plans for the heritage area, it became evident that the USDA was not familiar with the functions of NHAs and did not have the framework in place to appropriate federal funds to a heritage area. With the congressional designation, there was an expectation that SSNHA would bring one million dollars worth of federal assistance per year into the area; however, no federal funds were allocated to the area by USDA and as a consequence, the coordinating entity did not have the resources to carry forward the planned activities. The Omnibus Parks Technical Corrections Act of 2000 transferred authorization for SSNHA from the Secretary of Agriculture to the Secretary of the Interior. Under this new assignment, SSNHA received their first federal NHA funding.

With the transfer to Department of Interior, the coordinating entity began a revision of its plans for the NHA to address challenges faced earlier. In early development activities, the coordinating entity's plans for development of the heritage area encountered challenges in building and providing assistance to the regional partnership network. While insufficient funding played a role in these challenges, a major challenge arose from the plans for the heritage area to develop interpretive facilities and other marketing facilities and resistance to this idea from partners. For example a project that met resistance from partners was the creation of Sycamore Street Market which was to be a year-round cooperative market. In planning for and implementing these strategies, there was a general sense among some partners that SSNHA was competing with existing organizations for funding. Moreover, coordinating entity staff and partner representatives interviewed indicated that, because the leadership of the coordinating entity was not from the local area, there was a sense that "outsiders" were coming into the area and sending a message that Iowans could not develop or promote their own regional heritage products.

The revised *Partnership Management Plan of 2004*, developed shortly after the transfer to the DOI, clarified and strengthened the role of the coordinating entity in achieving the mission of the national heritage area. In the revised management plan, the coordinating entity streamlined its goals and

objectives to align with their mission and the stated purposes in the authorizing legislation. For example, the coordinating entity discontinued its goals of building new attractions, creating a heritage byways program, and tracking heritage area visitors. Instead, they concentrated their efforts on augmenting the interpretation, education, and preservation activities implemented by communities in the heritage area. The following five goals were established in the revised Partnership Management Plan:

1. Interpretation and Education — to present the complete story of America's agriculture and agriculture industry to residents and visitors through balanced and cohesive interpretation across the heritage area;

2. Market the Heritage Area — to increase public awareness, interest, and visitation to the heritage area;

3. Build Local Capacity — to enhance the capacity of communities and local businesses to preserve and develop heritage resources and to become stronger partners in regional tourism efforts;

4. Build Partner Capacity for Quality Visitor Experience — to provide consistent quality visitor experiences throughout the heritage area; and

5. Resources: Working toward Sustainability — to obtain and allocate funding to support heritage area projects and sustain the coordinating entity

3.3 SSNHA Organizational Structure

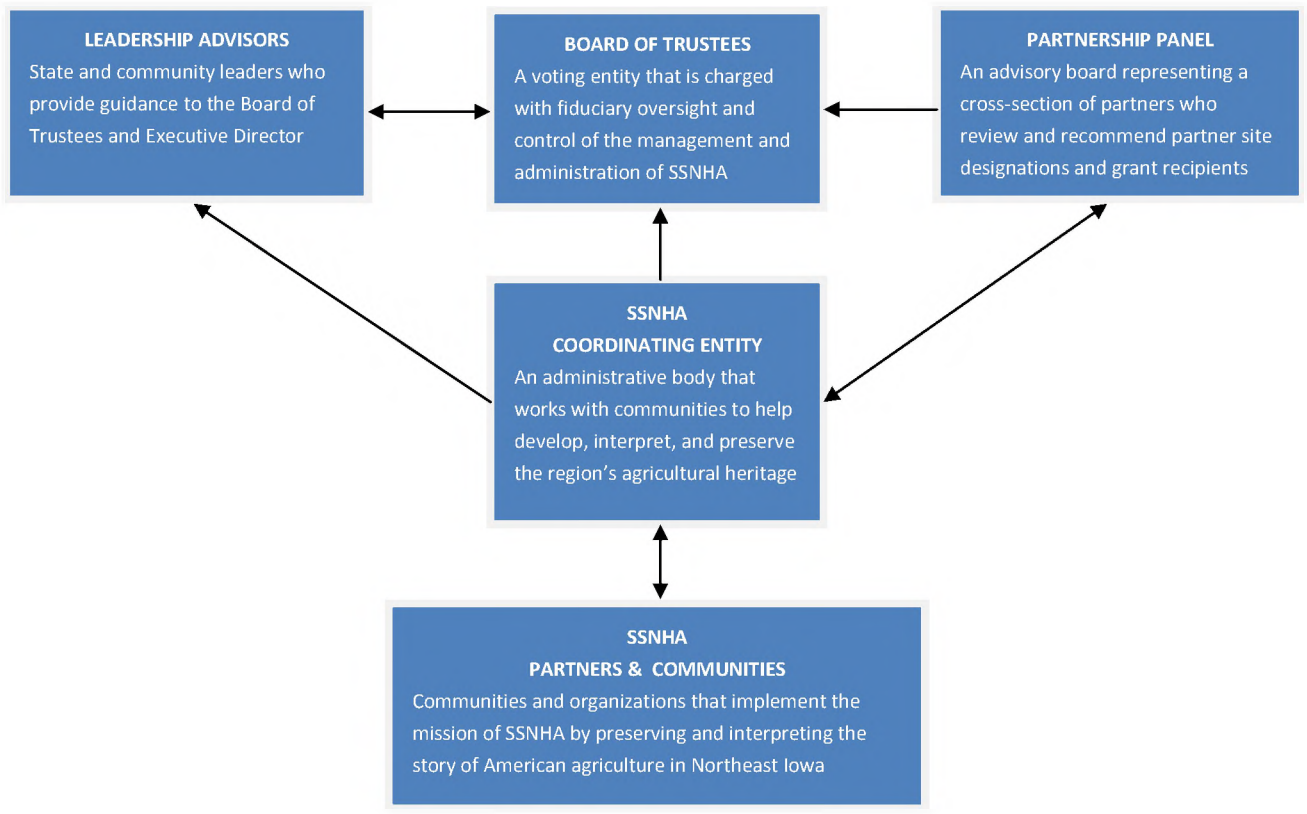
Figure 3-2 provides an overview of coordinating entity's organizational structure; details about each of its components are discussed in greater detail below.

Staff

Prior to the receipt of federal funding in 2000, the coordinating entity staff consisted of a volunteer part-time Executive Director and two paid employees. In the first four years of SSNHA, there was considerable turnover in the leadership of the organization with two different Executive Directors. This turnover resulted from the stresses of insufficient funding and the challenges of establishing relationships with the heritage area community. With the receipt of federal funds, the coordinating entity hired its current Executive Director and began the process of revising its management plan and expanding paid staffing to support heritage area activities. The current organizational staffing consists of an Executive Director, a Program and Partnership Director, Finance and Office Manager, an Education and Interpretation Manager, Marketing and Communications Manager and three Program Assistants, interns from the University of Northern Iowa.

The SSNHA governance structure consists of a group of Leadership Advisors, a Board of Trustees, and a Partnership Panel. Each of these groups is discussed in more detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Figure 3-2. Organizational Chart for the SSNHA Coordinating Entity



Leadership Advisors

With the receipt of federal funding, the SSNHA Executive Director recognized an opportunity to form a group of Leadership Advisors to help provide vision and guidance to the administrative leadership of the coordinating entity. The Leadership Advisors are a group of state and community leaders who provide strategic advice to the overall program through consultation with the Board of Trustees and Executive Director. As advocates for the heritage area, the members provide important links to regional leadership, potential partners, and resources. Members of the group also assist with fundraising activities such as hosting events in their homes. At the time of the evaluation, there were nine members, including a former Iowa Governor, Iowa Governor Elect and former U.S. Congressmen. The members meet on an ad-hoc basis when asked for assistance by the Executive Director. The Leadership Advisors group is a non-voting entity without a formal charge.

Board of Trustees

A 14-member Board of Trustees guides the coordinating entity staff in implementing the mission of the heritage area. The Board is comprised of local community leaders, including private-sector professionals, farmers, farm bureau representatives, and representatives of municipal offices. The Board of Trustees is

a voting entity that is charged with fiduciary oversight and control of the management and administration of SSNHA. According to the coordinating entity bylaws, there can be no more than 25 Trustees and they can serve only two three-year terms. The Board of Trustees meets quarterly.

For this evaluation, five board members were interviewed, including the Board of Trustees Chair. According to the interviews, the Board of Trustees views their primary responsibility as advancing the mission for the heritage area. This responsibility is largely accomplished by representing the heritage area externally, serving on board committees, and guiding the staff on strategic and technical matters. The various board committees that Board of Trustee members serve on are the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Audit Committee and Board Development Committee. The Executive Committee can act on matters between regularly scheduled meetings. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Trustees. Section 6.1.2 provides details on the Board of Trustees in relation to the sustainability of the coordinating entity.

Partnership Panel

Formed in 2000, the Partnership Panel is an advisory body representing a cross-section of the heritage area's partners. The Panel works closely with the Program and Partnership Director in refining programs and developing strategies for future endeavors. The Partnership Panel reviews applications for partnerships and directly recommends to the Board of Trustees emerging partner and partner site designations. The Panel also reviews grant applications and recommends recipients for awards from the grants programs. Partnership Panel members can serve two three-year terms and new members are nominated and elected by existing Partnership Panel members.

3.4 SSNHA Partners

At the time of this evaluation, SSNHA was composed of 108 partner sites across a 37 county region of Northeast Iowa. The partnership membership is diverse ranging from large museums with million dollar budgets, to small businesses, such as working farms, and to volunteer-led historical societies preserving a community site. The partners implement the mission of SSNHA by preserving and interpreting the story of American agriculture in Iowa. From its beginnings as a federally-designated national heritage area, the coordinating entity established a policy of making investments in its heritage area partners rather than independently conducting preservation and interpretation activities. The investments the coordinating entity makes in its partners include technical assistance, seed money available through grants, and other forms of support for the regional network partner sites.

The number of SSNHA partners has increased over time from 9 designated partners in 2001, to 58 partners in 2002, 62 partners in 2003, 82 in 2004, 88 in 2005, 93 partners in 2006, 104 partners in 2007, and 108 partners in 2010. The types of SSNHA partner sites have changed over time; initially the heritage area was composed primarily of museums with sizable staff and budgets but now also includes small, volunteer led historical societies and small businesses, such as working farms.

Communities and historical sites benefit in a number of ways from partnering with the coordinating entity for the heritage area. The coordinating entity publishes a visitor guide to the heritage area each year in which the partner sites, their contribution to heritage development, their location, and their contact information is provided. The guide is widely distributed and can be a source of good publicity for partners. In addition, partner sites or potential partner sites benefit from association with SSNHA through technical assistance, access to information, networking opportunities, and grants provided by the coordinating entity.

To be a partner site, locales must be located within the designated 37 county heritage area and have site accessibility, a consistent interpretation related to at least one of the SSNHA themes, a unique and significant collection related to Iowa's and America's agriculture heritage, and proper insurance in place to manage and protect the site. Sites apply for partnership to SSNHA. Prior to formal application, many potential partners are in contact with the coordinating entity staff to discuss their partnership and how they can best meet the criteria. NPS staff from the Midwest Regional Office also provides guidance to these sites on making improvements to meet the partnership criteria. The Partnership Panel reviews all formal applications and selects partners.

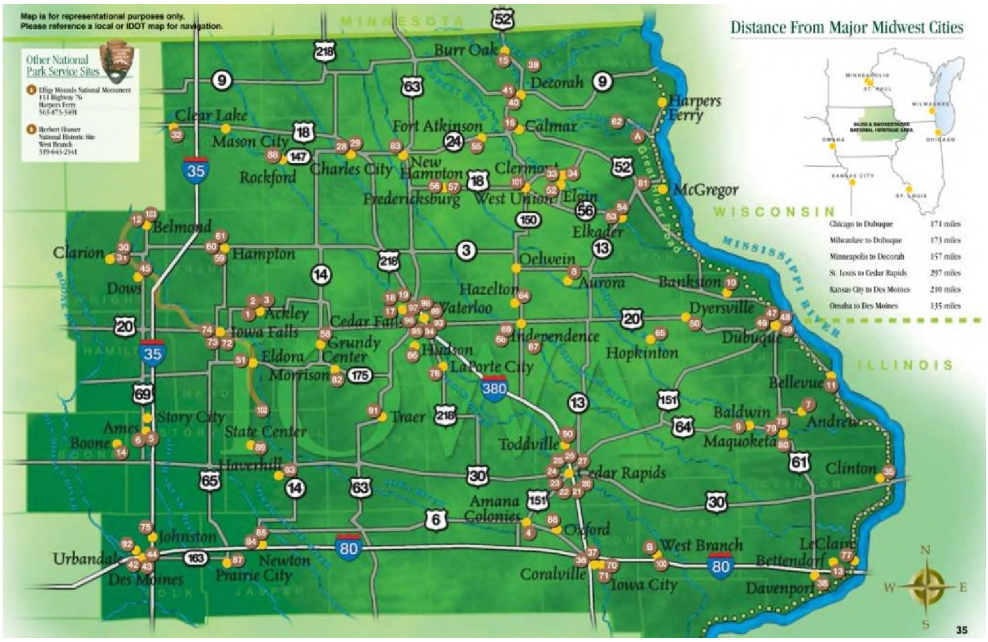
Initially, potential partners applied for partnership designation to SSNHA and, if accepted, were categorized based on their level of interpretation, services, and facilities. The following three categories of partners were designated: Strategic Investment Partners (SIP), Affiliate Sites (AS), or Points of Interest (POI). SIPs had strong potential for interpretive opportunities, local economic impact, or the ability to generate additional heritage development. AS and POI partners were sites that lacked the capacity to be a SIP, but with technical assistance could potentially strengthen their interpretation along the six heritage area themes or improve their capabilities for providing a quality visitor experience. As of 2008, there were 21 SIPs, 39 AS and 44 POI partners in the heritage area.

In 2008, the coordinating entity temporarily discontinued designating new partner sites in response to the increasing number of partners and concerns over partnership management if rapid growth continued. Coordinating entity staff and members of the Partnership Panel and Board of Trustees embarked on a listening tour during which they gathered input and ideas from over 60 partners and communities to help shape the direction of the heritage area. The feedback received was that the quality of the partner sites and the breadth of the heritage story being told are of greater value than the number of sites. As a result, the coordinating entity revamped its partnership designation system to a simplified process of two categories, emerging site or partner site. Sites that were already designated as SIP, AS or POI were re-designated as partner sites. The Partnership Panel reviews all applications; new sites that fit partnership criteria at the time of application are now to be designated as partner sites. If a new site does not meet partnership criteria at the time of application, it can enter into an agreement with the coordinating entity to become an Emerging Site. Emerging Sites work with the coordinating entity staff to develop plans of action to become partner sites. The partner site designation process resumed in 2010.

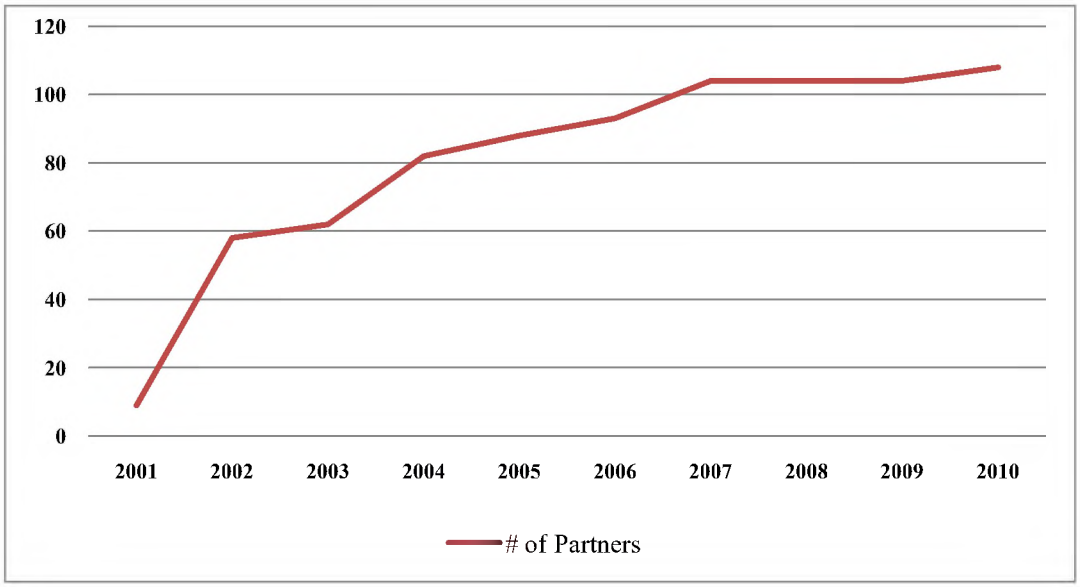
At the time of this evaluation, there were 108 existing partner sites and 34 sites in various stages of consideration for Emerging Site or Partner Site designation. Figure 3-2 is a map displaying where the existing partner sites are located in the 37 county areas. These partners are located throughout the

heritage area, with a concentration of partners in the urban areas such as Waterloo, Dubuque, and Cedar Rapids. Over time, the coordinating entity also has been able to engage partners located in rural areas, such as Rockford, Calmar, Maquoketa, and Cascade.

Figure 3-3. Map of 108 Existing SSNHA Partner Sites



Graph 3-1. Growth in SSNHA Partnership Network Over Time



Section 4:
Fulfillment of the Authorizing Legislation and Management Plan for SSNHA

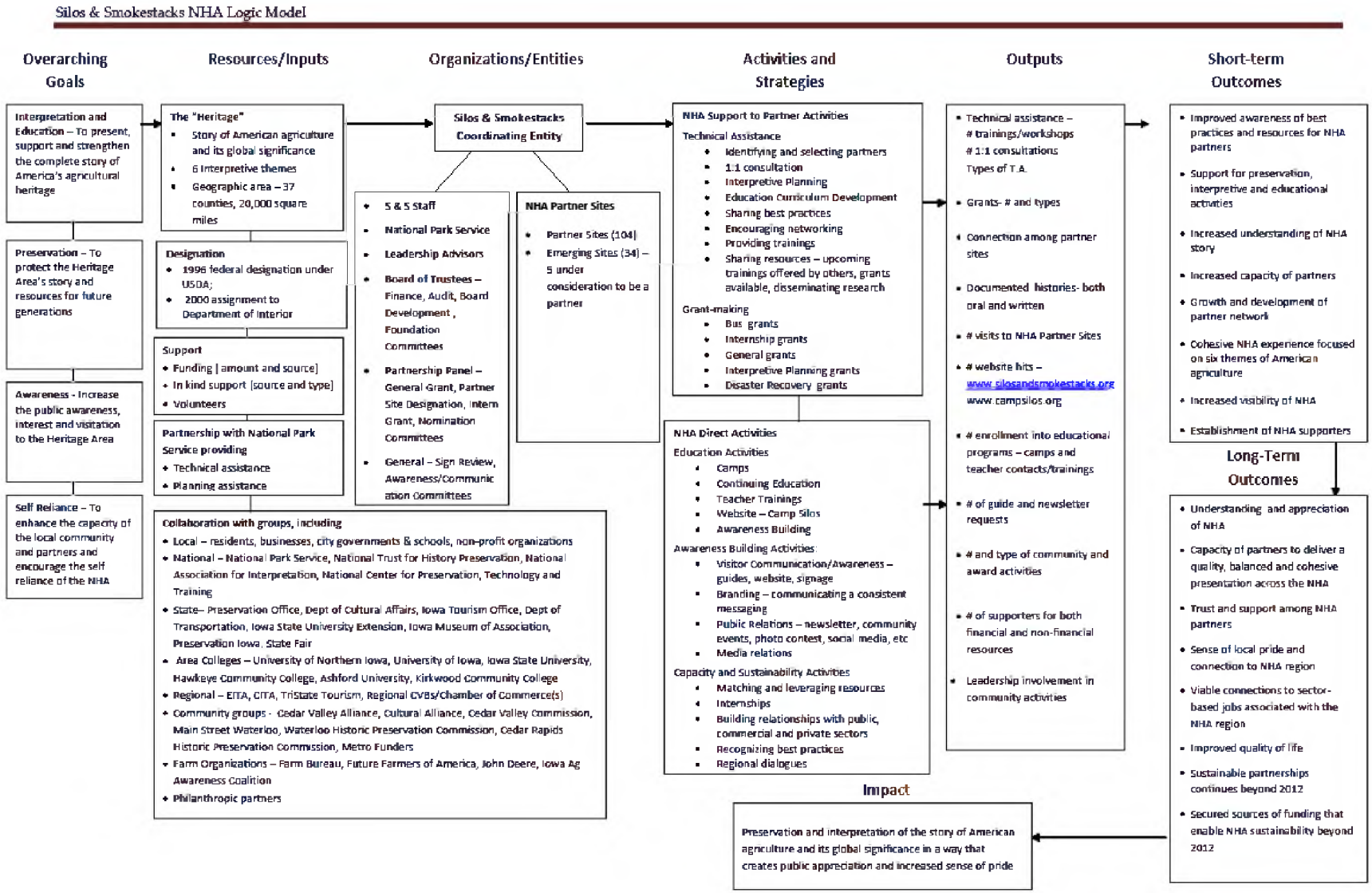
4.1 Authorizing Legislation and Management Plan Objectives

Section 3.2 describes the SSNHA objectives that are defined as part of the authorizing legislation and its management plans. This evaluation examines the extent to which the SSNHA administration has fulfilled the objectives of authorizing legislation and the 2004 revised Partnership Management and Action Plan. In coordination with coordinating entity staff, the evaluation team developed a logic model that is a visual representation of the Heritage Area's:

- Overarching goals;
- Resources and key partnerships available to help accomplish its goals;
- Activities and strategies that are being implemented to accomplish the goals;
- Intended short and long-term outcomes; and
- The linkages among the activities, strategies, and outcomes.

