



Finger Lakes National Heritage Area Feasibility Study

National Park Service

2021

Photo: Dawn at Keuka Lake, taken by Joshua House

Photo: High Falls, Rochester, NY, credit VisitRochester.com

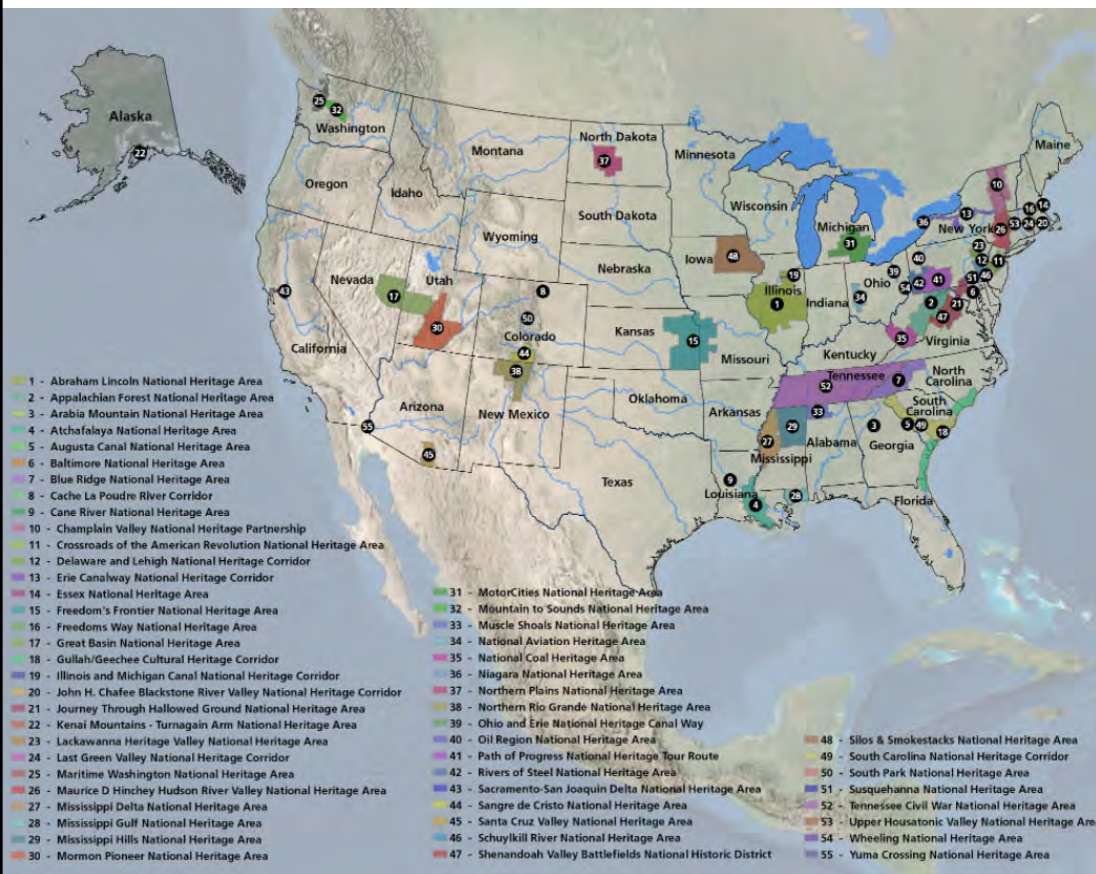


Photo: Keuka Lake, credit Fingerlakes.org

Agenda

- What is a National Heritage Area?
- What is a Feasibility Study and how is one initiated?
- Criteria overview
- Multi-layered public outreach approaches during COVID
- Public outreach materials
- How to comment (*yes, you!*)
- Q&A

What is a National Heritage Area (NHA)?



*"A National Heritage Area is a place designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources combine to form a **cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape** arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.*

*These patterns make National Heritage Areas **representative of the national experience** through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in them.*

Continued use of National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance."

- NHA's are not part of the National Park System like national parks, seashores, recreation areas, etc.
- Nonetheless, NHAs further the mission of the NPS by fostering community stewardship of our nation's heritage.



Rivers of Steel NHA



Abraham Lincoln NHA



Augusta Canal NHA



Blackstone River Valley
National Heritage Corridor

National Heritage Areas are a ...

