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National Heritage Areas Administrative History Project

J. Glenn Eugster
December 14, 2015

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508 compliant version by Jessica Lamb

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My Narrative
The Administrative History of the National Heritage Areas Coordinating Office

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Interview conducted and transcribed by
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My first interest was not specifically in heritage areas, per se, because I think the term is a label we have put on the different work that we do in different programs at different levels of the government and in the private sector. At the University of Georgia, I studied landscape architecture and read, Design With Nature, a book by Ian McHarg, then a consultant as well as the Chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania. I worked for a while after undergraduate school and then went to the University of Pennsylvania for graduate school to study under McHarg. What I found while I worked was decisions about the use of land and water were fragmented. A developer would go out in a part of the metropolitan area and do a 500-acre subdivision and there wouldn't be any real analysis of history, of nature, and I thought that I really needed to learn a lot more of how I do this design with nature. I had a natural bent. At the University of Pennsylvania, they talked about human ecology, and I thought that I didn't come for this. There were a lot of excellent cultural anthropologists and human ethnographers and McHarg had brought them in because he had this decision-making model, he called the, *layer cake of reality*.

When you think of how we plan landscape. We have a historic preservation office, a heritage office, a wetlands office and an economic development office. What we have done is pull the landscape apart and put it in neat little organizational boxes. Sometimes those organizations come together but more often than not they do not because of budget or parochial interests. What McHarg believed was that interdisciplinary planning was needed and he would assemble teams.

When I left the University of Pennsylvania, I worked on a number of short-term contracts with Bucks County, PA, McHarg's office, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the New Jersey Office of Coastal Zone Management. All the time I'm looking at these values. How are we protecting these values, be it open space or historic buildings? It was all fragmented goals and objectives. I wondered why we weren't doing what McHarg told us, interdisciplinary? I came across a notice for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) hiring for 30-60-day appointments. I jumped to BOR and worked for Bernard *Chick* Fagan. He took me under his wing, and we did a pilot, a national urban recreation and open space study.

My term ended but later I got a one-year appointment with BOR. BOR had a history of work with recreation and open space but recognized that there were other values and programs out there, such as historic preservation, land conservation and parks. Early in my career I had worked a lot for local governments, so I knew that private property and economic value, although not in our mandate, were inherent values of land and had to be considered. BOR had us doing this national urban recreation study and I was intrigued by the open space portion because we had to look at different metropolitan areas and identify what were the important places that could provide recreation opportunities to metropolitan populations and all kinds of stuff popped up. I was co-leader of the Philadelphia-Camden-Trenton-Wilmington Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area which was a large area. I heard about the Pinelands National Reserve, a big natural area in NJ, which had been the focus of human ecologists from UPenn, such as Jon Berger and Dan Rose, with Mary Hufford of the American Folklife Center, and Libby Marsh of Stockton State College. It is very much a landscape, not just a natural area. Philadelphia was a

bit of an incubator of innovation with really bright people trying new ideas. There was Maurice *Red* Arnold, who was the regional director in the policy position who understood how these pieces come together at the local level. He had guys under him, such as Jack Hauptman, Kevin Coyle and John Stokes who had amazing ideas of how all these pieces fit together.

BOR transformed into the Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service when Jimmy Carter became President. It was a good thing because he brought together pieces of NPS including historic preservation and put them with the BOR functions. The good news was that HCRS was about heritage. The bad news was that Carter wasn't sure to be a second-term President.

During the time of the merger, I worked on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory. The rivers program applied to the Mid-Atlantic and the North-Atlantic Regions, a thirteen-state study area. We were supposed to identify potentially nationally significant river corridors for possible inclusion in the national system. We got into this whole issue of what was significant and what values to consider. Again, I started out with a natural bent but quickly saw that rivers had many, many values and functions including historic, cultural, fishery, water supply, energy and more.