This section of the findings document is a detailed review of the SSNHA activities and strategies and the coordinating entity's effectiveness in meeting its goals and objectives. These activities and strategies can be separated into those that support partners and communities in the greater heritage area, such as grant making and technical assistance, and activities that are conducted to increase understanding and awareness of the heritage area by students, educators, and the general public both inside and outside the heritage area. Figure 4-1 is the SSNHA Logic Model.

Figure 4-1. SSNHA Logic Model



4.2 SSNHA Activities

The SSNHA Management Plan establishes the underlying foundation for the coordinating entity's support activities — technical assistance, grant making, and education to heritage area communities to benefit their preservation activities, interpretation work, and other elements of the visitor experience. The plan states:

> "For heritage tourism to be viable, it takes more than the traditional tourism promotion effort of brochures, marketing, and advertising. It takes conscious development of a high quality product. The product is the total visitor experience: what it is that draws them there; what they experience in the way of getting around, visiting the attractions, meeting the people; how their needs for food, accommodations, and shopping are met; and, whether or not their expectations are met – and hopefully, exceeded."[4]

The coordinating entity also conducts education activities for teachers and students in the local communities to raise their awareness and knowledge of Northeast Iowa's agricultural heritage. Finally, the coordinating entity works to raise awareness of the heritage area and the partner sites in the general public through publications, its website, and public appearances.

Section 4.2.1 provides a description each type of technical assistance activity offered by the coordinating entity followed by an assessment of the impact of technical assistance. Section 4.2.2 provides details of each type of grant offered by the coordinating entity and then provides an assessment of the impact of the grant program. Section 4.2.3 describes and examines the effectiveness of the various educational activities and Section 4.2.4 examines the coordinating entity's awareness building activities. All of these SSNHA-related activities are provided not only to partners, but also are offered to interested parties in the greater heritage area community.

4.2.1 Technical Assistance

The coordinating entity does not own or operate historical sites and it does not have governance over the region's agricultural story. Rather, SSNHA provides guidance in explicating the agricultural heritage of the area through the interpretation of six themes: the fertile land; farmers and families; the changing farm; higher yields: the science and technology of agriculture; farm to factory: agribusiness in Iowa; and organizing for agriculture: policies and politics. The coordinating entity attempts to foster a unified approach to, or framework for, telling of the story of America's agriculture through technical assistance to partners or emerging partners in the heritage area. These technical assistance activities include trainings and workshops, individual consultations, and the sharing of best practices.

Each of the three types of technical assistance is described in more detail in the sections below.

[4] "Silos and Smokestacks Partnership Management Plan", page 5, September 1997.

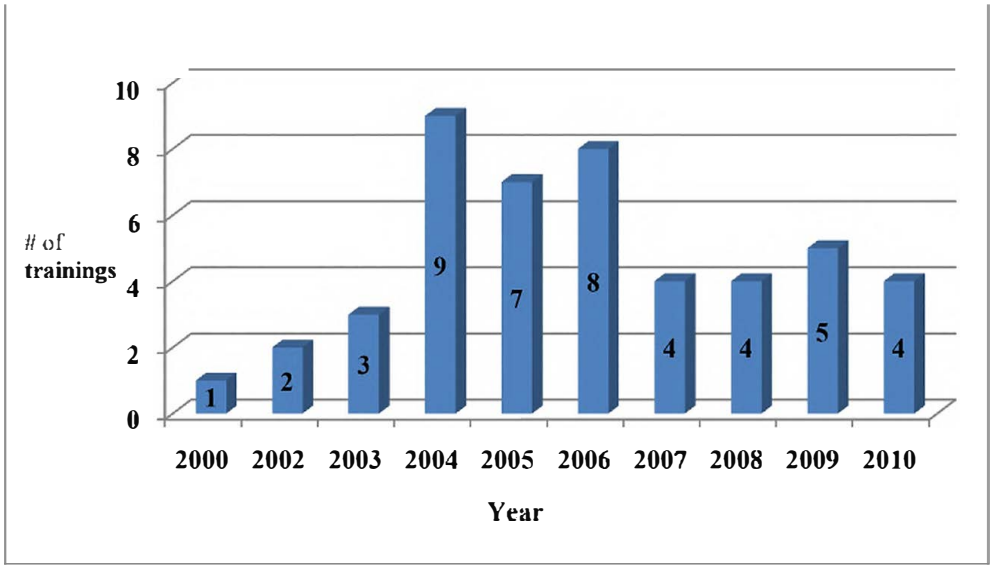
Technical Assistance Activities

Trainings and Workshops

Since 2000, the coordinating entity has sponsored 47 trainings and workshops for heritage area communities. The median number of attendees at each training or workshop was 25 attendees. Because of the substantial size of the SSNHA, the coordinating entity locates its trainings throughout the region to ensure that partners can access some of the technical assistance opportunities without having to go great distances. Training and workshop attendees are charged a fee to cover food and rental expenses. These fees generally range from $40 to $50. The trainings and workshops are offered to residents throughout the heritage area. SSNHA coordinating entity staff asks participants to complete a form after the trainings in order to track attendance and whether the workshop provided useful information. Because the form was customized for each training with de-identified participant information, it is not possible to aggregate them to learn how many trainings individuals attended or their cumulative assessment of the trainings. The evaluation team was able to interview partners for their thoughts about the usefulness and value of SSNHA-related trainings as a whole and those results are presented here.

Training topics include a range of subjects from general introductions to SSNHA and the programs offered by the coordinating entity to topic-centered workshops about signage, interpretation, preservation, and methods to enhance the visitor experience. Seventeen of the 47 workshops have been co-instructed by coordinating entity staff and an NPS staff member from the Midwest Regional Office. Most of these jointly instructed workshops occurred in the early years of this technical assistance and tapered off after 2006. The coordinating entity staff have also held workshops in conjunction with partner sites, waiving training fees in exchange for site staff's participation as instructors and the free use of facilities. Graph 4-1 presents the number of workshops and trainings by year and Table 4-1 presents training topics, location and attendance by year.

Graph 4-1. Workshops and Trainings by Year



The intensity and focus of workshops has changed over the years. After a peak of nine workshops in 2004, the organization reduced the number of trainings offered over time. In the early years, the trainings were specific to Strategic Investment Areas (SIA) and topics mainly covered general topics such as an introduction to the grants program or creating exhibits. Interviews with program staff indicate that, after 2004, the coordinating entity decided to offer trainings and workshops according to the expressed interest of partners and residents in the heritage area. At the end of each workshop, participants complete a form where they can suggest topics for future trainings. A review of these forms indicates that the coordinating entity has been responsive to these suggestions. Workshop topics since 2004 have included evaluation of programs, interpretation, collections and archives, use of technology, fundraising and development, school programs, and exhibit creation. Table 4-1 provides a listing of coordinating entity workshop activities over the years and attendance at each of these workshops. This table demonstrates the change in focus and number of offerings over time.

The 2006 Resource Training workshop had a high attendance of 400 participants, but it was held on several dates throughout various locations in the heritage area. This Resource Training was directed at partner sites and involved training on presenting a consistent message about the heritage area. A review of the remaining workshop offerings indicate a steady attendance over time and demonstrate the continued interest in these workshops throughout the region. When asked about the value of training and workshop offerings by the coordinating entity, many of the representatives from larger partner sites (e.g., museums) stated that their training needs were generally more specific about policies and administration. The trainings met the needs of smaller partner sites; interviews with smaller partner site representatives indicated that the workshops were valuable since they did not have the in-house expertise to address the topics covered in SSNHA-related workshops. The coordinating entity also sponsors scholarships for attendance to non-SSNHA-related workshops and conferences. Representatives from larger partner sites noted they use this resource.

Individual Consultations

SSNHA coordinating entity staff offer individual technical assistance to partner sites, emerging sites, and communities to strengthen their capacity for heritage development and improving visitor experience. This technical assistance includes site preparedness planning and goal setting that is tailored for the specific partner or emerging site. Individual technical assistance allows for staff from the partner sites or potential partners to work extensively with staff from the coordinating entity, as well as with the NPS Midwest Regional Office. Examples of the types of individual technical assistance offered include meetings with communities to identify possible heritage sites and needs assessments at potential SSNHA partner sites. SSNHA coordinating entity staff have held dialogue meetings with communities that have expressed an interest in receiving guidance on heritage development efforts. These dialogue meetings focus on helping communities to identify resources or opportunities for heritage development. Once a community or organization has begun the process to become a SSNHA partner, coordinating entity staff work extensively with them on a one-to-one basis to assess their needs and support them in developing interpretation, education, and preservation strategies as they relate to the themes of America's agricultural heritage story that guides the heritage area. Also since 2008, SSNHA received 40 pre-applications to become partner sites and designated partner sites received individual consultations in the interpretation and conservation of their site as part of the partnership designation process. Coordinating entity staff and NPS staff have also conducted site preparedness and site improvement consultations with existing

partners. Among the topics that coordinating entity staff and NPS staff have discussed with existing partners are ways to improve buildings, walkways, collection presentation, and signage. Communities and partners approach the coordinating entity to request this assistance, which is provided without a fee. Although the coordinating entity does not collect data on how many consultations are conducted, interviews with staff and partner site representatives indicate this is a significant technical assistance activity.

Several representatives of partner sites, especially those who joined SSNHA partnership network after 2002, expressed respect for the coordinating entity's philosophy of understanding needs before offering assistance. According to coordinating entity staff and early partners, this was a noted improvement compared to the early years of the coordinating entity when partners felt that "outsiders" were telling them how to operate their sites. Partner site representatives spoke about how in past years, during the initial development stages of their sites, coordinating entity staff visited their communities and sites to learn about what resources currently existed that could provide a foundation for heritage development. After these initial visits, coordinating entity staff then worked with the community members to offer the assistance needed to build upon their existing resources. One example is the Carrie Lane Chapman Catt Girlhood Home where SSNHA and NPS staff worked closely with their all volunteer staff to guide the home renovations and present the collections in a sequential and interactive manner to enhance the visitor experience.

Potential partners located in rural communities or those with few, if any, staff (e.g., volunteer-led organizations) most frequently reported this customized capacity-building assistance to be the most valuable assistance provided by the coordinating entity. They noted that coordinating entity staff and NPS staff visited their communities on numerous occasions offering their assistance and expertise. Over the course of multiple interviews, the coordinating entity was referred to frequently as the catalyst that started the process of community awareness and revitalization. Beyond providing assistance in interpretation, the individual technical assistance encouraged communities to think about long-range plans and goals for their sites and communities. Partner sites located in rural counties with distressed economies reported that without this individualized support, it would have been challenging, if not impossible, for them to get their projects up and running. The coordinating entity staff spent extensive time with them in helping create a sustainable vision for their project and directed them toward local funding resources.

Table 4.1. SSNHA Coordinating Entity Workshop Offerings and Attendance by Year

Year	Workshop	Location	Attendance
2000	SSNHA Planting New Fields Conference	Waterloo, IA	115
2002	2002 Grant Program Workshop	Waterloo, IA	30
	2003 Grant Program Workshop	Waterloo, IA	21
2003	Wayside Exhibit Workshop	Waterloo, IA	18
	From Text to Tour Workshop	Waterloo, IA	29
	Roadmapping Conference	Waterloo, IA	67
2004	Visitor Readiness Workshop	Baldwin, IA	31
	SSNHA and Heritage Tourism	Cedar Rapids, IA	20
	From Text to Tour Workshop	Moline, IL	30
	Interpretation 101 Workshop	Postville, IA	16
	Travel Markets in NE Iowa	Decorah	30
	By the Wayside: Idea to Reality Workshop	Waterloo, IA	19
	2004 Grant Program	Independence, IA	18
	Signage/New Trends in Group Travel	Balltown, IA	19
	How to Create a Seamless Guided Tour Workshop	Dubuque, IA	70
2005	How to Create a Seamless Guided Tour Workshop	Cedar Rapids, IA	69
	Interpretation 101 Workshop	Postville, IA	20
	Turning Stats & Stuff Workshop	Maquoketa, IA	20
	Partner & Grant Program Workshop	Rockford, IA	18
	Ready for Prime Time Workshop	Waterloo, IA	11
	Adding Sizzle to Your Site Workshop	Amana, IA	33
	SSNHA Annual Conference	Waterloo, IA	101
2006	CIRP Outdoor Interpretive Sign Worksession	Hampton, IA	12
	Partner & Grant Program Workshop	Dubuque, IA	17
	Navigating the Landscape of Grant Funding	Decorah	30
	CIRP Outdoor Interpretive Sign Worksession	Hampton, IA	12
	How to Develop an Exhibit Plan Workshop	Waterloo, IA	33
	Prosperity Eastern Iowa	Maquoketa, IA	50
	Resource Training - Silos & Smokestacks 101	Various Locations	404
	2006 Annual Conference	Waterloo, IA	150
2007	Collections Management Workshop	Decorah, IA	40
	Partner & Grant Program Workshop	Hazelton, IA	26
	Interpretive Writing Workshop	Newton, IA	11
	Resource Training - Silos & Smokestacks 101	Various Locations	16
2008	SSNHA Grant Programs Workshop	Maquoketa, IA	8
	Grant Seeking & Proposal Writing Workshop	Independence, IA	44
	Event Marketing	Waterloo, IA	23
	Resource Training - Silos & Smokestacks 101	Various Locations	16
2009	SSNHA Grant Info Session	Waterloo, IA	25
	Thematic Writing Workshop	Fredericksburg, IA	36
	AmeriCorps NCCC Info Session	Waterloo, IA	9
	Industrializing the Corn Belt Book Talk	Eldora, IA	29
	Outcomes-Based Planning & Evaluation	Iowa Falls, IA	24
2010	SSNHA Grant Info Session	Waterloo, IA	14
	Inclusion & Universal Design Workshop	Cedar Rapids IA	19
	Oral History Workshop	Waterloo, IA	34
	Interpreting Your Story: The PAIR Model of Success	Dubuque, IA	59
		Total Attendance	**1946**

Sharing Resources and Best Practices

In order to accomplish the goals outlined in the legislation and Management Plan, such as interpretation, education and capacity building, the coordinating entity determined that sharing resources and best practices should be a critical component of its technical assistance activities. The coordinating entity's establishment of a partner network enables the sharing of lessons learned and best practices.

Some of this sharing occurs through formal mechanisms. For example, in 2004, the coordinating entity released the *Wayside Companion Guide*. This guide was written and designed by the NPS Midwest Regional Office as a tool to help partner sites and communities to further enhance the heritage area experience through a coordinated signage system. Another resource that is formally shared with partner sites and communities is the *Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area Interpretive Plan*. This plan was prepared to help sites improve their delivery of information and build a balanced and cohesive interpretive presentation across the heritage area.

In addition to these formal resources, coordinating entity staff and partner site representatives often noted the informal sharing of resources that is facilitated by the coordinating entity. Workshops and other coordinating entity sponsored events offer opportunities for networking. These occasions prompt conversations among attendees where they learn what is going on at other sites and gather information about other resources available in the heritage area. Because SSNHA has a regional network of partners, several partners noted that coordinating entity staff serve the broader community as a portal for sharing heritage area news and activities as well as partner site and community news and activities. SSNHA coordinating entity staff inform partner sites about other resources available in the communities such as workshops or conferences being offered by other organizations like the Iowa Museum Association or State Preservation Office or grant opportunities from other organizations. This information is generally shared via newsletters, blast emails, or personal communication.

They also indicated that coordinating entity staff were easily accessible and were responsive to questions. If coordinating entity staff could not answer their questions, partner site representatives stated that they could rely upon coordinating entity staff to direct them to the appropriate sources. Some examples of this referral function included providing partner sites with contact information for other partner organizations doing similar work, contacts at local universities, or consultants and companies that have worked with other partner sites.

There is one technical assistance activity that the coordinating entity has discontinued. For four years, 2000, 2003, 2005 and 2006, SSNHA sponsored an annual conference for the heritage area community. These conferences focused on heritage development through educational sessions on Iowa travel markets, signage, and interpretive planning. After the 2006 conference, the coordinating entity made the decision to discontinue the conferences. The coordinating entity determined that they were duplicating resources already available in the community and concluded that participants might benefit more from topic-centered workshops offered throughout the year, rather than having one conference per year. Because some partners may still wish to pursue opportunities to attend conferences, the coordinating entity now offers scholarship funds to partially fund attendance costs at other relevant conferences, such as those held by the Iowa Museum Association and Alliance of National Heritage Areas. Several of the

representatives from larger partner sites, particularly museums, expressed appreciation for the coordinating entity's continued support in helping them attend other conferences. They indicated that the topics addressed at these conferences, such as specific museum policies and guidelines, were more pertinent for their work than some of the topics covered in SSNHA workshops. Since the termination of the annual conferences, the coordinating entity has also collaborated with other organizations, such as the Iowa Museum Association and the Iowa State Preservation Office, to stage sessions at their conferences.

Impact of Technical Assistance

The coordinating entity's technical assistance activities are directed to help the heritage area accomplish the purposes specified for it in the authorizing legislation and in the management plan goals. Specifically, the heritage area is to support the interpretation, preservation, and promotion of this unique historical area and help build local community capacity in presenting its story. The evaluation team considered the following measures in assessing the impact of the technical assistance activities on the interpretation, preservation, and promotion of the heritage area and the community capacity to present the historical story:

- An increased understanding and awareness of SSNHA resources by area organizations and individuals; and
- The engagement of heritage area communities in activities and learning about preservation and interpretation.

Based on these measures, the coordinating entity's technical assistance activities appear to have had the desired impact on the partners. Interviews with both coordinating entity staff and the majority of partner representatives indicate that these technical assistance activities are perceived as the most valuable assistance offered by the coordinating entity. Partner representatives and a representative of a potential partner site interviewed indicate that they all have received one or more forms of technical assistance and have found it has helped them to develop and interpret a heritage story.

The coordinating entity has offered forty-seven trainings for 1,946 residents at various locations throughout the heritage area. The high attendance at these trainings indicates the engagement of the community in these activities. Evaluation data are not available to allow us to determine empirically if the coordinating entity's trainings have actually increased understanding and awareness of SSNHA resources over time. Partner site representatives report that they found the workshops, along with the individual consultations and SSNHA best practice resources, to be useful in both raising awareness and applying techniques for preservation and interpretation, such as development and sequencing of exhibits and applying interactive techniques for interpretation. The coordinating entity has also sponsored partners' attendance at other conferences and training opportunities, which has helped engage larger partner organizations in learning about tools to help preserve and interpret their heritage story. Among those partners interviewed, technical assistance was universally positively perceived and considered an advantage of being involved with the heritage area and coordinating entity.

