

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS: EXAMINING ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AS FEDERAL PARTNER

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Abstract.—Understanding the organizational development of National Heritage Areas (NHAs) and defining the National Park Service's (NPS) role within individual NHAs guided this qualitative study. Information gained during telephone interviews led to the development of an *a priori* model of the evolutionary stages of NHAs' organizational development and the role of the federal partner over time. This model will be tested during phase two of the study.

A snowball technique (Patton 2002) was used to identify key experts with knowledge of the National Heritage Area movement. These included current and former NHA executive directors, NPS employees, and other experts. In an open-ended interview process (Patton 2002, Yin 2003), experts were asked to identify evolutionary changes in the organizational development of NHAs over the life of the NHA and any key turning points (Isabella 1984) in the evolution. They were also asked to discuss the role of the NPS over the life of the NHA along with any key turning points in that relationship. Lastly, interviewees could discuss any other opportunities, issues, or concerns relating to the organizational development of NHAs.

The results found that a variety of organizational structures reflect the unique and diverse nature of NHAs. Additionally, NPS roles reflect NHA needs and evolve dynamically. Lastly, the role of the board is critical in NHA evolution.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since 1984, 27 heritage areas have proven their national historical significance and have been designated as

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) by the U.S. Congress. Examining how the organization of NHAs evolves over time, researchers can identify the stages of organizational development and the role of the National Park Service (NPS) as a federal partner.

1.1 Research Questions

This qualitative research study analyzed designated NHAs. The following research questions guided the study design and methodology:

- 1.) What stages of organizational development do NHAs evolve through?
- 2.) How has the role of the NPS as a federal partner changed over the lifespan of the NHA?
- 3.) Are other issues, concerns, and opportunities effecting the organizational development of NHAs or the relationship with the NPS?

1.3 Literature Review

Heritage area partnerships may be defined as diverse interest groups working together at the domain level to achieve a common mission (Gray 1985). These may include a stakeholder pool derived from government entities, private citizens, non-profits, and businesses engaging in collaborative efforts (Gunn 1994, Selin & Chavez 1995, 1994). Conditions fostering collaboration provide the theoretical framework for partnership formation, which moves through identifiable stages (e.g., Gray 1985, Jamal & Getz 1995, Mandell 2001). Moreover, identifying the organizational steps of partnership formation provides practical and theoretical frameworks for existing and future research (Waddock 1989, Selin & Chavez 1995, Venter & Breen 1998, Caffyn 2000, Institute for Conservation Leadership 2004).

In addition, partnership formation is recognized as a driving force in conservation of protected areas, including those with cultural significance (Phillips 2003, Mitchell 2003). Heritage areas are considered integral

components of conservation efforts (Daly 2003, Judd 2003, Stowkowski 2003, Vivanco 2003, Bodurow 2003). Although descriptive case studies chronicle the NHA movement and the evolutions (Barrett 2003, Bodurow 2003, Eugster 2003, Gates & Morgan 2003), no empirical research exists examining the evolution of the organizational development of NHAs and the NPS' role as a federal partner.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Data for this qualitative research (Patton 2002) project were collected as a pilot study of NHA organizational development and NPS' role as a federal partner. To ensure an information-rich sample, a snowball technique (Patton 2002) was used to identify key experts with extensive knowledge of NHA development. At the end of each interview, participants were asked who else was an expert on NHA organizational development and the role of NPS as a federal partner. Interviews continued until key names were mentioned over and over (Patton 2002). These names included current and former NHA executive directors, NPS employees, and other experts.

In an open-ended interview process (Patton 2002, Yin 2003), informants were asked to identify evolutionary changes and key turning points in the organizational development of NHAs. Participants were also asked to discuss the role of NPS over the life of NHA and to identify key turning points in that relationship. Lastly, respondents were given the opportunity to discuss any other opportunities, issues, or concerns related to the organizational development of NHA or the role of NPS as the federal partner over the lifespan of NHA.

