

Chapter 2: The Calumet Region and the Management Planning Process



Steelworkers Park. Matthew Kaplan.

INTRODUCTION

The Calumet region, located at the crossroads of the continent at the southern end of Lake Michigan, is crucially important to the economy, ecology, and society of the United States. The region's industry and commerce represent a significant part of the American economy, especially in steel, petroleum refining, heavy equipment manufacturing, and the transshipment of goods. Huge industrial complexes share space with national parks, and the region has long been a hotbed of environmental research and activism. And more than a million and a half people, as large as many other Midwestern metropolises like Milwaukee, Kansas City, or Indianapolis, call the area home.

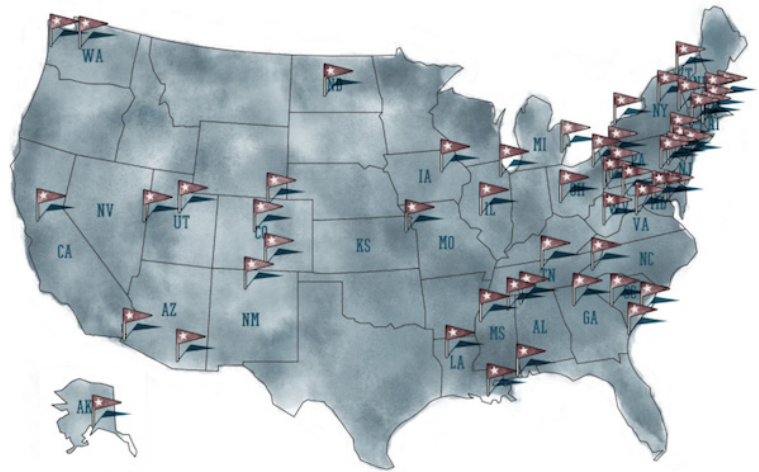
But the region is a complicated place, with many and diverse stakeholders, who often struggle to agree on regional goals and priorities. Political boundary lines fragment regional agreement even further: the Calumet region spans two states, five counties, more than 75 municipalities, and a number of special function park, school, and stormwater districts. The manner in which the region developed, and ongoing environmental degradation and deindustrialization, has created some starkly unfair living conditions.

A National Heritage Area (NHA) can create space for common ground in such a landscape. Many heritage areas developed in the 1980s and 1990s in regions where deindustrialization hit hard—in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan among others. Heritage Areas are not a panacea for regional difficulty, but they are a significant tool in the toolbox for those seeking to build on regional assets to foster sustainable futures.

There are now 55 NHAs, each of them unique. The Nation's first NHA, the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, was created in 1984 with the aim of interpreting the role of that canal in building the Midwest and fostering regional economic re-birth through tourism development 140 years later. An effort is underway to create the Black Metropolis National Heritage Area, just to the north of the CHA on Chicago's near South Side.

The seeds of the Calumet National Heritage Area project were planted by a 1986 proposal by geographer James E. Landing for a Lake Calumet Ecological Park. This evolved into a 1998 Special Resource Study by the National Park Service (NPS) for a Lake Calumet National Ecological Park. NPS recommended at that time that the region might be a good candidate for an NHA, and even then, the study began moving beyond ecology alone to consider historical, cultural, and recreational resources. In recent years, NHA programming has grown to encompass these aspects of a region, as well as education and the arts.

Since the commencement of the Feasibility Study process in 2013, sparked at the Calumet Summit in that year, a guiding discussion for the process has been how best to make the heritage area program fit this particular place. The CNHA Feasibility Study, approved by NPS staff in 2018, deployed an intensive community engagement process to arrive at a statement of national significance, key interpretive themes, a resource inventory tied to those themes, and an appropriate boundary for the proposed Heritage Area. These elements are reviewed in Section 1 below. (A more in-depth discussion of how the region's history has shaped the key themes may be found in Chapter 3 of the *Feasibility Study*.)



"National Heritage Areas are considered one of the Department of the Interior's most cost-effective initiatives, relying on a public/private partnership in which every federal dollar is matched with an average of \$5.50 in other public and private financing."
- Congressmen Paul Tonko (D-NY) & David McKinley (R-WV)

National Heritage Areas. <https://www.nationalheritageareas.us/>

The *CNHA Feasibility Study* also outlined how the Heritage Area could contribute to regional goals and priorities. These goals and priorities were articulated not only by community members who participated in the *Feasibility Study* process, but were indicated as stated goals and visions in the numerous plans consulted as part of the process. To prepare this *Management Plan*, then, it was a natural evolution to form Focus Area Planning Committees (FAPCs), composed of regional experts in the relevant areas, for each of the main regional goals and priorities areas. The FAPCs were charged with the first phase in the process of moving from aspirational goals to actionable projects in their respective areas. FAPCs were formed for:

- Environment and Stewardship
- Cultural Heritage/Historic Preservation
- Recreation
- Arts
- Education
- Tourism and Economic Development
- Branding and Wayfinding

The potential projects identified and prioritized by each FAPC, and then discussed together among all the FAPCs, formed a long list of potential actions that the NHA could undertake, where it would most fill a regional need not currently undertaken by another entity, and where it could have the greatest impact. These projects were further grouped in order to facilitate operationalizing them and to align them with the goals of the NHA entity.

This chapter describes the process of developing specific goals for the CNHA. It starts from the big picture—statements from the *Feasibility Study* concerning what is nationally significant about the Calumet region and the major interpretive themes the Heritage Area should adopt—and, moving through the Management Planning process, arrives at a sharp focus on the Heritage Area’s goals and projects to support those goals. The first section reviews the *Feasibility Study*’s statements about national significance, major regional themes, boundaries, and goals. Starting with these goals, the second section includes a scan of other heritage area work in these goal areas, thorough review of regional plans and studies, and the prioritization process undertaken by regional experts in the FAPCs. The final section provides actionable projects for the goals identified in the *Feasibility Study* and how these projects are now clustered for operational purposes in the goals of this *Management Plan*.

1. The nationally significant Calumet Region

1.1 Statement of significance

From a National Park in the Indiana Dunes to a National Monument at Pullman, the Calumet region contains both globally rare natural areas and the colossal evidence of industrial urbanization. These National Parks do not exist in isolation. Near them and between them are huge industries set next to delicate habitats and distinctive communities. The Parks’ own stories reflect the ever-increasing complexities of American life during the peak period of the “second Industrial Revolution” between the Civil War and the Second World War. Innovative construction of a company town in a wetland area in 1882 signaled the stunning attractiveness of this region to the large scale factories that would soon anchor the western end of America’s Manufacturing Belt. As it ushered in an era of enormous industrial production, massive immigration, labor conflict, and environmental degradation followed. Industry filled in wetlands, thrust into Lake Michigan, cut down dunes, and advocated for wetland drainage and the complete rearrangement of river flow. It built upon and spun a thickening web of rail lines, canals, roads, and pipelines second to no other region in the country. The encounter between growing industry and fragile dunes at the beginning of the twentieth century gave rise to a new kind of environmental conservation in an urban environment that focused on the protection of open lands for city people. A new kind of National Park, developed fifty years ago, characteristically wraps around the last large

integrated steelworks constructed in America, the sort of contrast that defines this uncommon place.

The Calumet region’s national significance stems from the unique natural habitat and its relationship to industry, transportation, and people. Characteristically American relationships among industry, labor, and the creation of place emerged. The impact of these changes is felt in American life and landscape to this day. The American people—those in other urban industrial areas, those who continue to pass through, those who stop to visit, and most importantly, those who live in this landscape—will benefit from knowing the coherent story of human and nature interaction in this region.



Indiana Harbor Shoreline. Herb Barghusen.

The story’s headline is this: The Calumet region contains globally rare natural areas, the nation’s premier heavy industrial district, and distinctive communities that continue to shape the natural and built landscape. Its two urban National Parks—Pullman National Monument and Indiana Dunes National Park—bookend and highlight these contrasting features. Today’s Calumet landscape—taken as an industrial, environmental, and community whole—shows how American life changed during the boom years of industrialization that followed the Civil War and how changes continued through booms and busts in the economy to the present day.

This headline opens a fundamental issue, for behind the headlines lie other crucially significant stories of longstanding significance. Few are more critical than the role of Native Americans in the region. The Calumet region was a crossroads to Native Americans who thrived here before European settlement and who continue to call the region home. The very name of a region now nearly synonymous with industrial urbanism is drawn from a word meaning “pipe of peace” and “prosperity” to the Potawatomi. Here it needs to be said that while the *Feasibility Study* was required to zero in on a particular phase in the region’s development, the functioning Heritage Area itself can embrace all aspects of the region’s history. Taking the long view, ironies, conflicts, and contradictions seem to recur at every step:

- A river whose very name means “peace pipe” is now the Great Lakes’ most significant area of environmental concern.
- A still changing landscape of singing sands and gentle swales is altered again by human hand, which levels hills, fills wetlands, and reverses rivers.
- A habitat crossroads and biodiversity hotspot that neighbors industrial furnaces and cracking towers.
- A well-integrated economic region of production and distribution with international reach and formed by people with roots from around the world, marked by place identities at the most local scale.
- A place where new models for cities exalted individual entrepreneurship but spawned gritty nationwide labor solidarity.

- A society where people of color were long excluded from housing but drove to national leadership in municipal governance and the pursuit of environmental justice.
- A hearth where women frequently tended home fires in an industrial world but took on leading roles in forging new forms of environmental activism and conservation.

Contrasts like these can be seen on the landscape. Sand dunes, wetlands, steel mills, ethnic neighborhoods, and railroads wrap around each other in an intertwined mix that is a crucial part of the significance of the region and the story that begins with the re-working of nature.

1.2 Core Regional Themes

1.2.1 Nature Reworked: The Calumet's Diverse Landscape

Natural areas, industries, transportation, and neighborhoods are found side by side in the Calumet region. Industry and nature meet each other here like few other places in the country. The mix of forest, prairie, lakes, and rivers attracted large-scale industry, agriculture, trade, and city growth. But in places, dry sands and wetlands proved too challenging to build upon. In time, and through much effort, they were preserved for their value as open space and as refuge for diverse plants and animals.



Lake Michigan shoreline near Cowles Bog. Jessica Jaffe.

A natural crossroads. Chicago's exploitation of its location at the easy passage of the subcontinental divide amidst forests and prairies of stunning verdure made it "the city of the century" and "nature's metropolis." But its flat site also made it the "mudhole of the prairies" and provoked pathbreaking engineering solutions to the challenges of urban growth. This epic development occurred ten miles north of the southern edge of Lake Michigan, and it projected the city's commercial reach to the "Great West." When the American economy emerged from the Civil War ready to be turbocharged by a new wave of industrialization, its western anchor would be the Chicago region, and its anchor within the Chicago region would be those lands by the lake that the first wave of mercantile urban development had passed over—the Calumet area.

Industrialization came quickly and forcefully to a region that happened to have unusually high species richness. It is situated at one of the great ecotones of the mid-continent, where vestigial boreal vegetation meets Indiana's great hardwood forests and Illinois' tallgrass prairies. Its sands and marshes are textbook examples of Wisconsinan glaciation that made the wet-dry alternation of sand and marsh a boon to biodiversity and a bane to European farming technique. Indiana Dunes National Park, with its successional vegetation features and its outholdings that include elements of bog, prairie, and marsh is one of the most biodiverse in the National Park system.

This fundament sparked scientific questions that anchored new disciplines in glacial geomorphology and ecology, provided the land base for the development of a vast urban-industrial complex, and ultimately inspired people in the growing industrial belt to develop pathbreaking approaches to land protection and restoration. Experts agree: the Calumet region's interplay of industry and nature is for Andrew Hurley a theme of "exceptional national significance" and for Christine Walley, "the most compelling narrative."

Changes to lifeways and landscape. The vast changes which made the American economy truly continental in scope after the Civil War also made previously bypassed regions, like the Calumet, central to the nation's expanding urban-industrial system. A vast economic region called the "American Manufacturing Belt" became the nation's growth center and focus of its industrial, political, and economic power. It extended roughly between the Great Lakes and the Ohio River, and between the Midwest and Atlantic ports. The Calumet anchored the western end of this region. It splendidly exemplifies this epochal phase in American national development. At the same time, it is a leading example of how a local landscape was remade to accommodate and attract industry, and how it bore the effects of such industrialization.

With uncanny timing, and as if to illustrate the textbook "epochs" of industrialization, the remaking of the Calumet area for industry can be said to begin with the creation of Calumet Harbor in 1870 and the widening and straightening of the Calumet River. When the Joseph H. Brown Iron and Steel Company (later Wisconsin Steel) was built south of 106th street in the 1870s, dredge spoil from the slip created along the Calumet River was dumped into adjacent wetlands to provide drier footings for the factory. When the North Chicago Rolling Mills moved to the mouth of the Calumet River in 1875, it began to add land to Lake Michigan for its facilities, which later evolved into U.S. Steel's South Works. The Town of Pullman literally rose from the bottom of Lake Calumet in 1882, when clay from the lake was used to make brick for the houses. The company also built docks and an edge to the western shore of Lake Calumet, that, coupled with the four feet of fill on which the homes were built, permanently set the lake apart from surrounding wetlands.

These types of processes would continue for the next century, with harbors created at Indiana Harbor, Gary, and Burns Harbor; lands extended a mile into Lake Michigan at East Chicago; rivers re-routed, straightened, deepened, and/or repurposed; continental drainage divides moved; and dunes destroyed in Gary, Portage, Burns Harbor, and Michigan City. Along the way, engineering landmarks like the Cal-Sag Channel (short for "Calumet-Saganashkee Channel, an integral part of what is now the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago) would be opened in 1922. To vault across the waterways, a web of landmark bridges would be constructed, as in the set of truss bridges over the Channel at Blue Island, the Chicago Landmark lift bridges over the main stem of the Calumet River, and the trunion bascule 106th Street bridge in Chicago, whose status even today as the busiest in this city of bridges testifies to the incessance of river traffic in this reach.

A heritage of activism and stewardship. Amidst these scenes of the American “technological sublime,” and even granting their greatness and role in building up the mid-continent as an epicenter of American industrial civilization, there was a growing sense that something was being lost. In 1916, agitation and advocacy for a Dunes National Park to become part of the new National Park Service reached a fever pitch. The advocates were led by the Prairie Club of Chicago, whose members included pioneering ecologist Henry Chandler Cowles, noted for his work on ecological succession at the dunes. Efforts were slowed by World War I, but the Indiana Dunes State Park was established in 1926. Renewed advocacy after World War II led to the creation of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in 1966. Cowles Bog in the Park, a National Natural Landmark, memorializes Cowles. It sits immediately adjacent to the Burns Harbor steel mill. It is characteristic of the Calumet region that what might seem like fundamental conflict between industry and environment would result in such pathbreaking compromises.