4.2.2 Grant Programs

In 2001, with the receipt of federal assistance, the coordinating entity began its efforts to provide funds to assist heritage area partners and communities in developing, preserving and interpreting the heritage story. They provide these funds in the form of grants in programmatic areas. Today, the coordinating entity has five grant programs that they offer to partners and organizations in heritage area communities. These include general grants, bus grants, internship grants, interpretative planning grants, and disaster recovery grants. Details for each grant program follow. Table 4-2 provides an overview of the five grant programs.

Table 4.2 Overview of Grant Type, Year Started and Purpose

Grant	Year Started	Purpose
SIA/SIP and General Grants	2001	To support SIAs, SIPs, and heritage area communities in their heritage preservation and interpretation efforts; enhance a site's heritage connection; help develop quality heritage programming for positive visitor experiences; and, build the capacity of heritage area for further heritage development.
Bus Grants	2006	Supports up to 75% of transportation costs associated with school study trips to SSNHA partner sites
Internship Grants	2006	Supports up to 70% of the wages of a summer college intern to work at a SSNHA partner site to: expose students to agricultural careers, provide opportunities for students to expand their experiences and skills; aid partner sites in enhancing their heritage preservation and interpretation.
Interpretive Planning Grants	2009	Pilot grant program to assist heritage area communities in identifying the heritage significance of their sites, developing their heritage stories, and planning for the interpretation of these stories
Disaster Recovery Grants	2008	Support SSNHA partner sites disaster recovery efforts after the extensive floods in the summer of 2008

Grants Programs

SIA/SIP and General Grants. In 2001, the coordinating entity and the Partnership Panel established the SIA/SIP and General Grant Program. The SIA/SIP Grant Program was offered from 2001 to 2003 and the General Grant Program continues to be available annually to partner sites, non-profits, local government agencies, or federally recognized Indian tribes for projects in at least one of the 37 heritage area counties. These grants are intended to support these groups in accomplishing one or more of the following goals:

- Preserve and interpret America's agricultural and agricultural industrial stories and their significance to the nation and the world consistent with the SSHNA Interpretive Plan;
- Enhance the site's agricultural connection;
- Raise the quality of the attraction;
- Develop positive visitor experiences consistent with the SSNHA Interpretive Plan; and
- Build the capacity of the heritage area region to further develop and sustain agricultural and industrial heritage tourism through new and existing sites, attractions and events.

The yearly cycle includes a grant announcement that is released in January, followed by an informational session held in February, and grant decisions announced by June. In order to receive this grant, grantees must provide equal match funds from a source other than federal funds and demonstrate that they can address the SSNHA mission and grant goals. Grants were first awarded in 2001 and there have been 148 awards totaling $1.47 million to date. The average grant period is 18 months.

Bus Grants. In 2006 during SSNHA's 10-Year Designation Celebration, the Education Scholarship Fund was created through corporate and individual contributions. This scholarship supports the Bus Grant Program and Internship Grants (described below). The Bus Grant Program partially funds transportation costs associated with school study trips to partner sites. Up to 75% of transportation costs to and from the selected partner sites per field trip are funded. The maximum amount for each grant is $350. The yearly grant cycle begins with an announcement in July and applications are accepted from August through December. Grants are awarded on a first come, first served basis until funds are depleted. Since 2007, 151Bus Grants have been awarded amounting to $37,558 of assistance.

Internship Grants. The Education Scholarship Fund also supports internship grants. The Intern Grant Program began in 2006 and supports up to 70% of the wages of summer college interns selected by partner sites. The goals of the Intern Grant Program are to do the following:

- Expose students to the diverse careers related to agriculture in northeast Iowa and provide opportunities for the student to establish positive relationships with partner sites;
- Provide opportunities for students to expand their experiences and skills and to apply concepts and philosophies learned in the classroom to on-the-job situations;
- Aid partner sites in hiring qualified and enthusiastic college interns that offer fresh new perspectives and skills to the site and its mission; and
- Enhance the site's agricultural connection through projects that preserve and interpret America's agricultural and agricultural industrial stories and its significance to the nation and the world consistent with the SSNHA Interpretive Plan.

Internship grants are available only to partner sites and the maximum amount allowable for each grant is $3,000 per student. Funds must be used to pay up to 70% of the summer intern's wages. Grantees are required to pay the remaining 30% of the wages. Interns must work between 240 and 480 hours and are to be paid between $7.25 and $10.00 per hour for their services. The yearly grant cycle begins with an

announcement in November and applications are accepted until February. Award decisions are made by March. Since 2007, there have been 16 grants totaling $26,000 to provide summer internship opportunities to Iowa's students.

Interpretive Planning Grants. In 2009, the coordinating entity introduced the Interpretive Planning Grant Program as a pilot program with a focus on helping communities prepare interpretive plans. This grant program assists sites and organizations to identify the preservation significance of their locale, delineate their heritage stories, and determine the best way to interpret the stories and themes they identify. These grants are available to partner sites, non-profits, local government agencies, or federally recognized Indian tribes for projects in at least one of the 37 heritage area counties. The grant announcement was released in July and grant decisions were made by October. In order to receive this grant, grantees must provide equal matching funds from a source other than federal funds and demonstrate that their activities will advance the SSNHA mission. In 2009, there were nine applications and five interpretive planning grants awarded totaling $8,875. In 2010, the Partnership Panel decided to offer the Interpretive Planning Grant Program again in 2011.

Disaster Recovery Grants. In June 2008, Iowa experienced torrential rains and massive flooding that caused extensive damage in more than half of SSNHA's designated counties. This flooding was declared a national disaster by the federal government. In addition to transportation closures and damage to private properties, the flooding resulted in significant cultural losses. Several of the SSNHA partner sites reportedly suffered significant damage to their buildings and exhibits and lost artifacts and documents. In response to this crisis, the coordinating entity offered small grants, up to $2000, to support disaster recovery. The coordinating entity awarded seven disaster recovery grants totaling $6,700.

Summary of Grant Activities

Since 2001, the coordinating entity has received 490 grant applications and awarded 327 grants for a total of $1,548,211 in grant assistance to the members of the heritage area community. Table 4-3 summarizes the grant type, number and dollars allocated to the heritage area by year since 2001.

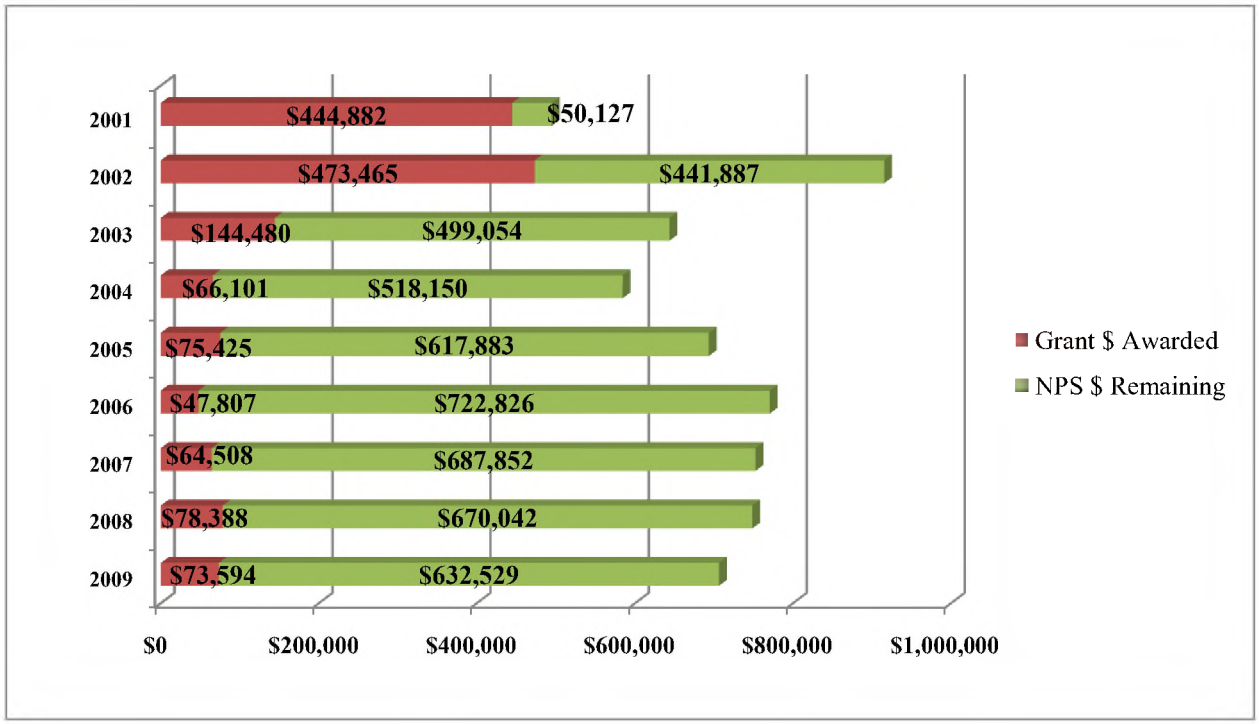
As displayed in Graph 4-2, in 2001 and 2002, 90% and 52%, respectively, of the coordinating entity's funds received from NPS were re-invested in the heritage area community through the coordinating entity's grants programs. During this time non-federal funds were used to pay for the coordinating entity's operating expenses, such as staff salaries. This significant investment in the grants program reflects purposeful action by the coordinating entity. Interviews with coordinating entity staff and members of the Board of Trustees revealed that initially there was a critical need to help reclaim the community's trust and support of SSNHA. SSNHA leadership indicated that the slow and sometimes contentious nature of the early days of the heritage area made funding an important tool in establishing their credibility as a coordinating entity and in assisting partner sites to effectively fulfill the SSNHA mission. The coordinating entity made a decision to award a significant proportion of their early available funding to SIA and SIP partners of SSNHA.

Table 4.3 Grant Type, Number, and Dollars by Year

Year	Type	#	Amount
2001	SIA/SIP, General	16	$444,882
2002	SIA/SIP, General	29	$473,465
2003	SIA/SIP, General	8	$144,480
2004	General	15	$66,101
2005	General	18	$75,425
2006	General	11	$47,807
2007	General	11	$49,595
	Intern	6	$7,500
	Bus	27	$7,413
2008	General	15	$60,000
	Intern	4	$5,685
	Bus	40	$10,003
	Disaster	4	$2,700
2009	General	13	$47,155
	Intern	3	$5,622
	Bus	48	$9,942
	Disaster	2	$2,000
	Interpretive	5	$8,875
2010	General	12	$60,241
	Intern	3	$7,120
	Bus	36	$10,200
	Disaster	1	$2,000
Totals		327	$1,548,211

After 2002, there was a significant reduction in the total amount of grant funding awarded while at the same time there was an increase in the number of awards and types of awards. After 2002, the coordinating entity invested NPS funds in other activities and programs, such as farm tourism, signage projects, and technical assistance and education activities. The details of the coordinating entity's investments are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.2. The level of grant funding also decreased over time because the coordinating entity ,with the support of the Partnership Panel stopped funding SIA projects and infrastructure projects, such as construction. The two SIA projects were pilot programs that the coordinating entity decided not to continue funding since they could not maintain the level of funding to these SIAs with the growing number of other partners that needed technical and financial assistance. Also, the General Grant Program initially funded physical infrastructure projects, but it became challenging for the coordinating entity to properly fund historic preservation projects with the limited amount of grant funding. The coordinating entity now refers partners to use other state preservation funds that are available for these types of projects.

Graph 4-2 Grant Dollars Awarded and Remaining NPS Funds by Year*



*2010 audited financial data is not available to include in this comparison

Despite the decrease over time in the amount of grant funding available to partners, the coordinating entity's grant program remains in demand. Table 4-3 examines the number of grants requested and awarded each year. The growth in the number of grants awarded over the years is largely due to the school bus grant program which awards a small amount of money (maximum $350) per applicant. The award ratios listed in Table 4-4 demonstrate the extent to which the coordinating entity's approach to its grant program touches the wider community demand for funding.

Table 4.4. Number of Grants Requested and Awarded and Award Ratio by Year

Year	Requested	Awarded	Award Ratio
2001	41	16	39%
2002	35	29	83%
2003	35	8	23%
2004	24	15	63%
2005	25	18	72%
2006	16	11	69%
2007	65	44	68%
2008	80	63	86%
2009	90	71	78%
2010	79	52	66%
Totals	490	327	67%

Even though the monetary value of grants awarded by the coordinating entity has decreased over time, partner site representatives noted the value of having this investment available to them. Several representatives stated that the appeal of the coordinating entity grants was not necessarily the monetary value, but the technical assistance accompanying the grants, the ability to use grant dollars to leverage further investment from other funders, and the relative flexibility of the funding available through the general and interpretive planning grant programs (e.g., ability to contract with external resources for interpretive planning or to hire interns for short term projects). For example, one partner site representative indicated that though the site's initial relationship with the heritage area and coordinating entity began with an interest in receiving monetary support to create signage for the site, the site realized the importance of the technical assistance they received and that funding for interpretive signage alone would not have been as useful. The technical assistance provided by coordinating entity staff and NPS was the more critical factor in helping the site fully explicate their interpretive plan and implement a more complete visitor experience. In addition, several partners indicated that the coordinating entity grant funding was valuable seed money in helping them launch specific projects and exhibits (such as capturing the oral histories of area farmers); in addition, the receipt of support and funding from the coordinating entity helped demonstrate that their projects had regional buy-in. Partners also indicated that the coordinating entity's relationship with NPS helps provide credibility for their projects, at times serving as a "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" and helping attract grant dollars from other sources. Partners also noted that they appreciated the flexibility of the SSNHA-related funds to bring in consultants or interns to help with special projects, especially in cases when they did not have the staffing or resources to conduct the project in-house.

SSNHA coordinating entity staff and the Partnership Panel maintain on-going communication with current grant recipients and assess the effectiveness of the grants during annual reviews. These reviews help the Partnership Panel decide if certain types of grants are effective and help inform future funding decisions. The Partnership Panel performs an annual review of each grant program to assess and refine the application process including the questions and criteria. Finally, at the end of each grant, grantees complete an outcome survey that describes the activities and objectives accomplished by the grant project and how it has impacted staff and visitors. In 2007, the coordinating entity compiled the survey information into the *Grants Program Report* that highlighted the impact of the program for residents and visitors in the heritage area. The *Grants Program Report* found that the coordinating entity's grant program overall helped create a cohesive visitor experience in the heritage area. In developing a heritage area experience, the *Grants Program Report* indicated that the grants program has had success in helping communities preserve icons, such as the artifacts in the Amana Colonies, and increase the capacity of the sites to attract new and repeat visitors by funding new interactive exhibits. In reviewing outcomes reported by early grantees, the report found that even though SSNHA-related grants are for a set period of time, the funded projects continue to have an impact on their communities years after completion.

Impact of Grants

Similar to the coordinating entity's technical assistance activities, the grants program is intended to build local community capacity in presenting America's agriculture story. The evaluation team considered the following measures in assessing the impact of the grant making activities:

- The engagement of heritage area communities in activities and learning about preservation and interpretation; and
- The growth and development of the partner network

Since 2001, the coordinating entity has awarded 327 grants totaling $1,548,211across the heritage area. Although the amount of dollars awarded decreased after the program's initial years, the number of requests for grants has more than doubled. This reflects, in part, an increase in the number and type of grants awarded but it also suggests increased awareness of the programs. The number and types of grants awarded has similarly doubled indicating that the coordinating entity has diversified its offerings to help support a broader spectrum of partners and community organizations. Also, while the monetary value of the grants is not substantial, interviews with all of the partner site representatives indicated the grants have value in demonstrating regional buy-in and indicating their projects have received a "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" from the coordinating entity of nationally designated heritage area. Moreover, in visiting partner sites, the bus grants program has succeeded in engaging teachers and school children to learn about the heritage area. These findings suggest that the coordinating entity has been successful in capturing the area's attention and engagement.

Based on interviews with SSNHA partners, the grants program also has been successful in building the capacity of the partners. All of the partner representatives interviewed said the grants program was beneficial for their sites in both building their capacity to interpret and preserve as well as in funding seed projects and helping them leverage investments from other funding sources. Also, while they couldn't directly attribute increased visitation to the grants, they did note that they felt that the grants helped them improve the quality of their agricultural heritage programming. For instance, several sites used money from the grants program to develop interactive exhibits, such as iPod tours and the capturing of oral histories. Interviews with coordinating entity staff echoed this sentiment reasoning that the grants program not only improved the quality of interpretation but also enabled communities to tell agriculture stories that were not being told, especially in rural communities.

4.2.3. Education

In 2005, the coordinating entity used a portion of its funds and contracted with the University of Northern Iowa to conduct an organizational assessment of the coordinating entity. One result of this assessment was a recommendation for the creation of a position for an educational and interpretive specialist. This position would help the heritage area tell the complete story of America's agriculture and agriculture industry to residents and visitors through balanced and cohesive interpretation across the heritage area through community educational activities. The Education and Interpretation Manager now oversees the Camp Silos website, manages the summer and spring break camps, and conducts continuing education courses or trainings for teachers. Each of these activities is described in more detail below.

Educational Programs

Camp Silos Website. Launched in 1999, before the receipt of NPS funds, the Camp Silos Website (www.campsilos.org) is an educational resource that is available to teachers and students. This website focuses on the development of American agriculture. Targeting students in grades 4-8, the site provides

online educational material related to the natural prairie, pioneer farm life, early agricultural technology, the story of corn from its early Indian origins to the present, and 21st century technological advances including applications of GPS and biotechnology. The site is structured around four thematic modules: Exploring the Prairie, Pioneer Farming, The Story of Corn, and Farming Today and Tomorrow.

From 2005 to 2009, the Camp Silos website has had approximately 35,000 visitors per month, resulting in 480,000 visitors per year spending between 3 to 5 minutes on the website. A full breakout of the visitors per year is presented in Table 4-5. In 2009, the website counter was not working for two months, so the number of visitors for 2009 is underestimated. Currently, coordinating entity staff estimate that the Camp Silos visitation will maintain steady visitation in 2010, with approximately 36,000 visitors per month.

Table 4.5. Camp Silos Website Visitors by Year

Year	Visitors
2005*	172,946
2006	483,668
2007	488,247
2008	492,952
2009**	392,234
* only half the year was recorded ** the website counter was not working for 2 months	

Summer and Spring Break Camps. In 2009, the SSNHA Education and Interpretation Manager began hosting spring break and summer camp programs for school-aged children. This program enrolled 10 to 15 children in a ten-day program where they visit at least two partner sites a day. The program is conducted in collaboration with a local nature center in Cedar Falls, IA that already operates camps and therefore has procedures in place for enrollments and waivers for their other camps. The nature center also provides advertisements for the camps and allows the coordinating entity to use its van to transport children to partner sites. The camp charges a nominal fee to cover admission fees to partner sites and to cover operating expenses for both the coordinating entity and the nature center. In its first year, 100 3rd to 6th graders attended the SSNHA summer camp visiting partner sites in the heritage area.

Teacher Trainings and Continuing Education. In 2006, the coordinating entity launched its teacher training activities. The coordinating entity partners with other local organizations to provide teacher trainings throughout the year. These trainings are an opportunity for staff to introduce teachers to the heritage area and to offer assistance in using agriculture-based curriculums in the classroom. These trainings also provide opportunities for the coordinating entity staff to share information about other community resources such as educational grants offered by Iowa Farm Bureau. Teachers can apply these training courses toward continuing education credits at local colleges. This program has experienced growth over time and currently represents the majority of the workshops offered by the coordinating

entity. Therefore, while the number of general technical assistance workshops offered by the coordinating entity has decreased, the number of educational supports and teacher trainings offered has increased. During this period, SSNHA coordinating entity staff also dedicated increased efforts to providing individual consultations.

