



Washington State

NATIONAL MARITIME HERITAGE AREA

Feasibility Study

Washington State's coastal areas, from the Pacific to the Strait to the Sound, have been defined by their relationship to saltwater – our maritime heritage.

Canoe cultures, the age of exploration, commercial traffic from tall ships to container ships, fishing, ferries, recreational boating, working docks and boatbuilding– Our maritime heritage and culture have shaped western Washington and are an important part of the our shared national story.



The National Heritage Area program supports local organizations working to promote their communities and celebrate their history.

With 49 National Heritage Areas currently designated, the program has nationwide participation. The program is not regulatory; instead, it provides resources and national recognition to make local organizations more successful.



Would designation as a National Maritime Heritage Area benefit Washington communities?



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Why consider becoming a National Heritage Area?



Support local communities by promoting heritage tourism.

Designation as a National Heritage Area would attract new visitors, improve marketing, and encourage local economic development.



Support local heritage organizations.

Museums, interpretive centers, historical societies, and other heritage organizations would attract more paying visitors, be more competitive for grant funding, be more effective in growing their membership, and could possibly receive direct funding through the Heritage Areas program for capital improvements or operations.



Support contemporary working waterfronts.

Today's waterfronts are as much a part of our maritime heritage as historic ships or lighthouses. Designation as a National Heritage Area would raise awareness of the value of our working waterfronts, and the role they have played in shaping our communities and building our economy.



Support healthy marine waters.

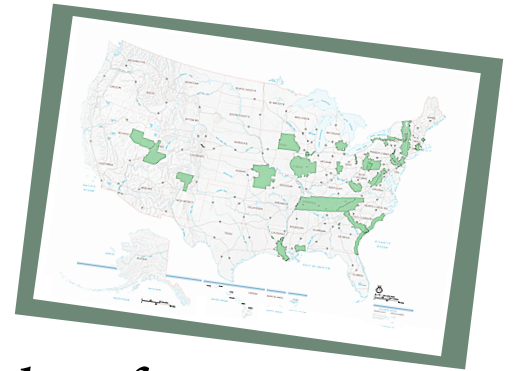
Large segments of our maritime economy rely on healthy marine waters. Maintaining and restoring the health of Washington's marine ecosystems is an important part of the story of our maritime heritage.



What is a National Heritage Area?

Established in the mid-1980s, the National Heritage Area program recognizes the best examples of our nation's cultural and historic heritage.

There are currently 49 designated National Heritage Areas from the southeast to Alaska.



Other heritage areas celebrate examples of early European settlements, revolutionary and civil war heritage, early industry and transportation, and similar chapters in our nation's history.

National Heritage Areas are initiated and managed by local groups and designated by Congress at the request of local citizens and governments.

The National Park Service evaluates the eligibility of a region to become a National Heritage Area and, if designated, assists the local management group.



How are National Heritage Areas formed?



The process begins with local supporters investigating whether becoming a National Heritage Area could benefit their region.

Next, a Feasibility Study is prepared to document the heritage resources, public support, and ability of a local group to manage a National Heritage Area.

If the Feasibility Study shows that the proposed area meets the criteria, it is sent to the National Park Service for review, then to Congress to request designation.

Congress drafts and passes legislation to designate the heritage area.

After designation, the local management group completes a detailed management plan to show how the Heritage Area programs will be completed.



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What are the boundaries of the Heritage Area?

The National Maritime Heritage Area would include Washington's saltwater coastline from Grays Harbor County to the Canadian border. It would also extend through Seattle's Ship Canal to include Lake Union.

The proposed boundary for the heritage area includes the area 1/4 mile landward of the shoreline.

Areas zoned for residential use would not be included in the designation.

Any local, state, tribal, or national park unit, public shoreline, national wildlife refuge, or WA DNR land that allows public access and is at least partly located within 1/4 mile of the shoreline would be included in its entirety.

Any designated historic district at least partly located within 1/4 mile of the shoreline would be included in its entirety.


Heritage sites not within 1/4 mile of the shoreline can be nominated for inclusion.

