

**HERITAGE TOURISM AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
FEDERAL HERITAGE TOURISM SUMMIT II
Washington, DC, May 9, 2003**

Executive Summary

In conjunction with its May 9, 2003, quarterly meeting, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) hosted a second summit meeting of Federal agencies to discuss cultural heritage tourism. As was apparent at the first summit meeting in November 2002, many Federal agencies are already supporting heritage tourism in various ways through their missions and programs. In light of the Administration's recent signing of Executive Order 13287, "*Preserve America*," and the launch of the *Preserve America* initiative, this meeting provided an opportunity to hear about current efforts in support of *Preserve America*'s goals and to begin discussing ways to improve the coordination and consistency of such efforts.

In addition to members, observers, and staff of the ACHP, the meeting included representatives from six cabinet departments and 19 sub-agencies, bureaus, and independent agencies. Federal attendees included representatives of the Departments of Agriculture (Natural Resources Conservation Service, Forest Service), Commerce (Economic Development Administration, International Trade Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), Defense (Installations and Environment, Legacy Program, Army, including the Center of Military History, Navy), Housing and Urban Development, Interior (Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, including the Recreation One-Stop Project, National Park Service, including the Heritage Areas and National Trails System Programs), and Transportation (Federal Highway Administration), as well as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, the Smithsonian Institution, and the United States Postal Service.

The program opened with remarks from John Nau, ACHP Chairman, followed by a video presentation of First Lady Laura Bush's announcement of *Preserve America* at the National Association of Counties on March 3, 2003. The session continued with presentations by Kit Kimball, Director, Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of the Interior; Sandy Baruah, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce; Douglas Baker, Deputy Assistant Secretary, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce; and John Fowler, Executive Director, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Following the presentations, the group divided into two facilitated discussions: one on issues in treating Federal resources as heritage tourism assets for land- and property-managing agencies, chaired by ACHP member Mayor Bob Young, and one on issues in assisting non-Federal parties with heritage tourism development for assistance agency and program representatives, chaired by ACHP member Susan Schanlaber. Agencies were asked to share their views on several issue areas and to consider appropriate follow-up actions.

Participants in the breakout groups indicated that it might be productive to establish an interagency working group on Federal involvement in heritage tourism. A survey of participants indicated that the highest priority areas to pursue are:

- Increasing coordination of Federal programs supporting heritage tourism,
- Exploring successes and barriers to success in Federal entrepreneurship,
- Ensuring economic sustainability for Federally supported heritage tourism initiatives,
- Establishing measures for success,
- Working with the tourism industry,
- Increasing funding for heritage tourism, and
- Ensuring an adequate educational component in Federal heritage tourism efforts.

Also considered by the group were such areas as: necessary interaction with States, tribes, local governments, and the business community; criteria for evaluating best practices; needed research on a wide range of topics; and improving public information as well as public support through various means.

It was emphasized that such a working group should produce concrete products and not duplicate the efforts of other related groups.

Key Points from Federal Heritage Tourism Summit II

- The Administration's *Preserve America* Initiative affirms the public value of heritage tourism to the Nation.
- Policymakers and decisionmakers in Federal agencies need to understand and make the case that support for heritage tourism complements their agency mission, and find ways to integrate it into their programs.
- Connections to both economic development potential and educational value and opportunity need to be maintained and stressed in program and policy development on heritage tourism.
- Many Federal agencies are already engaged in some aspect of heritage tourism development and support. Many opportunities exist to enhance agency efforts through coordination with other Federal entities or with other governmental or private activities.
- There is an important linkage between appropriate management of Federal heritage assets and regional and local economic development potential.
- Partnerships among agencies and State, local, tribal, and private sector entities lead to the most successful heritage tourism efforts and leverage substantial additional financial and technical support.
- Agencies should be encouraged to identify policy and practical obstacles to successful heritage tourism partnerships. Partnership failures as well as successes should be shared and principles for successful partnerships clarified and articulated.
- Creative approaches and entrepreneurial strategies can help overcome perceived barriers.

- Enhanced public access must be balanced with resource preservation, public safety, and security concerns.
- Successful, sustainable business planning models and practices need to be developed and shared.
- Open dialogue, information and experience sharing, and dissemination of success stories, useful models, and best practices among Federal agencies should be encouraged and continued.
- There is a clear need for a central information resource for the public on available Federal funding and technical assistance, as well as resource management policy as it relates to heritage tourism.
- The ACHP is well situated to assist in interagency and intergovernmental coordination efforts in support of heritage tourism policies and programs as a convener, facilitator, and clearinghouse promoter.
- Training, facilitated workshops, “toolkits” and other awareness/outreach strategies for sharing information on the benefits and methodology of successful heritage tourism need to be developed and supported.
- Large-scale multi-agency, multi-State, and/or multi-community ventures like the Lewis and Clark bicentennial initiative need to be evaluated to learn what works and what does not when it comes to heritage tourism program development and sustainability.
- Economic and other benefits of heritage tourism must be documented by research. Agencies must put in place means to track their investments and measure their results.