In the summer of 2008, the coordinating entity began partnering with Effigy Mounds National Monument in order to conduct a teacher workshop series. The series, managed by Effigy Mounds, consists of five day-long classes. The coordinating entity created the curriculum for one day of the workshop series. That day is dedicated to the heritage area and a related agricultural curriculum that can be used in the classroom. On this day, the SSNHA Education and Interpretation Manager facilitates the training of 50-70 teachers and teachers visit partner sites in the region.

Since 2006, the coordinating entity has directly conducted 22 teacher workshops/trainings with an average of 44 participants at each. Similar to other coordinating entity technical assistance activities, these teacher workshops/trainings are offered throughout the heritage area region to enhance accessibility for the community. Table 4-6 presents a list of the teacher training activities by year along with their location and attendance.

Since 2006, as part of their technical assistance work, the coordinating entity has directly conducted evaluations of two of these workshops, "How to Survive and Work with School Reform" and "Teaching with Historic Places." Both of these workshops were well received by participants, with almost all participants indicating the material was new for them and they felt they could apply the material presented to their work.

Since the other workshops were conducted in collaboration with partners, such as Effigy Mounds, the coordinating entity could not supply formal documentation of the workshop evaluations. Based on conversations with partners, the educational activities have been well-received. Several representatives from partner sites spoke of the importance of educating school-aged children about their agricultural heritage and that the coordinating entity is the only agriculture-based resource in the region coordinating this effort. They expect that this awareness building may result in school visits to their sites but they cannot directly attribute school visits to the coordinating entity. Representatives from partner sites also spoke of how their work with the coordinating entity has helped them add educational components to their sites in ways that they never anticipated. For example, one partner stated that coordinating entity staff provided them with the idea of having a local youth group plant and maintain a garden at their site so that the youth could learn more about Iowa's prairie landscape and its importance in relation to agriculture.

Table 4.6. Teacher Training Activities, Locations, and Attendance by Year

Year	Workshop	Location	Attendance
2006	How to Survive & Work with School Reform	Iowa Falls, IA	20
2007	Teachers Resource Fair	Cedar Falls, IA	105
	Excellence in Teaching	Cedar Valley, IA	60
	Teaching Academies	Calmar, IA	32
	Teaching Academies	Ankeny, IA	37
	Teaching with Historic Places	Cedar Falls, IA	51
2008	Teaching Academies	Denison, IA	30
	Teaching Academies	Independence, IA	50
	Excellence in Teaching	Cedar Valley, IA	50
	Teaching Academies	Mt. Pleasant, IA	50
	Effigy Mounds Teacher Workshop	Elkader, IA	58
	Teacher Resource Fair	Cedar Rapids, IA	50
	Teacher Resource Fair	Cedar Valley, IA	50
2009	Teaching Academies	Clarinda, IA	24
	Teaching Academies	Oskaloosa, IA	41
	Excellence in Teaching	Cedar Valley, IA	50
	Effigy Mounds Teacher Workshop	Decorah, IA	72
	Teaching Academies	Anamosa, IA	26
2010	Teaching Academies	Nashua, IA	24
	Excellence in Teaching	Cedar Valley, IA	25
	Teaching Academies	Fort Dodge, IA	16
	Effigy Mounds Teacher Workshop	Fredericksburg	46
Total			967

Impact of Educational Programs

According to the 2004 revised management plan, educating residents and visitors about the unique agricultural history of Northeast Iowa is one goal of the coordinating entity. The evaluation team considered the following measures in assessing the degree to which the coordinating entity is successfully educating the citizenry on this history:

- The engagement of heritage area communities in activities learning about the heritage area; and
- An increased knowledge of SSNHA and its story by the public

The data collected through this evaluation indicates that the coordinating entity is making progress toward its goal of educating the public, particularly in the last five years with the focus on education of heritage area teachers and children.

Camp Silos is engaging the public. We note that the approximately 36,000 visits to the Camp Silos website per month indicate that the coordinating entity has been able to engage the public in an agriculture curriculum sufficiently to promote use of the website with an average visit time of 3 to 5 minutes. The evaluation did not have data on the number of repeat users, page views or comparative data from other educational websites, but the Camp Silos has attracted a large number of visitors with an above average visit time for websites overall.

The coordinating entity has made recent progress in delivering activities aimed at accomplishing the educational goal of the management plan. Since 2009, the summer camps and spring break camps are engaging some children and providing opportunity for them to learn the story of Northeast Iowa's agricultural history. The teacher trainings are engaging the educational community and there is some evidence they are increasing knowledge. Since 2006, the coordinating entity has conducted 22 teacher trainings with a total of 967 attendees. For trainings directly offered by the coordinating entity where evaluation data are available, these data indicate that the trainings were useful for participants in gaining knowledge and expertise. Because the evaluation team could not interview teachers who attended the trainings or students who attended camp activities, the team cannot conclude that these activities have resulted in an actual increased understanding of the heritage area.

4.2.4. Awareness Building

According to the SSHNA Management Plan, one of the heritage area's key goals is to increase public awareness, interest, and visitation to the heritage area. The coordinating entity staff conducts several marketing and awareness building programs directed at this goal. These programs include signage and logo/material placement, publishing the visitor's guide to the heritage areas, the SSNHA website, a newsletter, and participation in community events. Each of these areas of activities is described below.

Awareness Building Activities

Signage and Logo/Material Placement. Through signage and logo or material placement, the coordinating entity is able to create a consistent and recognizable identity for the heritage area. There are highway signs placed along five major corridors announcing to residents and visitors that they are entering the SSNHA. Additionally, the coordinating entity has invested in interpretive signage in several communities. One example of community signage is the installation of 67 interpretative signs along the Cedar Valley Trails. In addition, each partner site that participates in the resource training receives a resource guide containing answers to common questions and SSNHA desk flags and pins to encourage visitors to ask about the heritage area. Fifteen of the partner sites have a National Park Passport station at their visitor's desk. This passport is a booklet where visitors can receive stamps indicating they have visited a National Park Service site. It is a popular NPS program that has been expanded to the heritage areas.

Visitor Guide. Since 2002, the coordinating entity has been distributing approximately 70,000 guides to more than 400 regional locations each year, as well as through phone/website requests. The number of guides distributed has increased steadily over time with 30,000 guides distributed in 2002; 50,000 annually distributed in 2003 and 2004; 85,000 annually distributed in 2005 and 2006; 80,000 annually

distributed in 2007 and 2008; and 70,000 guides distributed in 2009 and 2010. The guide helps increase awareness of the heritage area and begins to tell SSNHA's story. The guide provides a description of the partner sites and their agricultural significance. Details provided include each partner site's hours of operation, address, and telephone number. The guide provides a map with the location of partner sites to help orient and direct visitors. This map which contains all partner sites allows visitors to identify partner site locations near their current location.

SSNHA Website. The SSNHA website provides information on the heritage area, including interactive map/listing info on Partner Sites, Event Calendar of upcoming cultural/community events around the region and other programs like SSNHA annual photo contest. It also provides links to technical assistance and program information, including resources such as the *Interpretive Plan* or the *Wayside Signage Guide*. Since 2007, the first year for which complete use statistics are available, SSNHA has averaged 313,413 visits to its website per year.

Newsletter and Email Outreach. The coordinating entity distributes newsletters, via mail and email, to partners and residents in the heritage area community. SSNHA also sends informational emails and event emails biweekly and traveler e-blast monthly emails. The current number of recipients for the quarterly newsletters is 3,234. The coordinating entity sends 388 e-info emails and 755 event emails biweekly and 1,985 traveler e-blast monthly emails. Total e-communications active contacts are over 3,000. Interviews with representatives of the partner sites and other community stakeholders suggest that the coordinating entity's role in establishing these communication mechanisms has been useful to partners and others in the heritage area. Interviewees noted that the coordinating entity acts like an "information clearinghouse" keeping them well informed of activities in the region and providing a portal for them to post information about their own events.

Awareness Building. Other awareness building activities include the coordinating entity's presence at various community events, such as the Iowa State Fair and the annual RAGBRAI race (a seven day bicycle ride across the state), and a regional awareness program including print, radio and television advertising.

LIFE Tours. One visible awareness-building activity that the coordinating entity once offered has been discontinued. From 2001 to 2008, the SSNHA coordinating entity operated a group travel program called "Living an Iowa Farm Experience" (LIFE Tours). This group travel program coordinated with tour operators and industry organizations across the country and internationally to assist working farms and agribusinesses in Northeast Iowa in hosting motor coach tour groups. This program was a large financial investment for the coordinating entity, as indicated in the program expenditure analysis in Section 5.2.; but, according to SSNHA leadership, it was difficult to quantify how many visitors were brought into the heritage area because the tours were not directly operated by the coordinating entity. SSNHA coordinating entity staff and its Board of Trustees decided to discontinue this program and concentrate efforts in education and awareness-building activities. A few organizations do arrange tours of historic structures such as barns. Based on interviews with partner site representatives, the program was well thought of and is missed. When asked if there are additional things partners would like as a result of their partnership with SSNHA, several partner site representatives mentioned they would like for the coordinating entity to arrange group tours.

Impact of Awareness Building Activities

According to the SSHNA Management Plan, one of the heritage area's goals is to increase public awareness, interest, and visitation to the heritage area. The evaluation team considered the following measures in assessing the degree to which the coordinating entity is successfully increasing public awareness, interest, and visitation:

- The engagement of residents in visiting heritage area sites; and,
- An increased knowledge of SSNHA and its story by the public

Due to limitations in the evaluation methodology (i.e., inability to conduct a broad public survey) and the limited visitation data for the sites, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the activities are increasing awareness of the SSHNA, knowledge of its story, and visitation. The importance of the coordinating entity to fostering an increase in public awareness, interest, and visitation to the heritage area was noted in several interviews, including those with coordinating entity staff and Board of Trustees, partners, and during discussion with visitors to partner sites.

The use of the website suggests that it may be providing a mechanism for increasing awareness of the SSNHA. The coordinating entity also conducts a number of activities to engage the heritage area community. The distribution of the newsletter, blast emails, and email traffic along with partner site representatives reporting that SSNHA coordinating entity is an information clearinghouse; all suggest that the coordinating entity is successfully engaging heritage community members.

Other related activities conducted by the coordinating entity, such as the Visitor's Guide, signage and logo materials, and public appearances, have the potential for increasing broad awareness and knowledge, but specific evidence of this was not available. According to interview data, all of the partners spoke positively of the value of the SSNHA Visitor's Guide and indicated that being part of this guide was a motivating factor for entering into a partnership with SSNHA. Additionally, a small number of community respondents, five of the seventeen intercept interviews, indicated that they had seen or used a SSNHA Guide while visiting a partner site. The highway signage was also mentioned as a source of identification by both partners and the community visitors.

In measuring visitation to the heritage area, the evaluation was limited in the amount of visitation data collected by the coordinating entity. The coordinating entity was able to provide partner visitation data for the following years: 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009. In 2005, the coordinating entity reported 2,146,855 visitors at 49 partner sites; in 2007 there were 773,545 visitors at 33 partner sites; in 2008, there were 2,451,643 visitors at 48 partner sites; and, in 2009, there were 2,491,141 visitors at 37 partner sites. Unfortunately, the coordinating entity was not able to collect data from the full-range of partners or even the same sample of partners over time. Also, the smaller reported number of partners in 2007 is most likely because the coordinating entity did not receive visitation data from one of its largest partners, the Iowa State Fair. Without baseline data and consistent collection from partner sites, it is not possible to measure whether the heritage area has sparked visitation. The coordinating entity has established the beginning mechanisms for collection of visitation data and trends indicate that the heritage area is receiving approximately three million visitors per year.

In measuring public awareness and interest in the heritage area, the evaluation team collected information from 24 visitors to four partner sites. Either in conversation or through an information card, these visitors were asked if they had heard of SSNHA and if their visit to the partner site increased their understanding and appreciation of America's agricultural heritage, past and present. Of the 24 visitor participants, the nine who were not from Iowa or a neighboring state had little knowledge of SSNHA or that they were visiting a national heritage area. The remaining respondents, from Iowa or a neighboring state, had recognized the name of SSNHA from either signs, brochures, or by just living in the area generally. Many of these respondents were not familiar with what SSNHA is nor did they relate the heritage area to agriculture. But, all of the visitors, including those from outside the heritage area, were asked if their visit to the partner site increased their understanding or appreciation for aspects of agriculture history (e.g., Fertile Lands, Farmers and Families), and the majority of these visitors indicated that the visit increased their appreciation by "some" or "a lot." Some spoke about how the information learned from visiting the partner sites was an especially important resource for children. A few individuals noted that they had an understanding of farms and agriculture from growing up in the area but that their children did not have the same exposure or knowledge about their agricultural heritage.

As indicated by the interviews with partner site visitors, the coordinating entity has recognized the challenge in spreading information about the heritage area and its resources to residents and visitors to northeast Iowa. Because the partner sites are critical to communicating this message, the coordinating entity started conducting "Resource Trainings – Silos & Smokestacks 101" in 2006. These interactive trainings are directed toward partner site staff and volunteers and provide training about presenting a consistent message concerning heritage areas, SSNHA, partner sites, and events. Interviews with the coordinating entity staff revealed that one of their goals is for partners to understand they are the heritage area, not the coordinating entity.

The evaluation found that while coordinating entity has made sizable investments toward awareness building and communication activities, the challenge of increasing knowledge and awareness of the heritage area remains. This is a considerable challenge when taking into consideration the vast size of the heritage area and will likely take more time than has elapsed to accomplish.

4.3 NPS and SSNHA Coordinating Entity Relationship

NPS has been a partner and mentor in helping the coordinating entity deliver the technical assistance required to achieve its mission. Interviews revealed that SSNHA's partners and the communities in which these sites were located benefited by the SSNHA coordinating entity's close relationship with NPS. Multiple site representatives noted the direct role of NPS in their development of a heritage story. NPS provided technical assistance to the sites, education and interpretation support, and technical assistance. In addition, NPS provided education and interpretation support and technical assistance to the coordinating entity that benefited the partner sites. Interviews with coordinating entity staff indicated that the heritage area's relationship with NPS helps bring legitimacy and credibility to their work. Also, in the beginning, the NPS staff was more experienced in working with heritage areas and was better trained in interpretation, preservation, and visitor experience than the coordinating entity staff.

NPS direct support provided to the sites included providing technical assistance to communities wanting to explore development of heritage sites or to existing sites interested in gaining information about how to deliver a quality visitor experience. For example, Fredericksburg, IA, once the Dairy Capital of Iowa, experienced a drastic loss in jobs and population during the 1980's farm crisis. Today it is a town of less than 1,000 residents. Recognizing the need to preserve its agricultural heritage, community leaders approached the coordinating entity to explore strategies for developing their community as a heritage site. For over a year, both coordinating entity staff and NPS staff visited this community to attend planning sessions and provide guidance. The coordinating entity and NPS worked with Fredericksburg on its development activities. As a result of this work, today, Fredericksburg, IA has preserved a nature trail with interpretive signs showcasing the area's landscape, barns, and pastures. Representatives from the Fredericksburg partner sites spoke favorably of the assistance received from coordinating entity staff and from the representative from the NPS Midwest Region

NPS provides both monetary assistance and non-monetary technical assistance directly to the coordinating entity. Discussions between Silos & Smokestacks and NPS staff sparked the idea of creating a national heritage area and NPS supported the first special resource study. Since the NHA designation, NPS has provided technical assistance to the coordinating entity in management planning and the preparation of best practice materials such as the *Wayside Companion Guide*. Additional educational and interpretative support came from NPS through workshops provided by NPS staff and through the use of NPS sites for training. For example, an NPS representative from the Grand Canyon National Park will be delivering a workshop in the fall of 2010 on using NPS's PAIR Model for successful interpretation. NPS staff has also worked with the coordinating entity staff in developing guidelines for programs, such as the SSNHA's grants program, and regional staff have served as members of the Partnership Panel.

Section 5:
Public/Private Investments in the SSNHA Coordinating Entity and Their Impact

The legislation that created SSNHA mandated the following concerning federal appropriations to SSNHA:

(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 Partnership under this title.

(b) 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 the coordinating entity activities, assess if the coordinating entity meets legislative requirements with regard to additional investments required, and summarize the ways in which the coordinating entity makes use of heritage area investments. While previous sections reported SSNHA coordinating entity activities from 2000 to 2010, this section relies upon SSNHA audited financial data which was available for the years of 2000-2009. Also, the audited grant dollars paid through the coordinating entity's grant making program do not match the grants awarded dollars noted in Section 4 since some of the grants dollars paid were less than the initial award amount due to reasons such as grantees not providing proposed matching dollars or grants being paid over the course of multiple years.

5.1 Investments in SSNHA Coordinating Entity's Activities

The financial investments that support the coordinating entity's activities can be divided into the three following categories:

- Federal Assistance Funding — Funding provided to the coordinating entity through NPS or other federal agencies on an annual basis since 2000.

- SSNHA Non-Federal Funding — All non federal funding, grants, contributions, and donations, made directly toward actions that meet the requirements of the area's legislation and management plan are counted towards match requirements. These funds include monies from the State of Iowa, local governmental entities, individual contributions, foundation and non-profit grants, corporate sponsorship, in-kind contributions such as donated office furniture, and miscellaneous income such as rental income from subleased office space or income from workshop or conference sponsorships.

- Matching Partner Contributions —The value of contributions and donated goods, services and supplies that meets the criteria for OMB Circular A-110 Section 23 as investment by the local

community that helps the SSNHA meet the requirements of the area's legislation and management plan.

The coordinating entity's audited financial statements indicate that between 2000 and 2009, a total of $7,882,259 in financial resources, excluding matching contributions, was directed toward SSNHA-related activities. Table 5.1 presents more detail on the direct financial support, federal assistance funding and non-federal funding, for the coordinating entity. The non-federal funding displayed in Table 5.1 is only a portion of the match funds that coordinating is required to meet to receive federal NPS appropriations.

Table 5.1 Direct Financial Investments in SSNHA Coordinating Entity, Total and by Year

Year	Federal - NPS	Other Federal	Public Grants	State/ Local	Private - Individual	Foundation & Non-Profit	Corporate Sponsors	In-Kind	Misc	Total
2000	$248,000	$170,921	$11,175	$13,467	-	$257,523	-	-	$10,842	$711,928
2001	$495,009	$22,161	$18,384	$250,050	-	$151,532	-	-		$937,136
2002	$915,352	$6,991	$35,785	$1,211	-	$100,000	-	-	$19,298	$1,078,637
2003	$643,534	$1,176	-	-	$5,020	$26,490	-	-	$7,147	$683,367
2004	$584,251	-	$2,324	-	$1,700	$29,540	-	-	$17,424	$635,240
2005	$693,308	-	$5,360	-	$29,690	$14,000	-	-	$37,374	$779,733
2006	$770,633	-	$500	-	$8,525	$700	$4,949	-	$1,260	$786,567
2007	$752,360	-	$2,537	-	$350	$14,067	$250	-	$1,095	$770,659
2008	$748,430	-	$8,120	-	$1,200	-	$6,274	-	$5,138	$769,162
2009	$706,123	-	$5,099	-	$1,360	$1,500	$2,100	$13,500	$149	$729,831
TOTAL	$6,557,000	$201,249	$89,283	$264,728	$47,845	$595,352	$13,573	$13,500	$99,729	$7,882,259

By Congressional instruction, the coordinating entity must match its federal assistance equally with non-federal dollars. To do this, the expectation is that SSNHA will leverage its federal assistance funds to secure funding from local donors in support of its mission. As noted in Table 5.1, non-federal investments come from many sources to achieve the requirements of the area's legislation and management plan. Partner match documentation is identified as part of the grant application process. All match documentation is reviewed by NPS to ensure that OMB regulations regarding match requirements are met.