We had a nomination process and did the inventory cooperatively with each of the states. A lot of people would nominate rivers that generally weren't recognized as a wild and scenic river. People don't understand all those little subtle organizational boxes that we put things in. Running parallel to the Inventory was a proposed effort focusing on, *Areas of National Concern*. As part of this Kevin (Coyle) did a quick report of a side-by-side comparison of all the designations within HCRS and NPS and the purpose, criteria and management objectives of each. Kevin stressed that you had to find the right fit for protection before you pick a program to use. Don't pick Wild and Scenic Rivers designation and then find out it doesn't fit. In deciding what fits you have to talk to people because people have to be involved.

What we saw in the past was that federal initiatives determined whether a river or historic property was important, and they determined whether it was appropriate to designate and determined how the management plan would be worked and then the locals would be brought in to review the document. We found that largely didn't work. People may be interested in protecting an area but have lots of misgivings about another level of government being involved.

My belief was if people were interested, they didn't want you to do anything to them, they really didn't want you to do anything for them, they wanted you to work with them. What we tried to do was to start by working with people to identify what values and functions they cared about. I crafted a decision-making formula based on what I learned from school as well as my mentors. The formula started with values and functions, then goals and objectives, issues and matters of concern, then alternatives and then selected action and then test if it was working.

People would tell us that they were interested in protecting an area. Sometimes they were interested in it becoming a national park. When you talked with them about what they were trying to accomplish, they didn't want the government to come and buy their land. They didn't want rangers. But they did want to get more recognition, find funding and protect it.

Early heritage studies: The 1970's was a period of innovation in protection, preservation, conservation and recreation work. My first exposure to heritage was in a document prepared by BOR on the Connecticut River Valley. Although it was before my time and unsuccessful, the concept that was articulated then intrigued me. Little did I know that there was a convergence of ideas about what work we did, how we did it, and what we called it.

I was aware of what was going on in the I&M Canal (Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor). I had talked to Jerry Adelmann. I also was involved in the New Studies Program, when someone proposes a national park. That process was woeful because the agency didn't want new national parks. At best you would do a study and have wasted two years.

In Philadelphia I worked on State Implementation Assistance. My projects eventually became heritage areas such as Blackstone. I thought I might be able to help people without doing these bigger, expensive studies. Because of the state priorities coming out of the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan it was a mix. Natural areas, parks, open space, historic/cultural. It broadened our focus, partners and mandate. It also required that we expand our toolkit.

In HCRS in Washington there was a guy doing computer work before anyone else, David Poor. He put together, Poor's Almanac which was a toolkit ahead of its time. He catalogued all the state and local programs that could help people help themselves. Money for trails, land acquisition, historic preservation, technical planning assistance, habitat protection, and more.

In 1976 as part of the National Urban Recreation and Open Space Study the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, prepared a report entitled "Greenline Parks: An Approach to Preserving Recreational Landscapes in Urban Areas." With the assistance of Charles E. Little of the Congressional Research Service, and Jon Kusler, the Subcommittee summarized the need for a new approach to urban park acquisition and management, the U.S. and International precedents and antecedents for, *Greenline Park*s, and the potentials for a federal government role.

Although the study introduced more terms and labels adding to confusion with partners and the public, the idea of a more interdisciplinary approach to dealing with places, people and some kind of process for protection was developing. When the heritage term started to bubble up, it was just the latest slogan. In hindsight it was great marketing. The earliest examples that I can remember of something like a heritage area study, but weren't called that, were a BOR study done on the Connecticut River Valley in Vermont and New Hampshire, and in the '70s the Lehigh Canal HABS/HAER project done by Karen Wade and Allen Comp. Meanwhile we turned the Nationwide Rivers Inventory into the States and Local River Conservation Assistance Program as a way to assist with the protection, restoration and revitalization of all types of rivers. The idea wasn't to designate all these rivers to the federal system but to see what the people wanted to do and help them if invited and if appropriate.