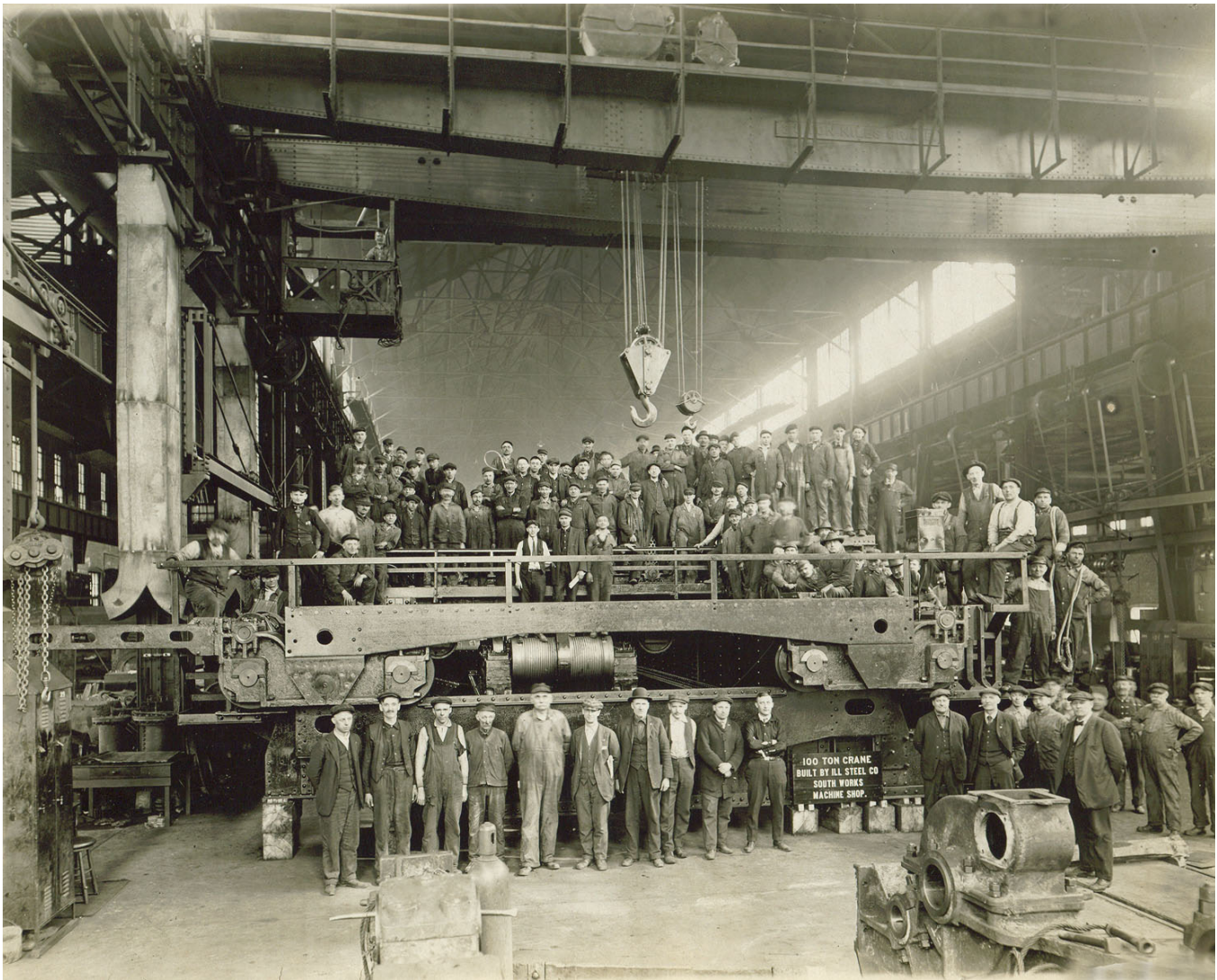
That the interests of “environment” had a place at the table is key but ultimately not surprising, since, as historian Heath Carter notes, “Citizen action is characteristic of the region.” Women had an especially significant role in the preservation of the Indiana Dunes and in the fight for environmental justice. Bess Sheehan, secretary of the National Dunes Park Association, played the leading role in the creation of Indiana Dunes State Park. The later effort to prevent further industrial encroachments on the dunes and pave the way for a National Park was led by Save the Dunes Council advocates Dorothy Buell, Charlotte Read, and Sylvia Troy. Lee Botts founded what is now the Alliance for the Great Lakes and spearheaded many local initiatives. Cowles’s student Norma Pfeiffer discovered a plant called *Thismia americana* in the shadow of a metallurgical coking facility in 1912 that is endemic to the region, was last seen in 1916, and is the only photograph in the magisterial tome, *Plants of the Chicago Region*. She went on to become the first Ph.D. in Botany from the University of Chicago. When the City of Chicago promised to build a Lake Calumet International Airport twenty years ago, local activists organized large-scale “*Thismia* hunts” to highlight the uniqueness of what could be lost under runways.

The proximity of residential areas to industrial zones has also made the Calumet area a hotbed of concern for those who have borne a disproportionate share of polluted land, air, and water. Key activists like Hazel Johnson, organizing from a base in public housing at Altgeld Gardens (for a while with the support of a young community organizer named Barack Obama) became leaders in the national environmental justice movement. Marian Byrnes, a retired schoolteacher, led grassroots efforts on the southeast side of Chicago and became a leader in the Southeast Environmental Task Force, Calumet Stewardship Initiative, and Calumet Heritage Partnership.

So a century of grassroots citizen activism has conserved, protected, and restored the biodiversity, native beauty, and recreational quality of the natural environment, making the region a significant place to the American conservation and environmental justice movements. Lee Botts wrote that a “restoration revolution” has coursed across the region, and now significant sites of the region’s globally rare patrimony of dune and swale habitat are preserved, frequently by and on behalf of the residents themselves.

1.2.2 Innovation and Change for Industries and Workers

As one of the great workshops of the world, the Calumet region lays bare epic stories of entrepreneurship, industrial development, the struggle for decent working conditions and wages, and of what happened when certainties crumbled.



Illinois Steel Company machine shop, South Works (predecessor to U.S. Steel). Southeast Chicago Historical Museum.

Manufacturing and industrial urbanism. Icons of industry like Pullman, Carnegie, Gary, and Rockefeller forged an industrial region that became the buckle of the American Manufacturing Belt. Built on extraordinary local, regional, and national interlinkages in both metal and non-metal industries, it rose to become the nation's premier steelmaking district by World War II and remains so today.

The Calumet region rose to industrial prominence during a time that scholars call the “Steel Rail” period, when the intertwined development of a national railroad network and integrated steel production moved the nation's industrial production center of gravity westward from the mills of New England and the mines of Pennsylvania.

Steel manufacturers began to move to the region in 1875, with the construction of the Brown Ironworks. Shortly thereafter (1881), the North Chicago Rolling Mills Company built its South Works at the mouth of the Calumet River. As manufacturers sought to lay out ever more efficient plants, Indiana sites became more important, especially with Inland Steel (1901), Gary (1906), and Mark Manufacturing (1914). When Wisconsin Steel closed in 1980 and the South Works of U.S. Steel soon followed with a major downsizing and then closure in 1992, it signaled the end of the century-long “boom” period in steelmaking in the Chicago portion of the Calumet region. Remnants, such as the Acme coke plant and the ore walls at South Works, still stand.

The evolution of these firms also illustrates the growing vertical and horizontal integration of the industry characteristic of the era: the very evolution of the name of South Works into Carnegie-Illinois into U.S. Steel suggests the ever expanding scope of operations and administration. U.S. Steel built its sprawling integrated Gary Works and an accompanying town in 1906. ArcelorMittal's Burns Harbor plant (originally Bethlehem Steel) was the last integrated steel facility to be built in the United States, and its Indiana Harbor facilities produce more steel than any other plant in the country.

Other firms built or operated equipment that ran on steel rails. Few places in the nation better illustrate the rise of railroads, as hubs of a transportation network, as centers of industrial production, or as engines of economic, labor, and social change, than George Pullman's town, now the Pullman National Monument. Pullman's reach as a manufacturing concern extended across the Calumet region, to include the Pullman-Standard works in Hammond and the facilities of Haskell and Barker (now hub of the Haskell and Barker Historic District in Michigan City). The Pullman Company's 1913 switch from wood to steel car construction was paralleled by the rise of other steel railcar manufacturers across the region.

Once established in the region, the steel industry proved to be magnetically attractive to a variety of other related businesses. A further web of industrial and short line railroads moved steel from the mills to fabricators with relative ease. Steel supply companies burgeoned. Others firms were attracted by the availability of inexpensive steel in the context of location in the Chicago market, or by the region's centrality to the national rail network, as did the G.H. Hammond Meatpacking Company, founded in its namesake city in 1869. Industrial facilities opened across the region in new industrial suburbs like Chicago Heights or old country towns like Valparaiso and LaPorte, where Allis Chalmers (previously the Rumely Companies) built agricultural machinery for the Midwestern market into the late 20th century.

As the technological underpinnings of the American economy changed in the twentieth century, the "steel rail" elements remained fundamental for the Calumet region. But the region retained its national importance as automobiles, airplanes, electricity, and petroleum assumed greater significance. Nothing sums up this new period better than the grand American combination of Rockefeller and Ford. While these two entrepreneurs' bases of operations were elsewhere in the country, their respective facilities constructed here in 1889 and 1924 point to the fundamentally interlinked nature of the Calumet regional economy and its embeddedness in the American Midwest. Both Chicago's Ford Plant and the British Petroleum Whiting Refinery (originally Standard Oil of Indiana) have undergone major reinvestments. BP's nearly \$5 billion reinvestment to handle heavier Canadian tar sands crude has placed it again at the center of North American debates about the long-term prospects for an economy built on this form of energy and an environment continuing to bear its consequences. The production and storage of petcoke as a byproduct of the refining process and BP's announced plans to buy out and raze the neighboring Marktown neighborhood has sparked regional activism around environmental justice. A contrasting pathway to industrial innovation is seen at the Method facility in Pullman, which aims for a zero impact approach to the landscape and is topped by the nation's largest rooftop greenhouse.

Labor takes a stand. The profound remaking of the Calumet landscape in an industrial image brought thousands of workers to the region and at a new scale. By 1920 one out of five manufacturing workers in the Chicago metropolitan area worked in the area's leading "Iron and Steel Products" employment group, most of it concentrated in the Calumet area. To the interests of labor as well as to capital, the Calumet region was defined by its heavy industry.

Workers' struggles for better conditions, wages, and rights captured national attention in the Pullman strike of 1893. The strike's spread to the nation's entire rail network pointed to the critical importance of that network and of the labor movement to the nation's economy. After the strike ended, Congress established Labor Day, a significant marker on the national path toward better working conditions and living standards for all Americans.

That path had many turns and switchbacks. For example, the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937, was one of the most violent moments in American labor history. Republic Steel later sited a sculpture on its property with ten pipes gesturing to the ten steel mills that once clustered in the area; today the sculpture sits across the street from Republic's former property and the pipes are interpreted as remembering the ten workers who died in that struggle. The Steelworkers Organizing Committee won recognition from U.S. Steel in 1937, and by 1942 SWOC had become the United Steelworkers International Union of America.

The effort to widen the path to be inclusive of all workers is memorialized at the National A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum. Randolph's efforts to organize the nation's first African American union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, can be seen as an innovation in American history on par with the entrepreneurialism of the man who built the Pullman Company. It also points again to the steely mesh of interconnection between the region's economy and its railroads, and the far-reaching effects the rails had on everyday American life.

Deindustrialization. An era of drastic shutdowns dramatically changed the region's industrial powerhouse and caused widespread job loss. Mills closed; firms went bankrupt; workers were cast out of their jobs; communities were devastated. This fate befell other places in the American Manufacturing Belt, and, indeed, what happened to all of them is one of the most significant national stories of the past four decades. A major impetus for the National Heritage Area effort in the Calumet region is to turn the regional narrative from one of loss and destruction, to one that builds on assets of natural and cultural heritage. That sense is taking hold, another turn in the changing historical perception of the value of this area.

Regional resources remain that tell the stories of past industrial endeavor, most notably in the Administration/Clock Tower building at the Pullman National Monument. The Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois named the remnant Acme Steel structures to be one of the "ten most endangered structures" in Illinois and provided seed money for an effort to preserve them.

More importantly, government, for-profit, non-profit, and grassroots entities and individuals have been gathering to re-vision the region in light of the changes it has undergone and the realities it faces. The Field Museum, one of the world's leading collections-based natural history museums, has devoted time and resources, and a neutral convening table to shine a light on the region's assets, as it did in its award-winning Journey Through Calumet community ethnography process. Indiana's Marquette Plan is a sustained effort to envision and create a coastal corridor that still has a place for industry and that embraces community access to the lakeshore. The Marquette Plan update incorporates historical and cultural resources and embraces the notion of a Calumet National Heritage Area. In Illinois, the Millennium Reserve effort similarly highlighted a Calumet National Heritage Area as a priority project with potential to fulfill the effort's goals of linking community, economic, and environmental sustainability. (The Millennium Reserve project ultimately fostered the development of the Calumet Collaborative, which is a core entity moving the Heritage Area effort forward.)

1.2.3 Crucible of Working Class and Ethnic Cultures

Cultures came together as people moved to the Calumet region in large numbers. As they worked, played, and set down roots, they developed a significant popular culture. Strong advocates led struggles for equality, inclusion, and civil rights that achieved national prominence.



Pierogi Fest, Whiting Indiana. Field Museum.

Working class housing and cultural traditions in the landscape. Their names tell us that steel was made: Millgate, Irondale, Slag Valley. They tell us who owned the mills, forges, and shops: Hegewisch, Pullman, Marktown, Gary, Hammond, Ford Heights. Colloquial (“the Bush”) or formal (“East Chicago”), geographical (“East Side”) or personal (“Whiting”), these are the names attached to islands of human community scattered across the Calumet wetlands and ultimately, into the morainal hills to the south. Separated from each other by patches of wetland, by belts of railroad tracks, and by the mills themselves, the communities developed distinctive identities strongly shaped by physical, economic, and social attachments to nearby industry.

The Calumet region’s residential structure is part of what makes it such a significant landscape and distinctive from the rest of the Chicago region. More than half of the communities in the Calumet area found their origin as industrial suburbs or satellite cities. The region has only a few railroad commuter suburbs, a type with which the Chicago region is otherwise well supplied. But as places founded squarely within the “Steel Rail” period, railroads were an obvious part of everyday life in most of the region.

The Calumet region contains nationally significant models of homes built for workers and their families. Landmark planned communities include Solon Beman's Pullman, Charles van Doren Shaw's Marktown, the city of Gary, and East Chicago's Sunnyside community. A wide variety of other house types include the concrete Edison Concept Houses in Gary, Frank Lloyd Wright's Foster House and Stable in Chicago's Stewart Ridge community, and the small home in Gary where Michael Jackson grew up.

People came from around the world to work in the Calumet region and put their stamp on the landscape. By 1930, the region had an extraordinary diversity of ethnic origins. Within some Calumet communities, pocket enclaves developed especially strong local attachments to local churches, schools, social halls, savings societies, and taverns, which ultimately fostered highly local—even isolated—place identification. Taken as a whole, this archipelago of very locally centered communities is a significant element in the national story of immigration, enculturation, and group identity.

Race relations. Most of the issues discussed above had a strong racial dimension. While the transportation equipment and steel industries were a major ground for recruitment of labor from the American South, and exerted a huge pull effect in the Great Migration to places like South Chicago, East Chicago, and Gary, racially-charged struggles of national resonance erupted over schooling, housing, and politics. Theodore Roosevelt High School in Gary was built specifically to house Gary's African-American students, thus keeping them out of "white" schools. In 1945, the historic but isolated Altgeld Gardens public housing project was built in Chicago for returning African American veterans. Conflict in the steelmaking Trumbull Park neighborhood emerged in 1953 when Black families attempted to move into public housing there, triggering a response from city authorities that, according to Arnold Hirsch, led to "making the second ghetto." Richard Hatcher's 1967 election in Gary as the first African American mayor of a major American city sped the postwar processes of white flight to suburban "South County", leading to the creation of a "dual metropolis" and the "environmental inequalities" that historian Andrew Hurley has documented. But it also led to the National Black Political Convention of 1972, the largest such gathering of the twentieth century.

Living cultural traditions. Renowned among a constellation of local history museums in the Calumet region, the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum wonderfully highlights the many aspects of family and associational life in its community. Similar stories could be told about other vibrant museums. But more lively are those resources on which you cannot put a plaque: these are the traditions, festivals, foods, music, and literature that make the region and its heritage come alive. Myaamia and Potawatomi people are working with the Indiana Dunes Visitors Center to create a cultural heritage trail that demonstrates their continuing engagement with the place they have long called home. Other especially active traditions include Labor Day commemorations, ethnic showcases like Whiting's Pierogi Fest, and church oriented events like Southeast Chicago's AnnunciataFest. Music has long pulsed out of the region, with especially notable examples being Gary's VeeJay records (the first American label to release the Beatles) and the Jackson family.

1.3 Recommended boundary

The recommended boundary encompasses the area where the three themes and the resources illustrating the national significance of the Calumet are strongest (see maps in Chapter 1). The themes are especially well represented in the immediate lakeshore area from South Chicago to Michigan City. However, experts such as Alfred Meyer, Kenneth Schoon, and Powell Moore would locate the regional boundary southward, where the occurrence of local "Calumet" place names from Chicago Heights to Valparaiso argues that the region's natural features, along with its key themes of economic and cultural development, also resonate.

Therefore, recognizing the strength of the set of traits that make up the region, and the ongoing patterns of employment, information flow, and trade that circulate within the area, this plan recommends the following boundary. It aligns generally with key historic trails across the area, particularly the Sauk Trail and Vincennes Trace. Locally, some adjustments have been made so that jurisdictions are not split and differences in the Illinois and Indiana planning agency and county line jurisdictions are taken into account.

In Indiana, the boundary extends to the borders of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), a key supporter and collaborator, has planning authority to the extent of these counties which reach to the Kankakee River. In addition to political convenience, as noted below, the Kankakee River was a distinctive boundary for the cultural and economic geography of the region and tended to set Northwest Indiana apart from the rest of the state of Indiana. The Kankakee National Water Trail marks this southern boundary just as the Lake Michigan National Water Trail marks the northern boundary.

