

**SUSQUEHANNA GATEWAY**  
National Heritage Area

National Heritage Area Designation  
Feasibility Study Report

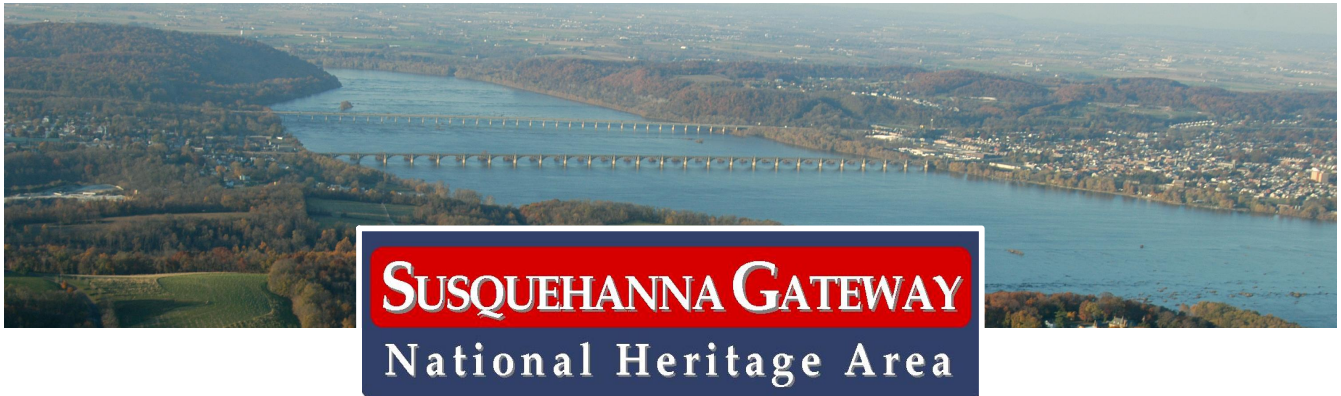
Prepared by  
The Lancaster-York Heritage Region  
Revised - September 2008

This Feasibility Study Report has been prepared by the Lancaster-York Heritage Region, a designated Pennsylvania Heritage Area, to document compliance with National Park Service National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines and support Congressional legislation for designation of the region as the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area.

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# SUSQUEHANNA GATEWAY National Heritage Area

## National Heritage Area Designation Feasibility Study Report

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### Executive Summary - A Place with a National Story to Share

According to the National Park Service, *“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 in them.”*

Throughout two centuries of American history, Lancaster and York Counties and the Susquehanna Gateway region have played a key role in the development of our nation’s political, cultural and economic identity.

The people of this region have advanced the cause of freedom and shared their agricultural bounty and industrial ingenuity with the world. The area’s town and country landscapes and natural wonders are visited and treasured by people from across the globe. The Susquehanna River has served the nation as a major fishery, transportation corridor, power generator and, most recently, as an outdoor recreation venue. The area’s people, land and waterways are essential parts of the national story. These qualities exemplify the National Park Service’s definition of a National Heritage Area.



*The significant role of the Susquehanna Gateway region in shaping American history and passing on a rich cultural and natural heritage exemplifies the values inherent in the National Heritage Areas program.*

The area’s people, land and waterways are essential parts of the national story. These qualities exemplify the National Park Service’s definition of a National Heritage Area.

The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area, currently known as the Lancaster-York Heritage Region, has been designated as a state heritage area by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania since 2001. The Lancaster-York Heritage Region, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation, serves as the Management Entity for the heritage area and has a seven-year track record of successful heritage development, particularly along the Susquehanna River corridor, located at the center of the region. The heritage area has substantial state and local funding support for operations and project development to match potential federal funding. The heritage area recently developed an updated Strategic Plan to further advance its mission and goals for enhancement of the region’s historic and cultural resources, including a primary strategic focus on creating an economically vital heritage and outdoor tourism asset based on the Lower Susquehanna River (see [Appendix A](#)).

Designation as a National Heritage Area is an important step in advancing the heritage area's Strategic Plan. National recognition will boost visibility and visitation and bring critical technical assistance and support to the region. The new identification as the "Susquehanna Gateway" area will also more effectively highlight and promote the majestic Susquehanna River, its scenic and fragile river lands, and its historic and vibrant river towns as central features of the region's potential as a prime heritage and outdoor traveler destination.



*The Susquehanna River and its historic river towns lie at the heart of the proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area.*

This *Feasibility Study Report* documents the Lancaster-York Heritage Region's qualifications for national designation based on the National Park Service's *National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Report Guidelines* and clearly demonstrates and finds that the interim criteria for National Heritage Area designation have been met. This report is drawn in part from the 1999 *Lower Susquehanna Heritage Area Feasibility Study* and the 2001 *Lancaster-York Heritage Region Management Action Plan*, well-researched resources that were prepared to qualify the region for designation as a Pennsylvania Heritage Area. These reports have been supplemented with more recent public engagement efforts and additional research into the area's national significance, which more specifically document the region's suitability for designation as a National Heritage Area.

National Park Service review of this report is requested in order to move forward with the introduction and passage of Congressional legislation to establish the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area, including the Lower Susquehanna River Corridor and all of Lancaster and York Counties in Pennsylvania, with the existing Lancaster-York Heritage Region organization serving as the Congressionally-designated Management Entity for the National Heritage Area.





# Chapter 1: Introduction

## a. Purpose of the Study

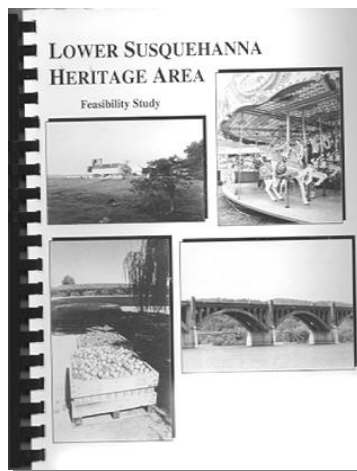
This *Feasibility Study Report* has been undertaken by the Lancaster-York Heritage Region in order to demonstrate compliance with the National Park Service's *National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines* and achieve National Heritage Area (NHA) designation by Congress. This report is intended for use by the National Park Service to assess the Lancaster-York Heritage Region's qualifications for designation by Congress as the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area.

## b. The Study Process

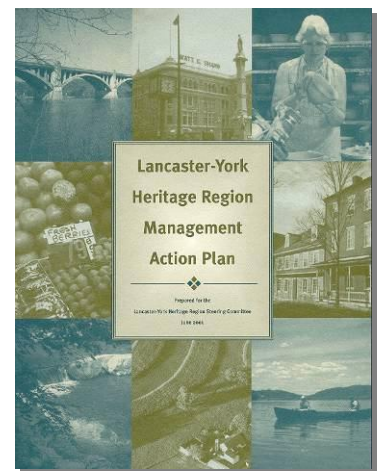
The Susquehanna Gateway region has been designated as an official Pennsylvania Heritage Area since 2001. The Lancaster-York Heritage Region is a Pennsylvania 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation and serves as the Management Entity for the existing state heritage area. The organization has a seven-year history of successful heritage development in the region.

State designation resulted from a multi-year planning process involving extensive public input and a collaborative assessment of heritage resources in Lancaster and York Counties. This process produced two key documents that have been used as sources of information and background for this *Feasibility Study Report* and are included by reference as Appendices:

1) The *Lower Susquehanna Heritage Area Feasibility Study* (1999) includes an historical overview, an assessment of existing conditions and resources, and recommendations for primary interpretive themes, goals, and management structure (see [Appendix B](#)).



2) The *Lancaster-York Heritage Region Management Action Plan* (2001) more specifically defines the themes, goals, organization and funding needed to initiate and manage the region as a designated Pennsylvania Heritage Area (see [Appendix C](#)).



The methodologies used to prepare these resources are included in each document. Public involvement in their development is summarized in Chapter 2, along with an overview of subsequent community engagement related to ongoing heritage area activities and the current National Heritage Area designation initiative.

A complete Statement of National Significance has also been developed to specifically document the region's eligibility and appropriateness for national designation. This statement, provided in Chapter 5, builds upon the extensive historical background and thematic structure developed for state designation and elevates those aspects of the region's heritage that are uniquely nationally significant to their proper context in the national story. The services of historian John S. Salmon of Richmond, VA, were engaged to research and prepare the Statement of National Significance.

National designation will advance the heritage area's goals by highlighting nationally-significant resources, boosting visibility and visitation, and bringing technical assistance and support to the region. Review of this study is requested as a critical step towards introduction and passage of legislation to establish the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area for these purposes.

### c. Description of the Study Area

The 1999 *Feasibility Study*, the 2001 *Management Action Plan*, and this *Feasibility Study Report* are based on a study area that includes all of Lancaster and York Counties in south-central Pennsylvania, with the Lower Susquehanna River as the central unifying physical feature of the region. Lancaster and York Counties share a rich natural and cultural history and played a significant role in American history. This common heritage presents exceptional opportunities for interpretation of the national story as it was impacted and shaped by the land and people of this unique geographical area. A map of the study area and proposed National Heritage Area boundaries is shown in [Appendix D](#).

### d. Coordination with Concurrent Studies and Efforts

As a designated Pennsylvania Heritage Area, the Lancaster-York Heritage Region has been a regional leader in the coordination of heritage and outdoor conservation efforts in partnership with other local, regional and state organizations, including the following recent initiatives:

- The heritage area works with the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership to implement the Greenway's Strategic Action Plan by serving as the contracted Regional Lead Organization for implementation of specific elements of the plan and supporting the Partnership with board development, education and outreach, regional organization and regional project development. A major recent initiative in support of the Greenway's goals has been the Lower Susquehanna River Greenway. This innovative public-private partnership is preserving and protecting significant portions of the Lower Susquehanna River's scenic and historic natural lands for public recreation, wildlife habitat, and sustainable heritage and outdoor tourism. Partners include the Lancaster-York Heritage Region, Lancaster County Conservancy, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, The Conservation Fund, and the PPL utility company.



- The heritage area is a partner with the Lancaster County and York County Planning Commissions in development of the Susquehanna River Corridor Master Plan. This project builds upon existing plans to provide a unified framework for conservation along the Lower Susquehanna. The framework is based on protecting landscapes to foster a diversity of ecological, social, and economic benefits, functions and values. The Susquehanna River Corridor Master Plan is being integrated with the Lancaster County Green Infrastructure Plan for consistency and implementation purposes. The Master Plan will serve as a model for implementing other corridor landscape plans identified by the overall Green Infrastructure Plan.

- The heritage area worked with the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership to achieve designation of the Susquehanna River Water Trail as a National Recreation Trail in 2008. This achievement involved coordination with Pennsylvania's Fish and Boat Commission and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, utility companies and other partners to nationally designate a significant section of Pennsylvania's longest water trail. The water trail is accessible by a wide range of users, is part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and has achieved national recognition by the American Canoe Association as a "Recommended Water Trail."



- The Lancaster County Heritage and York County Heritage programs have also recently been initiated in partnership with the heritage area. These programs evolved from the original Lancaster County Heritage program, started in 1994 by the Lancaster County Planning Commission as a way to designate local heritage resources as authentic sites, services, or events. This program has been a model for other communities across the nation. The Lancaster and York programs operate under the same criteria to determine a potential heritage resource's eligibility and both will include the same resource categories. The Lancaster-York Heritage Region partners with both programs to promote designated heritage resources, facilitate communication between the two programs and provide education and training opportunities.



#### e. Steps to be Undertaken at the Conclusion of the Study

This *Feasibility Study Report* has been prepared by the Lancaster-York Heritage Region, a designated Pennsylvania Heritage Area, to document compliance with National Park Service National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines and support Congressional legislation for designation of the region as a National Heritage Area.

The National Park Service is being asked to evaluate this locally-sponsored feasibility study and determine that the area qualifies for national designation. Upon request, the Lancaster-York Heritage Region is prepared to provide additional information in a timely manner. Once the National Park Service finds that the area meets the interim criteria for national designation, the heritage area requests that this finding be forwarded to appropriate Members of Congress as soon as feasible.

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region has already requested that legislation for Congressional designation of the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area be introduced in the United States Congress, subject to a favorable finding on the interim criteria by the National Park Service. After an appropriate bill is introduced, the appropriate House and Senate committees will schedule hearings on the legislation, after which the Lancaster-York Heritage Region will work with the bill's Congressional sponsors to advance the legislation for approval.



*The Lancaster-York Heritage Region is seeking approval of Congressional legislation to designate the region as the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area.*





## Chapter 2: Public Involvement Strategies

Beginning with the *Feasibility Study* and continuing through implementation of the *Management Action Plan* and concrete pursuit of designation as a National Heritage Area, strategic involvement of local citizens has remained a hallmark of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region's success. Community partnerships and public input have continued to advance the heritage area as new programs and projects have been developed and implemented over the past seven years.

Over these years, public participation has ranged from small focused committees of engaged stakeholders to public workshops and special events, from regular meetings of board members and advisory partners to the active participation of regional heritage and tourism communities. Most recently, a special focus on a robust process of public involvement has been underway related to the heritage area's pursuit of National Heritage Area designation. The strategic community engagement efforts of the heritage area are summarized here.



*Public involvement has been a key feature of the heritage area's planning and management.*

### Feasibility of Heritage Area Study Development

The Lancaster and York County Boards of Commissioners, together with the region's two county Planning Commissions, two Convention and Visitors Bureaus and the York County Chamber of Commerce, with grant support from the Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program, sponsored the original 1999 *Lower Susquehanna Heritage Area Feasibility Study*. The *Feasibility Study* assessed whether Lancaster and York Counties possessed the cultural, natural, and recreational resources needed to successfully interpret one or more aspects of Pennsylvania heritage and provided evidence of organizational capacity to implement regional heritage development initiatives.

A *Heritage Area Steering Committee* was selected to participate in the preparation of the study and was composed of individuals with a range of heritage-related interests, including:

- Sam Allen, Lancaster County Heritage Advisory Committee
- Tom Baldrige, Lancaster Alliance
- Brenda Barrett, PA Historical & Museum Commission
- Thomas Brant, York County Department of Parks & Recreation
- Sandra Butt, Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce
- David Carver, York County Industrial Corporation
- C. Alan Chace, PA Heritage Areas Program
- Felicia Dell, York County Planning Commission
- Michael A. Domin, Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Thomas Donley, York County Chamber of Commerce
- Anne Druck, York County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Allan Lerselius, PA Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Julie McNamara, Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Eric Menzer, York City Office of Economic Development
- John Mikewychok, Lancaster County Parks Department
- Chris Reilly, York County Board of Commissioners
- Charles Smithgall, City of Lancaster
- Jerry L. Spangler, PA Department of Community & Economic Development
- Scott W. Standish, Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Paul Thibault, Lancaster County Board of Commissioners
- Dan Witmer, Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry

A *Heritage Area Task Force* engaged stakeholders to help manage the work of the study's consulting team under the direction of John Milner Associates. The Task Force consisted of the above individuals plus additional community members, including:

Fred Abendschein	Bob Gingerich	W. Fred Kinsey III	Judith J. Saylor
Ginny Abendschein	Greg Good	Gary Lehman	Tom Shaffer
Larry Adams	Edward Goodhart	Gerald Lestz	Deidre Simmons
Mark Arbogast	Randy Harris	Gwen Loose	Tom Simmons
Gerald S. Book	Scott H. Haverstick	Sam Loth	Tom Smithgall
Joan Clippinger	Melinda Higgins	Patricia McCandless	Caroline Stauffer
Alice Crowl	Ken Hoak	Pat Nagle	Robert R. Stewart
Sonya M. Duncan	Lorraine Hovis	Carl L. Neff	John Symonds
Reed J. Dunn	Jack Loose	David Nikoloff	Jesse Taylor
Bill Ebel	Marshall Kaiser	Jim Parks	Tom Tillet
June Evans	Barry Kent	Roxanne Price	Rich Wood
Patrick Foltz	Mark Kimmel	Betty Rose	

Task Force meetings took place from April 1998 through June 1999, with two public workshops conducted in the spring and summer of 1998. The consulting team worked closely with the staff of the York and Lancaster County Planning Commissions to collect project information, coordinate meetings and workshops, and provide guidance about who the consulting team should interview. The Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Task Force and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources also assisted throughout the process, along with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

The consulting team undertook an ongoing process of gathering and gleaning information from the available literature. An abundance of information documenting the history and cultural traditions of the region was reviewed during the process, including local histories, historic resource surveys, Pennsylvania folk life data, economic development and tourism information, regional calendars of events, open space plans, natural resource inventories, and comprehensive plans. Numerous Planning Commission studies on heritage development issues proved helpful. The team supplemented these sources with input from eight-five individuals representing various heritage-related organizations.

## Management Action Plan Development

After completion and submittal to the state of the *Feasibility Study*, and at the request of the York and Lancaster County Boards of Commissioners, the two County Planning Commissions led a joint effort to prepare a *Management Action Plan* for the heritage area.

