

Maryland Heritage Areas Program

Strategic Plan: Desired Future Conditions and Obstacles to Achieving Success

Task 2,
Section 2: Tourism Development
Task 3
Interpretive Framework

January 2009

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Preface

Following are excerpts from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority's Request for Proposal and the consultant team proposal's scope of work for Task 2, Section 3.2, Tourism Development, and Task 3, Development of an Interpretive Framework

Section 2, 3.2 Tourism Development: Scope of Work (excerpt from project proposal)

The economic impact of heritage tourism is seen in increased visitation and expenditures by travelers on lodging, restaurants, attractions, events and shopping. Goals set in each local heritage area management plan to encourage and support tourism development will be compared with the results achieved. In particular, the partnerships between local heritage areas and local tourism organizations will be examined for their collaborative efforts. Examples of successful marketing, including identification of target audiences, development and implementation of marketing strategies and tracking of results, will be reviewed. Less successful marketing partnerships and promotions will also be examined to identify obstacles that prevented success. The report will provide strategies for state program support and local heritage area development of tourism marketing efforts.

Section 3 Development of an Interpretive Framework: Request for Proposal (excerpt)

Consultant will create an interpretive framework for the overall Maryland Heritage Areas Program which addresses those nationally and regionally significant themes and the cultural and natural resources associated with those themes that may best enable the public to understand, appreciate and celebrate their importance. Development of this framework should take into consideration those themes interpreted by Maryland Byways, initiatives of the National Park Service in Maryland and National Park units located in Maryland, and outlined in Certified Heritage Area management plans and should include consultation with historians.

Elements to be considered in the identification of themes may include, among other factors, natural and cultural resources, important events or decisions and the roles of specific places, people, social movements, beliefs, folkways and traditions. The interpretive framework is not intended to be an exhaustive inventory of every theme and subtheme that may be potentially addressed by heritage areas in Maryland, but rather a summary that identifies and justifies what themes are most important from a national cultural heritage perspective. The purpose of the framework will be to assist the Maryland Heritage Areas Program to focus program resources in a strategic manner and identify partnership opportunities.

Section 3 Scope of Work (excerpt from project proposal)

The Management Plan development process for each of Maryland heritage areas included extensive research into the area's history. This research yielded identification of primary and secondary themes. Additionally, inventories of cultural, historic and natural resources that reflect the identified themes were created.

Themes are designed to convey the area's historical stories and to entice visitors to want to come and experience the region. In order to make the best use of Maryland Heritage Area Program development funds, it is important to understand which themes will be most likely to resonate with visitors and to determine how to showcase these themes to target audiences. Our team will develop an interpretive framework through the following steps:

1. Evaluate Heritage Area Themes

We will review the primary and secondary themes in each heritage area's management plan. We will work with the Strategic Plan Advisory Team to identify historians in Maryland who can serve as a resource in this process. The evaluation will be a three-step process to include:

- 1.1. Resources - We will consider these themes in relationship to the cultural, historic and natural resources available in the heritage area.
- 1.2 Defining Elements - We will consider key elements that define the heritage of each area such as folkways, cultural traditions, social movements and important events.
- 1.3 Accessibility to Visitors – It is critical that the themes not only accurately reflect the area's heritage and that resources (buildings, landscapes, traditions) still exist, but they must be available to visitors to offer a heritage tourism experience.

2. Consider Other Themes

We will review the themes developed by the Maryland Byways program, National Park Service and other statewide interpretive and promotional programs. Themes will be considered in relationship to the heritage area themes for their similarities, differences and the opportunities they create to appeal to and attract visitors.

3. Identify Linkages

In addition to reviewing individual heritage area themes, we will identify themes which have the potential for linking heritage areas in interpretation and promotions that cross heritage area boundaries. These linkages can present opportunities for partnerships between heritage areas to attract a larger audience. (For example, the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial offers an occasion for many heritage areas to work together on interpretive programs and promotions.)

4. Conduct Visitor Research

We will conduct an online survey among those who have visited the heritage areas and among those who travel to visit historical sites and areas but have not recently been to Maryland's heritage areas.

This phase of the research will take place late in 2008. At that time, it will not be possible to undertake the surveys on site since many site will likely be closed or have reduced hours of operation. Thus, we will request that managers in a number of sites in each heritage area collect email addresses from visitors and forward them to us in electronic form at the end of

the season. In November we will send emails to this database inviting participation in a survey of heritage areas by visiting a specific online location. The emails will have links to the survey online.

In addition, since the themes also need to appeal to those who have not visited the areas, we will purchase an online sample of travelers from the states which provide most of the current visitors and/or states that will be the focus of future promotions of the heritage areas. These travelers will also be asked to take the survey.

Our goal will be to assess the appeal of a number of themes designed to interest prior and prospective visitors in traveling to the individual heritage areas and of the over-arching themes designed to induce them to visit Maryland and one or more of the heritage areas.

5. Recommend Key Themes for MHAP Focus

Based upon our research, we will prepare a report that identifies the key themes that are most important from a national cultural heritage perspective and that are most likely to generate interest and visitation from tourists. We will further recommend strategies for the Maryland Heritage Areas Program to encourage partnerships and to direct funding to achieve the desired results.

Introduction

This report encompasses the Maryland Heritage Areas Program's interpretive framework, tourism development and marketing strategies as outlined in Tasks 2 and 3. The order of presentation is rearranged to outline the following progression:



Report sections include:

1. Interpretive Framework Background
 - Legislation
 - Core components and goals
 - SPAT Goals Analysis
 - Heritage Area themes
 - Heritage Area directors survey
 - Work sessions and online survey
 - Other statewide programs
2. Tourism Development and Marketing Background
 - Overview of tourism questions
 - Legislation
 - Core components and goals
 - SPAT Goals Analysis
 - Maryland Heritage Area tourism policies and plans
 - Maryland Heritage Area tourism marketing
 - Maryland Office of Tourism
 - Maryland Byways
 - Stakeholder interviews, work sessions and online survey
 - Other state and national Heritage Area marketing
 - Visitor Research – Online Survey
3. Interpretive Framework Recommendations
4. Tourism Development and Marketing Recommendations

Background: Interpretive Framework

Development of an Interpretive Framework

Legislation: House Bill 1

In 1996, House Bill 1 passed the Maryland State Legislature, authorizing the creation of the Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program, better known as the Maryland Heritage Areas Program. The bill included references to interpretation including:

- **Proposals for recognized heritage areas** – Proposals for designation would “describe the cultural, historic and natural resources which contribute to the special character of the heritage area.”
- **Designating certified heritage areas** – Management plans were required to include “an inventory and evaluation of the significant natural and cultural resources,” and “a description of the educational, interpretive and recreational programs and projects to be undertaken.”
- **Grants** – The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority may award “grants and loans...for planning, design, acquisition, development, preservation, restoration, interpretation, marketing and programming of certified heritage areas.”

Core Components

Several of the core components detailed in *The Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program* booklet address interpretation including:

- A strong focus or theme(s) that makes this place different or distinctive from the areas that surround it or that are nearby.
- Interpretive Structure and Programs – The visitor is easily able to find the major stories of how the area’s heritage came to happen and why it is important in Maryland and the nation’s development.

Goals for the Program

Also included in *The Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program* booklet are seven program goals. Several of these address interpretation including:

- To enhance visitor appeal and enjoyment of the state’s history, culture, natural environment and scenic beauty by improving the overall product – the visitor experience.
- To enable Marylanders and visitors alike to have greater access to and understanding of the history and traditional cultures of the state and to understand the important events that took place here.
- To foster linkages among and between heritage attractions that encourage visitors to explore, linger and sample the diverse offerings of the state’s distinctive regions.

Strategic Plan Advisory Team

**Evaluation of Heritage Area Progress and Accomplishments –
Program Goals Analysis**

On June 7, 2007, SPAT developed “lines of inquiry” for each of the Heritage Area Program’s goals. Goals and questions specifically related to interpretation are:

Goal 4: Enable Marylanders and visitors alike to have greater access to and understanding of the history and traditional culture of the state and to understand the important events that took place here.

Question: Does the Program need a statewide interpretive plan to guide its development?

Goal 5: Foster linkages among and between heritage attractions that encourage visitors to explore, linger and sample the diverse offerings of the state’s distinctive regions.

Question: DNR is supporting development of a statewide trail system including land and water trails. How can the Program complement this effort?

Question: How should heritage areas and scenic byways be working together at the state and local level?

Question: To what extent should the program encourage and support activities that cross-cut multiple heritage areas?

Certified Heritage Area Management Plan Interpretive Themes

As part of the process of developing a management plan, each Heritage Area created an inventory of cultural, historic and natural resources. Primary and secondary interpretive themes were developed for each Heritage Area using the inventory and research about the area's history. Management plans also included strategies for developing heritage tourism products to reflect these themes.

FOUR RIVERS (Annapolis, London Town, & South County)

1. **Waterways** with secondary themes of ecology of the water's edge; waterborne commerce and communication; commerce to recreation, and life on the water.
2. **The Living Past** with secondary themes of living landmarks, preserving the past, the re-usable past, and artists, architects and artisans.
3. **America's Roots** with secondary themes of revolutionary era, war and peace, and African Americans history.

ANACOSTIA TRAILS HERITAGE AREA

1. **Linking the Nation: Transportation and Communication Firsts**
sub-themes: Main Street/US Route One, Aviation Firsts, From Balloon to the Moon, Street Car Suburbs.
2. **Settlement, Development and Growth of Communities**
sub-themes: African American Community and Culture, Notable Citizens, Education & Research, Pattern Book and Sears Mail-Order Houses, Religion and Early Churches, (Churches, Stones and Bones), Greenbelt, A Planned Greentown, Industry and Labor.
3. **The Bladensburg Races: The War of 1812 in ATHA**
4. **The Natural Environment**

BALTIMORE

1. **Portal to American Identity (Overarching Theme)** – National Road, Baltimore and Ohio railroad, Civil War, Civil Rights
2. **Crosscurrent in Freedom (Primary Theme)** – Seek and uphold freedom, War of 1812, Battle of Baltimore 1814, Antebellum era (free black community), 20th Century Civil Rights, religious freedom
3. **Gateway to Possibilities (Primary Theme)** – Industry, immigration, education
4. **Inventing Baltimore on the Chesapeake (Primary Theme)** – Activities, industries, technologies, art forms, cultural traditions, buildings and institutions.
Sub-themes – Foresight and Innovation: Parks and Public Works; Planning: Architecture and Building; Making a Living at the Water's Edge; In Pursuit of Knowledge: Education, Science and Medicine; Creating Something Special: Art and Culture; Competition and Camaraderie: Sports in a Sporting Town; Living Traditions
5. **North of the South – South of the North (Primary Theme)** – Antebellum through Civil War years, segregation, diversity

CANAL PLACE

The Canal Place Heritage Area management plan does not list specific themes. However, the original 1995 “Canal Place Management Plan” includes as Appendix B a report titled “Canal Place Heritage Tourism and Economic Development Plan” (prepared for the Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority by Clarion Associates, Inc., October 1995). The report lists five potential “thematic” groups:

1. **Railroad/Transportation-Related Attractions**
2. **The Potomac River, Wills Creek, and the Narrows**
3. **Fort Cumberland and the French & Indian War**
4. **Scenic Drives**
5. **Fishing**

HEART OF CHESAPEAKE COUNTRY

1. **Harriet Tubman and Eastern Shore African American History** – celebrating the past and continuing role of African Americans in the community, including the development of the area, industries, Civil War, post war and civil rights movements.
2. **Chesapeake Landscapes and Outdoor Adventure** – documenting, preserving and accessing the incredible natural resources – water, land, wildlife – that define the area, dictate much of the economy and provide a unique opportunity to enjoy, experience and appreciate the environment.
3. **Working Waterfront Villages** – concentrating on the communities where commercial fishing and boating still dominate the economy and waterfront.
4. **Agricultural Life** – recognizing the past and present significance of agriculture on The area and its place in culture, traditions and livelihoods of the people.
5. **Dorchester Families and Traditions** – focusing on the people and their contributions, crafts and culture in the three hundred year history of the area.
6. **American Indian Heritage** – honoring the culture, traditions and hallowed sites of those who came before the Europeans and are reclaiming a place in the community’s awareness.
7. **Dorchester History, Architecture and Artifacts** – highlighting the rich history, buildings, arts and implements that tell the stories of the past and are the bridge to the future.