National Heritage Areas are not regulatory. Inclusion within the Heritage Area has no regulatory effect on land use or other property rights.






What heritage resources would be featured in the Heritage Area?




Heritage resources are places and facilities open to the public where visitors can learn about and experience Washington's maritime heritage.



Heritage resources are located throughout the proposed Heritage Area, and each part of the Heritage Area would be featured in visitor information.



Participation in Heritage Area programs is completely voluntary— only facilities wishing to allow access or be identified as part of the Heritage Area will be.



Currently active heritage organizations –that operate museums, historic vessels, interpretive centers, and similar visitor facilities– are also likely to be most active in a Heritage Area.

Types of Heritage Resources:

- ✦ *Museums and Interpretive Centers*
- ✦ *Historic Vessels (with public access)*
- ✦ *Maritime Education & Activity Centers*
- ✦ *Maritime Events*
- ✦ *Lighthouses & Locks*
- ✦ *Ferries and Public Passenger Vessels*
- ✦ *Waterfront Communities*
- ✦ *Public Places with Great Maritime Stories*





Maritime Heritage Resources




Museums and interpretive centers

Often operated by non-profit organizations or historic societies, some facilities focus on maritime heritage, while others feature maritime heritage as one of several subjects. Examples include the Puget Sound Navy Museum in Bremerton, the Bellingham International Maritime Museum, and the Squaxin Island Tribe's Museum, Library and Research Center.



Historic vessels with public access

Historic vessels from all eras of our maritime history are displayed around the proposed Heritage Area. Visiting these vessels provides a direct connection to the people who sailed them and the times they were actively plying the seas. Examples include the U.S.S. Turner Joy in Bremerton, the Virginia V in Seattle, and the W.T. Preston snagboat in Anacortes.



Maritime education and activity centers

Part of our living maritime heritage, these centers keep old craft skills alive, and offer hands-on maritime experiences. Examples include the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding in Port Hadlock, the Center for Wooden Boats' facilities on Lake Union and Camano Island, and programs like the Sea Scouts of Tacoma and Sound Experience, operator of the Adventuress.



Maritime events

From small community heritage festivals to major events, annual gatherings like Tribal Journeys, Tacoma's Tall Ships festival, Seattle's Maritime festival, and many others give residents and visitors great reasons to visit the waterfront and celebrate maritime heritage.





Maritime Heritage Resources (cont.)



Lighthouses and Locks

People love lighthouses, and few things are as closely identified with maritime heritage as these unique structures that dot our coastlines from Grays Harbor to the northernmost San Juans. Seattle's Chittenden locks, a similar maritime-themed facility, is a favorite destination for out-of-town visitors.



Ferries and Public Passenger Vessels

A direct descendant of the Mosquito Fleet, Washington State DOT operates the largest ferry fleet in the United States. A trip on a ferry offers a truly unique experience for visitors to the region. Other large passenger vessels, from the Black Ball Ferry line out of Port Angeles to the Alaska Ferry System and the growing cruise ship presence in the region, provide diverse opportunities for water-based exploration of our region and beyond.



Waterfront Communities

Many of the communities in the proposed Heritage Area have a strong relationship to water and waterfronts. Whether it's Victorian Captains' homes on the bluff in Port Townsend or the Fairhaven historic district, communities have stories to tell about their history and their contemporary relationships to their saltwater shorelines.



Public places with great maritime stories

In some places the significant events of the past can be understood through intact artifacts and graceful interpretation; in others there is no sign of history passing by. However, just being in the real place where Vancouver's ship anchored, or sentries spent lonely nights watching for enemy ships during WW II is a powerful way to experience some of the most significant events of our region's history.





Potential Benefits of National Heritage Area Designation

Growing **heritage tourism** through improved national awareness of the region, coordinated tourism promotion, and improved tourism products (for example travel itineraries and packages.)