In suburban Illinois, the boundary runs east-west along the line of Crete-Monee Road between the state line and I-57, and then north on I-57 to Crawford Avenue. Any municipality that touches this boundary is considered to be within the National Heritage Area, including a large number of the municipalities which comprise the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association service area. The Illinois boundary falls substantially north of the Kankakee River because significant stretches of Will and Kankakee counties do not cover the Calumet region. In addition, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning service area does not include Kankakee County and does include vast stretches of non-Calumet northeastern Illinois. The boundary is drawn to incorporate the historic paths of the Dixie and Lincoln Highways, the modern successors of the Vincennes Trace and Sauk Trail, respectively.

From Crawford Avenue into Chicago, the boundary continues three miles west of Vincennes until it reaches 67th Street, where it returns to the lake shore along the southern boundary of Jackson Park. It therefore includes the bulk of the “Greater Calumet” and “Greater Stony Island” regions of the City’s new Chicago Neighborhood Now planning initiative, which clusters the City’s original 1930s non-overlapping planning and statistical Community Areas into functional planning regions. Greater Calumet includes the Community Areas of Washington Heights, Morgan Park, Hegewisch, West Pullman, Riverdale, East Side, and the southern portions of Roseland, Pullman, and South Deering. Greater Stony Island includes the Chicago Community Areas of Greater Grand Crossing, South Shore, Chatham, Avalon Park, Burnside, Calumet Heights, South Chicago, and the northern portions of Roseland, Pullman, and South Deering. The northern boundary runs very close to the southern boundary of the emerging Black Metropolis National Heritage Area. The boundary overlaps the I&M Canal NHA, especially along the Cal-Sag Channel, Little Calumet, Calumet River corridor.

1.4 Calumet region goals and priorities

Multiple stakeholders and entities have coalesced in the region over the two decades since the National Park Service’s Calumet Ecological Park Resource Study. They have stated many goals and priorities in various contexts, and now all these aspirations and voices are coming together as the region is poised to become a Calumet National Heritage Area. It has been repeatedly stated, especially at multi-stakeholder Calumet Summits in 2013 and 2015, that a National Heritage Area is the clearest path to bring coherence to these efforts, strengthen regional identity, and bring necessary resources to activate great thinking.

An overarching goal of the heritage effort is to draw together the conceptual interlinkages of the three heritage themes and to project them forward as fundamental to any regional sustainability effort. There is a powerful sense, given the complexity of the themes of the region, that heritage reverberates in everyday life and undergirds conversations which cut across economy, environment, and community. There is a strong sense the region’s heritage is built into the region’s future.

Goals and priorities’ thematic connections are represented by abbreviations after each bullet point.

Abbreviation	Theme
NR	Nature Reworked: The Calumet’s Diverse Landscape
II	Innovations and Change for Industries and Workers
CC	Crucible of Ethnic and Working Class Cultures

Bold indicate strong thematic connection.

Italics indicate some thematic connection.

What follows is a distillation of the most salient heritage goals and priorities now incorporated into current regional plans (such as the Millennium Reserve Green Infrastructure Project and the Marquette Plan), and discussed in community conversations, Summits, and feedback sessions.

1.4.1 Environment and Stewardship

The Calumet region has played an important role in conservation, ecological study, and environmental protection. The area continues to possess a rich conservation ethic, ecologically significant sites, and outstanding services by agencies to protect the environment and public health. Priorities to enhance environmental treasures across the bi-state region are:

- Identify, connect, and enhance important subgeographies such as the dune and swale, moraine forest, and river corridors **(NR)**
- Coordinate land management, ecological restoration, land acquisition, and trail development activities in key habitat areas **(NR, II, CC)**
- Provide improved access to existing natural areas **(NR, II, CC)**
- Restore, manage, and promote healthy watershed systems **(NR, II, CC)**
- Promote the protection of coastal and estuarine areas and waters **(NR, II, CC)**
- Develop a stewardship model for bi-state Calumet that includes measures of success for both ecosystem restoration and volunteer engagement **(NR, II, CC)**
- Connect environmental stewardship to health/well-being activities **(NR, II, CC)**

1.4.2 Cultural Heritage/Historic Preservation

The communities of the Calumet region are sites of significant cultural history. But sites of significance are often unrecognized and unappreciated. Priorities are:

- Identify and showcase the industrial, natural, and community heritage of the bi-state region through education, festivals, and other cultural activities **(NR, II, CC)**
- Protect, conserve, and restore significant landmark sites, including homes, commercial and religious structures, public buildings, and planned industrial communities **(NR, II, CC)**
- Identify, protect, and preserve important archaeological sites in the region **(NR, II, CC)**
- Build a bi-state dialogue between the Pullman National Monument, the Indiana Dunes National Park, and the lands around and between them **(NR, II, CC)**
- Create a bi-state regional consortium/network of local heritage groups, museums, archives, and historical societies **(NR, II, CC)**

1.4.3 Recreation

The Calumet region historically has contained significant places to relax and play. Priorities across the state line are:

- Continue to develop the region's system of trails and improve the connections between them **(NR, II, CC)**
- Improve existing and develop new recreational sites **(NR, CC)**
- Increase access to the Lake Michigan shoreline **(NR, II, CC)**
- Promote tourism and ecotourism **(NR, II, CC)**

1.4.4 The Arts

The region's landscape and heritage are significant sources of artistic inspiration, especially with attention-grabbing proximity to nature and industry. There is a thriving arts community in the Calumet region, but it is not well recognized. Priorities are:

- Promote and protect the existing folk and fine arts heritage of the region **(NR, II, CC)**
- Support and promote existing artists and arts organizations **(II, CC)**
- Promote the role of the arts in regional-scale placemaking **(NR, II, CC)**
- Activate and transform heritage spaces that build community and enhance civic engagement for local residents and that are attractive to visitors using creative placemaking approaches **(NR, II, CC)**

1.4.5 Education

The cultural and environmental heritage of the Calumet region offer unique opportunities to engage children and adults in place-based learning. A Heritage Area could provide a network to facilitate the creation, connection, and enhancement of educational programming around environmental conservation and stewardship, economy, the arts, cultural heritage and historic preservation, and interpretation.

- Develop heritage-based curricula in partnership with local primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational institutions (NR, II, CC)
- Develop life-long learning programs (NR, II, CC)
- Connect with area scientists (NR, II, CC)
- Identify local geographies within the region as priority areas for programming and types of programs to prioritize for those regions (NR, II, CC)

1.4.6 Regional Economic Development and Heritage Tourism

Industry has been a key identifying factor and the backbone of the Calumet region. The region's industries are in flux, making stability and redevelopment key goals. Conserving the industrial heritage of the Calumet region is important, but should be coupled with efforts to support existing industries and attract new investment, and build on environmental and community assets. Priorities are:

- Make the most of opportunities that meet the “triple bottom line” that enhance economy, build community, and protect environment (NR, II, CC)
- Improve the Lakeshore in ways that balance industrial development and water-based tourism and recreation (NR, II, CC)
- Utilize brownfield sites for industrial development (NR, II, CC)
- Increase tourism marketing at the bi-state regional scale (NR, II, CC)
- Attract and retain residential workforce that enjoys high quality of life (NR, II, CC)
- Identify and elevate opportunities for adaptive reuse of buildings and other structures, such as closed steel mills and Union Station in Gary, to become regional gateways or interpretive centers (NR, II, CC)

1.4.7 Wayfinding and Branding

Develop a comprehensive regional system of signage and wayfinding to guide visitors and local residents through the region, provide details about specific locations, build regional identity through branding, and connect the region's places through themes and stories.

- Create a brand identity for wayfinding that boosts regional connectivity and pride in place (NR, II, CC)
- Interpret sites and spaces through signage, exhibitions, other media (NR, II, CC)

2. Background to regional priority-setting and review of existing plans

The Calumet Region has an illustrious past. But the Calumet Heritage Area is concerned with how the region's natural and cultural heritage provides the basis on which to move toward a brighter tomorrow. Between past and future lie the concerns of today, and Heritage Areas can be one pathway through which present-day issues are addressed. These issues can range widely—including arts, education, recreation, environment, economy, recreation, and historic preservation. The Management Plan process offered a structured way to show how those issues could potentially be addressed by the Heritage Area, and then how to organize to accomplish these tasks.

This *Management Plan* is an organic outgrowth from the *Feasibility Study* prepared by regional partners and approved by the National Park Service staff in July 2018. In important respects, completing the tasks of a *Feasibility Study*—gathering a partner network, scanning for resources, developing visions, themes,

and plans, and creating actual projects—really started to get the Heritage Area behaving like a Heritage Area. Since the National Park Service approved the *Feasibility Study*, huge strides were made to activate the Heritage Area, though Congressional action is still forthcoming. Partners deemed it very important to move forward with a management plan so that the Heritage Area’s activities, roles, operations, finances, and functions could be defined in relation to other activities in the region. If and when Federal designation should occur, the plan could be updated to account for new realities, resources, and requirements.

To create the *Feasibility Study*, an extensive community engagement process recorded community concerns, surfaced issues and opportunities, and identified assets, resources, and needs. The set of regional goals reviewed in Section 1 were developed in alignment with the Heritage Area’s overall purpose and themes. These goals spanned seven content areas that Heritage Areas often support: environment/stewardship, cultural heritage/historic preservation, recreation, arts, education, economy/tourism, branding/wayfinding. The goals developed in the *Feasibility Study* helped to guide a discussion of what the Heritage Area *could* do; in order to define what the Heritage Area *would* do, a set of specific projects needed to be developed, and then prioritized, aligned and coordinated with other projects, and then filtered for what could be truly accomplished.

An important first step in specifying the role and function of the Heritage Area as a new tool for regional actors to deploy on issues of concern was to systematically review existing regional plans and studies in each of the main content areas. The review surfaced significant issues for focus area experts to consider. Taken together they underscore the most important issues and partners that make up the modern Calumet landscape. They also unearth even more evidence of the region’s complexity and vitality, and the potential of the CHA to interact with many different activities, and for the need to keep prioritizing and asking where a CHA would most add value to regional efforts, not merely be related to them.

In this section, the connection between regional plans and these goals is reviewed. The reviews printed below are substantially the background material that regional experts were given as they convened in Fall 2019 as part of Focus Area Planning Committees (FAPCs). Members of the FAPCs were advised that it was not the intent of the Heritage Area effort for it to become all things to all people, nor for the process to re-invent the wheel and replicate the many excellent and compelling planning projects already undertaken. But it is important to be aware of projects that could benefit from affiliation with the Heritage Area, or that might even require Heritage Area involvement to leverage resources to ensure project completion. As a result, members of the FAPCs were urged to be broadly aware of what is happening in the region. It set the stage for thinking through what NHAs can do and what the current state of NHA-relevant programming in the region is, by asking the following key questions:

- What are potential projects that could be undertaken within the next 5 years that would most tie in to the NHA?
- How would an NHA add value to this work?
- If the NHA did not exist, would this project even go forward?
- Of those projects, who should be the project lead or point person?
- What resources are needed to complete this work?

Those experts were then convened as FAPCs in Fall 2019, to develop and then prioritize a list of actionable projects where the NHA could best be leveraged to make a difference in the region.

After each FAPC in the seven areas developed its own list of priority projects, members from all the FAPCs met in December 2019 to review the prioritized lists of projects in order to keep a special eye on synergies, overlaps, and opportunities for further discussion. The outcome of this process was a list of prioritized projects by the key content areas. The Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) then took stock of operational overlaps and ways to best leverage the impact of the projects by carefully integrating them with other plan elements, organizing them under the main regional goals as articulated above in Section 1.4, and phasing their rollout. This clustering and phasing is discussed in Section 3 below, and it forms the basis for the “Implementation and Business Plan” found in Chapter 5.

2.1 Environment and Stewardship

The successful effort to create an Indiana Dunes National Park is the latest in a series of signs that the heritage of the Chicago region is marked by pioneering approaches to environment and stewardship in an urban setting. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (now the National Park) was the first National Lakeshore when it was created in 1966 and the push to create a National Park in this geography goes back to the beginnings of the National Park Service in 1916. The Illinois and Michigan Canal National Corridor was the nation's first when it was designated in 1984. The Illinois Prairie Path, launched in 1965 and inspired and led by May Theilgard Watts (who also had strong connections to the Dunes), was the country's first significant rails-to-trails conversion. The Cook County Forest Preserve system was a pioneering effort to create recreational and conservation spaces at the metropolitan scale, and it was inspired by the nation's first great regional plan, the Burnham and Bennett's Plan of Chicago (1909). Creation of the Chicago Wilderness alliance in 1996 was regarded as a national model for multi-stakeholder ecological restoration efforts at the metropolitan scale.



Indiana Dunes National Park. C. Livingston, Indiana Dunes Tourism.

Other efforts continue to this day, and just a few examples indicate the national significance of the ecological restoration work in a difficult built-up landscape with many operating industries and numerous legacy pollution issues. The cleanup of most of the Grand Calumet River, the only one of 41 Great Lakes Areas of Concern to fail all 14 “beneficial use impairments” in the Great Lakes basin when originally determined twenty years ago, and the restoration of adjacent natural areas along the stream, is likely the most significant in the Great Lakes basin. The Nature Conservancy’s restoration of Indian Boundary Prairie in Illinois and numerous fragments of rare ridge and swale habitat of northwest Indiana are national models. The Shirley Heinze Land Trust has added more than 2,600 acres to its portfolio since its inception in 1981 and the organization received the Land Trust Alliance’s National Excellence Award in 2018, only the 18th recipient from among 1,000 land trusts in the award’s twelve years. Save the Dunes maintains its staunch advocacy for the dunes ecosystem while leading efforts to restore it. In Chicago, the Chicago Park District now owns nearly a thousand acres on lands that once held operating steel mills or other industries or were ticketed for development as sanitary landfills. Great Lakes Audubon has spearheaded the restoration of key sites in both Chicago and in Northwest Indiana for marsh birds. The Cook County Forest Preserve’s recent Next Century Conservation Plan sets ambitious goals for both acquisition and restoration. Chicago Wilderness has turned its attention to a Green Vision where people and nature thrive together.

These and other activities are undertaken with the strong awareness that they are embedded in working landscapes and are neighbored by many communities. The Chicago region’s national leadership in volunteer stewardship certainly extends to the Calumet region. Volunteer stewardship is accompanied by vigorous educational outreach as well.

In the heritage area context, “environment” typically means activities that protect or enhance natural areas, rather than activities focused on pollution prevention. “Stewardship” tends to entail activities that draw in the community, especially as volunteers in natural areas. Outdoor recreation and environmental education possibilities are covered in Sections 2.c and 2.e below.

2.1.1 Identify, enhance, and connect important sub-geographies, and

2.1.2 Coordinate land management, ecological restoration, land acquisition, and trail development activities in key habitat area

While the Calumet region has nationally significant natural areas, the region’s intense industrial, transportation, and urban development has left them generally fragmented. Regional planning agencies on both sides of the state line recognize that fostering connectivity is important to overall regional development and quality of life. To foster its goal “to promote coordinated and sustainable development redevelopment and preservation within the region through collaborative local and regional land use planning,” the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s (CMAP) *On to 2050 Plan* suggests designating “liaisons to sub-geographies” and facilitating “planning processes based on non-jurisdictional geographies (e.g. watershed based boundaries).” Similarly, NIRPC’s *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan* calls out the importance of sub-geographies and notes the special opportunities to connect them via greenways which “allow for greater transportation access for humans and allow wildlife to utilize routes for travel and to better access food, water, mates and nesting spaces.”

In important respects, major steps have already been taken over the past fifteen years in the Calumet region to develop a coherent strategy for the identification, protection, restoration, and management of these landscapes. This management planning process comes at an excellent time in this bi-state regional discussion, and it presents an opportunity to dovetail these efforts with a broader regional re-development strategy that highlights the enormous value that these assets present.