HEART OF THE CIVIL WAR

1. **An Era of Change** - Technology Changes; Societal Tensions; Abolitionist Movement
2. **Maryland as a Borderland** - Geographic Borders; Cultural Divisions; Tense Communities.
3. **Maryland as a War Zone** - Maryland's Pivotal Location; Occupied Towns and Countryside; Mercy and Healing.
4. **Reunion & Reconciliation** - Seething Passions; Reunification.

5. **Aftermath** - Changed Economies; African-American Life During and Post-Reconstruction; Commemoration and Caring for the Dead; Preserving Sacred Places; War Alumni.
6. **Shadows of the Civil War** - Political Tensions; Reenactments.

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE GREENWAY

Singular Title Theme:

The Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway: Gateway to the Chesapeake Bay

Core Themes (Sub-themes):

1. **The Greenway Landscape** – Land characteristics which influenced human actions, and, in turn, were shaped by humans.
2. **Waters in Motion** – The vital role water has played in the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway’s “story,” including the Susquehanna River and its falls and creeks, as well as the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
3. **The Lower Susquehanna Community** – The people and communities as well as their roles in shaping the identity of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway.

LOWER EASTERN SHORE

1. **A Watery World: The Living, Natural Bays and Rivers of the Chesapeake and the Atlantic**
 - Bays and their marshes: Habitat for a vast population of migrating waterfowl
 - The Pocomoke is the deepest river on the Eastern Shore
 - Chincoteague Bay and Assateague Island are two components of the same coastal system
 - The “microclimates” of the Chesapeake Bay: Fishing Bay, Monie Bay, Tangier Sound, and Pocomoke Sound are each different places, complete with their own weather and water patterns
 - Islands of the Chesapeake
 - The steamboat era across the region
 - “Bones” on the beach: Maritime archeology is not just underwater (the story of inlet formation on Assateague Island and how ships stranded in old inlets are covered with sand, to emerge decades later as natural erosion reveals them)
 - Dramatic opening: The raging storm that opened the Ocean City inlet changed the town and the bays
 - Forested wetlands: Habitat for many critters
2. **Great Escapes: Recreation and Renewal**
 - Ocean City arose as a nineteenth-century resort town run by women
 - The rise of sea-kayaking on Chincoteague Bay
 - Sailing on the Chesapeake and Chincoteague Bays
 - Paddling on the Pocomoke
 - From the Annessex River to Assateague Island: Gunning across the
 - Lower Eastern Shore
 - The art, craft, and industry of the decoy

- Baseball on the Lower Eastern Shore
 - Early twentieth-century entertainment (such as movie theaters)
3. **Land, Water, and Action: Stewardship and Sustainability**
- Chincoteague oysters and their decline
 - Saving the rich soils of the Lower Eastern Shore
 - The end of the age of sail and the survival of the skipjacks
 - Development of boats specifically for this region
 - Waterfowl hunting
 - The struggle to save Smith Island from natural erosion
 - Restoration of shad and yellow perch, rockfish (striped bass), crabs, and oysters
4. **The Land of Plenty: Peoples and Settlement on the Lower Eastern Shore**
- Stories of the founding of colonial county seats: Princess Anne, Snow Hill, and Salisbury
 - The life and times of Smith Island
 - The Lower Eastern Shore as “cultural hearth”: Where did the settlers’ descendants go from here?
 - The strong role of religion in the settlement and ways of life in the region, including (but not limited to) Quakers, Methodists, and Presbyterians
 - American Indian stories from “contact” and the colonial era
 - Emancipation and freedom for African Americans on the Lower Eastern Shore, and the establishment of free black communities in places such as Allen
 - Early pirates and their influence on settlement
 - Living cultures and how they survived here
 - The rich archeological heritage of the Lower Eastern Shore, both prehistoric and historic
 - The remarkable tradition of firefighting on the Lower Eastern Shore
 - Banking in Ocean City: The men had their bank, and the women had theirs
 - Somerset County has many of the earliest, most complete land records and port records in the United States. These records are now housed in the Hall of Records in Annapolis. The Nabb Research Center also has the records catalogued on microfiche.
 - The Oyster Wars and Scarborough line disputes
 - The Mason-Dixon Line and Transpeninsular Line. This is the line that established the southern boundary of Pennsylvania before its three lower counties separated to **become the state of Delaware.**
5. **Lifelines and Livelihoods: Commerce, Productivity, and Transportation**
- Colonial plantations on the Lower Eastern Shore
 - Forestry then and now
 - Bog iron and canal-building
 - The rise of railroads on the Lower Eastern Shore and their relationship to towns of the region
 - The unique ship-building tradition of Sharptown

- U.S. Route 113’s “string of pearls”: Colonial towns on a colonial route (Berlin, Snow Hill, Pocomoke City)
 - Changing times, changing crops: Succession in agriculture, from tobacco, to wheat, to fruits and vegetables, to today’s corn, soybeans, and poultry – the economic forces that led to successive specialization, and the dislocations that came with change
6. **Military and Naval Heritage on the Lower Eastern Shore**
- Claiborne and Lord Baltimore: The first battle between English-speaking peoples in the New World took place on the Pocomoke River in 1635; the issue was control over Kent Island
 - The Somerset Militia
 - The Tories of Salisbury and the Continental Army
 - Pemberton and the Civil War
 - “Breadbasket of the Revolution”
 - Revolutionary War heroes
 - Picaroons (Loyalist pirates) and the Revolutionary War
 - Battle of Kedges Straits: Also known as the “Battle of the Barges,” this was the last sea battle of the Revolutionary War; the year after Cornwallis’ surrender, patriot and Picaroon forces fought in the waters off Crisfield
 - Lower Eastern Shore and the Civil War

MONTGOMERY

1. The **Farming History** cluster set in the Agricultural Reserve with Poolesville, a farming center since the 18th century, as its gateway.
2. The **Quaker Cluster**, centered in Sandy Spring and including Brookeville, featured for its national importance in the history of religious tolerance and its role in the Underground Railroad.
3. The **Innovative Technology** path includes the construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the Metropolitan Line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in the 19th century, which started the County on the path of technological and industrial innovation that continues today.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

1. Agriculture/Tobacco Culture

Tobacco based economy shaped Southern Maryland’s landscape and culture. Resources & Interpretive venues: Friendship House, Gen. William Smallwood House Museum, Thomas Stone National Historic Site, Sotterley Plantation, Tobacco Culture Survey (Calvert County), 19th Century Tobacco Barn Information Center Calvert Cliffs

2. War and Conflict

During American Revolutionary War and War of 1812, British Navy controlled waters of the Chesapeake. During the Civil War the slave population in the 3 counties constituted the majority. Resources & Interpretive venues: General Smallwood House, Calvert Marine Museum, Naval Air Test & Evaluation Museum, Point Lookout State Park

3. Religion

Separation of Protestant and Catholic traditions on the voyage of the Ark and the Dove, crucial to formation of St. Mary's City in the new colony. Resources & Interpretive venues: Historic Saint Mary's City, St. Clements Island/Potomac River Museum, St. Ignatius Church, Mt. Carmel Monastery

4. Maritime Culture

The waterman's life from its peak in the 19th Century to the few fisheries left today. Resources & Interpretive venues: Maritime communities such as: Broome's Island, Benedict and Piney Point, Calvert Marine Museum, Joseph C. Lore and Sons Oyster House, Piney Point Lighthouse Park and Museum, Chesapeake Bay Lab, Naval Air Test and Evaluation Museum

5. Colonial Settlement: Maryland's Beginnings

First point of contact for Europeans settling in Maryland, first state capital. Resources & Interpretive venues: St. Clement Island, St. Mary's City, Sotterley Plantation, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, Port Tobacco, Thomas Stone national Historic Park

6. Nature and Eco-Tourism

Experiential tourism sites abound in both federally and state owned lands as well as lands protected by easement to protect natural resources. Resources & Interpretive venues: Nanjemoy Creek (Great Blue Heron rookery), Zekiah Swamp, Wicomico River (designated State Scenic River), Battle Creek Cypress Swamp (northernmost stand of bald cypress trees), significant Bald Eagle population

7. Native American Heritage

Traces as early as 10,000 BC, and Piscataway tribes during the European settlement. Resources & Interpretive venues: Woodland Indian Hamlet (Historic St. Mary's), Piscataway Indian Museum (Waldorf), Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum exhibits, Town of Indian Head (archeological sites)

8. African-American Heritage

Prominent figures since earliest settlers, including Mathias De Sousa, first African-American elected to serve in a State Legislature. Resources & Interpretive venues: African-American Heritage Society (La Plata), Sotterley Plantation

STORIES OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Central Story: Living within an Estuary—An Inseparable Influence - Life here is inseparable from the Chesapeake Bay—as estuary and as watershed. This is as true today as it has been historically.

Themes:

1. **Changes in the Land** - The Chesapeake Bay is a dynamic natural system with humans as an integral part.
2. **Peopling the Land: Change and Continuity** - Residents here, past and present, have selectively embraced change in response to the particular resources and geography of Chesapeake Bay, and in the process, have themselves changed this place.

3. **Colony and Nation-building** - This region both participated in and contributed to processes and events central to the growth and continued prosperity of colonial Maryland. With time, the region also contributed to the broader patterns of nation-building.
4. **Food for the Soul—Religion and Belief** - The history of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is closely interwoven with the story of religious toleration and denominational development spanning the 17th to the 20th centuries. The religious heritage here in turn is linked in powerful ways to Abolition and the Underground Railroad.
5. **Working the Land and Water** - The fertile lands, rich waters, and gentle climate of this region supported successive populations whose wealth grew as they learned to exploit these resources. Today's economy and unique Chesapeake Bay cultures still rely on a foundation built from natural resources, and resonate also to influences well beyond the Bay.
6. **Destination Eastern Shore! Travel and Transportation Past and Present** - If this is a landscape whose destiny is determined by the Chesapeake Bay, it is also a landscape shaped by the history of transportation and the ever-greater access afforded by a succession of travel modes.

