



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



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# *Niagara National Heritage Area Study*

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Study Report  
2005



A vertical decorative image on the left side of the page showing a waterfall cascading over rocks, with water mist rising from the base.

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## *Executive Summary*



# Executive Summary



Maid of The Mist

## Introduction

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Niagara Falls is a geological wonder that has been a world-renowned tourist attraction for 200 years. The Niagara River Gorge is an exceptionally scenic corridor, carved by the movement of the Falls due to erosion from its original location near Lewiston, New York, beginning over 10,000 years ago. Rich in natural and cultural resources, the Niagara Falls area has significant historical associations with Indians, early European exploration, the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Underground Railroad. The Falls have long been an important site for hydroelectric power and ancillary industries. Together, these elements have contributed to Niagara Falls' importance in the American imagination, as a national landmark and a symbol of the American conservation movement.

There are three National Historic Landmarks in the study area: the Adams Power Transformer House, in Niagara Falls, which is the birthplace of the modern hydroelectric power station; the Niagara Reservation, designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and considered the oldest state park in the country; and the Colonial Niagara Historic District, in Lewiston and Youngstown, which includes Old Fort Niagara.

With the extensive cultural and natural resources in the Niagara Region, there is a widespread belief that there is great potential for upgrading the area's offerings. A Niagara National Heritage Area designation is being explored locally as a way to heighten appreciation of the region, better preserve its natural and historic resources, improve coordination among existing programs and sites, and improve the quality of life and economy of the area. Local efforts in pursuit of these objectives are ongoing.

The study area, according to federal legislation authorizing the NHA feasibility study, is the “lands in Niagara County, New York, along and in the vicinity of the Niagara River.” It encompasses the Cities of Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda; the Towns of Porter, Lewiston, Niagara, and Wheatfield; and the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown. A broader context area embraces the Canadian side of the Niagara River and Erie County, New York, communities bordering the Niagara River, namely Buffalo and Tonawanda.



Visitors to the Cave of the Winds

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Study Act (P.L. 107-256) outlines the criteria for evaluating the feasibility of the Niagara Falls Region to become a National Heritage Area. Analysis of the Niagara Falls Region in light of these criteria demonstrates that the area contains resources and represents themes that are distinctive aspects of America’s heritage.

In the process of researching for this study, four heritage themes interpreting the region have been identified:

1. Natural Phenomenon—Niagara Falls and the Niagara River Gorge are natural phenomena overwhelming in physical magnitude and deeply embedded in the popular consciousness;
2. Tourism and Recreation—Niagara Falls has been a leading international tourist attraction for 200 years, influencing the development of tourism and nature conservation in North America;
3. Power and Industry—Around 1895, Niagara Falls became the foremost source of hydro-electric power in North America, stimulating the development of innovative heavy industries in Niagara Falls and Buffalo;
4. Borderland/Border Crossing—The Niagara River area, a boundary between the United States and Canada, has played an important role in Indian culture, the French and English colonial struggle to control North America, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Underground Railroad, and it reflects national differences and similarities between the two countries today.

The feasibility study examined three management alternatives: (1) Continuation of Current Practices; (2) National Heritage Area—Niagara Falls and Lower Niagara River; and (3) National Heritage Area—Niagara Falls and Network of Thematically Related Sites. Alternative 2 would establish a heritage area along the American side of the Niagara River from the rapids above the Falls to the river’s mouth at Lake Ontario. Alternative 3 would have as



its core the area described in Alternative 2, as well as a network of sites thematically related to Niagara Falls in Niagara and Erie Counties with possibilities for cooperation with related sites in Canada.

Three possible models for the national heritage area management entity are a state agency, a regional nonprofit organization or a federal commission. As a public body created by Congress, a federal commission can be effective at assembling a cross-section of public and private interests, raising the profile of the heritage area, and involving the National Park Service.

A state commission that could be an appropriate management entity would be the newly created Niagara River Greenway Commission, which has been established to develop a plan for a greenway stretching the length of the Niagara River, from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. The State of New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has expressed a preference that this commission be the management entity for a potential national heritage area.

A regional nonprofit organization tends to be most appropriate where a strong, broadly supported nonprofit regional heritage organization already exists or emerges through the planning process.

A national heritage area could enhance the quality of historical, cultural, and natural attractions in the Niagara Region and increase connections between them. Heritage area goals expressed in the planning process include: improving the visitor experience; strengthening the region's identity; increasing public awareness of local history and the need for preservation; encouraging research on local history; and improving the local economy.