- “Lived-in” distinctive landscape that tells cohesive, nationally important stories expressed through existing resources and ongoing traditions.
- Community-driven, partnership-based conservation model
- Managed by a local “coordinating entity”.
- Designated by Congress (requires legislation to create a new national heritage area)
- Eligible for NPS funding and technical assistance

What NHA’s are not

- Nothing is owned or managed by the federal government.
- Does not change local land use regulations or private property rights.
- Does not impose any federal regulatory overlays.

NHAs are a community-driven approach to



- **Conservation/Natural Resource Protection** Land restoration and maintenance via invasive species removal, replanting and toxic site clean-up
- **Historic Preservation** Cultural landscapes preservation and maintenance; Oral histories preservation; Protections of historic properties; Historic preservation grants
- **Recreation** Trails development and maintenance; Organized events
- **Education** Educational programs and grants; Interpretive materials development
- **Community Development** Streetscape improvements; Art projects
- **Economic Development** Heritage tours; Development of tourism infrastructure; Outdoor recreation-based support through trail partnerships



More about the NPS National Heritage Areas Program

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/index.htm>

- The NHA program
- Feasibility studies and the associated criteria
- How the NPS provides technical assistance to NHA management entities



Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta NHA

Feasibility Study

- The purpose of a feasibility study is to determine if there is a unique nationally important story being told in a particular study area.
- The study also evaluates if there is public support for a National Heritage Area designation and if an organization is poised to manage it if created.

What's the final product look like? See the 'Northern Neck National Heritage Area Feasibility Study' here:

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=487&projectID=31631&documentID=105467>

How is an NHA feasibility study initiated?

Two ways:

1. Local advocates or 'sponsors' create the study (on their own or by hiring contractors) and provide it to the NPS
2. Congressional authorization for the National Park Service to conduct the study.



March 2019, Congress passed the *John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act* (aka the 'Dingell Act') **Public Law 116-9, Section 6003** authorized the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area study.

How is an NHA feasibility study initiated?



The study area was defined as these 14 counties in central NY State:

- Cayuga
- Chemung
- Cortland
- Livingston
- Monroe
- Onondaga
- Ontario
- Schuyler
- Seneca
- Steuben
- Tioga
- Tompkins
- Wayne
- Yates

Criteria for feasibility study

10 criteria*

1. Assemblages of resources that represent distinctive aspects of American heritage are worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use best managed through partnerships.
2. Reflects traditions and customs
3. Provides opportunities for conservation
4. Provides outstanding opportunities for recreation and education
5. Resources important to themes and retain a degree of integrity
6. Interests in the region are involved in the planning and a financial plan and roles have been outlined.
7. The proposed management entity and units of government are willing to partner
8. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity
9. The boundary map is supported by the public.
10. The management entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.

** Abbreviated list*



Weaving demonstration in Rio Grande NHA

Photo: A Manzanares

Criteria for feasibility study

The 10 criteria address these questions



Does the landscape have an assemblage of historic, cultural, and natural resources that, when linked together, tell a nationally important story?



Do outstanding opportunities exist for improving the quality of the resource assemblage through conservation, recreation, and education?



Are there ongoing traditions, customs, and lifeways associated with a nationally important story?