Heritage Area Executive Director Surveys

In October 2008, Heritage Area executive directors were surveyed for insights into how themes are used for product development, interpretation and promotion. Following is a summary of responses:

| Question | Heritage Area Responses | Comments |
|---|--|---|
| Are there interpretive themes in your management plan that should not be listed or should be revised? | 6 – interpretive themes are appropriate as stated 3 – some themes need revisions or better definition | Heritage Areas that wanted changes felt that some sub-themes needed clarification and more ability to connect to product development. |
| Are there any themes that should be added? | 3 – would like to add 5 – don't need to add | |
| Do you focus on certain themes in your annual work plan or applying for grants? | 8 – yes 1 – no | Heart of Civil War and Baltimore are developing interpretive plans. |
| Are your interpretive themes featured on your Heritage Area's website or collateral materials? | 5 – yes 1 – no 1 – yes, website; no, collateral 1 – will be on new website | |
| Are interpretive themes used by your DMOs in tourism promotions? | 2 – no 6 - yes | One Heritage Area stated: "We feel that interpretive themes are not marketable." HOCW – implementing marketing plan with DMOs – received MHAA marketing grant |
| Are any of your interpretive themes linked with other Heritage Areas? | 8 - yes | Civil War, War of 1812, Underground Railroad, Revolutionary War, Maritime, Tobacco/Agriculture, Colonial Settlement, Native American, African-American |
| Do you promote any of these in collaboration with other Heritage Areas? | 7 - no | |
| Would you be interested in collaborative promotions? | 8 - yes | Civil War Sesquicentennial is a statewide opportunity. |
| Has your Heritage Area collaborated with Maryland Byways? | 8 - yes | |
| What are the most important interpretive themes for Maryland to develop and promote? | | Freedom, national identity, Civil War, War of 1812, diverse geography, Chesapeake Bay, Underground Railroad, scenery, agriculture, natural resources, religious freedom, Native Americans, African Americans, maritime, ecotourism & outdoor recreation |

Research: Stakeholder Work Sessions and Online Surveys

The research phase of the strategic plan development process yielded numerous opinions and ideas related to the importance of interpretive themes and the development of new heritage tourism products.

Findings from the online stakeholders survey included:

- 88% of respondents felt that “heritage themes that intrigue visitors and ways to experience the themes” is important to success.
- 65% thought that “interpretive themes for us to support” was an important benefit of Heritage Areas.
- 59% cited “new products for tourists” as a benefit of Heritage Areas.
- 97% said that “maps and brochures describing the area’s attractions and how to access them” is important to success.
- 59% said that Heritage Areas had done a good job of meeting the goal of enabling Marylanders and visitors greater access to and understanding of the state’s history.
- 54% said that Heritage Areas had done a good job of meeting the goal of enhancing visitor appeal and enjoyment of the state’s history, culture, natural environment and scenic beauty by improving the overall product – the visitor experience.
- 67% would like to see MHAA develop an improved statewide map and guide that maps all heritage areas and physically as well as thematically relates them to each other and to Maryland Byways.
- 54% would like for each Heritage Area to publish in print and online a brochure describing the area’s themes, resources and suggested tours.

Participants in the work sessions also made comments about interpretive themes and interpretive planning:

- “A statewide (interpretive) plan could be useful.”
- “State tourism may be able to link certain themes and put out information saying ‘if you’re interested in railroads you’ll certainly want to do this. Or if you’re interested in rural life, you’ll want to do this.’ Tourism can provide the link with advertising.”
- “It (a statewide interpretive plan) seems unwieldy and unworkable. It might have been good if it was the first thing the Heritage Areas Authority worked on, before we figured out our own themes.”
- “No need (for a statewide interpretive plan). Everyone has their own unique history.”
- “I agree that a state interpretive plan would be unwieldy. Besides we have our own management plans and that might cause us to have to go back and reconsider. There have been occasions in which multi-heritage areas worked together on a project where the linkages made sense.”
- “I don’t think we need a statewide interpretive plan. But maybe a statewide approach to marketing the heritage areas.”

Maryland Byways

The Maryland Byways Program was established as the Scenic Routes Program in 1988. In 2000, the Scenic Byway Program updated themes for a system of 31 byways. In 2007, the program was again reviewed and the system was reduced to 19 byways. (Additional information on Maryland Byways is found in the tourism section of this report.)

Maryland's 19 byways are:

1. Historic National Road (also an America's Byway)
2. Mountain Maryland
3. Chesapeake and Ohio Canal
4. Antietam Campaign
5. Catoctin Mountain (also an America's Byway)
6. Old Main Streets
7. Mason and Dixon
8. Falls Road
9. Horses and Hounds
10. Lower Susquehanna
11. Charles Street
12. National Historic Seaport
13. Star Spangled Banner
14. Booth's Escape
15. Roots and Tides
16. Religious Freedom Tour (applying for America's Byway designation)
17. Chesapeake Country (also an America's Byway)
18. Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad
19. Blue Crab

Department of Natural Resources

The Department of Natural Resources supports numerous programs that can connect with Heritage Areas including:

- Statewide Trails - This ongoing project is creating a statewide system of land and water trails.
- State Forest and Park Trail Guides – Guides have been developed for state forests and state parks which include maps, photos, area history and activity information. Guides are sold through the department's website.
- Children's Outdoor Programs – The department's website features an area with activities and information designed to encourage children and their families to enjoy the outdoors in Maryland.
- National Recreation Trails – The department supports designation of National Recreation Trails in Maryland. According to the NRT website, there are currently nine designated trails in the state.

National Heritage Areas

The recently designated Journey through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area includes the Heart of Civil War Heritage Area as well as parts of Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Additionally, a Corridor Management Plan and application for All American Road designation has been submitted for Route 15, the main road through the Heritage Area.

The Journey through Hallowed Ground NHA has three primary themes:

1. Land of Conflict, Reunification and Rebuilding
2. Land of Leadership
3. Place of National Beauty and Rural Character

These themes, in particular theme #1, are reflected in and are complementary to the themes of the Heart of Civil War Heritage Area:

1. Era of Change
2. Maryland as a Borderland
3. Maryland as a War Zone
4. Reunion and Reconciliation
5. Aftermath
6. Shadows of the Civil War

The Baltimore Heritage Area is currently seeking National Heritage Area designation. In April 2007, a feasibility study was submitted to the National Park Service. The study uses the interpretive themes that were developed during the state Heritage Area's plan update:

1. Overarching Theme: Portal to American Identity
2. Primary Theme: Crosscurrents in Freedom
3. Primary Theme: Gateway to Possibilities
4. Primary Theme: Inventing Baltimore on the Chesapeake
5. Primary Theme: North of the South - South of the North

History Matters! – Maryland Humanities Council

In October 2000, MHAA approved funding of *History Matters!*, a Maryland Humanities Council pilot project designed to help Heritage Areas develop interpretive plans and to build thematic and interpretive linkages into a statewide system. Additional funding was approved in 2001. The program was developed by Maryland Humanities Council staff and an advisory committee of historians and tourism professionals.

The first stage of the project focused on developing interpretive themes, creating an online bibliography of Maryland history and working with the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway as a pilot area to create an interpretive plan. The second stage involved working with Anacostia Trails Heritage Area to create an interpretive plan.

Statewide interpretive themes developed for Maryland's Heritage Areas were:

1. Settlement patterns across the centuries
2. Changes in the landscape
 - a. natural environment – resources to sustain life and attract settlement
 - b. built environment – incidental reshaping through settlement
 - c. designed environment – human impact on the land; shift from natural to agricultural to urban to suburban
3. Individual communities and cultures – everyday lives of the common people (especially women, Native Americans, African Americans, farm and factory workers and immigrants)
4. Waterways – including the Chesapeake Bay and Susquehanna River
5. Trade, Commerce and Economics
6. Freedoms won, Freedoms lost: religious, political and intellectual
7. Adaptation and ingenuity – tools, transportation and technology

The original intent of the project was to work with all of the Heritage Areas to develop interpretive plans. However, at the end of the first two stages, the program was discontinued by the Maryland Humanities Council. The Heritage Area Program's Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the work completed on *History Matters!* MHAA did not take further action on the project.

Maryland Arts and Entertainment Districts Program

The State of Maryland designates Arts and Entertainment Districts to encourage renovation of buildings to create spaces for arts or arts and entertainment businesses and to revitalize specific areas of communities. An Arts and Entertainment (A&E) district is defined by Americans for the Arts as *a well-recognized, labeled, mixed-use area of the city in which a high concentration of arts and cultural facilities serve as the anchor attraction*. Maryland is the first state to develop A&E Districts on a statewide basis. Designated districts are:

- Annapolis (Anne Arundel County)
- Berlin Arts and Entertainment District (Worcester County)
- Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District (Montgomery County)
- Cambridge Arts and Entertainment District (Dorchester County)
- City of Frostburg - Mountain City Arts and Entertainment District (Allegany County)
- City of Salisbury (Wicomico County)
- Cumberland Arts and Entertainment District (Allegany County)
- Denton Arts and Entertainment District (Caroline County)
- Downtown Frederick Arts and Entertainment District (Frederick County)
- Elkton Arts and Entertainment District (Cecil County)
- Gateway Arts District (Prince George's County)
- Hagerstown Arts and Entertainment District (Washington County)
- Havre de Grace (Harford County)
- Highlandtown Arts and Entertainment District (Baltimore City)

- Silver Spring Arts and Entertainment District (Montgomery County)
- Snow Hill Arts and Entertainment District (Worcester County)
- Station North Arts and Entertainment District (Baltimore City)
- Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District (Montgomery County)

National Park Service

The Centennial of the National Park Service's creation will be in 2016. Pre-centennial activities and events will begin in 2011. This celebration may also provide opportunities for Maryland Heritage Areas to partner in programs and promotions.

Background:
Tourism Development and Marketing

Tourism Development and Marketing

Overview: Tourism Questions

Although tourism is in many ways a primary focus of the Maryland Heritage Areas Program, many questions continue to be considered about what this emphasis means and how it should be carried out in regard to Heritage Area identity, image and marketing and the partnerships required to be successful. These include:

- Should the Heritage Area or the visitor experience be promoted to visitors?
- Is it important for a tourist to know that he/she is traveling in a Heritage Area?
- How can all of the different promotional messages and venues be best coordinated to make it easy for tourists to understand their travel options?
- How do Heritage Area management entities work with their local DMOs?
- What happens if local DMOs do not promote the history and heritage of the area?
- How can multi-county/multi-DMO Heritage Areas facilitate partnerships for unified promotion? Is that part of their responsibility?
- What is – or should be - the involvement of the Maryland Office of Tourism in Heritage Areas?

Legislation: House Bill 1

The bill which created the Heritage Areas Program includes specific references to tourism:

- **Maryland Heritage Areas Authority** – Members include “the Secretary of Business and Economic Development,” (department houses the Maryland Office of Tourism), “a public member of the Maryland Tourism Development Board,” and “a member of the public who has significant education or experience in heritage tourism.”
- **Proposals for recognized heritage areas** – Proposals for designation would “describe strategies for encouraging and accommodating visitation to and compatible economic development of the heritage area.”
- **Designating recognized heritage areas** – In awarding designation, the Authority must find “public assistance for the heritage area is reasonably expected to produce additional private investments, job creation and tourism revenues.”
- **Proposals for certified heritage areas** – Management plans were required to include “a description of plans for encouraging and accommodating visitation to and compatible economic development of the recognized heritage area.
- **Program Statements** – Among state agencies required to prepare program statements is the “Secretary of Business and Economic Development regarding the state tourism program and economic development and job creation activities.”

- **Grants** – The Authority can award funds including “grants and loans to local jurisdictions or other appropriate entities for planning, design, acquisition, development, preservation, restoration, interpretation, marketing and programming of certified heritage areas.”

Core Components

Several of the core components detailed in *The Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program* booklet address tourism:

- A strong focus on theme(s) that makes this place different or distinctive from the areas that surround it or that are nearby.
- Leadership should include business, civic, cultural, arts, museum, environmental, tourism and historic preservation organizations.
- Visitor services: accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shopping and recreational attractions....
- Visitors are able to move about easily, whether by automobile, bicycle, foot, rail or boat....
- The visitor is easily able to find the major stories of the heritage area and why it is important to Maryland and the nation’s development.
- Economic development....recognize the value of the area’s heritage resources.