Among the steps that have been taken are the following:

- The creation of a Chicago Wilderness (CW) Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV) in 2004 as the “spatial expression” of CW’s *Biodiversity Recovery Plan*. This vision was drawn in broad brushstrokes, but it established the principle that in addition to large swatches of the Indiana Dunes, Moraine forest, Hoosier Prairie, and Indian Boundary Prairie ecosystems, the corridors of the Little Calumet River, Grand Calumet River, Trail Creek, Coffee Creek, Salt Creek, Thorn Creek, and Kankakee River could serve as major connecting corridors.
- The CW Green Infrastructure Vision map was used as a major framing device in a map prepared especially for the Calumet region in 2008. That map also showed a number of sites of ecological restoration, many of them derived from Lee Botts’s work on *The Restoration Revolution in Northwest Indiana*. The map also depicted the Chicago Lake Plain and Valparaiso Moraine regions, and showed an approximate regional boundary that subsequently served as the study area for the *Feasibility Study*.
- The CW Green Infrastructure Vision was incorporated into the CMAP’s *Go to 2040 Plan*. A related version was also incorporated in the NIRPC *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan*.
- In 2012, CWs refined its Green Infrastructure Vision map. This “2.0” version was produced by the Conservation Fund. It used mapping tools to layer relevant data to determine areas with the most potential to create conservation corridors between critical conservation areas, or “hubs”. This GIV 2.0 reinforced the corridors identified in the first version, but it added large swatches of potential land in the moraine forest region, important not only for its conservation potential but because this region stands in the path of future urban development.
- In 2014, some of the region’s key conservation partners gathered together as the Calumet Land Conservation Partnership (CLCP). CLCP includes Save the Dunes, The Nature Conservancy, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, NIRPC, Openlands, Metropolitan Planning Council, National Parks Conservation Association, Field Museum, and Great Lakes Audubon. With the GIV 2.0 as a starting point, this group made further recommendations to delineate sub-regional conservation focus areas, and began to make progress in coordinated conservation action planning in four of them: the Indiana Dunes ecosystem, the East Branch of the Little Calumet River, Hobart Marsh, and the swathe of ridge and swale landscape from Lake Calumet to Miller Woods that the group dubbed the “Heart of Calumet”. An important start has been made to assess conservation targets, identify potential lands for acquisition, places to focus restoration for greatest impact, opportunities to coordinate management activities, and, importantly, fresh ways to integrate community heritage and aspirations into conservation planning.
- A new bi-state sustainable development non-profit, the Calumet Collaborative, began operation in 2017, with regional conservation and the support of the Heritage Area project as two of its four key initiatives. In 2018, the Collaborative coordinated the creation of Conservation Action Plans in three additional sub-geographies: Hoosier Prairie, Moraine Forest, and Ambler Flatwoods. These were initially called “gap” areas because they did not figure in the NOAA-approved 2012 Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) process, nor were they part of CLCP’s initial conservation focus areas. The process developed a common language used across all three areas, grouping potential lands for acquisition into three strategic sub-types: management and restoration of lands already under conservation management; lands which buffer or connect these “core” lands; and lands that incorporate conservation into municipal or utility decision-making (e.g. via rights-of-way). The conservation priorities maps were presented in a globally-recognized “Conservation Action Planning” format and with a language that could be used to align the other sub-geographies in the region as discussed here.

- Meanwhile, in 2015, five agencies in Illinois with jurisdiction over 23 important sites listed on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory established the Millennium Reserve Conservation Compact. The entities include the Chicago Park District, Forest Preserves of Cook County, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission,, and The Nature Conservancy. The partners have identified compatible, shared, and coordinated conservation outcomes for these sites, and will undertake protection and restoration activities necessary to provide effective long-term conservation. The Compact calls specifically for the development and implementation of a regional habitat management plan for wetland wildlife habitats, with a focus on deep marshes and the restoration of hydrology and vegetation sufficient to support marsh-nesting birds.
- Further Conservation Action Plans (CAPs) are nearing completion for other critical sub-geographies including the Cal-Sag Channel/Little Calumet/Grand Calumet corridor in Illinois and the West Branch of the Little Calumet in Indiana.

To sum up, some form of conservation planning is now occurring in at least 10 sub-geographies in the Calumet region. The map below shows the sub-geographies from west to east, including Little Calumet River in Illinois, Calumet Conservation Compact (formerly Millennium Reserve Conservation Compact), Heart of the Calumet, Hoosier Prairie, West Branch of the Little Calumet River, Hobart Marsh and Deep River, Moraine Forest, Indiana Dunes, East Branch of the Little Calumet River, and Ambler Flatwoods.

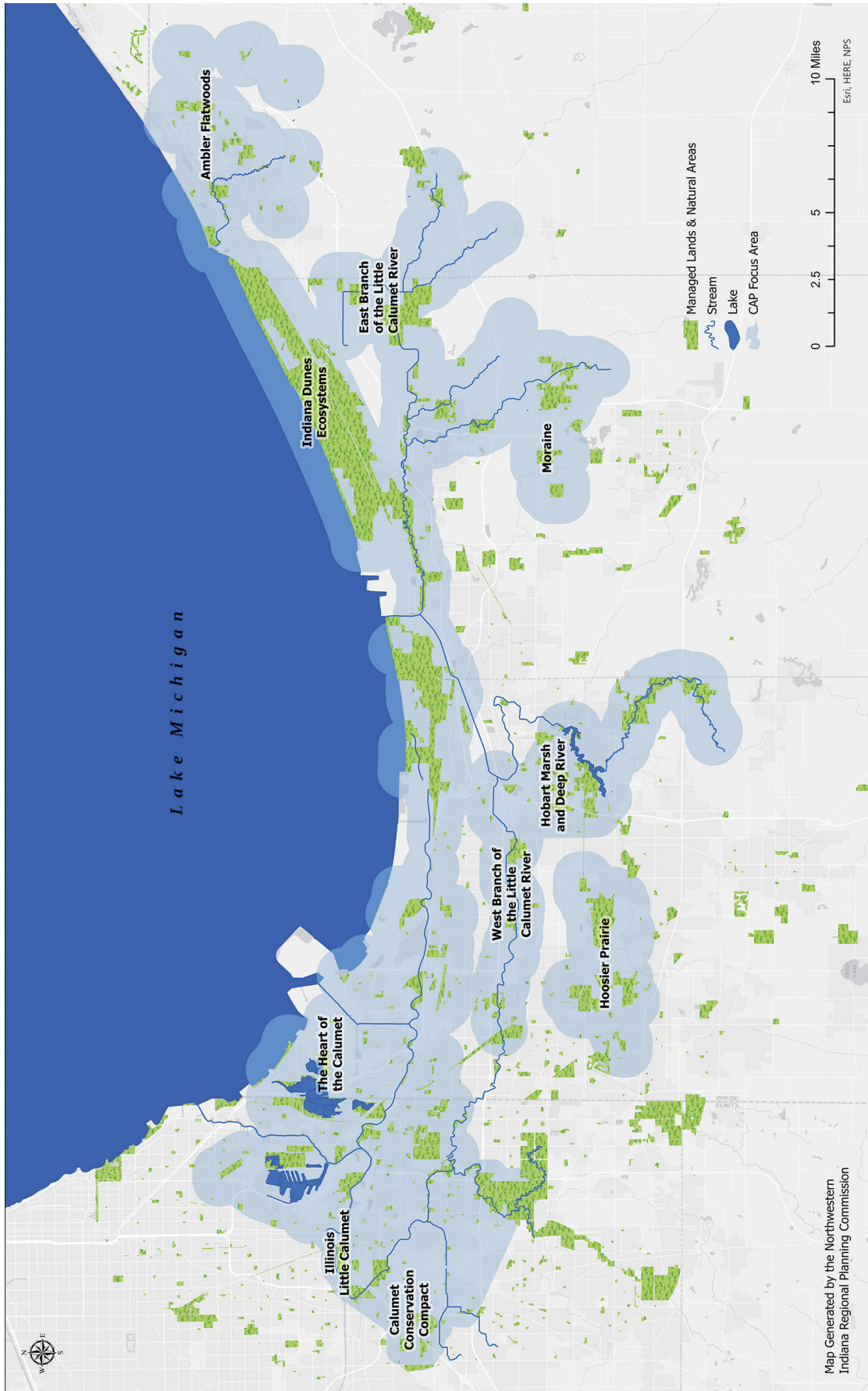
In each sub-geography the following critical steps have been taken:

- The threats to conservation have been identified;
- Assets to strengthen conservation targets have been identified;
- Work has been undertaken to mobilize the assets to meet the threats;
- Broad scale conservation action plans have been developed; and
- Planning and conservation work in the geographies is on a path to sustainability.

The Conservation Action Plans that summarize the status and direction of conservation planning in the Calumet region are available as public-facing documents on the Calumet Collaborative's website (calumetcollaborative.org).

Some high-level threats to conservation are common across this landscape, including invasive species, habitat loss and fragmentation, and climate change. Partners have been driven by the awareness that environmental conservation in the Calumet region is especially conditioned by its relationship with neighboring communities. For conservation successes to be achieved, community participation and engagement needs to be integrated earlier in the process. It is also clear that there are opportunities to engage communities in different and deeper ways. And here, the environmental conservation work really meshes with the purpose and pathway of the Heritage Area: the epic story of this region's ongoing and often vexing relationship with nature is nationally significant, and so are the intersectional, inventive, and resolute solutions to future relationships with nature that are always being devised.

Map 2.1—Conservation Action Plan Focus Areas



The opportunity now exists to further coordinate this planning. The outcomes of each sub-geography can be gathered into an overall regional conservation framework plan, such that the activities proposed can be better prioritized. The Heritage Area process represents a major opportunity to contribute to this work, especially insofar as it explicitly connects the internal work of the conservation community to a community-facing dialogue relating conservation to other high priority regional goals.

2.1.3 Provide improved access to existing natural areas

Improving access to natural areas is increasingly stated as a value that goes beyond the conservation community. For example, the business-oriented Northwest Indiana Forum's *Strategy for Economic Transformation* states that "enhancing quality-of-place amenities, such as arts, culture, entertainment, transit, agricultural lands, parks and recreation, and green space, is a growing economic development priority across the nation." The *2012 NW Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report* notes "though the region is exceptionally blessed with natural areas readily accessible to residents and visitors, and more tourism focus is placed on them, neither residents nor visitors take full advantage of these natural amenities." "Access" involves attention to public transportation and "active transportation" means for the differently abled to enjoy natural areas, ways to creatively engage communities adjacent to natural areas beyond volunteer stewardship. "Access" also means "perceptual access", such that the region's assets are broadly known, appreciated, and enjoyed.

Wonderful guidance on access to the Lake Michigan shore is provided by the *Marquette Plan*, which sets an ambitious goal of making 75% of the shore accessible to the public. As that accessibility is enhanced, the plan lays the groundwork for the Marquette Greenway, "51 miles of continuous trail along the shoreline that is tied to other trail systems developing in the region, various waterway and greenway systems, with diverse surface materials, trailheads, lookout points, interpretive areas, and activity nodes." Enhancements are also underway at Steelworkers Park in Chicago.

While South Shore railroad improvements are a factor in improving access to the lakeshore, plans also call out the need to provide north-south transit access, and the need for better boat launches, both along the lake and on tributary streams (such as at Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve and other locations along the Calumet River, and at the Portage Marina).

Exemplary pathways that provide a link to regional heritage have been created at Hammond and Whiting, and at Portage. Other local efforts include those in Gary, where the Gary Green Link plan of a dozen years ago still provides a fund of excellent ideas that may be relevant to the CHA effort: "One of the goals of this Master Plan is to develop a natural resources greenway and recreation corridor, the Gary Green Link, which will ring the City of Gary, connecting the Grand Calumet River, the Little Calumet River, and the Lake Michigan shoreline."

As new conservation lands are established, some of them embedded in former industrial spaces or in regions not previously thought of as "natural areas", some creative approaches will be needed. For example, access to the Lake Calumet region was stated as a priority by the Millennium Reserve Steering Committee: "The opportunity for Lake Calumet and adjacent lands to be made publicly accessible is one of the premier desires and focus areas for the Millennium Reserve Steering Committee. It represents one of the best opportunities to advance all three of the primary purposes of Millennium Reserve (ecological, economic, and community development)." The committee made special mention of the opportunity created by the new Pullman National Monument, which "will undoubtedly increase visitation to Chicago's South Side and will connect many urban residents with a "neighborhood" national park. Beyond preserving history and spurring business growth, readily accessible national parks serve as gateways for urban populations to the larger park system, the great outdoors, our culture, and our past."

2.1.4 Restore, manage, and promote healthy watershed systems

The development of the Calumet region's industrial/commercial infrastructure involved significant re-orientation of the region's hydrology as well as severe impairments to water quality. Streams have been widened, deepened, and straightened, and significant flood control structures have been built in some places. Canals have been built to connect the Mississippi drainage with the Great Lakes, and the continental divide between the two great sub-continental drainage systems was essentially moved. Impairments to natural water flow have severely affected wetlands.

At the same time, the efforts to clean up some of these systems are also a part of the national significance of the region. A number of the ten sub-geographies noted above center on riparian-oriented conservation corridors, and to some extent, the conservation planning for these areas accounts for aquatic species, water quality, and other water-oriented issues. In some instances, such as the Grand Calumet River AOC, restoration of the stream has created opportunities for terrestrial conservation in adjacent lands.

Coordinating efforts such as the Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Partnership and the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative, and planning initiatives like Great Rivers Chicago, are enhancing collaboration. The *Marquette Plan's* call to complete watershed management plans for all relevant sub-watersheds is gradually being met.

Recreational groups like the Northwest Indiana Paddling Alliance have taken an active role in advocacy for clean water. The Lake Michigan National Water Trail and Kankakee River National Water Trail and the new African American Heritage Water Trail from Beaubien Woods to Robbins has put the spotlight not only on recreation, but conservation of the resource.

As much of the region lies in the Lake Chicago plain, older cities have combined stormwater systems, and residential flooding is a widespread issue, the interests of green infrastructure approaches for stormwater management have increasingly converged with interests of the conservation community to enhance biodiversity and create stream-based conservation corridors.

2.1.5 Promote the protection of coastal and estuarine areas and waters

Regional planning documents are highly sensitive to the grand fact that Lake Michigan borders the region to the north. NIRPC's *NWI 2050 Plan* is representative:

Lake Michigan represents Northwest Indiana's most prominent natural asset. A 45-mile coastline defines the northernmost boundary for the region and remains the only Great Lakes border for Indiana. The benefits of Lake Michigan are both recreational and commercial. The coastline provides NWI residents ample outdoor recreational opportunities with pristine beaches, parks, and marinas lining the shore. Additionally, the lake is an essential and abundant source of freshwater, not only for region residents, but including critically-important industrial centers that require large water bodies for production and shipping.

Both Illinois and Indiana now have vigorous Coastal Zone Management Programs that prioritize conservation of lands draining into the lake, as well as the protection of cultural and natural resources in the coastal region.

2.1.6 Develop a stewardship model for bi-state Calumet that includes measures of success for both ecosystem restoration and volunteer engagement; connect environmental stewardship to health/well-being activities

The Calumet region has a rich tradition of volunteer stewardship. For nearly twenty years, Calumet Outdoors (formerly Calumet Stewardship Initiative or CSI) existed as a means to link organizations who engage volunteers in ecological restoration. Calumet Outdoors is itself a voluntary entity, and has moved through several attempts to define its role and measure its impact. Key partners within CSI convened the Calumet Summits of 2013 and 2015. At the 2013 Summit, when called on to “think big”, participants named the creation of an NHA as the top priority. At the 2015 Summit, “heritage” was explicitly incorporated as a theme of the convening, along with “stewardship” and “education”. In 2018, CSI was formally linked to the Calumet Heritage Partnership (CHP), as one of CHP’s “groups”, and took on its new name of Calumet Outdoors.

Two key themes emerged from the 2015 Calumet Summit that develop the connections between “heritage” and “stewardship”. The first theme aims to deepen and expand the existing path already set by Calumet Outdoors to encourage volunteers, coordinate efforts, and track progress. The second theme suggests crafting a new stewardship model to better engage communities in the work and, in so doing, find new ways to enhance quality of life and to care for nature.

The bulleted points below, drawn from the *Calumet Summit 2015 Report*, focus on deepening and expanding the current stewardship model:

- Develop a stewardship model for bi-state Calumet that includes measures of success for both ecosystem restoration and volunteer engagement. This includes:
 - Identifying and promoting a suite of volunteer opportunities that are utilized by multiple organizations committed to promoting these opportunities through their volunteer networks
 - Building the capacity of volunteer leaders to help with long-term maintenance of priority habitats)
 - Engaging a diverse mix of participants in experiential events to strengthen community and civic connections to priority habitats in the bi-state Calumet landscape.
- Create opportunities for volunteers to travel around the region and make connections
- Promote micro-stewardship to allow volunteers to find smaller project to take charge
- Recruit more site stewards
- Communicate with volunteers, ecologists, community partnerships of different types (e.g. region-wide, inter-agency, new stakeholders)
- Increase outreach and engagement using a variety of strategies (e.g. volunteer opportunity clearinghouse, workshops, community service, social media, tapping industry employees)
- Establish Every Kid Outdoors program to foster youth engagement and help them become environmental stewards, now and in the future
- Develop the CSI website as a ‘one stop shop’ for all recreational happenings within the Calumet. This online resource would help solidify a regional identity and provide a shared space for recreational news and developments in both Indiana and Illinois.

