

NORTHERN DELAWARE HERITAGE COALITION MEETING

February 9, 2007 2-4 p.m.

New Castle County Government Center
87 Reads Way
New Castle, DE

Participants:

Dr. David Ames, University of Delaware – Center for Historic Architecture and Design
Julie Bell, National Park Service – Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance
Bobbi Britton, East Coast Greenway Delaware / Delaware Greenways
David Hunt, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation
Derrick Lightfoot, City of Wilmington Planning Department
Glenn Pusey, Pencader Heritage Association
Brett Saddler, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation
Peter Shields, Delaware Greenways / Shipley Road Association / Friends of Rockwood & Bellevue
Jim Smith, New Castle County Land Use Department
Nancy Willing, Friends of Historic Glasgow

I. Meeting Purpose (Bobbi Britton reporting)

Last Northern Delaware Heritage Coalition meeting was in August of 2006!

- 1) Need to review status of demo project and move it forward
 - Review results of reconnaissance surveys
 - Discuss what needs to happen to complete the project
 - Review options, decide on path forward and schedule meetings
- 2) Review and confirm FY07 project workplan & schedule of activities

II. FY07 Project Workplan (Julie Bell reporting)

During September, 2006 project selection meetings, National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program approved application for technical assistance to the Northern Delaware Heritage Trail Network. Staff time of 2 1/2 months has been allocated so that Julie Bell can continue her assistance with the following old and new primary tasks:

- 1) Wrap up assistance to demo project in March
- 2) Initiate Phase I planning for the Northern Delaware Heritage Trail Network in 2 parts:
 - conceptual planning for trail & transit connections and infrastructure development
 - defining amenities & visitor experience (near-term = w/in 10 years)

Ms. Bell noted that, while she will continue to provide some limited assistance to the demo project the next two months, after March she will return to NPS mission-focused work in trail and greenway planning and development. She expects the Coalition to take the lead in completing the demo project.

In cooperation with Wilmapco, New Castle County Land Use Department, East Coast Greenway Delaware, and University of Delaware, a draft workplan was developed for FY07 (October 1, 2006 to October 1, 2007) and extended into FY08 (October 1, 2007 to October 1, 2008). Solely the FY07 portion of the workplan was considered and approved in concept at today's meeting. The FY08 portion is to provide context and demonstrate the goals the Coalition will strive to reach in the future.

Ms. Bell distributed the revised FY07/08 workplan, a schedule of the primary tasks for 2007, and a comments sheet that participants could use to specify their concerns or suggestions regarding the tasks, roles and schedule for 2007. The comments sheet also allowed participants to write down whether or not they felt the timing was right for creating a 501c3 for the Coalition.

Ms. Bell outlined the FY07 project objectives and the major tasks as follows (see attached workplan for details):

April/May, 2007 – Stakeholder Workshops Part I (New Castle Co, Wilmapco, ECG DE take the lead)

1. Evaluate basic non-auto infrastructure – Trail access to heritage resources from the ECG spine route using the WILMAPCO Pathway Plan as basis for analysis, adding information from DNREC and New Castle County for recreational trails/greenways. Evaluate existing transit connections to heritage areas. Goal: transit connections from Wilmington to each heritage area.
2. Consider basic directional signage
3. Map heritage resource connections and mark where significant gaps occur
4. Review current plan and prioritize projects; add any new projects significant to heritage resource connections
5. Start to build vision for a heritage trail network, Phase I, that are feasible to accomplish in the near-term (within 10 years)
6. *Volunteer coordinators* needed for each heritage area, to get people to the meeting, set up location/meeting space, handle logistics, work w/ workshop coordinators. *Potential locations* – Ashland Nature Center (Red Clay), Wilmapco for White Clay/Pencader groups.

Late May, 2007 – Synthesis Workshop & Open House (WILMAPCO takes the lead)

1. 2 parts: General meeting of Coalition to:
 - a. Share results of previous four workshops
 - b. Present heritage resource access map
 - c. List identified priority projects to be accomplished within 10 years - Includes recommendations for directional signage
 - d. Policy recommendations – Evaluate potential for incorporating into NCC Comp Plan
 - e. Determine additional steps – Identification of major gaps in heritage trail system or prioritizing from a heritage perspective
 - f. Share information for June Congressional outreach
2. [Author's addition] Public open house to share with a general audience information about the project and get input on the basic trail / transit infrastructure needs and opportunities [other option is make each of four heritage workshops open to public]

June, 2007 - Outreach to Congressional Delegates (organized by New Castle County, ECG DE & DE delegates)

