

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Fact Sheet: Planning Together for a Proposed Nation's Oldest Port National Heritage Area

A "National Heritage Area" is a place designated by the United States Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These areas tell nationally important stories about our nation and are representative of the national experience through both the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved within them.

Overview

There are 40 National Heritage Areas (NHA) in the country. The first one was designated in 1984. The 3 newest areas were designated in 2008.

A National Heritage Area is designated by Congress. Technical assistance for National Heritage Areas is managed at the federal level through the National Park Service, but most individual Areas are coordinated at the local level by local stakeholders through a 501(c) 3. Land ownership (private, city, state, or federal) does not change upon designation.

A National Heritage Area is eligible for up to \$10 million in federal matching grants during its first 15 years of designation. Matching grants stimulate economic potential through heritage tourism development, heritage education, and resource conservation. FY2006 Interior appropriations law contained \$13.3 million for the 27 National Heritage Areas at that time.

National Heritage Areas function like business enterprise zones. They work through coordination and promotion, not regulation. They leverage resources and provide grants and technical support to communities interested in preserving and celebrating their heritage resources, but do not adversely affect those who are not interested.

Over the life of the program, National Heritage Area grants have leveraged funding from other sources at a ratio of 1:8 (Source: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/REP/perfmeas.pdf>)

National Heritage Area designation bills are generally popular in both houses of Congress. (Major National Heritage Area Bills and Congressional action since 2000 as found on Thomas <http://thomas.loc.gov/>)

Proposed National Heritage Area

The proposed geophysical boundary of the National Heritage Area follows three main, interconnected watersheds (Tolomato, Matanzas, and Pellicer Creek) of the region, including areas of Flagler and St. Johns Counties, and extend three miles offshore into the Atlantic Ocean to include Florida's territorial waters.

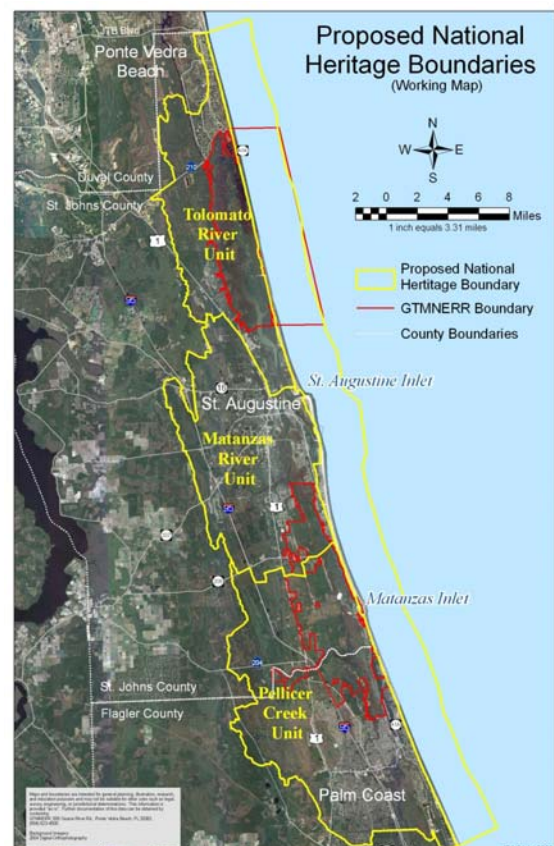
Working Group

Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum, Flagler County, St. Johns County, Florida Sea Grant, the Friends of A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Byway, and the Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Program are coordinating the feasibility and public outreach process. This Working Group is open, growing, and others are encouraged to participate.

Timeline

The timeline for designating the proposed National Heritage Area follows:

- 2008 - 2010 Planning, public outreach and community education. Community meetings for input to the feasibility study began in April 2008 and will continue throughout the process.
- 2008 - 2010 Detailed resource assessment and theme development will be conducted in concert with local entities.
- 2009 - 2010 A draft feasibility study document will be prepared and presented for comment.
- 2011 - 2012 A final feasibility study and draft legislation



will be prepared for submission to Congress.

Economic and Community Impacts of National Heritage Areas

National Heritage Areas promote and attract heritage tourism, a fast-growing segment of the total tourism market. A 2004 Michigan State University study estimates that 25,000 additional daytrips per year from heritage tourists outside the region brings in \$850,000 and creates 22 jobs. If tourists stay overnight, their impact grows to \$5.2 million dollars and 138 jobs. (Source: <http://web4.msue.msu.edu/mgm2/default.htm>)

Some individuals can be concerned about National Heritage Areas affecting private property rights. National Heritage Area Designation brings no additional laws or regulations regarding development, coastal or beach access, or any other type of land-use activity. In its draft legislation, the proposed National Heritage Area will specifically exclude property acquisition, including development rights or other interests on real property.

A 2004 Government Accounting Office report could not find "...any examples of a heritage area directly affecting – positively or negatively – private property use." (Source: www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/LEG/gao_report.pdf, pg. 4)

Grants benefit residents and tourists alike, as can be seen by the following list of projects existing National Heritage Areas have supported.

- Murals, festivals, musical and dance performances, radio programs, television series, and new plays about the region
- Small business development
- Recreational trail development or maintenance
- Brochures, signage, maps and other materials to aid tourists (and residents!) in discovering and enjoying the region
- Natural areas clean-up and restoration
- Website development for local agencies
- New books about the region's historical figures or role in major national events
- Historic site renovation or stabilization
- Museum, library, traveling, and other public exhibits
- Workshops
- Student photographic and oral history projects
- Architectural re-use studies

Additional Information

Website in progress: www.floridanha.com

National Park Service

General Info <http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/>

Legislation & Designation <http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/LEG/index.htm>

Articles & Research Publications <http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/REP/research.htm>

Congressional Research Service

CRS Issue Brief for Congress *Heritage Areas: Background, Proposals, and Current Issues*
https://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/LEG/gao_report.pdf

Contact:

Leslie White, Heritage Area Officer, St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum, 765-610-1684, email:
lwhite@staugustinelighthouse.com