- Work with land managers and hold discussions focused on developing strategies for Dan Ryan Woods, Hobart Marsh, Miller Woods, Roxana Marsh, and William Powers/Eggers Woods. Common threads in all the conversations follow: Build Partnerships, Community Outreach & Engagement, Branding & Regional Connections, Address Invasive Species, Sensitive Ecologies
 - Spotlight new and unique things communities are doing
 - Spotlight tried and true efforts to support stewardship
 - Designate Hobart Marsh as an international wetland
 - Rename the west side of Hobart
 - Put together a collection of stewardship best practices (e.g., see the Coastal Management Program)
 - Get the region on at least one list of distinction to help establish a sense of place and pride with the natural area
 - Repurpose invasive species
 - Connect Oak Savannah Trail to developed area to the north

A second set of recommendations from the Summit drew attention to new ways of engaging the community that move beyond the traditional volunteer “work day”. They include:

- Connect stewardship to health (e.g. yoga followed by volunteering, monitoring calories burned).
- Create opportunities for kids to enjoy nature, learn, and be active, like kayaking, hiking, or biking.
- Get kids to know the area so they can love it! Parks create better citizens - use them for education as well as fun. Use unstructured play and games, and give lots of information along the way. Focus on outdoor classroom and stewardship training together.
- Partner with healthcare providers and insurance, making the logical connection between health and education; Tourism Departments and Chambers of Commerce since the outdoors can also be used (with care) to produce economic benefits; and organizations like Rotaries/Elks/ Lions Clubs which often look for local projects to support via funding and volunteers.
- Long-term goal: Develop a vision of outdoor recreation that encourages visitation, physical activity and interaction with nature in the open spaces and on the trails within the Calumet Region.
- Blend Stewardship and Recreation: Focus on repurposing natural lands for recreation that also creates support for preservation and stewardship; Promote stewardship on the rivers by engaging youth in fun stewardship activities; Improve water quality and access for play in the region’s bodies of water
- Make New Connections: Increase river access for communities that currently do not have access to local bodies of water; Focus on untapped opportunities in urban and developed areas; Re-use the thousand plus acres of City of Chicago owned land for outdoor recreation; Help people make “connections” and “feel alive” through recreation!

2.1.7 Reduce the impact of light pollution on the region's environment

As a region where hearth fires lighted up the night and where industrial enterprise thrums 24/7, it should come as no surprise that public comments on the *Feasibility Study* pointed out the need to show light itself is a major way that nature has been reworked in the region. And characteristically for a region where natural areas are juxtaposed with industry, the Calumet region contains a community that is a leader in the “dark sky” movement: Beverly Shores is one of only 22 IDA Certified International Dark Sky Communities. The town’s location as a key site in the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival is a reminder that the dark sky movement advances conservation connectivity even as it clears the air for nighttime observation of the stars.

2.2 Cultural Heritage/Historic Preservation

A fundamental theme of the Calumet Heritage Area is that it is a cultural crossroads. Its extraordinary geographical connections to the rest of North America made it a hub of migration, encounter, exchange, conflict, and cooperation almost from the moment the glaciers receded 10,000 years ago until today. Successive peoples in the region interacted with each other and the region’s natural endowments to produce distinctive cultural landscapes across time. But as important as some of these moments to the history of the U.S. were, many have been obliterated by the imprint of succeeding generations. Some physical remnants of past cultures remain—as archives and museum objects, archeology, historic sites, buildings, infrastructure, entire districts—and so, too, do the memories and aspirations of people who still call the region home. While some significant gains have been made to preserve these stories for future generations, much is yet to be done, and a CHA is an excellent way to move that work forward.

Those involved with the CHA effort believe that a sustainable future should take off from a firm grounding in heritage, culture, and tradition. Here, “cultural heritage” concerns are fused with “historic preservation”, partly for efficiency’s sake, but also to capture this sense that rootedness in the past is a living community asset that informs plans for the future.

The region has had many pasts that could fall under the purview of the CHA. But it is important to underscore a key point made in the *Feasibility Study*: “Today’s Calumet landscape—taken as an industrial, environmental, and community whole—shows how American life changed during the boom years of industrialization that followed the Civil War and how changes continued through booms and busts in the economy to the present day” (p. 9). A particular interpretive lens should be focused on this period, and can offer a reminder that as elements of the region’s technological infrastructure become obsolete, they may still have strong value for telling the story of the place. Other efforts are calling attention to this nationally significant heritage, ranging from the Whiting Pierogi Fest landing on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* in 2015, to the recently dedicated African American Heritage National Water Trail in Illinois. Recent national conferences by the Vernacular Architecture Forum in 2015 and the Society for Industrial Archeology in 2019 have featured the historic resources of the Calumet region, and point to the potential to make the field trips and resources devised for conference attendees available to the general public on a regular basis.

The current *Calumet Voices/National Stories* exhibit, created by the Field Museum and fifteen local partner organizations, demonstrates some of the “everyday” objects and artifacts at hand that interpret the region’s history and connect to national significance. Partnering organizations, pictured on the following page, are located throughout the bi-state Calumet region.

CHAPTER TWO



Barker Mansion



Historic Pullman Foundation



Brauer Museum of Art, Valparaiso University



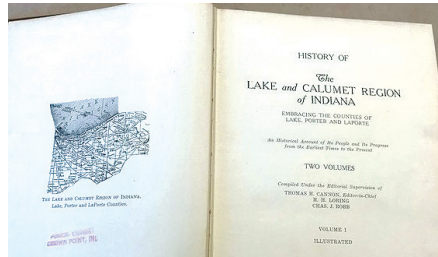
Cedar Lake Historical Association



Gary Public Library and Cultural Center, Local History Room



Calumet Heritage Partnership, Acme Collection



Crown Point Community Library



People for Community Recovery



Southeast Chicago Historical Museum



Northwest Indiana Steel Heritage Project



Pullman National Monument



Blue Island Historical Society



Robbins History Museum



Hammond Public Library, Local History Room



Lakeshore People's Museum



Westchester Township History Museum



Porter County Museum

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2.2.1 Identify and showcase the industrial, natural, and community heritage of the bi-state region through education, festivals, and other cultural activities

This goal aligns with *Indiana's Cultural Resources Management Plan, 2013-2019*, and its goal to “increase public awareness, public understanding, and public support for preservation and archeology.” It also aligns with *Illinois Heritage: Past, Present, Future Plan* and its goal to “make the connection between historic resources and quality of life, tourism attraction, and sense of place in outreach efforts.” The Indiana plan speaks eloquently to the need to connect:

Far more people than just preservationists and archaeologists have a stake in Indiana's heritage and cultural resources. Heritage tourists seek experiences that can't be duplicated in other places, while many businesspeople and hospitality workers depend on the dollars these visitors bring to their communities. Nature advocates, environmentalists, and outdoor enthusiasts share a conservation ethic with preservationists. Historians, genealogists, and researchers rely on historic records and documents, but they also learn from the buildings, structures, and sites that tell us about the past. Many developers, realtors, and contractors derive some portion of their livelihoods from the historic buildings in their communities. All across Indiana, people reside in historic housing and neighborhoods, children attend historic schools, and employees work in historic buildings. The preservation movement needs to be as broad and inclusive as possible if preservation is to become a mainstream Hoosier value.

Both plans offer some concrete thoughts on how to make preservation work more relevant, and, indeed, it would be strongly advised for the CHA effort to have excellent links to both statewide Preservation Offices.

Many organizations and individuals have worked to increase the relevance of cultural history and historic preservation at the regional scale. The work done in the *Feasibility Study* to inventory resources and sites across the region and the creation of the *Calumet Voices/National Stories* exhibit by the CHP's Calumet Curators group provide a strong indication of what an CHA can do. The new Calumet Heritage Area events calendar is a simple but powerful way for the CHA to begin to coordinate activities across the region (see <https://www.calumetheritagearea.org/calendar.html>). This calendar can be used to create a greater level of coordination with regional efforts in the future.

Better coordination and interpretation of the Calumet will fulfill the thoughts and visions expressed in regional planning documents and at regional visioning tables. These visions include:

- **Interpretive trails.** In 2011, the *Future of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Report* called for broadening “the presence of the National Park Service by creating a Heritage Trail of sites that tell important stories of science, nature, labor history, industry and people leading from Chicago to Northwest Indiana.” The 2015 Calumet Summit refined the idea – to connect the new Pullman National Monument with Indiana Dunes National Park. This “Pullman Porter” trail would “tie the Pullman Porters on the South Side of Chicago to Porter County, Indiana. This trail would highlight the ecological heritage, cultural diversity, and labor history in the Calumet Region. It also would bring attention to the rich biodiversity such as we find in Wolf Lake and the Grand Calumet Marsh. And, depending on the route, there are options to stop along the way and enjoy a porter beer at one of the region's many microbreweries.”
- **African American heritage.** As large a presence as African Americans are in the region, and as significant some of the existing historic sites and markers are—for example, the A. Philip Randolph National Pullman Porter Museum, the Jan Ton farm and other underground railroad sites, the Midtown Gary Historical project—there is a sense that the African American contribution to the region is under-interpreted. In this regard, it is also worth underscoring the opportunities to support and collaborate with Black Metropolis National Heritage Area effort underway north of the CHA in Chicago.

- *Activities in the agricultural region.* The Feasibility Study makes the point that the industrial Calumet area is closely bordered by a rural landscape, where farms, small towns, and recreational opportunities developed in close relationship to the more urbanized area. Today these places present opportunities for greater interpretation and potential development as recreational sites. LaPorte County's Countywide Land Development Plan (2008), for example, makes a special appeal to preserve the country's remaining vineyards, orchards, and other fruit production areas. Lake County's Open Space Plan has objectives to develop the Buckley Homestead and the Grist Mill at Deep River to further interpret this aspect of the county's heritage.
- *Professional and volunteer development.* The Illinois Heritage: Past, Present, Future Plan offers some specific ideas: "Improve education and training of professionals, students, and the public on historic preservation techniques; Provide professional development through state preservation conferences and regional training; Reach out to youth programs at educational institutions; Create a preservation training directory; Incorporate enhanced use of new media and information technologies; Hold public workshops on restoration and maintenance techniques."

2.2.2 Protect, conserve, and restore significant landmark sites, including homes, commercial and religious structures, public buildings, and planned industrial communities

A long list of cultural resources was prepared for the *Feasibility Study*. During this process, it became clear that a number of communities in the region have yet to conduct historic resources studies, much less do the necessary work to appropriately designate the sites and afford them available legal protections. Even when these legal protections are created, they may not be long-term, as CHP knows from experience, as the "Historic Steel Resources Along the Calumet River" listed on Landmarks Illinois's 10 most endangered structures list in 2004 have all now been removed. A similar story could be told about a Frank Lloyd Wright home in downtown Gary. Places like the historic Marktown community are in perpetual danger of decay or outright removal.

The *Marquette Plan* speaks to some of the urban development reasons why it is important not to give up:

In spite of the deteriorated state many of Northwest Indiana's vacant buildings are in, plenty of buildings and structures remain that still possess value. It is important to highlight that many of these vacant structures possess architectural features that are significant and worth preserving. For buildings where rehabilitation is a viable option, historic preservation or adaptive reuse of the structure should be prioritized in an effort to retain the rich and diverse architectural qualities of the region's legacy cities. Historic preservation strategies stand as preferable to demolition as a default strategy, which not only can prove to be an expensive undertaking in a tight fiscal environment, but also can result in the loss of the types of architectural assets that can drive neighborhood and downtown revitalization. As highlighted in the "Rightsizing Cities Initiative," when communities combine preservation values with planning efforts, the opportunity exists to leverage historic buildings, districts, and neighborhoods as key drivers for rightsizing and revitalization efforts. This process can be furthered by accessing preservation incentives, community resources and inventorying neighborhood assets...when green deconstruction is considered, materials and architectural details can be repurposed in other projects recommended by *Marquette Plan* Frameworks such as arts and cultural districts and lakefront recreational areas.

The situation calls for concerted knowledge and action at the regional scale, and some regional plans have already made this point. These include:

- *Designation on the National Register of Historic Places.* One reason to consider properties for designation on the National Register of Historic Places is they may become eligible for state and federal rehabilitation funding. Robertsdale's Davis Avenue Historic District is an example.

- **Other designations.** Sites that do not qualify for the National Register of Historic Places could still be identified for state or local designation, especially because within the CHA framework, they may now add to the broader interpretive framework. As the *Marquette Plan* points out, the Hessville neighborhood in Hammond, “though lacking a large number of structures or districts that would be eligible for the National Register, still maintains a high density of housing and walkable streets.” Other features may also qualify as national civil or mechanical engineering landmarks.
- **Restoration/revitalization.** Some places have historic resources—some of them already appropriately designated—that could contribute to broader-scale revitalization efforts. For example, the Gary Downtown/East Lakefront sub-area contains five historic districts (Horace Mann, West 5th Apartments, Gary City Center, Combs, and Eskilson) and one historic property (Ralph Waldo Emerson School) that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As the *Marquette Plan* points out, “Though many of these districts and buildings are threatened by blight and disinvestment, their traditional street grid pattern, access to transportation infrastructure, and walkability, serve as potential drivers for revitalization.” The Plan identifies some framework tools that could be applied within the district, including “historic resource rehabilitation, public-private partnerships, development-design standards, and utilization of incentives that encourage historic preservation. As resources within the district are in various states of disrepair, a phased approach to rehabilitation is recommended. This should begin with prioritized stabilization of significant resources to preserve their architectural character, allowing them to remain eligible for financial incentives”.
- **Interpretation.** Planning processes like *Positioning Pullman*, the *Marquette Plan*, and the *Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Long-range Interpretation Plan* set the stage for creating significant sub-regional identities that will create strong interpretive possibilities.

2.2.3 Identify, protect, and preserve important archeological sites in the region

The Feasibility Study’s focus on the industrial period in the Calumet does not preclude a functioning CHA’s exploration of the region’s deeper past. While nature has been pretty thoroughly re-worked throughout the area, significant archeological sites remain. Recent studies by the Cook County Forest Preserves and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (now the Indiana Dunes National Park) catalogue sites and raise interpretive possibilities. It should also be pointed out that “archeological” work does not only need to be confined to the deepest past. There are some other examples to consider:

- **Marine archeology.** Key shipwrecks in Indiana waters of Lake Michigan have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The JD Marshall Preserve was established to protect the cultural values embodied by the shipwreck. According to the *Marquette Plan*, “the preserve boundary includes the shipwreck and associated debris fields and serves to promote the understanding and appreciation of cultural values by the people of the State of Indiana.”
- **Studies of 19th and 20th century domestic and work life.** Archeological techniques have been used to recover elements of everyday life in the Pullman community. These and other excavations offer tremendous potential for future interpretation of places in the region.
- **Industrial archeology.** This field involves the study of industrial sites, structures, artifacts, and technology, and is particularly germane to the themes and resources of the Calumet region. An excellent demonstration of that fact were the tours of the region conducted by the Society for Industrial Archeology at its annual conference in Chicago in 2019, focusing on steel, oil, Pullman, bridges, and the Indiana Harbor Canal.

2.2.4 Build a bi-state regional dialogue

The Heritage Area planning process itself offers opportunities to bring together key actors in historic preservation across the state line. The Calumet region offers particularly fertile ground for cooperation between entities such as Indiana Landmarks, Landmarks Illinois, and Preservation Chicago, supported and coordinated with the work of local history museums, historical sites, and historical societies.



Steelworkers Park, former U.S. Steel orewall transformed into a climbing wall. Sarah Coulter

2.3 Recreation

The Chicago region is marked by pioneering approaches to recreation and conservation in an urban setting. Woven throughout the region is an incredibly compelling and growing network of hiking and biking trails. The Major Taylor Trail in Chicago commemorates a pioneering African American cyclist. The Big Marsh Bike Park presents biking opportunities next to a newly restored marsh (home to bald eagles), and adjacent to a landfill and an abandoned industrial facility. The new Kankakee National Water Trail bounds the geography of the CHA to the south and is paralleled by the Lake Michigan Water Trail to the North. The recreational possibilities of the region seem endless, and it is worth stating, insofar as they attract visitors to the region, and stimulate economic evolution as discussed in Section 2.6 below. In the heritage area context, “recreation” tends to mean activities that are either classified as “outdoor recreation” (walking, biking, fishing, hunting, birding, swimming, etc.) or “historic” tourism (historic sites, museums, etc.). There are many other things that people do with their leisure time that for the most part are outside the scope of this group. The primary focus here is on outdoor recreation.

