

National Heritage Area FAQs

The Big Sky Country National Heritage Area (BSCNHA), as currently proposed for Cascade and Chouteau counties, would create a designation similar to a tourism region. Like other National Heritage Areas (NHA) around the country, this NHA will stimulate economic growth and promote the nationally significant historical, cultural, and natural resources in our area. It will not interfere in any way with private land holdings nor will it have any regulatory authority. In short, there are really no potential negative impacts of receiving federal designation for an NHA.

- NHAs are specific geographic regions designated by Congress where significant historical events occurred and/or extraordinary places exist that represent the Nation's heritage.
- NHAs were created by President Ronald Reagan in 1984 to save taxpayer funding and to empower local control over the interpretation and care of local historic sites.
- There are 55 designated NHAs in the United States.
- NHAs receive bipartisan support throughout the United States.
- NHAs act as coordinating entities to assist local communities with projects and economic development within the established boundary.
- NHAs do not impact or affect any private property rights, state, county, or local regulations or ordinances.
- An NHA does not possess condemnation or eminent domain powers.
- NHAs have no regulatory authority. NHA coordinating entities are non-elected boards with no jurisdictional authority to create or change federal, state, tribal, or local regulations.
- NHAs must be re-certified by Congress every ten years. NHAs must demonstrate they have responsibly matched and expended federal appropriations and annually submitted the required reporting documents to the National Park Service.
- NHAs are not National Parks or Monuments. Funding for NHAs is allocated from a separate line item than National Parks.
- Funding for NHAs is approved by the National Park Service. On average, NHAs generate \$5 of local and private investment for every \$1 of federal funds appropriated, an excellent return on investment.
- Congress decides on the final boundary for the NHA. As required, the Big Sky Country NHA has proposed a project area based on the places, stories, and the supporting resources that local citizens identified as important to our national heritage.
- National Heritage Areas are proven positive economic drivers for private businesses, communities, and regions that choose to participate.

Reference Sources

- Big Sky Country National Heritage Area, Inc. website, www.bigskycountrynha.org
- The Alliance of National Heritage Areas website, www.nationalheritageareas.us
- National Park Service websites, www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas and https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/economic_impact_studies.htm
- Heritage Areas: Background, Proposals and Current Issues by the Congressional Research Service, August 20, 2020. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL33462.pdf>
- *From Skepticism to Support: National Heritage Areas in the West* by Eleanor Mahoney, NPS Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow, an article published in the Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol. 88, NO. 2, 2020, <https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.jstor.org%2Fstable%2F10.5406%2Futahhistquar.88.2.0129&data=02%7C01%7C%7Ca2bb8e4739c547fd1e4a08d84fb29d57%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637346976709537809&data=7eQT9zSNcuEXm%2FSYRtQcVXcWluq7tB%2F78sSKOtqhk2Q%3D&reserved=0>
- *From Parks to Partnerships National Heritage Areas and the Path to Collaborative Participation in the National Park Service's First 100 Years* by Alan W. Barton, an article published in Natural Resources Journal, Volume 56, Issue 1, Winter 2016, <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1007&context=nri>
- Fort Benton River Press, *Guest Opinion: Cascade & Chouteau counties are national treasures*, by Carroll Van West, Director of the Tennessee Civil War NHA, published September 23, 2020
- Testimony to the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives, National Heritage Area Act of 2019 (H.R. 1049) presented by Sara Capen, Chairwoman of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and Executive Director of the Niagara Falls NHA, April 30, 2019, Appendix B includes an article titled: *Dispelling Myths and Falsehoods on the Issue of Private Property Rights and National Heritage Areas* <https://naturalresources.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Capen,%20Sara%20-%20Written%20Testimony.pdf>