During the summer of 2005 and spring of 2006, 22 interviews were collected representing current and former executive directors of 12 NHAs, and a variety of NPS representatives on the local, regional, and national levels. Twenty telephone interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each interview lasted an average of 40 minutes. Two participants chose to respond in writing. Content analysis began with the researcher hand-coding data to organize information into themes and then into sub-themes (Patton 2002). Additionally, another colleague used Word Stat Analysis to identify

themes and sub-themes. General themes were based on the guiding research questions. Data were organized under three main themes: organizational development and key turning points; NPS role and key turning points, and other opportunities, issues and concerns relating to organizational development and the role of NPS as a federal partner. In an iterative process (Patton 2002), data were further reduced to sub-themes based on information that emerged from the interviews.

3.0 RESULTS

Consistent with qualitative research, responses received during the interviews guided the interpretation of the data and produced the following themes and sub-themes.

3.1 Organizational Development of NHA

3.1a A Variety of Structures Exist

A search of the NPS/NHA website reveals that a variety of NHA management structures exists, such as federal commissions, non-profits, state agencies, municipal authorities, and university centers. Currently, the majority of NHAs are non-profit organizations, such as the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District or Essex National Heritage Area. Yet other NHAs, especially those receiving NHA designation in the early years, are federal commissions, such as the John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and Cane River National Heritage Area. Others, such as The National Coal Heritage Area, are state agencies. The Tennessee National Civil War Heritage Area, is housed at Middle Tennessee State University and managed through the university's Center for Historic Preservation. Lackawanna Heritage Valley is a municipal authority.

According to respondents, this variety is in direct response to each NHA's individual needs. One participant said that the management structure of an NHA "depends on the area and the community.... The variation occurs because of the communities that they're associated with and the capacity of the community to support it and to do projects." Another explained that "management structures for heritage areas really needed to follow what they were trying to accomplish—kind of an architectural philosophy of form follows function."

Some respondents, for example, prefer the freedom that a non-profit structure provides. Interviewees suggest that non-profit organizations circumvent some of the rigid guidelines associated with federal agencies. One participant said, “We don’t have quite as much red tape to deal with and it gives us more flexibility in raising federal funds.”

On the other hand, some respondents suggested NHAs benefit from the credibility and validity associated with a federal commission. A participant explained, “Being a ‘federal commission’ ... gives us a little bit of visibility—like ooh, that’s kind of interesting. That gives them some sort of ...prestige, I guess, that is seen in not being a local entity.”

Hence, the diversity of management structures reflects the unique nature, needs, and goals of individual heritage areas.

3.1b. NHA Organizational Development is Dynamic

Moreover, NHA organizational development is dynamic. NHAs adjust their legal structures to fit the local conditions. A participant explained that a NHA’s organizational structure “reflects the resources, the setting, the players who are involved...and the political culture.” Another said that his/her NHA’s legal structure, currently a non-profit entity, was created in direct response to community needs. The participant said that although the governing body was originally a federal commission, “the people in the valley very clearly said that they were uncomfortable with this federal commission actually carrying on the work of the management plan. Their request was that the federal commission be replaced by a private non-profit organization.”

Moreover, some felt that another advantage to a federal commission was local buy-in. An interviewee said that his/her NHA chose to be a federal commission because it gave the managers the ability to cast the area in a new light for the local region. The participant said, “...it’s often difficult to grasp, especially if you grew up in this area and you know what the resources are. A NHA kind of packages them in a new way...it’s a challenge to

build our identity within the community....” Another participant stated, “If we were a non-profit, we’d end up appearing as if we were competing with those organizations in this very small area where there are not a lot of external resources, especially funding resources.”

NHA legal structures are a direct response to the communities they serve. As one participant stated,

Unlike the structure of a national park, where you have a very defined bureaucracy, a very defined chain of command that works where you are, I think that one of the reasons heritage areas have been successful is that they have had the flexibility to adapt their management structure to the situation of the community or communities in which they are.