The Blackstone: The Blackstone came up around the time we were doing the Inventory and State Implementation Assistance. Local and state interest was strong and resulted in congressional requests to NPS for assistance. There was a scramble to see who would do the study on the Blackstone because everybody wanted the money. Senator Chafee (from Rhode

Island) on the Senate Committee for Environment and Public Works was one of the people asking for this. The Denver Service Center, North Atlantic Regional Office and our office in Philadelphia negotiated the NPS response to Senator Chafee. Robert Yaro from Massachusetts and Bob Bendick and Judy Benedict from Rhode Island were very comfortable with me and I also had a colleague in the Boston office, Rolf Diamant, who was assigned the lead for NPS and eventually did the heavy lifting on the Blackstone. Our office, including myself, Frederick Steiner, who now has McHarg's position at University of Pennsylvania, Cecily Corcoran Kihn and Joanne Jackson, who had a background in human ecology, worked together on the concept for the Blackstone Valley Heritage Area. We assessed the significance of the values and functions of the landscape and outlined options including the idea that the heritage area would get six years of NPS assistance.

We had looked at I&M, which wasn't a federal park area, so these heritage areas didn't have to be traditional national parks, but they had nationally significant values. Determining that it had nationally significant values in itself didn't mean that the federal government had to do something. During my rivers work I had learned from (Chick) Fagan that the lowest level of government that was willing to make a commitment to do what was necessary should have the opportunity to take stewardship responsibilities. That had a pretty big impact on me because I used to think the higher the significance the more justification for us being there. But I had seen federal efforts go bad where locals didn't want the feds. Wind up having this battle over who's in control rather than what's the best way to protect.
When we did the alternatives analysis it went to the state agencies and Senator Chafee who modified the options for the valley and the NPS role. They changed the report, prepared legislation and did the designation. When we set out the intention was never to create a substitute for national designation. NPS had a process you had to go through if you wanted a national park unit. The heritage designation wasn't intended to be a back door to the creation of new units of the national park system.

Delaware & Lehigh: Congressman Peter Kostmayer, from Pennsylvania, who had been involved in the Tocks Island Dam and the protection of the Middle Delaware River and turned out to be a good friend of the NPS, came and talked to me about the Delaware & Lehigh Canal (D&L). He told me that he had gone to Washington and there was a meeting with eight people from the NPS telling him that designating the D&L a heritage area wasn't a good idea--it needed to be studied. So, he called me to his office to talk to him about whether the D&L was nationally significant. I said, yes, it's documented that it is. He asked if I thought it was a good idea to have some sort of designation. I said, yes, with the caveat that they plan first so that they know what they are getting into before they designate. We had learned the hard way that to designate first allowed locals to find out that there were all kinds of problems they hadn't anticipated.

He asked why I was saying it was a good idea when eight members of my agency said it wasn't. I asked if he knew about the HABS/HAER study, or the National Urban Recreation and Open Space study. He didn't. I told him that I thought this canal was one of the flagship canals. The C&O Canal is way up there, but D&L is pretty special. He ran with it.

Lackawanna: As these things started to move, Congressman Joseph McDade came in after talking to NPS Director Bill Mott. They decided that Steamtown in Scranton, Pennsylvania

would be a good National Historic Park. Very controversial. Little did we know at the time that ten years before the Denver Service Center was up in that area looking at a proposal for a national anthracite coal park. It didn't go anywhere. Why? Top-down approach. Their historians worked on it without involving the local and state people.

After McDade and Mott talked, Jim Coleman came to me to say he wanted me in charge of this and that I should work with the Denver Service Center and Washington. Originally McDade had gone to Mott to ask if he could help him get a turntable for the railyard roundhouse. Director Mott decided it should be a national park. Mott had created the California railroad museum when he was Director of California Parks before he was NPS Director.

The old Denver study talked about how significant that region was for anthracite coal. The story of anthracite coal turned into immigration. We accelerated the planning process. Denver to do all the engineering and serious planning and we to do the public outreach.

People in Scranton said, don't just tell the story of the railyards, talk about the valley. You can't tell the story of the railyards without context. A principle of historic preservation is context. Everyone knew what a park was but not what this new thing was. We laid out some alternatives for connecting the railyards with the valley. There was the natural option, the historical/cultural option, the economic option. I remember people standing up at the meetings and saying, we want all of this. People understand at the local level that a special place is connected.