2.3.1 Continue to develop the region’s trails and improve the connections between them

A remarkable set of improvements to the regional trail network has been unfolding within the framework of NIRPC’s *Greenways & Blueways Plan* and CMAP’s 2050 planning process. Other trail planning organizations, such as Openlands, Active Transportation Alliance, and Northwest Indiana Paddling Alliance, provide key insights, staff support, and volunteer energy. County level agencies, including Forest Preserves of Cook County and Lake County Parks and Recreation, have recently conducted significant planning processes. Some new trails like the Cal-Sag Trail specifically tie to regional heritage themes, but for the most part the current trail planning work is focused on completing key links in the system rather than heritage interpretation. Some preliminary themes for the Focus Group to consider where a CHA would add value do emerge, however. They include:

- **Interstate cooperation.** The *Greenways & Blueways Plan* makes specific reference for the need to “review bi-state trail planning initiatives including the development of the tristate Marquette Greenway” with partner agencies like CMAP and the Southwestern Michigan Metropolitan Planning Commission. The *Greenways & Blueways Plan* also suggests consulting with groups like ATA to garner support. Such cooperation could be a coordinating role for the NHA, which could also ensure that interpretive priorities remain central to the trail planning.

- *Specific trail ideas.* The Marquette Greenway is an example of a specific trail idea with long pedigree (extending back to the first *Marquette Plan* of 2005) that is meant not only to forge transportation connections, but by virtue of the near lakeshore routing through industrial and dunes geographies, to interpret the landscape and heritage as well. Other trail ideas with interpretive possibilities surfaced in visioning sessions, such as a “historic trail between Hyde Park and the Dunes [which] would pass through many sites that have tales to tell in the history of science, ecology and geology, the Great Migration, railroads, industry and labor” (*Future of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Report*, p. 35). A similar conceptual idea surfaced at the 2015 Calumet Summit, in the immediate wake of the declaration of the Pullman National Monument, to create a “Pullman-Porter” trail from Pullman to the Indiana Dunes National Park near Porter. In these ideas, the NHA could serve as a primary framing device for the transportation feature.
- *Links to the local scale.* A special feature of the NHA is the way that local stories and places can be gathered with other local stories to tell a story of national significance at the regional scale. As individual municipalities come “on line” with active transportation plans and projects, strong opportunities exist to link local sites of heritage interest into the regional network.
- *Best practices:* Trails plans typically do not hold regional heritage as top of mind, but individual features overlap with other NHA goals, such as broader questions of access, wayfinding and signage, and conservation functionality.

2.3.2 Improve existing and develop new recreational sites

The NHA effort began in 1999 with a National Park Service Resource Study to determine whether a Calumet Ecological Park would be feasible. At the time, NPS accounted for the available resources and determined that among the management alternatives, there was not enough in the region to create a National Recreation Area. One wonders if that same conclusion would be reached today. It is worth considering how many new sites of recreation—each of them utterly distinctive and part of the case made for the national significance of the CHA—have appeared in the region in the past 20 years: a new National Monument and a newly named National Park; three golf courses (Lost Marsh, Harborside, and Centennial) now sit atop landfill; the Big Marsh Bike Park opened on land once ticketed to be a landfill; Steelworkers Park in Chicago and the Hammond Lakefront Park, both excellent birding locations on lakefill on former industrial sites; the Portage Riverwalk and Lakefront was still being cleaned up two decades ago; and ecological restoration have enhanced the ecological value of the region; and the waters, while not clean enough to swim in, allow at least paddling activities.

The *Feasibility Study* encourages thinking on recreational sites beyond trails plans, like an enhanced Visitors Center at the Dunes or “Greenway Centers” at key trailhead locations. It is worth considering other possible “gateway” locations as part of an emerging network of regional sites that may also be conceived as anchor points in the Heritage Area.

The plan review also surfaces new concepts in recreational thinking that certainly dovetails with some of the concerns of the NHA. These include:

- *Cultural relevance.* New concepts in recreational trail planning include making the efforts more culturally relevant. Many “creative placemaking” ideas fall within this realm
- *Sensitivity to archeological sites.*
- *Convergence of ecological ideas with recreational planning.* The *Greenways & Blueways Plan* specifically links trail planning to “conservation corridors”, which are a key feature in “green infrastructure” planning schemes to link core natural areas with each other. Trails should model best landscaping practices, including native plantings and invasive species management, and also offer golden opportunities to interpret these practices to the public. The Calumet Heritage Partnership has made a commitment to join an NPS-led effort to link NHAs to pollinator recovery efforts.
- *Outreach to new audiences.* Potential new audiences include children (via “nature play opportunities”), those with accessibility constraints, and links to healthcare providers.

- *New opportunities for interpretation.* Because of the vigor of ecological restoration activity, for example, on the west side of Gary, it may be possible to think of new environmental education opportunities in existing parks or newly restored natural areas.

2.3.3 Increase access to the Lake Michigan shoreline

The *Marquette Plan* and other efforts to enhance access to the lake shore are discussed in Section 2.1.3 above.

2.3.4 Promote tourism and ecotourism

The renaming of the Indiana Dunes National Park (the state's number one tourist destination) comes at an excellent time for the developing CHA effort. The *2012 NW Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report* looks for a "leadership role for the National Lakeshore in integrating the park more deeply into economic and community development arenas. This can serve as a starting place for a serious, thoughtful effort to make the Dunes central to the identity and image of Northwest Indiana." Issues of "identity and image" are the sweet spots for NHAs.

One way to develop this connection between regional identity and the magnetic attraction of the dunes is to enhance the presence of the NHA at the Visitors Center. If the Center develops as a regional "gateway", what better place to frame the regional story? Efforts already underway to develop a Native American Cultural Trail on site at the Visitors Center invite further exploration of the region's heritage and also indicates a potentially replicable model for trail development rooted in cultural history and knowledge. The NHA has a potentially critical role to play in developing interpretive materials, tours, fostering further conversation about creating "culture-nature" trails, and perhaps leading an effort to create a regional-scale "nature-industry" interpretive trail (such as the one that anchors the visitor experience in the Ruhr area of Germany.)

Other tourism gateways could play a similar role. Such places include the Indiana Welcome Center in Hammond, Lake Etta, the casinos, downtown Whiting, and Pullman National Monument.

It will be important to determine what the potential interpretive role will be at the "Greenway Centers" proposed in the *Greenways & Blueways Plan*, which could "increase public access to conservation lands and provide ecotourism magnets" (p. 53). A specific task that could benefit from NHA involvement on the way to developing the "eco-tourism infrastructure" at the Centers is to "identify and map points of interest for recreational users and tourists" (p. 160).

2.4 The Arts

In a region so clearly defined by heavy industry, those who are unfamiliar with the Calumet may be surprised to discover the flourishing arts community and practice in the region. A "Working List of Arts Organizations and Institutions" developed for and distributed at the 2014 Calumet Heritage Conference focused on Arts and the Heritage Area found 66 arts venues, collectives, companies, and centers; college/university arts programs and facilities; and supporting organizations. Researchers who put the list together found that: "1) the arts practice in the Calumet region is simultaneously broadly dispersed throughout the region and concentrated in vibrant pockets, especially in areas where the arts are supported by local government or institutions of higher learning; 2) artists have their creative networks but often feel separated from other pockets of artistic activity by social and political boundaries; and 3) youth art and repurposed or found art are important categories of practice.

The arts tradition in the Calumet region has deep roots, and frequently takes its cues from the compelling landscape of nature, industry, and the community's engagement with it. Poets, artists, musicians, and dramatists played a key role in the effort to create a Dunes National Park a century ago. Labor and environmental struggles frequently figure in works of art. The mingling of cultures in the region brings constant new life and forms of artistic expression to the scene. And it is not just the "scene", but the sounds of the region as well that have blended into its rich musical tradition.



"Tribute to the Past", Roman Villarreal. Steelworkers Park. Lisa Cotner.

The close identification of the arts with a particular place is a key feature in the relatively recent emergence of the "placemaking" movement. As a geographer once put it, "A region is a medal cast in the likeness of its people." NHAs are particularly well-suited to capture this regional personality, to draw it to the attention of residents and visitors, to enrich their lives, pose questions, and draw out responses. The movement is gathering steam in the Calumet region, so much so that statements like this one by Roman Villarreal, artist and former steelworker, no longer seem far-fetched: "Art is the new steel."

An NHA could add value to the great art underway in the Calumet region. By taking account of the existing planning processes and work of arts organizations (such as South Shore Arts or local arts councils), the following goals and priorities in the area of the Arts were identified.

2.4.1 Promote and support the existing folk and fine arts heritage of the region; promote and support artists and arts organizations

Existing plans point to the importance of arts in the region. 2012 NW Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report notes that "Arts and culture, along with charitable giving, enrich the lives of Northwest Indiana residents and visitors" (p. 6). This point was underscored in the 2016 update to the *Indicators Report*: "Placemaking really thrives when anchored by arts and culture. Artists and creatives often serve as the catalysts for reinvigorating abandoned or distressed locales. They generate the type of vibe and activities, which draw in visitors who are looking for unique experiences. A burgeoning creative sector also bolsters job creation, entrepreneurialism and community attachment to place." While vigorous in places, the Arts are still emergent as a coordinated activity at the regional scale. The 2016 update notes, "perhaps Northwest Indiana's only weakness is not marketing its strengths and opportunities more often". An NHA could provide communications, coordination around events, and heritage-specific programming.

Some NHA-relevant programs, plans, and priorities to consider include:

- *Artist financial support.* Proximity to key regional heritage sites and natural areas could be leveraged to support local nearby artists. For example, the Indiana Dunes National Park has an Artist-in-Residence program supported by the Chesterton Art Center.
- *Artspace.* Live/work space for artists has been constructed in Michigan City and Pullman in partnership with “Artspace”. Are there other candidate locations in the region?
- *Exhibit space in “heritage” locations.* Places that attract recreational or heritage tourists can also be venues for art-related exhibits and classes. For example, the grist mill at Deep River County Park houses exhibits and hosts monthly photography classes. The Forest Preserves of Cook County *Recreation Master Plan* called for an expansion of “arts and cultural activities and events” (p. 6). The District has moved forward with an “Art Outside” program, targeted at “arts groups who are interested in the District’s conservation and recreational goals and outdoor spaces; and who feel that their art work – performed or exhibited, taught, or observed would further those goals and/or augment the District’s outdoor environments” (p. 46).
- *Arts districts.* The *Marquette Plan* calls for the creation of arts and culture districts, which can be designated by the Indiana Arts Commission. “Benefits can include increased tourism marketing, economic activity, opportunities for collaboration with the Indiana Artisan Program, and promotional highway signage.” The plan points to several districts in the making, such as Whiting, Gary-Midtown, Gary-Miller, and Michigan City. The *Positioning Pullman* document points out a number of existing and potential roles for the arts community in the Pullman neighborhood, as it develops a strong identity as an arts district.
- *Foster integration of the arts across sectors.* The *2012 NW Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report* goes on to say, “As with many aspects of life in Northwest Indiana, the arts tend to be standalone and would benefit from deeper integration with economic development, community development and public education efforts.” As a step in this direction, the Northwest Indiana Forum identifies the performing arts as one of Northwest Indiana’s target industry clusters (p. 8).

2.4.2 Promote the role of the arts in regional-scale placemaking

As discussed above, there is new energy and new investment in placemaking projects, from the Cal-Sag Trail and placemaking activities in Blue Island, to the neighborhoods in and around the Pullman National Monument, to work of the Chicago Park District to restore and develop its Calumet regional properties, to the work along the Indiana Lakefront, and southward toward the Kankakee River. The NWI Forum’s *Strategy for Economic Transformation* highlights a number of the reasons why such an effort is critical for the region.

Enhancing quality-of-place amenities, such as arts, culture, entertainment, transit, agricultural lands, parks and recreation, and green space, is a growing economic development priority across the nation ... There is growing evidence linking placemaking to successful economic development ... Quality of place is a top consideration for people in choosing where they prefer to live and how communities should approach economic development. For example, two-thirds of all respondents and 74 percent of Millennials responded that investing in schools, transportation choices, and walkable areas is a better way to grow the economy than traditional approaches of recruiting companies... Cities such as Valparaiso, Whiting, Hobart, and Michigan City are making substantial investments in their downtown amenities.

This consideration applies across the Heritage Area's program areas, but it is important to consider ways that the Arts conversation specifically bolsters quality of place. The following provides a few examples:

- *Expand heritage-oriented events.* FairsandFestivals.net, an online festival resource, points to several trends: people are increasingly willing to spend money at craft shows, art fairs and festivals; holidays are especially important times for special events; and a variety of offerings are trending upward, such as music, cultural arts, scrapbooking, jewelry, and digital arts. The Cook County Forest Preserves conducts several heritage-themed events, such as an Art Fair at Little Red Schoolhouse and Settler's Day at Sand Ridge Nature Center.
- *Art in the Park.* The use of public art in parks is specifically singled out for expansion to all parks in the *Lake County Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. The Chicago Park District has long experience with public art projects, including at Steelworkers Park.
- *Public art along trails.* NIRPC's *Greenways & Blueways Plan* is highly cognizant of the potential to place public art along the region's rapidly expanding trail network and calls out potential stakeholders in the effort. It seeks to "encourage the use of public art along trail corridors. Contact local high schools or colleges to promote art. Sponsor art projects. South Shore Arts to work with schools and local entities on projects. Developers: Collaborate with local artists with trails in developments. Corporate property owners: Collaborate with local artists with trails on property and sponsor. Govt: Promote national best practices and work with local entities on implementation. Schools: Art students to work with local entities on projects – schools to sponsor." The plan notes that "most effective are projects that are implemented where graffiti has been an issue." (Pg. 71) The Field Museum's experience in working with community organizations and community artists to create "Gathering Spaces" in Chicago's Burnham Wildlife Corridor may be especially helpful.
- *Rekindle the mural movement.* Murals can be an excellent way to tell a heritage story in unexpected places. The *Positioning Pullman* document provides an example: "Painting aspects of the Pullman stories on the viaducts located along the western edge of the national monument will enhance what is now an eyesore in the historic neighborhood. Pullman Art Space artists can partner with Chicago outdoor art groups to complete." (p42)
- *Art and Placemaking Summit.* The 2012 *NW Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report* sounded the need to update the community assessment survey and the regional cultural plan of South Shore Arts. With a focus on the retention of millennials by One Region, and a Placemaking initiative baked into the NWI Forum's "Ignite" plan (see p.42), could the NHA play a role in coordinating a Placemaking Summit? It would provide a strong moment to share best practices, new projects, and possibilities for regional coordination.

2.5 Education

"Future generations" were named as key beneficiaries in the 1916 Act to create the National Park Service, and, indeed, since that time there has been a close relationship between parks and the next generation. Progressive educators like John Dewey were well aware of the value for children not only of trips to museums like the Field Museum but also to the Indiana Dunes. More than a century ago the Field Museum also established its Harris Loan Collection of diorama boxes that teachers can borrow to show natural history and cultural concepts in their classrooms.

From that foundation, and increasingly inspired by works such as Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods* and David Sobel's *Place-Based Education*, educators in the region have seen high value in exposing children to its natural heritage. Specific sites have focus on school visits, with excellent facilities such as the Dunes Learning Center and the Paul Douglas Center for Environmental Education at the Indiana Dunes National Park, Gibson Woods Nature Center, Hammond Environmental Center, Deep River Outdoor Education Center, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County's nature centers at Sand Ridge and Little Red Schoolhouse.



William W. Powers State Recreation Area. Suellen Burns.

Pathbreaking formal programs like Mighty Acorns (3rd-5th grade), Earth Force (middle school), and Calumet Is My Backyard (CIMBY) link kids to local natural area assets and give students the opportunity to participate in ecological restoration across the region. Partner networks like Calumet Outdoors, the Chicago Wilderness Alliance, and the former Environmental Educators of the Southern Lake Michigan Region have developed methods to share resources, combine and complement efforts, and create programming like “No Child Left Inside.”

Education in the Calumet region is not only about K-12 formal schooling. Dewey’s colleague at the University of Chicago, Henry Chandler Cowles, laid the groundwork for a tradition of ecological research that fostered key concepts such as ecological succession, and the dunes remain a hub of scientific research. The CHA has a special opportunity to create a platform for lifelong learners to investigate the cultural and natural history of the place where they live. A fine example is the new *Calumet Voices/National Stories* exhibit created through a partnership with community members, the Field Museum, and twelve local history museums pooling their resources to tell the story of this unique place in a compelling way to both resident and visiting audiences.

As noted above, in the Heritage Area context, “education” can apply to a variety of learning environments. Among other possibilities, it can relate to curriculum development, field trip experiences, research opportunities, classroom and other interpretive materials and teaching tools and other pathways to learn from the rich cultural and natural resources that people find in their midst.