Draft Program Proceedings

Opening Session

John L. Nau, III, Chairman, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, welcomed ACHP members and Federal agency guests, encouraging them to participate in both the opening session and breakout discussion groups to follow. He began by noting that the recent announcement of the *Preserve America* initiative and issuance of Executive Order 13287, “*Preserve America*,” both supported and encouraged a greater Federal presence in the field of heritage tourism.

Chairman Nau reviewed progress to date, including the first Federal Heritage Tourism Summit in November 2002, and the interagency meeting in April on the implementation of the Executive order. He then recapped what he saw as the most salient points of consensus emerging from the previous summit. They are:

The case for heritage tourism and its value to the Nation should be made and shared among policymakers and decisionmakers. Connections to its economic, educational, and other community benefits are particularly important.

Federal heritage holdings need to be viewed as assets, and their management needs to include consideration of their potential contribution to regional and local heritage tourism initiatives through partnerships.

Many Federal agencies are engaged in some aspect of heritage tourism development and support, but often these efforts are not well coordinated with those of other Federal entities or with other governmental or private activities.

Successful business-based approaches to asset management, and best practices for heritage tourism, need to be developed, collected, and shared.

Federal agencies need to reach out to non-Federal parties, identify opportunities to work together, and to share successful strategies for working with States, tribes, local communities, and the private sector.

Chairman Nau reviewed the agenda for the afternoon and expressed the hope that the breakout discussion groups would begin to address how to accomplish these goals.

He then introduced a video presentation with excerpts from the First Lady's announcement of the "*Preserve America*" initiative. The Chairman then introduced a panel consisting of representatives of the Departments of Commerce and Interior, partners with ACHP in our "*Preserve America*" efforts.

Sandy Baruah, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development for Program Operations, discussed heritage tourism and "sound, market-based economic development." Sixty-three million dollars in Economic Development Administration grants have been given to projects involving historic preservation and/or heritage tourism over the last 10 years. These 84 investments have leveraged approximately \$225 million in private sector investment, creating or saving over 17,000 jobs in the U.S. economy, an average of 205 jobs per EDA investment in heritage tourism. Each regional office has been directed to continue to support and foster public-private partnerships that will increase heritage tourism and economic development.

Kit Kimball, Director of External and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Department of the Interior, emphasized the importance of heritage tourism in revitalizing rural communities, encouraging a focus on the "preservation, protection, and ongoing sustenance of Rural America, especially in the West." She stressed the importance within DOI of fostering a citizen stewardship ethic. She also described the "Take Pride in America" volunteer program. "Take Pride in America" is a national campaign to encourage Federal, state, and local public and private partnerships and volunteer service to protect public parks, recreation areas, and cultural resources. Its primary focus will be to encourage citizen stewards to dedicate time and service to help protect and restore resources and facilities in their area.

Douglas Baker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Service Industries, Tourism, and Finance within the International Trade Administration noted that the Office of Travel and Tourism serves as a "National Travel Office." They track international travel to the U.S. and design and implement promotional and marketing campaigns to get visitors to return to the U.S. They are spending \$50 million and targeting four to six countries. About 20 percent of the funding will go State and local governments to promote their localities, including key intergovernmental organizations like the Western States Tourism Policy Council.

Chairman Nau then introduced ACHP Executive Director John Fowler, who discussed the relationship between Executive Order 13287 and Heritage Tourism.

Breakout Sessions—Facilitated Discussions

Agency representatives and ACHP members divided into two breakout groups, one for land and property managing agencies and one for assistance agencies and programs, to share information and discuss a series of questions.

Federal Land and Property Managers

Twelve land- and property-managing Federal agency representatives, from eight agencies, met with ACHP members and staff to discuss “Issues in Treating Federal Resources as Heritage Tourism Assets.”

Agencies face challenges in encouraging heritage tourism, including integrating the goals of *Preserve America* with their missions, overcoming institutional barriers to creating partnerships, balancing resource protection with the economic and educational benefits of increased tourism, and balancing public access with security concerns.

Some agencies shared examples that illustrated how activities that support heritage tourism also can also advance other agency missions. Planning and management documents can be revised to integrate heritage tourism with other priorities. BLM’s new National Recreation Priorities will include a major piece on tourism/heritage tourism. Improving coordination and communication within agencies is also a priority.

Many agencies stated that they were already “doing heritage tourism,” though it may not be so identified. Other agencies felt that existing programs could become more supportive of heritage tourism. For example, 35 states participate in the Coastal Zone Management grant program, which has tremendous potential for providing incentives and building heritage tourism partnerships.

Multi-agency partnerships will afford more funding and creativity. Federal, State, tribal, and local governments and the private sector should be working together to provide a seamless visitor experience. Regional approaches make sense, and artificial barriers should be broken down. Congressional support should be cultivated.