The term heritage was injected in the discussions. It seemed as if everybody knew what heritage was, but not everyone had the same definition. We talked about it being a heritage area. Years earlier, under Pennsylvania Governor (Richard Lewis *Dick*) Thornburgh there had been a low-key feasibility study for heritage areas in Pennsylvania done by consultants Cecily Corcoran Kihn and Joanne Jackson. We talked to the state leaders and more ideas were added to the mix, e.g., the trolley system of the area, the restoration of the Lackawanna River. When the Steamtown plan went forward it was part and parcel with the heritage area that added in economic, natural, cultural, heritage features. It was assumed that NPS, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the counties, the municipalities all had to be involved.

When we started working on the Lackawanna, we had a daylong session on heritage areas with people from NPS, as well as, Massachusetts and New York who spoke on how they ran their heritage areas. We talked about what was going on in the federal area. It got the buzz going. Larry Williamson, of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, made the Pennsylvania statewide system of heritage areas happen. I think a lot of resistance to heritage areas, from the federal and local sides, is simply about money. The interest is not going to go away and sometimes if you say no the political people will go over your head. Steamtown could have been a low cost, no cost assistance. They needed a roundtable. They didn't even ask for a national park. But, when offered a national park, they said yes. It is now a successful park, fabulous heritage area (Lackawanna Heritage Valley).

Measures of success: Measures of success are complicated. However, people at the local level know whether progress is being made. It is fascinating that often there are very few tangible things that people are interested in. You can tie in miles of trail, contributions to the economy

which are nice because they seem factual. I think, are they achieving the goals in the management plan? Are they still engaged and helping?

NPS attitudes: I liked working for the NPS. Rest assured that they didn't want any of us. As a BOR and HCRS alum I met real hostility in Philadelphia, Boston, Denver and Washington, DC. When we began work for NPS I had 15 really good people in my shop, and we were doing work that we had money to do. The NPS Administration offices kept trying to take the money away and talking about reductions in force. Everyone except my secretary and Joseph DiBello left.

Congress was very supportive of that kind of partnership work. I think NPS tends to be park centric. But the world has changed. I made a comment in a presentation about the expansion of heritage areas, federal and state, and that I could imagine almost any area of the country putting together a heritage area plan. Not saying that the NPS should help them all or designate them all. I said that this was a way to integrate different program area activities, e.g., economic development, flood control, rails to trails, historic preservation. If NPS wants to be successful they have got to integrate, think more holistically.

I don't know what NPS objectives have ever been for heritage areas. I've seen total resistance from the get-go. Because money is so important, I think the resistance is still there. If money is your main criteria to do something, set it aside and come back with something more realistic. Blackstone is either important or not. It can't be important only if we have money. The Lackawanna Valley is either important or not.

Local participation: In my work in NPS and for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency I would always get people to sign on at the beginning of a proposal or project. Pass a local resolution saying that you endorse working with us. When you wait for the final product to get endorsements there might be a group who had thought even doing the study was not a good idea. Getting up front endorsements would tell you that it was a good idea. Good investment of the time and money. Senator (Paul) Sarbanes wanted the Lower Eastern Shore a National Heritage Area, but the local people got nervous, and Maryland decided to make it a state heritage area. They got a lot of technical assistance from federal agencies but ultimately wanted to do it themselves.

We always talked about heritage area, not national or state heritage area. If people care about their areas, they will do something. If they don't, they won't and NPS should not go there.

For EPA I worked in the area of the Chesapeake Bay. One meeting I had in Dorchester County was an example of the special qualities of a place that local people will talk about. One woman got up and said, "Heritage is who we were, who we are, and who we will be." I thought to myself, don't be afraid to ask, but ask questions that are going to build the foundation. If you don't get agreement on values and you get into the issues; how people feel about the feds and taxes. If you go to that first it gets too cumbersome. Because you can always take people back and say, you said you were interested in protecting these wetlands, or this underground railroad, how can we do that and still address your fears of the federal government or tax rates?

That process gives people a chance to not only be an observer but a participant. I think the old school way of doing things of going off and making the plan and then coming to people and asking them what they think doesn't work as well as being much more interactive. Ask the local interested people to help identify resources and needs. There are people in the community who know things that we don't know. Plus, they are locals, and you build in credibility when you make the decision together. Once you get the drumbeat going through public meetings and media stories there are corporate and granting organizations that want to contribute to the effort.