Involved citizens worked together with a team of professional planners, designers, historians and economists, led by Mary Means & Associates, to develop the plan. A *Steering Committee* of community leaders served as a project board throughout the plan's preparation. Working with this group of local historians, educators, and heritage site managers, five story themes emerged to explain the history and culture of the region. These themes are reviewed in Chapter 3.

The planning process took place over a sixteen-month period from 1999 to 2001. As the plan developed, the consultants conducted a large number of interviews, held numerous meetings with people from a wide range of interests and





facilitated two public workshops. Steering Committee meetings began in June 1999 and continued through January 2001, with a total of eight meetings held during this planning period.

The Steering Committee consisted of the following individuals and organizations:

- Sam Allen, Bube's Brewery
- Mark Arbogast, PPL/Holtwood Environmental Preserve
- Tom Baldrige, Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Brenda Barrett, National Park Service
- Mary Y. Bender, PA Department of Agriculture
- Thomas Brant, York County Department of Parks and Recreation
- Sandra Butt, Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce
- David Carver, York County Economic Development Corporation
- C. Alan Chace, PA Heritage Areas Program
- Lloyd Chapman, National Park Service
- Felicia Dell, York County Planning Commission
- Joseph DiBello, National Park Service
- Michael A. Domin, Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Thomas Donley, York County Chamber of Commerce
- Anne Druck, York County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Lucinda Hampton, Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Jack Howell, Lancaster Alliance
- Julie McNamara, The John Wright Company
- Eric Menzer, York City Office of Economic Development
- John Mikowychok, Lancaster County Parks Department
- Roseann Nikolaus, The National Watch & Clock Museum
- Gayle Petty-Johnson, York Heritage Trust
- Commissioner Chris Reilly, York County Board of Commissioners
- Thomas Ryan, Lancaster County Historical Society
- Mayor Charles Smithgall, City of Lancaster
- Jerry L. Spangler, Dept. of Community & Economic Development
- Scott W. Standish, Lancaster County Planning Commission, Project Coordinator
- Commissioner Paul Thibault, Lancaster County Board of Commissioners

*Management Committee* meetings of staff and consultants were also held concurrently with the Steering Committee meetings, with a total of four such meetings throughout the process.

A special *Interpretive Subcommittee* was also organized and meetings were held to develop and refine the interpretive framework which organized the plan. Members of the subcommittee included:

- Francis Velasquez, Nixon County Park
- Fummi Kennedy, African-American Experience
- Gayle Petty-Johnson, York County Heritage Trust
- June Evans, Susquehanna Piedmont Preservation Council
- Bill Wright, North Museum
- Steve Miller, Landis Valley Museum
- Sam Allen, Bube's Brewery
- Scott Standish, Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Thomas Ryan, Lancaster County Historical Society
- Tom Schaefer, Historian



*Heritage area planning involved stakeholders from many community constituencies in a variety of settings.*

*Key Stakeholder* interviews with forty-three individuals took place in March 2000 and *Focus Group* meetings and briefings were held in October 2000. *Public Workshops* were also held in each County - on January 31, 2001 at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster and on February 1, 2001 at Pennsylvania State University's York Campus. *Newsletters* were utilized as a communication tool throughout the planning process. Three issues of the newsletter, titled *Heritage Update*, were published and distributed in Summer 2000, Fall 2000 and Winter 2000-2001.

### Ongoing Public Engagement in Regional Heritage Development

Since designation as a state heritage area in 2001, the heritage area has engaged citizens and civic leaders in the implementation of heritage development programs and projects in a variety of ways:

**Board of Directors** – The heritage area’s Board of Directors is comprised of nineteen members, with eight members from each county in the heritage area representing civic and business leadership, each elected to serve a three-year term (see [Appendix E](#)). Additionally, there are three ex-officio Board members, including one voting representative from each of the two County Boards of Commissioners and one non-voting representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources. Since 2002, there have been thirty-three Board of Directors meetings. In addition to various committee meetings, the Board has also held one strategic planning retreat.



*Thirty-three meetings of the heritage area’s Board of Directors have been conducted since 2002.*

**Advisory Council** – This committee provides ongoing input and guidance to the heritage area’s staff and Board of Directors. It also provides members with resources for networking, collaboration on regional projects, project funding and exposure through the heritage area’s website. The twenty-eight member group is composed of leaders representing historical, tourism, preservation, commerce and recreational organizations, local businesses and state and local government (see [Appendix E](#)). The Council has conducted twenty-one quarterly meetings since March 2003, rotating to various heritage-related locations within the region. The Advisory Council represents organizations “in the field” that help achieve the heritage area’s mission and goals.

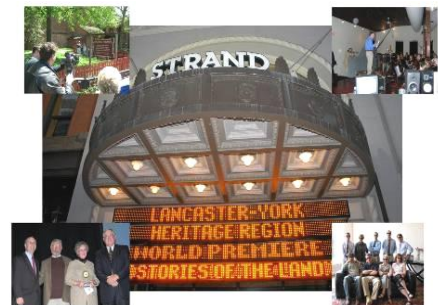
**Tours** – Providing tours for conferences, visiting officials and the public is an important part of heritage area activities. Since 2003 the heritage area has led various guided tours, including visits to Historic Pleasant Garden, the Lower Susquehanna River Greenway, African-American heritage sites in Columbia, and other heritage and outdoor tourism venues in the Susquehanna’s river towns.



*African-American heritage tours in Columbia.*

**Product Development** – Through collaborative efforts and partnerships the heritage area has been able to produce high quality heritage products that have been well-received by the public. These partnerships are often with Advisory Council members, businesses and other groups working through project committees. Public meetings are also held for key projects. The heritage area’s *Stories of the Land* visitor orientation film was developed with a committee and then showcased at a public premiere. The majority of the talent in the film, including the soundtrack musicians, was from the region.

Public meetings are also held for key projects. The heritage area’s *Stories of the Land* visitor orientation film was



*The Stories of the Land heritage film engaged residents of the region in a variety of ways.*

**Events** – The heritage area has hosted numerous events celebrating the rich history of the region. Some of these have included public release of heritage products, including a kayak trip to launch the Susquehanna River Water Trail Map and Guide and celebrations for the release the *Growing Traditions* guide to local agricultural heritage. Others included news conferences for major projects, such as the Lancaster and York County Heritage Programs and the River Towns Heritage Development Strategy.

In November 2005, the heritage area hosted a major event with state officials to launch *Pennsylvania Civil War Trails: Prelude to Gettysburg*. Additionally, for three years the heritage area has planned and coordinated full weekends of activities and special packaging around Civil War heritage to complement this state-led program. Other public events have included open houses and sponsorships of local conferences and forums where the heritage of the region has been celebrated.

### Community Support for National Heritage Area Designation

Public participation in heritage development activities has been crucial to the positive impact, success and growth of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region. The organization staunchly believes - and has effectively demonstrated - that strategic engagement of the public is the most effective means of raising awareness about the heritage area's mission and goals and building a broad base of support across the region. This successful record of public involvement is reflected in strong community support for designation of the region as a National Heritage Area. Community engagement to help build this base of support has taken place in a number of strategic ways outlined below, most recently culminating in a series of thoughtful and inclusive public meetings.



The heritage area's *Management Action Plan*, itself developed through an extensive public engagement process, specifically addressed the potential of the region for national designation:

*Of the National Heritage Areas across the country and the state designated heritage areas in Pennsylvania, the Lancaster-York region arguably surpasses these by far in terms of the quality, integrity, and national significance of the heritage resources.*

The plan also highlighted the need for building strong community support of federal designation in order for the effort to be successful in an area where government involvement is typically suspect.

The heritage area's strategies for engaging the community in heritage development over the past seven years have produced the strong regional network needed to support and sustain national designation. This is well reflected in the statements of support for designation of the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area received from key civic leaders and organizations representing a broad cross-section of the community (see [Appendix F](#)), including the following constituencies:

- The Lancaster-York Heritage Region Board of Directors, representing regional business, government and civic leadership committed to heritage development.
- The Boards of Commissioners of Lancaster and York Counties, representing bi-partisan regional political leadership supporting heritage development with funding and collaboration.
- Members of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region Advisory Council, representing twenty-eight community groups, companies and public agencies from across the region, including historical societies and heritage museums, historic preservation and land conservation trusts, downtown revitalization organizations, convention and visitors bureaus, planning commissions, parks and recreation departments, chambers of commerce and hospitality businesses.

These endorsements reach beyond those signing the statements, bridging to thousands of residents and hundreds of businesses that their organizations represent across the heritage area. Combined with the research and public involvement that went into the heritage area's original *Feasibility Study* and *Management Action Plan*, they affirm public support for national designation and demonstrate the region's readiness to advance the partnerships needed for success as a National Heritage Area.



## Public Meetings on National Heritage Area Designation

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region is very proud of its successful record of public involvement and it is reflected in strong community support for designation of the region as a National Heritage Area. While every aspect of the heritage area's work has always been informed by an active and engaged network of community partners, the heritage area's *Management Action Plan* specifically speaks to the region's readiness for designation as a National Heritage Area, and that focus demands a singular and substantive process for public involvement.

The leadership of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region recognizes through experience that the importance of public involvement in consideration for designation as a National Heritage Area can not be understated. According to the National Park Service, in order to be considered for designation "...a strong base of local, grassroots support is essential...with the visible involvement and commitment of key constituencies."



*National designation community meeting hosted by the Lancaster County Historical Society on July 28, 2008.*

To that end, the heritage area planned and executed a series of community events to garner input from its strong regional partnership network, including residents, government, community groups, non-profits, private businesses and the general public. The primary purposes of the gatherings were to look at the work of the heritage area through the spectrum of national significance, help to define the region's unique national story, identify significant assets, and show local support for designation as a National Heritage Area. Appendix G includes samples of meeting materials and presentations.

The events were held in the most central locations in the larger population centers of the heritage region. The first was hosted by the Lancaster County Historical Society in Lancaster, PA, and the next was hosted by the York County Heritage Trust in downtown York, PA. In the case of both events, the participation of the public far exceeded any and all estimates and expectations.

Community outreach for both meetings was extensive. In addition to sending well over 200 invitations to the typical heritage area mailing lists, e-mail blasts, web-based notices and personal contact from the organization's leadership were all employed to ensure participation of the citizenry. A sampling of those organizations and individuals notified about the meetings includes:

- Key elected officials from the region: Lancaster & York County Commissioners, all PA House & Senate members in both counties, U.S. Senators Arlen Specter and Robert P. Casey, Jr., Members of Congress Rep. Joseph Pitts and Rep. Todd Platts
- Friends of Heritage
- Lancaster York Heritage Region Advisory Council
- Lancaster York Heritage Region Board of Directors

**LANCASTER-YORK HERITAGE REGION**

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region, in collaboration with the Lancaster County Historical Society & York County Heritage Trust, cordially invites you to attend one of our community meetings about National Heritage Area designation for the region.

**We look forward to you joining us at one of the following community meetings:**

**Monday, July 28, 2008**  
Lancaster County Historical Society  
230 North President Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603

Or

**Wednesday, July 30, 2008**  
York County Heritage Trust  
250 East Market Street, York, PA 17403

**Both meetings are from 6:00 pm until 7:30 pm**  
**Doors open at 5:30 pm with light refreshments**

More information about the Lancaster-York Heritage Region is available on our website:  
[www.StoriesoftheLand.com](http://www.StoriesoftheLand.com)

Your ideas & suggestions are important to these discussions. This official designation would elevate people's understanding of our nationally significant stories & ensure their rightful place in American history.

The benefits of National Heritage Area designation include more economic development opportunities for our local communities, additional avenues for intergovernmental partnerships, & more ways of honoring & sharing our region's stories & great places.

*Community meeting invitation.*

- Downtown Inc. (York)
- Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County
- Historic York, Inc
- Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Lancaster Farmland Trust
- Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau
- York County Chamber of Commerce
- York County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- York County Heritage Trust
- York County Planning Commission



*Facilitator John Cosgrove discusses National Heritage Areas with community stakeholders at the York County Heritage Trust.*

As it typically receives well over a thousand hits per month, an announcement appeared on the Lancaster York Heritage Region’s website, with an entire page dedicated to sharing information about the public meetings. An e-mail blast with information about the meetings was distributed throughout the heritage area’s regional partnership network with a pdf file announcement attached. The comprehensive and inclusive outreach to the public is directly responsible for the excellent participation and substantive information garnered from the meetings.

The agendas for the public meetings were designed to be informative, but engaging. While it was imperative that the meeting participants understood the work-to-date of the heritage area and what it means to be a National Heritage Area, the organization’s leadership insisted that the format be interactive with a strong emphasis on audience participation, not just presentations. Each meeting was designed accordingly within a 90 minute timeframe. The services of John W. Cosgrove, immediate past Executive Director of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, were secured as facilitator of the meetings. Mr. Cosgrove worked with the heritage area’s leadership in the development and production of the events in order to meet their goals and the objectives.

Each meeting agenda began with brief welcoming remarks from each respective host and an overview of the event from John Cosgrove. That was followed by the presentation of the film *“Stories of the Land,”* a 15-minute presentation that captures the vitality of the region’s small towns and countryside, the story of the quest for freedom, the ingenuity of the people of the area, the richness of the land’s bounty and the beauty of its natural wonders. In addition to the film being beautifully produced and very informative, it also served as a valuable tool for advancing the content of the meeting itself.

*“...creating a National Heritage Area is a citizen-initiated process. It’s you saying to the nation, ‘This is our story and this is how we believe the story should be told’...”*

- Meeting facilitator John Cosgrove as quoted in the *Lancaster New Era*

The participants in the meeting (particularly those who had viewed the film previously) were challenged to watch *“Stories of the Land”* with the region’s story being elevated to a national audience. The participants were asked to watch the film “as if they were from Oklahoma or New England or the west” and to think about what makes their region’s story significant to people from different parts of our nation.

The film was followed by a comprehensive overview of the work of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region. Mark Platts, President, informed participants about the history of the organization, the

The film was followed by a comprehensive overview of the work of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region. Mark Platts, President, informed participants about the history of the organization, the

positive impacts it has had on improving the quality of life for its citizens and its visitors, and the desire and responsibility of pursuing national designation.

Mark Platts also introduced the concept of re-branding the heritage area as the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area to better represent the influence and impact of the river on the region and the nation.

John Cosgrove next presented the participants with information that included an overview of the National Heritage Area program and the heritage development movement in America. Some of the topics discussed included:

- What is a National Heritage Area?
- What Does a National Heritage Area Do?
- What Kinds of Investments do National Heritage Areas Make?
- What is the Federal Role in National Heritage Areas?
- What Role Does the National Park Service Play?
- How Does a National Heritage Area Attain Designation from Congress?
- What Are the Impacts of Designation on a Region?
- In What Direction is the National Heritage Areas Movement Going?

When the initial information was presented in each meeting agenda, the most important purpose of the gatherings was addressed. The public question, input and comments period was designed to garner key information from the participants:

- Their view on the national significance of their regional stories.
- To help define the region's unique national story.
- To identify significant regional heritage assets.
- To state local support for the designation as a National Heritage Area.

The substantive and thoughtful contributions received from the public portion of each meeting proved to be of tremendous value to the overall process and surely exceeded all expectations of the heritage area's leadership and staff. Below is a sample of input from the meeting participants. (Note: comments made at the second meeting in York that were similar to those shared in Lancaster have not been repeated here.)

### Lancaster County Historical Society:

On July 28, 2008, over 50 participants were welcomed by Lancaster County Historical Society Executive Director Thomas Ryan, Ph.D., and Lancaster-York Heritage Region Board of Directors Chairman, David Keller.

*How is your story nationally significant?*

- **The Susquehanna River:**
  - It is a rugged slice through a rugged part of American history.



*Participants in Lancaster listen to an overview of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region's work from President Mark Platts.*

*"The Susquehanna River is a precious family heirloom that needs to be preserved and protected."*

- Congressman Joe Pitts, (PA-16)



- The Susquehanna is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest river in the nation with a thirteen million-acre drainage basin.
- It is one of the oldest major water systems in the world.
- It is largely non-navigable.
- The river is “the umbilical cord to the Chesapeake Bay” - 90% of the upper Bay’s fresh water and 50% overall flows from the Susquehanna.
- It is geologically ancient.
- It contains evidence of ancient Native American settlers in the area - artifacts and petroglyphs.
- The area centered at mid-river continuously inhabited by people for thousands of years.
- Its major contributions to American history - colonial diplomats traveled across it, it was the natural boundary that protected advancement into Lancaster County during the Civil War.
- It served as a major transportation route and manufacturing district during America’s Industrial Revolution.
- Its exceptional flora & fauna - it has over 200 species of birds, including the bald eagle.



*Tim Smedick from the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County comments on the area’s national significance.*

▪ **Agriculture:**

- Role this region played in founding of the nation.
- The area’s soil is so rich – and 25% of the nation’s population is within 150 miles.
- Economist Magazine once declared this swath of land the “richest in world.”
- Transportation of agricultural products to local market.
- Family Farms - farming and farms stay with families over multiple generations.
- A significant number of family farms have not become large commercial operations.