2.5.1 Develop heritage-based curricula

The Calumet Summits, especially the ones convened in 2013 and 2015, offered regional partners, especially those with an “educational” focus, the opportunity to offer project ideas and preliminary ways to prioritize them in the Heritage Area context. Calumet Outdoors continues as a loosely-coordinated regional scale partner network. CMAP’s and NIRPC’s 2050 planning processes also touch on issues of community engagement and retention of population that feed into thinking about “education”. County-level agencies, including Forest Preserves of Cook County and Lake County Parks and Recreation, have recently conducted significant planning processes that contribute significantly to this discussion.

The notion of developing “heritage-based curricula” is a key potential value add of the CHA, and important in its own right. But the CHA could also envision a role not only in course content development, but in removing barriers to content delivery. The *Millennium Reserve Steering Committee Final Report* succinctly describes them:

Area teachers need professional development and program support, schools need transportation support for field trips, and other systemic issues stand in the way of bringing young people to the region’s many natural areas. At the same time, non-school community partners have the potential to sponsor programming. The connections between nature education and potential conservation careers need to be developed. Nature learning, recreation, and work activities need to be connected to create a web of available opportunities leading to conservation careers and lifelong stewardship engagement in a way that is as inclusive as possible. In short, to make a broader and deeper regional impact, the programs need to be better integrated, better connected, and better funded. (p.47)

While this section focuses on K-12 education, many of the issues pertain to higher education as well.

- **K-12 curriculum.** Twenty years ago the Chicago Wilderness Alliance established a goal to “ensure that every student graduating from a school system in the Chicago Wilderness region is ‘biodiversity literate.’ Major steps have been taken in that direction, including the establishment of standards-aligned curricula in the Mighty Acorns (3rd– 5th grade) and Earth Force (middle school) programs. But an opportunity exists to develop place-based lesson plans or units that are in the CHA’s sweet spot of natural and cultural heritage and the concept of a region and help more broadly move beyond early childhood elementary education.
 - **Field trips.** Trips can fall into several categories. A more comprehensive inventory and systematic inquiry into program opportunities and challenges for participation would be very welcome:
 - **Curriculum-based trips to specific sites.** The Mighty Acorns model of building in-class activities around visits to natural areas could be replicated at local history museums and sites. An excellent starting point is the *Calumet Voices, National Stories* exhibit that is built on the capacity and collection of a dozen local museums.
 - **Outdoor experiences.** More immersive experiences have been developing across the region including Wilderness Inquiry’s Canoemobile and camping at Dunes Learning Center and with the Camping Leadership Immersion Course through Cook County Forest Preserves
 - **Tours.** An example here is the Southeast Environmental Task Force’s “Toxics to Treasures” tour through the industrial areas and wetlands of the Southeast side of Chicago. Potential tours like this, as well as tours of working industry (Ford, Cleveland-Cliffs, BP) have been positive experiences for students in the past and would be strengthened by further inventory and development.
- **Service learning.** School district approaches to service learning could be identified and assessed for possibilities for connections around the CHA.
- **Teacher training and professional development.** Coordinated teacher workshops have been offered as part of various programs like Mighty Acorns, Earth Force, and CIMBY and on various topics through the Indiana Dunes National Park. A related issue is to identify and develop a cohort of teachers as part of an inter-district learning community. There is a role for non-school partners, as indicated in the Forest Preserves of Cook County’s *Next Century Conservation Plan*: “the Forest Preserves should make sure every town has at least one educator who can train peers to integrate nature and the forest preserves. By incorporating environmental and cultural resource education into the school curriculum, all students can obtain a comprehensive base of information upon which the nature center programming can expand.”

- **Access.** The oft-stated ambition is, as the *Calumet Summit 2015 Report* puts it, to “ensure that every child in the Calumet Region is connected to their local, natural environment” (p. 3). The most significant barriers to access include money, time, curricular constraints, and trip-appropriate clothing and equipment. To that end, some specific ideas have emerged as potential roles for the NHA, including coordinated grant writing workshops for teachers, a centralized pool of bus transportation resources, ways to ensure that field experiences are coordinated with standards-based classroom activities, and a lending library of field kits for teacher use. ADA-related accessibility remains a particular area of access issue concerns an inventory of ADA-related accessibility issues.
- **Coordination.** What can the NHA do to aid in coordinating education issues?

2.5.2 Develop life-long learning programs

Lifelong learning is one of the deeper forms of “community engagement”—a topic much on the mind of regional partners. The Forest Preserves of Cook County *Cultural and Natural Resources Master Plan* offers thoughtful perspective on the importance of learning about the place one calls home:

Developing an ecological identity means developing an awareness of one’s role within the environment. ... The FPCC can help develop ecological and historical identity in its citizens by providing education that emphasizes the ways humans interact with and benefit from natural areas, both in the distant past and today. Experiences in the forest preserves play an important role in developing an ecological and historical identity. Local forest preserves put people in contact with their most direct connections to natural and cultural resources. A visit to the Forest Preserves of Cook County can accomplish what a visit to a national park or a wilderness area may not be able to accomplish. The experience of nature or an archaeological site as something that is distant and exotic, or of wilderness as pristine and entirely devoid of human activity, can prevent us from recognizing ourselves as part of the ecosystem. Conversely, the experience of nature and history as things we are surrounded by can help us identify with and value these resources. The Forest Preserves of Cook County provide this important connection for the residents of Cook County. The education and outreach of the Forest Preserves should continue to help people appreciate and identify with local ecosystems. Programming should encourage people to examine how nature and history fit into the context of their own lives. (p. 111)

The plan review also surfaced a number of other concepts that dovetail with the concerns of the NHA. These include:

- **Establishing firm ground for lifelong learning.** It is important to recall the linkage between childhood experience and the potential for lifelong learning. As the *Calumet Summit 2015 Report* puts it about the stewardship experience, it helps “them become stewards in order to preserve and care for the environment, now and in the future” (p. 23).
- **Young adults.** The One Region organization has a specific mission to attract and retain “millennials” in the region. How does that interact with educational opportunities, and what is the best way for an NHA to add value to this effort?
- **Older adults.** The *Calumet Summit 2015 Report* suggests, “connect with older and retired adults who can volunteer with kids and engage them in storytelling and other low-physical activity things to do in nature” (p. 27). This also lines up with the FPCC’s Nature Ambassador program that aims to provide ways for volunteers to become nature educators in their own communities and in the forest preserves.
- **Volunteers.** Both the environmental and cultural heritage community have relatively robust volunteer traditions. Some precedent exists for coordinated volunteer training at the regional scale. Can these efforts be linked to each other, and advanced by the NHA? In thinking about volunteers, it is also important to acknowledge that in the more economically distressed portions of the region that the idea of volunteer “workdays” may simply not resonate. Can some volunteer tasks be part of a career pathway?

- *Community science/Citizen science.* New technologies permit increased volunteer involvement in both environmental and community monitoring. As the Calumet Summit recommends, “Education and training that can help volunteers track findings, engage volunteers in early detection efforts, employ community/citizen science to develop skills, and utilize non-traditional skills (e.g., GIS).”
- *Relate lifelong learning to potential for workforce development.* A livable place rich in nature and culture can also potentially translate to job opportunities. As the CMAP *On to 2050 Plan* relates, “Planning for human capital means bridging the gap between residents seeking to build a career and employers looking to build their workforce. It will require increased coordination among regional industries, community colleges, and other institutions engaged in workforce development at every level.”
- *Outreach to new audiences.* Potential new audiences include children (via “nature play” opportunities”), those with accessibility constraints, and links to healthcare providers.
- *New opportunities for interpretation.* Because of the vigor of ecological restoration activity, for example, on the west side of Gary, it may be possible to think of new environmental education opportunities in existing parks or newly restored natural areas.

2.5.3 Connect with area scientists

Many have long held the aspiration that science should become more “relevant” to the general public. As the *Calumet Summit 2015 Report* puts it, scientists should be thinking about “Getting out of the classroom, making the connection to science, building partnerships, making new connections, connecting to the community” (p3). In the *Feasibility Study*, this aspiration moves in two basic directions: first, how can “community science” efforts become more coherent and coordinated, such that the engaged lifelong learners discussed above genuinely contribute to regional understanding, and, second, how can scientists who work in higher education, museums, and agencies deliver what they know about the area in a way that is lively and relevant? In thinking through these questions, it is worth knowing that several sites in the region—notably the dunes—have been “nationally significant” ground for scientific inquiry for a long time. The region’s science infrastructure includes not only a Calumet-based network of community colleges, baccalaureate institutions, and graduate-degree granting institutions, but also higher education partners throughout the region and nationally, state and federal agency scientists, and museum-based researchers. It is also worth bearing in mind that “science” includes not only important work in ecology and other natural sciences, but a range of inquiry in the social sciences and humanities. Of course, the NHA would enter this ground as only one among many partners, and the goal here is to consider the specific value that an NHA can add to all this activity.

The following ideas have emerged from a scan of the literature:

- *Higher-ed curriculum.* At the higher education level, the potential exists to develop a suite of courses at area institutions that draw on and coordinate the strengths of regional faculty. An excellent example is the University of Chicago’s “Calumet Quarter.” A good starting point is to survey and make more widely available course offerings at regional colleges and universities.
- *Internships/practica.* Models exist at both the high school and post-secondary levels to create opportunities to learn in an internship environment. Some higher ed programs like GLISTEN (Great Lakes Innovative Stewardship Through Education Network) have been quite successful in placing undergrads in meaningful internships. Is there an opportunity to expand throughout the region (into Illinois) and, perhaps, to add a cultural heritage component?
- *Annual Science Summit.* In one direction, this could be a replay of the Calumet Research Summits of 2001, 2006, and 2010, with a focus on scientific findings that best inform local ecological and cultural heritage management practice. In the other, such a summit could be linked more to the K-12 level.

- *Higher education consortia.* The current One Region organization in NW Indiana grew out of the Quality of Life Council, with a strong higher education presence. The South Metro Higher Education Consortium in Illinois is still one of the state's most active such consortia, and holds an annual sustainability summit. Is there a way to link these efforts in the NHA? One precedent was the attempt to create a Calumet Higher Education Environmental Partnership ten years ago.
- *Foster methods to link K-12 environmental and social science educators to research scientists.*
- *Link NHA innovations to the broader context of innovation and the regional economy, such as the Society of Innovators.* Specific links to the heritage of innovation may be a first pathway.
- *Bioblitz.* In one 24 hour period in 2002, 130 researchers, citizen scientists, students, and local scientists participated in the "Calumet Bioblitz". Working the wetlands of the Calumet region, the crew identified 2,259 species, including 2 new species to the region and 1 new species to science. Subsequent bioblitzes have been conducted at the Indiana Dunes in 2009 and 2016, at Trail Creek in Michigan City in 2011, and at Warren Woods in Michigan in 2018.
- *Thismia hunts.*
- *Research hub.* Promote natural and cultural resources management-related research in this region that has pioneered unique approaches to the problem.

2.5.4 Identify local geographies within the region as priorities for programming

The region is anchored by a newly declared Pullman National Monument in the west and the newly renamed Indiana Dunes National Park in the east. These national park units are joined by a number of nationally significant sites of ecological restoration from the Forest Preserves of Cook County through the rare ridge and swale habitats near the lakeshore to the Moraine Forests of Porter County and down to the remnants of the Grand Kankakee Marsh. The *Feasibility Study* contains a resource inventory of 4xx sites each keyed to one or more of the core themes of the NHA. The "Calumet Voices, National Stories" exhibit opening in 2019 showcases not only the exhibit sites but the great work done by at least a dozen local history museums and historic sites.

But "sites" in the context of programming also means the region's homes, schools, businesses and parks, that are strewn across a very diverse human landscape. As noted above, some NHAs choose to focus programming in particular areas and with particular populations. It will be of great importance to the NHA effort to prioritize places and people where its programs can have the most impact best suited to its capacities and interests.

Some specific suggestions include:

- *Think "intersectionally".* An advantage of the regional approach is the ability to consider a variety of contexts and potential partners, even when focused on a particular issue such as education. The *Calumet Summit 2015 Report* suggests "inking with other groups to work toward common goals including transit providers, older people, religious groups, groups like the Southeast Environmental Task Force, and 'green' industry." (p3)
- *Consider new audiences.* Again, the *Calumet Summit 2015 Report* advises casting a broad net, by "expanding programming to reach a broader audience including African American and Latino kids; new immigrants; kids with special needs (e.g. autism); people with accessibility needs and/or who are aging; and adults including opportunities for life-long learning and stewardship." (p3)
- *Use new technologies.*
- *Make the most of emergent learning centers.* Both the Cook County Forest Preserves and Lake County Parks have invested in new environmental education and nature centers. These places and other key visitor locations across the region can serve not only as education hubs for the region but also as gateway locations, providing basic visitor information to the overall Calumet region.

- *Consider “novel” sites.* A region as richly diverse as the Calumet offers a host of untapped interpretive and educational possibilities. Some were specifically called out in regional plans. The *Positioning Pullman* document prepared after the Monument’s creation suggests interpreting demolished buildings in that community as tourist and educational sites. The region’s brownfields sites, some of them scenes of tragic community loss and dislocation such as East Chicago’s Calumet Housing complex, cry out for interpretation and understanding. Some of these sites are also tremendous environmental successes, such as the cleanup of the Grand Calumet River. Does the clustering of these sites in the Calumet—both the gains and the losses—create opportunities to tell a story common across America that it might just be in the wheelhouse of an NHA to interpret?

2.6 Regional Economic Development and Heritage Tourism

The Calumet region rose to prominence as the nation’s premier industrial district in the years following the Civil War, and in important respects it continues to be so. As a market area, it has more people than metropolitan Milwaukee. It is still the beating heart of the nation’s steel industry, contains its seventh largest petroleum refinery (and largest in the Midwest), remains a major producer of transportation equipment, and sits astride the most significant crossroads of waterways, interstate highways, railroads, and pipelines in the country. The region has also undergone deindustrialization, environmental degradation, and workforce dislocation that threaten community stability and the region’s image as a place with a high quality of life.

Important work is being done to re-ignite the economy of the region. The Northwest Indiana Forum has conducted a major study of economic redevelopment potential. The One Region organization in Northwest Indiana has focused on the retention of talent by zeroing in on quality of life improvements. A regional economic development strategy is emerging in the Chicago Southland as well. All of these efforts note the increasing importance of “placemaking”, not only as an adornment of everyday life in the region, but as a key part in economic development thinking. This is the NHA’s sweet spot.



Riley's Railhouse Bed and Breakfast, Chesterton. C. Livingston, Indiana Dunes Tourism.

The recent re-naming of the Indiana Dunes National Park, the dedication of the Pullman National Monument in Illinois, the completion of major trail systems, the rise of craft brewing, and local strategies to bring in visitorship to attractive and historic downtowns are part of the puzzle. Indiana Dunes National Park is already the number 1 tourist destination in the State of Indiana and the Pullman National Monument anticipates an increase of visitorship from 30,000 to 300,000 once its new Visitors Center is complete.

An NHA offers the opportunity to identify, coordinate, and dovetail these assets with regional economic development strategies. It is worth bearing in mind that National Heritage Areas first evolved in some of the nation's most distressed communities and were, in fact, part of the response to that distress. What Brenda Barrett wrote about heritage areas a dozen years ago still holds true today and seems especially applicable to the Calumet region: "... all are working landscapes and almost all are communities that are under stress. They are places that are losing or have lost their traditional economic base and are facing a loss of population, particularly young people. Many areas have the historic infrastructure of extinct or dying industries or long-outmoded transportation systems, and some still bear the scars of resource extraction."

2.6.1 Make the most of opportunities that meet the "triple bottom line"

The "triple bottom line", where environment, economy, and community equally thrive, is found most explicitly in the work of the sustainable development organization, the Calumet Collaborative, which "is dedicated to achieving inclusive regional prosperity and improving quality of life by focusing attention and resources of diverse stakeholders on priorities and on-the-ground work that integrate community, economic, and environmental values and have regional impact." Three of the Collaborative's four initiatives are directly relevant to work described here: advancement of the NHA entity itself; a regional brownfield initiative; and a wayfinding and branding effort that has recently led to the creation of branding materials for the NHA.

Both of the regional planning organizations that cover the Calumet region in their 2050 plans incorporate strong elements of the "triple bottom line" without naming it as such. CMAP for example, urges an urban development pattern that targets that fills in the already developed pattern and that brings resources to make vibrant, livable communities. CMAP notes that "as they pursue redevelopment opportunities, communities should improve natural resources, use sustainable building and greening practices, and address the needs of the most vulnerable residents and areas." (Pg. 61)

Similarly, NIRPC envisions a Northwest Indiana that in 2050 will be "connected, renewed, united, and vibrant." Each of these vision statements is combined with one of four Focus Areas (Economy & Place, Environment, Mobility, and People & Leaders) to create 16 critical paths to action. The concerns of economy, environment, and community are woven throughout the plan.