Finally, another response summarized,

...I liken it to sailing. When you’re sailing, you know where your destination is. But the tide and wind and the waves are always changing, so you adjust your course as you’re sailing to accommodate the immediacy of the wind or the weather, but you still have your ultimate goal in mind. A good management plan should do the same thing. It should identify your goal and tell you how you’re going to get there, but also give you the latitude to adjust your course with the prevailing winds, the changing of the winds.”

Such statements reveal that a variety of organizational structures reflect the unique and diverse natures of the NHA’s. Moreover, these structures are dynamic, with the ability to change in response to the needs of local stakeholders and other social, economic, and political factors.

3.1c. NHAs’ Organizational Development Evolves Through Identifiable Stages

Interviews revealed that NHAs’ organizational development evolves through similar and identifiable stages consistent with organizational development theory, which will be discussed in detail in the discussion section of this paper.

Table 1.—Five stages of national heritage area organizational development

Organizing	Implementing	Role Setting	Institutionalizing	Redirecting
Stakeholders define a shared vision.	Federal funds received.	Staff begins assuming more responsibility in day-to-day activities and direction setting.	Board assumes responsibility for fund raising and building ties with the community.	Movement in a new direction or reorganization in response to such factors as changes in funding status and/or acquisition of new funding sources, sunseting of the federal relationship.
Stakeholders develop a shared identity.	New or extended staff are hired.	Board assumes a governing role.	Board refinement occurs as the organization actively recruits proactive, involved members.	
NHA designation provides structure	NPS serves as the conduit through which funds flow to individual NHA's.	NPS continues technical assistance, but the role changes to reflect the specific needs of individual heritage areas.	NPS continues technical assistance, but the role changes to reflect the specific needs of individual heritage areas.	"Death" may occur as they terminate their efforts.
NPS aids in planning/technical assistance.	NPS continues technical assistance, but the role changes to reflect the specific needs of individual heritage areas.			NPS continues technical assistance, but the role changes to reflect the specific needs of individual heritage areas.

The first stage of NHA organizational development is called the "Organizing" stage. Almost unanimously, participants commented that NHAs organizational development began with NHA designation, which linked and defined the shared visions of the stakeholders. One participant stated that, although there was not one cohesive grassroots initiative driving the creation of its heritage area, many organizations throughout the region had been working individually towards this goal. Despite sharing a similar goal, these various groups worked in a his/her "very disparate and uncoordinated" manner. Another stated that, although in the beginning his/her NHA might have appeared to be the "epitome of pork barrel," public support already existed and became visible when the public began to understand the NHA movement; since "they didn't know they had the opportunity to extend [their grassroots efforts] to the region as a whole through the national heritage area model." Another participant stated that, prior to designation, there was interest from a variety of parties, but no "structural partnership." NHA designation brought all those forces around the same table, with a "formal structure to undertake things with credibility." This formal structure, in turn, increased stakeholder interest. Participants also observed that NHA designation

led to increased stakeholder support. One person commented,

What I did notice after it became a national heritage area was an increased interest from the public at large in what it was and what it was designed to do, and I think specifically what we saw was an increased desire by the public to participate in it.

Thus, the "Organizing" stage in NHA organizational development is the realization of a shared vision among stakeholders, the adoption of a formal structure in the form of NHA designation, and an increase in stakeholder interest.

Secondly, an "Implementing" stage occurred as the receipt of federal dollars served as the impetus for NHAs to begin developing as an organization by hiring staff and implementing management plans. One interviewee stated that after five years of designation, no funding had been received and no planning had taken place. Because there was little or no funding, the organization could not grow. The participant discussed the importance of initial funding: "With that initial funding, the heritage area was

able to begin the management planning process ...and then also hire staff for the first time...the initial bout of funding was a major turning point....” Another NHA was designated in 1996 but did not receive funding until 1998 and “then we sort of ramped up and were fully going by 2000.” Another NHA waited for funding before creating “by-laws and the articles of incorporation for the corporation.” One participant stated that federal funding is what got the ball rolling: “It’s like once you jumpstart the process, it starts taking on a life of its own.” Another stated that the partnership that developed from the merging of several organizations into the formal structure of a NHA “was a step...necessary to ensure our success and hopefully superlative performance as a moderately sized National Heritage Area” by making provisions for new personnel and new avenues of funding, along with a new geographic focus. Hence, funding and staffing create the “Implementing” stage, the second step in the organizational development of NHAs.