▪ **Uniqueness of Early Life in Region:**

- Founded on religious freedom, tolerance and diversity.
- William Penn’s 1688 handbills marketed the region to European settlers.
- Region was attractive in Europe because of unique sense of place, political set-up, agriculture, freedoms.
- Lancaster County was established to accommodate spill-over settlement from Philadelphia and is an early model of growth management.

*“Our nation’s founding principles of religious diversity and freedom were actually originated in our region.”*  
 - Citizen at Lancaster meeting

▪ **Lancaster City’s unique quality as an urban center:**

- Large amounts of architecture remain and have not been modernized
- Victorian town, but modern city
- Unique City Landscape

- Urban Alternatives
- Urban life/lifestyles appealing to heritage tourists
- Unique cultural assets like the Fulton Opera House

▪ **Frontier Prototype:**

- Movement of people.
- Premiere area of westward expansion.
- 27-33% of nation came through Lancaster County.
- Innovations like the Conestoga wagon.

**York County Heritage Trust:**

On July 31, 2008, nearly 50 participants were welcomed by Joan Mummert, Executive Director of the York County Heritage Trust, David VanArsdale, Treasurer of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region Board of Directors, and Suzanne Copping of the National Park Service.



*Local restaurant owner Sam Allen shares his thoughts on the area's significant stories at the York meeting.*

*How is your story nationally significant?*

▪ **Unique landscape:**

- Rolling farmland and open space.
- Value of agriculture.
- Region has smart famers contributing hugely to national economy.

▪ **Region as a "Turning Point" in American History:**

- Actions in York & Lancaster took place at a turning point in the Revolutionary War - the Articles of Confederation, the French Alliance, the Conway Cabal, Thomas Paine's work in the region.
- Thomas Hartley's importance to George Washington.
- Turning point of Civil War with bridge burning at Wrightsville.

▪ **Region's Contribution as an Artistic and Cultural Centerpiece:**

- Known by nationally renowned artists for unique landscape beauty.
- Works by Henry Latrobe, Frederick Edwin Church, Louis Remy Mignot, Thomas Moran, Jasper Francis Cropsey and George Inness.
- Strand-Capital - two theaters from 1930s by world renowned architect.

*"This is where so many of our nation's historical 'turning points' happened...the American Revolution, the Articles of Confederation, the French Alliance..."*

- Educator at York meeting



### Chapter 3: Overview of Area History and Contributions

The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area is a rich showcase for Pennsylvania's long and distinguished role in the development of the United States, including the practice of long-held religious beliefs and cultural traditions and the innovative spirit that has helped America retain its role as a world leader. The 2001 *Management Action Plan* provided an overview of the region's historic significance, which is summarized below as supportive documentation that the area possesses a nationally distinctive landscape that contributes to our national heritage. A complete statement of the region's nationally significant stories and resources is provided in Chapter 5.

The popular identity of the Susquehanna Gateway region, and Lancaster County particularly, is strongly associated with the Plain People, more commonly known as the Old Order Amish and Mennonite communities. The Amish originally settled in Lancaster in the early 1700s after fleeing religious persecution in Europe, mainly Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands. Today, Lancaster County is home to North America's oldest and most densely populated Amish settlement. These groups no longer exist in their European homeland. Their aversion to modern conveniences and their ability to continue traditional ways in the face of tremendous external change and pressure has piqued national and international interest for much of the past century.



*The Amish and other Plain People project a unique cultural identity for much of the region.*

The Amish were not the only people to settle here. Indeed, the region is a striking example of Penn's doctrine of religious freedom, upon which Pennsylvania was originally founded. Attracted by the prospect of a life without religious persecution, European immigrants - English, Irish, Germans, Scots - eagerly settled in the region, bringing with them an assortment of faiths, including Catholicism, Judaism and a variety of Protestant sects, such as Pietists, Mennonites, Moravians, Lutherans, Huguenots, Dunkers, and Schwenkfelders. Penn's rejection of military conscription and successful peacemaking efforts further enhanced the appeal of the region to war-weary immigrants. By the time of the American Revolution, Pennsylvania had grown to be one of the largest colonies, with highly cosmopolitan communities. Some have called this region the first American melting pot. At one time the edge of the North American frontier, it was also a major outpost for those seeking their fortune to the west.

The region's prominent national role during the Revolutionary War period also exemplifies the area's contribution to American freedom. Fleeing Philadelphia in September 1777, the Second Continental Congress met in Lancaster for a day before crossing the Susquehanna River to reconvene in York, hoping that the river would serve as a protective barrier from the British. The revolutionary government remained in York for nine months, and there debated and adopted the Articles of Confederation - "America's first Constitution."

The region's place in the freedom story extended to African-Americans fleeing slavery. The predominance of people who opposed slavery and its proximity to the Mason-Dixon Line helped to make this area an active part of the national network known as the Underground Railroad. Due to the clandestine nature of the Underground Railroad, little physical evidence of this history remains,

yet personal accounts passed on through generations and continuing research have revealed the region's important role in this story.

Agricultural heritage is among the most distinct aspects of the Susquehanna Gateway region. For centuries the area's farmland has served as the breadbasket to the East, and the intricate and colorful patchwork quilt of cropland is a defining physical characteristic of the landscape. The region's agricultural heritage is also the backbone of the state's economy. From subsistence farming by Native Americans, to traditional cultivation by members of the Plain Sect, to modern food production techniques, there are rich and varied stories about agriculture's past, present and future.

Lancaster is widely touted as the most productive non-irrigated farmland in the United States. York is distinguished by its many food processing and packaging plants that flourished after World War II and resulted in York being given the title of snack food capital of the United States. Innovative local companies helped to diversify the agricultural industry well beyond the county boundaries. For example, beginning in the late 1800s York International led the development and manufacture of commercial ice making machinery that helped make food transport over long distances possible. The diversity of the agricultural economy has helped the region withstand economic downturns that have devastated other communities, especially those built on "dirty industries" such as coal and steel.



*The region's historic role as a center for farming and food production is well known.*

The important role played by local manufacturers extends well-beyond agri-business. For centuries the region has been a center for a large and highly diverse collection of manufacturing businesses - local and international, small and large, new and old. This tradition of design, production and innovation continues. Some examples of the goods currently produced in the region are: motorcycles, barbells, coffins, paper, pottery, tanks, furniture, wallpaper, violins, tapestries, dental prosthetics, hydraulic turbines, and cigars.

The importance of transporting goods to the growth of agriculture and manufacturing also made the region a center for transportation innovation. From the Conestoga wagon to the first iron steamboat and the first coal-burning steam locomotive, Lancaster and York Counties have a rich history of ingenuity in this field. These stories and others, including development of the King's Road, Lancaster Turnpike and Low-Grade railroad line, are of national interest and significance.

## Chapter 4: Heritage Themes of State Significance

The interpretive framework for designation of the region as a state heritage area employed a thematic structure for organizing the area's key sites, stories and events. This framework was founded in research, visitor interests, and existing public programs, as well as insights gained via a host of interviews, workshops and planning sessions. The themes originated in the work undertaken for the 1999 *Feasibility Study* and were further developed in the 2001 *Management Action Plan*. They illustrate the framework that has guided the heritage area's work to-date and provided an advanced starting point for development of the *Statement of National Significance* that more specifically documents the region's qualifications for national designation, as presented in Chapter 5.

The heritage area's five primary themes as defined in the 2001 *Management Action Plan* included:

- *Foodways: From Farm to Table*
- *Invention, Innovation, Tradition*
- *Quest for Freedom*
- *Town and Country: Forging Communities, Cultivating the Land*
- *Natural Ways: The Susquehanna River and Beyond*

As part of the heritage area's later work to effectively "brand" the region and present an appealing, marketable public identity, these themes have been organized and presented to residents and visitors over the past few years in the form of five primary interpretive stories, as described in detail below: *Bounty, Ingenuity, Freedom, Towns and Countryside, and Natural Wonders*.

### Bounty

With its rich soil, the Susquehanna Gateway region has long been associated with agriculture, and farming has come to define much of the character of the region. The Bounty theme expands the story of agricultural heritage by looking at it from an historical, contemporary and anthropological perspective, including an exploration of the relationship of residents to the food they grow, process, market, prepare, serve and consume.

With a temperate climate, a host of creeks and springs, and a limestone valley that cuts across York and Lancaster counties, generations of residents have worked the land and produced a wide array of crops for both home and market. Because of its proximity to eighteenth century urban centers - Baltimore and Philadelphia - and because of the relatively early development of transportation networks, area farmers moved quickly from subsistence agriculture to commercial farming. The development of large and small towns in the region - especially the cities of Lancaster and York - also offered commercial opportunities for farmers. In Lancaster, the first market dates from 1730, and the Central Market, still in existence, was built in 1889. In York, market sheds were built in Centre Square in 1768. Today, as in the past, farmers markets serve as informal community centers in both counties, sites where town and country people congregate, interact, buy and sell.



*The region's five historic downtown farmers markets still connect growers to their customers.*



From its earliest years, York and Lancaster counties were prime examples of Penn's intention that Pennsylvania be settled by small landowners. These yeomen farmers grew barley, oats, buckwheat and rye. Soon wheat, legumes and clover were added. By the middle of the eighteenth century wheat dominated agriculture in the area, and the region became the breadbasket or granary for the colonies. It also exported farm produce - especially grains - to Europe and the Caribbean.

From 1800 to 1850, Lancaster County's wheat production led the entire country during most years. With competition from the Midwest in the middle 19<sup>th</sup> century, area farmers turned to tobacco, corn, dairy products, livestock, poultry, orchards and truck farming. From 1850 to 1900, Lancaster County led the United States in total farm production, and from 1900 to 1945 Lancaster's leading crop was tobacco. Today, grapes, vineyards and wine production have become part of the local economy.

The productivity of the land in the region is only partly due to the fertility of the soil. Another source of productivity is rooted in German culture and attitudes, including an emphasis on hard work, planning and measured judgment. Among the Mennonites, attitudes and approaches to agriculture were rooted in their experiences in the Palatinate region of Germany before they came to America. While in that depleted region, the Mennonites learned to farm in skillful ways by: (1) experimenting with new techniques; (2) using gypsum, lime and manure to fertilize the soil; (3) developing new feeds for livestock; (4) rotating hay with legumes to replenish the soil. When they came to Lancaster and York counties in the 18<sup>th</sup> century they brought along these hard-won attitudes and approaches.

During the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of farms in both Lancaster and York counties began to decline, although efficiency and productivity continued to increase. In York County, for example, the number of farms declined from 8,091 in 1900 to 2,041 in 1989. A comparable process has taken place in Lancaster County where the number of acres in farmland declined by 20% from 1945 to 1990. In recent years, preservationists and local political leaders have become active in efforts to maintain and protect the area's agricultural heritage and economy.



*Despite encroachment from development and an ever-changing agricultural economy, farming and farmland continue to define the identity of much of the Susquehanna Gateway region's rural landscape.*

The Bounty theme also highlights technological advances in farm equipment, marketing, processing and transportation networks. Starting with gristmills and flour mills in the eighteenth century, food processing has been an essential part of the area's economy. In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries this part of the story includes stockyards, candy and chocolate factories, snack food processing plants, cigar making establishments, breweries and wineries. In 1928 alone, for example, York County produced a million gallons of ice cream and 34 million ice cream cones. After World War II, the county became known as "the Snack Food Capital of the World," producing large quantities of potato chips, cheese

curls, popcorn, caramel corn, corn chips and tortilla chips while also spawning spin-off industries which make burlap bags, cardboard boxes and cellophane packaging.

Bounty also includes food preparation and consumption. In this way, folkways and culture, especially ethnic traditions and values, become a part of the narrative. German cuisine, African-American foods, as well as Hispanic, Asian and Jewish cooking have a place in this story, as do attitudes toward food, rituals relating to food consumption and harvest, beliefs concerning health and nutrition, and family customs, celebrations and life passage. Bounty, in short, can be a lens for examining not only agriculture, marketing and cuisine but also the diverse groups who have lived in the area.

## Ingenuity

This theme is usually associated with manufacturing, commerce and transportation. It also juxtaposes the robust and energetic inventiveness of the region with an equally strong and persistent tendency toward tradition, heritage, preservation and conservatism. In this way it makes social attitudes and cultural values a part of a story that is often interpreted only in economic and technological terms.

In part because of its prime inland location and in part because of the entrepreneurial spirit of the people who settled in the region, residents of Lancaster and York counties have a long history of creativity and ingenuity in developing new enterprises. Some of this spirit was initially manifested in the realm of commerce and transportation as testified to by the completion of Pennsylvania's first canal, Conewago Canal, in 1797, and the construction of the Lancaster-Philadelphia Turnpike, the first turnpike in the United States. While roads remained a mainstay, the region also was part of the canal fever resulting from the opening of New York's Erie Canal in 1825. Important canals in the region included the Eastern Division of the Main Line Canal (completed in 1834) and the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal (opened in 1840). Canals gave way to railroads in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Wrightsville and Columbia serving as key transportation hubs.

This innovative, entrepreneurial spirit can also be seen in manufacturing, where the impulse to market farm produce and develop transportation networks offered spin-off opportunities, such as development of the Conestoga Wagon. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century many German settlers in the region tried to design a strong and spacious cargo-carrying wagon to contend with the area's hilly terrain, rough roads, and harsh weather conditions. The result was the Conestoga, a boat-shaped sixteen foot or longer wagon which could successfully travel the area's roads without cargo shifting. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the area would continue this tradition of making vehicles when it became a center for the manufacturing of automobiles and motorcycles, including the Pullman Company, BCK Motor Car Company, Martin Carriage Works Company and, of course, Harley Davidson motorcycles.

This tradition of innovation combined with the advantages of location on the Susquehanna River and readily available mineral deposits to spawn a significant local iron industry in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Furnaces in Columbia, Marietta, West Hempfield, Wrightsville, and other nearby communities attracted English iron masters and German workers in large numbers. Together they played a role in the region becoming a productive source for rifles, cannons, cannonballs, swords, clocks, iron-clad steamboats, railroad



*Local weavers still carry on their craft in the region using traditional tools and techniques.*

locomotives and household metal goods. During the 18th century, for example, local craftsmen experimented with the design of the German heavy rifle and the Scotch-Irish long-barreled rifle to make the famed Pennsylvania Rifle, subsequently known as the Kentucky Rifle.

Still, the go-go entrepreneurial spirit was not unbounded. Indeed, the same German culture which gave birth to this innovative and inventive energy was also responsible for a counterpoint, with a notable emphasis on tradition, custom, preservation and heritage. The Plain People - with their strong commitments to close-knit community life, service to one another and nonconformity in relation to mainstream culture - are a prime, but not exclusive, example of this countervailing tendency. In fact, the Plain People also combine an energetic and inventive work ethic with their more obvious conservative tendencies and cultural beliefs.

Throughout the region this traditionalist inclination can be witnessed in church- and family-centered community life; a propensity toward relatively small-scale operations in the size of farms, industrial establishments and towns; efforts to place limits on suburban growth; and a longstanding involvement in the preservation and heritage movement.

Currents of innovation and tradition can also be found in the arts, humanities, craftsmanship and folk arts of the region. Charles Demuth (1883-1935) offers a prime example of a local artist who received international recognition for his original and imaginative perspective and contributions. Similarly, area craftspeople - quilters, weavers and woodworkers - have given the region a reputation as a leader in traditional arts and crafts.

## Freedom

The pursuit of freedom lies at the very core of the American experience and has been a recurrent theme in the development of the region. This theme speaks to the concerns and interests of a broad range of visitors and residents while also identifying relationships between various groups and eras not usually seen in a common light.

In 1681, when William Penn received a charter to launch his "Holy Experiment," he placed freedom of religion at the foundation of the new colony. Penn envisioned a society where religious tolerance, representative government, peaceful relationships, and economic well-being would be a way of life. Several groups - especially German and Swiss Anabaptist, English Quakers and French Huguenots - responded to Penn's vision of religious freedom by settling in the region. Scottish Presbyterians - who had left Scotland for Ireland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and became known as the Scots-Irish - also came to the area in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to escape religious and economic struggles.

Because of their location on the western frontier of Pennsylvania during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Lancaster and York counties were part of the western migration from coastal settlements on the Atlantic to the interior of the continent. When Lancaster was formed in 1729 and York formed twenty years later, each county became a destination for families seeking economic opportunity. After the counties were well established, other settlers used the region's roads, canals and railroads on their journey west. This economic perspective on the freedom theme continues to this day.



*Historic places of worship reflect the region's early attraction as a place of religious freedom.*



A political slant on the quest for freedom theme can be seen when examining the role of Lancaster and York counties during the American Revolution. Forced out of Philadelphia in 1777, the Second Continental Congress met in Lancaster for a single day in September and then crossed the Susquehanna River - hoping that it would serve as a protective barrier from the British - and reconvened in York. The revolutionary government remained in York for nine months, from September 1777 to June 1778, where the Continental Congress debated and adopted the Articles of Confederation before sending them to the 13 colonies for ratification. During this same period the Gates House in the city of York was the site of the Conway Cabal, where General Horatio Gates and his political associates unsuccessfully sought to remove Washington from command of the army.

