

## Northern Plains Heritage Area Public Involvement Plan

### Introduction

This plan describes the process for involving the public in development of a Northern Plains Heritage Area Management Plan (Management Plan) by the Northern Plains Heritage Foundation (Foundation). Involving people, agencies, and organizations as early as possible in the planning process is the key to success. This includes pro-active efforts to find and involve the public. Public involvement ensures public review of the proposed Management Plan and that the Foundation carefully considers public concerns before decisions are made or actions are implemented. Public involvement includes public notice of meetings and making documents readily available to inform those persons and agencies that may be interested or affected by the proposed Management Plan.

### *National Park Service's Public Engagement Principles*

According to the National Park Service's "Public Engagement Principles Project" there are five standards for civic engagement and public involvement (Standards section in DO 75A):

**“1) Match the tools to the job.** We respect and respond to a community's or public's unique interests, capacities and civic culture. At the beginning of a public involvement and outreach process, we test and refine engagement strategies to respond to the public's diversity of experiences and perspectives. We explain the public involvement process and help the public define how they would like to participate. We clarify visions, goals and values early, and explain how they will influence decision-making.

**2) Ensure that all voices are heard, but none dominate.** We actively and meaningfully seek to listen to the voices of all interests. We solicit and hear the diversity of experiences and perspectives. We actively engage those members of the public who may not have been previously or traditionally involved, and keep updated contact lists (especially phone and email) of interested parties.

**3) Maintain ongoing relationships.** In the parks and programs, our day-to-day, ongoing relationships provide the foundation for effective public involvement among park superintendents, managers, and staff with their neighbors, fellow agencies, tribes and indigenous communities, local and state governments, and others. We will work with national, state, and local partners, and with park "friends" groups to sustain public engagement in parks, programs, and decision-making. We do not rely merely upon written correspondence or other notification methods to get people involved, but make the necessary phone calls and try to meet in person. Whenever key matters are under consideration, to the greatest extent possible, we call major partners and follow up with written communication. Beyond striving for quality and personal commitment to these critically important relationships, we also find ways to document and share them with succeeding superintendents and managers throughout the NPS, as appropriate, for the good of the Service.

**4) Build trust and understanding first, then ownership.** We include the public, project

sponsors and policy makers in a collaborative exploration of the conditions and trends, precedents and possibilities, and key factors that will shape the future. That common knowledge base fosters working relationships, helps build support, and sets the stage for implementation.

**5) Follow a "no surprises" ethic.** As a public involvement process moves toward conclusion, we seek to ensure that no one is surprised by new information or controversy. We keep the channels of communication open among all participants.”

## Management Plan

According to the authorizing legislation, not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, the Northern Plains Heritage Foundation must transmit at proposed Management Plan for the Heritage Area to the Secretary of the Interior for approval. Development of this plan must include the public.

The plan must include the following:

“(A) describe comprehensive policies, goals, strategies, and recommendations for telling the story of the heritage of the area covered by the Heritage Area and encouraging long-term resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development of the Heritage Area;

(B) include a description of actions and commitments that Federal, State, tribal, and local governments, private organizations, and citizens will take to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area;

(C) specify existing and potential sources of funding or economic development strategies to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the Heritage Area;

(D) include an inventory of the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area relating to the national importance and themes of the Heritage Area that should be protected, enhanced, interpreted, managed, funded, and developed;

(E) recommend policies and strategies for resource management, including the development of intergovernmental and interagency agreements to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area;

(F) describe a program for implementation for the management plan, including—  
(i) performance goals;  
(ii) plans for resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development; and  
(iii) specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any Federal, State, tribal, or local government agency, organization, business, or individual;

(G) include an analysis of, and recommendations for, means by which Federal, State, tribal, and local programs may best be coordinated (including the role of the National Park Service and other Federal agencies associated with the Heritage Area) to further the purposes of this section; and

(H) include a business plan that—  
(i) describes the role, operation, financing, and functions of the local coordinating entity and of each of the major activities described in the management plan; and  
(ii) provides adequate assurances that the local coordinating entity has the partnerships and financial and other resources necessary to implement the management plan for the Heritage Area” (P.L. 111-11 Section 8004(d)).