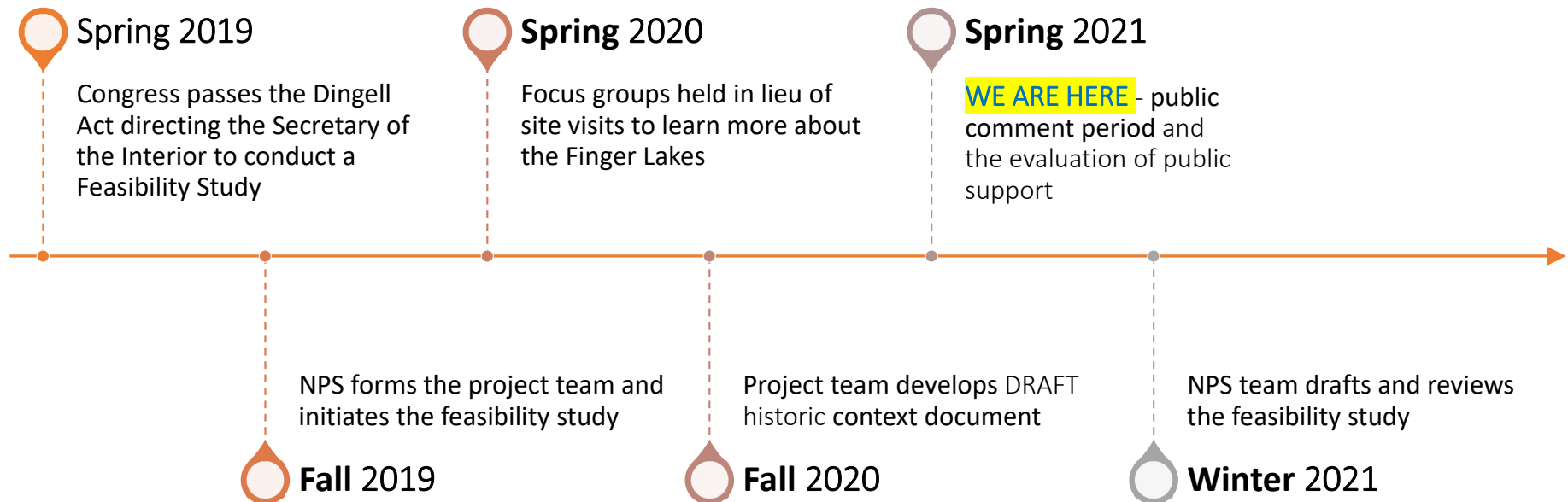


Does an organization exist that has the financial and organizational capacity to coordinate heritage area activities?



Is there public support for NHA designation and the proposed coordinating entity, and are potential partners interested in working with the proposed coordinating entity on heritage area activities?

Timeline / Public Comment Phase



Public outreach over 14 counties during COVID

Original plan (pre-COVID)

2020

Initiate formal consultations with Indian Nations, per DOI policy

Summer (90-days)

Several in-person **public meetings** dispersed throughout the 14-county study area.

Prepare materials: presentation (ppt), brochure, visual displays/easels, flip charts, and comment cards for meetings.

Receive public comment through in-person meetings and the NPS' online public comment portal (PEPC).

New plan (started April 2020)

2020 Multi-layered outreach approach

April - May

Initiate formal consultations with Indian Nations, per DOI policy (always before, during, after 90-day public comment period)

Ask for help / expand networks

Initiate relationship with NY SHPO staff.

Host 14 two-hour 'Focus Group' video meetings (one for each county) with the assistance of local advocate for NHA study with contacts throughout study area (FLTA). NPS asked for 6-8 participants who were each (1) from that county, and (2) knowledgeable about at least one of the NHA study criteria. Purpose: Introduce study broadly, begin orienting NPS study team to resources in the study area.

Public outreach over 14 counties during COVID

2020 continued

July – Aug

Continue expanding networks. Initiate relationship-building with local governments (14 counties, 4 regional planning councils). At counties' discretion, proposed NPS virtual presentations at publicly-noticed meetings compliant with NY Open Meetings Law to spread awareness and encourage the submission of comments. Identified county government points of contact.

Summer – Fall

Initiate research expanding on / beyond information from May 2020 'Focus Groups'.

Summer – Fall

Summarize NPS' research in text + table (the 'context study' narrative) currently available for public review/comment.

NY SHPO review of draft 'context study'.

Develop dynamic online 'Story Map' to introduce the study virtually, share NPS' understanding thus far, encourage public review of written narrative ('context study'), and prompt public comment via NPS' public comment portal (PEPC).

Continue to develop and nurture partner / stakeholder relationships with SHPO, governments, the FLTA, individuals, scholars, etc.

Public outreach over 14 counties during COVID

2021

Jan-Feb

Finalize 'context study' narrative, Story Map, press release, and public presentation materials.

Brief Congressional offices (2 Senate, 5 House)

Begin scheduling public meeting presentations with 14 county governments, 4 regional planning councils, watershed/lake associations, city governments, etc.

March - May

Announce opening of 90-day public comment phase on March 1 with press release.

The fruits of 11 months of relationship-building ~ many press release recipients on March 1

- 135 Focus Group participants (May 2020)
- 82 Media
- 36 CLGs and other units of local govt (non-county)
- 19 County govt and regional planning council staff
- 17 Historians and history societies/orgs
- 14 Tourism promotion orgs
- 7 Congressional offices
- 9 State govt
- 4 Existing NHA's in NY State
- 323** with request to share widely within recipients' networks

+ Indian Nations engaged in formal consultations which occur before, during, and after 90-day public comment period

Public outreach over 14 counties during COVID

2021

March - May

Numerous public presentations (17 done thus far, at least 6 to go); remain flexible to do more presentations as requested.