Vivid examples of the freedom theme are also part of the African-American struggle for emancipation from slavery and the ensuing Civil War. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many Africans found their way to the region by way of the West Indies, but rather than coming as free people they arrived enslaved. Scots-Irish, English, Welsh and German settlers were all slaveholders, but in 1780 Pennsylvania enacted a law, the first among the original states, which eventually abolished slavery in the Commonwealth. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the size of the free African-American community in some of the region's towns and cities was considerable. In 1832, for example, 400 African-American residents - approximately 20% of the town's total population - lived in Columbia.

The African-American quest for freedom took on new meaning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the region - because of its proximity to Maryland and Virginia - served as a major route for those escaping slavery. Local free black residents, working hand-in-hand with Quakers from both counties, developed an informal network called the Underground Railroad that offered food, shelter and information for runaways. In 1851, residents of Christiana in eastern Lancaster County took a stand against a Maryland slaveholder seeking the return of a runaway under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act, a struggle in which three free blacks were killed along with the slaveholder.

Ten years later, when the Civil War erupted, York and Lancaster counties again played a role in an armed struggle where issues of freedom were paramount. In 1863, Confederate forces briefly occupied York and fought Union forces under the command of General George Armstrong Custer in the town of Hanover. During this same period, Union soldiers burned the bridge in Wrightsville when the Confederates sought to cross the Susquehanna and enter Lancaster County.

Today this pursuit of freedom continues to be expressed in different ways. Skepticism of government, suburban sprawl and the arrival of immigrants from other parts of the world are new manifestations of a tradition in which freedom has been sought and prized by the region's people.

## Towns and Countryside

This theme offers opportunities to explore community life, public celebrations and festivals, patterns of social interaction, the cultural landscape and attitudes toward the land itself. The distinctive towns with ethnic and religious underpinnings, the prevalence of churches and the livable scale of the region are indicative of long-held values. To the casual visitor the area seems to present a tightly knit, tension-free appearance - and for some residents this appearance is a reality - but at times the region has been



*Quiet small town life still defines the visitor experience to the region even as the area has changed and evolved from its historic identity.*

disrupted by a deep-seated insistence on freedom of action, an adamant suspicion of government interference and troubling discrimination.

English Quakers, Scots-Irish Presbyterians, German and Swiss Mennonites, French Huguenots and German Dunkers formed communities in the region during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Generally, the English, Scots-Irish and Welsh lived in perimeter areas, while the Germans inhabited the agriculturally rich interior. In many cases town names suggest these ethnic and religious origins: Donegal, Drumore, Shrewsbury, Hanover, Manheim, Strasburg, Lititz, Heidelberg, Ephrata, and Hopewell.

The overwhelming prevalence of English and German peoples living in small market towns that served the surrounding rural area gave the region a cultural cohesiveness during much of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Church-centered, the vast majority of the residents of these towns turned inward when it came to community life, although economically they looked to Baltimore, Philadelphia, Europe and the West Indies as outlets for their produce.

During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, small communities of free African-Americans emerged in the region. Their members formed churches and voluntary associations, but they often lived under stressful circumstances. Even as other parts of the Northeast became home to immigrant groups from eastern and southern Europe in the years following the Civil War, this region remained overwhelmingly white and native born well into the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the 1870 Census, well over 90% of York County residents were native born and less than 2% were African-American. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, substantial numbers of Hispanics, African-Americans and Asians took up residence in the area, especially in the more urban centers.

Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when trolleys first appeared on the streets of York and Lancaster, suburbanization has become a widespread phenomenon in the region. Automobiles began to appear on local roads. These new modes of transportation - together with electric streetlights and telephones - made it possible for urban residents to move from the towns into areas that had formerly been outlying farmland. The process of sprawl and homogenization had begun. However, although decades of suburbanization appear to threaten the uniqueness of many area communities, the prevalence of small towns with surrounding, well-tended rural areas continues to typify the region.

## Natural Wonders

With the region's rivers and creeks, mineral deposits and rich soil, geological formations and temperate climate, the impact of nature on the region is noteworthy.

Climatologically, geographically, and culturally, the region is a crossroads. In this area both the northern boundary for southern species and the southern boundary for northern species co-exist and intersect. With local power companies divesting some of their land along the Susquehanna River, attention to ecology, nature and stewardship is especially timely as this development presents tremendous opportunities and challenges.



*The Susquehanna River showcases the region's "visible geology."*

The Susquehanna River has long played a key role in the region's formation, development and identity. Indeed, the Susquehanna is the dominant natural feature on the area's landscape, and interpretation of the Natural Wonders theme focuses on the river. Running through the center of the region, the



422-mile long Susquehanna has its headwaters in Otsego, New York, and empties into the Chesapeake Bay. While the Susquehanna has been a corridor linking southeastern Pennsylvania to northern Maryland, it has also been a barrier separating York in the west from Lancaster in the east.

Even though shallow, rocky and virtually un-navigable in many areas, the river has served as a transportation route, a manufacturing district and a recreational haven. The river's gorges, "deeps," potholes and petroglyph-marked boulders present opportunities to explore a "visible geology" and to witness surviving evidence of Native American culture. For thousands of years before the Europeans came to the area, indigenous peoples used the Susquehanna as a travel route. In fact, the very name of the river comes from a composite Indian word that is variously interpreted to mean "river of islands" or "river that falls to the south" or "muddy river."

The story of Natural Wonders also has a human dimension beginning with those indigenous peoples, as for many of these peoples the river served as a focal point for settlement, subsistence and transportation. The earliest known Native peoples in the area were of the Paleo-Indian chronological period dating from approximately 13,000 B.C. By A.D. 1000, the addition of agriculture to the hunting and gathering subsistence pattern allowed the Shenk's Ferry people to adopt village life. The Susquehannocks inhabited the lower Susquehanna Valley from about 1550 to 1675, perhaps assimilating remaining Shenk's Ferry people into their ranks. The Susquehannocks were active participants in the fur trade with English colonists, an alliance that resulted in the demise of Native American society and their departure from eastern Pennsylvania by 1675. Once the Susquehannocks left eastern Pennsylvania, the rather liberal Indian policies of William Penn resulted in other disrupted groups moving into the area, although these settlements were quickly made untenable by increased European population, as well as the policies of some of Penn's administrators. The Native populations were gone from eastern Pennsylvania by 1750.

Archeological research and the mosaic of the landscape reveal events and occurrences of past centuries in the region. In this way, too, the story of human interactions with the land, the river, creeks and tributaries is divulged. Geologically, the region consists of three distinct bands running from southwest to northeast: the Piedmont Lowlands, the Limestone Valley and the Triassic Lowlands. In the south, the Piedmont Lowlands with its rolling hills and steep cliffs provides breathtaking views of the Susquehanna. English, Welsh and Scots-Irish settled this area, and they constructed iron forges, machine shops, distilleries and tanneries. With its rich soil and productive farmland, the Limestone Valley - the central geological band - has been the most prosperous area in the region. German culture continues to assert a strong presence in this area. In the north, the Triassic Lowland - with its steep slopes and its deposits of shale, iron ore and sandstone - has historically combined industry, mining and agriculture. Today the area includes state game lands and commuter suburbs for urban Harrisburg.

Mineral deposits and mining offer another opportunity to view the story of human interaction with the natural environment. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century iron ore was extracted from a myriad of mines in the region. York County alone had 126 iron mines. By mid-century there were 18 operating slate quarries in the area around Delta, while two mines in Lancaster County served as a major source of chrome in the country and another provided all the nickel mined in the United States. These extractive industries changed the landscape, created and reshaped communities, attracted immigrants and provide hundreds of jobs.

The interaction of humans with nature is also revealed in the story of the Susquehanna River during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With hydroelectric dams at York Haven, Safe Harbor, Holtwood and Conowingo, Maryland, the Susquehanna has often been referred to as the "River of Power." Over the course of the century these dams played a major role in the rise of recreational activities on the river, but also in a drastic decline of the shad population in the Chesapeake Bay. Recent interventions by the power

companies, conservationists and local governments have begun to change the pattern of shad decline and resulted in signs of restoration of the shad population.

Although nature has long played an influential role in the life of the region, currently only a few opportunities exist for visitors and residents to view close-up or actively sample the natural beauty of the region. In particular, most visitors are unfamiliar with the gorges, ravines, creeks, wildlife habitats, flyways, hiking trails, parks, preserves, sanctuaries and archeological sites in the two counties. With the area in transition - as suburbs expand and power companies prepare to divest land along the Susquehanna River - increased public awareness of these natural treasures becomes all the more vital.



*Pinnacle Overlook in southern Lancaster County provides a breathtaking site for taking in the natural beauty and rich cultural heritage of the Susquehanna River Valley.*

## Chapter 5: Statement of National Significance

A *Statement of National Significance* has been developed for the proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area in order to document the existing state heritage area's eligibility and appropriateness for national designation. The information provided here builds upon the extensive historical background and thematic structure developed for state designation and elevates those aspects of the region's heritage that are uniquely nationally significant to their proper context in the national story. In order to ensure consistency with established National Park Service practices for development of such work, the Lancaster-York Heritage Region engaged the services of historian John S. Salmon of Richmond, VA, to research and prepare the *Statement of National Significance*.

The research and planning process for development of the *Statement of National Significance* has resulted in four major themes that tell the story of the Susquehanna Gateway region. These national heritage themes reflect events and movements that truly represent the American experience. The significance of the region is also reflected in its many natural and historic resources, which include one National Natural Landmark, five National Historic Landmarks, and 329 other historic buildings, districts, and archaeological sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see [Appendix I](#)).

### Nationally Significant Heritage Themes

The heritage themes for the proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area are derived from the central role that the Susquehanna River, one of the oldest river systems in the world, has played in the history of the region. Two main branches meet at Northumberland, north of the proposed heritage area: the West Branch, which arises in western Pennsylvania, and the North Branch, which has its source in upstate New York. The four-hundred-and-fifty-mile-long river, the longest on the East Coast, flows southeast through the heart of the Lancaster-York region before it enters the Chesapeake Bay at Havre de Grace, Maryland. Before the bay was flooded at the end of the Pleistocene, it constituted the river's lower valley.



*The majestic Susquehanna River lies at the heart of the heritage area, defining its geography and shaping its history and culture.*

Throughout the history of the area, the Susquehanna River and the rich land it drains have been the unifying element. The natural abundance of animal and plant life here long attracted Native Americans, followed by European settlers who transformed the landscape from woodlands and garden plots into farms and small towns. The later discovery of coal in the river's higher reaches, as well as an industrial boom in the Lancaster-York region, increased commercial traffic on the Susquehanna. Ever since the eighteenth century, both industry and agriculture have coexisted here.



In the American mind, however, the area is synonymous with the Amish (more accurately, the Plain People, who belong to other sects as well), and the beautiful rural landscape they created that still exists in large parts of Lancaster and York Counties. Today, those scenic qualities attract visitors from throughout the United States and around the world.

Although agriculture still represents a significant part of the area's economy, the industrial base has declined while recreation and natural areas have grown. The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area, then, has experienced a cycle in which local values regarding the uses of the landscape have changed from predominantly agricultural to markedly industrial, and more recently to a focus on the natural and historical environment. National Heritage Area designation will help preserve this nationally important and unique landscape.

The four major interpretive themes developed for the Susquehanna Gateway region are focused on the Susquehanna River Valley, the Amish, and the area's roles as a gateway to the settlement of the American frontier and as a capital of the new nation during the Revolutionary War. Two additional and related heritage themes have also been identified: the area's important role in the Underground Railroad and the influence on the national slavery debate by two political leaders from the region.

## A. The Susquehanna River as a Corridor of Culture and Commerce

Long before European settlers first explored the Susquehanna River in the proposed heritage area, Native Americans lived here. They left traces of their occupation both in rock art at several petroglyph sites as well as in archaeological remains at town sites and other locations. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has recorded almost 2,900 archaeological sites throughout the Lower Susquehanna River Sub-basin, about half of which lie within the heritage area. Several of the sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

When Captain John Smith explored the Chesapeake Bay in the summer of 1608, he journeyed up the Susquehanna River as far as Smith's Falls (now the site of the Conowingo Dam) in Maryland. He sent Indian emissaries upstream to the Susquehannock town, which was located on the eastern bank of the river in present-day Lancaster County near Washington Boro. The tribal leaders sent canoes laden with gifts downstream to Smith to form a trading alliance, thereby opening to the English a trade network that extended from the bay along the river and beyond for hundreds of miles, as far away as the Great Lakes.



*The Susquehannock Indians lived in stockade villages at various sites along the Lower Susquehanna River.*

The natural abundance and richness of the Susquehanna River system that had proven so attractive to American Indians eventually drew European settlers here as well. After William Penn received his grant in 1681 and began settling his colony, the great fertile valley of the Susquehanna lured English, Swiss, and German farmers, hunters, and merchants to the region from the early settlements on the Delaware River. The first European settlers arrived in the heritage area (at that time the frontier) about 1710. They cleared woods for farms and constructed towns, thereby transforming the landscape here.

Under Penn's leadership, Lancaster County became the locus of a unique relationship between the proprietor and the original residents of the area. About 1684, Penn reserved five hundred acres on

the eastern bank of the Susquehanna River here as a place of refuge for the Susquehannock and other Indians who had been displaced. Known as Conestoga Indian Town, the site became an important gathering place for treaty meetings between the colonies and Indians between 1696 and 1762. Benjamin Franklin printed transcripts of three treaty sessions, as well as a pamphlet denouncing the infamous massacre of the Conestoga Indians at the hands of the Paxton Boys in 1763. The Conestoga Town site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Susquehanna River served the colonists from the beginning as an important commercial highway to the Chesapeake Bay, especially in the proposed heritage area. In addition, Indian paths here were transformed into roads, one of the most important being the Great Wagon Road from Philadelphia westward to the frontier. In the first half of the nineteenth century, canals and then railroads enabled farmers and entrepreneurs in the area to ship agricultural and industrial products east and west to remote markets. Robert Fulton, credited with developing the first commercially successful steamboat, was born in Lancaster in 1765; the Robert Fulton House in southern Lancaster County is a National Historic Landmark. John Elgar, of York County, constructed the first iron steamboat in America, named it Codus, and launched it on the Susquehanna River near present-day Accomac on November 22, 1825. In 1831, York County watchmaker Phineas Davis designed and built the first practical coal-burning steam locomotive; it revolutionized railroad transportation. A York iron foundry constructed both Elgar's steamboat and Davis's locomotive.

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, rafts and canal boats floated down the Susquehanna River to the Chesapeake Bay, transporting lumber, iron, and other products to vessels bound for Baltimore, Norfolk, and the wider world. In the towns and hamlets along the river, craftsmen and industrialists established workshops and factories that made many of these products. During the twentieth century, as both industry and the use of the river for commercial shipping declined, several hydroelectric dams were constructed to provide power to regional communities. The dams have helped create recreational areas and make the Susquehanna a popular destination for outdoor activities, including boating, fishing, hunting, birding, and hiking. From a wilderness area to a rural landscape to an industrial environment to a recreational haven, the river has undergone significant changes over the centuries that are representative of similar trends on other rivers across the nation.

The story of the Susquehanna River Valley therefore reflects the American experience, including Native American habitation, European settlement, the alteration of the landscape to rural farmland, the construction of towns, the rise and decline of industries, and changes in the use of the river from exploitation and commerce to recreation.

## **B. The Amish Identity in the American Mind**

Because Pennsylvania was established in part as a refuge for immigrants of all religious persuasions, members of many other denominations quickly followed the founding Quakers into the colony. Among the early European settlers in the region were German Baptist sects that included the ancestors of what are today called Old Order Amish, Mennonites, and others - the "Plain People." Pacifistic and spurning modern technology and most worldly things, the Plain People are generally lumped together as "The Amish" in the



*Well-kept Amish farmsteads in the Susquehanna Gateway region exemplify American ideals about farming and rural ways of life.*

popular American imagination. Their religious values, “simple” way of life, and well-tended farms speak to the deepest feelings that Americans have about ourselves and our national experience: that virtuous, hardworking, humble people can carve from the wilderness a way of life that is respectful of the natural world and of their fellow human beings. The Amish seem to many Americans to personify the virtues of faith, honesty, community, and stewardship. These perceptions may be based more on myth than on reality, but they constitute the heart of our national myth, and how we believe we see ourselves when we are at our best.

The German settlers along the Susquehanna River, beginning with their arrival in the 1710s, cleared farmsteads and made a landscape that today gives the appearance of having been little altered since then. In reality, the area is vastly different now in many ways, from paved roads to electric lighting to the development of residential and commercial districts. Within the rural areas, however, the hand-built houses, barns, and other structures, the sizes and patterns of fields and woodlots, the varieties of crops achievable with horse-drawn plows, and the farming methods used have created a landscape that is perhaps unique in America.