Promoting **economic development** by increasing visitor expenditures, creating jobs and support for local businesses and services, and diversifying the local economy

Supporting **healthier marine ecosystems** through organizational partnerships and linking ecosystem health, maritime history, and economic development

Enhancing **pride of place** due to increased awareness of maritime resources and working waterfronts

Building and strengthening **partnerships** among heritage organizations, local jurisdictions, marine businesses, and recreational users of maritime resources

Improving access to potential **federal funding** and increasing competitiveness for **grant programs**

Bringing **National Park Service support** for projects and operations



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Potential Concerns About National Heritage Area Designation




Most concerns about Heritage Area designation have focused on potential regulatory and property impacts.



The National Heritage Area program has no regulatory intent.



National Heritage Areas have no regulatory authority or impact.



National Heritage Area management organizations do not have eminent domain authority and are not allowed to acquire property with any federal funding provided by the NHA Program.

Heritage areas do not appear to have affected property owners' rights. In fact, the designating legislation of 13 areas and the management plans of at least 6 provide assurances that such rights will be protected.

United States General Accounting Office Report, 2004





Managing the National Heritage Area

The feasibility study must demonstrate that the Heritage Area will have an effective, stable management organization. Based on work with stakeholders so far, the management organization is likely to be an existing non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that would take on the Heritage Area as a new program.



Role of the Management Organization

The management organization of a National Heritage Area is responsible for:

- **Administration**—creating and administering a Management Plan for the Area
- **Coordination and Collaboration**—Facilitating dialogue and coordination among heritage organizations, jurisdictions, and industry partners
- **Economic Development and Tourism Promotion**—Creating a central information source and coordinating regional marketing initiatives to promote the NHA as a destination
- **Fundraising and Distribution**—Fundraising and grant writing, as well as grant making and funding distribution among participating organizations
- **Resource Preservation**—Promoting general public awareness of the value of maritime resources



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Fair, Representative, and Effective Management

✦ The management organization will likely be an existing non-profit organization with:

- A good track record of fundraising, stable management, professional staff, and execution of quality programs
- The capacity to absorb a new program

✦ The governance of the organization must represent the broad geographies and types of organizations included in the Area.

✦ Proposed mechanisms to achieve this include:

- An **advisory board** or **steering committee** with regional representatives from all partnership organizations, including maritime stakeholders and local jurisdictions
- **Subcommittees** or **working groups** to address particular issues such as tourism promotion campaigns or public education and open to any stakeholder who wishes to participate

The management organization will not:

- **Manage** stakeholder organizations, which remain independent
- Work for the **preservation** of a particular resource or take on a political advocacy role
- **Wield regulatory authority** or **eminent domain authority**
- **Acquire property** with any federal funding provided by the NHA program



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Draft Recommended Legislative Language


Many existing National Heritage Areas have included language in their designating legislation to clarify that designation is not intended to increase regulation. The following draft language is proposed for inclusion in the Washington State National Maritime Heritage Area Feasibility Study and designating legislation:

1. The overarching goal of designation is to encourage and strengthen partnerships and collaboration among maritime interests for the purpose of economic development and heritage tourism.
2. This designation recognizes that waterfronts are both a foundational part of Washington's heritage and dynamic places that are constantly adapting to new opportunities and technologies.
3. Designation is not intended to directly or indirectly regulate land use, public land policy, or private activity.
4. Federal law prohibits a designated national heritage area from the following:
 - a. Authorizing the management organization to regulate the right of any person with respect to private property or local zoning ordinance or land use plan.
 - b. Modifying, by enlarging or diminishing, the regulatory authority of any state, tribal or local government to regulate land use.





Next Steps



Following the Community Workshops, the project team will:

- Incorporate community feedback in a Draft Feasibility Study.
- Seek additional public and stakeholder input on the Draft.
- Revise and submit a Final Feasibility Study to the National Park Service by November 2009.



Stay Involved!

- Raise your questions and concerns with the project team.
- Sign a letter of support.
- Call and encourage a letter of support from:
 - Your state representative
 - Your city and county officials
 - Your Chamber of Commerce or local economic development or tourism promotion organization
 - Your local community service organizations, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Club, etc.
- Sign up to receive project emails and provide your feedback on the Draft Feasibility Study.