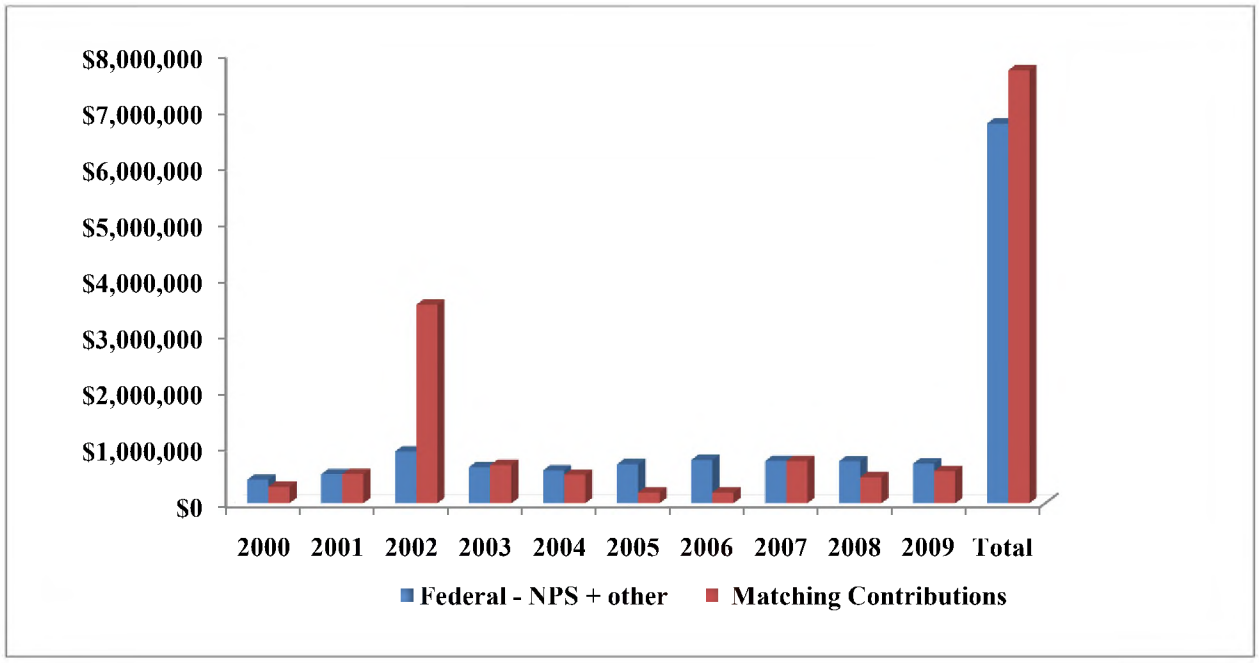
Table 5.2 presents the federal funds, the SSNHA non-federal funds, and matching partner contributions by year. In 2000, SSNHA did not have matching partner contributions since the grants program did not begin until in 2001. In 2002 and 2007, the size of the matching partner contributions was higher than other years because SSNHA gave grants to two large programs, Kirkwood Community College Iowa Equestrian Center for $250,000 and Heartland Acres Agribition Center for $10,000. SSNHA was able to count these projects' other investments as part of the SSNHA match.

Table 5.2 Overview of Federal funds and Matching Contributions to SSNHA Partners by Year

Year	Federal - NPS + other	Non-Federal Funds	Matching Partner Contributions
2000	$418,921	$293,007	-
2001	$517,170	$419,966	$100,000
2002	$922,343	$156,294	$3,376,163
2003	$644,710	$38,657	$642,113
2004	$584,251	$50,989	$458,073
2005	$693,308	$86,425	$105,793
2006	$770,633	$15,934	$176,109
2007	$752,360	$18,299	$731,204
2008	$748,430	$20,732	$443,311
2009	$706,123	$23,708	$548,525
TOTAL	$6,758,249	$1,124,010	$6,581,291

Together, the SSNHA non-federal funds and matching partner contributions count towards meeting the 50% match requirement. As can be seen in the legislation quoted above, the detailed requirements for the match are not spelled out in the legislation. SSNHA is required to meet the 50% match requirement in total by 2012, not on a yearly basis. As of 2009, SSNHA had received $6,758,249 worth of federal funding and has $7,705,301 in allowable matching dollars including both non-federal funds and external matching contributions.

Graph 5-1 SSNHA Match Results by Year



5.2 Use of Financial Resources

The coordinating entity uses its direct financial resources to support its programmatic initiatives and operational activities. Of the funds available to SSNHA since 2000, 86%, $6.8 million were federal funds and 24%, $1.1 million, were non-federal funds. The majority of funding to the coordinating entity each year (98%), including the federal funding, has been unrestricted. Since 2002, the coordinating entity has received $145,760 worth of restricted funds from individual and corporate donors for specific signage or educational projects.

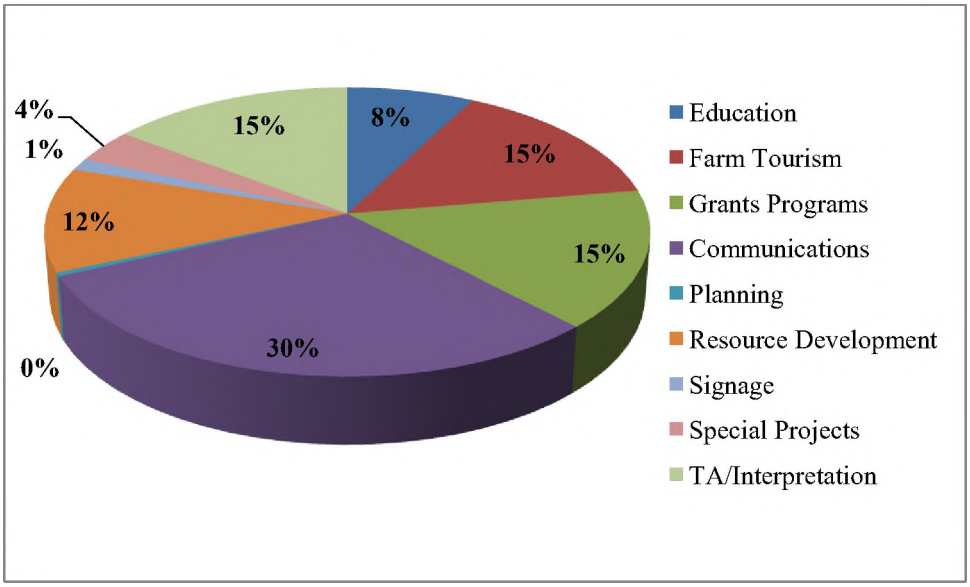
The coordinating entity expenditures since 2000 total $7.7 million. This spending is divided between operational expenses and the program activity expenses as displayed in Table 5.3. Operational expenses include staff salaries, rent, and other administrative expenses. Programmatic expenses are those resources dedicated to SSNHA-related activities, such as technical assistance or grant funding. After 2000, operational expenses increased, in part, because more staff was hired. Staff size increased from 2.5 FTE staff prior to NPS funding to 6.5 FTE staff, including 2-3 interns, currently. The decrease in operational expenses after 2005 reflects, in part, a change in the accounting practices; at this time, the coordinating entity began allocating program staff time to program expenses rather than including it under operational expenses. Since 2000, the coordinating entity has expended $5,150,914 (from NPS funds and non-federal funds) including both direct expenditures and personnel costs on program activities. As noted earlier, this amount spent on program activities is a slight underestimate of the total programmatic spending because, prior to 2005, the coordinating entity did not identify staff time to project activities but to operational expenses instead.

Table 5.3 Operational Spending by Year

Year	Operational Expenses	Program Expenses	Total
2000	$222,226.21	$529,798.27	$752,024.48
2001	$272,335.00	$653,207.02	$925,542.02
2002	$338,264.00	$572,601.00	$910,865.00
2003	$306,281.00	$399,659.00	$705,940.00
2004	$346,959.42	$257,878.00	$604,837.42
2005	$199,328.00	$548,281.96	$747,610.00
2006	$199,497.01	$637,512.05	$837,009.06
2007	$239,310.04	$550,410.88	$789,720.92
2008	$252,018.62	$509,594.75	$761,613.37
2009	$222,693.00	$491,971.09	$714,664.09
Total	$2,598,912.30	$5,150,914.02	$7,749,826.36

Prior to 2005, program activity funding was concentrated in the grants program, particularly in 2002 and 2003 when the grant-making activities accounted for more than half of program expenditures. Also, other early major program expenditures include a $364,867 investment in the Sycamore Street Market in 2000 and $413,725 spent on technical assistance and interpretive plan activities in 2001.To illustrate the allocation of program dollars including the cost of staff time, Graph 5.2 presents the coordinating entity's total program expenditures for only 2005 to 2009 when staff compensation and benefits were allocated to program activities.

Graph 5-2 SSNHA Coordinating Entity Direct Expenditures by Program Type, Total 2005-2009



The largest program expenditures over the last four years are in the areas of communication, the grants program, farm tourism, and technical assistance. The coordinating entity's communication activities, which encompass the awareness building activities discussed in Section 4, are almost twice the size of the other large program expenses. Also, as noted in Section 4.3, the farm tourism activities, LIFE tours, for SSNHA were ended in 2008-2009 because it was considered difficult to quantify how many visitors were brought into the heritage area given that the tours were not directly operated by the coordinating entity. The coordinating entity staff and its Board of Trustees decided to discontinue this program and concentrate efforts in education and awareness-building activities. Table 5.4 presents a detailed breakdown of SSNHA program expenditures over the last five years.

Table 5.4 SSNHA Program Expenditures by Year, 2005-2009

Programs	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Education	$17,970	$45,280	$48,211	$40,771	$57,548	$209,781
Farm Tourism	$106,436	$102,756	$85,573	$68,250	$39,109	$402,124
Grants Program	$68,286	$88,673	$91,336	$91,755	$84,067	$424,117
Communication	$174,249	$181,531	$156,167	$162,887	$154,472	$829,305
Planning	$3,006	$479	$1,785	$3,667	$2,463	$11,400
Resource Development	$42,838	$79,430	$70,928	$64,457	$62,140	$319,793
Signage	$27,061	$1,363	$2,331	$3,424	$2,115	$36,294
Special Projects	$12,649	$45,190	$24,124	$12,568	$7,729	$102,260
TA/Interpretation	$95,786	$92,810	$69,956	$61,815	$82,329	$402,696
Total	$548,281	$637,512	$550,411	$509,594	$491,972	$2,737,770

Program funding for education has increased since 2005, when the coordinating entity hired staff dedicated to this activity. Farm tourism spending, as would be expected since the coordinating entity discontinued the program, has declined over the years. Grants spending increased slightly over time while communications spending slightly declined over time. Resource development activities mostly involve the Executive Director and include strategizing for the coordinating entity's sustainability and special projects such as creating a foundation. Spending on signage projects decreased after 2005. This reflects the end of the major highway signage projects. The coordinating entity continues to spend money to maintain these highway signs and invest in projects in other communities. Spending for technical assistance has remained relatively stable as a core coordinating entity programmatic activity; with slight decreases in spending in 2007 and 2008.

5.3 Impact of Investments

The evaluation assessed the investments made in the coordinating entity to promote the work of the heritage area and the impacts of these investments in helping accomplish the purpose of the legislation. Based on our analysis of the available information, the coordinating entity has successfully met the 50% federal funding match requirements. .The majority of these match funds, 85%, are funds provided to grantee partners and do not directly flow through the coordinating entity. The majority of the funds that

are directed to the coordinating entity's programmatic activities are NPS funds. Over time, the amount of non-federal funding for the coordinating entity has decreased; reasons for which are further examined in Section 6.3. In examining the use of investments, the coordinating entity has exercised fiscal responsibility in expending 66% of the total funds for programmatic activities that are aligned with the management plan as presented in Section 4.[5]

The following section examines the sustainability of SSNHA coordinating entity. It also discusses reasons why non-federal funding has decreased over time and its potential impact on the financial sustainability of SSNHA.

[5] Total programming funds from Table 5.3 were divided by total funds reported in Table 5.3 to determine that 66% of funds were spent on programming.

Section 6:
SSNHA Sustainability

This section explores the sustainability of SSNHA and the work of the coordinating entity. Assessment of the sustainability of SSNHA is mandated by P. L. 110-229, specifying that there be a "…review [of] 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."

NPS, with the assistance of the stakeholders from many National Heritage Areas, defined sustainability for an NHA as "…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's management capacity, including governance, adaptive management (such as strategic planning), staffing, and operations;
- 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;
- Financial planning and preparedness including the ongoing ability to leverage resources in support of the local network of partners;
- 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.

This section of the report assesses the degree to which SSNHA exhibits the components required for maintaining a successful and sustainable coordinating entity. To accomplish this assessment, the evaluation examined the SSNHA management, leadership, and partnership structures and the role of NPS in the functioning of the heritage area. The evaluation team also examined the SSNHA coordinating entity's financial resources to assess the extent to which NPS funding has helped the heritage area complete its operational and programmatic mission and access other funding to support its operational and programmatic activities.

6.1.1 SSNHA Coordinating Entity's Organizational Capacity

To assess the coordinating entity's management structure, we began by examining and building on the 2005 report from the University of Northern Iowa. As noted earlier, in 2005, the coordinating entity used a portion of its funding and commissioned the University of Northern Iowa's Sustainable Tourism and Environment Program (STEP) to conduct an organizational assessment. This assessment resulted in the report "A Review and Analysis of the Organizational Structure and Management Positions of the Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA)." This assessment included a review of existing job descriptions, organizational structure, and the heritage area's strategic plan. The assessment examined the

roles of the Board of Trustees, Partnership Panel, and subcommittees to determine the extent to which they met organizational requirements. The assessment also compared coordinating entity's organizational structure in comparison to other selected National Heritage Areas including South Carolina, Lackawanna Valley and Essex National Heritage Areas.

The 2005 organizational assessment found significant gaps in the staffing and organizational structure of the coordinating entity and provided recommendations concerning staff services, staff composition, and organizational designs. The report concluded that when compared to other NHA coordinating entities, the coordinating entity was understaffed given its geographic and partnership program size. The report also indicated that the position of the Program and Marketing Director was overloaded. The Program and Marketing Director was found to be responsible for the SSNHA-related programs, marketing and communications, technical assistance, and administrative functions. The report recommended that the coordinating entity hire three additional staff members — an educational coordinator, grants and resource development specialist, and marketing and public relations coordinator.

The 2005 organizational assessment was instrumental in shaping the management structure that currently exists at the coordinating entity. A Marketing and Communications Manager was hired and the Program and Marketing Director was relieved of responsibilities for carrying out marketing tasks. The latter's position title was changed to Program and Partnership Director with the primary responsibility to focus on the delivery of technical assistance and grants programs to heritage area partners. After the organizational assessment, the coordinating entity also hired an education and interpretation manager and three program assistants. The evaluation team conducted interviews with coordinating entity management staff which indicated that staff roles in these areas are clear as is the relationship between the staff positions and the mission of the heritage area. Moreover, the interviews revealed that beyond their circumscribed responsibilities, staff members find collaboration to be the best way to accomplish the goals and objectives of the heritage area.

The evaluation team also conducted interviews with Board of Trustees members, Partnership Panel members, and partner site representatives regarding their thoughts on the ability of coordinating entity staff to help preserve and interpret the story of American agriculture. The overall consensus was that the coordinating entity is accessible and responsive to heritage area needs. All of the interviewees cited that they were impressed by the coordinating entity staff's commitment to moving the mission and vision of the heritage area forward. The majority of interviews with representatives of the partner sites and other community stakeholders indicated that the coordinating entity is viewed as both a leader and convener in the heritage area community. Several interviewees noted the value of having an executive director with strong ties to the agricultural industry and Iowa state political leaders. Also, several respondents spoke of the coordinating entity's strong involvement within the heritage area community by serving on the boards or advisory committees for other community organizations. A few interviewees noted they would like to see the coordinating entity take on a larger advocacy role in helping bring more local funding and support for heritage area efforts.

A finding from interviews with representatives of partner sites is the expressed concern that the Program and Partnership Director may be over extended. While some of those interviewed had experience working with other coordinating entity staff, this experience was limited compared to the extent of their

work with the Program and Partnership Director, who is the primary contact between the coordinating entity and partners. Others had only worked with the Program and Partnership Director. Interviews with SSNHA leadership suggest that the coordinating entity has made recent efforts to address this challenge. Some of the Program and Partnership Director's responsibilities have been shifted to other staff. For instance, the Education and Interpretation Manager has taken a lead role in visiting Emerging Sites and providing technical assistance.

Overall, the evaluation found that over time the coordinating entity incorporated adaptive management techniques in refining their *Partnership Management Plan of 2004* delivering services to meet the evolving needs of heritage area partners, and having an organizational staffing structure in place to meet the coordinating entity's mission and goals. The organization will also benefit from future data collection and evaluation efforts, which are currently being planned by the coordinating entity, to systematically review the effectiveness of their offerings.

6.1.2 SSNHA Leadership, Governance and Oversight

SSNHA is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of fourteen members. These members are regional community leaders, including private sector professionals, farmers, farm bureau representatives, and representatives of regional and state governments. The Board of Trustees is charged with fiduciary oversight and control of the management and administration of the coordinating entity. For this evaluation, five board members, including the Board Chair, were interviewed to gain an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and their roles in the furthering the SSNHA's sustainability.

According to SSNHA Board of Trustee members, their primary responsibility is to advance the mission for the heritage area. This responsibility is largely accomplished by representing the organization externally, serving on board committees, and guiding the staff on strategic and technical matters. The various committees that Board of Trustee members serve on are the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Audit Committee and Board Development Committee.

The evaluation found that the Board of Trustees members is sufficiently staffed and engaged to maintain the governance and accountability of the coordinating entity. The diverse membership of the Board of Trustees helps ensure that the work of the coordinating entity is meeting the multiple needs of the heritage area. The diverse membership also helps support SSNHA coordinating entity in representing the heritage area to the public. The evaluation found that there is one area where the Board of Trustees members are not contributing. Fundraising is not considered a role or function of the Board of Trustees even though it typically is a primary area of responsibility for boards on nonprofit organizations (e.g., Martinelli 2010). While many of the Board of Trustees members personally contribute and encourage their organizations to make corporate contributions, in their view, fundraising has not been designated as primary responsibility.

6.2 SSNHA Partnerships

SSNHA's regional partners are of critical importance for the preservation and interpretation of the story of American agriculture in the heritage area's 37-county region. When asked about the role of the partners in the sustainability of the heritage area, SSNHA staff commented that partners are essential for keeping the story of American agriculture alive. The role of the coordinating entity is to work directly with partner sites to provide the support and assistance they require to produce a quality interpretation of their stories and advance the mission of SSNHA. Representatives of partner sites who were interviewed for this evaluation echoed this sentiment. When asked about heritage area sustainability, interviews with SSNHA management and partner site representatives indicate that partner sites will still continue to operate even if the coordinating entity does not sustain into the future. According to many partners, the quality of the partner site's interpretation of the agricultural heritage would be compromised without support from the the coordinating entity.

In addition to representing America's agricultural story, representatives of partner sites described other contributions they make towards SSNHA sustainability by participating in leadership activities for SSNHA. They noted their involvement with the coordinating entity's strategic planning sessions or their membership on the Partnership Panel. These partner site representatives also described meeting with potential donors or state officials to advocate for SSNHA. They also reported that they allowed their facilities to be used free of charge for SSNHA workshops or meetings and a few partner site representatives indicated that they led SSNHA trainings free of charge.

In an effort to better support their partners, the coordinating entity, Partnership Panel members, and Board of Trustee members embarked on a listening tour to 4 heritage area communities in 2008 to receive feedback. Given the rapid growth in the number of partners (from 9 designated partners in 2001, to 58 partners in 2002, 62 partners in 2003, 82 in 2004, 88 in 2005, 93 partners in 2006, 104 partners in 2007, and 108 partners in 2010), SSNHA was interested in how they were meeting the needs of their partnership network. The consensus of the opinions gathered during this outreach effort was that the quality of the designated partner sites and the breadth of the story being told were more important than the number of sites. There were particular concerns that some partner sites were not adequately telling the heritage story and support should be given to improve these sites rather than continue to add new ones. The coordinating entity has since altered its partnership designation process, enhanced their delivery of targeted technical assistance, and instituted a new process to evaluate existing partner sites and the quality of their interpretation of America's agricultural story. These new processes that focus on quality rather than quantity, by dedicated defined resources to existing partners rather than developing new ones, demonstrate responsible stewardship of limited resources to support the long-term quality of the preservation and interpretation's of the heritage area's story.