## **Public Scoping**

Scoping is “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.” Public involvement begins with scoping. Announcements of public meetings should be made through all available formal and informal channels, which may include (but are not limited to) direct mailings, newspapers, public service announcements, discussions at community gatherings, a website, and direct invitations sent to agencies and interested parties. The invitation letter includes a scoping package that describes the proposed action (development of a Management Plan).

### ***Basic Elements of Public Scoping***

- Hold public meetings to collect comments and input.
- Issue periodic press releases to inform the public of issues and alternatives.
- Use local partnerships, facilitated meetings, collaborative workgroups, and other methods to continue receiving public input.
- Create and maintain a website that posts current information and facilitates requests for information and additions to the distribution mailing list.
- Develop a mailing list for distribution of the scoping package. Add to that list and use it for distribution of the Draft Management Plan.

### ***News Releases***

News releases will be prepared to announce scheduled meetings and other significant developments throughout the planning process. This may include planning milestones, new or altered plans, new or altered legislation, or any other information in the public domain.

### ***Scoping Package***

The scoping package should be sent to state and federal agencies and tribes with an interest in the Management Plan, local government officials, county government, historical and cultural groups, legislators, Congressional delegation, city government, chambers of commerce, recreation organizations, educational institutions, private property owners, and the public. The package should include a map of the Heritage area, legislation, and an invitation to participate in public scoping to develop the Management Plan.

### ***Public Scoping Meetings***

At least one meeting should be held in the counties in the Heritage Area: Burleigh, McLean, Mercer, Morton, and Oliver. In addition, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Three Affiliated Tribes should be offered an opportunity for a meeting on each of their reservations.

This public scoping process will help identify the following:

- Recommendations for telling the story of the Heritage Area, protecting its resources, enhancing, interpreting, funding, managing, and developing the area
- Actions and commitments that people, organizations, agencies, and other entities can make to and for the Heritage Area
- Potential sources of funding
- Inventory of natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources to be included in the plan
- Policies and strategies for resource management in the Heritage Area

- Program for implementation of the plan
- Business plan elements

**Public Meeting Format** The meetings will be held in accessible buildings and light refreshments will be provided. Information will be presented at the beginning of the public scoping meetings with a brief (15-20 minute) Power Point presentation that explains the National Heritage Area Program, Northern Heritage Foundation, map of the Northern Plains Heritage Area, proposed Management Plan, authorizing legislation, background information, website, and timeline. Information displays will be posted for viewing before and after the meeting.

After the presentation the audience will break into small groups. Each group will sit in a separate area with a flipchart. A member of the public involvement team will facilitate discussion of a Management Plan topic and record all comments on the flipchart. The notes will be transcribed after the meeting for incorporation into a scoping report.

Participants also will be encouraged to make comments through several mechanisms – written comment cards, letters, e-mails, or oral comments at the scoping meetings. After the public scoping meetings conclude, the public involvement team will prepare a public scoping document summarizing comments.

### **Scoping To-Do List**

Request tables at each location 5 large and 2 small  
Table skirts  
Projector screen  
Projector table  
Arrange for Cookies and coffee  
Public Notice creation and distribution to media  
PSA script creation and distribution to media  
Paid Advertising creation and placement  
PSA script creation and placement

### **Go-Box List**

Sign-in Sheets  
Handouts  
    Comment Cards  
    National Heritage Area brochure  
Display  
    Map of Northern Plains Heritage Area  
Power Point presentation  
    Laptop  
    Projector  
    Screen  
    Power cord (2 or 3) and power bar  
    Duct tape  
Name Tags for presenters and facilitators  
Flip Charts (4) w/ extra paper

#### Markers

Camera – take photos of planning scoping meetings for planning  
Extra office supplies (pens, post-it notes, tape, etc.)

#### **Other Public Meetings**

As requested, other public meetings will be held with Federal, State, and local agencies, along with affected Indian tribes, stakeholders, cooperating agencies and other interested persons. All formal meetings should be open to the public and minutes should be recorded for the administrative record.