Briefings to update Congressional offices.

Receive public comment.

June 1

Close public comment period.

Summer - Winter

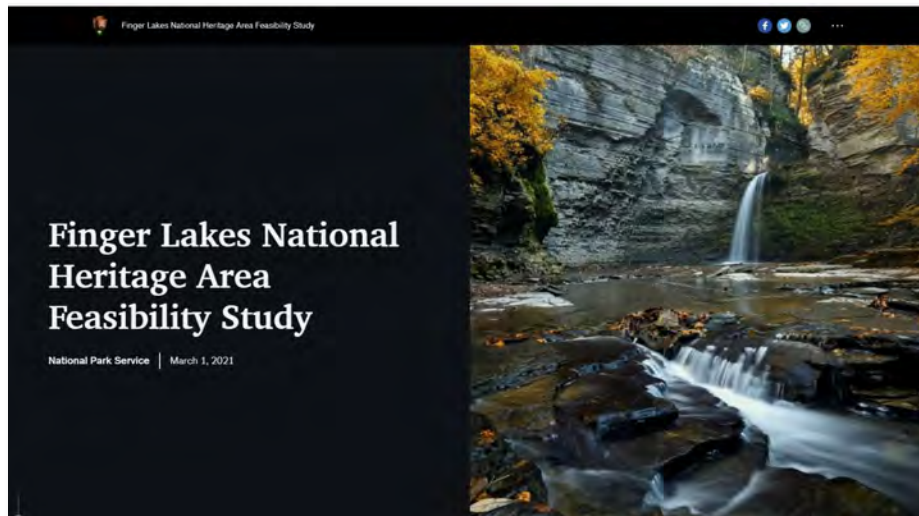
Review comments received; update research as appropriate; conduct additional research. Begin drafting report.



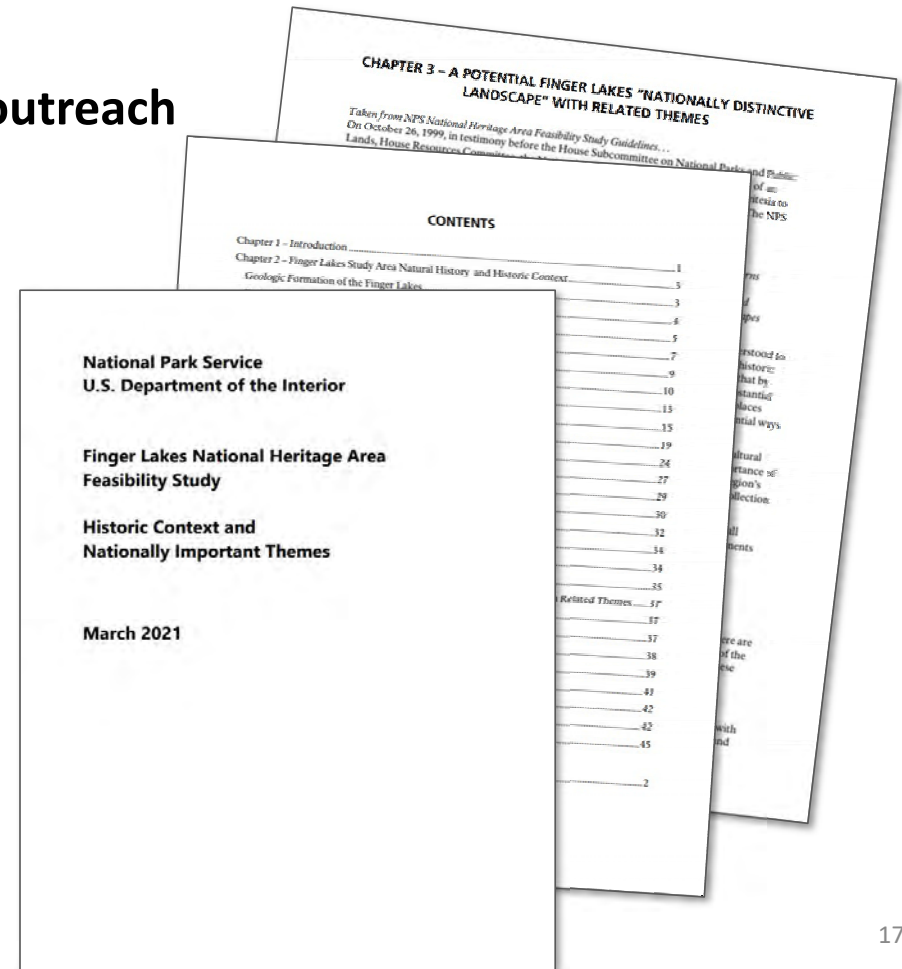
Northern Plains NHA, Enrolled members of Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara Nation at the Chief Looking's Village archeological investigation