Elsewhere in the country, commercial farming and mechanization epitomize the term “agribusiness.” In the Susquehanna Gateway region, however, the ancient ideal of the family farm of manageable size seems to have been achieved and sustained. Whether or not the landscape created and maintained by the Plain People can accurately be regarded as typical of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, it clearly is not of the present. To most Americans, it looks like the rural landscape of our dreams: farmland as it ought to be, the epitome of the Jeffersonian ideal.

Today, the Amish and other Plain People of Lancaster and York Counties are also frequently the subject of considerable sentimentalism, commercial exploitation, and intrusive curiosity. Nostalgic longing for an imagined “simpler” past, ignorance of the dangerous and often backbreaking labor associated with farming, a willingness on the part of some to substitute the imitation for the authentic for the sake of profit, and the environmental impact of countless gawkers threaten the very thing that people come to the area to see. Commercialism especially endangers the landscape.

A balance must be maintained between sustaining the rural environment that the visitors want to experience and the fact that the community of Plain People is a living one, which means that it is changing. Some of the people are moving from Lancaster County across the river into York and other parts of Pennsylvania, pressured to do so because their population is growing and farms can only be subdivided to a certain point before they become too small to be economically feasible.



*The Lancaster farm featured in the 1985 motion picture “Witness” hosted visitors on special bus tours during the film’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*

Many Amish are involved in enterprises other than agriculture: operating or working in restaurants, baking and canning foods for sale, engaging in quilting and other handcrafts, and constructing wooden garden and lawn furniture as well as wooden playhouses. Although these “nontraditional” and unromantic occupations may disillusion some visitors, such activities help offset the economic uncertainty of farming and in reality enable the Plain People to sustain their more traditional ways of life, helping to preserve the rural landscape for which the people have become known throughout the world.



The Plain People are not unique to the proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area. The landscape they have created there, however, is of a scale and scope that is rare if not entirely unknown elsewhere in the United States. The people and their landscape well represent the national story of American agriculture and the way it has transformed the natural environment.

### C. Gateway to the Frontier

Close on the heels of the English and German settlers came the Scots-Irish immigrants who arrived in America at the ports of Philadelphia, and New Castle, Delaware, and soon moved west to the backcountry in the 1720s. Many settled just beyond Lancaster in an area known as Donegal, where they buffered the eastern settlements from the Indians farther west. The Great Wagon Road, on which the Scots-Irish and other immigrants journeyed west from Philadelphia, passed through Lancaster, York, and Gettysburg, then turned south at the Appalachian Mountains and led to the backcountry of Virginia and the Carolinas. By the mid-eighteenth century, it had become one of the busiest highways in the colonies as immigrants, primarily Pennsylvania Germans and Scots-Irish from the Susquehanna Gateway region, trekked south through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. They and their descendants populated not only the frontier farther south in the Carolinas but also the Appalachian Mountains to the west.

These emigrants from the Susquehanna River region took with them two local innovations that attained national renown: the Conestoga wagon and the Pennsylvania-Kentucky rifle. The origins of both are murky, but the wagon was mentioned as early as 1716 and named for the Lancaster County community in which it was created. Built like a small boat, it generally measured sixteen feet long and four feet wide and deep, and could transport large cargoes of smaller items without their shifting, thanks to the wagon's sloping sides and ends. At first the wagons were used to transport produce and goods locally, but soon they were adopted for long-range shipping of freight. They proved vital to the transport of supplies into the backcountry well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



*The Conestoga wagon was a locally derived innovation that significantly influenced early commerce in the United States.*

The origin of the long rifle is even more steeped in legend and uncertainty than that of the Conestoga wagon, but the weapon seems to have been the creation of Pennsylvania German gunsmiths in the Lancaster-York region. The rifles were known by the 1740s and common a decade later. Gunsmiths from Pennsylvania through the Shenandoah Valley to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, soon were producing them as settlers from Pennsylvania immigrated south. Later in the century, because of their widespread popularity in Kentucky, the firearms became commonly known as Kentucky rifles.

The emigrants also took with them the vernacular architecture that was their common heritage—especially the log dwelling, the stone house, and the bank barn—and transformed the backcountry as they had the Susquehanna River region. For example, their influence is obvious in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, which owes to them much of its built environment and landscape. Their spread into the backcountry of the Carolinas, the Appalachians, and beyond eventually carried their cultural influence and independent spirit throughout America.

The Lancaster-York area was a nationally significant gateway to the settlement of the ever-moving frontier. In the Susquehanna River Valley early in the eighteenth century, the people developed a

vernacular architectural idiom, a host of useful and innovative tools for survival and growth, and a sustainable system of farming that transformed the landscape here. When subsequent generations emigrated to the west and south, they took with them their methods of construction, their wagons and rifles, and their agricultural techniques to likewise transform much of the rest of the country.

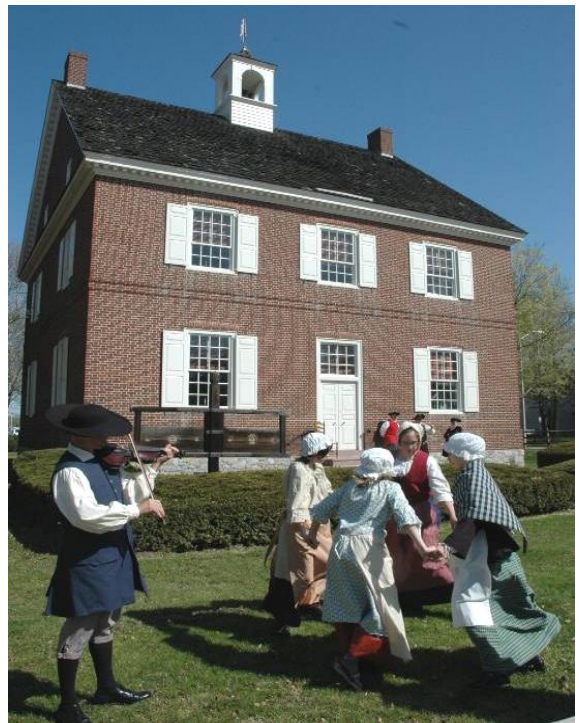
#### D. Revolutionary Turning Point

During the Revolutionary War, this area became the seat of government for the Continental Congress, the new nation's executive body, at a crucial time in the conflict. After convening first in Philadelphia in 1774, Congress moved to Baltimore late in 1776, returned to Philadelphia in early 1777, and then fled to the Pennsylvania frontier in September 1777, where the Susquehanna River provided a natural barrier to the British Army. The British had compelled Congress to flee when the army occupied Philadelphia after defeating George Washington's army in the Battle of Brandywine. Congress convened for one day in Lancaster on September 27, and then moved west across the Susquehanna to York, where it remained until June 27, 1778, and then returned to Philadelphia.

While in York, Congress achieved an objective of national significance after almost a year and a half of debate. The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, the "first constitution" of the United States of America, had been presented to Congress for consideration on July 12, 1776. While holding its sessions in the county courthouse in York, Congress approved the Articles on November 15, 1777, and sent copies to the states for ratification, which was completed on March 1, 1781.

At first, while Congress concluded debate on the Articles and settled in for the autumn and winter at York, the war news was bad. Washington's army suffered defeat with heavy casualties at Germantown, outside Philadelphia, on October 4–5, 1777, when his attack on the British failed. American general Horatio Gates, however, forced General John Burgoyne's British army to surrender at Saratoga, New York, on October 7. Washington and his army then huddled in the cold and survived the winter at Valley Forge, where Baron von Steuben drilled the soldiers and instilled discipline and pride. In Paris, on February 6, 1778, French and American diplomats signed treaties of alliance that brought France into the war, and the Congress at York ratified the treaties on May 4. Thomas Paine, who had fled Philadelphia with the Congress, buoyed American spirits when he published *The American Crisis, Number V*, on March 23, 1778, in Lancaster. His letter "To the People of America," on the prospect of war between Britain and France, appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on June 10 when the newspaper was published in York. When the British evacuated Philadelphia in mid-June to retreat to New York, Washington fought them to a draw at the Battle of Monmouth, in New Jersey, on June 27–28, as Congress moved back to Philadelphia. Lancaster and York served as the third and fourth capitals of the revolutionary government, then, as the tide of war began to turn the Americans' way.

Later, as the colonies neared success in the struggle to separate from Britain, General James Wood established Camp Security, a prisoner-of-war camp, near York in the summer of 1781. It operated



*The story of the area's starring role in the birth of the nation is told at the Colonial Courthouse complex in historic downtown York.*



until the spring of 1783 and housed more than a thousand British soldiers from Burgoyne's army who had surrendered at Saratoga. One of the few identified prisoner-of-war encampment sites that survive in the United States, Camp Security is threatened by development. The American Battlefield Protection Program, in its September 2007 *Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States*, listed Camp Security as a highly threatened and important (Class B) site.

The Susquehanna Gateway region is one of only four locations to serve as the capital of the United States during the struggle for independence. There, during its meetings in York, the Continental Congress completed its debates on the Articles of Confederation and disseminated it to the states for ratification. The heritage area is therefore nationally significant as the birth site of the new nation's first governing document. In addition, it was while Congress was resident there that the victory at Saratoga occurred, the Continental Army matured at Valley Forge, and France entered the war on the side of the United States. This often-overlooked moment of American history at York and Lancaster was when the young nation turned a critical corner on the road to independence.

### E. Additional Heritage Themes

Two additional heritage themes within the Susquehanna Gateway region contribute importantly to its national significance, especially with regard to African American history, although neither one is unique to the area. The first is the role that local residents played in the Underground Railroad. The second is the role that two local residents who were also national leaders - James Buchanan and Thaddeus Stevens - played before, during, and immediately after the Civil War.

Pennsylvanians, especially the Quakers and Plain People, were instrumental in the development and implementation of the Underground Railroad before the Civil War. They were not alone, and "conductors" and safe houses were active in many parts of the Upper South and in the bordering free states. The Underground Railroad theme is not unique to the proposed heritage area, in contrast with the themes discussed above, but it is nonetheless vitally important to a fuller understanding of the area's history.



*The area's role in the Underground Railroad story is told through living history tours and events.*

Those escaping slavery arrived in the area by boat, traveling secretly up the Susquehanna River, or on foot. They found many local residents, both black and white, eager to help them. The passage by Congress of fugitive slave laws, in 1793 and especially as part of the Compromise of 1850, enraged Northerners who opposed slavery. They saw the act (ironically in light of later Southern assertions) as a violation of states' rights as well as of the fundamental principles of liberty. When legislative appeals and litigation failed, some antislavery advocates resorted to direct action, hiding fugitives, breaking into jails to free them, and even resisting with violence.

An episode that occurred in eastern Lancaster County on September 11, 1851, was not the first recorded instance of violent resistance, but it was one of the deadliest and provoked a national outcry. It began when "slave-catchers" surrounded the house of William Parker, a black man, near Christiana. The group included a Baltimore County, Maryland slaveholder who failed to identify Parker or another black man as the fugitives being sought. Armed local residents soon surrounded the group, shots were fired, the Maryland slaveholder was killed, and his son and several others were wounded. More than two dozen black and white men and women were later arrested, charged with treason for interfering with the application of the law, tried in Christiana, and acquitted. William

Parker escaped to Canada via the Underground Railroad. The Christiana resistance episode became a national cause célèbre.

There is considerable interest in the Susquehanna Gateway region's role in the Underground Railroad. Additional research is needed and is being conducted, and efforts to highlight this aspect of the area's history hold great promise for development of new interpretive opportunities.

Two national leaders of the 1850s and 1860s were Lancaster residents: James Buchanan (1791–1868) and Thaddeus Stevens (1792–1868). Each man attained national significance largely while serving as president and congressman, respectively, in Washington, D.C. Buchanan, who was president between 1857 and 1861, was regarded as a Northern man with Southern sympathies who supported slaveholders' rights and despised abolitionists. He also thought secession was illegal, but so was using military power to stop it. Although most historians have concluded that his presidency was a failure for not having stopped the slide toward secession, it is also unclear what he could have done to prevent it. After Buchanan left office, he returned to Lancaster and Wheatland, his home since 1848, where he became the first former president to write his memoirs. Wheatland, designated a National Historic Landmark on July 4, 1961, is open to the public.

Thaddeus Stevens, who was born in Vermont, settled in Lancaster in 1815 to practice law. He served in Congress from 1849 to 1853 and from 1859 until his death in 1868. Ardently antislavery in his convictions, Stevens was actively involved in the Underground Railroad. In Congress, he became a leader of the so-called "Radical Republicans" during the Civil War, advocated total war against the south, and was an architect of Reconstruction and the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. He was a leader of the impeachment movement against President Andrew Johnson in 1868. After Stevens died in Washington on August 11, 1868, his body lay in state in the Capitol Rotunda and then was buried in Lancaster's Schreiner-Concord Cemetery, which he had chosen because it was, as he wrote in his epitaph, the only cemetery there that was not "limited as to race." The Stevens and Smith Historical Site in Lancaster, which includes his house and law office, the home of his black housekeeper, Lydia Hamilton Smith, and a nearby tavern, are contributing resources in the Lancaster City Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County is restoring the buildings as a signature museum complex.

### Relationship to the National Park Service Thematic Framework

The four primary themes for the Susquehanna Gateway region fit with the revised "Thematic Framework" ([www.cr.nps.gov/history/histhome.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/histhome.htm)) that the National Park Service (NPS) adopted in 1994 and revised in 1996 for interpreting the role of historic sites in American history. The National Park Service has identified eight major historical themes that cover the span of our nation's history. Of these, the Susquehanna Gateway region's resources fit mainly into the following categories:

- Theme A fits into NPS Theme I, Peopling Places
- Theme B fits into NPS Theme I, Peopling Places, Theme II, Creating Social Institutions and Movements, and Theme III, Expressing Cultural Values
- Theme C fits into NPS Theme I, Peopling Places
- Theme D fits into NPS Theme IV, Shaping the Political Landscape



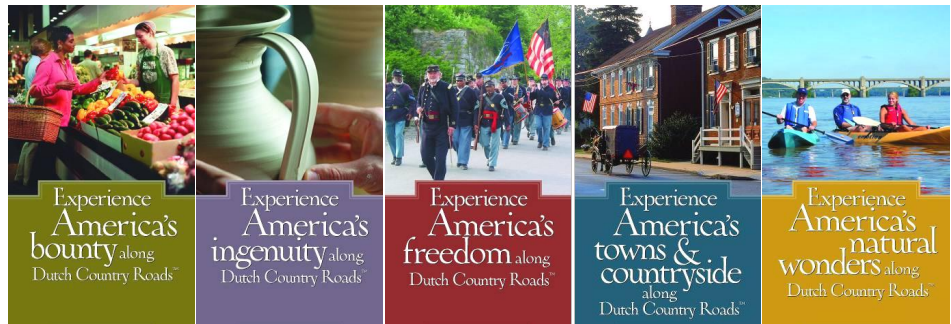
The story of the Underground Railroad would fit under NPS Theme II, Creating Social Institutions and Movements, Theme IV, Shaping the Political Landscape, and Theme V, Developing the American Economy. The stories of James Buchanan and Thaddeus Stevens would fit under Theme IV, Shaping the Political Landscape.

## Chapter 6: Application of Interim National Heritage Area Criteria

The following information summarizes how the current state heritage area qualifies for national designation according to the National Park Service's ten suggested criteria for becoming a National Heritage Area. This assessment is derived in part from the findings of the 1999 *Feasibility Study* and the 2001 *Management Action Plan* and links to the Susquehanna Gateway Statement of National Significance presented in Chapter 5, which provides more specific documentation of the significant role played by the region in the development of the American story.

**1. The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities.**

The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area retains and showcases a nationally significant collection of natural, historic and cultural resources that exemplify the very best of America's heritage. The heritage area dramatically illustrates Pennsylvania's long and distinguished role in the development of the United States, the practice of long-held religious beliefs and cultural traditions, and the innovative spirit that has helped America retain its role as a world leader.



*The state heritage area's five interpretive themes have been used to showcase the region's key stories of importance to Pennsylvania's historical development.*

Through the work of the state designated Lancaster-York Heritage Region, these stories have been organized and presented to residents and visitors based on five primary interpretive themes: Bounty, Ingenuity, Freedom, Towns and Countryside, and Natural Wonders.

Numerous sites of significant American heritage are situated within the Susquehanna Gateway region. Included among the more than 200 historically significant sites, structures, districts and tours are the home of a former United States President, the community where the Continental Congress adopted the Articles of Confederation (America's first Constitution), the homes of many prominent figures in American history, the preserved agricultural landscape of Lancaster County's Plain communities, numerous National Historic Landmarks, National Historic Districts and Main Street communities, and many thriving examples of this region's nationally significant industrial and agricultural heritage, which collectively and individually are important to United States history.