1. Purpose is to share information on all the trail and heritage related projects going on in northern Delaware.
2. Each heritage area would display their area, and projects in their area receiving NPS RTCA assistance.
3. Congressional update on the NPS managed DE National Coastal Heritage Resource Study
4. Other non-NPS assisted projects such as C& D Canal
5. NPS to be invited to answer questions about NPS role on the projects

June/July, 2007 – Project Re-evaluation

1. Evaluate progress in FY07 and identify mid-course corrections, revisit workplan
2. Determine additional grants & assistance that may be needed
3. Application for NPS RTCA technical assistance for FY08

September/October/November, 2007 – Stakeholder Workshops Part II (New Castle Co, Wilmapco, ECG DE take the lead)

*Note: Ms. Bell will be away for approximately first two weeks in September and has project selection meetings mid-September.

1. Define the components of a complete Heritage Trail Network
2. Evaluate heritage trail network user experience & facilities, amenities; look at potential hubs, gateways, trailheads, orientation centers
3. Consider potential upgrades to sites such as transit access, interpretive information, signage
4. What do we have now or can assume in short timeframe? What is needed right now to have a consistent package?
5. Should economic impacts of a heritage trail network be assessed? Evaluate feasibility of doing an economic impacts assessment of the completed heritage trail network – budget & components.

Key decision: Coalition members present at the meeting confirmed their agreement with the general approach represented in the FY07 workplan. Bobbi Britton noted that details regarding the preparation/inputs for the stakeholder workshops, the agenda, and the outcomes will be addressed during the coming weeks.

Group discussion & comments sheets notes:

- The Congressional outreach meeting will raise the stature of New Castle County through emphasis on the many heritage resources in the county
- Bring in the TMA, Delaware as a partner, to help support and market transit connections to the heritage sites
- DART and DELDOT should be included as Coalition partners; it was noted that they will be participating through WILMAPCO to evaluate the heritage network connections
- The Comprehensive Plan Update for New Castle County should consider SRAs as heritage resources
- As part of fundraising, the Coalition must consider the economic value of the project and express it in writing. The Coalition must understand and explain the economic benefits.
- Heritage tourism is not considered a priority for the State of Delaware, and the economic development community does not appear to consider heritage tourism as having much economic value.
- Who is the economic development community?
 - Committee of 100
 - Municipal governments
 - County governments
 - DEDO
 - DRBA – may provide marketing expertise to project and should be invited to participate
 - Convention & Visitors Bureaus
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Large corporations
- An independent assessment of economic impacts would have more credibility than a volunteer group asserting the heritage trail network has economic benefits. Meeting participants tentatively agreed that an economic impacts evaluation is necessary, unless the Coalition finds strong reasons to the contrary. It is generally a part of planning projects (e.g., environmental impact assessment), helping to weigh the investments in infrastructure with the public benefit.
- Cuyahoga Valley and the economic value of the national park was mentioned – credibility, standing

III. Considering a NHDC Non-Profit (Bobbi Britton facilitating)

Meeting participants considered whether or not it was time for the Coalition to form a non-profit.

Advantages:

- Clearly defined roles with one contact person who can field information requests
- Credibility and standing when fundraising

Issues:

- Lag time for IRS approval can be significant
- \$1,000 may be needed for legal work

Options:

- 1) Coalition is formalized through agreement
- 2) Separate 501c3 is formed – parent board representation very important; the Delaware Historical Society was suggested as a partner; it was noted that Bobbi and Julie did make a presentation to Joan Hoge at the DHS.
- 3) Existing organization becomes 501c3 representing Coalition

IV. Completing the Demo Project (Bobbi Britton reporting/facilitating)

1. Issues and Challenges

- *Driving the tours:* Reconnaissance surveys in fall of 2006 showed how difficult it would be for the visitor to find his/her way through the heritage areas. In addition, some assets are not accessible, if the tourist needs to pull over. Driving directions are needed for the auto loop tours, possibly with heritage assets folded into the directions. Assets that are to be included on the map should be re-examined.
- *Editing the copy:* Talisman will not complete the demo design until the text is complete and finalized. Currently, there is too much copy for each of the tours and for the overall context to fit into the copy blocks allocated within the design. Wilmington Renaissance Corporation will do copywriting for us but the text needs to be good format and close to the size that is needed.
- *Contacting private sites:* Some of the heritage assets are privately owned and have not been contacted for approval to be included on the demo map.
- *Availability of technical assistance:* Bobbi Britton and Julie Bell will not be available to help the heritage groups complete the demo project after March of 2006. Starting in April of 2006, they must concentrate on other commitments within the FY07 workplan.
- *Funding:* \$15,250 in total is in hand for design and production of the demo project, of which \$5,250 is being held by Wilmington Renaissance Corporation. The remainder of the funding has been obligated. There is currently no funding for printing the 10,000 copies. Approximately \$5,000 is needed for printing.
- *Public input:* The question was raised regarding the NPS requirements for public input on the demo project. Ms. Bell replied that the NPS was solely providing technical assistance to a partnership project that was locally led, and that a formal National Environmental Policy Act process was therefore not required for the project. She added that NPS encouraged the broadest possible public input on NPS-assisted projects, and that the public input was tailored to the needs of each individual project. It was noted that the public process refers to the FY 2007 work plan and is suggested as a means of insuring that the work might be able to be added to the WILMAPCO's transportation plan (part of the NCC Comprehensive Plan).