Based upon participants’ responses, a third phase, “Role Setting,” emerges as NHA staff become more stable and proficient and as responsibilities shift from the board to the staff. One interviewee commented that a key turning point in his/her NHA’s evolution came when staff became more “professionalized, through staff changes and staff training, through just working—all of us working together to figure out how this heritage area can work, what it can do.” One interviewee called this the “implementation phase,” with “heavier work” and “heavier lifting” than the creativity that is required in earlier stages. Another said, “One group starts to take on a leadership role, where another is much more practical day-to-day kind of thing.” One participant noticed a shift between commission and staff: “Most of the direction or the ideas or the momentum is coming from the staff, because we’re aware of opportunities.... In the early days, I think it would have been most of the momentum was coming from the commission itself.” Another remarked that although, the budget and financial support came from a federal commission, the NHA had recently formed a non-profit under which the staff handles operations. Hence, in “Role Setting,” the staff becomes more specialized and assumes more responsibility in day-to-day operations.

As boards make the transition from the initial planning or “visioning” entity to assume the responsibilities of relationship building and fund raising, the fourth, “Institutionalizing,” stage begins. One participant remarked that “we had a major turning point when the board recognized that we were going to have to be a more active fundraising organization than we had in the past.” Another noted that the board of directors’ concentration recently expanded to community outreach. Also during “Institutionalizing,” organizations begin actively refining their boards to ensure productivity and recruit board members who will be involved and proactive. One respondent explained that the NHA was in the process of recruiting new board members who would be more effective in attracting private dollars and in “help[ing] us gather some money.” Another said that they now purposefully keep a few vacant seats on their board, “just in case there are other key players that we want to bring on—corporate people, people that can help with fundraising, individuals that have a particular expertise or interest.” One person explained that the effectiveness and quality of a NHA board at this stage hinges on “the ability to raise friends and funds.” Another NHA commented, “We’ve added more positions on the board, and we’re trying to get more diversity of the community on the board...[We] need to reach out and get more input in from the community.” In “Institutionalizing,” a proactive and involved board takes shape and assumes the responsibility of public involvement and fundraising.

Finally, the “Redirecting” phase occurs when the organizations begin moving in a new direction or reorganize in response to funding changes or other social, economic, or political forces. Although few NHAs have reached this stage of organizational development, participants’ responses indicated an anticipation of what the future would bring. One participant said, “Some of these grow to outlive their usefulness. Some of them spin off just like would happen in a business or something like that. Sometimes they’ll develop arms.” Others might redefine themselves to move forward, which is the case with one NHA. A participant remarked, “Our commission expired. It was renewed once and now it’s expired, and there is legislation that’s pending to reestablish the heritage area...[as a] regional not-for-profit.” One person commented that his/her NHA

was preparing for this stage to come by explaining that the NHA was going to have to “start behaving more like a traditional non-profit organization, instead of assuming we would rely on federal funding going into the future.... It’s always something you have to plan for in the future.” Another respondent feared that the NHA might cease to exist when the federal funding ran out. Hence, as their organizational development evolves, a stage of “Redirecting,” may be reached and NHAs will be faced with deciding in what direction they want to proceed.

Thus, as NHAs evolve, their organizational development move through a series of stages: Organizing, Implementing, Role Setting, Institutionalizing, and Redirecting.

