

Calumet Heritage Area Management Plan Executive Summary



Calumet Harbor Bridge. Hannah Anderson Graver.

Partners across the Calumet region have joined forces in an effort to establish a Calumet Heritage Area, to ensure that the region's unparalleled environmental and cultural heritage resources are stewarded and preserved for the benefit of current residents and generations to come. The Calumet region contains globally rare natural areas, the nation's premier heavy industrial district, and distinctive communities which combine to tell a unique American story. This *Management Plan* brings together actions that build on present efforts to craft visions and goals for the future of the region. The *Plan* is a key feature of the Calumet Heritage Area effort, led by the Calumet Heritage Partnership and the Calumet Collaborative. The Field Museum has played a significant role in the process which has involved hundreds of residents and stakeholders for nearly a decade. The CHA is now seeking designation as a *National Heritage Area*.

About National Heritage Areas

National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress to recognize nationally important lived-in places where natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources intersect. NHAs use grass-roots, community-driven approaches to heritage conservation, community revitalization, and economic development. Benefits of NHAs include sustainable economic development; healthy environment and people; improved quality of life; increased educational and stewardship activities; community engagement and pride; and national prominence for a nationally significant landscape. One of the first steps in achieving National Heritage Area designation is completing a feasibility study. In 2018, the *Calumet National Heritage Area Feasibility Study* was approved by the National Park Service, confirming the region’s importance in telling a nationally important story and demonstrating the real potential of a Calumet National Heritage Area.

About the Calumet Heritage Area Management Plan

Using the *Calumet National Heritage Area Feasibility Study* as a foundation, the CHA Joint Coordinating Committee worked with regional stakeholders to create this document, modeled on other NHA management plans. When Congress designates an NHA, the legislation usually carries a mandate to create a management plan. Rather than wait for a Congress-mandated management plan, CHA partners have moved forward to create one. Management plans include long-range policies, goals, strategies, and actions; an implementation plan with short, mid- and long-range actions and performance goals; a business plan for the heritage area coordinating entity; and an interpretive plan.

The *CHA Management Plan* finalizes the overall vision and goals, sets the course for projects that are strategic, coordinated, and impactful, and clarifies roles, responsibilities, systems, and resources needed to make the Heritage Area a success. It includes:

- Three core **regional themes**
- Four **overarching goals**
- One **innovative collaborative management structure** guided by a Joint Coordinating Committee, activated by partner organizations and volunteers, and offering operational flexibility and connectivity between large institutions and smaller organizations
- 72 specific **priority actions and steps**
- Seven topic areas of the priority actions: *Environment and Stewardship, Cultural Heritage and Historic Preservation, Recreation, Arts, Education, Regional Economic Development and Heritage Tourism, and Wayfinding and Branding*

The CHA Management Plan has particular focus on:

- Collaborating for regional impact.
- Heritage development.
- Connecting residents and visitors more strongly with the region’s extraordinary natural and cultural resources.



Big Marsh. Sarah Coulter.

The CHA is poised to undertake many of these priority actions in the immediate future. Examples include developing exhibits to tell the story of the Calumet’s history as part of the environmental justice movement; creating a network of the public arts and artists in the region; working with educators to include environmental stewardship in curricula, and producing a Calumet Most Endangered List to draw attention to particular sites, buildings, and landscapes. In the future, at the time of national designation, this *Plan* can be updated to account for new circumstances and mandates.

All of this information is laid out in the five chapters of the Management Plan:

Chapter 1: Concept and Approach defines a Heritage Area; explains why this is an important effort for the Calumet region; lays out the vision and mission; introduces the *Management Plan*.

Chapter 2: The Calumet Region and the Management Planning Process provides an overview of the Calumet region and the Management Planning process so far, including the development of the *Feasibility Study*, the formation of planning groups, and the beginning of the Heritage Area’s operation.