A good example of this was my work with Crisfield, Maryland while at the EPA. Their city's plan had been all engineering. But when you actually talked to the citizens there was a story there and our public meetings brought that out. Some people had particular ideas of what they wanted to preserve and how to do it. It is interesting what we learned in Crisfield. People would tell me that Crisfield had potential, but the people were kind of insular. We had a meeting of about 100 people and were talking about how to revitalize the waterfront. My approach was to say, what do you think? Rather than start out expounding my own experiences and ideas. This guy in the back of the room, had an idea all figured out for sunset concerts on the dock that leads to the Smith Island ferry. He knew performers. He knew families who would put the people up to save money. Nobody had ever asked him. It is a different approach to working with communities. Not to say that NPS hasn't used this approach in things like the Main Street Program or some of the technical assistance projects. What you are doing is assuming there is a certain amount of knowledge out there. All too often government comes and poses something and says, what do you think? Rather than saying, what do you think, in order to propose something. I think a lot of people know a lot about history.

Everybody knows something and you just have to figure out what it is that they know. The way you do that is to ask them; what do you know? This is your place, your future, help us design it. This is where this movement has made a big effort. In my experience, asking has produced a lot of useful information that means something important to the community.

We went to Congressman McDade's office to ask, what were the ten groups we could not forget to talk to from his perspective. It was historic preservation, labor unions, downtown business, environmental groups, and so forth. In many ways he outlined the interdisciplinary team McHarg spoke of. NPS staff did thirteen individual listening sessions, put it all together, and reported it back to people. It made all the difference in the world. A federal agency like the NPS or EPA can't just stroll in. They have to be invited. They have to know somebody. You still have to prove yourself. You can then begin to talk and listen, talk and listen.

Essential elements of successful heritage areas: For National Heritage Areas there has to be resource values that are greater than statewide significance, that the feds value, and that the locals value. There has to be something that people will agree on that is important to work together to protect. Local support up front doesn't mean local support to actually designate it but local support to come together to look at alternatives for protection is essential. If you do a study without asking for governments to pass resolutions or at least send a letter of support, you may be at risk because you just don't know whether they are really committed to it. A plan should be done before designation. The devil is in the details and I've seen situations in which that was not done, and it is a disaster, such as in the Upper Delaware. NPS had done a plan that threatened

the communities with condemnation. The plan wasn't locally prepared. It was prepared by the Denver Service Center. If you are a fed and doing a project and money is being spent, you want to be sure it is a sound project. If you don't have a plan, then you are never really sure of that. Working out a plan after the designation you are taking the local incentive away. The plan is the agreement that spells out how we are going to work together. In the plan it is essential that it has goals and objectives. That it has real civic engagement from start to finish. There should be a process where people can help write the plan. That the plan be approved by those parties that endorsed it in the beginning. It should spell out how it is going to be implemented.

Once you go through that process you decide on what it is we want to do and then the money comes to the table. How are we going to pay for that? If people agree with an idea, they will help find the money to pay for it. NPS so far has preferred plan after designation. That is because that is the way NPS does things for national parks. That is the old system. The internal model. To plan after a park is designated. The problem with doing things differently puts people at risk. If you have done things in a certain way for decades and someone says, let's try this a little differently, there is a greater risk. What if it doesn't work? We know the old way works. This is a different game. Better to find out who is in charge in the plan before you designate rather than after. If you stick with a template, over time it is outdated.

I think these efforts to be successful require a NPS presence if it is a national area. There has to be a liaison in the same zip code that helps make the communication between all these interests and NPS easier. I don't think there has to be a big land presence.

