

PROPOSAL FOR
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
GEORGE WASHINGTON FRONTIER
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Preserving the Sites and Stories of George Washington
and the Many Settlers and Soldiers Who Struggled
to Move the American Frontier Westward
During the Period 1748 - 1758



For the full proposal and further information on how
you and your community can help to establish this
important National Heritage Area please go to:

www.GWFHA.org

George Washington Frontier Heritage Area Initial Planning Suggestions

Gather parts for your “Story” (no later than 1758)

- First settler stories
- Community settlement stories
- Battle stories
- Captivity stories
- Heroes of the community
- Early industries & mines
- George Washington connections
- Militia organization & membership

Collect locations for a map (established by 1758)

- Historic Homes
- Historic Churches
- Historic Graves
- Major Land Grants
- Battlefields
- Roads

Build networks: Tourism, Economic Development, History groups, Arts organizations and local Libraries

- Make contacts (state and local)
- Develop contact information including resource specialties
- Ask for Story information and map sites

Contact your Federal and State representatives

Create list of heritage tourism development opportunities

Forward information for web site to cchall@fortedwards.org

- Map sites
- Story themes
- Bibliographic resources
- Additions/corrections for the draft Proposal posted on web site

Check www.gwfha.org for updates

An Invitation to Help Establish the George Washington Frontier National Heritage Area

In late 2008 a member of Col. Washington's Frontier Forts Association came up with the idea of establishing a National Heritage Area to memorialize the stories of the countless men and women who struggled on the central colonial frontier during the years of the French and Indian War. Today historians think of this conflict as the proving ground for many of the heroes of the American Revolution. It certainly was for the quintessential American hero who rose to manhood during this time in this proposed heritage area. That hero was the "Father of Our Country," George Washington.

The establishment of a National Heritage Area is a complex process that requires the effort of many entities within the designated communities. This effort is required because according to the criteria set forth by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior, a National Heritage Area is a vehicle for not only heritage tourism and historic preservation, but also for community development - economic, cultural and social. Its establishment must be a community effort if it is to enhance life within the community while at the same time benefiting the American people.

The preliminary study that is posted on the web site www.GWFHA.org is put forward so that communities within the proposed heritage area can get some understanding of the opportunities available to them and gauge the possibility of actually achieving the goal of designation as a National Heritage Area. The information given is limited; it must eventually be expanded by community input. This is an opportunity for local Convention and Visitor Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Historical Societies, County Development Offices and State Tourism and Economic Development Departments to decide if they wish to take advantage of the many opportunities that designation as a National Heritage Area offers. Among the opportunities are federal financial assistance and national exposure.

We invite you to peruse the full proposal and then let us know if you would be interested in meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a non-profit to coordinate a multi-state effort to achieve designation. One must acknowledge that this is a difficult time to think of expending effort and spending money on a project such as this. However, the future may be brighter than it first appears. Although our country is experiencing severe financial problems, the recovery effort may well support such community development efforts. Also, one must consider that our newly elected President has a keen grasp of the importance of understanding our nation's heritage. It is assumed that he will make history an important subject and will support the interpretation of our national story by local communities. We are approaching the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. It would be wonderful to have already established a National Heritage Area that celebrates the era that formed the consciences of the colonists who would declare liberty and which trained the soldiers who would win the victory. We invite your participation in this patriotic effort.

The establishment of a George Washington National Heritage Area would be of greater benefit than simply encouraging patriotism. The program is designed to:

1. Conserve living landscapes and cultures,
2. Allow people to tell stories in their own words,
3. Provide integrated resource conservation,
4. Engage the public beyond park or local community boundaries and
5. Provide new partnership opportunities within and among communities.

Achieving designation as a National Heritage Area is a complex, multi-step task that requires the work of many organizations in the effected area. There is no formal process for NHA designation, but the National Park Service recommends that the following steps be taken:

- Demonstration of widespread community involvement
- Commitment from key constituents
- Completion of suitability/ feasibility study
- Public involvement in the planning process

This invitation is extended to allow communities to gather together to seek the benefits of designation as a National Heritage Area. The first two steps shown above are the important point in the process. We ask communities to study the preliminary document and also the guidelines from the National Park Service. Then if there is sufficient interest, there will be an opportunity to gather together to study the mechanics of the process of funding a Feasibility Study and considering the formation of a management organization. Please study the proposal and then contact us if you are interested.

The National Park Service has provided a great amount of information and publicity on the purposes, requirements and benefits of a National Heritage Area. This information is provided on the Internet at:

www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/

The link to "Becoming a NHA" includes downloadable articles on:

1. An Introduction to National Heritage Areas [introheritageareas.pdf]
2. Feasibility Study "Frequently Asked Questions"
3. Feasibility Study Guidelines [NHAFeasGuidelines.pdf]
4. Sample Studies, Plans and Projects
5. Components of a Successful Management Plan

The first article is a colorful and concise look at the benefits of a National Heritage Area; it is a wonderful handout for the public to raise awareness and interest. The third article of guidelines contains very important information that anyone involved in the process of seeking designation should study carefully.

At this stage of the project inquiries for further information may be directed to Charles Hall, Director of Research and Publications for The Fort Edwards Foundation. Email: cchall@FortEdwards.org

www.gwfha.org