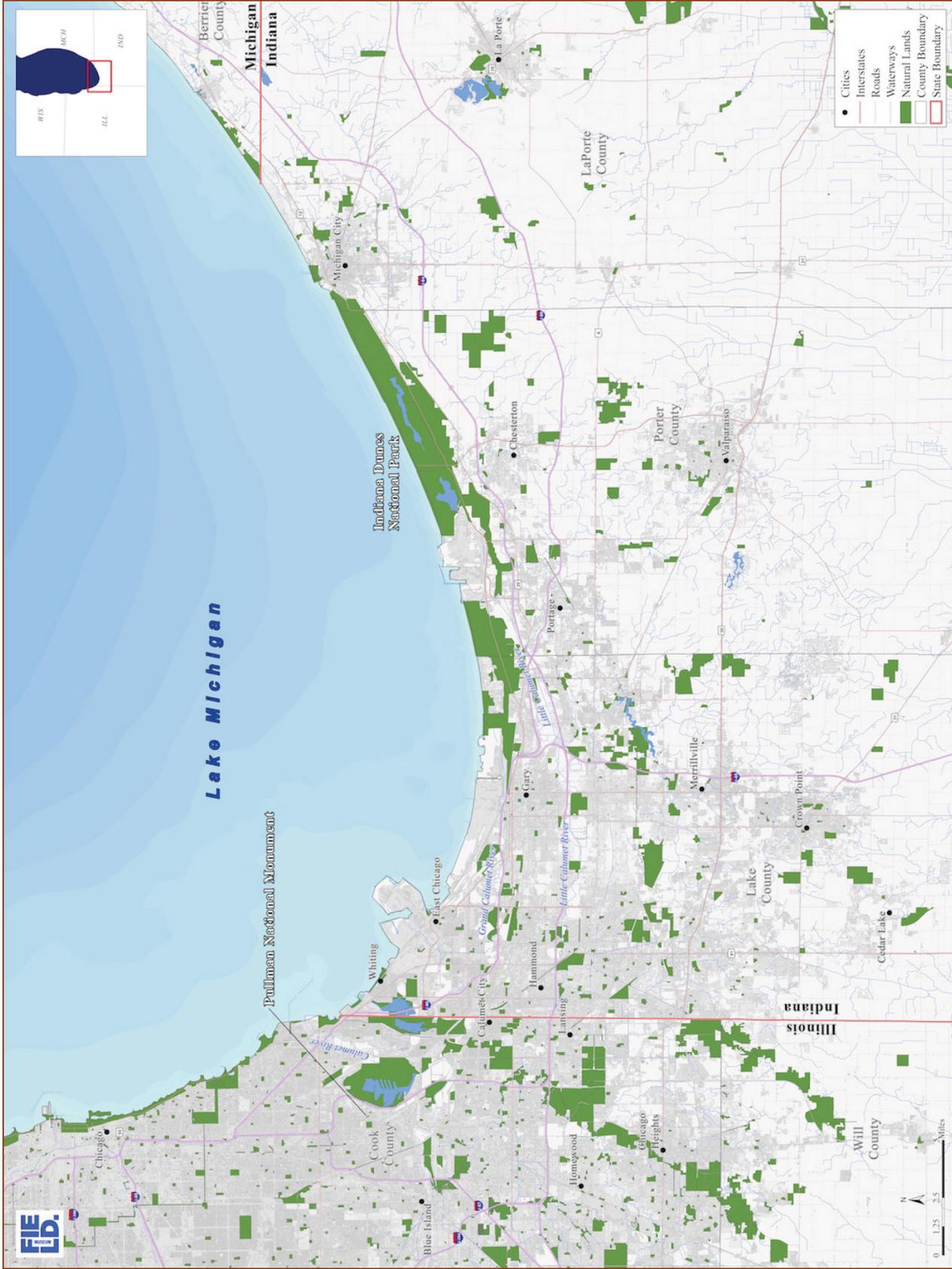
Chapter 3: Interpretive Plan shares interpretive themes, methods and sites of interpretation to tell the story of the Heritage Area.

Chapter 4: Action Goals and Objectives lays out the goals and subgoals to achieve the mission and vision of the Calumet Heritage and provides in-depth detail on goals that activate the interpretation plan, conduct on-the-ground improvements to natural areas and cultural resources, and leverage the Heritage Area’s impact on the regional economy.

Chapter 5: Business and Implementation Plan provides a description of the management structure of the Calumet Heritage Area, including in-depth detail on how the goal of creating a financially and administratively sustainable Heritage Area entity will be met.



Portage Lakefront. Jessica Jaffe.



Map of the Calumet region. Field Museum.