3.2 NPS’ Role as a Federal Partner Changes Over Time

3.2a. Initially, The NPS has a Static Role as the Federal Partner

Interviews reveal that in the beginning, each NHA has a similar relationship with NPS. NPS is one of many collaborators in the partnership and has very specific functions during the initial stages of NHA evolution, such as offering technical assistance. NPS also serves as the federal agency through which Congressionally appropriated funds flow during the lifespan of the NHA.

Technical assistance in the early stage of NHA development comes in the form of planning and implementation of the plan. One Park Service employee stated,

I’d say with every heritage area the Park Service plays a role in the early states, in the planning stages, public involvement, helping them build coalitions of support, defining the objectives, really doing the early stages of planning and pulling the area together and determining what direction they’re going to take.

Another NPS employee stated, “Probably our most important role is helping in the planning in the beginning.” Another representative stated that Park Service expertise might come in the form of helping

develop the management plan, or in conserving or developing resources. One participant explained that dealing with the federal government’s regulations are difficult for outside agencies like NHAs and described the relationship as being like “the earth’s plates grinding against one another.” The participant explained that NPS offers a “reconciliation of the private sector and the public sector” and can often ease that tension through interpretation of the regulations and advocacy on behalf of the NHA program.

For example, local or regional NPS offices not only serve as the “conduit” through which funds are channeled, they also assist individual NHAs in procuring funds. One participant explained,

When we need technical support services, they’ve been involved, but I jokingly talk to the Superintendent and say, the most important thing you can do is when the money gets appropriated, fee it up and get it to us as soon as possible....The only way to speed that process is through the Park Service pushing and pulling and trying to get the money moving.

One NPS Superintendent said that the NHA in partnership with NPS unit did not get the start it needed until NPS intervened on behalf of the NHA to obtain funding. Hence, not only does NPS serve as the agency through which Congressionally appropriated funds flow, it also serves as a liaison in acquisitioning the money on behalf of individual NHAs.

Initially, the role of the NPS as the federal partner in NHA development is two-fold: it offers technical assistance and then continues to serve as the agency through which NHA funds flow.

3.2b As NHA Organizational Development Evolves, So Does the Role of the NPS

Although NPS continues to serve as the agency housing NHA funds, its role diversifies to reflect the needs of individual NHAs. One participant explained, “There’s a relationship that develops, and it’s going to be a little different depending on the interests that are involved in the creation of the heritage area, the enabling legislation,

and what the expectations are.” For example, in areas where public mistrust of federal programs is prevalent, the NHA and NPS did not play up their relationship to the local community. An interviewee explained:

They [the NPS] have taken a very low-key approach to our heritage area, because they didn’t want to create any problems for us.... There is absolutely a legitimacy and a value and a credibility to the arrow and all of that. To the tourism public we want to appeal to that. To the general public here, we want to keep it low key.

With other NHAs, the two organizations function in a symbiotic relationship. One NHA director explained, “The national park lends a long-term stability, vision and expertise—technical expertise in many areas—preservation in this area and in research [and] in interpretation especially.” The interviewee went on to say that the NHA “brings to the table the 300 years of the same cultures interacting in this area. Descendents of the original people are all over the Board....It brings to the table community relevance as it were for the park.”

Another participant pointed out that NPS contributions were centered on the local conditions and stakeholders: “Probably more than anything, their mantra is these are local decisions, locally arrived at; we just support the local consensus.” That sentiment is mirrored by one NPS Superintendent’s observation that the NPS is “functioning as an enabler, not necessarily a leader, not necessarily as a doer.” Other interviewees described the NPS as a “quiet enabler,” as “woven” into the fabric of the NHA and community, and as the passenger in a vehicle being driven by the NHA.

Hence, as NHAs begin to evolve, so does the role of NPS as the federal partner, moving from a source of technical assistance to fill a role dictated by local needs and conditions.