Public outreach over 14 counties during COVID

Public outreach materials for 100% 'distance' outreach



Dynamic 'Story Map' website (above) with GIS component and links to 'context study' narrative of research thus far (right) as well as 'Comment Now' buttons going to NPS public comment portal (PEPC)



How to comment *(yes, you!)*

Options for providing feedback and public comment:

- **NPS project website:**
<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/FingerLakes> (see 'Open for Comment' tab)
- **Story Map:** <https://arcg.is/0eCKrj> (look for 'Comment Now' buttons)
- **Email:** Charles_Lawson@NPS.gov
- **Context study document:**
https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Finger_Lakes_Context

The public comment period runs through **June 1st, 2021**.

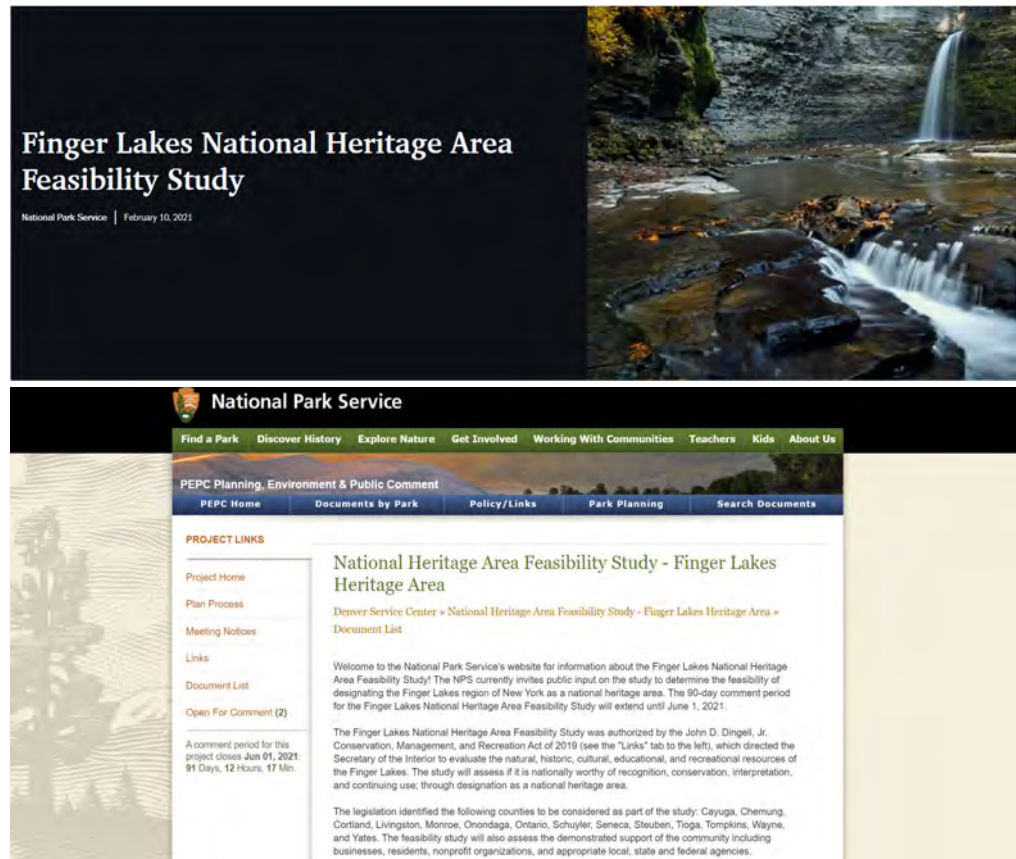




Photo: Festival of Balloons in Dansville, NY

*Please spread
the word!*

Thank you!

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