



Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is a National Heritage Area and how many exist?**
 - National Heritage Areas and Corridors, like the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, are places where natural, historic, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape. The U.S. Congress designates National Heritage Areas and Corridors for their capacity to describe nationally important stories about the evolution of our nation. There are currently 40 National Heritage Areas and Corridors in the United States.

2. **How many people in New York State live within the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and how will improvements affect them?**
 - Over 80 percent of the population of upstate New York lives within the Corridor, which mirrors the traditional settlement pattern along the Erie Canal.
 - The Corridor's commission and staff collaborate with the Erie Canalway's 234 communities to protect this treasured cultural and historic resource and to promote the NYS Canal System as a recreation destination for today's visitors.
 - National designation also brings with it a variety of benefits, including technical and financial support from the National Park Service. Federal financial assistance provides valuable "seed" money that leverages other funds from state, local, and private sources. The region also benefits from use of the widely recognized National Park Service arrowhead logo in acknowledgment of the Corridor's national significance.

3. **What are the benefits of a partnership approach to heritage development?**
 - Partnerships among public, private, and nonprofit sectors are essential in defining and implementing goals for the Corridor. Local residents play a valuable role in voicing needs and implementing management strategies for the region.
 - Preserving and celebrating the Corridor's distinct heritage also includes establishing regional linkages, such as trails, critical building restoration, and developing a coordinated approach to interpreting the region's stories.
 - Partnering also provides opportunities to leverage financial and in-kind resources and reduces the possibility of duplicating efforts. There is also no federal land ownership authorized with the program, so partners are essential to hosting visitor facilities.

4. **How are National Heritage Areas managed?**

- The management entity outlined in federal legislation may be a state or local agency, a federal commission, or a private non-profit corporation. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor is managed by a federal commission. The management entity is empowered to create and implement a management plan for the heritage area and is authorized to receive federal funds.

5. **What is the role of National Park Service?**

- Since 1916, the National Park Service has been the federal agency responsible for preserving nationally significant natural and historic resources for present and future generations. National Heritage Areas allow the National Park Service to fulfill this mission without acquiring or managing additional lands.
- After a heritage area is designated by Congress, National Park Service staff are enlisted as partners with local community activists in planning and implementing heritage area activities. The National Park Service enters into a cooperative agreement with the local parties. The cooperative agreement defines mutually shared goals, and serves as the legal vehicle through which federal funds can be passed to management entities.

6. **Are there examples of National Heritage Area success stories the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor might wish to emulate?**

- Yes, there are many. For example, *The Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area* located in Southwestern Pennsylvania, interprets the industrial heritage and the contributions of immigrants who settled in the region to pursue job opportunities created by the steel industry. Its staff recently created *Routes to Roots*, a full-color print and on-line driving guide to the seven-county Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area. *Routes to Roots* highlights “must-see” sites and pinpoints destinations for travelers interested in arts and architecture, folk crafts and music, industrial history, the outdoors, regional foods, and shopping experiences.
- The *Essex National Heritage Area*, located north of Boston, coordinates *Trails and Sails: A Weekend of Walks and Water*, an annual weekend event in late September that provides residents and tourists with opportunities to experience the region’s resources and heritage through tours and open houses. Events and marketing are geared toward residents in the region. All events are free, and some events are at sites that are only open to the public a few times a year.
- The *Augusta Canal National Heritage Area*, an 8.5 mile-long working canal and towpath in eastern Georgia, is the nation’s only industrial power canal still in use for its original purpose. The August Canal Authority has achieved several major administrative milestones and capital improvements totaling nearly \$34 million dollars in public and private investments over the past 10 years. Initiatives capitalize on resource stewardship, education, and interpretation to generate income for current and future operations and programs.