3.2c The Role of the NPS as the Federal Partner will Continue to Evolve

Participants felt that the NHA/NPS partnership was a good one and offered suggestions about their future relationship. Some suggested that NPS serve as a “sounding board” among NHAs to open lines about

best practices and successes so that future NHAs avoid pitfalls in recreating the wheel. Additionally, interviewees suggested a heightened level of collaboration. One NHA director explained, “I encouraged the NPS to consider enhanced funding for special joint projects involving 2 or more NHA’s from within the same NPS region; for example, an educational initiative, or a marketing campaign themed to a shared industrial or cultural focus.” Another participant anticipated joint educational programming through shared rangers from other parks to enlighten communities within the NHA. Although the role of the NPS varies among NHAs and reflects individual NHA needs, participants clearly saw a continuation and growth of the relationship in the future.

3.3 Other Issues, Concerns or Opportunities Relating to NHA Organizational Development or the Role of the NPS as the Federal Partner

3.3a Board Members Affect NHA Evolution

One opportunity that resounded throughout the interviews was that NHAs need to understand and encourage responsibility on their boards. Participants suggested NHAs could not achieve their vision, effectively raise funds, or engage the community without the support of an energetic, involved, and proactive board. Interviewees suggested the need to structure their boards and choose the right board members. One participant explained that effective board members must be “engaged” in the organization and that all too often, members are merely warm bodies rather than active participants. They continued, “I don’t think people spend enough time really thinking about who needs to be on their boards and evaluating and trying to shape the board.” Other participants spoke of the dangers of haphazardly choosing board members who might draw the NHA “off-course.” Instead, they suggested using the management plan as a structure to “inspire and unite” the board. One participant commented that effective boards should “become imbued with the mission of the plan.” Another sentiment was that managing the size of the board is also critical. One NHA cut the number of board seats after realizing that there were too many members to reach a quorum. Another NHA director said that large boards are too difficult to manage and “it just sort of loses focus.” Hence, boards play a vital role in

NHAs. Therefore, NHA's actively "craft" their boards to ensure active engagement and participation.

4.0 DISCUSSION

Results from this qualitative study should be interpreted with caution. The small sample size limits generalizing the results to all NHAs and the NPS. Also, the researcher noted that some interviewees preempted any negative comments by saying, "Don't quote me on this" or simply avoided making any critical comments at all. Some seemed to paint an unusually "rosy" picture with their responses. This attitude may be attributed to personal bias, politics, or some other personal agenda on behalf of the interviewee. Moreover, the researcher did not employ a mixed-methods (Patton 2002) approach when gathering data since this project will be used as part of a large, more in-depth study during Phase Two.

Beyond these limitations, however, these interviews produced information-rich qualitative data that were used to examine the organizational development of NHAs and the role of the NPS as the federal partner. Results from the study confirm previous literature on partnership formation and organizational development. It also informed the definition of stages of NHA organizational development that will be tested in Phase Two of the research project.

Consistent with literature on partnership formation (Gunn 1994, Selin & Chavez 1994, 1995; Gray, 1985), participants suggested that NHAs are formed by stakeholder partnerships at various levels, including local, state, regional, and national levels. Respondents repeatedly credited partnership and collaboration among groups as a driving force behind NHAs. Venter and Breen (1998) create a partnership model depicting an "overlapping" in interests between government and non-government entities. This overlap of interests creates a partnership forum through which issues are addressed. Respondents suggest that the overlapping of stakeholder groups and NPS as the federal partner create a partnership forum, or "network structure" (Mandell, 2001), through which the NHA takes life to address the common goal of preserving America's living landscapes and acknowledging those areas that served to create American heritage. This "shared vision" is also consistent

with literature on partnership formation (Gray 1985, Selin & Chavez, 1994, 1995).

Likewise, many researchers have identified and mapped the steps associated with these partnerships' organizational development (Waddock 1989, Selin & Chavez 1995, Venter & Breen 1998, Caffyn 2000, Institute for Conservation Leadership 2004). Responses from this study show that NHA organizational development evolves through similar stages as these models. The Institute for Conservation Leadership (2004) found that non-profits move through four stages of development: Founding, "The Leap", Shared Governance and Institutional. Although NHAs operate under a variety of organizational structures, such as federal commissions, and non-profits), interviews suggest that all have evolved through stages similar to those defined by the Institute.