2. Funding Options

- A review of our demo project draft and our sponsor fees indicated that funding at an advertising level will be dependent on a larger run of maps (more like 20,000) and distribution plan. Each heritage group would be asked for a distribution plan. The Red Clay area alone hosts about 5,000 students each year. Convention and Visitors Bureau would also distribute. City Life magazine has a circulation of 20,000 and will consider printing the Wilmington portion of the demo project in the magazine. There may be other similar opportunities. A distribution of 20,000 maps and reprints of individual sections all carrying the sponsor name could be packaged into an attractive proposal for corporate advertisers. We will probably need professional help with this.
- Initial options discussed:
 - i. Each of heritage areas would find \$1,000 to obtain the \$5,000 needed to print 10,000 copies and leave it at that
 - ii. Secure services of marketing person to develop a promotion and distribution plan, and secure \$50,000 for demo printing, web site development
- Either option should include 501c3 as a beneficiary, an entity with staying power that could complete the demo map. If there is no 501c3, potential donors may believe that “they’ve already given to the organization” asking for the contribution.
- A State planning grant may be available. Jim Smith will check on this potential source of funding.

Key decisions:

- 1) Complete demo map in draft form, with all elements included, to show Coalition’s commitment to and support for project.
- 2) Production: Dave Hunt will find out what it costs to get initial 100 copies made 2-sided, from pdf.
- 3) Philips-Saddler will ask their marketing person what it would cost to develop a minimalist marketing plan, including 2 pages to give to potential corporate funders with a statement of purpose and cover letter. Distribution list consisting of project partners will be included.
- 4) Each heritage area will raise \$500 - \$1,000, to cover the cost of the marketing plan, printing draft demo copies, and registering a 501c3. The total cost is estimated at about \$3,000.
- 5) Working group will research the feasibility of creating a separate non-profit as opposed to expanding the mission of an existing non-profit.

V. Underground Railroad Historic Highway Nomination (Dr. David Ames reporting)

University of Delaware is managing a study for the Underground Railroad Historic Highway, working with the states of Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania. In Delaware, this historic highway follows Route 10 in part, entering Delaware at Sandtown (Kent County).

There are four distinct sections to the Underground RR History Highway:

- 1) The “gauntlet” in Camden, MD area & Star Hill re-provisioning. Two choices could be made at this point historically by the runaway slave: 1) continue north to Middletown/Townsend area on road or 2) continue east to Delaware River
- 2) Camden, MD to Odessa, DE
- 3) Odessa to Wilmington, an on-road route
- 4) Wilmington to Kennett Pike in PA. PA side includes a few meetinghouses that hid runaway slaves. Mendenhall family (Mendenhall Inn) may be a good connection, due to the intermarriage with the Garretts.

A National Park Service grant to the City of Wilmington, originally rescinded, has been re-proffered and will extend to September of 2007. The University of Delaware is using its resources as a match to the grant. Kate Larson is responsible for the historic context of the Underground Railroad in Delaware. Dr. Ames noted that he is representing the Underground Railroad project as a member of the Northern Delaware Heritage Coalition.

VI. Next Steps

Complete demo copy: Half-day workshops will be held with each of the four heritage areas representing the loop tours in February and early March. These workshops will be specifically to revise and complete the descriptions for the auto loop tours. Each coordinator identified for a heritage area will be responsible for bringing at least two other people to the workshop. A fresh pair of eyes that does not know the project would be preferable. Good writers and those who know the area's history are also ideal. Teachers may be a possibility. Two dates have been selected so far:

- Friday, February 16, 2007 – 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – White Clay/Newark workshop (Nancy Willing, coordinator). Location to be determined.
- Friday, February 23, 2007 – 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Brandywine / Philadelphia Pike (Brett Saddler, coordinator). Location to be determined.

Workshops for the Red Clay and Pencader groups could be held in the afternoon on the days indicated above, or on different days, according to the convenience of the group. Bobbi Britton will be available to assist the groups. Julie Bell may be available for one or more workshops.

Agenda and materials list will be forthcoming.