There has been public interest in establishing a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area since 2000, when an array of local leaders met with National Park Service officials to discuss the concept. This interest has been related to a number of planning and heritage initiatives, including the Urban Design Project of the University of Buffalo, the Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance, and the Buffalo Niagara



Encampment re-enacted at Old Fort Niagara

Cultural Tourism Initiative; and efforts to redevelop and promote Niagara by the City of Niagara Falls, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, USA Niagara, and the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation.

This study includes an Environmental Assessment of possible impacts related to the three alternatives. This assessment finds that the potential impacts are not significant, although additional visitors staying over longer periods of time would contribute to the tourism economy and specific sites might receive more visitation.

The study includes an inventory of natural and cultural resources within the Niagara River study area. It should be noted that this inventory is not exhaustive, but is sufficient to determine that adequate resources are present to provide interpretive opportunities relating to the themes presented in this report. Should a Niagara National Heritage Area be authorized by Congress, a more thorough resource inventory would be completed when a plan for the heritage area is developed.

This report does not presently make findings regarding criterion 7 regarding the demonstration of commitments of the management entity, local governments and organizations, or for criterion 10 describing the proposed management entity. The public comment period will be used by the study

team to evaluate public support for one of the management entity alternatives described above and to ascertain commitments that may be pledged by governments and organizations to the management entity and the heritage area as a whole. Complete findings on these criteria will be formally documented for the study record. The next steps after publication of this draft report will include: public view of the draft study for 30 days subsequent to its release; a public meeting to obtain public comments; review of public comments by the study team; preparation of the final national heritage area feasibility study report; and transmittal of the report to the Secretary of the Interior who will make a recommendation to Congress.





## *Part One*



## *Study Purpose and Background*





## Study Purpose and Background



A system of stairways and platforms leads visitors to the Cave of the Winds

### Project History

In 2001, Senator Charles E. Schumer and Congressman John J. LaFalce asked the National Park Service to explore alternative strategies for potential NPS partnership involvement in the area of Niagara Falls, New York, with state and local representatives.

An NPS reconnaissance team visited the area on March 19 and 20, 2001. The team met with district office staff of Senator Schumer and Congressman LaFalce, representatives of the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, faculty of the University of Buffalo, staff of area state legislators, and local organizations.

The reconnaissance team completed their assessment in July 2001. At the time, the team did not undertake a full study of the Niagara Region. Rather, the reconnaissance report explored whether further study was warranted to consider an NPS role in the region.

The reconnaissance report identified a number of possible approaches, including NPS technical assistance and federal designation of a heritage area. The reconnaissance report recommended that a congressionally authorized study be undertaken to seek broad public input and determine the feasibility of alternatives.

### Legislation

In October 2002, Public Law 107-256 the “Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Study Act,” directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. The study legislation defines the study area as “the lands in Niagara County, New York, along and in the vicinity of the Niagara River.” The study legislation also identifies national heritage area criteria to be employed by the National Park Service in conducting the study and requires consultation with state and local agencies.



Observation Tower at Niagara Falls State Park

Finally, the study legislation requires that a report be submitted to Congress no later than three fiscal years after the date upon which funds are made available to complete the study. The complete text of Public Law 107-256 may be found in Appendix A.

The following National Park Service Interim National Heritage Criteria are used by the National Park Service in evaluating study areas for such a designation:

1. The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage, through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities.
2. The area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a valuable part of the nation's story.
3. The area provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/or scenic features.
4. The area provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.