The Institute (2004) defines the Founding stage as: "an individual leader or a small group has an idea and forms an organization, run by volunteers." Challenges during this stage include lack of funding and professional staff.

This stage is confirmed during this research.

Respondents in this study suggest that NHAs grow from a common vision among various stakeholders. Additionally, several participants expressed frustration in the beginning because they had no funding and no ability to hire staff.

One variation revealed during this research is that this stage of development is not limited to individuals or small groups. NHAs bring together entire states, regions, and both private and public stakeholders representing volumes of participants. Regardless of size, however, interviews reveal that "Founding" is a common stage among all NHAs' organizational development as it begins to evolve.

Secondly, NHAs experience a second stage of organizational development similar to the Institute's "The Leap" stage. Funds begin to roll in and staffing occurs. Challenges include "developing a systematic, effective way for the board to support and work with the executive director and staff."

Thirdly, the research corroborates the Institute's finding that the third stage, "Shared Governance," begins when "the board assumes the governance of the organization and delegates administration of programs to the executive director and staff." This research suggests that many NHAs are in the "Shared Governance" stage, especially since a point of concern among many participants was ensuring that board members stepped up to the plate in assuming their responsibilities as the governing body.

Participants suggest that a few NHAs have reached what the Institute terms as the "Institutional" stage, where the staff assumes more responsibility and has more control over the organization's direction while the board focuses "mainly on fundraising and community support."

While the Institute (2004) finds four stages in the organizational development of non-profits, this study also suggests a fifth stage, where NHAs may face what Selin & Chavez (1995) call an "outcomes phase," where partnerships "undergo a cyclical re-evaluation of purpose" that may lead the partnership in a new direction or allow it to dissolve. This research corroborates the existence of an "outcomes phase." Participants in this study are already anticipating this stage. Results suggest that some NHAs may redefine their focus if their sunset date is reached and their federal funding is cut. Having reached its sunset date, one NHA is attempting to redefine itself as a non-profit and secure further federal funding. Although "death" has not occurred for any NHA, several participants expressed concern that they would not be able to operate without the federal funds they currently receive.

5.0 MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study reveal that NHAs organizational development evolves dynamically and reflects the unique nature of individual areas. Managers should realize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution in managing NHAs. This finding has implications as the recent growth in the NHA movement has been met with increased public scrutiny about the use of taxpayer dollars to fund the projects, the need for performance- and outcome-based assessment and the need to address the accountability of the use of federal funds as described in the Government

Performance Result Act. Attempts to standardize enabling legislation and to create assessment measures should be made with a heightened awareness that such actions might stifle the very creativity and uniqueness that defines each NHA. However, understanding the stages of organizational development that each NHA passes through might make this task less daunting.

Additionally, it is evident that the NPS as a federal partner plays an integral role in NHA start-up. This relationship evolves dynamically to reflect the needs of individual heritage areas, ranging from highly visible relationships to virtually hidden ones. This relationship will clearly continue in the future and the NPS roles as federal partner will become even more sophisticated as NHAs seek to partner among themselves in outreach, education, and even funding opportunities.

Finally, the interviews revealed that participants realize the important role their boards play and that they are concerned about creating an optimal board presence. Board development exercises will help NHAs recruit and structure effective boards.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This first phase of research helped identify NHAs to be used in implementing Phase Two of the project. Interview data collected in Phase One will be supplemented by secondary data, such as transcripts from meetings, feasibility studies, newsletters, meeting minutes, and NPS reports in a mixed-methods study (Patton 2002) to test the stages of organizational development and role of NPS as a federal partner as suggested by this study. This model may contribute information needed to develop designation and evaluation criteria and will serve as a useful management tool for current and forthcoming NHAs.

7.0 CITATIONS

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