



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

H32(2257)

FEB 17 2015

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

Dear Chairman:

Pursuant to Public Law 110-229, I am pleased to transmit the *Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area Evaluation Findings* (Tennessee Evaluation). The National Park Service (NPS) engaged the consultant 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 (NHA). Based on the findings of the Tennessee Evaluation, and as required by Section 462(c) of Public Law 110-229, the NPS recommends a future role with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (TCWNHA). NPS will work with the TCWNHA to implement business, fundraising, and financial resource development plans, and form networks of operational and financial partnerships to further long-term sustainability of TCWNHA operations.

The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (TCWNHA) tells the story of how the Civil War and Reconstruction impacted the area. In creating the heritage area in 1996, Congress wished to bring together municipalities, agencies, and organizations across Tennessee to ensure that the heritage of the Civil War and Reconstruction were preserved, conserved, and interpreted. Funding was dependent on completion of a Compact that was signed by the Governor of Tennessee and the Department of the Interior in 1999. The Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) at Middle Tennessee State University was selected as the coordinating entity. CHP partnered with stakeholders to create a master plan. In 2002, NPS allocated funds for a management plan that was completed in 2005.

CHP has accomplished its legislated purposes and goals of the management plan focusing on resource and historic conservation, education and interpretation, heritage tourism, research and dissemination, and community engagement and impact. A Professional Services and Planning program is the core of CHP's activities. CHP developed a collaborative model of partnerships and matching grants to promote involvement.

Resource and historic preservation of buildings and properties accounted for 22 percent of CHP's work from 2001-2011. CHP provided grants and helped partners plan, research, and

acquire historical and preservation skills. As of 2011, CHP conducted 306 consultations to raise the visibility of sites, and increase volunteer time, visitation, and donations

Forty-five percent of CHP's work focuses on education and interpretation activities. Leveraging NPS funds with a \$1 million grant from the Tennessee Department of Tourism Development, CHP created exhibits for 14 State Welcome Centers to increase understanding of the Civil War. CHP also funded 107 activities and sponsored 64 workshops during the study period, such as a symposia series with Stones River National Battlefield. CHP coordinated publication of 51 reports and publications including *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* with over 1,500 entries from 560 authors. CHP supports websites such as *Shades of Gray and Blue*, a project with Walker Library and Vanderbilt University Libraries, and *The Looking Back: The Civil War in Tennessee* project with the Tennessee State Library and Archives. The project brought experts to over 30 communities to digitize over 7,000 documents, photos, and artifacts.

To achieve the TCWNHA heritage tourism mission, the Evaluation found that CHP offers services to organizations for economic development, including projects on sites that were critical to the emergence of a free African American community and the civil rights movement. Awareness of African American heritage was created through tours, National Register listings, exhibits, and symposia. Through trails and byways, CHP promotes 16 trails with 234 markers to promote attractions. CHP partnered with Mississippi River Corridor-Tennessee, Inc. on a National Scenic Byways grant from the Federal Highway Administration to promote tourism.

NPS staff members from Stones River National Battlefield, Shiloh National Military Park, and the Southeast Regional Office were members of the teams that prepared the 1999 Compact, 2001 master plan, and 2005 management plan. CHP works collaboratively with Stones River National Battlefield, Andrew Johnson National Historic Site and National Cemetery, the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, and Shiloh National Military Park. CHP's relationship with the NPS has been a positive, long-lasting and mutually beneficial partnership, based on exchanges of resources, assistance, and planning.

Although designated in 1996, TCWNHA did not receive NPS funding until 2001. From 2001-2011, TCWNHA received \$3,485,605 in NPS Federal funds that were matched with \$4,687,219 from State and local organizations. CHP exceeded the one to one Federal funding match requirements at a ratio of 1 to 1.25. As a department of the Middle Tennessee State University, CHP does not engage in fundraising, although it requires grant recipients to match grants by 50 percent. CHP successfully leveraged the NPS dollars to attract funding from other sources. TCWNHA's funding is well below the authorized limit of \$15 million.

The Tennessee Evaluation found that the TCWNHA coordinating entity, CHP, has sustainable components including a Board and administrative structures. It generates revenue from non-Federal sources, which could provide some continuity in funding should the NPS funds be reduced or eliminated. However, the Tennessee Evaluation states that the non-Federal funds will not completely replace the NPS funds that supported grants. While CHP may be able to continue with the support of the University, the heritage area activities potentially would be reduced. Middle Tennessee State University and the CHP provide substantial in-kind resources including oversight for contracts, technology, and projects. Both the NPS funding and the NHA

designation are seen as valuable to partners, providing credibility and a sense of pride for communities, and attracting investors.

The TCWNHA is fulfilling its legislative mandate. Based on the positive results of the Tennessee Evaluation, the NPS recommends a future role with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. With appropriate authorization, a range of options exists for the NPS involvement including: providing financial and technical assistance, coordinating training, providing operational guidance and guidance on long-term sustainability planning, partnering with National Parks for events and programming, consulting on preservation and conservation, and consulting on area plans and projects.

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,



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

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander
The Honorable Bob Corker
The Honorable David Roe
The Honorable John Duncan, Jr
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The Honorable Scott DesJarlais
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Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Michael Bean
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