Goals for the Program

Also included in *The Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program* booklet are seven program goals. Several of these address tourism:

- To enhance visitor appeal and enjoyment of the state’s history, culture, natural environment and scenic beauty by improving the overall product – the visitor experience.
- To increase the economic activity associated with tourism, creating opportunities for small business development, job growth and a stronger tax base.
- To enable Marylanders and visitors alike to have greater access to and understanding of the history and traditional cultures of the state and to understand the important events that took place here.
- To foster linkages among and between heritage attractions that encourage visitors to explore, linger and sample the diverse offerings of the state’s distinctive regions.
- To balance the impact of tourism activity with the quality of life enjoyed by residents.

Strategic Plan Advisory Team

Evaluation of Heritage Area Progress and Accomplishments – Program Goals Analysis

On June 7, 2007, SPAT developed “lines of inquiry” for each of the Heritage Area Program’s goals. Goals and questions specifically related to tourism are:

Goal 1: Enhance the visitor appeal and enjoyment of the state’s history, culture, natural environment and scenic beauty by enhancing the overall “product” – the visitor experience.

Question: Is there a true “system” of heritage areas in Maryland?

Question: Is there brand recognition for the Maryland Heritage Area product?

Goal 5: Foster linkages among and between heritage attractions that encourage visitors to explore, linger and sample the diverse offerings of the state’s distinctive regions.

Question: DNR is supporting development of a statewide trail system including land and water trails. How can the program complement this effort?

Question: How should heritage areas and scenic byways work together at the state and local level?

Question: To what extent should the program encourage and support activities that cross-cut multiple heritage areas (for example the John Smith 400 Celebration).

Goal 7: Accomplish these goals via partnerships among local and regional leaders, non-profit organizations and state agencies.

Question: What are the obstacles to DMO and heritage area partnerships and how can the program resolve them?

Maryland Heritage Areas Authority: History of Tourism Policies and Plans

The minutes of MHAA reveal a long history of addressing the question of tourism marketing including the role that Heritage Areas should play in promoting their area to tourists, the relationship with the Maryland Office of Tourism and the amount of funding that MHAA should dedicate to marketing.

The issue of marketing Heritage Areas was discussed at a May 2001 retreat of Heritage Area directors and also at a meeting between the Maryland Office of Tourism and a DMO focus group. The MHAA minutes show that the Authority addressed the issue of Heritage Area marketing at its October 2001 meeting: “Staff reported meeting with the Maryland Office of Tourism Development (MOTD) staff on August 22 to discuss funding for development of a marketing plan for the Maryland system of Heritage Areas. MOTD is developing a marketing plan proposal for presentation at the January MHAA meeting.”

At the January 2002 MHAA meeting, discussion of a marketing plan began with an explanation by staff of policy questions including 1) who would take the lead role in marketing the state's Heritage Areas; 2) how will the state's Heritage Areas be marketed or branded and 3) what sort of relationship should the MHAA require between Heritage Areas and local destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to ensure collaboration rather than duplication of marketing efforts and expenditures. A proposal for a three-part Heritage Areas marketing initiative was presented:

1) The Maryland Office of Tourism would develop marketing strategies in three phases with a projected total cost of \$465,000:

- Phase 1 – Develop a statewide graphic identity, production of a statewide Heritage Areas map, inclusion of Heritage Areas on the tourism office website and upgrade trade/consumer show exhibits to reflect Heritage Areas.
- Phase 2 – Establish a toll free number for inquiries, incorporate Heritage Areas into various publications and market through advertising, public relations and trade/consumer shows.
- Phase 3 – Conduct market studies to measure return on investment.

2) Each Heritage Area would use the graphic identity in all MHAA funded activities, produce and distribute a map, develop a website (link to state tourism site), develop trade/consumer show exhibits, and market through advertising, public relations and trade/consumer show activities.

3) MHAA would create a marketing grants program. Start-up marketing grants of up to \$50,000 would be available to each DMO located in a certified heritage area.

MHAA Action – After discussion of the proposal, MHAA passed a motion approving expenditure of up to \$110,000 on a contract with the Office of Tourism to complete Phase 1 of the proposal.

Statewide Heritage Area Map - In 2002, the Office of Tourism developed a statewide map. Heritage Area and DMO staffs were contacted for information on what visitors would experience in their Heritage Area and what symbols or attractions represented the area. A five-panel, four color piece was developed featuring logos, a map and brief descriptions of each Heritage Area. The Maryland Historic Trust website and the Maryland official tourism website and toll-free number were listed for additional information.

At the April 2002 MHAA meeting, the Authority approved creation of a marketing assistance grants program with the condition that grants can total no more than \$50,000 for any Heritage Area and that applications would be accepted from Certified Heritage Area management entities or their designated marketing partner and DMOs recognized by the Maryland Office of Tourism.

Marketing grants were designed to encourage partnerships between local management entities and DMOs by requiring that applications be submitted jointly and that the marketing plan reflect the Heritage Area. Grants can be awarded for advertising placement, participation in consumer and travel trade shows, printed material/collateral and website development.

At the April 2005 MHAA meeting, it was reported that Phase 1 had been completed by the Office of Tourism, coming in under budget. MHAA approved the remaining funds to be used for production and placement of a two-page Heritage Area advertorial in the 2005 and 2006 editions of the "Destination Maryland" travel guide.

As of December 2008, the Marketing Grant Policy approved at the January 2005 MHAA meeting remains in effect:

Certified Heritage Area management entities or their designated marketing partner, and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) recognized by the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, may receive a marketing grant of up to \$50,000 provided that the Certified Heritage Area management entity has completed a MHAA-approved heritage area marketing plan in coordination with its affiliated DMOs.

Certified Heritage Area management entities or their designated marketing partner, and Destination Marketing Organizations that receive a marketing grant shall be ineligible to receive another marketing grant for a period of 18 months from the date of the Authority's approval of a Grant Agreement, except when the Authority determines that an additional grant is required to complete the marketing program funded by the initial grant.

Maryland Heritage Areas Tourism Marketing

Management plans include an analysis of current visitation and target audiences and a description of promotional plans. Maryland Heritage Area management entities are involved in tourism product development and marketing to varying degrees. Examples of activities are:

| Heritage Area | Tourism Activity | Websites |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Anacostia | Does own promotion; minimal relationship with DMO | www.anacostiatrails.org fun places, plan a trip, press room, downloadable visitors guide |
| Baltimore | Strong partnership with Baltimore Area CVA | www.baltimorecity.gov/government/heritage links to BACVA site, attractions; resources by thematic categories; Authentic Baltimore |
| Canal Place | Minimal work with DMO | www.canalplace.org link to trip planner, visitor attractions |
| Four Rivers | ED on board of DMO; coordinate with AACVB Applying for marketing grant | www.fourriversheritage.org Things to Do – multiple categories such as African American heritage, guided tours, historic sites, sacred places, events, maps, etc. |
| Heart of Chesapeake Country | Housed in tourism office; ED also serves as tourism director | www.TourChesapeakecountry.com organized by themes – history given for each with some links; listings of heritage attractions, tourist maps |
| Heart of Civil War | Housed in tourism office; strong partnership with DMOs | www.heartofthecivilwar.org organized by themes -Home Front, Heat of Battle, Beyond the Battlefield |
| Lower Eastern Shore | Works with DMO | www.skipjack.net/le_shore/heritage organized by interest areas such as bicycling, boating, historic buildings, arts, maritime history, traditional foods |
| Lower Susquehanna | Works with DMOs | www.hitourtrails.com links to county tourism offices |
| Montgomery County | Does own promotion; no partnership with DMO | www.montgomeryheritage.org events, museums & sites, kids page, travelling in Montgomery County, downloadable Ipod driving tour |
| Southern Maryland | Works with 3 DMOs | www.SouthernMDisfun.org guides and maps, suggested itineraries, links to county DMOs, brochures can be ordered |
| Stories of the Chesapeake | Has done some marketing; DMO core of marketing committee | www.storiesofthechesapeake.org links to tourism offices, visitors and residents can post stories, Visit Us section includes links to attractions, maps, plan your tour, itineraries (new website in development) |

Several Heritage Areas have selected a unique name that reflects the characteristics of the area such as Heart of Civil War and Anacostia Trails. Others use names that identify the location such as Montgomery County and Southern Maryland. A few have also developed promotional messages: “Where Time and Tide Meet” for Southern Maryland, “Below the Mason Dixon Line, Above the Potomac and at the Heart of the Civil War” for Heart of Civil War and “Canal Place: History Starts Here.”

Local DMOs may have promotional messages which do not necessary reflect the presence of a Heritage Area or heritage attractions. Baltimore Convention and Visitors Bureau uses the slogan “Get in on it” to allude to all the city has to offer. Prince George’s County Conference and Visitors Bureau promotes “So Much to See and So Much to Discover” on its website, but does not feature the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area. The Montgomery County Conference and Visitors Bureau promotes the area as “The Upside of Downtown.” The three DMOs in Southern Maryland – Calvert, St. Mary’s and Charles counties – do not use the “Time and Tide” theme or logo on their websites.

Each Heritage Area maintains a website. Most include information for residents and stakeholders on upcoming events such as fundraisers or grant opportunities as well as information targeted to tourists.

In addition to being a Maryland Heritage Area, many Heritage Areas also overlap or intersect with other designations and promotions. These include the Journey through Hallowed Ground, a National Heritage Area which encompasses the Heart of Civil War Heritage Area, and statewide routes including National Scenic Byways and Maryland Civil War Trails.

Maryland Office of Tourism

I. What is the involvement of the Maryland Office of Tourism in Heritage Areas?

Of the 16 stakeholder interviews conducted by the consultant team, 10 indicated that they believed the tourism office was among the greatest champions of the Heritage Area Program among state agencies. Three respondents said they would like to see more involvement from the tourism office. As noted in the online stakeholder survey section, 82% of respondents said they would like to see the Maryland Office of Tourism spend “more time and dollars marketing Maryland’s cultural heritage tourism experience.”

Currently the Maryland Office of Tourism is involved in Heritage Areas through:

- **Providing information and tourism training** – Visitor research data produced by the Office of Tourism was useful in the preparation of management plans and continues to be important to understand who is coming to Heritage Areas. The tourism office also provides training on topics such as public relations and website design as well as interpretive planning and program consultation.
- **Attending Coalition of Heritage Areas meetings** – Office of Tourism representatives attend meetings when invited to provide updates on state activities.
- **Encourage DMO partnerships** – In order to receive a Heritage Area marketing grant, the management entity and local DMO must show they worked together on a marketing plan. The Office of Tourism encourages these efforts.
- **Maintains a presence for Heritage Areas on www.VisitMaryland.org** – The state’s official tourism website includes a section with links to thematic topics including Heritage Areas, Civil War Trails, the Star Spangled Banner Trail and others. The link to the Heritage Area page leads visitors to a brief description and a link to the Heritage Area website.
- **Includes two pages in *Destination Maryland*** – The official tourism vacation planner includes two pages with brief summaries and contact information for each Heritage Area.

Although the Office of Tourism does include Heritage Areas in these promotional venues, the state is primarily presented to visitors through five regions – Western, Capital, Central, Southern and Eastern Shore.