If you are going to have a National Heritage Program, then all you are going to get is additions to a national heritage area program. If you design it a little differently, you will get some areas to be added as national heritage areas, but you might redirect some of the ones that maybe don't make sense. As an example, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. There was one way to get your river designated as a wild and scenic river. Get a study, study is reviewed, they designate, then you do the management plan. A lot of people wanted to protect their rivers but didn't want the feds to do it, but the process was set up to have the feds in control. In the Wild and Scenic Rivers legislation there is section eleven, which says, the agency can help states, local governments and private groups with river conservation and assistance. We have converted that into the River Conservation and Technical Assistance Program. Then Washington people turned that into the Rivers and Trails Program. You get a lot of assistance requests, many of which can be handled fairly easily. Some people are available for assistance. Not all need to be designations, if we are interested in heritage values. One of the ways to protect heritage values is national designation but there are state designations, there are local plans. If you just set up one path, the political people will get in there and get their area designated. If you can set it up with more flexibility, you are not necessarily encouraging people to go only the political route.

Administration of a NPS heritage program: In the beginnings of the heritage movement there was no guidance from Washington whatsoever. It didn't really fit. People saw that it started to grow, and Bill Spitzer got interested and Kate Stevenson got involved. Traditionally I think NPS managers thought it was a historic preservation thing and should go to Kate. Ultimately in headquarters they put things in one program or another and then that puts sidebars on it. I think it is best administered at the regional level to ensure integration.

The NPS Philadelphia Office helped place talented and savvy people in heritage areas. For example, Randy Cooley went to southwest Pennsylvania, Debbie Darden to the Lackawanna Valley, Deirdre Gibson to the D & L Canal, Paul Labovitz to Cuyahoga, Michael Creasy to Las Caminos Del Rio. Until you get someone who's in a place to provide service that, *gets it*, a heritage area is a hit or miss proposition for NPS.

As NPS considers future heritage area funding and designation no disagreement, in the NPS budget the parks come first. Whatever new program they are contemplating has to be designed with modesty, because if you over design it, it is going to fail. You will get resistance. It would be interesting to know what would cause an agency that's interested in heritage to say no to heritage. Was it simply the money?

I believe that good policy is that which works at the local level. It's carried to the national level. A good idea is only a good idea if everyone else says it's a good idea. Someone in Washington could think that heritage areas were a good idea, but until people started doing it at the local and state level and with some of the NPS in the field it's not a good idea.

Partnerships: Partnerships are not forever. The original Philadelphia-idea for heritage areas was that there would be six years of NPS assistance. Something less than the act of permanent designation makes a lot of sense if people are concerned about how successful heritage areas are.

Maybe by the nature that these are partnership efforts, the NPS should be concerned that if it fails what's going to happen to it. For example, I was appointed the river navigator of the Presidential Initiative on the Potomac, The Potomac National Heritage River. When they asked me to consider taking that job I was with EPA. The locals said they would only agree to my appointment if I worked out of the NPS National Capital Regional Office. That put me under Regional Director Terry Carlstrom. There was a lot of fanfare about how great this was going to be, and they gave me no money. We did a lot and we needed so little, but they weren't willing to do that (put money into the effort). I asked Carlstrom to give this to another federal agency, because some were interested, or wrap it up. It had gone five years and there was a lot of pressure inside the agency, especially from Director Mainella's office, to keep doing it. I stepped down from the navigator and finally we wrapped it up. It hurt because I never thought I would be left there with no help. Especially with no political support. It was embarrassing. But the wisdom of what happened was that it ran its course. It did some good things, but it wasn't meant to compete with other organizations that were already out there. It wasn't meant to duplicate things. It wasn't meant to draw money from a budget that was already tight.

Earlier in my career I worked with a group called Management Institute for Environmental Business. They did a guidebook to environmental partnerships. It was fascinating because they talked about partnerships like a lifespan. There was a beginning, a middle and an end. When we talk about these things, we just assume that they are going to go on forever. That needs to be thought out because political support changes, the agency's priorities change and yet, once you designate it, if your partners fail, what's the plan? This movement is not going to go away, so how does NPS embrace it and make something good for it and for all our programs? Good for NPS, states and local governments and private groups.