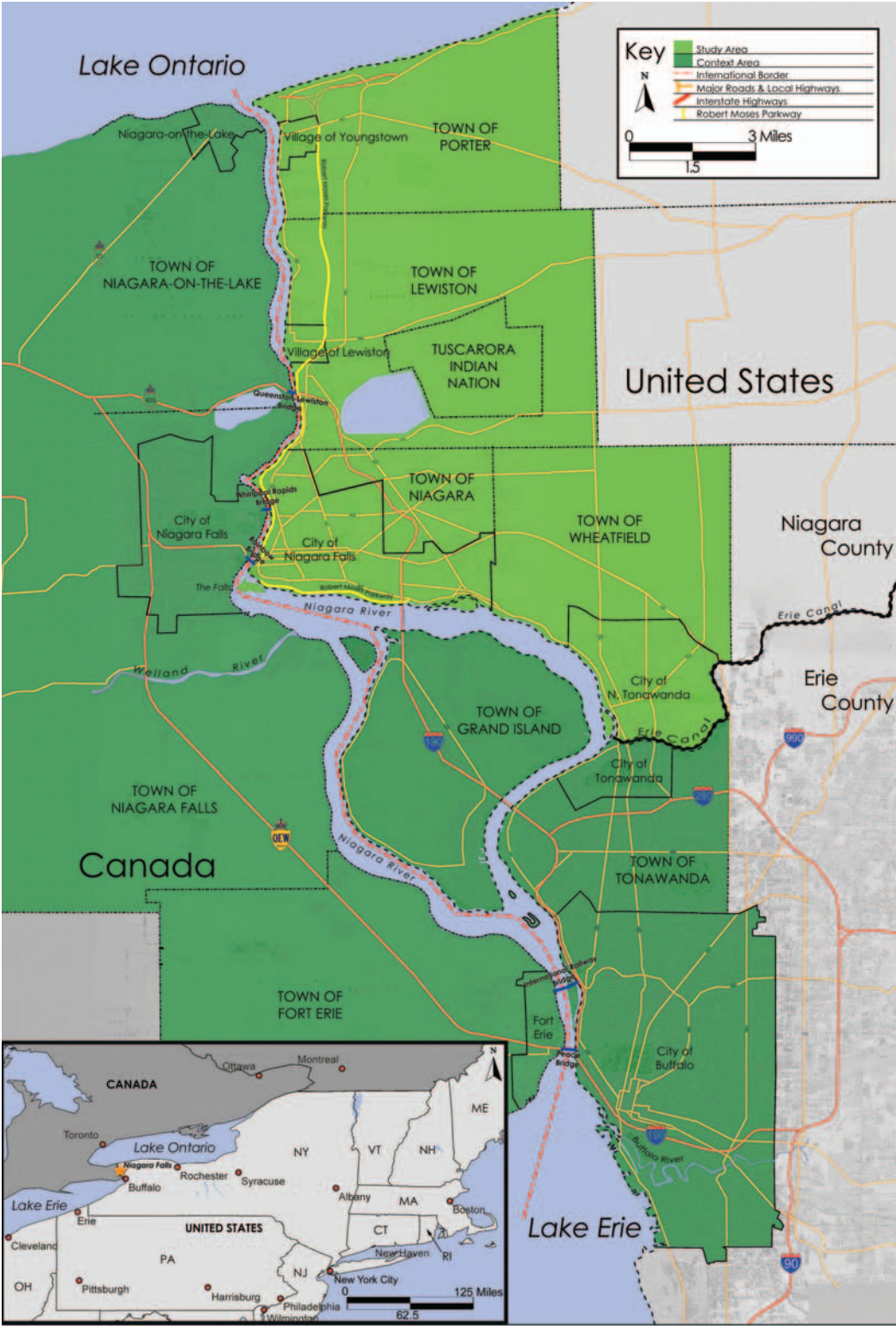
5. The area includes resources that are important to the identified theme or themes of the area and retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation.
6. Residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and governments within the proposed area that are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area.
7. The proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing
8. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area.
9. A conceptual boundary map has been reviewed by the public; and
10. The management entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.

## Study Process

### *Establishing the Study Area*

The study legislation defines the study area as “lands in Niagara County, New York, along and in the vicinity of the Niagara River.” In compliance with the legislation, the study team considers this to be the primary study area. The central resources associated with this area are Niagara Falls and its associated rapids, the Niagara River Gorge, the Lower Niagara River (Lower Niagara River is below the Falls and the Upper Niagara River is above the Falls), and the cultural, historic, and scenic resources that are directly associated with those central resources. The primary study area encompasses the Cities of Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda; the Towns of Porter, Lewiston, Niagara, and Wheatfield; and the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown.

The Niagara River demarcates the international boundary between the United States and Canada. Significant portions of the Niagara River and Gorge as well as Horseshoe Falls lie within Canada, while the American Falls lie within the United States. In addition, Canada possesses many cultural, historic, and scenic resources that complement or complete stories that are present on the U.S. side.





Future federal funding, of course, could not be used to assist Canadian resources since they would be outside of any potential heritage area boundary.

The primary study area received the greatest amount of emphasis in terms of resource inventory and evaluation and would be central to any proposed federal designation. The associated resources found in the context area were considered in relation to the resources and themes identified for the primary study area. Opportunities to build new or expand upon existing links between the context and primary study areas were explored in the course of developing management alternatives.

### Resource Inventory and Assessment

As part of its reconnaissance, the study team surveyed known cultural, historical, natural, recreational, and scenic resources throughout both the primary study area and the context area. While not exhaustive, the resource inventory yielded sufficient information to make findings regarding criterion 1. The team relied heavily on secondary sources such as the National Register of Historic Places, inventories completed by the New York Power Authority as part of the Niagara Power Project Relicensing process, state and regional tourism guides and brochures, and the Western New York Regional Information Network—an online resource sponsored by the Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth at the University of Buffalo. Similar resources were consulted to identify resources in Canada. The team evaluated the region's resources as defined through the inventory against the relevant criteria for national heritage areas. Part Two of this report contains a description of the region's resources and their evaluation.