II. Maryland Tourism Research

The Office of Tourism's 2009 Marketing Plan includes information on visitation to the state:

- For calendar year 2007 there were 27.2 million visitors to Maryland, a decrease of 3.8 percent from 2006.
- 75% were leisure visitors; 25 percent were business travelers.
- The key target audience for promotion is women, age 25-64, household income of \$75K+, well educated, managerial and professional occupations.
- The average travel party size is 2.1 persons; 30 percent of trips are taken with children.
- The audience is also defined by special interests such as Civil War, Underground Railroad, Maryland and America's Byways, cultural heritage programs, outdoor recreation and sporting events and multicultural sites/events.
- Primary feeder markets are the mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia and parts of New York, Ohio, Indiana and North Carolina.
- Maryland residents are the largest percentage of tourists – in 2007, 31 percent of all travelers were from within the state compared to 17 percent from Pennsylvania and 11 percent from Virginia.

III. Key Office of Tourism initiatives that can affect Heritage Areas

The Office of Tourism has several key initiatives that can directly affect heritage areas in the coming years:

1) **Rebranding the state of Maryland** – In 2009 the Office of Tourism will conduct a rebranding study to gain new insights into how to best position Maryland in the highly competitive tourism marketplace. Preliminary research into target audience interests revealed a strong connection that visitors feel to water. The rebranding study will further explore this interest by looking in particular at opportunities to brand Maryland by marketing the Bay.

2) **Promotional Focuses** – In the next few years, the Office of Tourism will focus major promotional efforts on three historical events:

1. Commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 in Maryland
2. Commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War in Maryland (2010-2015)
3. Commemoration of the Centennial of the death of Harriet Tubman (2013) – focusing on Tubman's life and legacy and the Underground Railroad.

3) **Visitor Experience Team** – The Office of Tourism has recently formed a Visitor Experience team to coordinate programs to recognize, develop and integrate new tourism resources. The team provides technical and financial assistance for targeted thematic initiatives as well as administration of Welcome Centers and management of the County Cooperative Grant Program. Strategies include those listed under #2, Promotional Focus.

Maryland Byways

The Maryland Byways Program is a logical partner for the Heritage Areas Program for several reasons including providing transportation routes through the state, reflecting many of the same themes as Heritage Areas and promoting unique ways for visitors to experience the state.

Since 2007, the program has included 19 byways. The Maryland Department of Transportation's website, www.sha.state.md.us/index.asp, includes information on Byways which can be found by following a link from the homepage under "Explore Maryland."

The Byway system reflects many Heritage Area themes such as the Underground Railroad, Star Spangled Banner, Religious Freedom, Antietam Campaign and the Historic National Road. Partnerships have been established between Heritage Area Programs and Byways. For example, the Southern Maryland Heritage Area was the coordinating agency for partners who have developed a Corridor Management Plan and nomination for National Scenic Byway designation for the Religious Freedom Byway.

The Byways Program has given visibility to the Heritage Area Program through two publications:

- 1) *Maryland Byways: Explore the Roads Less Traveled* Guidebook – This 176-page, four-color guidebook was developed with funding from the Federal Highway Administration, Maryland State Highway Administration and Maryland Office of Tourism. Since 2000, approximately 400,000 books have been printed. The guidebook includes a paragraph about Maryland's Heritage Areas in the introduction. References are made to Heritage Areas throughout the text. For example, the section on the Historic National Road notes that the road passes through three Maryland Heritage Areas: Baltimore, Heart of Civil War (Frederick) and Canal Place (Cumberland) and the Religious Freedom Tour notes that the route is in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area.
- 2) *Maryland Byways: Explore the Roads Less Traveled* Map – The large, four-color map showcases the state's Byways and Heritage Areas. Since 2000, approximately 1 million maps have been printed. On one side is a brief description of each Byway and a map locating the routes. The other side features brief descriptions of each Heritage Area and a map showing locations.

The guidebook and map can be downloaded from the Maryland Highway Administration website. The Office of Tourism handles calls requesting these pieces as a result of their marketing efforts on the tourism website, *Destination Maryland* travel guide, national and international travel magazines, trade shows and other marketing. The tourism office's call center distributes a Byways package including the guidebook, map, *Destination Maryland* and the tourism office Events Guide. Additionally, all state and county visitor centers and welcome centers as well as other outlets distribute the books and maps. Maryland Byways awards funding through the National Scenic Byways Program on an annual basis for this marketing.

In March 2008, the Maryland Byways Program and Maryland Office of Tourism contracted with the travel industry research firm Longwoods International to conduct an "Awareness/Image Study and Visitor Profile" to better understand perceptions about byways, to identify likely target audiences among Maryland residents and out-of-state visitors, to identify strategies for creating greater awareness and interest in traveling along Byways and to develop strategies for making Byways an important part of Maryland's overall tourism marketing efforts. A report is being prepared to determine how best to use the findings to update Byway marketing. Initial research findings can also be helpful in evaluating marketing opportunities for Heritage Areas:

- Scenery should be celebrated as the backdrop or canvas onto which the unique and exciting Maryland Byway experience is brought to life.
- Primary "hot button" motivators for travel to Maryland are: family, affordability/accessibility, sightseeing, uniqueness, learning and discovery, adventure and historical/cultural experiences.
- Researchers found challenges in "differentiation" between Maryland and competing states – meaning Maryland must more clearly define to visitors what is unique and should compel travel to the state rather than another destination.
- After viewing images and reading descriptions about Maryland's Byways, survey respondents greatly increased their favorable comments about the state and its byways.
- 55% of respondents said they had not heard of Maryland Byways; 10% said they had traveled on one of the byways; 9% had seen road signs and 26% had heard the name but had not traveled on a byway.

Research: Stakeholder Interviews, Work Sessions and Online Surveys

The research phase of the strategic plan development process yielded numerous opinions and ideas related to the importance of the development of tourism product as well as tourism promotion. Findings included:

- Of Heritage Area directors who were interviewed by the consultant team, seven said that the primary focus of their Heritage Area activities is tourism development and promotion. Two said their focus is a mix of tourism and preservation. One said their focus was tourism product development.
- Respondents to the online stakeholders' survey indicated the importance of tourism to heritage areas:
 - In response to the statement: "More time and dollars should be spent on marketing Maryland's cultural heritage tourism experiences"
 - By the Office of Tourism Development - 82% Agreed
 - By the MHAA" – 72% Agreed
 - 59% said the development of new products for tourists was a benefit of the Heritage Area
 - 97% said that providing visitors with maps and brochures describing the area's attractions and how to access them is important to success
 - 95% said that wayfinding signage to help tourists find their way is important
 - 82% want signage to mark the presence of a Heritage Area
 - 68% want local tour programs to package attractions into an easily accessible trip
 - 88% want to see promotion of Heritage Area sites at accommodations and sites in order to encourage multiple visits
 - 68% would like to see the Heritage Area Program develop an improved statewide map and guide that maps all heritage areas and physically as well as thematically relates them to each other and to Maryland Byways
 - 54% would like each Heritage Area to prepare and publish (in print and online) a brochure describing the area's themes, resources and suggested tours
 - 66% would like for marketing grants to be available to individual heritage attractions
- Additional comments from respondents in the online stakeholders' survey included:
 - "Focus more on local visitors. With fuel prices increasing, people are traveling less far from home."
 - "Since I think MHAA is a tourism development entity that should be its focus."
 - (The program has) "lack of strong branding, focus, support and community awareness of the heritage area."

- “The local visitors’ bureau seems threatened by any Heritage Area success and does not provide strong marketing support.”
 - “All Heritage Areas should be promoting in print and online, but they are all unique and a cookie-cutter look takes away from each area.”
 - “Provide MHAA brochure templates to local Heritage Areas and/or require that brochures/newsletters/materials paid for with MHAA funds are made available to other Heritage Areas in the source format, so that things that work can be borrowed and replicated at modest cost.”
 - “Substance first. Marketing is secondary.”
- Participants in the work sessions also made comments about tourism:
 - “We are all too small to do our own marketing. And marketing together as state Heritage Areas is the most important component.”
 - “Our Heritage Area has taken advantage of the marketing grants...That means our three county DMOs have the incentive to pool their resources and focus on the Civil War theme as a reason to come to the area.”
 - “We just made a DVD and downloadable video to do a driving tour.”
 - “We have just developed a Heritage Area brochure. It’s a great opportunity to provide visitors an understanding of what is in the area.”
 - “We’re the first one to produce an area brochure. This is the first time that the Heritage Area itself has been highlighted in a publication.”
 - “Fulfillment is way up through our advertisements in media. The PR about this program was excellent with articles in the local papers....”
 - “...a statewide approach to marketing the Heritage Areas. Market the opportunities statewide for enjoying a heritage experience.”
 - “If you opened up the grants a little by allowing marketing expenses to be covered with the grant you are recognizing the importance of marketing in the success of the project.”
 - “We have prepared a lot of brochures and rack cards to get the word out. The website has what there is to see and do. All Heritage Areas are working on their websites.”
 - “Maybe the state Heritage Area program could pay the fee to have our brochures displayed in key places such as train stations and welcome centers.”
 - “The relationship between the Heritage Areas and their respective DMOs for tourism marketing has to be more clearly defined.”
 - “We introduce people to the concept of the area and describe the different themes you can see in our area...”
 - “The Tourism Development Office understands promoting by region and then by state and making it a bigger experience. The Heritage Areas should follow those guidelines and do that promotion. That’s where we need a little bit more from the state Heritage Area Program is in the marketing and helping the tourism development directors market the experience.”

Tourism Development and Marketing in other State and National Heritage Areas

A review of many state and national Heritage Area websites and management plans shows that tourism development and marketing is an important part of what these organizations do. The extent to which each management entity engages in marketing varies greatly ranging from having staff positions for marketing, public relations and group tour promotion to partnering with local tourism bureaus which do the actual marketing. Following is a sample of the types of marketing undertaken by state and national heritage area management entities:

| Heritage Area | Website | Tourism Marketing |
|---|--|---|
| Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District | www.shenandoahatwar.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing plan focuses on Civil War Sesquicentennial - Published Civil War Visitors Guide - Website features “Visit the Valley” section - Tourism committee includes Valley DMOs - Large SVBNHD signs are placed on the interstate entrances to the District |
| Blackstone Valley National Heritage Area | www.nps.gov/blac/ www.tourblackstone.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blackstone Valley Tourism Council promotes the region - Mgt. plan calls for Heritage Area to “encourage and enhance” the Council’s programs and those other tourism businesses - Mgt. plan calls for a consistent Corridor image and marketing communications package |
| Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area | www.silosandsmokestacks.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publishes Visitors Guide - Travel itineraries - Partnership Panel includes Iowa Tourism Office - Heritage Area staff includes Marketing/PR manager and Group Tour manager |
| Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Area | www.delawareandlehigh.org | Management plan (1993) discusses challenges of five TPAs and development of management policies to bridge the gap of cooperative marketing |
| Pennsylvania State Heritage Areas | www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/heritagearks/ www.heritagepa.net | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heritage Areas recently formed HeritagePA network to share resources - Website includes links to 12 heritage areas - Most heritage area websites include tourist information – listings, itineraries, etc. |
| New York State Heritage Areas | www.nysparks.state.ny.us/heritage/herit_area.asp | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website includes links to each heritage area - There are 17 designated New York State Heritage Area Visitor Centers – centers have interpretive exhibits in addition to visitor center staff assistants, brochures, etc. - Most heritage area websites include tourism information and encourage tourists to start at the visitors center |

Visitor Research: Online Survey

(Note: A complete report on the findings from this survey is included with this report.)

In November 2008, consultant team member Davidson-Peterson Research conducted an online survey to gather information from visitors and potential visitors to Maryland. Information included traveler interests related to cultural, historic and natural resources, preferred types of trip planning resources, knowledge of – and interest in – traveling to Heritage Areas, frequency of travel and other information.