6.3 Financial Sustainability and the Importance of NPS Funds

In order for SSNHA to be financially sustainable it must have sufficient funds to cover its operating and programmatic expenses. Table 6-1 presents SSNHA's federal funds received; non-federal funds received; and total expenses by year. This table demonstrates the importance of federal funding to the operation of the SSNHA; moreover, it shows that the requirement for this federal assistance has increased over time.

As federal funds have become expected, funds from non-federal sources have significantly decreased. NPS funds do not appear to have spurred additional investment in SSNHA. While partner site representatives mentioned that SSNHA funding served as a catalyst in helping them develop pilot projects and leverage other grant funding, the NPS funds do not appear to have attracted additional funds from state or local governments or private entities for SSNHA. In fact, interviews with state representatives suggested that SSNHA funds are perceived as a way of extending the state's reach in the provision of technical assistance to northeast Iowa communities. Having the SSNHA funding and activities in place allows the state to concentrate their support in non-heritage area communities. It does not encourage the state to supplement the NPS funds received. SSNHA leadership reasons that private sources of funding also see the federal funding as a way to extend their reach. They suggest that there is a widespread conviction among corporate and private funders that SSNHA no longer needs the support and they are free to move to other projects or that they are free to "time out" of their funding of SSNHA projects in order to share the wealth.

An additional consideration when examining the issue of non-federal funding to SSNHA is the well-recognized negative impact of the global economic crisis on nonprofit fundraising since 2007. The economic downturn substantially decreased charitable giving and reduced the number and size of foundation grants to nonprofits.

Also, as noted in section 5.1, there are two types of funds that support SSNHA's mission but are not available for general operating or programmatic expenses. The first of these types of funds is grants to partner sites. These funds go to partner sites for their programmatic and preservation work and do not flow through coordinating entity. They appear on the SSNHA financial documentation because they serve as part of the SSNHA match to federal dollars but they are not available for use in the SSNHA operating or programmatic budget. Another funding source that is not available for general support is restricted funds, though these make up only a small portion of the funds received by SSNHA. Since 2002, SSNHA has received only $145,760 in restricted funds, or about 2% of the total SSNHA funding, for specific signage or educational projects. Table 6-1 presents federal funds received; non-federal funds received; and, total expenses by year.

Table 6.1. Federal Funds Received, Non-federal Funds Received, Total Revenue and Total Expenses by Year

Year	Federal Revenue	Non-Federal Revenue	Total Revenue	Expenses
2000	$418,921	$294,593	$713,514	$752,024
2001	$517,170	$433,858	$951,028	$925,542
2002	$922,343	$156,294	$1,078,637	$910,865
2003	$644,710	$38,657	$683,367	$705,940
2004	$584,251	$50,989	$635,240	$604,837
2005	$693,308	$86,425	$779,733	$747,610
2006	$770,633	$52,989	$823,622	$837,009
2007	$752,360	$45,653	$798,013	$789,721
2008	$748,430	$41,077	$789,507	$761,613
2009	$706,123	$23,298	$729,421	$714,664
Total	$6,758,249	$1,223,833	$7,982,082	$7,749,825

As indicated in Table 6-1, the coordinating entity's total revenue closely tracks the organization's total expenses per year. In addition, the SSNHA 2009 Statement of Net Assets from the audited financial statements shows that the heritage area's only material asset at the end of 2009 beyond federal support and the small amount in grants receivable ($167,000 dollars) is a small amount of cash ($197,528). This fact further supports the importance of federal funding for the sustainability of the heritage area's activities.

6.4 Sustainability Summary

The SSNHA coordinating entity is staffed and has the governance in place to work with heritage area communities to develop, interpret, and preserve the region's agricultural heritage by providing grants, technical assistance, educational assistance, and awareness-building activities over the long-term. Future plans for activities include a possible collaboration with Cedar Valley Tech Works in opening a reception center in Waterloo, IA that would welcome corporate visitors to the heritage area and encourage them to visit other SSNHA sites. This activity would likely provide additional visibility for SSNHA and its partner sites, which could aid heritage area sustainability by increasing the role of the heritage area serving as a hub for on-going capacity building; communication; and collaboration among local entities as well as increasing the engagement of diverse audiences in the heritage area activities.

The coordinating entity does face challenges to its financial sustainability. NPS funds, set to expire in 2012, are essential for the operation of the coordinating entity and for their support to heritage area partners. Based on a review of the SSNHA financial records, it is apparent that SSNHA's need for this

federal assistance has grown over time. Once federal funds became consistent, funds from non-federal sources significantly decreased. At this time only 3% of the operating expenses are covered by non-federal funds.

The Board of Trustees has been engaged recently in conversations with the SSNHA Executive Director regarding sustainability without continued federal funding. Members of the Executive Committee and the Leadership Advisors group have been working closely with the Executive Director to develop plans for long-term financial sustainability. One approach under consideration is the creation of a SSNHA Foundation. This foundation would be in the form of a charitable trust dedicated to supporting the delivery of the coordinating entity's programmatic activities. SSNHA leadership currently is in discussion with private individuals who may consider donating their estates to this foundation. Another avenue of support for the heritage area that is being pursued is the submission of a joint application between SSNHA and Future Farmers of America for a U.S. Commemorative Coin. If the application is accepted, the proceeds for the coordinating entity could be up to $2 million. The timing for these prospects is in the future and the likelihood of their occurrence is not certain.

Section 7:
Conclusions

In conclusion, this evaluation has determined that over the last ten years, the SSNHA coordinating entity has attended to each of its legislated purposes and goals outlined in the management plan through the federal resources provided. It has used much of its funding to provide technical assistance and grant support to heritage area communities in order to build their capacity to support the interpretation of America's agricultural story; to develop and preserve heritage resources; to operate as a strong partner in the heritage area; and, to provide a quality and consistent visitor experience. The heritage area has built a large regional network of 108 formally designated partners. During the evaluation, the coordinating entity was referred to frequently as the catalyst that started the process of community awareness and revitalization. In addition, several evaluation interviewees noted that the coordinating entity's programs encouraged communities to think about long-range plans and goals for their sites.

The heritage area currently has approximately three million visitors per year, the SSNHA website receives about 300,000 visits per year and the Visitor's Guide is widely distributed, with 70,000 guides at 400 locations. Camp Silos, the educational website for teachers and students, has approximately 36,000 visits per month, resulting in 480,000 visits per year.

Since 2002, the coordinating entity has offered forty-seven trainings for 1,946 residents, awarded 327 grants totaling $1,548,211, and conducted 22 teacher trainings with a total of 967 attendees. In addition, the coordinating entity has disseminated numerous best practice resources and engaged in numerous individual consultations with partner sites and potential partner sites.

The evaluation concludes that the coordinating entity has been fiscally responsible in expending funds for programmatic activities that address goals and objectives specified in the authorizing legislation and management plan. The largest program expenditures have occurred in the areas of awareness building activities, the grants program, technical assistance activities, and educational programs. The evaluation also found that the coordinating entity is staffed and has the governance in place to work with heritage area communities to develop, interpret, and preserve the region's agricultural heritage. Over time the coordinating entity has incorporated adaptive management techniques in refining their management plan and organizational structure and in delivering services to meet the evolving needs of heritage area partners.

Appendix A.

Augusta Canal and Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area Evaluation Methodology July 2010

Background and Purpose

In May 2008, Congress passed legislation[6] which requires the Secretary of the Interior to evaluate the accomplishments of nine National Heritage Areas (NHAs) no later than three 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. CPM, in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), has contracted with Westat to evaluate the next two NHA sites: Augusta Canals in Augusta, GA and Silos & Smokestacks in Waterloo, IA. Each evaluation is 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, including our core evaluation approach; evaluation design; associated data collection methods, sources, and measures; and analysis and reporting plans. Our methods build upon the methodologies and instruments used in previous NHA evaluations conducted by the Conservation Study Institute and with the Essex Evaluation.

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.

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

[6] From P.L. 110-229, Section 462. EVALUATION AND REPORT, signed May 8, 2008

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 CPM, the NPS Working Group, the NPS Expert Panel, the NPS Comptroller, the NPS liaison with each heritage area, and NHA leadership and community partners. Working products will be developed in close coordination with CPM, the NPS Working Group 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. A detailed timetable of the expected deliverables and the process for gathering a range of stakeholder perspectives is provided in Appendix A.

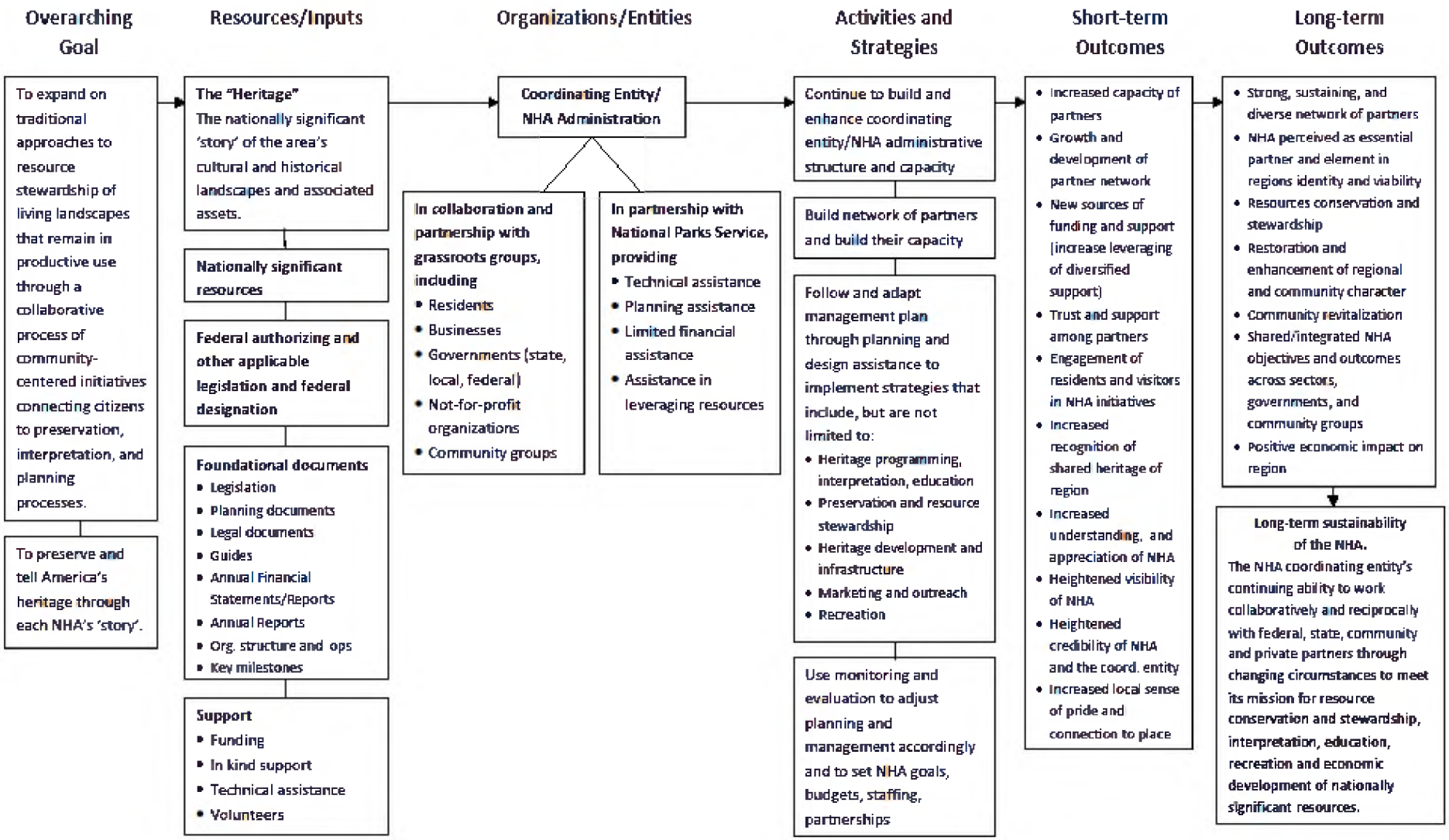
Core Evaluation Design and Measures

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 B), and a comprehensive case study protocol. The basic structure of the NHA Logic Model is a visual representation of the:

- overarching goals 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.

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.

Figure A-1. NHA Logic Model



Appendix B presents the NHA Domain Matrix. Guided by an understanding of the NHA as depicted in the NHA Logic Model, this 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. Westat will also conduct a literature review of research methodology to ensure the reliability and validity of indicator selection and subsequent operationalization. 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 Q.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 either 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 Q.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 Q.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 (Appendix C) 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 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 discontinued; specifically, which activities might have a prospect of continuing without federal funding, which would likely end without federal funding, and therefore, which goals and objectives might not be reached.

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; 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:

Foundational Document 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 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. In reviewing these documents we will 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 Essex evaluation, 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 ten 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.

Topic-centered interviews with Executive Directors and staff of the NHA coordinating entity

During a two day 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 interview up to 9 staff in each NHA.

Topic-centered interviews with members of the NHA partner network

Members of the NHA partner network 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. 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 website 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 a variety of strategies in the NHA, including opportunities for written comments, semi-structured individual interviews, and focus groups. These different data collection approaches will be used with a range of community stakeholders including residents, tourists and local representatives and will be designed to provide opportunities for dialogue about the NHA. Through these different approaches, we will collect data to provide a sense of whether the NHA is meeting some of its intended outcomes, such as engaging residents and enhancing their understanding of the NHA. The different data collection approaches will provide opportunities for both written and oral dialogue. Westat will work with the NHA coordinating entity and local partners in arranging these strategies.

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 Report

The analysis and synthesis of each NHA's data will be guided by the overall protocol and the Findings Document Outline (Appendix D). 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 report will be guided by a modification of the outline finalized by the NHA Evaluation Working Group. Westat will first share a draft of the report with the Executive Director of the NHA coordinating entity for a review of technical accuracy. The Director will have the opportunity to share the report 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, CPM and Westat can be held to discuss the comments and to arrive at a resolution.

Also throughout this review process, we will ensure CPM and NPS are informed of each NHA's comments and feedback. Once the NHA's feedback is reviewed and incorporated, Westat will submit the draft reports to CPM and the NPS Working Group for review. Once this review is completed, Westat will then submit the draft reports to the NPS Peer Committee and NPS Expert Panel. Westat expects to have the Final Findings Document for each evaluation complete by December 2010.

Tailoring the Evaluation Design for NHA Evaluation Sites

The core evaluation design will be tailored to Augusta Canals and Silos & Smokestacks, the two sites to be evaluated by Westat. A preliminary "meet and greet" visit to both 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.

During the initial site visit, a customized logic model for each NHA will be developed; detailing the NHA's goals, resources, partnerships, activities and intended outcomes. This process will involve a group meeting with NHA management staff and 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 1 day of travel and meeting time each.

Once the tailored logic models are finalized for each NHA evaluation site, Westat will then adapt the NHA Domain Matrix and 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.

Data collection for each NHA evaluation will occur during a second visit to each NHA site, and is expected to last 2-3 days depending on the scope of the site. We will use hardcopy and email memos to keep the NHA Executive Directors informed of our evaluation activities both pre- and post- site visits. Westat will have a system in place to ensure that the information communicated to each NHA site is received.

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 sought in a variety of ways will substitute for the survey and the input received 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.

Moreover, this evaluation methodology is restricted in the amount of information Westat can capture on what would be the probable effects of sunsetting an NHA. For example, there is interest in understanding what types of activities and mechanisms existed prior to the NHA and thus might have some ability to survive beyond federal funding. It is unclear, however, if reliable and complete sources of historical information on the NHA area before federal funding exist or if they are feasibly accessible within the time and resource constraints of the current evaluation. Westat will rely upon documents and interviews with key NHA staff to gather historical input and attempt to identify through this data collection and the analysis of funding information the extent to which activities have possibility of sustainability at some level. However, only the most obvious sources of sustainability will likely be able to be identified.

Appendices

Appendix A1: Timetable of deliverables
Appendix A2: NHA Domain and Source Crosswalk
Appendix A3: NPS Working Group Definition of Sustainability
Appendix A4: Findings Document Outline

A1. Timetable of Deliverables

Deliverable	Due Date
Task 1 - Refine Project Methodology	
Comments from NPS Working Group on Logic Model and Domain Matrix	6/16/2010
Draft Evaluation Methodology and Findings Report Outline to CPM	6/18/2010
Draft Evaluation Methodology and Findings Report Outline to NPS	6/22/2010
Review Evaluation Methodology and Findings Report Outline on NPS Working Group Call	6/24/2010
Comments from NPS Working Group on Evaluation Methodology and Findings Report Outline	6/29/2010
Draft Evaluation Methodology to Peer Review and Panel of Experts	7/1/2010
Comments from Panel of Experts and Peer Review	7/6/2010
Submission of Final Evaluation Methodology to Comptroller	7/8/2010
Comptroller Approval	7/14/2010
Task 2 - Site Prep, Logic model and Instrument Development	
Draft Data Collection Protocols to CPM and NPS	7/23/2010
Silos & Smokestacks Site Visit	
Introductory Teleconference with Silos & Smokestacks	7/15/2010
Silos & Smokestacks Meet and Greet Visit	7/19/2010 - 7/21/2010
Draft Logic Model to Silos & Smokestacks	7/26/2010
Comments on Logic Model from Silos & Smokestacks	7/30/2010
Draft Silos & Smokestacks Logic Models + Data Collection Instruments to CPM and NPS	8/5/2010
Comments from CPM +NPS Working Group on Silos & Smokestacks Materials	8/12/2010
Augusta Canal Site Visit	
Introductory Teleconference with Augusta Canal	7/16/2010
Augusta Canal Meet and Greet Visit	8/02/2010- 8/03/2010
Draft Logic Model to Augusta Canal	8/6/2010
Comments on Logic Model from Augusta Canal	8/13/2010
Draft Augusta Canal Logic Models + Data Collection Instruments to CPM and NPS	8/20/2010
Comments from CPM +NPS Working Group on Augusta Canal Materials	9/9/2010
Task 3 - Additional Data Collection and Site Visits	
Silos & Smokestacks Site Visit	
Share Logic Model and Data Collection Instruments with Silos & Smokestacks	8/16/2010
Comments from Silos & Smokestacks	8/18/2010
Silos & Smokestacks Second Site Visit + Town Hall Meeting	8/23/2010- 8/25/2010
Augusta Canal Site Visit	
Share Logic Model and Data Collection Instruments with Augusta Canal	9/13/2010
Comments from Augusta Canal	9/15/2010
Augusta Canal Second Site Visit + Town Hall Meeting	9/20/2010- 9/21/2010

Deliverable	Due Date
Task 4 - Findings Documents	
Draft Findings Document to Silos & Smokestacks and Augusta Canal	11/12/2010
Comments from Silos & Smokestacks and Augusta Canal	11/19/2010
Second Draft Findings Document to CPM and NPS Working Group	12/3/2010
Comments from CPM and NPS Working Group	12/10/2010
Third Draft Findings Document to NPS Peer Committee and Panel of Experts	12/17/2010
Comments from NPS Peer Committee and Panel of Experts	12/24/2010
Final Findings Document	1/15/2011

A2. Domain and Source Crosswalk

Research Question, Domains, Measures 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?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Heritage Programming, Interpretation and Education – 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						
Nature of NHA activities						
Description of programming, interpretation and education activities	x	x		x	x	
Description of activities that were initially not intended	x	x		x	x	
Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity	x	x		x	x	
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	

Research Question, Domains, Measures 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?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Impact of activities						
Engagement of residents and visitors (# served/involved/affected)	x	x	x			
Increased understanding, awareness and appreciation of NHA resources and stories		x	x			
Increased recognition of shared heritage of region			x			
Greater amount and diversity in sources of funding committed to interpretive and educational programming	x			x		x
Job creation	x					x
Preservation and Resource Stewardship– Activities that support long-term preservation, conservation and reclamation of natural, cultural and historic resources; includes implementing environmental conservation efforts						
Nature of NHA activities		x				
Description of preservation and resource stewardship activities	x	x		x	x	x
Description of conservation efforts related to folklore, folk life, life ways and traditions	x	x				x