The group discussed encouraging visitation to the full range of assets, diverting some tourists from overtaxed popular destinations. Many heritage areas are underused and have great economic/recreational potential. Managers must package enough discrete sites, through means such as itineraries and thematic interpretation and promotion, to encourage destination driving. Travelers seeking day trips are seen as a growing market.

A close working relationship with the local community is essential. The community may or may not want the economic stimulus of increased tourism. Issues include trash, traffic, vandalism, theft, and invasion of privacy. Citizens and local communities need a central address for getting information from the various Federal agencies involved. Agencies need to share relevant information with each other.

Some agencies have provided travel and tourism workshops and project seed money to local communities. Some agencies facilitate working groups composed of public and private sector groups working on joint projects.

Lessons learned in other places can be studied and applied. It was suggested that we look at Parks Canada and study their tourism partnerships. Quality control is an essential element when sharing models and “best practices.”

The need for solid business planning and an entrepreneurial approach was stressed. For example, unused facilities in Federal agency ownership can be adaptively reused, outleased, sold, rented as accommodations, and for other purposes that complement heritage tourism. In the competition for agency resources, efforts that increase management effectiveness and efficiency get higher priority. It is also important to insure that marketing doesn’t get ahead of operational capacity.

Local folks can use mentoring to create business models that work. The Small Business Administration could develop training and package it for rural business mentoring. NACO is also interested in this approach. Perhaps a joint Federal institute could be set up to train locals to manage historic resources and visitors. Agency professionals also need training on how to do this work. Managers could use mentoring from those with more experience.

Agencies with security concerns can provide “virtual access” to their historic resources via the web. Defense and high technology facilities in particular must limit public access and explore other ways to share the many historic resources they manage.

Some participants expressed a willingness to form a working group if it was time-limited and focused on producing specific products and tools. Caution was raised about duplication of other, similar efforts, and about the extent of agency commitments. The general sense was that a smaller working group could productively advance the mutual goals of the agencies participating.

Federal Assistance Agencies

Fifteen Federal assistance agency and program representatives, from twelve agencies, met with ACHP members and staff to discuss “Issues in Assisting Non-Federal Parties with Heritage Tourism Development.” The participants shared what their agencies were doing related to heritage tourism. Examples included provision of technical assistance, training, grants, as well as funding research and education efforts.

Some assistance agencies have partnered with property managing agencies in related grant-making programs. For example, NEA has given grants in partnership with the Forest Service to preserve local arts while developing alternative income sources to logging and mining. Many assistance agencies have participated in multi-agency efforts like the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial initiative. The NEA has also supported the National Trust’s “Share Your Heritage” workshops.

Several agencies, including IMLS, EDA, and HUD, stated that their existing grant programs can benefit heritage tourism efforts. FHWA has many related programs, including Transportation Enhancements, Historic Covered Bridges, and Scenic Byways Programs.

An economic impact study on the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee border was done eight years ago but no such research has been done recently. The group felt that additional research would be very valuable. There is currently no tracking that measures the effectiveness of grant programs in this area, and funds expended are not categorized in a useful way for such measurement. Research is needed to justify investment by demonstrating economic and other benefits.

A post-mortem evaluation of the Lewis & Clark initiative and similar programs would also provide important information for future efforts. The group noted that, despite the broad coalition involved, limited financial investment kept the initiative from reaching its full potential.

Those around the table noted that participation in coalitions such as Partners in Tourism helped get cultural and heritage tourism into the language of the tourism industry. *Preserve America* will do the reverse by legitimizing tourism as a priority in Federal agencies. Several agency representatives emphasized that Administration initiatives are often short-lived, unless their goals are internalized, seen as complementing the agency mission, and integrated into agency programs. It was suggested that a meeting between the First Lady and agency representatives would provide an incentive and help convince them of the Administration’s commitment to this effort.

Agencies with a focus on education see it as their mission to educate local residents as well as travelers about historic resources, and are seeking ways to integrate cultural/heritage tourism with their existing programs.

This group also noted that there are sometimes institutional barriers to Federal entities working together and to using entrepreneurial approaches. Agencies may need added authorities.

A clearinghouse for information sharing would also be desirable. The majority of the participants felt that an interagency working group that could centralize information on resources and make it readily available, collect and share “best practices,” and create training products and other tools, would be useful. Some participants felt it was essential to form such a working group in order to make progress toward our goals.

The group noted the need to bring in State, tribal, and local governments as partners, but was concerned that in a climate of severe budget shortfalls, more pressing human needs would minimize resources to be devoted to historic preservation and heritage tourism. There was a strong sentiment that any efforts undertaken should be realistically funded, and not “tin-cupped.”

Summary and Conclusions

At the end of the meeting, the full group reconvened. There was a brief report and wrap-up discussion from both breakout sessions for the benefit of all participants, including a summary of major points of consensus and possible next steps. The ACHP will explore further action, including:

- Possible establishment of a Federal working group on heritage tourism;
- Scheduling of a conference on heritage tourism that would include Federal as well as non-Federal participants; and
- Means for better information-sharing on experiences, model approaches, and best practices.