Natural resources are also a significant part of the area's heritage, with the Susquehanna River and adjacent lands standing out as a premier natural and recreational resource. Wildflower glens, migratory bird resting sites, remnants of old-growth forest, complex geological features, pre-historic Native-American archaeological sites and remnants of a once flourishing iron industry are all found along the river. Portions of this heritage are nationally recognized for ecological diversity and scenic quality: Kelley's Run Trail, along a river tributary, and the Susquehanna River Water Trail are both National Recreation Trails; Ferncliff National Natural Landmark is known for its wildflowers; and the Susquehanna River Gorge has been deemed worthy of designation as a National Natural Landmark in studies of the area. The Susquehanna River Water Trail is also part of the National Park Service's Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network.



*National Significance:* Of the nationally significant historical themes related to the Susquehanna Gateway region that are discussed in Chapter 5, the theme titled *“The Susquehanna River as a Corridor of Culture and Commerce”* is especially relevant to Criterion 1. The story of the Susquehanna River Valley reflects the American experience, including Native American habitation, European settlement, the alteration of the landscape to rural farmland, the construction of towns, the rise and decline of industries, and changes in the use of the river from exploitation and commerce to recreation.

## **2. The area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a valuable part of the national story.**

The cultural identity of much of the Susquehanna Gateway area is associated by many with the Plain People, more commonly known as the Old Order Amish and Mennonite communities. Lancaster County is home to North America’s oldest and most densely populated Amish settlement. The Plain community’s aversion to modern conveniences and ability to continue traditional ways in the face of tremendous external change and pressure has been the subject of much interest for visitors to the region for much of the last century.



*Amish mud sales provide annual affirmation of the continued strength and viability of the region’s large Plain community.*

The Amish were originally attracted to the region by William Penn’s legacy of life without religious persecution. Penn’s rejection of military conscription and focus on peacemaking enhanced the appeal of the area to immigrants. By the time of the American Revolution, Pennsylvania was one of America’s largest colonies, serving as the first American melting pot. At the edge of the North American frontier, the region was a launching point for those moving west.

The region’s promise of freedom extended beyond religion to African-Americans fleeing slavery. The predominance of people who opposed slavery and its proximity to the Mason-Dixon Line helped to make the area an active part of the Underground Railroad. Due to the clandestine nature of this national network, physical evidence of this history remains scarce, yet personal accounts passed on through generations and continuing research have revealed the region’s important role in this story.

Agriculture is one of the most distinct aspects of the region’s heritage. The area has served as the breadbasket to the East for centuries, with its patchwork of rich farmland defining the landscape. Lancaster is widely touted as the most productive non-irrigated farmland in the nation. York is distinguished by its many food processing and packaging plants. Innovative local companies helped diversify the agricultural industry well beyond county boundaries. This diversified economy helped the region withstand economic downturns that devastated other communities. The region’s agricultural heritage remains a key part of Pennsylvania’s economy. Traditional crop cultivation and modern food production makes the area rich in stories about agriculture’s past, present and future.

The important role of manufacturing extends beyond agri-business to include a centuries-old tradition of highly diverse and innovative industries. York’s World War II industrial mobilization effort, known as the “The York Plan,” sought to use every available person and machine day and night to design, engineer and manufacture the parts and products necessary for the war effort. The plan

became a national model for manufacturing communities across nation. This tradition of innovation is still reflected in the region's production of motorcycles, barbells, coffins, paper, pottery, tanks, furniture, wallpaper, violins, tapestries, dental prosthetics, hydraulic turbines, and cigars.

*National Significance:* Of the nationally significant historical themes related to the Susquehanna Gateway region that are discussed in Chapter 5, the theme titled *"The Amish Identity in the American Mind"* is especially relevant to Criterion 2. Although the Plain People of Lancaster and York Counties are not unique to the area, the landscape they have created there is of a scale and scope that is rare if not entirely unknown elsewhere in the United States. The people and the landscape, which have become known throughout the world, represent the national story of American agriculture and the way it has transformed the natural environment.

### **3. The area provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/or scenic features.**

Historic resources of state and national significance are found throughout the Susquehanna Gateway region. The Susquehanna River Valley was the center of the Susquehannock native peoples civilization, before the arrival of Europeans during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The European settlers brought diverse cultures, religions, and trades that shaped the character not only of present-day Pennsylvania, but also of other outlying East Coast regions. Known to geographers as a "cultural hearth," the region was initially home to people and ideas that migrated to the Upper Ohio Valley, Piedmont Maryland, the West Virginia panhandle, and Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.



*The Pennsylvania bank barn influenced farm architecture across the United States and remains a signature feature of the local landscape.*

The region has consistently occupied a top position in national agricultural production, although its production emphasis gradually shifted from wheat, to livestock, to tobacco, to dairy. Lancaster and York Counties are also known for ingenuity in the manufacturing arena, from munitions to confections. The region is home to nationally significant transportation landmarks, including the Lancaster-Philadelphia Turnpike, the Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Howard Railroad Tunnel.

Gently rolling hills, flat plains, and winding valleys make up the heritage area's landscape. The quality of the soil and topographical character of the region discernibly shaped early settlement patterns - delineating prime settlement locations from those that were less favorable and establishing preferred routes of travel. Settlers were first attracted to the region not only for the quality of its soils, but for its abundant water resources, a necessity for any successful settlement. Immediately adjacent to Maryland, the region is situated near the mouth of the Susquehanna River where it joins the Chesapeake Bay, serving as Pennsylvania's gateway to the river both north and south.

*National Significance:* Of the nationally significant historical themes related to the Susquehanna Gateway region that are discussed in Chapter 5, the theme titled *"Gateway to the Frontier"* is especially relevant to Criterion 3. This area was a nationally significant gateway to the settlement of the American frontier in the eighteenth century. Residents of the Susquehanna River Valley



developed a vernacular architectural idiom, a host of useful and innovative tools for survival and growth, and a sustainable system of farming that transformed the landscape. As they emigrated to the west and south, they took with them their methods of construction, their wagons and rifles, and their agricultural techniques to likewise transform much of the rest of the country. The national influence of this region as a “cultural hearth” can be seen today in both the built environment and in the agricultural patterns of western Virginia, the backcountry of the Carolinas, and beyond.

#### 4. The area provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.

The Susquehanna Gateway region contains exceptional parks and other recreational resources - potentially the most diverse collection of recreational offerings among Pennsylvania’s twelve heritage areas. York and Lancaster Counties, together with the region’s municipalities, have been diligent in addressing their recreational needs, and have done admirable planning and development with considerable citizen support. The Lower Susquehanna River also has a considerable and highly diverse natural heritage that will support a successful National Heritage Area over the long term. A great deal of this natural heritage can be showcased through the creation of a major “eco-tourism” destination focused on the river.



*Local outfitters can provide gear and guidance for a quality recreational experience in the natural wonders of the Susquehanna.*

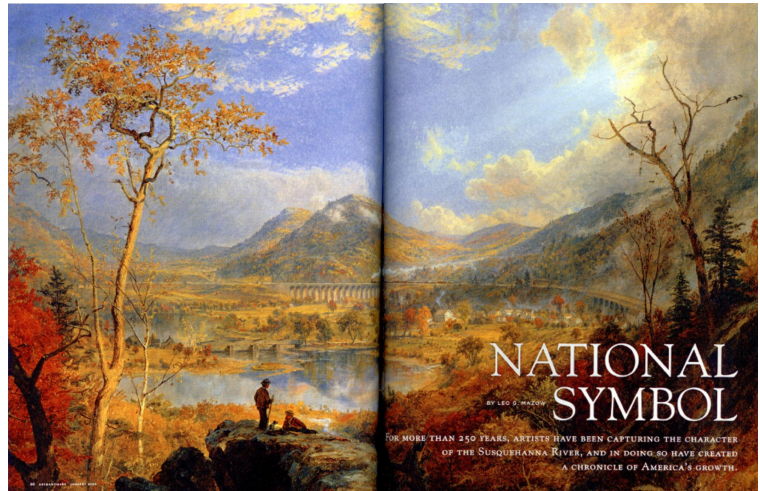
York and Lancaster Counties also have an abundance of organizations that are active in education and interpretation about regional heritage. All of the region’s major interpretive opportunities are addressed to some extent by existing organizations. The North Museum in Lancaster possesses an extensive collection of Native American artifacts. The Agricultural and Industrial Museum in York interprets the forces that shaped the region’s economy. Pennsylvania German culture is interpreted at the Landis Valley Museum. The golden era of railroads is presented at the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum, a Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission site in Strasburg. Decorative arts and local history exhibits are found at the many house museums and historical societies in the area. Local folk life, including traditional foods and crafts, is celebrated during the region’s many seasonal festivals.

The heritage area hosts several institutions that are leaders in heritage education within the region. The Lancaster County Historical Society, the Heritage Center of Lancaster County and the York County Heritage Trust all have broad interpretive scopes and offer events and exhibits about various aspects of regional heritage, including social history, folk art, decorative arts, and architecture. Each county also has an active historic preservation advocacy group - the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County and Historic York – that endeavor to educate the public about conserving their heritage and serve as a repository for research conducted on the historic architecture of each county.

A recent example of the region’s unique opportunities for innovative heritage education and interpretation is the *Visions of the Susquehanna* river art exhibit. This critically acclaimed collection of historic and contemporary artwork featuring the Susquehanna River was put together in 2006 by nationally-recognized artist and local resident Rob Evans, in association with the heritage area’s *Along the Susquehanna* heritage exhibit project. After travelling to museums throughout the river



watershed's three states (Pennsylvania, Maryland and New York), selected artwork from the exhibit has been purchased by the heritage area to create a permanent river art collection showcasing the beauty, power and cultural identity of the Susquehanna. The national significance of *Visions of the Susquehanna* has been recognized by Art & Antiques magazine, which titled its grandly illustrated January 2008 article about the collection "National Symbol" (see [Appendix K](#)).



*"Art & Antiques" magazine recently showcased the region's "Visions of the Susquehanna" river art exhibit as a "National Symbol."*

***National Significance:*** All of the nationally significant historical themes related to the Susquehanna Gateway region that are discussed in Chapter 5 are also relevant to Criterion 4. This region has an unusually rich collection of natural and historical resources that provide high-quality recreational and educational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

The theme titled *"Susquehanna River as a Corridor of Culture and Commerce"* discusses the ways in which the river and its landscape influenced, and were in turn affected by, the people who settled here. From the Susquehannock to Penn's colonists, from craftsmen to industrialists, from farmers to town builders, they all left a built and natural environment that can teach visitors and residents alike about the nationally important history of this region.

*"The Amish Identity in the American Mind"* discusses the influence that the Plain People have had on Lancaster and York Counties, the changes they have wrought in the landscape, and the rural environment they have created. The landscape and the people themselves have gripped the American imagination and constitute a cherished part of our self-image. Opportunities abound here for learning about the Plain People and their farms and lifestyles.

The theme titled *"Gateway to the Frontier"* explains how the people of this area—English, Germans, and Scots-Irish—extended their vernacular architecture, farming methods, and folkways well beyond the boundaries of two counties. Their influence is still seen today across large parts of America, especially in the western piedmont and mountain regions of the South. Much can be learned here about the culture these people created and transplanted so successfully elsewhere.

Finally, the theme titled *"Revolutionary Turning Point"* discusses the vital role this area played during a crucial period in the Revolutionary War. The reconstructed courthouse in York, which replicates the building that served as the national capitol in 1777 and 1778, is the focal point at which to educate visitors about this nationally important story.

## **5. Resources that are important to the identified themes or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation.**

The region's heritage resources - their diversity, breadth and quality - are the core of the proposed National Heritage Area. This history is rich and varied. Among the most significant stories are those involving the pursuit of religious freedom, agriculture, and industrial innovation. The cultural resources that help tell these stories - the area's people, art, crafts, buildings, landscapes, and artifacts - are outstanding.

The cities and small towns that dot the landscape are interesting and charming repositories of regional culture. They reveal the unique flavor of community life that one can experience traveling through the area. The concise pattern of town and countryside is the realization of idealized small town life. The cultural traditions of the immigrants, past and present, place Pennsylvania Dutch side by side with Asians and Hispanics. Cultural institutions are plentiful and several stand out, such as York County's Historical Society and Agricultural and Industrial Museums, and Lancaster County's Landis Valley Museum, Ephrata Cloister, Heritage Center Museum, Lancaster County Historical Society, Fulton Opera House, and National Watch & Clock Museum.



*Downtown Lancaster is a showcase of regional heritage.*

Lancaster County draws visitors in part because of its evocative images of bucolic rural landscapes. The scenery includes both the landscape, with its distinctive patchwork of fields, and the cultural symbols, such as wash hanging on the line and hand painted signs advertising produce for sale. While York also exhibits an agricultural landscape, the vestiges of an industrial heritage are more evident there, with factories, iron furnaces, and railroads testifying to the area's hard-working spirit.

Transportation is also ingrained in the history of this region. From the early years of westward migration to modern highways, transportation by way of foot, horse, wagon, boat, and car have made their mark on the landscape. The Conestoga wagon, invented here in the early 1700s, was among the earliest transportation innovations in the region. Used to carry freight, it was the most common mode of transporting commercial goods in the U.S. prior to the expansion of the railroad.

As with the rest of the nation, railroads played a critical role in regional transportation during the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly in the transport of agriculture-related goods. The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania provides high quality interpretation of state and regional railroad history.

The Lower Susquehanna River comprises an outstanding and under-appreciated natural resource, both regionally and nationally. The ecological, recreational, and scenic qualities of this resource make it one of the most distinctive and noteworthy features of the region and the state.

The river's dramatic gorge, located in the south-central part of the region, is especially beautiful. Notable natural sites along the river include the Conejohela Flats bird habitat, two wildflower preserves, and three nature preserves. The river gorge is also home to one of the largest remaining collections of Native American petroglyphs, or rock art, in the northeastern United States.

Numerous state, county and local parks provide opportunities for recreation and experiencing nature. Most notable of these are the four state parks (Codus, Gifford Pinchot, and Sam Lewis in York County; Susquehannock in Lancaster County) and the county parks (including Chickies Rock and Central in Lancaster County,



*The Susquehanna's petroglyphs are one of the region's last remaining vestiges of a once-thriving native civilization.*



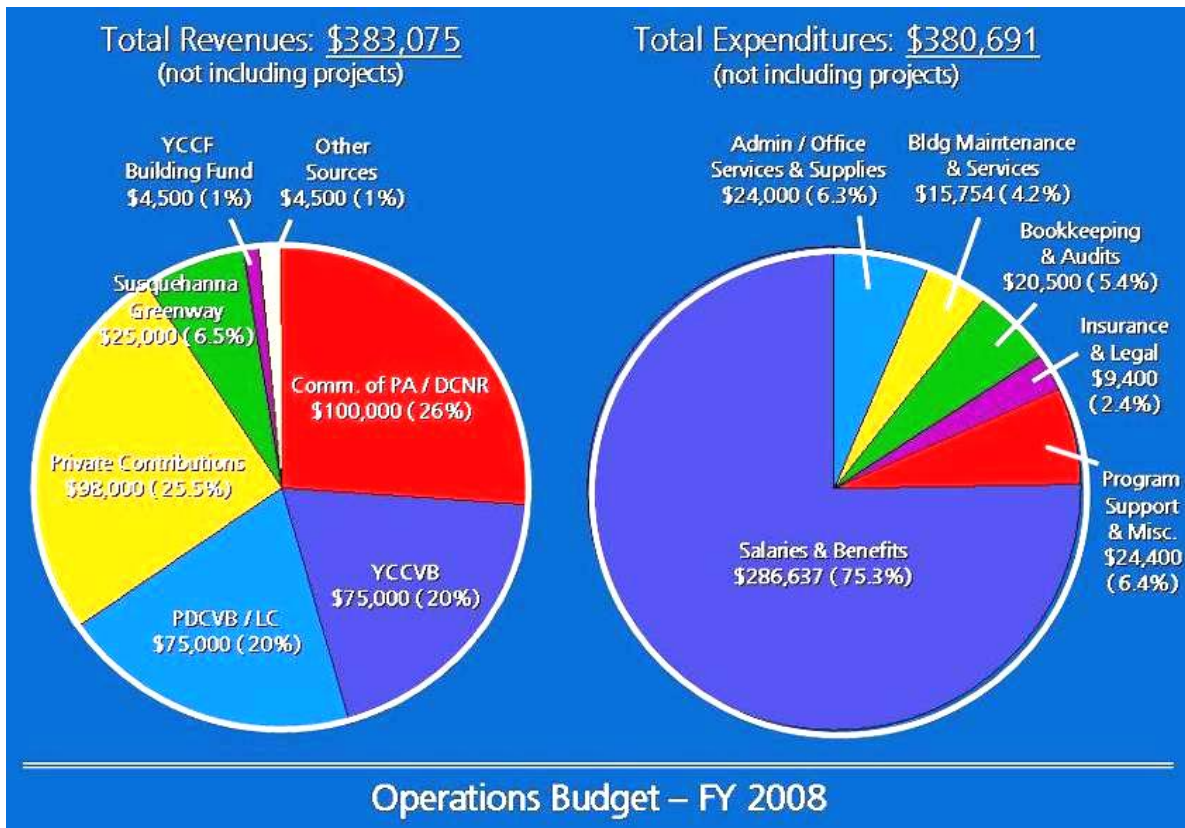
and Rocky Ridge and Kain in York County). Both counties also operate excellent environmental education centers as central features of their parks.

