



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

H32(2257)

FEB 11 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman:

Pursuant to Public Law 110-229, I am pleased to transmit the *Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Evaluation Findings* (Evaluation). The National Park Service (NPS) engaged the consulting group Westat as the evaluator to independently assess the progress, analyze the investments, and identify the critical components for sustainability of the national heritage area. Based on the findings of the Evaluation, as required by Section 462 (c) of Public Law 110-229, the NPS recommends a future role with Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (HRVNHA). NPS will work with HRVNHA to implement business, fundraising, and financial resource development plans, and form networks of operational and financial partnerships to further long-term sustainability of HRVNHA operations.

In 1996, Congress designated the HRVNHA to recognize, preserve, and interpret the nationally significant resources within ten counties along the Hudson River. The heritage area is coordinated by the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council and the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Incorporated (Greenway) created by New York State in 1991. The Hudson River Valley played a significant role in the American Revolution. It inspired movements in American art and architecture. It is the home of stories such as "Rip Van Winkle" and the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow". It played an important role in the iron and textile industries. It housed the first women's labor union and secondary school. It includes National Historic Sites and National Park units, National Historic Landmarks, historic districts, and over 1,000 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Evaluation determined that over 15 years, the HRVNHA coordinating entity, Greenway, has attended to its legislated purposes and goals outlined in its Management Plan through the Federal resources provided and matching funds. Greenway's efforts have centered on six strategy areas: resource preservation, education and interpretation, recreational usage, marketing and outreach, economic development, and regional planning and community impact.

Both the NPS funding and the National Heritage Area designation have been of value to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. The funding has provided financial flexibility, the ability to leverage other resources, and has provided reliable support for its activities. As noted

in the enclosed findings document, between 1996 and 2011, HRVNHA received \$7,843,501 in NPS funding which was matched with \$22.4 million from non-Federal sources, far exceeding the one-to-one requirement for annual matching contributions. The Evaluation concludes that HRVNHA has expended funds in alignment with the goals and objectives specified in its authorizing legislation and management plan. HRVNHA's cumulative funding from NPS remains below the authorized amount of \$15 million.

Between 1996 and 2011, resource preservation efforts included providing Greenway Council grants of \$2,355,424 and Greenway Conservancy grants of \$1,219,401 to partners. As a result, partners leveraged an additional \$9 million to match Council grants and \$5 million to match Conservancy grants. Providing places for recreational activities is a focus of the Greenway Communities Council and Greenway Conservancy. Activities have included developing water trails and trail amenities, providing technical assistance to communities, developing programs, holding recreational events, and producing maps and guides.

HRVNHA supports education and interpretation initiatives including Teaching the Hudson Valley and the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College. Between 2003 and 2011, they awarded 93 Explore Award grants to schools and between 2006 and 2011, they held curriculum development Institutes that included 200 educators each year. HRVNHA's Teaching the Hudson Valley website features over 250 lessons and the Institute at Marist College website serves as a digital library. Additionally, education and interpretive activities of HRVNHA partners have been supported by Heritage Development Grants and the Quadricentennial Implementation Grants.

The work of HRVNHA contributes to the mission of the NPS by extending the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation in the Valley. The NPS Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites is a key partner of the HRVNHA providing technical and financial assistance by hosting workshops, board meetings, and serving on advisory committees. The NPS sites are major destinations in the area and serve as de facto visitor centers. Teaching the Hudson Valley was established in partnership with NPS sites. NPS also provides assistance through the Northeast Regional Office.

HRVNHA is sustained by partnerships including local governments, State agencies, business development organizations, and regional and community organizations. New York State appropriated funds to support and staff the Greenway. Other Federal sources included funding for the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial, Save America's Treasures, National Endowment for the Arts, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). If NPS funding is discontinued, progress will be slowed and some activities may cease. The basic structure of the State-supported Greenway would likely remain if other sources of funding continue.

The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area is fulfilling its legislative mandate. With appropriate authorization, a range of options exists for NPS involvement in supporting the heritage area including providing financial and technical assistance, coordinating training, providing operational guidance and guidance on long-term sustainability planning, partnering with National Parks, or consulting on preservation, conservation, and plans.

An identical letter is being sent to the Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; the Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, United States House of Representatives; and the Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Natural Resources, United States House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Bean". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michael Bean
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Charles Schumer
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
The Honorable Eliot Engel
The Honorable Christopher Gibson
The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Sean Maloney
The Honorable Paul Tonko
The Honorable Tom Udall
The Honorable Ken Calvert
The Honorable Betty McCollum



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FEB 11 2015

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

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The Evaluation determined that over 15 years, the HRVNHA coordinating entity, Greenway, has attended to its legislated purposes and goals outlined in its Management Plan through the Federal resources provided and matching funds. Greenway's efforts have centered on six strategy areas: resource preservation, education and interpretation, recreational usage, marketing and outreach, economic development, and regional planning and community impact.

Both the NPS funding and the National Heritage Area designation have been of value to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. The funding has provided financial flexibility, the ability to leverage other resources, and has provided reliable support for its activities. As noted

in the enclosed findings document, between 1996 and 2011, HRVNHA received \$7,843,501 in NPS funding which was matched with \$22.4 million from non-Federal sources, far exceeding the one-to-one requirement for annual matching contributions. The Evaluation concludes that HRVNHA has expended funds in alignment with the goals and objectives specified in its authorizing legislation and management plan. HRVNHA's cumulative funding from NPS remains below the authorized amount of \$15 million.

Between 1996 and 2011, resource preservation efforts included providing Greenway Council grants of \$2,355,424 and Greenway Conservancy grants of \$1,219,401 to partners. As a result, partners leveraged an additional \$9 million to match Council grants and \$5 million to match Conservancy grants. Providing places for recreational activities is a focus of the Greenway Communities Council and Greenway Conservancy. Activities have included developing water trails and trail amenities, providing technical assistance to communities, developing programs, holding recreational events, and producing maps and guides.

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The work of HRVNHA contributes to the mission of the NPS by extending the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation in the Valley. The NPS Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites is a key partner of the HRVNHA providing technical and financial assistance by hosting workshops, board meetings, and serving on advisory committees. The NPS sites are major destinations in the area and serve as de facto visitor centers. Teaching the Hudson Valley was established in partnership with NPS sites. NPS also provides assistance through the Northeast Regional Office.

HRVNHA is sustained by partnerships including local governments, State agencies, business development organizations, and regional and community organizations. New York State appropriated funds to support and staff the Greenway. Other Federal sources included funding for the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial, Save America's Treasures, National Endowment for the Arts, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). If NPS funding is discontinued, progress will be slowed and some activities may cease. The basic structure of the State-supported Greenway would likely remain if other sources of funding continue.

The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area is fulfilling its legislative mandate. With appropriate authorization, a range of options exists for NPS involvement in supporting the heritage area including providing financial and technical assistance, coordinating training, providing operational guidance and guidance on long-term sustainability planning, partnering with National Parks, or consulting on preservation, conservation, and plans.

An identical letter is being sent to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate; the Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, United States House of Representatives; and the Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Natural Resources, United States House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

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Michael Bean
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Charles Schumer
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
The Honorable Eliot Engel
The Honorable Christopher Gibson
The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Sean Maloney
The Honorable Paul Tonko
The Honorable Tom Udall
The Honorable Ken Calvert
The Honorable Betty McCollum



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Committee on Natural Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Committee on Natural Resources
House of Representatives
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