Research Question, Domains, Measures 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?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Description of activities that were initially not intended	x			x	x	
Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity (e.g., administration of grants; provision of TA)	x	x		x	x	
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	
Impact of activities						
Environmental, cultural and historic resources conservation	x	x		x	x	
Artifact or building restoration	x	x		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			

Research Question, Domains, Measures 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?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Increased capacity of partners	x	x				
Growth in partner network	x	x		x		
Community revitalization	x	x	x		x	
Job creation	x					x
Development and Infrastructure – Heritage based development activities that further provide educational and inspirational opportunities for current and future generations						
Nature of NHA activities						
Description of physical improvement and development activities	x	x		x	x	
Description of activities that were initially not intended	x	x		x	x	
Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity (e.g., administration of grants; provision of TA)	x	x		x	x	
Role of NHA administrative staff	x	x		x	x	
Role of the partnership network	x	x		x	x	

Research Question, Domains, Measures 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?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Role of the local community	x	x	x	x	x	
Impact of activities						
Development/construction that is successful in meeting objectives	x	x	x	x	x	
Increased local sense of pride and connection to place			x			
Heightened visibility of NHA resources and stories			x			
Job creation	x					x
Marketing and Public Outreach – Activities that increase public use and awareness of the NHA and further its economic sustainability						
Nature of NHA activities						
Description of marketing and public outreach activities (e.g., promotional materials, events programming)	x	x	x	x	x	
Description of activities that were initially not intended	x	x		x	x	

Research Question, Domains, Measures 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?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity (e.g., creation of marketing plans)	x	x		x	x	
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	
Impact of activities						
Engagement of residents and visitors (# served/involved/affected)	x	x	x		x	
Increased understanding, awareness and appreciation of NHA resources and stories	x	x	x			
Increased recognition of shared heritage of region	x	x	x			
Greater amount and diversity in sources of funding	x	x		x		x
Growth and development of partner network	x	x				
Heightened visibility of NHA resources and stories		x	x			

Research Question, Domains, Measures 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?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Job creation	x					x
Planning and Technical Assistance – Activities that build local community capacity and assist individuals, organizations and communities who are involved in NHA interpretation, education, preservation and development activities						
Nature of NHA activities						
Description of planning and technical assistance activities (e.g., leading conferences and workshops; technical assistance to local organizations; targeted financial assistance, catalyst, facilitation, convening, negotiating)	x	x		x	x	
Description of activities that were initially not intended	x	x`				
Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity (e.g., coordinating, planning)	x	x		x	x	
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	

Research Question, Domains, Measures 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?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Impact of activities						
Increased capacity of partners	x	x				
Growth and development of partner network	x	x				
Trust and support among partners	x	x				
Heightened credibility of NHA	x	x				
Job creation	x					x
Mechanisms in place to achieve NHA goals and objectives						
Description of activities/mechanisms in place prior to NHA designation	x	x				

Research Question, Domains, Measures Evaluation Q.2 What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Financial investments:						
Amount of federal funding over time	x			x		x
Amount and sources of leveraged funds over time	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
Impact of financial investments						
Amount of dollars committed to each NHA activity (Interpretation & education, Preservation, Development, Technical assistance and Marketing) over time	x	x				x
Revenue generated from NHA program activities – educational and recreational	x					x
Consistency of donor support	x		x			x
Expansion of base of donors over time	x		x	x	x	x
Job creation	x					x

Research Question, Domains, Measures Evaluation Q.2 What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites, Other Documents	Financial Data Forms
Other types of investment						
Partnership contributions (e.g., time, staff, resources)	x	x		x	x	x
Community contributions (e.g., volunteerism)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Donated services and supplies	x	x				x
Impact of other investment sources						
Educational impacts	x	x		x		
Marketing and promotional	x	x		x		
Staff enhancement and retention	x	x		x		x
Land/facilities acquisition	x	x		x		x
Job creation	x					x

Research Question, Domains, Measures Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites	Financial Data Forms
Nature of management structure						
Description of management structure	x	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	
Coordinating entity's contribution to sustainability						
Diversity of skills and expertise	x	x		x		
Capacity for adaptive management over time (incl. changes in staffing levels, strategic planning, etc)	x			x		
Investments in developing staff and career advancement opportunities	x			x		x
Clear NHA goals with well-defined timeframes	x	x		x		

Research Question, Domains, Measures Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites	Financial Data Forms
System for setting annual goals or for establishing budgets	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		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			x		
Stakeholder development plan (sustainable impacts)	x	x				
Growth and development of partner network	x	x		x		
Transparent and effective communication channels with governance, staff, volunteers, partners, etc	x	x	x	x		
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				

Research Question, Domains, Measures Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites	Financial Data Forms
Nature of partner network						
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				
Partner network's contribution to sustainability						
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					
Number of partners over time	x			x		
Partners' role(s)on NHA boards	x	x				
Trust and support among partners	x	x				

Research Question, Domains, Measures Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites	Financial Data Forms
Financial sustainability						
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
Analysis of ratio of federal funding to other fund sources and change in the ratio over time				x		x
Nature of other non-federal investments	x					x
Extent to which fundraising activities have been prioritized over time	x	x		x		
Analysis of likely effects on NHA activities if they could not be financially sustained	x	x				
Economic impact on sustainability						
Resource stewardship resulting in improved economic value of NHA	x	x				x
Improved earned income over time	x					x
Trends in return on fundraising investment	x	x				x
Trends in contribution and grants ratio – indicates dependence on voluntary support	x					x

Research Question, Domains, Measures Evaluation Q.3 How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Management Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Documents	NHA Guides, Brochures, Websites	Financial Data Forms
Trends in debt ratio	x					x
Trends in average annual operating revenue	x					x
Job creation	x					x

A3. NHA Sustainability Definition

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA WORKING DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABILITY[†]

P. L. 110-229, the legislation that governs this evaluation process, includes the following mandate:

(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.

In an effort to clarify the "critical components of sustainability", NPS, with the assistance of National Heritage Area stakeholders, created the following definition for sustainability:

National Heritage Area Sustainability

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.
- Outreach and marketing to engage a full and diverse range of audiences

[†]January 5, 2010, from Martha Raymond, National Coordinator for Heritage Areas, NPS. Working Definition of National Heritage Area (NHA) Sustainability – An earlier iteration of the above definition was developed as part of facilitated discussion during the July, 2009, NHA Evaluation Meeting in Washington, DC, modifying the definition used at the start of the evaluation process in 2008. The Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA) also developed a definition of sustainability in 2009. In November, 2009, the NHA Evaluation Working Group combined the July definition with the ANHA definition to develop the above language as a guide during the NHA evaluation process.

A4. NPS Working Group Definition of Sustainability

For Evaluations of NHA Coordinating Entities per P.L. 110-229

Section 1: Introduction (common to all NHA Coordinating Entity evaluation reports)

A. Define and describe the National Heritage Areas (NHAs) and NHA coordinating entities along with the range of NHA coordinating entity relationships that commonly exist (including with NPS) (include map)
B. Define the purpose of the evaluation in relationship to PL 110-229 and outline the key research questions
C. Describe the evaluation methodology (including limitations), tools, and roles/functions

Section 2: NHA Coordinating Entity Overview (Background)

A. Introduction of the NHA and NHA coordinating entity (include map)
B. Overview of the relationships between and among the NHA coordinating entity, Partners, and the National Park Service
C. Key findings, including investments and their long-term impacts
D. Timeline of key events (including investments and key events affecting, influencing, and changing local priorities/needs)

Section 3: NHA Coordinating Entity Structure and Organization

A. Authorizing legislation (summary; complete in appendix), NHA's vision and mission, and NHA coordinating entity's mission (include a chart linking these to the legislation NHA Plan goals/objectives, guiding principles, NHA coordinating entity organizational documents, and any partnership pacts– show how vision and mission/goals/objectives align with legislation)
B. How and why NHA coordinating entity goals and objectives changed over time (present graphically) (adaptive management) (including reflecting changes in the local and national economy)
C. Organizational structure of the NHA coordinating entity (management, coordination, decision-making, and priority-setting present graphically if possible and link to legislation, management plan, and other formal organizational documents)
D. Describe partner relationships

Section 4: NHA Coordinating Entity's Fulfillment of the Authorizing Legislation and Management Plan

A. Description of requirements defined in the authorizing legislation and management plan

B. Identification (and assessment of progress) of the NHA coordinating entity's programs/activities and the ways in which they fulfilled the intent of the authorizing legislation and management plan (taking adaptive management into consideration)
C. Description (and assessment of progress) of the NPS/NHA coordinating entity relationship and how it compares to what is described in the authorizing legislation and management plan (taking adaptive management into consideration)

Section 5: Public/Private Investments (Federal, State, Tribal, and local government and private entities) in the NHA Coordinating Entity and their Impact

A. Overview of the investments made in the NHA coordinating entity since its inception, broken down by major category (include a chart and/or graph showing investments over time if possible)
B. Analysis of how the NHA coordinating entity utilized its investments - grants, development expenses, volunteer program, marketing, education, preservation, tourism, program management, etc. (include a chart and/or graph showing the expenditures over time if possible)
C. The impact of the NHA coordinating entity's investments including, but not limited to, interpretation, education, preservation, conservation, recreation economic development, and tourism. Look at short term outcomes and also long term outcomes from earlier years

Section 6: Identification and Assessment of Components Required for Maintaining a Successful and Sustainable (self-sufficient) NHA Coordinating Entity

A. Define important management roles/functions and the extent to which they exist (formal or informal)
B. Define partnerships/interrelationships that are needed to achieve sustainable results and the extent to which they exist (formal or informal)
C. Define financial resources needed and their role in defining and sustaining the NHA coordinating entity
D. Describe the role that catalyst funding has played and continues to play in the NHA coordinating entity (leveraging)
E. Define the NPS' current role and how it impacts the sustainability of the NHA coordinating entity

Appendices:

1 Evaluation Legislation
2 Authorizing Legislation
3 Terminology
4 Evaluation Methodology

Appendix B

NHA Management/Staff Topic-Centered Interviews

Discussion Guide

Version 08-16-2010

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for talking with me today. As part of the federally mandated evaluation of NHAs we are talking with members of Silos & Smokestacks staff with 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, and would like to use it as a guide throughout the interview. Using this logic model as a guide, our discussion will help us gain a more detailed understanding of Silos & Smokestacks, including the background and history of the Heritage Area, 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 it should take about 1 – 2 hours to complete.

1. To start off, could you tell us about your role with Silos & Smokestacks? When did your work with Silos & Smokestacks begin?

[Review goals, etc from logic model]

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

1. Could you tell us about the organizational history and evolution prior to the Silos & Smokestack's NHA designation?

2. How did the NHA designation come about? How did the switch from USDA to NPS fit into this? What changed in the organization as a result of the designation and the switch to NPS? How did this designation and then affiliation change affect your strategic planning processes and management plan?

3. What was your working relationship like with USDA? What is your relationship like with NPS? Has that relationship evolved over the time you have been working with them?

4. How are the management and operations of Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity currently structured?

   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 Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity? What are the goals for the Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity?

6. Can you describe the various planning processes that the Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity has undertaken over time? When and how did you determine a need for this and what type of engagement of the larger community was necessary?

ACTIVITIES

A. We'd like to learn more about your (the coordinating entity's) grant-making activities. We're interested in learning more about your:

- **General grants**
- **Interpretive planning grants**
- **Disaster recovery grants**
- **Bus grants**
- **Internship grants**
- **Any other types of grants we may have missed?**

1. For each one of these grant-making programs, could you describe:
    - When it began?
    - The impetus for starting it?
    - The activities it supports? *Probe – how does it promote the preservation, interpretation and education of America's agricultural story*
    - How it is funded? Does it leverage other funding?
    - If the grants are provided for a specific purpose/time period and/or could they be sustained on their own without continued Silos & Smokestacks funding?

    - Could you describe the grant-making process for this program:
        - How do organizations find out about and apply?
        - 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?

2. Overall, how has the grants programs affected :
    - Partners – their capacity, the relationships among partners - in what ways?
    - Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area and coordinating entity 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?
    - Job creation – for partners, in the larger community/heritage area, etc?

3. Are there certain grant programs that have been more successful than others in achieving the goals of Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area? If so, why do you think these have better impacts for the overall Silos & Smokestacks Heritage 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. Are there documents you could provide us that describe these grant programs and how they have been implemented over the years?

B. We'd like to learn more about your (the coordinating entity's) technical assistance activities. According to the logic model, we know you engage in several types of activities such as:

- **Trainings and workshops**
- **1:1 Consultations including interpretive planning and education curriculum development**
- **Sharing best practices and resources**
- **Any other technical assistance activities we may have missed?**

Trainings and Workshops: Let's begin with the training and workshops you offer -

1. Could you provide details about:
   - The types of topics are covered? How do you determine training topics?
   - Who attends? Who is this targeted to?
   - The regions/areas where they are delivered?
   - Who conducts the training and workshops – Silos & Smokestacks Staff, NPS staff, partners, etc?
   - In this past year, how many trainings/workshops occurred? How long were they?
   - For trainings/workshops delivered this past year, how much did it cost? How was it funded?
   - What are your goals/objectives for the training/workshop programs?

2. How long has the organization been providing trainings and workshops? Overall, what was the impetus for starting this activity (*probe- part of the original management plan, seen as an unmet need in the community?)*

3. How the trainings and workshops affected have: *Probe – for each of these, how do you know any of these outcomes occurred?*
   - Attendees – increased knowledge and skills?
   - Partners – their capacity, the relationships among partners - in what ways?
   - Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area and coordinating entity 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?

4. Could you tell us what have been the overall successes of your training and workshop activities and how they relate to the larger Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area? What challenges have you encountered in implementing this activity?

5. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of your training and workshop activities?

6. Are there documents you could provide us that describe your training and workshop programs and how many have attended over the years?

1:1 Consultations: Let's talk about the 1:1 technical consultations you offer-

7. Could you provide details about:
    - The types of consultations you provide? *Probe: interpretation planning, capacity building, planning assistance, heritage programming assistance, etc.*
    - Who you provide the consultation to?
    - How you determine when and to who to offer these services?
    - The types of topics covered? How do you determine topics?
    - Who provides this assistance - Silos & Smokestacks Staff, NPS staff, partners, etc?
    - What is the length of time consultations are provided?
    - What are the costs of consultation and how is it funded?
    - The goals and objectives of these 1:1 consultation activities?

8. How long has the organization been providing 1:1 consultations? Overall, what was the impetus for starting this activity (*probe- part of the original management plan, seen as an unmet need in the community?)*

9. How the 1:1 consultations affected have: *Probe – for each of these, how do you know any of these outcomes occurred?*
    - Participants – increased knowledge and skills?
    - Partners – their capacity, the relationships among partners - in what ways?
    - Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area and coordinating entity 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?

10. Could you tell us what have been the overall accomplishments of your 1:1 consultation activities and how they relate to the larger Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area? What challenges have you encountered in implementing this activity? Have there been some 1:1 consultations requests that you can't meet or have had challenges delivering?

11. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of your 1:1 consultation activities?

12. Are there documents you could provide us that describe your 1:1 consultation activities, such as the types of assistance provided, to whom and the related outcomes?

Sharing Resources: Let's talk about how you share resources and best practices throughout the Silos & Smokestacks region

13. Could you describe:
    - The types of resources you share? *Probe – best practices, grants or trainings offered by others?*
    - How you find out about these resources?

- How you share the resources and information with organizations in the Silos & Smokestacks community? Whom do you share it with? Are some resources targeted to specific groups?
- The goals and objectives of providing this assistance?

14. Overall, what was the impetus for starting this activity (*probe- part of the original management plan, seen as an unmet need in the community, seen as part of the larger Silos & Smokestacks mission?)*

15. How have sharing resources affected : *Probe – for each of these, how do you know any of these outcomes occurred?*
    - Partners or potential partners – their capacity, the relationships among partners - in what ways?
    - Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area and coordinating entity 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?

16. Could you tell us what have been the overall accomplishments of this technical assistance activity and how they relate to the larger Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area? What challenges have you encountered in implementing this activity?

C. Education – we'd like to learn more about the education activities that you (Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity) provide including:

- **Camp Silos website**
- **Camps**
- **Continuing Education**
- **Teacher Trainings**
- **E-Communications**
- **Any other educational activities we may have missed?**

1. For each educational activity, could you provide details about:
    - The natures of the activity?
    - When it began?
    - When is it offered?
    - Who do you provide it to? *(i.e., –teachers, students, ages, etc)*
    - The role of Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity staff staff in providing this?
    - The role of the community in implementing these activities?

2. What was the impetus for offering educational activities?

3. How have the educational activities affected:
    - Participants – increased knowledge and skills
    - Partners – their capacity, the relationships among partners - in what ways?
    - Silos & Smokestacks - the Heritage Area and coordinating entity 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?

4. Could you tell us what have been the accomplishments of your education activities and how they relate to the larger Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area? What challenges have you encountered in implementing this activity?

5. How do you evaluate and/or assess the effectiveness of your educational activities?

6. Are there documents you could provide us that describe these educational activities, such as the types of assistance provided, to whom and the related outcomes?

D. Awareness building - we'd like to learn more about the marketing activities undertaken by Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity to build awareness about the Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area. These include

- **Visitor communication/awareness - guides, website, signage, tours**
- **Branding – communicating a consistent message**
- **Public relations – newsletters, community events, photo contests, social media, etc**
- **Media relations**
- **Any other activities we may have missed**

1. For each activity could you provide us details about:
   - What it entails?
   - The impetus for starting these activities?
   - How long it has been in place?
   - The role of Silos & Smokestacks staff?
   - The role of the local community?

2. How have these marketing and awareness building activities affected: *Probe – for each of these, how do you know any of these outcomes occurred?*
   - Partners – their capacity, the relationships among partners - in what ways?
   - Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area and coordinating entity 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 overall accomplishments of your marketing activities and how they relate to the larger Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area? What challenges have you encountered in implementing this activity?

PARTNERS and PARTNERSHIP NETWORK

1. Could you describe what the partnership network is and why partners are of critical importance to the Silos & Smokestacks Heritage Area?

2. Why was the growth and development of a partnership network laid out with the original NHA plans?

3. How has it evolved over time? For instance, could you describe the progression from the designation of SIA, SIP, AS, and POI to the designation of Emerging Sites and Partners?

4. Could you describe how an organization becomes a partner? What is the partner designation process? What are the requirements for becoming a partner?

5. What types of services or support do partners receive from Silos & Smokestacks?

6. What types of services or support do you receive from your partners?

7. How do partners support one another?

8. How has the 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

9. 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*

10. 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?

LEADERSHIP ADVISORS, BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND PARTNERSHIP PANEL

1. Can you tell us about the history of and/or your role on the Board of Trustees, Leadership Advisors and Partnership Panel? Has your/their role changed across the life of Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity?

2. What are the responsibilities of members of these committees? For instance, does it involve setting goals, establishing budgets and financial accountability for the Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity?

3. How do the skills and expertise that members of these committees bring to the table contribute to the NHA's sustainability?

4. Do you/ members of these committees assist with fundraising? Contribute financially?

5. What kind of fundraising plan (immediate and long-term, sustainable impacts) is in place?

6. What is the process of communication between Silos & Smokestacks staff and members of the Board of Trustees, Leadership Advisors and Partnership Panel?

7. What activities has Silos & Smokestacks conducted over the years to garner community support? What have been your successes and challenges?

8. Can you tell us what you think have been your greatest successes and most serious challenges across the history of Silos & Smokestacks?

ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

1. In your experience, what have been some of the major accomplishments for Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity and how has this impacted the larger Heritage Area?

2. Could you tell us about some of the challenges the coordinating entity and Heritage Area face?

3. How would the Heritage Area be affected if the coordinating entity could not be financially sustained with federal NHA funding?
   Probe: Which program areas would be affected and how?

4. Are there ways Silos & Smokestacks (both the coordinating entity and Heritage Area) has changed the region over the past 12 years? How? In what ways? How has Silos & Smokestacks's coordinating entity's impact changed over time?