Central to the survey was asking respondents to indicate their interest in themes associated with Maryland’s Heritage Areas. Five categories of themes were presented with five subthemes under each one. Following are the themes and rankings in order of interest in each subtheme (each category adds to 100 points):

| Theme 1: Maryland’s Role in National Conflicts | Ranking |
|---|----------------|
| Nation and state torn apart – the Civil War on the border in Maryland; 150 th anniversary commemoration (2009-2015) | 26.94 |
| Americans fight for independence – Revolutionary War | 23.15 |
| Finishing the fight for independence – War of 1812; bicentennial commemoration of the war (2012-2014); Story of the Star Spangled Banner | 21.77 |
| Role of Maryland in WWII – building a navy and an air force | 15.69 |
| The Cold War and modern diplomacy | 12.45 |
| Theme 2: Founding, Settlement and Growth | |
| Early architecture and building traditions | 26.07 |
| Founding and settlement – John Smith and other notable Maryland settlers | 22.77 |
| Native American history, culture, traditions | 21.62 |
| Religious freedom – founding of Protestant and Catholic demoninations and traditions, early churches, religious tolerance | 15.23 |
| Immigration and westward expansion | 14.31 |
| Theme 3: African-American History | |
| Civil War and Reconstruction | 33.10 |
| Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad | 23.31 |
| Antebellum era (slavery and free black communities) | 15.46 |
| Desegregation, Thurgood Marshall, Civil Rights | 14.54 |
| African-American cultural traditions – arts and entertainment | 13.60 |
| Theme 4: Transportation and Work | |
| The working Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries – commerical fishing and boating; development of unique boats, historic maritime cultures, growth of waterfront recreation | 29.82 |
| Space – the next frontier – NASA, Goddard, the Hubble, mapping the universe | 21.85 |
| Roads and railroads – changing travel modes, National Road, B&O Railroad | 17.80 |
| Construction of transportation modes – canals, railroads, roads | 16.79 |
| Aviation inventions and development | 13.75 |

| Theme Five: Natural Resources | |
|--|-------|
| Outdoor recreation and adventure – hunting, fishing, beaches, boating – past and present | 31.34 |
| Chesapeake Bay foodways and cultural traditions | 24.47 |
| Changing uses of the land and present day protection of natural resources | 15.80 |
| Agriculture – history and present day practices | 14.37 |
| Influence of the environment on Maryland’s growth | 14.01 |

Ranking Interpretive Themes

By calculating the scores of each interpretive subtheme, the five primary themes emerged in the following order of popularity:

1. Founding and Settlement
2. Natural Resources
3. National Conflicts
4. Transportation and Work
5. African American History

Research Findings of Visitor Interests and Activities

The survey also gathered additional information that is helpful in determining strategies for tourism development and and marketing. Findings include:

- **Heritage Areas** – The survey included a map of Maryland outlining the state’s 11 Heritage Areas. Respondents were asked which areas they had visited in the past year:
 - 43% - Annapolis, London Town & South County
 - 39% - Baltimore
 - 34% - Heart of the Civil War
 - 27% - Stories of the Chesapeake
 - 21% - Lower Eastern Shore
 - 18% - Southern Maryland
 - 16% - Heart of Chesapeake Country
 - 16% - Montgomery County
 - 12% - Lower Susquehanna
 - 10% - Canal Place
 - 5% - Anacostia Trails

Respondents were then asked “**Did you know that the sites you visited were in a Heritage Area?**”

- 57% - No
- 32% - Yes
- 11% - Don’t remember

Those who were aware of the Heritage Area were asked “**How much did that knowledge influence your decision to visit sites in the Heritage Area?**”

- 5% - Very much – we probably wouldn’t have come if it had not been in a Heritage Area
- 17% - Somewhat – helped us to decide, gave us a reason to go there rather than somewhere else
- 7% - Not very much – was good to know, but didn’t contribute much to the decision
- 2% - Not at all – didn’t have any influence on our decision

(22% positive; 9% negative)

- **Activities while traveling in Maryland** – Respondents were asked to indicate what activities they enjoyed on their trip to Maryland. (They could check all that applied.)

| Category | Activity | Ranking |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------|
| Natural Scenery | | 66% total |
| | Viewing scenery – fall foliage, spring blossoms | 37% |
| | Visiting a Maryland State Park | 36% |
| | Enjoying nature/the outdoors | 36% |
| | Seeing rural vistas and farm fields | 20% |
| | Driving designated scenic routes | 17% |
| Shopping | | 59% total |
| | Tourist shopping | 35% |
| | Buying locally grown produce | 34% |
| | Shopping for antiques, local arts & crafts | 29% |
| Historic Sites | | 57% total |
| | Visting historic districts | 33% |
| | Visiting monuments and memorials | 24% |
| | Visiting Civil War battlefields and sites | 18% |
| | Learning about Maryland’s early settlement | 14% |
| | Learning about our nation’s founding & early settlement | 13% |
| | Visiting historic cemeteries | 11% |
| | Visiting War of 1812 battlefields & sites | 10% |
| | Following heritage trails | 9% |
| | Visiting Revolutionary War battlefields & sites | 8% |
| | Learning about African-American history | 3% |
| Cultural Attractions | | 57% total |
| | Visiting museums (arts, history, agricultural, maritime) | 34% |
| | Attending festivals, seasonal festivals or cultural events | 34% |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|
| | Attending performing arts events | 16% |
| Outdoor Recreation | | 56% total |
| | Swimming/beaches | 35% |
| | Outdoor recreation – hiking, biking, skiing/boarding, snowmobiling, etc. | 25% |
| | Water-based recreation – boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, etc. | 23% |
| | Birdwatching | 5% |
| Towns and Cities | | 51% total |
| | Visiting small towns | 33% |
| | Visiting Main Street communities | 28% |
| | Visiting large cities/urban areas | 17% |
| Other | | 64% total |
| | Dining on local cuisine | 55% |
| | Visiting theme parks or amusement parks | 15% |
| | Other | 5% |
| | None of the above | 1% |

- **Experiences at historic sites or areas** – Respondents were asked “**What types of experiences do you particularly enjoy when you visit historic sites or areas?**” (Respondents could check all that apply. Question was not Maryland-specific.)

| Activity | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Exhibits on the history of the site | 67% |
| Demonstrations of period crafts or tasks | 59% |
| Guided tours | 50% |
| Living history programs | 50% |
| Behind the scenes tours | 49% |
| Driving tours with markers and appropriate signage | 47% |
| Authentic musical performances | 47% |
| Re-enactments of events or battles | 45% |
| Guides dressed in period costumes | 45% |
| Hands-on activities for adults | 43% |
| Videos/films to watch on site | 41% |
| Special programs or lectures | 39% |
| Interpreted hiking, biking or paddling trails | 39% |
| Self-guided audio tours (CDs or iPods) | 35% |
| Hands-on activities for children | 34% |
| Other | 1% |
| None of the above | 1% |

- **Sources of information for travel planning** – Respondents were asked what sources of offline and online information they used to plan a trip to Maryland.

| Offline Sources | Percentage |
|---|-------------------|
| Friends, family, coworkers | 45% |
| Articles in magazines | 22% |
| Visited a Welcome Center/Visitor Center | 18% |
| Newspaper travel section | 17% |
| Travel books or guidebooks | 16% |
| Advertisements in magazines | 14% |
| Called or visited a AAA office | 11% |
| Maryland's Official Tourism Guide | 11% |
| Brochures for individual Maryland Heritage Areas | 10% |
| Maryland Scenic Byways guidebook or map | 8% |
| Special interest guides: Civil War Trail Map Guides, Historic National Road Guide, etc. | 5% |
| National Heritage Area brochures | 4% |
| Called local tourism office | 2% |
| Travel agent | 2% |
| Called a travel company (airline, hotel chain, etc.) | 2% |
| Called Maryland Office of Tourism toll-free number | 1% |
| Other | 5% |
| Did not use offline sources | 20% |
| | |
| Online and Electronic Sources | |
| Search engine websites (i.e. Google, Yahoo) | 46% |
| Local city, county or area tourism websites | 26% |
| Maryland State Parks/Dept. of Natural Resources website | 26% |
| National Parks websites | 19% |
| Websites for individual Maryland Heritage Areas | 17% |
| Airline/hotel websites | 15% |
| Special interest websites (i.e. history websites, Civil War websites, etc.) | 15% |
| AAA website | 15% |
| Online travel agency websites (i.e. Expedia, Travelocity) | |
| Travel guide websites (i.e. Frommers, Fodors) | 11% |
| Scenic Byways websites | 6% |
| DVDs or podcasts for touring the individual Heritage Area | 2% |
| Other | 2% |
| Did not use online/electronic sources | 13% |
| None of the above | 3% |

- **Accommodations** – Respondents were asked “In what type of accommodations did you stay the most nights on this trip in Maryland?”

| Accommodations | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| National chain hotel/motel | 27% |
| At the home of family or friends | 20% |
| RV Park or campground | 6% |
| Independent or small hotel, motel or inn | 5% |
| Rented home, condo, cabin or timeshare | 5% |
| Bed and breakfast | 4% |
| Historic hotel or inn | 4% |
| Resort | 2% |
| Second home, condo, cabin (owned) | 2% |
| On a boat | 1% |
| Other | 1% |
| No overnights | 23% |

- **Travel companions** – Respondents were asked “Who travelled with you on your trip to Maryland?”

| Travel Companion | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Spouse/significant other/domestic partner | 73% |
| My/our children under 18 | 30% |
| Friends | 24% |
| Other relatives | 16% |
| My/our children 18 or older | 9% |
| No one, I traveled along | 5% |
| My/our grandchildren under 18 | 3% |

Recommendations

Overview

The recommendations for developing an interpretive framework, product development and promotion are interwoven in a series of strategies designed to strengthen the cultural, historic and natural resource product in Maryland and to communicate these resources as a unique, memorable experience for visitors. The recommendations directly address core component #6 and goals #4 and #5:

Core Component #6: The visitor is easily able to find the major stories of the heritage area and why it is important to Maryland and the nation's development.

Goal #4: To enable Marylanders and visitors alike to have greater access to and understanding of the history and traditional cultures of the state and to understand the important events that took place here.

Goal #5: To foster linkages among and between heritage attractions that encourage visitors to explore, linger and sample the diverse offerings of the state's distinctive regions.

Desired Future Condition

Building on the success of multiple partnerships within Heritage Areas and among state agencies and programs, the Maryland Heritage Areas Program will provide leadership and advocacy for a system that will attract visitors and offer an outstanding visitor experience:

- 1) Create systems of product development and interpretation of the state's history, culture and natural resources focusing on primary and sub-interpretive themes
- 2) Take full advantage of available technology to create an information resource to enable visitors to plan a unique and memorable visit to Maryland
- 3) Implement strategies for cross promotion to encourage visitors to explore the state – in particular focusing on Maryland residents.
- 4) Build on partnerships between Heritage Areas, the Maryland Office of Tourism and other agencies to promote cultural heritage travel in Maryland.