The heritage area has several excellent trails, such as the York County Heritage Rail Trail, extending from Downtown York to the Maryland border and drawing cyclists from the region and beyond. Other well-known trails in the region include the Susquehanna River Water Trail, the Mason-Dixon Trail, the Conestoga Recreation Trail, the Horseshoe Trail and portions of the Appalachian Trail. The Heritage Rail Trail and the Susquehanna River Water Trail were both designated as National Recreation Trails by the United States Secretary of the Interior in June 2008.

National Significance: In Chapter 5 the nationally significant historical themes related to the Susquehanna Gateway region are discussed. These heritage themes reflect events and movements that represent the American experience. This area includes a vast array of historical, cultural, and natural resources recognized by national programs: one National Natural Landmark, five National Historic Landmarks, and 329 other individual historic buildings, districts, and archaeological sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see [Appendix I](#)). All of these resources must meet stringent standards of integrity to qualify for recognition. The area is therefore unusually rich in landscapes, districts, buildings, and sites that are capable of supporting interpretation.

6. Residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area that are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area.

Current Finances: As a state-designated heritage area, the Lancaster-York Heritage Region has been operating according to an annual budget, financial plan and auditing process for over seven years. The approved operations budget for fiscal year 2008 is \$383,075, as summarized in the chart below:

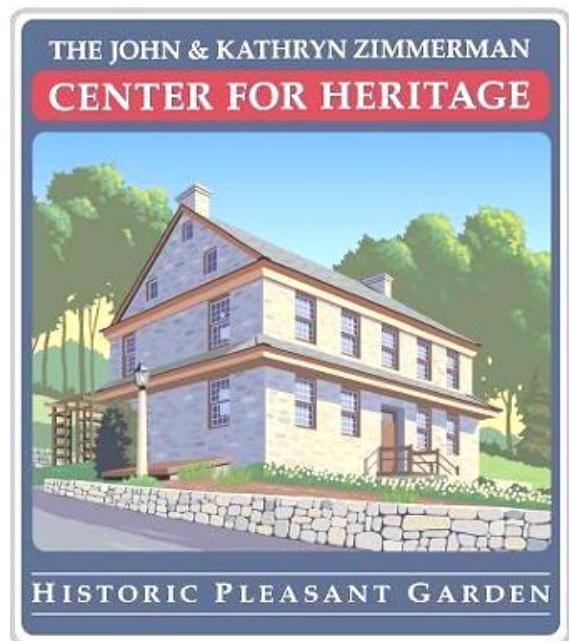




Major funding partners for heritage area's annual operations and management budget include the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources / Heritage Areas Program (\$100,000), York County Convention and Visitors Bureau (\$75,000), County of Lancaster (\$40,000), Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau (\$35,000), and private donors (\$98,000). The heritage area receives \$25,000 annually from the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership to serve as the Regional Lead Organization for the Lower Susquehanna River portion of the greenway. Over \$75,000 per year in additional operations funds will begin in 2009 as part of the heritage area's lead management role in the recently announced Lower Susquehanna River Greenway Initiative.

Since 2001, the heritage area has also managed over \$2.4 million in heritage development projects, funded with \$1.5 million in state grants matched with \$900,000 in local public and private funds. Annual project grants from the Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program are typically funded for up to \$150,000, depending on the state budget process. These projects are implemented over multiple years – the heritage area is currently managing \$410,000 in state-funded project grants. Legislation to increase state funding support for Pennsylvania's heritage area network is currently pending with the state legislature. If approved as planned in 2009, the heritage area's capacity for heritage development work and matching funds for federal support will be greatly enhanced.

Further evidence of the heritage area's growing financial strength and stability was the major gift to the organization of the Historic Pleasant Garden property in May 2007. This early 18<sup>th</sup> century home, valued at \$1.4 million, was donated by John and Kathryn Zimmerman, long-time civic leaders from York County, to serve as the heritage area's office and regional center for heritage programs. The property has been designated as The John and Kathryn Zimmerman Center for Heritage at Historic Pleasant Garden. A \$100,000 building maintenance fund was also donated by the Zimmermans. With its riverfront location and history as one of the oldest remaining frontier-era structures in the region, Pleasant Garden will provide an especially appropriate headquarters for the new Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area.



*The \$1.4 million Historic Pleasant Garden property was donated to the heritage area in 2007.*

At the present time, it is anticipated that all current sources of funding for heritage area operations and project development will continue, and may actually increase, through the next five years. The state funding has been consistently budgeted for the past seven years and will increase if the pending legislation is approved. The local support from the convention and visitors bureaus and Lancaster County, established by agreement when the state heritage area was launched in 2001, has also remained consistent. New sources of funding, such as that beginning in 2009 from the Lower Susquehanna Greenway Initiative, will also continue to build the heritage area's financial health and capacity for enhanced heritage development programs and projects.

*Conceptual Financial Plan:* The strength and consistency of the heritage area's current and anticipated operations and projects budget provides the foundation needed to effectively plan for and match anticipated federal funding support resulting from National Heritage Area designation. In order to project the heritage area's financial picture once national designation is achieved and federal funding is appropriated (assumed to begin by 2010), a conceptual five-year financial plan has been developed, as shown below:

Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area / Five-Year Conceptual Financial Plan: 2010-2014						
Purpose	PA DCNR / Heritage Areas Program	Local Govt., CVBs, Other Local	Lower Susquehanna Greenway / SGP	Private Contributions	Federal NHA Appropriation	Total Five-Year Funding
Management, Operations & Planning	\$500,000 <sup>1</sup>	\$750,000 <sup>2</sup>	\$500,000 <sup>3</sup>	\$250,000 <sup>4</sup>	\$850,000 <sup>5</sup>	<b>\$2,850,000</b>
NHA Management Plan	\$100,000 <sup>6</sup>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000 <sup>7</sup>	<b>\$300,000</b>
Heritage Development Programs & Projects	\$650,000 <sup>8</sup>	\$125,000 <sup>9</sup>	\$250,000 <sup>10</sup>	\$75,000 <sup>11</sup>	\$400,000 <sup>12</sup>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
<b>Total Five-Year Funding</b>	<b>\$1,250,000</b>	<b>\$875,000</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$325,000</b>	<b>\$1,450,000</b>	<b>\$4,650,000</b>

**Notes:**

1. PA Heritage Area Program Management Grants = \$100,000 / yr
2. YCCVB = \$75,000 / yr; PDCVB = \$35,000 / yr; Lancaster County = \$40,000 / yr
3. Lower Susquehanna Greenway / SGP = \$100,000 / yr
4. Private Donations = \$50,000 / yr
5. Federal NHA for Operations = \$50,000 in 2010; \$100,000 / yr 2011-2012; \$300,000 / yr 2013-2014
6. PA Heritage Areas Program Study Grants = \$50,000 / yr 2011-2012

7. Federal NHA for Management Plan = \$100,000 in 2010; \$50,000 / yr 2011-2012
8. PA Heritage Areas Program Project Grants = \$150,000 in 2010; \$100,000 / yr 2011-2012; \$150,000 / yr 2013-2014
9. Local matching funds - CVBs, local governments & other local partners = \$25,000 / yr
10. Lower Susquehanna Greenway Initiative = \$50,000 / yr
11. Private Donations = \$15,000 / yr
12. Federal NHA for Projects = \$200,000 / yr 2013-2014

This conceptual financial plan is based on a projected National Heritage Area appropriation of \$150,000 annually for the first three years after designation, the period during which a new Management Plan will be developed. This appropriation would fund some initial new operations capacity and costs associated with development of the Management Plan, which would also be supplemented with state funding. The projected annual federal appropriation is projected to increase to \$500,000 for the fourth and fifth years of the five-year planning period, with funds allocated for enhanced management and operations capacity and regional heritage development programs and projects, all based on the new Management Plan.

Community Support: National designation was identified as a goal for the heritage area in the 2001 *Management Action Plan*, which was developed with extensive community input. Support for national designation was recently affirmed by the heritage area’s Board of Directors as part of the Board’s strategic planning process. The updated Strategic Plan focuses the heritage area’s mission on raising awareness and appreciation of the cultural and economic value of the Susquehanna River and preserving, enhancing and celebrating its most significant heritage assets as economically vital attractions for the region. The plan identifies national designation as a critical step towards increasing public recognition of the area as a place with nationally important stories to share. The Board of Directors also approved a resolution in May 2008 specifically requesting the introduction of legislation for such designation from the region’s Congressional delegation.

All twenty-eight member organizations on the heritage area’s regional Advisory Council, including the region’s two convention and visitors bureaus and two county planning commissions, have endorsed national designation. Letters of support from these partners are included in Appendix F. The two County Boards of Commissioners have also endorsed national designation as a key component of regional efforts to enhance heritage and outdoor tourism by sharing the region’s rich heritage with residents and visitors alike.

As detailed in Chapter 2, strong community support for designation of the region as a National Heritage Area was expressed at the two public meetings conducted to discuss the proposal. Participants not only affirmed the desirability of achieving national designation, they also shared great input about the nationally significant stories that qualify the region for such a distinction.

## **7. The proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area.**

A key part of the process leading to state designation in 2001 was the development of strong partnerships across the region. This approach was essential to building consensus about heritage development priorities and completing the *Feasibility Study* and *Management Action Plan*.

These partnerships continued after state designation with development of a framework and criteria for potential partners to work in concert with the heritage region. This framework includes a nineteen-member, two-county civic leadership-based Board of Directors that provides strategic policy direction to the heritage area's work and includes representatives of each County Board of Commissioners. The Board's oversight is complemented by an Advisory Council made up of almost thirty agencies, organizations, associations, institutions, and businesses which embrace and support the heritage area's overarching goals and objectives. The Advisory Council meets quarterly and includes representatives of convention and visitors bureaus, county parks departments, county planning agencies, historical societies, and hospitality businesses.



*The Board of Directors provides strategic policy direction to heritage area programs and projects.*

By working together, the heritage area's partners have benefited from networking opportunities and access to more resources. They have been able to achieve a larger number of successful projects than if working alone. These partnerships are a key part of the heritage area's seven-year track record of success. Through their expressions of support for national designation (see [Appendix F](#)) and their participation in the public meetings held concerning such designation, these partners have also committed to help advance the National Heritage Area's work in a similar collaborative manner.

## **8. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area.**

Lancaster and York Counties already have a vibrant tourism economy that is largely based on sharing the unique character of the region's heritage with visitors from around the world. Many attractions that are not heritage-based have located in the area to benefit from visitors attracted here to experience the region's rural landscapes, historic towns and natural wonders. A National Heritage Area is consistent with this economic activity and will help strengthen the economies of local communities, especially those that have protected their authentic character and traditions. National designation will also greatly enhance opportunities for focusing heritage development activities on the Susquehanna River and its potential to be an accessible, national showcase for large landscape conservation, environmental quality and sustainable heritage and outdoor tourism.

## **9. A conceptual boundary map is supported by the public.**

The current boundaries of the state-designated heritage area were established early in the planning process to include all of Lancaster and York Counties, with the Susquehanna River at the center, uniting the communities physically, culturally and economically. These boundaries have enjoyed strong support from local residents and civic leaders engaged in the region's heritage programs and projects over the past seven years. The boundaries continue to be supported by the state heritage area's primary funding partners. They were also supported by participants at the two public meetings conducted to discuss national designation. Building on this success, the same boundaries are



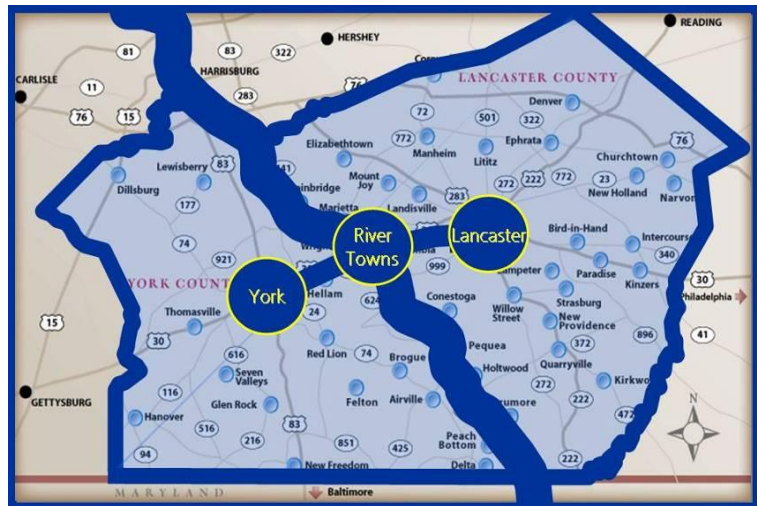
proposed for the National Heritage Area, as shown on the map included here and in [Appendix D](#). The two counties in the heritage area include 131 municipalities (see [Appendix H](#)).

**10. The management entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.**

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region was incorporated in 2002 as a Pennsylvania 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation by the local partners who managed development and state designation process. This organization has successfully served as the Management Entity since that time and is also proposed to serve in the same capacity for the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area. The heritage area operates from Historic Pleasant Garden, an 18<sup>th</sup> century dwelling on the Susquehanna River in York County. Designated as The John and Kathryn Zimmerman Center for Heritage in recognition of its donors, the facility serves as a base for heritage development activities and heritage education and interpretive programs.

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region is governed by a nineteen-member, two-county civic leadership-based Board of Directors that provides strategic policy direction and oversight to the heritage area’s work. An Advisory Council representing almost thirty regional agencies, organizations, associations, institutions, and businesses also provides support and guidance to the organization.

As reviewed at the recent community meetings in Lancaster and York regarding National Heritage Area designation, the current state heritage area has planned, initiated, and completed a wide range of heritage development initiatives since designation by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 2001 (see examples in [Appendix K](#)). These programs and projects have included partnerships with many other regional community organizations, as well as local and state agencies. National designation, support and identity will further enhance the region’s ability to preserve, protect and celebrate our area’s significant heritage resources and stories.



*The proposed National Heritage Area includes all of Lancaster and York Counties, with the Susquehanna River at its center.*



*NHA community meetings included an overview of programs and projects completed since state designation in 2001.*



## Chapter 7: Affected Environment

In order to provide an evaluation of the resources that exist in the heritage area, this chapter addresses the affected environment by reviewing cultural, historic and natural resources inventories that provide a basis for determining the quantity and quality of resources that exist in the region. Documentation of these resources helps provide a better understanding of how national designation may contribute to additional public education and protection of the region's resource base. These resources can also demonstrate potential opportunities to increase the quality of such resources through National Heritage Area designation. The heritage resources of the region provide the necessary physical places and interpretive opportunities to effectively tell the area's national stories as described in Chapter 5, *Statement of National Significance*.

### Cultural and Historic Resources

The historic resources in the proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area represent a remarkable wealth of American history. There are five National Historic Landmarks, including such widely acclaimed national treasures as the meticulously preserved *Wheatland* in Lancaster, PA. This amazing 17-room brick structure served as the home of President James Buchanan from 1849 until his death. The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area is home to 334 National Register of Historic Places listings which includes 49 National Register Historic Districts. National Register sites within the proposed National Heritage Area include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. A complete listing of the region's National Register sites and National Historic Landmarks is provided in [Appendix I](#).



*Wheatland, President James Buchanan's historic home in Lancaster County, is a National Historic Landmark.*

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region has taken its responsibility as stewards of these resources very seriously over the past seven years and has diligently strived to creatively interpret, preserve and promote many of these significant historic and cultural resources. By way of example, in 2006 Lancaster-York Heritage Region partnered with the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County and Historic York, Inc. to plan and implement a public, inter-county tour of historic homes and heritage sites. While the project effectively helped to showcase properties demonstrating a variety of architectural styles and stories, it also helped to show that so many more opportunities for creative partnerships in regional preservation would be possible with an expanded network of support from federal resources.

The Lancaster-York Heritage Region has taken its responsibility as stewards of these resources very seriously over the past seven years and has diligently strived to creatively interpret, preserve and promote many of these significant historic and cultural resources. By way of example, in 2006 Lancaster-York Heritage Region partnered with the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County and Historic York, Inc. to plan and implement a public, inter-county tour of historic homes and heritage sites. While the project effectively helped to showcase properties demonstrating a variety of architectural styles and stories, it also helped to show that so many more opportunities for creative partnerships in regional preservation would be possible with an expanded network of support from federal resources.

Designation as a National Heritage Area will serve to increase public awareness of local cultural and historic resources and help promote their preservation through community partnerships across the region. Visitors will be provided with information that connects these diverse historic places, destinations and districts to the nation's stories and the unique role this area played in American history. The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area will also work with the many jurisdictions in the region to foster preservation of valuable cultural and historic resources and provide a viable interpretive experience.



The efforts of the proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area will significantly expand the stewardship capacity of the region to ensure that nationally significant cultural and historic resources in the heritage area are not negatively impacted by national designation. In fact, through a stronger partnership network, the resources of the region would be protected to a greater degree.

