

Testimony for the record

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**Submitted to
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives**

April 10, 2013

Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member Moran, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the Heritage Partnership Programs, a component of the National Recreation and Preservation programs administered by the National Park Service (NPS). I thank the Committee for your demonstrated support of the National Heritage Areas (NHAs) over the years. We appreciate the fact the Committee recognized the need to increase the funding for the National Heritage Areas Program in FY 14 providing additional support to all NHAs and recognizing the accomplishments of the longstanding NHAs. Building on that appropriation, please note that before the start of FY 15, several National Heritage Areas will have successfully completed their management plans and will begin undertaking implementation projects. This “population growth” will necessitate a total appropriation of \$20 million for the upcoming year, while the actual requirement for the program when taking into account the increasing needs of the NHAs in the early stages of implementation would reach \$22 million. Although this represents an increase, it is relatively modest recognizing the existing authorizations more than double that amount. Also, the NPS will need appropriate funding support for administration and technical assistance.

I am Allen Sachse and I am the past (retired) President of the Delaware & Lehigh NHC (D&L) in eastern PA. I presently serve the D&L in an advisory capacity and in that role I represent the D&L on the Board of Directors of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA). The Board of the ANHA has elected me as Chair, which I serve in a voluntary capacity. Prior to the D&L, I work with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and was involved in the creation and management of the Pennsylvania Heritage Areas program. Throughout most of my professional life I have had the good fortune of engaging with partners facing the challenges and seeing the benefits of bringing community conservation and heritage development together.

As you know, NHAs are grassroots, community-driven organizations that enhance local economic development by bringing to life historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, and heritage tourism projects for a fraction of the cost of a traditional national park. By working with business and civic leaders, the NHA significantly compounds the effectiveness of federal tax dollars by routinely leveraging these dollars four-fold or more.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, we all recognize and appreciate the challenges of managing the federal budget. No doubt, for the foreseeable future, the fiscal limitations will continue to affect all federal agencies, not just the NPS. However, the American public has shown no sign of tiring of their national parks or desiring reductions in park opportunities. To the contrary, there is a demand for more service and accessibility to our public lands, especially near centers of population. So as we approach the second century of the NPS, how do we address these seemingly incongruent realities? A major part of the answer is that the NPS will be required to expand its current level and use of public/private partnerships. The national heritage area model is a public/private partnership model which has over-time been proven to work.

The NPS has a daunting mission of preserving the resources and interpreting the most significant American stories. No doubt, Jon Jarvis, Director of the NPS, recognized the contribution NHAs are capable of when he stated, *“National Heritage Areas are places where small investments pay huge dividends, providing demonstrable benefits in communities across the country and in partnership with our national Parks.”*

Through my work, I developed a keen interest in this country’s early industrial transportation system of canals. So when visiting the District of Columbia, I often will stay in the Georgetown neighborhood. This affords me the opportunity in the evening to enjoy the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park (C&O). The NPS does an exceptional job of preserving this tremendous asset with a modest operation and maintenance budget of approximately \$9.3 million. However, as impressed as I am by the care and interpretation of the C&O, it is still difficult for people to truly understand how important canals were in the 19th century to the growth and development of this nation.

Early canals connected many of the inland towns to the major maritime cities. They were financed by both private capital and public funds. Often the engineers were presented unprecedented challenges of geography in the design and construction. Construction required a massive labor force, which was not readily available. Canals provided water power for mills; canals move massive amounts coal and other raw materials to manufacturers of industrial products; canals transported the manufactured products to the consumers, improving commerce and trade; canals became the means to grow and expand our young nation. Canals linked the eastern markets to the Great Lakes and then on to the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys. There are seven NHAs whose stories emanate from canals – Augusta Canal, Blackstone River Valley, Delaware & Lehigh, Erie Canalway, Illinois & Michigan, Ohio and Erie Canalway, and Schuylkill River. Each of these NHAs is working in partnership with the NPS, state, and local agencies to preserve and tell this nationally significant story. Collectively, the seven NHAs received approximately \$3.7 million in NPS Heritage Partnership funding in fiscal year 2014. Granted, one cannot accurately compare the cost of managing any given mile of a historic canal to another, for the resources truly differ. However, one can easily see that local ownership and multiple partners sharing the management responsibility can pay real dividends to the NPS as they face the challenge of preserving and sharing the stories of transportation, industrial growth, capital, immigration, labor, settlement, and more. However, it is equally important to note that because of the entrepreneurial nature of most NHAs the local partners also reap the

benefits of this partnership by creating and supporting local jobs through investments in their community and heritage tourism. Regrettably many of this nation's historic canals have been lost to time and neglect. These seven systems were also vulnerable, but because of the partnership work of these NHAs much has been saved for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

These seven NHA partnerships are conserving approximately 1,000 miles of historic canal corridors and in the process saving miles of watered canal. Today these historic canals and towpaths are becoming tomorrow's network of trails and blue ways connecting population centers to parks and historical sites of national, state, and local importance. The waterfront towns along the way are experiencing re-purposed buildings and preserved neighborhoods. This is all accomplished by leveraging the collective resources and the partners' commitment to preserving their shared heritage and sense of place.

There are many lessons to be learned about partnership management by studying the successes of the program as it has evolved over the past three decades. At the request of Congress, the NPS commissioned a series of evaluations of nine of the longstanding NHAs. The work was completed by Westat, an external evaluation firm. The evaluations have been completed and the findings verify the accomplishments of the nine NHA partnerships to address the purpose defined in the legislative language and the original designation; the NHAs ability to leverage additional funds to meet program and infrastructure needs 4-1 (local to federal) in most cases; the NHAs employed sound management & fiscal responsibility; the NHAs relied on public participation and created partnerships to carry out the work; the partners preserved nationally significant resources; and the NPS was an invaluable partner.

The travel is a major component of the nation's economy and we sometimes overlook the fact that heritage tourism represents a significant portion of the industry. The heritage traveler includes both domestic and foreign visitors, all wanting to explore and learn more about America. Although NHAs are lived-in landscapes, they are places of authenticity where the stories of America are told and visitors want to explore.

In February 2013, the Northeast Regional Office of the NPS (NER NPS) released a report titled, ***The Economic Impact of National Heritage Areas***. The NER NPS partnered with the ANHA and the Heritage Development Partnership to measure the economic impact of the NHA partnership work of within the region. Tripp Umbach, a nationally recognized firm specializing in research, strategy planning and impact analysis, was commissioned to undertake the study. Data collection occurred in six NHA used as case studies from among the 21 within the northeast region. The subsequent estimates and projections were made using IMPLAN economic impact software. The analysis and projections demonstrated that –

- The 21 NHAs within the Northeast Region of the United States combine for a projected annual economic impact of \$5.4 billion. The NHAs in the Northeast Region support more than 66,880 jobs and generate \$602.7 million in local and state taxes.
- Additional analysis extrapolates the economic benefit of all NHA sites in the United States. The projected annual economic benefit of all 49 NHA sites on the nation's

economy is \$12.9 billion. The economic activity supports nearly 150,000 jobs and \$1.2 billion in Federal taxes from sources such as employee compensation, proprietor income, indirect business tax, households, and corporations.

Mr. Chairman, in August 1984, President Regan signed into law the Illinois & Michigan National Heritage Corridor – the nation’s first NHA. This new and bold partnership approach was meant to bring together the interest of preservation, conservation, recreation, and economic development for the first time. The model will continue to evolve, but there is little doubt the NHA partnerships are working. I thank the Committee for your past support and ask for your continued support as you finalize FY 15 Interior Appropriations.