Obstacles to Achieving Success

There are a multitude of agencies and organizations in Maryland which offer information to help potential visitors plan a trip. The challenge for visitors is that they must first *find* these resources, then they must *sort through* all of the non-relevant material to get to the information they want to plan a trip focused on cultural, historic and natural activities and events. For example, a potential Maryland visitor may find a DMO website and learn about shopping, dining, accommodations and upcoming festivals, but never learn about that the community offers a downloadable Ipod driving tour of the surrounding countryside. Or, a traveler who is coming to Maryland with his children may learn about children’s activities in an Arts and Entertainment District, but never learn that the Department of Natural Resources offers many fun activities through its children’s programs posted on the DNR website. The graphic pictured below illustrates the challenge a visitor faces in planning a trip to Maryland:



Additionally, the heritage tourism product – historic, cultural and natural resource sites – faces many challenges. As is most often the case, most are managed by nonprofit organizations with small budgets and limited funds. The MHAP grant programs are instrumental in helping many of these sites enhance their offerings through new exhibits and tours. Additional support from the Heritage Areas through training opportunities can help address issues faced by many of these sites. The challenge for the Maryland Heritage Areas Program – hopefully not an insurmountable obstacle – is to become the leader in organizing a system that encompasses all of these agencies and programs to build and enhance the state’s heritage tourism product, to make it easy for visitors to learn about Maryland and to inspire a wish to visit the state.

I. Developing an Interpretive Framework

Primary Themes

Based on assessment of the interpretive themes of each Heritage Area, findings in the online visitor research survey and a review of all of the additional programs previously described, it is recommended that an interpretive framework focus on three primary themes:

- 1. Founding and Settlement**
- 2. Natural Resources**
- 3. National Conflicts**

Theme #4, Transportation and Work, fits appropriately as a subtheme for both Founding and Settlement and Natural Resources. The African American History theme (#5) is an appropriate subtheme for National Conflicts.

One or more of these themes is found in each Heritage Area, affording the opportunity for participation in further development and promotion:

| Heritage Area | Themes |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Anacostia Heritage Trails | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| Baltimore | 1, 3, 4, 5 |
| Canal Place | 2, 4 |
| Four Rivers | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| Heart of Chesapeake Country | 1, 2, 5 |
| Heart of Civil War | 3, 5 |
| Lower Eastern Shore | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| Lower Susquehanna | 1, 2 |
| Montgomery | 1, 2, 4, 5 |
| Southern Maryland | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| Stories of the Chesapeake | 1, 2, 4, 5 |

II. Developing a Statewide Interpretive Plan

A question posed by the Strategic Plan Advisory Team was:

Does the Program need a statewide interpretive plan to guide its development?

The consultant team considered several factors related to this question:

- Comments made during stakeholder interviews and work sessions
- History Matters! – Although MHAA expended funds for this project of the Maryland Humanities Council with the intent of developing a statewide interpretive plan, Heritage Area directors were not supportive of the initiative.
- How would a statewide plan be implemented? How would funds be directed? How would results be measured?
- Are the overarching themes that emerged from the strategic planning process, the History Matters! Project and the themes for each Heritage Area sufficient to build the heritage tourism product?

Based on an an assessment of these factors, the consultant team does not recommend devoting resources to developing a statewide inepretive plan at the present time. Instead, we recommend that interpretive themes be used as the foundation for focusing on product development and marketing as outlined in the following sections.

III. Using the Interpretive Framework for Product Development

As noted in the Maryland Heritage Areas Program Strategic Plan RFP: *The purpose of the framework will be to assist the Maryland Heritage Areas Program to focus program resources in a strategic manner and identify partnership opportunities.*

Two recommendations are made to accomplish this goal:

1) **Connect Non-capital Project Grants to Interpretive Themes**

The interpretive theme survey of Heritage Area directors showed that a majority encourage applicants for non-capital project grants to align their grant requests with the Heritage Area's interpretive themes. Directors assist potential applicants by providing interpretive themes found in the management plan. Many of the grants awarded by MHAA in FY2009 reflect the Heritage Area's themes. Examples include:

| Heritage Area | Applicant | Project | Connection to Themes |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| Four Rivers | Annapolis Maritime Museum | Oysters on the Half Shell Exhibition | Natural Resources (Waterways) |
| Baltimore | B&O Railroad Museum | Connecting Trains and Telegraph | Transportation and Work (Inventing Baltimore) |
| Heart of Chesapeake | Dorchester County Chamber | Crabtoberfest | Natural Resources, African American history, Founding & Settlement (6 of 7 themes in mgt. plan) |
| Heart of Civil War | City of Hagerstown | Exterior exhibits at homes | Role in National Conflicts (MD as a war zone) |
| Lower Eastern Shore | Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experiences | Interpreting Nature & Heritage Sites for Visitors | Natural Resources (Watery World, Great Escapes; Land, Water & Action) |
| Southern Maryland | Calvert Marine Museum Society | Museum orientation video | Natural Resources; Founding & Settlement (maritime cultures) |
| Stories of the Chesapeake | Sultanta Projects Inc. | Downrigging Weekend | Natural Resources, Transportation (Working Land & Water, Travel and Transportation) |

The Project Grant Application lists 10 criteria for selecting grant recipients:

1. Local Heritage Area Management Entity ranking
2. Consistency with Heritage Area Management Plan
3. Clarity
4. Urgency
5. Project Design
6. Leverage
7. Impact
8. Readiness
9. Demonstration Value
10. Administrative Capability of Applicant

Criteria #2 – Consistency with Heritage Area Management Plan – includes two questions for consideration:

- Is the project specifically identified in the Certified Heritage Area Management Plan?
- If the project is not specifically identified in the Certified Heritage Area Management Plan, is the project consistent with the goals, objectives, standards and actions outlined?

To more directly connect applications to interpretive themes, it is recommended that the questions be reworded:

- **How does the project relate to the interpretive themes outlined in the Certified Heritage Area Management Plan and the primary or sub-themes identified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Program?**
- **If the project does not relate to interpretive themes, describe how it is consistent with the goals, objectives, standards and actions outlined in the plan.**

2) Facilitate Product Development and Enhancement through Training

At the December 16, 2008 meeting of the Strategic Plan Advisory Team, participants agreed that the Heritage Area Program's emphasis on increasing heritage tourism product is unique to the program. Participants noted that the Heritage Area Program should work to build the capacity of cultural, historic and natural resources that have market demand. This effort will have two major results: 1) Sites will become sustainable and 2) DMOs and the Maryland Office of Tourism will have more to market.

In addition to facilitating non-capital grants, Heritage Areas can directly address this need by coordinating and hosting ongoing training workshops. It is recommended that this effort be implemented as a partnership with the American Association for State and Local History (www.aaslh.org). AASLH states as its mission: "AASLH provides leadership and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful to all Americans."

An important part of AASLH's work is offering training workshops for museums and historic sites. Workshops are developed in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Department of Historic Sites. Workshops are held in locations around the country – always with the support of a local partner. The Maryland Heritage Areas Program can provide a leadership role in bringing these workshops to the state. The MHAP can also recruit other local partners such as the Small Museums Association to help host the workshops.

Host Requirements

As a local host, the Maryland Heritage Areas Program would be responsible for:

- Meeting space free of charge
- LCD projector, cart and table
- Internet connection
- Refreshment breaks
- Marketing assistance

Note: Two complimentary registrations are provided to the local host. Scholarships are also available.

Examples of workshops offered by AASLH are: (More information is at www.aaslh.org.)

Planning Purpose-Driven Programs

Intentional program planning is purpose-driven. It starts with the museum's intended impact. Staff should plan what they want to achieve programmatically to advance the museum's mission. This workshop addresses how to plan purpose-driven programs and highlight the link between planning and evaluation, so that the museum's goals and objectives guide program planning and frame evaluation. Instructors: Randi Korn, Randi Korn & Associates; Max van Balgooy, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Museum Education 101

Museum Education 101 provides an overview of the role of education within museums from an experience-based perspective. Seasoned educators direct conversations about museum education and what it is museum educators do. Through interactive activities, hands-on training and case studies, participants will learn about volunteer management, docent training, tour techniques, active learning with people of all ages, developing exhibits with visitors in mind, on-line education and working with others to build education programs. Workshop themes are based on the recent publication *The Museum Educator's Manual: Educators Share Successful Techniques*, coauthored by the workshop's instructors. A copy of the manual is included in the workshop registration.

Exhibit Makeovers

Interpretive exhibits bring objects, images, and ideas to life for visitors through storytelling, diverse presentation media, and learning opportunities that engage multiple intelligences. In this workshop based on the new book *Exhibit Makeovers: A Do-It-Yourself Workbook for Small Museums*, you'll learn the basics of exhibit planning, organization, text writing and design. Drawing on resources of the Oregon Historical Society, working hands-on in small groups, participants experiment with ways to make exhibit content meaningful and memorable for visitors. Each participant will receive a copy of *Exhibit Makeovers* (AltaMira Press, 2008), and an electronic version of Alan Ransenberg's *An Exhibit Design Process*.

Historic House Museum Issues and Operations

Why are historic houses necessary to their communities? How are historic house museums unique? During lively group discussions and activities, participants explore management, collection and interpretation issues to answer these questions. Participants become familiar with the types of research that are appropriate for historic house museums and learn how to translate that research into interpretive themes, storylines and plans. They will also take part in an interpretive exercise focused on designing more exciting house tours. Other topics include marketing, volunteers, earned income, membership programs and care of buildings and landscapes. Each participant will work on an important issue or problem during the workshop. Instructors are Max van Balgooy, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and George McDaniel, executive director of Drayton Hall in Charleston, S.C.

Civic Engagement for Historic Sites

This one-day advanced workshop for historic house museums explores the benefits of community engagement and outlines the skills and strategies needed for facilitating dialogues and discussions. Participants learn how to identify appropriate partners and forge collaborations that are mutually beneficial. The instructor suggests methods for constructing tours that support civic engagement and provides tools for assessing and planning civic engagement initiatives. The instructor is Steve Long, vice president of collections and education at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York.

Great Tours

Discover how to create great tours at historic sites in a one-day workshop for educators, interpreters, curators, and directors of museums, heritage areas, and history organizations. The workshop is based on the book *Great Tours!: Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites* (AltaMira Press, 2002). Each participant receives a copy of the book and numerous handouts. Large and small group interactive exercises are based on a case study of an historic site, providing participants with practical experience. Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- create a thematic tour for a historic site
- integrate material culture and historic biography into theme-based interpretation
- develop and maintain outstanding guides
- adapt and respond to various audience types

IV. Tourism Marketing

The extent to which Heritage Areas should be engaged in tourism promotion has been discussed since the inception of the program. The research phase clearly shows that Heritage Areas *are* including promotions in their activities to varying degrees ranging from websites to brochures to event production and promotion. The extent of these activities is often a factor of how engaged the area's DMOs are in promoting cultural, heritage and natural resources. The recommendations in this section seek to address some of the questions that have been raised about marketing Heritage Areas to tourists and to offer strategies that will not duplicate what is already being done but will build on and strengthen these efforts.

Recommendations focus in five areas:

- 1) Visibility of the destination as a Heritage Area
- 2) Marketing messages using primary themes as the foundation
- 3) Using technology to attract visitors
- 4) Partnerships to capitalize on travel by Maryland residents
- 5) A strong partnership with Maryland Office of Tourism

V. Visibility of the destination as a Heritage Area

Much consideration has been given to the question "Should a visitor know they are in a Heritage Area?" The two-part answer to this question is 1) yes and 2) the significance of this designation should be capitalized on in promotions. Reasons for this include:

- Receiving this designation means that the area has unique and significant cultural, heritage and natural resources which can appeal to visitors. As noted in the Maryland Byways visitor research, Maryland needs to differentiate the state from nearby states in the perception of visitors. Communicating the 11 special destinations the state offers is one way to do this.
- All of Maryland's Heritage Areas are already being promoted in various ways to visitors – either by the Heritage Area, the DMO or the Maryland Office of Tourism.
- National Heritage Areas have long embraced promotion as part of their activities. (See previous examples.)
- The term "Heritage Areas" can grow in public recognition just as terms like "Cultural Arts Districts," "Main Street" and "Scenic Byways." These designations represent programs but have also come to convey specific experiences to visitors in recent years.