5. What were some of the early lessons learned or unintended consequences (e.g., issues related to collaborating rather than competing with partners, Life Coach Tours) in implementing the activities and strategies for Silos & Smokestacks?

6. Could you tell us about any evidence of community support for Silos & Smokestacks (both the Heritage Area and coordinating entity)? What does this look like (i.e. volunteers, funding, invitation to participate on the boards of other organizations, engagement of State leadership, etc?)

7. What additional things would you have the Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity do, if any? What changes would it be helpful for Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity to make?

Appendix C

Partner Network Interview Protocol

Draft Version - August 16, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us today about your organization's involvement with Silos & Smokestacks. 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 Silos & Smokestacks and any assistance you have either received from or contributed to the National Heritage Area. We are interested in collecting information about your relationship with Silos & Smokestacks, how it has evolved and how Silos 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, 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 SILOS & SMOKESTACKS

1. Can you briefly the nature of your relationship with Silos & Smokestacks?

2. What factors influenced your decision to become a partner with Silos & Smokestacks?

3. When and how did your partnership with Silos & Smokestacks begin? What, if any, requirements are there for being a partner?

4. What is the nature of the partnership? *Probe here for receipt of activities from Silos & Smokestacks; including:*
    - *grants (types, amount, when),*
    - *receipt of training (when, type of training, how they found out about it),*
    - *1:1 technical assistance (when, type, amount received, did you request it)*
    - *Signage, brochures, etc?)*

5. Could you describe how your organization's program activities incorporate the Silos & Smokestacks heritage story and themes?

6. Could you describe how your partnership with Silos & Smokestacks has affected your organization?
    a. Has it had any effect on the types of visitors you get? The number? Why or why not? How do you know?
    b. Has it helped you identify others to work with? Did you know of these organizations before you partnered with Silos & Smokestacks?
    c. Has it helped you receive funding? In what ways? What funding have you received that you may not have without the Silos & Smokestacks partnership?
    d. Has it helped you have more community:
        i. Visibility?
        ii. Involvement?
        iii. Etc?
    e. Does it help you identify or be in touch with other resources and best practices that you may not have known about?

GRANT- MAKING ACTIVITIES

1. Now, I would like to go over the grants you mentioned earlier, beginning with…..Could you tell us:
    a. When you received this/these grant(s)?
    b. The time period the grant(s) covers?
    c. The Silos & Smokestacks grant application and reporting process?
    d. The process of getting matching funds from other sources? Was this a grant requirement? How did you get matching funds? Dollar for dollar, what was the ratio?

2. Could you describe how you've used these grants to incorporate or enhance stories about the Silos & Smokestacks heritage into your programming? Was there a link to other sites in your programming?

3. Approximately, what percentage of your total funding is/was from Silos & Smokestacks for the grant period(s)?

4. What did the Silos & Smokestacks funding allow your organization to do? What are the advantages and disadvantages of receiving funding from Silos & Smokestacks?

5. Do you still have this grant funding from Silos & Smokestacks? What would you have done differently if there was no grant funding?

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 Silos & Smokestacks?
    a. What type of assistance did you receive (training, consultations, facilitated meetings, brainstorming ideas, site assessments, etc)

b. Who did you receive it from?
c. Where did you receive it?
d. How did you find out about this assistance?
e. Were there requirements for participating in these activities?
f. Did you need to pay for this assistance?

7. Could you describe how you've used this assistance to incorporate or enhance stories about the Silos & Smokestacks heritage into you programming?

8. How has this assistance and your activities/offerings evolved over time?

9. What does this assistance from Silos & Smokestacks 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. What does being part of a partnership network mean to your organization? *Probe – describe the ability to collaborate with other organizations, share resources, who do you collaborate with?*

2. Could you describe the ways your organization collaborates with Silos & Smokestacks and/or with other Silos & Smokestacks regional partners?

3. 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?*

4. Have you gained access other organizations or resources in the community because of your collaboration with Silos & Smokestacks? How? *Probe – NPS, other state resources*

OVERALL IMPACT OF SILOS & SMOKESTACKS – To all Partners and Partnership Panel

1. How has your relationship with Silos & Smokestacks evolved over time? Has the impact of Silos & Smokestacks changed over time – grown stronger, weaker or stayed the same?

2. Have you experienced any challenges as a result of your partnership with Silos & Smokestacks? *Probe – limitations on ability to fundraise or collaborate with other organizations?*

3. What leadership roles does Silos & Smokestacks play in the community? Convener? Organizer? Funder? Other?

4. Are there ways in which the Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity has changed the region over the past 12 years? How? In what ways? How has Silos & Smokestacks's impact changed over time? *Probe – were there mechanisms present before the Silos & Smokestacks designation?*

5. Is it important for your organization to continue working with Silos & Smokestacks? Why? What factors influence your continued relationship?

6. What additional things would you have the Silos & Smokestacks coordinating entity do, if any? What changes would be helpful for Silos & Smokestacks to make? In general, in what ways could they serve your needs better and the needs of the region?

Appendix D

Protocol for Review of NHA Financial Data Forms

Silos & Smokestacks

Version 08.16.10

Targeted information sources:

- Annual financial statements and reports (audits, tax returns, budget activities and performance reports)

Purpose: The information targeted by this protocol is intended to determine the following:

- The extent to which the NHA coordinating entity has met its legislative mandate for receipt of federal funding, including matching contributions from non-federal sources
- Sources and amounts of funds (including federal, non-federal and in-kind sources) received by the NHA coordinating entity
- How the NHA coordinating entity invests its funding
- The level of funding that is required to sustain NHA operation and achievement of goals, and
- How the NHA coordinating entity maintains financial accountability
- Areas of legislative mandate that currently are not receiving funding

I. NHA Coordinating Entity Financial & Other Resources

A. NPS funding

1. How much did the NHA coordinating entity receive each year from NPS Federal Assistance (federal funding for NHA) from 1996 - 2009?

B. Funding Received from Other Sources

1. What were the amounts of funds received from other sources each year between 1996-2009?
   - What/Who were the sources of those funds?
   - How much was received?
   - What (activities, programs, etc) were the funds received for?

2. What were the amounts and sources of leveraged funds received between 1996-2009?
   - Extent to which the funding is discretionary or restricted
   - Nature/amount in grants applied for (if data are available) and grants awarded over time

C. Other types of investments

1. What other types of investments have been made in the NHA between 1996-2009? To which activities?
    - Partnership contributions (e.g., time, staff, resources)
    - Community contributions (e.g., volunteerism)
    - Donated services and supplies

2. What amounts of revenue have been generated from NHA program activities between 1996-2009 (e.g., from educational and recreational activities)?

II. Allocation of Financial & Other Resources

1. How has financial and non-financial (donated goods/services) funding been allocated?
    - Amount of dollars from NPS allocated to each NHA activity (Interpretation & Education, Preservation, Development, Technical Assistance and Marketing) over time
    - Amount of dollars from other sources that have been allocated to each NHA activity (Interpretation & Education, Preservation, Development, Technical assistance and Marketing) over time

III. Resources needed to sustain the NHA

A. NHA coordinating entity's level of unrestricted[7] funding

1. What are the NHA coordinating entity's assets (current, fixed, other, net)?

2. What are the NHA coordinating entity's liabilities (loans, outstanding costs)?

    - What are the NHA's typical operating expenses and what proportion of NPS funding supports this?

B. Areas the Coordinating Entity Contributed to Sustainability

1. What kinds of investments have been made toward developing staff and career advancement opportunities and how do they contribute to heritage development?

2. What kind of system does the coordinating entity have for setting annual goals or for establishing budgets?

3. What kind of fundraising plan is in place and what kinds of impacts has this had (immediate and long-term, sustainable impacts)?

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[7] "Unrestricted" funds are those that are available for a nonprofit to use toward any purpose. Unrestricted funds usually go toward the operating expenses of the organization

IV. Financial Accountability

1. What kind of system is in place for maintaining financial accountability (who does the coordinating entity report to)?

2. How does the coordinating entity account for its activities and any requests for/uses of funds (What types of reports are maintained and why)?

3. Who has financial oversight of financial planning for the NHA?

4. What type of accounting system is in place (staffing and systems)?

Appendix E

Topic Centered Guide for Interviewing Partner Site Visitors

Hi, my name is XXXX and I'm interested in your opinions rather than your personal information. This will take about 5 minutes. I am working with the National Park Service to gather information from visitors to this site about the National Heritage Area that is located here in NE Iowa. Do you have about 5 minutes to chat with me? 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. Place of residence

2. How found out about site; Reason for visiting

3. First time or repeat visit

4. Familiarity with agricultural and historical heritage of NE Iowa
    a. Probe on source of knowledge
    b. Probe on if and how this visit has enhanced their knowledge of the agricultural heritage—connection to Iowa, understanding of specific themes emphasized at the partner site

5. Familiarity with Silos & Smokestacks and the larger National Heritage Area
    a. Probe on materials (show brochure)
    b. Probe on signage (show signage)
    c. Probe on visiting other partner sites
    d. Probe on message (themes) of Silos & Smokestacks
    e. Probe on what NHA means to them
    f. If local, probe on role of Silos & Smokestacks in community – economic, cultural, historic, restorative [revitalization]

Information Cards to be filled out by up to 9 persons at each site

Hi, my name is XXXX and I'm interested in your opinion but not in any personal information. This will take around 2 minutes. I am working with the National Park Service and others to learn more about the visitors within Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area in NE Iowa. Would you be willing to fill out this card? Feel free to stop at any time, whether finished or not. if you feel like you need to move on or would prefer not to finish the card.

1. Where do you live?
   - ☐ Northeast Iowa
   - ☐ Another part of Iowa
   - ☐ A neighboring state
   - ☐ One of the other stats in the United State
   - ☐ Outside the United States

2. How did you find out about the [insert name of site]? (Mark all that apply)
   - ☐ Highway or road signs
   - ☐ [Insert name of site] Brochure
   - ☐ Silos & Smokestacks Brochure
   - ☐ Other, _____(please specify)

3. How much has visiting here today increased your appreciation for: [insert appropriate theme, such as farmers and families] in Iowa?
   - ☐ Not much
   - ☐ A little
   - ☐ Some
   - ☐ A lot

4. How much has visiting here today increased your appreciation for [insert appropriate theme, such as changes in the farming in Iowa] after visiting this site?
   - ☐ Not much
   - ☐ A little
   - ☐ Some
   - ☐ A lot

5. Has visiting here today increased your appreciation for something else – please describe?

6. Do you plan to visit any other places of interest in NE Iowa?
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Yes, How did you find out about these other places?

     _____

Appendix F

SSNHA Timeline

YEAR	EVENT/ACTIVITY
1980s	Farm Crisis impacts heavily the agriculture and agriculture industry dependent community of Waterloo and NE Iowa
1991	• Waterloo Redevelopment Authority hires consultant to prioritize downtown revitalization needs • Seven private citizens organize the Waterloo Reinvestment Group and first investigated an attraction based on the agricultural heritage of the area
1992	America's Agricultural Industrial Heritage Landscape was incorporated as a non-profit.
1995	NPS conducts a special resource study, "Cedar Valley Special Resource Study", acknowledging the national significance of the resources and heritage of the region
1996	Congressional designation as a National Heritage Area under USDA, America's Agricultural Heritage Partnership
1997	The original Partnership Management Plan is completed
1998	First Strategic Investment Area (SIA), Country Heritage Community, is designated with funding from a local trust
1999	Launched educational website, www.campsilos.org as an educational resource available to teachers and students
2000	• SSNHA authorization is moved to NPS with the first receipt of federal funds of $249,000 • Partnership Panel is established • Second Strategic Investment Area, Central Iowa River Partnership, is designated
2001	• First Strategic Investment Partners (SIP) are designated • The grant-making program is established with the first round of funds allocated to SIAs and SIPs • SSNHA develops a communications/awareness position strategy
2002	First Affiliate Sites (AS) and Points of Interest (POI)are designated
2003	• 45 sites are designated as either a SIP, AS or POI • SSNHA offers first technical assistance workshops • SSNHA visitor guide is distributed
2004	• Partnership Management Plan is revised • SSNHA Interpretive Plan and Signage Guidelines are developed
2005	• 85 sites are designated as SIP, AS or POI • LIFE Tours has international presence

YEAR	EVENT/ACTIVITY
2006	• The Education Scholarship Fund is established to support Bus and Internship grants • First gateway signs are placed on the interstate • 91 sites are designated as SIP, AS or POI • SSNHA holds its first resource training
2007	• 104 sites are designated as SIP, AS or POI • Intern and Bus Grants are offered
2008	• SSNHA region is affected by floods and Disaster Recovery Fund is established • SSNHA embarks on a 37-county Listening Tour
2009	• Interpretive Planning Grant program is established • SSNHA conducts follow-up to the Listening Tour • New Partner Site designation process is established • SSNHA sponsors first round of spring and summer camps
2010	• 108 sites are designated as Partners

Appendix G

Partner Sites

Site Name	Site City	Site County	Year Designated
National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library	Cedar Rapids	Linn	2001
Carl & Mary Koehler History Center	Cedar Rapids	Linn	2001
Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve and Center	Rockford	Floyd	2001
UNI Museums	Cedar Falls	Black Hawk	2001
Living History Farms	Urbandale	Polk	2001
Amana Heritage Society Museums	Amana Colonies	Iowa	2001
Grout Museum District	Waterloo	Black Hawk	2001
Seed Savers Exchange	Decorah	Winneshiek	2001
Hartman Reserve Nature Center	Cedar Falls	Black Hawk	2001
Hawkeye Community College Farm Laboratory	Waterloo	Black Hawk	2002
4-H Schoolhouse Museum	Clarion	Wright	2002
Fort Atkinson State Preserve	Fort Atkinson	Winneshiek	2002
Iowa River Greenbelt Scenic Drive		Hardin	2002
Jenison Meacham Memorial Art Museum & Farm	Belmond	Wright	2002
Heartland Museum	Clarion	Wright	2002
Motor Mill Historic Site	Elkader	Clayton	2002
Northern Iowa River Greenbelt Scenic Drive		Wright & Franklin	2002
Prairie Bridges Park	Ackley	Franklin	2002
Ackley Heritage Center	Ackley	Hardin	2002
Iowa Masonic Library & Museum	Cedar Rapids	Linn	2002
Cedar Valley Arboretum & Botanic Gardens	Waterloo	Black Hawk	2002
Hardin County Farm Museum	Eldora	Hardin	2002
Franklin County Fair & Grandpa's Farm	Hampton	Franklin	2002
Froelich General Store and Tractor Museum	Froelich	Clayton	2002
Hurstville Lime Kilns	Maquoketa	Jackson	2002
Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum	West Branch	Cedar	2002
Cedar Rapids Museum of Art	Cedar Rapids	Linn	2002
Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge	Prairie City	Jasper	2002

John Deere Waterloo Operations - Tractor & Cab Assembly Operations (TCAO)	Waterloo	Black Hawk	2002
State Historical Building	Des Moines	Polk	2002
Matthew Edel Blacksmith Shop	Haverhill	Marshall	2002
Montauk	Clermont	Fayette	2002
Plum Grove	Iowa City	Johnson	2002
Clinton County Historical Society Museum	Clinton	Clinton	2002
Mamie Doud Eisenhower Birthplace	Boone	Boone	2002
Riegel Blacksmith Shop	Clermont	Fayette	2002
The Ion Exchange, Inc.	Harpers Ferry	Allamakee	2002
Laura Ingalls Wilder Park & Museum	Burr Oak	Winneshiek	2002
Franklin County Historical Society Museum	Hampton	Franklin	2002
Jasper County Museum	Newton	Jasper	2002
Hurstville Interpretive Center	Maquoketa	Jackson	2002
National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium	Dubuque	Dubuque	2002
Gilbertson Conservation Education Area	Elgin	Fayette	2002
Indian Creek Nature Center	Cedar Rapids	Linn	2002
Floyd County Historical Society Museum	Charles City	Floyd	2002
Dows Historic District	Dows	Wright	2002
Calkins Nature Area	Iowa Falls	Hardin	2002
Wapsipinicon Mill Museum	Independence	Buchanan	2002
The Wallace Centers of Iowa	Des Moines	Polk	2002
Grundy County Heritage Museum	Morrison	Grundy	2002
Ushers Ferry Historic Village	Cedar Rapids	Linn	2002
Vesterheim Norwegian - American Museum	Decorah	Winneshiek	2002
Carnegie Cultural Center	New Hampton	Chickasaw	2002
University of Iowa Museum of Natural History	Iowa City	Johnson	2002
National Farm Toy Museum	Dyersville	Dubuque	2002
Eagle City Winery	Iowa Falls	Hardin	2002
Scenic City Empress Boat Club	Iowa Falls	Hardin	2002
REA Power Plant Museum	Hampton	Franklin	2002
Carrie Lane Chapman Catt Girlhood Home	Charles City	Floyd	2003
Carson Art Gallery	Ackley	Hardin	2003

Four Mounds Inn & Conference Center	Dubuque	Dubuque	2003
George Maier Rural Heritage Center of Clayton County	Elkader	Clayton	2003
Bennington No. 4 School	Waterloo	Black Hawk	2004
African American Museum of Iowa	Cedar Rapids	Linn	2004
Brucemore	Cedar Rapids	Linn	2004
Hawkeye Buffalo Ranch	Fredericksburg	Chickasaw	2004
Jackson County Historical Society Museum	Maquoketa	Jackson	2004
Potters Mill	Bellevue	Jackson	2004
The Putnam Museum & IMAX® Theatre	Davenport	Scott	2004
Traer Historical Museum	Traer	Tama	2004
Waterloo Center for the Arts	Waterloo	Black Hawk	2004
Watson's Grocery Store Museum	State Center	Marshall	2004
Cedar Falls Historical Society	Cedar Falls	Black Hawk	2004
F.W. Kent Park	Oxford	Johnson	2004
Farm House B&B/Engelbrecht Family Winery	Fredericksburg	Chickasaw	2004
Barn Quilts of Grundy County	Grundy Center	Grundy	2004
Jackson County Farm	Maquoketa	Jackson	2004
Delaware County Historical Museum	Hopkinton	Delaware	2004
Richardson-Jakway Historic Site	Aurora	Buchanan	2004
Fontana Interpretive Nature Center	Hazleton	Buchanan	2004
Iowa State Fair	Des Moines	Polk	2004
1876 Coralville Schoolhouse	Coralville	Johnson	2004
Mississippi Valley Welcome Center	LeClaire	Scott	2005
Sugar Grove Vineyards and Gatheringplace	Newton	Jasper	2005
Park Farm Winery	Bankston	Dubuque	2005
Kinney Pioneer Museum	Clear Lake	Cerro Gordo	2005
The Dairy Center	Calmar	Winneshiek	2005
Mines of Spain Recreation Area	Dubuque	Dubuque	2005
Family Museum	Bettendorf	Scott	2006
Hansen's Farm Fresh Dairy / J&J Dairy	Hudson	Black Hawk	2006
Iowa River Gazebo	Coralville	Johnson	2006
Tabor Home Vineyards and Winery	Baldwin	Jackson	2006
Winneshiek County Historical Society-Locust School	Decorah	Winneshiek	2006
Cedar Rock the Walter House	Independence	Buchanan	2007
Fayette County Historical Center	West Union	Fayette	2007

Heartland Acres Agribition Center	Independence	Buchanan	2007
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum	Johnston	Polk	2007
La Porte City FFA Historical & Ag Museum	La Porte City	Black Hawk	2007
Mathias Ham House Historic Site	Dubuque	Dubuque	2007
National Cattle Congress	Waterloo	Black Hawk	2007
Reiman Gardens	Ames	Story	2007
Special Collections Department, Iowa State University	Ames	Story	2007
Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Area	Toddville	Linn	2007
Cascade Historic Limestone Silo	Cascade	Dubuque	2010
Eagles Landing B & B, Winery and Vineyard	Marquette	Clayton	2010
Belmond Historical Society Museum	Belmond	Wright	2010
Museums of Story City	Story City	Story	2010
Wagaman Mill and Museum	Lynnville	Jasper	2010