#### **Distribution of Information**

Communicating effectively and delivering clear and accurate information about the proposed Management Plan is critical. This information must be correct and be presented in a way the public can understand, following these principles:

- No decision has been made on the outcome nor will one be made until the end of the planning process.
- This is an open and public process with full disclosure.
- All public information will be available to the public.
- Target issues, not audiences.
- Public input and agency consultation is essential.
- Public will have an opportunity to comment on the Draft Management Plan
- All substantive comments will be carefully considered in developing the Final Management Plan

#### **Web Site**

There will be a website for the Northern Plains Heritage Foundation that posts the following:

- Locations and times of public scoping meetings
- Description and location of the Heritage Area
- Authorizing legislation
- Links to other Heritage Area websites and the National Park Service
- Frequently asked questions
- Draft public documents
- News releases
- E-mail link to the request information and add name/address to the mailing list

#### **Tribal Consultation**

Federally recognized tribes are to be respected as sovereign governments, and we must respect this sovereignty by protecting and maintaining rights reserved by or granted to tribes or individual Indians by treaties, statutes, and executive orders. The sovereignty of tribes and this trust relationship have been affirmed through treaties, court decisions, legislation, regulations, and policies.

#### **Draft Management Plan**

The release of the Draft Management Plan must be announced along with the public review period and dates, times, and locations of public meetings.

**Notice of Draft Plan Availability and Media Notice**

The Draft Management Plan will be sent to libraries and all entities on the distribution list. An electronic copy will be posted on the website. Paid advertisements will be placed in local newspapers listing the locations and times of public meetings. News releases, formal public notices, and public service announcements will be distributed to a media list approved by both agencies.

**Public Hearings**

A least one public hearing with a court reporter and a hearing officer must be held during the public review period. The public hearing(s) should be held after publication of the notice that the draft Management Plan is available and 10 days before the end of the public review period.

The meetings will be held in accessible buildings and light refreshments will be provided. A pre-meeting question-and-answer session will include a brief (15-20 minute) Power Point presentation that explains the proposed Management Plan. Displays will summarize the major sections of the Management Plan.

After the pre-hearing presentation, the formal public hearing will be called to order by the hearing officer. The hearing officer will read from a pre-approved script explaining the public hearing process and inviting comments on the Draft Management Plan. All commenters will be asked to fill out a speaker registration form, which will be given to the hearing officer. The hearing officer will invite each speaker to present verbal comments for 5 minutes. Written comments may also be submitted. The court reporter will record all comments.

Participants also will be encouraged to make comments through several mechanisms – written comment cards, letters, e-mails, or oral comments at the hearings. All comments received on the Draft Management Plan and hearing transcripts will be posted on the website.

**Hearing To-Do List**

- Request tables at each location (5 large and 2 small)
- Table skirts
- Projector screen
- Projector table
- Arrange for Cookies and coffee
- Public Notice creation and placement
- PSA script creation and placement
- Paid Advertising creation and placement
- PSA script creation and placement

**Go-Box List**

- Microphones and portable podium with amplifier
- List of hearing locations and phone numbers
- Projector
- Laptop with Pointer
- Easel
- Court reporter contract and cell phone number
- Cell phone numbers of all key participants

Sign-in sheets

Direction signs

Signs/Posters

- “Northern Heritage Plains Heritage Management Plan Meeting” - 2 large signs on foam core
- “Northern Heritage Plains Heritage Management Plan Meeting - Welcome” – 1 for sign-in table.

Basket for comments

Pens

Executive Summaries of the Draft Management Plan

Information on submitting comments

Comment forms

Displays

Name Tags for presenters and display staff

Camera – take photos of meetings for Final Management Plan

Office supplies (pens, post-it notes, tape, etc.)

National Heritage Area brochure

Timer lights (green, yellow, and red), if available, or a timekeeper

### **Final Management Plan**

The Northern Plains Heritage Foundation will carefully consider comments and respond to these by making changes in the Management Plan, as appropriate. The Foundation will carefully consider each substantive comment and prepare responses. The comments and responses will be posted on the website.

The Final Management Plan must be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior for approval. It should be posted on the website and distributed to the mailing list after the Secretary has signed the document.