While it is not imperative that a visitor knows he/she is in a Heritage Area, neither should the opportunities to convey this special designation be overlooked in promotions.

VI. Create marketing messages using interpretive themes as the foundation.

Interpretive themes are usually developed as an internal exercise, allowing local cultural heritage planners to identify what is special and important about an area and to use that information to make decisions about what to restore, interpret and present to visitors.

However, interpretive themes can also be used as the foundation for developing marketing messages. Examples are seen in two of Maryland's Heritage Areas that approached interpretation in different ways:

- Southern Maryland – This area has a wide variety of interpretive themes – agriculture/tobacco culture, war and conflict, religion, maritime, Colonial settlement, nature, Native American and African heritage. The area developed a marketing message – *Where Time and Tide Meet* – that reflects this collection of themes and invites the visitor to learn more.
- Heart of the Civil War – This area focuses on its important Civil War history which is reflected in six themes - Era of Change, Maryland as a Borderland, Maryland as a War Zone, Reunion and Reconciliation, Aftermath and Shadows of the Civil War. All of these themes are encompassed in the area's marketing message – *Below the Mason Dixon Line, Above the Potomac and at the Heart of the Civil War*.

Example

The Indianapolis Cultural Development Commission worked with the city's six cultural districts to develop unique identities and marketing messages for each district. The process included developing both factual and descriptive identities, then using this information to create marketing messages. From there, the commission created "Identity Toolkits" for each district which included these descriptions, "experience" and "locator" messages, logos and guidelines on how attractions and businesses could use their district's identity for promotions. <http://www.bsu.edu/capic/culturalindy/programs.html>

VII. Use technology to reach visitors and to enhance the visitor experience

According to Paul J. Sacco, executive director of the Massachusetts Office of Tourism, "Technology is becoming the third 'T' in travel and tourism." In recent years, tourism destinations have begun using technology for the purpose of attracting visitors through creatively designed websites that make travel planning easy and to enhance the visitor experience by offering itineraries and downloadable audiotours.

Maryland's Heritage Areas have developed websites, but the opportunity exists to build on these efforts to create greater visibility on the internet. It is recommended that MHAA and the 11 Heritage Areas work together to create a Maryland Heritage Areas website that focuses on *experiences* that visitors can enjoy. The website would have unique features including:

- Presenting the state through interpretive thematic messages – The identified primary and sub-themes can be used as the basis for developing unique visitor experiences.
- Developing new itineraries – Itineraries can grow out of the statewide and individual Heritage Area themes. These itineraries can encompass one Heritage Area or several. (As noted in the executive director’s survey, all directors saw opportunities to work with other Heritage Areas and were interested in pursuing this opportunity.)
- Encompass all travel activities offered through partner agencies and organizations – As previously outlined, there are many programs and promotions within Maryland – ranging from Byways to Main Street to Arts & Entertainment Districts to State Parks. The Maryland Heritage Area website can include information on all of these as well as links to agency/organization websites. Placing all of this information on one website will make it easy for visitors to find out about these activities and sites, and to see how they can fit into an itinerary.
- Include tours that visitors can download and take on their trip – The next step in enhancing both the website and the visitor experience is using technology to “make sites come alive.” Montgomery County Heritage Area recently created a downloadable Ipod tour that is available on their website. Increasingly, visitors will want this kind of experience to be available as they travel. A series of thematic tours can be created and introduced over a number of years. This periodic introduction of tours also creates a promotional opportunity as each new tour can be announced through the travel media.
- Invite tourists to add to the website – Create an area where travelers who have visited Maryland can post summaries of their visit, pictures and suggested itineraries.

Website Examples

1) www.experiencemississippiriver.com

This site was developed by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, founded in 1938, and Mississippi River Country USA, founded in 1986 to promote the 10 states along the river. The website contains a wealth of information but is easy to navigate. Sections and features include:

- 10 States – links to state travel websites in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana
- Along the River – including the Great River Road National Scenic Byway
- Beyond the River – additional places to visit in the 10 states
- River Facts
- Itineraries – an assortment of itineraries such as “An 18 Day Circle Tour of Wisconsin,” “Great Lakes and Mississippi River Circle Tour,” “West Tennessee Farms,” and “Illinois: Rolling on the River.”
- Geocaching – information on places to enjoy geocaching along the river

- Blogs – an area where travelers can submit their travel experiences and suggestions for other travelers
- Japanese website – link to the same website presented in Japanese

2) www.lyhr.org

This is the website of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region in Pennsylvania and invites visitors to “Explore America’s Heritage Along Dutch Country Roads.” The site’s use is guided by five themes: Bounty, Ingenuity, Freedom, Towns & Countryside and Natural Wonders. Site users may click on a theme which takes them to information on attractions related to that theme. Another way to use the site is to click on the regional map. From there, visitors can click on any of the “dotted” locations which will take them to information on things to see and do. Visitors can build their own itinerary by selecting “add to itinerary” for any activity or site that interests them. The site also includes:

- Current events
- Information on all visitor centers in the region including hours of operation
- Maps and guides
- Links to all of Pennsylvania’s 12 Heritage Areas

A new addition to the site is Group Tours. This program was developed by the Lancaster-York Heritage Region with assistance from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Visitors can select group tours by theme. Information includes attractions, meals and shopping. Contact information for a local receptive operator is given to help groups plan their trip.

3) www.soundaboutphilly.com

SoundAboutPhilly was launched by the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Corporation in September 2006. The program offers a series of free, mapped and customizable sound-seeing tours. Tours concentrate on lesser-known city experiences and combine interesting tales, fun facts and lively music to tell the area’s story. A variety of thematic tours are offered such as:

- “History Unplugged,” 300 years of non-textbook American history
- “Flavorhoods,” a look at dining in different ethnic neighborhoods
- “My Philly,” recommendations straight from the mouths of local Philadelphians
- Philly Noir: The African American experience in Philadelphia
- Once Upon A Nation, the undertold tales of the Historic District
- Vintage Philadelphia
- Keepin’ the Faith - A religious history tour.

In the first five months of the program (September 2006 – February 2007), the site had 64,849 visits from 43,414 visitors. There were 13,332 downloads.

VIII. Focus on Partnerships to Capitalize on Travel by Maryland Residents

The recommendation in this section is to create a statewide “Doors Open” program that showcases Heritage Areas to Maryland residents. Several factors support pursuing this opportunity:

- As noted by participants in the December 16, 2008 Strategic Plan Advisory Team meeting, partnerships are one of the greatest strengths and benefits of Heritage Areas.
- Heritage Area directors share information and support each other’s efforts through the Coalition of Heritage Areas and through informal networking. A survey of directors showed that directors see many thematic links among Heritage Areas that provide opportunities for promotion. All responding to the survey indicated an interest in exploring ways to work together for the benefit of all Heritage Areas.
- Maryland Office of Tourism research shows that 31% of tourists are Maryland residents traveling within their home state.
- The online visitor survey showed that 45% of travelers consult friends and family when making travel plans to Maryland. (Matched only by search engines at 46%.)
- A Doors Open event offers the opportunity to work with many other partners including Preservation Maryland, State Parks, A&E Districts, Main Street communities, Byways, etc.
- It is critical that Heritage Areas cultivate the support of residents in order to accomplish the goals of the Heritage Area Program, to obtain funding for programs and operations and to stimulate economic benefits through travel.
- Doors Open events are designed to generate awareness among residents of the cultural, heritage and natural resources in their community, region or state and to build support among residents for preservation and conservation of these resources.
- The Four Rivers Heritage Area has hosted a successful Doors Open event called “Maryland Day,” which can serve as a model for a statewide event.
- Although a growing number of communities and regions across the country are holding Doors Open events, Maryland has the opportunity to be the first to host a statewide Doors Open.

Doors Open is a concept which began in France in 1984 to encourage residents to have a greater appreciation of French heritage. The event offers free admission, behind-the-scenes tours and special programs during a specified time each year – all targeted to local residents. The concept has spread to 48 European countries which now plan an annual celebration of their heritage and culture (www.heritagedays.net). In 2000, Doors Open began in Toronto, expanding to include all of Ontario in 2002. Heritage Canada offers organizational assistance to communities planning events. (www.doorsopencanada.com).

Although not originally started as a heritage tourism activity, a Doors Open program has the benefit of encouraging residents to explore the area where they live. A Maryland Doors Open event would provide an opportunity to showcase the state’s Heritage Areas among residents, capitalize on the interest that residents have in traveling within their own state

and bring new opportunities for sponsorships and other financial support to Heritage Areas. The successful track record of many areas in creating Doors Open events provides resources to help in planning an event in Maryland.

Examples

1) www.doorsopencanada.com

Heritage Canada's website provides information about the concept of Doors Open as well as resource materials for communities or regions that are planning an event. The site also includes links to Doors Open events in Canada.

2) www.essexheritage.org or www.trailsandsails.org

The Essex National Heritage Area encompasses 34 communities in Essex County, Massachusetts. The Heritage Area management entity works with numerous partners to host a Doors Open event called "Trails & Sails" the last weekend in September to showcase the area's cultural, natural and historic resources. Over 200 free events are offered among 140 of Essex County's sites. Opportunities for outdoor adventures include biking, hiking, boating and kayaking. Tours of historic homes, museums and art galleries are also offered. The event program codes activities as outdoor activities, kid-oriented, free admission, self-guided or guided.

3) www.denvergov.org/doorsopendenver

The Denver Office of Cultural Affairs and Denver Architectural Foundation organize Doors Open for Denver, Colorado. The 2008 weekend event had the theme "150 Years of Denver Architecture" with more than 80 architecturally significant buildings open. The event offered the opportunity to tour buildings that are not usually open to the public.

Participants enjoyed two options:

- Urban Adventures – The website lists sites and tour information for 12 self-guided tours on a variety of themes such as "Bicycle Tour of Central Denver," "Art Spaces," "What Was This Building?," and "Churches and Chapels."
- Expert Tours – 36 tours guided by experts included options such as "History of Denver Walking Tour," "Under the Golden Dome: The Historic State Capitol," "Denver Botanic Gardens," and "Denver After Dark."

IX. Continue to build a strong partnership with the Maryland Office of Tourism

The Maryland Office of Tourism has been a strong partner for the Heritage Areas Program.

Ways to continue this partnership include:

- **Visitor Experience Team** – This team monitors and implements strategies to ensure a positive visitor experience. The Tourism Areas and Corridor (TAC) Sign Program works to determine where signs to the state’s attractions should be placed along main travel routes. One or more Heritage Area directors could become involved in this committee, representing all Heritage Areas, to participate in the determination of signage placement.
- **Promotional Focus** – The tourism office’s intention to focus promotions on three heritage-related themes (Bicentennial of the War of 1812, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad and Civil War Sesquicentennial) affords many opportunities for Heritage Area attractions. Heritage Areas should learn about and respond to any activities offered through the tourism office to showcase their area, working in partnership with local DMOs whenever possible.
- **Rebranding** – As the tourism office engages in a rebranding effort in the coming year, Heritage Areas should stay informed about the process and determine how the state’s new brand can connect to Heritage Area themes and messages.
- *Destination Maryland* and www.visitmaryland.org – The official Maryland travel guide and website have offered good exposure for Heritage Areas. This activity should be continued and updated as needed to include the Maryland Heritage Areas website link and information on new tours, attractions and events.