If the designation is to mean something there needs to be a commitment from the partners to earn that. You want to evaluate success, but you also want to evaluate commitment. Are the partners committing for perpetuity? They'll say, no we can't. But we are submitting the designation for perpetuity. The original idea was that you want to do something to protect and to get recognition. People, more often than not, are interested in recognition, assistance, and money. What we thought was, it's a new concept, try it for six years. If you want to pursue national park designation, then you can be channeled into that chute. If it was not the intent to make these units of the NPS then can't they be something similar to national register, or national historic landmark status? It is an important seal of approval that makes it easier to get assistance. If it is intended to be part of the national park system, then there should be some rigorous steps that need to be taken. There are so many kinds of designations. Some are parks, some aren't.

Money for six years may be enough. You're helping them figure out what they want to do with the area. After the six years the partners and the NPS would have to make a decision if they are recommending the area for designation. We might decide that it has national significance but may be best served by a state rather than federal entity.

What the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act said was, it's fine to deal with that one river but the depth and breadth of our act is to help people help themselves save rivers. I think that's the question here. Do you want to help people help themselves save heritage? If all you are doing is designation, you are going to lose more than you protect. That was the lesson we learned from the Wild and Scenic Rivers. So, we started doing statewide river assessments, working with the states to reinforce the states. The State of South Carolina started designating their rivers. Less federal action and for really a pittance. I think it's the same thing with heritage areas.

What does NPS think that success looks like with heritage areas? Would we like to see state heritage area programs? How does that relate to other existing historic preservation programs? It goes back to the question, has NPS really embraced a place-based approach? I would say, in some places, not. The reason the plan is so important before is you are building that relationship. There has to be an opportunity for that talking and listening before the formal and final action.

Tangible benefits to the NPS: I think the NPS learned more about the public it serves and the way it works with others. It learned more about how to partner. Learned more about place-based approaches, be it preservation, recreation, historic preservation or conservation. It learned more about tools that are available outside the agency: laws, programs, money. I think it built stronger political support for the NPS. Not just for projects or the program but for NPS. It also puts a different face on the NPS. One that sends the signal that we are interested in the places we manage but we are also available to help people help themselves for the values that we share. Successful projects, like this, improve the NPS credibility. A lot of the work that the NPS does, at times, is controversial. The way you work in these areas shows that you can be flexible. You can listen as well as lecture. I think that goes a long way with state agencies.

Whether we like it or not, democracy is being debated. These heritage areas are the front line, aren't they? You are stepping right into the on-the-ground political reality of who we were, who we are, and who we will be. I think that that is exciting and challenging.

The minute we think we know how to do something we get stuck in our model. The world is changing. Shouldn't we be open to discovering new ways? When we started working with heritage areas, we thought we knew how to do historic preservation. We knew how to do conservation and environmental restoration. With partners who are all innovators at the local level and are constantly learning and we learn from that feed-back loop. How does success influence how we do things in the future?

Benefits of NPS to heritage areas: NPS people are dedicated and gifted public servants. People like Joe DiBello, Deirdre Gibson and Debbie Darden, they bring a prospective that's not selfish, open to working with all kinds of people in all kinds of ways. The agency attracts a lot of talented people in terms of their skill sets. The D & L wouldn't be where it is if it wasn't for the HABS/HAER project. The HABS/HAER people are phenomenal for all of its specialized expertise. NPS has phenomenal contacts in other agencies, and at the state level. The contact between the NPS and the state historic preservation offices is really important.

Rolf Diamant and Nora Mitchell did a lot of work internationally and started an exchange with other countries. Ideas proven successful in other countries brought here and vice versa. The fact that the agency has been around forever and has time tested success is very valuable. People know who the NPS is and say wow. Only in some pockets of the country do they say, watch out.

NPS policy change over time: My sense is that NPS policy is still pretty paternal. If I was still in the agency I would want to ask, how are we empowering people to help us carry out our programs? Are we doing the things that help others help us accomplish what we both think is important? I think that is hard because NPS employees feel it's about money and power and we are the feds, we're in charge. That is a dated concept. Can we do more to help others help themselves and in doing that we do less ourselves? Under the current way we do things, the loss of heritage values, places that we care about, continues to outpace the rate of protection. Are we okay with that? We can be more effective, but it requires us to work differently.