Elements of the "triple bottom line" approach are also seen in plans and projects that take a specifically economic development tack. The most prominent example is the Northwest Indiana Forum's *Ignite the Region: A Regional Strategy for Economic Transformation* plan, completed at the end of 2018. The plan focuses on five key areas: business development & marketing, entrepreneurship & innovation, infrastructure, talent, and placemaking. The placemaking angle, in particular, is of direct relevance to the NHA effort, although the plan does not mention it specifically. According to *Ignite*, "The region's local and regional placemaking efforts are laudable. However, much more needs to be done. This will require regional organizations, such as the Northwest Indiana RDA, the NWIF, One Region, and NIRPC to continue articulating why placemaking is critical to economic development. It will also entail ongoing advocacy for additional federal, state, and local resources to be invested in quality-of-place enhancements."

Cook County's Bureau of Economic Development has been leading a *South Suburban Economic Growth Initiative* project and released a Phase I report in 2017. The report carefully inventories the region's assets and challenges for economic development. One heritage-relevant idea is to "Establish the South Suburbs as the Region's "Green Playground", with "shared vision and coordinated investments in recreational infrastructure and complementary amenities such as retail, restaurants, and lodging to position the South Suburbs as the region's destination for outdoor recreation." The report goes on to make a specific linkage to the NHA: "Projects such as the Calumet Collaborative, the Cal-Sag Trail and the proposed Calumet National Heritage Area will build on and further supplement existing recreational assets to make the sub-region a draw for outdoor enthusiasts across metro Chicago. These efforts can also serve to attract residents to live in the area for regular, convenient access to these amenities." The report also notes some process advantages of the regional collaboration embedded in the CNHA: "several large-scale efforts aimed at coordinating southland geography on non-economic issues further illustrate the potential to convene stakeholders around common issues—e.g., the Calumet Collaborative, Great Rivers Chicago, Calumet Heritage Partnership and others." (pp. 70-71)

2.6.2 Improve the lakeshore

The *Marquette Plan* and other strong efforts to increase access to the lakeshore are discussed in Section 2.1.3 above.

2.6.3 Utilize brownfield sites for industrial development

While the CNHA is never likely to become an actor in industrial development as such, to the extent that brownfield redevelopment becomes a regional strategy it will be useful to keep the heritage implications in mind. The shining example here is the 57 acre Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk, which was developed on a former brownfield site and is now one of the park's leading attractions. Are there other potential examples like this, to which a CNHA could contribute?

Here it is especially useful that the Calumet Collaborative, a leading actor in the NHA effort, is also playing a lead role in a regional Brownfields Initiative. The Collaborative is currently engaged in rolling out a Phase I regional brownfields map that can facilitate just this sort of strategic examination of the heritage implications.

One overarching goal of the NHA effort is to change the external perception of the region, as one riddled with brownfields and risks. As creative solutions to the pervasive brownfield issue are found, the potential to display the solutions to others interested in brownfield redevelopment exists as a prime example of the region's creativity in dealing with environmental issues. One such idea is found in the *Ignite* project's notion to "explore establishing a national center of excellence in brownfield redevelopment in Northwest Indiana. Such a center could be associated with one of the region's universities" (p. 23). Similarly, *Ignite* makes the suggestion to "host a national brownfield conference annually to generate new ideas for market-driven redevelopment of brownfield sites in Northwest Indiana. Promote the advancement of the region and by using Northwest Indiana as a test bed for new technologies and programs...Such an event would help to educate the region's development community on the brownfield redevelopment process" (p. 23).

2.6.4 Increase tourism marketing at the bi-state regional scale

As noted in Section 2.3.4, issues of regional “identity and image” are in the NHA’s wheelhouse. A significant start on activating that connection is seen in the brand Toolkit for the CHA, recently established by the Calumet Collaborative. The Toolkit is discussed in more detail in Section 2.7 below.

A number of specific marketing variations on the collaboration theme were published in the *Positioning Pullman* document (2016), including:

- Collaboratively market “regional heritage, industrial, and eco-tourism initiatives, as well as the development of historic inn, hotel and motorhome accommodations to enable people to stay overnight in the immediate area” (p. 100).
- “With two national parks—Pullman and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore—in close proximity, there is strong incentive for marketing collaboration and visitation synergy” (p. 100).
- “To reach the employment and economic growth goals, all of the various sectors and activity centers need significant interaction, shared marketing and coordination. Pullman should be marketed as part of a broader network of regional attractions in order to grow visitation. Collaborative marketing could be structured around visitation themes and tied directly to attractions between downtown Chicago, Pullman, the Lake Calumet region and northwest Indiana” (p. 101).
- “It is important to market Pullman as part of a broader network of regional attractions in order to grow visitation. Collaborative marketing could be structured around themes and tie directly to attractions between downtown Chicago and Pullman, and between Pullman and northwest Indiana and southwest Michigan” (p. 101).

It will be important to determine what the potential interpretive role will be at the “Greenway Centers” proposed in the *Greenways & Blueways Plan*, which could “increase public access to conservation lands and provide ecotourism magnets” (p. 53). A specific task that could benefit from NHA involvement on the way to developing the “eco-tourism infrastructure” at the centers is to “identify and map points of interest for recreational users and tourists...” (p. 160).

All this supports *Ignite’s* point that, “finally, the region is placing a greater emphasis on tourism as an economic driver. Creating new amenities and attractions along the lakefront, promoting sustainable agritourism at Fair Oaks Farms, and studying the development of a convention center and hotel in Lake County are just a few examples of renewed efforts to grow the region’s tourism economy. These initiatives also present an opportunity to leverage tourism to support industry and talent attraction efforts” (p. 10). In addition to making the case that tourism is important to the economy, *Ignite* suggested several specific ways to expand it:

- “The proposed convention center in Lake County represents a tremendous opportunity to take tourism in the region to a new level. According to the findings of the convention center feasibility analysis, one of the primary nonlocal event markets for the convention center is “corporate and other types of event activity from the Chicago/Northwest Indiana greater metropolitan area and throughout the state of Indiana” (p. 15).
- “Identify a complementary theme for tourism attraction, business recruitment, and talent attraction” (p. 15).
- “The NWIF and LEDOs should work with the South Shore Convention & Visitors Authority and other local tourism organizations to align their conference and meeting strategy to targeted occupations, groups, and industries” (p. 15).
- “Leverage tourism assets to distribute business marketing messages. Prominently display positive information about the region’s economy and business climate at key visitor destinations; Encourage first points of contact to communicate positive messages about the region’s business advantages to visitors. Provide educational materials and talking points about the region’s economy to first points of contact” (p. 16).

- “Continue regional and local efforts to expand cultural, arts, entertainment, and recreational infrastructure and amenities” (p. 35).
- “Craft breweries, wineries, and distilleries across the US continue to experience rapid growth. Growth associated with craft beverages also supports regional tourism and talent attraction” (p. 50).

2.6.5 Attract and retain a workforce that enjoys a high quality of life

The reports already cited make the strong case between quality of life and workforce development and retention. NHAs can play a role, both in job creation and retention, as the reports cited in section II above point out.

On its face, an NHA would not seem to have a major role in workforce development. But some NHAs are part of a diversifying web of job readiness. As the Chicago Wilderness Next Generation of Conservation Leaders Working Group recommends, “Advocate for better integration of a “web” of opportunity that lets young people find their entry point into training or jobs, and in which educational institutions, non-profits, and for profits recognize each others’ roles in making the web of green/sustainability jobs.” Other working groups that are thinking about Arts, Education, Recreation, Environment, and Cultural Heritage/Historic Preservation, are at work to identify specific programs that could bear job creation potential. Some of these ideas are listed here:

- *Relate lifelong learning to potential for workforce development.* A livable place rich in nature and culture can also potentially translate to job opportunities. As the CMAP *On to 2050 Plan* relates, “Planning for human capital means bridging the gap between residents seeking to build a career and employers looking to build their workforce. It will require increased coordination among regional industries, community colleges, and other institutions engaged in workforce development at every level.”
- *Link NHA innovations to the broader context of innovation and the regional economy, such as the Society of Innovators.* Specific links to the heritage of innovation may be a first pathway.
- *Artspace.* Live/work space for artists has been constructed or is underway in Michigan City and Pullman in partnership with “Artspace”. Are there other candidate locations in the region?
- *Foster integration of the arts across sectors.* The 2012 *NW Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report* goes on to say, “As with many aspects of life in Northwest Indiana, the arts tend to be standalone and would benefit from deeper integration with economic development, community development and public education efforts.” As a step in this direction, the Northwest Indiana Forum identifies the performing arts as one of Northwest Indiana’s target industry clusters (p. 8).
- *Restoration/revitalization.* Some places have historic resources—some of them already appropriately designated—that could contribute to a broader-scale revitalization efforts. For example, the Gary Downtown/East Lakefront sub area contains five historic districts (Horace Mann, West 5th Apartments, Gary City Center, Combs, and Eskilson) and one historic property (Ralph Waldo Emerson School) that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As the *Marquette Plan* points out, “Though many of these districts and buildings are threatened by blight and disinvestment, their traditional street grid pattern, access to transportation infrastructure, and walkability, serve as potential drivers for revitalization.” Does the process of historic reconstruction and redevelopment bring with it the potential for new jobs?

2.6.6 Identify and elevate opportunities for the adaptive reuse of buildings and other structures

The prospect of adaptive reuse of buildings and other structures is a major part of the Cultural Heritage/Historic Preservation Working Group's remit. The argument is made again that this work, good in itself as a stabilization of regional assets and cultural memory, also links with regional economic development strategy by centering development in historic locations. And by fostering development where infrastructure is already in place, making the most of materials and energy already embodied in the building, and lowering the landfill impacts of demolition, it is an efficient use of resources and connects to conservation goals as well.

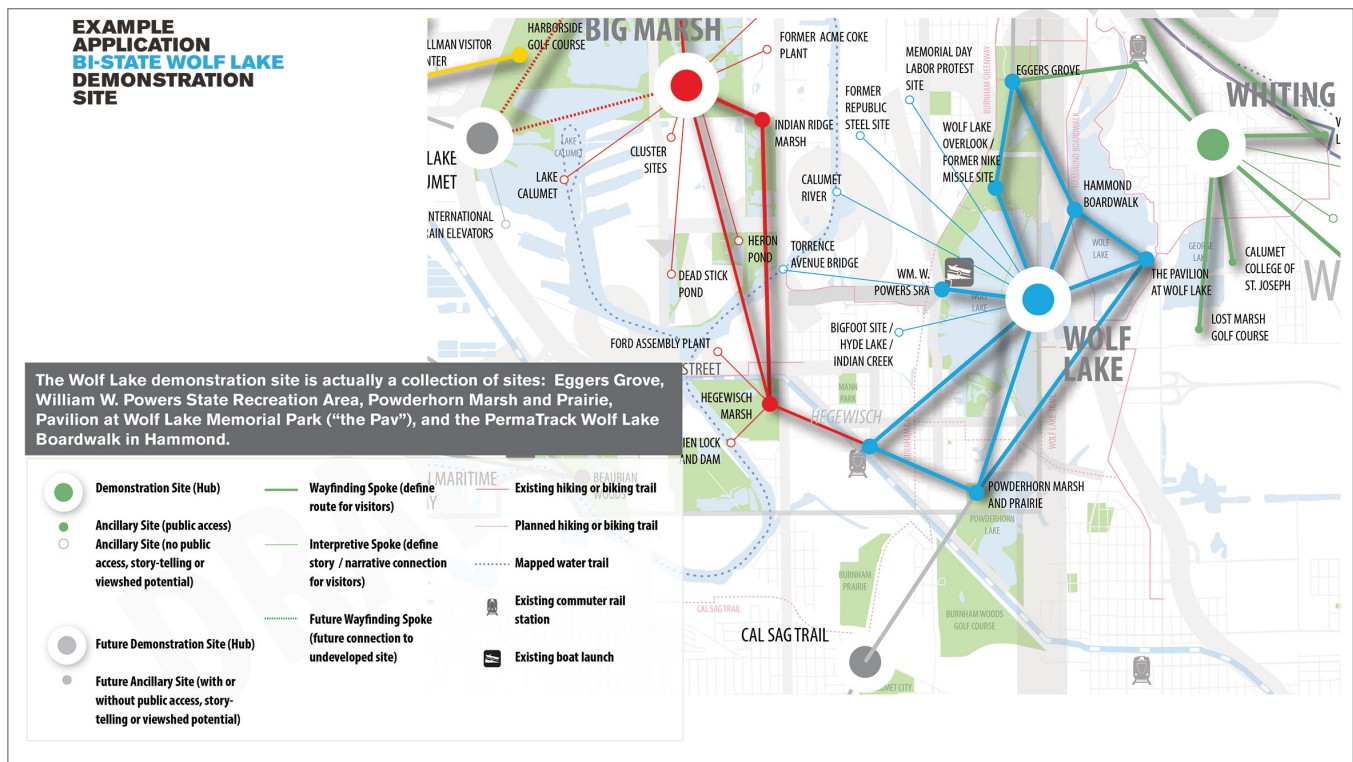
CMAP's *On to 2050 Plan* is clear on this point: "Infill and redevelopment can provide a variety of benefits, such as leveraging and making efficient use of existing infrastructure and services, promoting walkability, and spurring investment in disinvested or stagnant growth areas" (p. 39). NIRPC's *NWI 2050 Plan* points out that "a number of urban communities are addressing vacancy concerns, including housing redevelopment in Whiting and downtown redevelopment in Michigan City. The region is currently placing a greater emphasis on renewing and concentrating growth within existing communities and main centers. These centers are ideally compact in form, mixed-use, walkable, and transit-accessible, with a wide choice of affordable housing options developed at a density and scale appropriate to their community context, whether urban, suburban or rural" (p. 66).

The region's most significant historic asset is the Pullman National Monument. The *Positioning Pullman* document calls out a number of historic preservation opportunities, and, again, links them to economic development: "National parks are economic generators. Visitors to Pullman National Monument will boost the region's economy significantly and provide the foundation for expanded access to the goods and services longtime community residents would like to see" (p. 100); "Pullman National Monument and the Pullman neighborhood could become a significant economic catalyst for the Calumet region and the larger South Side of Chicago, particularly in the ability to add a significant number of new and higher paying jobs in the community" (p. 101).

NIRPC's *Greenways & Blueways Plan* is also conscious of this intersectionality of goals: "Historic structures in these areas (geographic intersections) could be repurposed for public access or amenities" (p. 127).

2.7 Wayfinding and Branding

Progress to advance the *Feasibility Study's* goals in the area of wayfinding/branding took a slightly different form than in the other six topical areas. Here, the Calumet Collaborative received grant funds to engage the Lakota Group as a consultant to develop an identity and brand for the Calumet Heritage Area, as well as a brand implementation toolkit for use by all stakeholders in the region to incorporate the brand with new and existing wayfinding systems. As in the other topical areas, regional experts were convened as part of the project Steering Committee to meet closely with Lakota during the project development process. The work of this committee was carefully overseen by the JCC. It was agreed by all that this engagement and development process would take the place of the Focus Area Planning Committees and that Lakota's work would be fully integrated into the Management Plan. Lakota explicitly grounded its work in the *Feasibility Study's* findings about the national significance of the region and the three key interpretive themes.



Calumet Region Wayfinding Concept Report draft. Calumet Collaborative.

The wayfinding and branding work slightly preceded the gathering of the FAPCs. Lakota completed the basic toolkit in late summer, 2019 and the branding and identity materials were formally rolled out at the Calumet Heritage Conference in October 2019. The creation of these materials, and the attendant events calendar, served as a perfect grounding from which to launch the focus area process for the other groups, and helped to tie the work together under one overall look and feel.

3. Setting regional priorities across key content areas

Focus Area Planning Committees (FAPCs) were convened in Fall 2019, to develop and then prioritize a list of actionable projects where the NHA could best be leveraged to make a difference in the region. As noted above, after each FAPC in the 6 areas developed its own list of priority projects, members from all the FAPCs met in December 2019 to review the prioritized lists of projects in order to keep a special eye on synergies, overlaps, and opportunities for further discussion. The outcome of this process was a list of prioritized projects by the key content areas. This work is summarized in Appendix A.

The Joint Coordinating Committee then took stock of operational overlaps and ways to best leverage the impact of the projects by carefully integrating them with other plan elements, organizing them under the main regional goals as articulated in Chapter 1, and phasing their rollout. This clustering and phasing is discussed in Chapter 4 and the set of action steps that lie at the heart of this plan is summarized in the Goal Implementation Matrix in Appendix B.