## Natural Resources

Natural resources are a significant part of the region's heritage, and the Susquehanna River and adjacent lands are an outstanding local, regional and national natural and recreational resource. Wildflower glens, migratory bird resting sites, remnants of old-growth forest, complex geological features, archaeological resources associated with pre-historic Native-American sites, and remnants of a once flourishing iron industry are some of the resources found along the river. Portions of this area are nationally recognized for ecological diversity and scenic quality: a portion of the north branch of the Susquehanna River is a designated American Heritage River; Kelley's Run Hiking Trail along a Susquehanna tributary is a National Recreation Trail; Ferncliff National Natural Landmark is known for abundant wildflowers; and the Susquehanna River Gorge below the river towns of Wrightsville and Columbia was deemed worthy of designation as a National Natural Landmark in studies of the area.

The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area is fortunate to have a significant number of unique and high quality natural areas throughout the region. In order to supply county-level documentation on the existence of species considered rare, threatened or endangered at the state or federal level, this report includes maps corresponding to the Lancaster County Natural Heritage Inventory and the York County Natural Areas Inventory, as shown in [Appendix J](#).

The Lancaster County Natural Heritage Inventory Update is a document compiled and written by the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC). It refers to all species considered to be rare, threatened or endangered at the state or federal level. It builds on the original Natural Areas Inventory of Lancaster County completed in 1990.

The York County Natural Areas Inventory is a document compiled and written by the Pennsylvania Science Office of The Nature Conservancy. These documents contain information on the locations of rare, threatened, and endangered species and of the highest quality natural areas in the respective county. It is not an inventory of all open space, but is intended as a conservation tool.

Accompanying each of the site descriptions, the inventories also provide general management recommendations that would help to ensure the protection and continued existence of these natural communities, rare plants, and animals. The recommendations are based on the biological needs of these elements (communities and species). The recommendations are strictly those of the PNHP and The Nature Conservancy and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the state or the policies of the county or townships for which the report was prepared.



*The American Bald Eagle has experienced a dramatic resurgence in the Lower Susquehanna River Gorge - the heart of the heritage area.*

Based on this documentation, the only known federally listed species of concern in Lancaster and York Counties is the bog turtle (*glyptemys muhlenbergii*). However, there are many plants and animals within the region that are considered rare, threatened or endangered at the state level.

More information about the Lancaster County Natural Heritage Inventory is available from the Lancaster County Planning Commission (717-299-8333). Information about the York County Natural Areas Inventory is available from the York County Planning Commission (717-771-9870).

Programs and projects to be initiated by the heritage area are expected to have negligible long-term adverse impact and negligible to minor adverse short-term impacts on flora and fauna. Detailed mapping of the incidence of various rare and/or endangered species is not available at this time. However, in the case of future construction projects that are proposed on land not already disturbed, efforts will be made to assess the existence of such species, prior to construction in order to identify any possible impacts and determine and review appropriate mitigation measures.

### **Summary**

The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area plans to implement a robust series of public awareness and interpretive programs and projects that will help to ensure that state and nationally significant cultural, historic and natural resources in the region are not negatively impacted by national designation. In fact, through a stronger partnership network, the resources of the region would be protected to a greater degree.





## Chapter 8: Management Alternatives

This chapter reviews three management alternatives appropriate for consideration in the proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area: a No Action Alternative, an Other Federal Designation Alternative and a National Heritage Area Designation Alternative.

### No Action Alternative

In this alternative, the existing Lancaster-York Heritage Region remains unchanged, continuing to operate as a state-designated heritage area. No additional technical assistance or funding would be provided through the National Park Service for coordination, interpretation, preservation or heritage development purposes. The current level of heritage development activities would likely continue, assisted by the existing partnership of non-federal entities. The heritage area and its partners would continue to implement the current Management Action Plan, utilizing existing resources and funding. This cooperation would be consistent with what has taken place over the last seven years. Since no federal funding or technical assistance support would be assumed, all resources for heritage development would be sought from the same types of state and local sources that have been used in the past.

While successes similar to those achieved in the state heritage area's first seven years of operation would continue, the No Action Alternative would limit the ability of the heritage area to reach its true potential for conservation, preservation and interpretation of the region's nationally significant cultural and historic resources and stories. While certain elements of the region's national stories are being enhanced and shared under the current state designated structure, the rich themes of national importance outlined in Chapter 5, *Statement of National Significance*, have not been fully developed, and may languish under the No Action Alternative. Lack of national designation could also jeopardize the ability of the region to advance its primary strategic focus to create an economically vital heritage and outdoor tourism asset based on the national significance of the Susquehanna River. The region would also not benefit from the advantages of a National Heritage Area profile in boosting visibility and visitation and bringing critical technical assistance and support to the region. This could limit new economic development activity focused on heritage and outdoor tourism in the region, especially along the Susquehanna River corridor.

### Other Federal Designation

This alternative assumes that the Lancaster-York Heritage Region continues to operate as a state designated heritage area and couples that designation with one or more federal designations other than that as a National Heritage Area. This alternative assumes that any other federal designation pursued and achieved would bring with it management entity status and resources.

The heritage region would identify other federal designation programs that would assist in conserving, preserving and promoting its heritage resources of national significance.

By way of example, the Lancaster-York Heritage Region could pursue federal designation of specific heritage and recreational resources through any of the programs of the National Trail System. The National Trail System is the network of continuous protected scenic corridors for outdoor recreation created by The National Trail System Act of 1968. The National Trail System consists of National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails and National Recreation Trails.

For instance, the heritage area could seek designation of the Susquehanna River Water Trail as a National Scenic Trail. Given the region's national significance with respect to so many broad facets of American history, a proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Scenic Trail would be a good candidate for designation. The region's national significance in trade and commerce, exploration,

migration of people, settlement of the Plain People and momentous United States military campaigns point to its strong position as a National Scenic Trail. The proposed Susquehanna Gateway National Scenic Trail would have significant potential for public recreational use and interest based on historic interpretation and appreciation.

While certain elements of the region's stories of significance to U.S. history would be enhanced and elevated under this alternative, the comprehensive strategy for encompassing all of the rich themes of national importance outlined in Chapter 5, *Statement of National Significance* may not be achieved. The piecemeal nature of this alternative may not produce the desired outcomes that a holistic conservation and preservation approach would.

### **National Heritage Area Designation Alternative**

This alternative assumes that the heritage area operates with both state and national designations and that the existing management organization assumes responsibility as the management entity for the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area.

National designation would help the organization expand its operations to a larger, national audience and would make the Susquehanna Gateway's heritage stories and resources part of the National Park Service interpretive and marketing network. Support for interpretation and other heritage area programs - and the recognition that comes with national designation - would elevate the status of the Susquehanna Gateway's heritage stories, identifying the region as a place for both residents and visitors to experience authentic national history.

As a National Heritage Area, the many cultural, historic and natural resource organizations in the region could also be eligible for additional technical assistance and grants. This assistance could provide much-needed support for historic preservation, resource conservation, interpretation, education, planning, open space/recreation development, and more, significantly reducing the risk of nationally significant resources being degraded or lost. Such support would help the heritage area's regional partners invest in new preservation and interpretive initiatives focused on the four primary national themes and two additional themes described in the *Statement of National Significance*, ensuring that the region's historic impact and influence on the nation is shared with residents and visitors in the most effective manner possible.

National designation would also help create an economically vital heritage and outdoor tourism asset based on the Susquehanna River by boosting visibility and visitation and bringing new technical assistance and support to the area through the National Park Service. This would enhance economic development activity centered on heritage and outdoor tourism and help the river corridor reach its true potential as a place for national learning and recreation.



*National designation will help protect and interpret significant heritage resources along the Lower Susquehanna River corridor.*

The Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area would also have greater ability to strengthen its powerful network of partnerships, enhancing its capacity to raise and distribute funds and otherwise work to implement the goals of the heritage area. For its part, the National Park Service will receive extensive leverage for its investment in the heritage area by embracing and incorporating into its national system an established, successful heritage area with nationally significant stories and resources that will enhance the offerings currently available in existing national parks and heritage areas.





## **Chapter 9: Impact Statement**

This chapter describes the anticipated impacts related to the proposed management alternatives described in Chapter 7, including the No Action alternative, the Other Federal Designation alternative and the National Heritage Area designation alternative.

None of the management alternatives considered would result in positive or negative impacts to public health or safety. Implementation of any of the management alternatives would out of necessity comply with local, state and federal regulations, including laws pertaining to all relevant health and safety issues and concerns.

Because none of the management alternatives prescribe specific actions for the development of land or natural or cultural resources within the study area, air quality and water resources would not be affected. Development projects that involve federal funding or resources would be subject to review for compliance with the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts.

It is not currently possible to identify potential impacts on wetlands because none of the management alternatives specifies a development location. If and when development sites are selected, a wetland determination would be conducted and an analysis of potential impacts, if any, on wetlands would be completed to fulfill compliance requirements.

### **No Action Alternative**

The first management alternative is the No Action Alternative. This option assumes that there will not be any federal action in the study area. This study finds that there would be no adverse effects on the characteristics of the affected environment from this management alternative.

### **Other Federal Designation Alternative**

The second management alternative is the Other Federal Designation alternative. This option assumes that the Lancaster-York Heritage Region continues to operate as a state designated heritage area and couples that designation with one or more federal designations other than that as a National Heritage Area. This alternative assumes that any other federal designation pursued and achieved would include all of York County, Pennsylvania and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. This alternative assumes pursuit of federal designation through the programs of the National Trail System. The National Trail System is the system of continuous protected scenic corridors for outdoor recreation created by The National Trail System Act of 1968. The National Trail System consists of National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails and National Recreation Trails.

Successful federal designation may subject the heritage area to the compliance requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. An Environmental Assessment may be sufficient to meet NEPA compliance requirements as no significant, quantifiable positive or negative impacts of Other Federal Designation have been identified. Such an assessment would be completed after designation is achieved as part of any required management planning for the other federal designation.

### **National Heritage Area Designation Alternative**

The results of the Feasibility Study Report indicate that the historic and cultural resources are best protected and interpreted by designation as a National Heritage Area. Therefore, the proposed and preferred action is designation of the area, including all of York County, Pennsylvania and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area.

The Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Report may be subject to the compliance requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the

National Historic Preservation Act and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. An Environmental Assessment may be sufficient to meet NEPA compliance requirements since no significant, quantifiable positive or negative impacts of National Heritage Area designation have been identified. Such an assessment would be completed after national designation is achieved as part of the required Management Plan for the National Heritage Area.

### **Impact Statement Conclusion**

The proposed and preferred action, the National Heritage Area Designation Alternative, will not have a significant effect on the environment. There are no significant impacts on public health, public safety, threatened and endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. Implementation of the proposed action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental law.



## Chapter 10: Vision Statement

Heritage areas often inspire action through a common vision. Much discussion and brainstorming throughout the planning process for state designation of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region led to a strong vision that resonated with residents and civic leaders. This vision has been updated to reflect the heritage area's recent strategic planning work and potential national designation, and it continues to guide and inspire the work of the heritage area. The statement is written in the voice of a journalist describing it from a position in the future, over a decade from now.

### A Vision for the Heritage Area: Looking Ahead to the Year 2020

The Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area is characterized by compact towns set in a countryside of verdant agriculture and open lands with the majestic Susquehanna River at its heart. From the dynamic cities of Lancaster and York, through the small, historic river towns of Columbia, Marietta and Wrightsville, to its many quaint rural villages, this area has experienced three hundred years of change. Unlike many other parts of the country, here the patterns of development have avoided much of the generic sprawl that has robbed other places of their distinctiveness. Here, people still enjoy strong ties to community life with activities focused around local institutions like churches, farm markets, and Main Streets. Buildings from the towns' earliest days sit cheek-by-jowl with those from the next generation. Even most modern additions fit the scale and character of their neighbors.



Feelings of regional pride and ownership run deep. Farmers appreciate the cities and towns; business and civic leaders in the towns readily speak of the important defining presence of the region's beautiful and productive agricultural countryside. During the last two decades, most of the towns and townships have confirmed these values through strong public policies. And, active land trusts and conservation groups are important partners.

This area has been a corridor of movement and opportunity since the 18th Century. The people of the Lower Susquehanna region descend from immigrants who sought freedom to pursue their own ambitions and beliefs, who came here, set down roots and formed communities that retain their own cultural distinctions even today. Germans have predominated in numbers, giving the area its association with "Pennsylvania Dutch" ways. Other groups include settlements of Scots Irish, English Quakers, and Welsh. African-Americans have been a part of both York and Lancaster Counties since the 18th Century. Today's new arrivals are Asian and Hispanic – or immigrants from suburban Baltimore or Philadelphia. During the last twenty years, the tensions between 'natives' and 'newcomers' and between whites and non-whites have lessened as we all share in the economic opportunities here.



This area has nearly always been prosperous. Our rich soils and hard work have made us the breadbasket of the Atlantic Coast. Our ingenuity and practicality spawned business, manufacturing and industry. Our skepticism of government and centralized power has been balanced by a strong sense of community spirit and voluntarism. Civic leadership is evident in our revitalized town centers, our long history of land stewardship, and our strong commitment to education and the arts.

A river runs through us - the Susquehanna. Native Americans traveled it freely, but to settlers, it was a barrier to trade and movement. Long after it was crossed with bridges, railroads, and turnpikes, the river's influence as a cultural dividing line remains. There has never been real conflict between the two counties, but Lancasterians tend to look east to Philadelphia; York residents look south to Baltimore.

Not until the Lancaster-York Heritage Region and the National Heritage Area that evolved from it were designated had there been a compelling reason to 'bridge' the river and work together. Through the heritage area we gained insights into the ways in which we are united through shared threads of heritage. As we explored how to better present our stories and our heritage to visitors (an important element in the region's economy), we became intrigued at what we were learning about ourselves. Our interpretive framework enabled us to think about ourselves differently and present our stories in ways that engage visitors and enable residents to understand some of the contradictions that are part of living here.

Programming for some of these themes was relatively easy, others took longer to develop. Today, we have become a national model for heritage and cultural programming. Potential visitors know the heritage area is a place where history truly comes alive – in our museums, on our streets and trails, throughout the countryside we are famous for, and along the river that runs through us. At our visitor orientation centers, a lively and engaging audio-visual production gives the big picture and outlines the key story threads of our heritage. It piques the visitors' interest and moves them to find their way to the places where the stories and experiences continue. Many of our museums and historic sites have re-framed how they present themselves, working from the heritage area's key interpretive themes. And, visitation has changed dramatically: people are coming more often and staying longer, exploring the well-packaged itineraries that draw them all over the area.

We were one of the first areas in the nation to install new hi-tech heritage waystations and a regional 'Voices of the Landscape' system. This technology is now available throughout the entire heritage area and provides visitors (and residents, too!) with a unique way to get to know us, our ways and our culture. Building from the interpretive framework, "Voices" makes dozens of audio programs available instantly to drivers, cyclists or walkers and enabling anyone who has one of the attractive driving and cycling maps of the heritage area to find their way. Listeners hear our voices, stories, music, sounds – you can even 'eavesdrop' on important historic events. The quality and freshness of "Voices" has





brought national media attention, and has been a big factor in how our tourism marketing programs have freshened the region's 'brand identity.'

Lancaster's new conference center and hotel were the catalysts for dramatic town center revitalization, which has now spread for blocks in every direction. The Heritage Center's expanded exhibits provide orientation to the region and to Lancaster County's uniquely Pennsylvania German character. Just beyond the town center, reinvestment in housing has strengthened neighborhoods that are walking distance from offices, shops and thriving farmers markets; improved gateways make it more logical and pleasant to find your way downtown.



York is also more vibrant. A decade ago, few would have believed it would someday rival Lancaster as a heritage tourism magnet. The leadership of the York County Heritage Trust and Better York and other civic groups have made a dramatic difference. The Heritage Rail-Trail's expansion, the opening of the new visitor center at the Colonial Courthouse Complex, and exciting new attractions at other Heritage Trust museums, coupled with a dynamic downtown marketing and management program, have brought the town center to life. Like Lancaster, housing renovation has led to revitalized neighborhoods surrounding downtown.

Perhaps most exciting of all is the emerging focus on the Susquehanna River itself. The lands along its shores have been conserved through an ambitious regional public-private partnership. This public park has areas of quiet natural beauty, other areas of more intense recreation and activity, and many places where one can access the water. Not only is the park a great natural asset, but the region is also beginning to see significant economic spin-off from visitors drawn to it.

The heritage area's 2008 Strategic Plan update, which first introduced a primary strategic focus on creating an economically vital heritage and outdoor tourism asset based on the river, is credited with helping to advance this effort. Designation as a National Heritage Area provided an exciting boost to visibility and visitation and brought critical technical assistance and support to the region. Identification as the "Susquehanna Gateway" area also more effectively highlighted and promoted the majestic Susquehanna, its scenic river lands, and its historic and vibrant river towns as central features of the region's potential as a prime heritage and outdoor traveler destination.