### Defining Thematic Framework

As an initial step in the study process, the team developed a thematic framework reflective of the cultural and natural resources represented in the area. In developing themes, the study team considered suggestions received during public meetings and work previously completed by the binational forum convened by the Urban Design Project at the University of Buffalo and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust of Toronto in their Rethinking the

*Niagara Falls is an internationally renowned natural resource and tourist attraction with a binational and international audience.*

Niagara Frontier series. Based on a reconnaissance-level survey of regional resources, the team identified the themes that were the most cohesive, pervasive, and distinctive in relation to the identified resources. As described in Part Two, the four themes identified by the team are meant to be broad and comprehensive so that they are able to embrace a wide range of pertinent stories.

### Defining Management Alternatives

Based on substantial public input and the outcome of the resource inventory and assessment, the study team developed a range of management alternatives that would meet the requirements of the national heritage area criteria as well as the needs and conditions defined by local stakeholders. While legislation directs us to consider whether or not the area is eligible for federal designation as a national heritage area, the study team also considered other management concepts to determine if they could address those needs and meet those conditions. A complete description of the management alternatives appears in Part Three of this report.

### Public Participation

During the course of the study, the team identified key audiences and employed a number of different strategies to reach out to and involve them, including public meetings, newsletters, project website, correspondence, phone contacts, and meetings with individuals as well as small groups of stakeholders. Early in the process, the study team recognized that there were numerous regional initiatives that were directly related to preserving and promot-

ing the region's resources. As a result, the study team contracted with the Urban Design Project at the University of Buffalo, a well-established regional planning group that was associated with many of these efforts. The Urban Design Project worked with the National Park Service to develop and implement a public involvement strategy for the study that would be inclusive and coordinated to ensure there would be no duplication of effort. The State Historic Preservation Office, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the local federally recognized tribes—the Seneca Nation, the Tuscarora Nation, and the Tonawanda Tribe of Seneca—were consulted and will continue to be consulted during the study process.

### *Transmittal of Study to Congress*

Upon completion of the study process, the final study report will be transmitted by the Secretary of the Interior to Congress. The Secretary's recommendations regarding national heritage area designation will accompany the report to Congress. After that, it is the role of Congress to decide whether or not to act upon any of the Secretary's recommendations. An act of Congress is required to designate a national heritage area or any other ongoing NPS role in the region not already authorized by other statutes.

## **Planning Context**

Niagara Falls is an internationally renowned natural resource and tourist attraction with a binational and international audience. The Niagara River touches communities on both sides of the U.S./Canadian border. At present, the U.S. side of the river is the subject of a major hydropower relicensing effort that is being overseen by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and involves a large group of participating agencies and interest groups. The relicensing discussions are resulting in the provision of additional financial resources to support public conservation and recreation projects in the study area. The Niagara River also has a large recreational constituency. A number of locally based organizations from both sides of the Niagara River Gorge have been working on access and waterfront revitalization initiatives.

In addition, there are a number of American Indian tribes with contemporary as well as historic interests in the region including the Seneca Nation, the Tuscarora Nation, and the Tonawanda Band of Seneca. Should a National Heritage Area be designated in the region, representation of Native American interests on the management entity and participation in the development of a heritage area plan will be critical to fully incorporating this valuable component of the region's heritage.

A number of these agencies, organizations, and initiatives are described in greater detail below:

### *New York State Parks—Niagara System*

As defined by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), the Niagara Region embraces both Erie and Niagara Counties and includes 14 state park units. Eight of these state parks and historic sites are located within the primary study area, and four of them include segments of the Niagara Gorge Trail – approximately 14.5 miles (23.3 kilometers) of hiking and walking trails along the rim and the floor of the Gorge. An asterisk (\*) denotes a state park offering Niagara Gorge Trail access. The state parks include:

- Niagara Falls State Park (until recently, referred to as Niagara Falls Reservation)\*
- Whirlpool State Park\*
- DeVeaux Woods State Park
- Devil's Hole State Park\*
- Reservoir State Park
- Earl W. Brydges ArtPark State Park\*
- Joseph Davis State Park
- Fort Niagara State Park and State Historic Site

The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation manages Niagara Falls, Devil's Hole, Whirlpool, Reservoir, and DeVeaux Woods State Parks as a single administrative unit, while the rest are administered as individual units. In general, these state park units were acquired at different times for different purposes. A more complete description of New York state parks located within the primary study area may be found in Appendix B.

The state of New York has recently invested \$44 million in capital improvements for parks in this region, primarily focused on parks associated with the Niagara Gorge Trail and the City of Niagara Falls. OPRHP recently completed a Niagara Gorge Trail Plan to address improving resource conditions and public access.

The state parks and communities along the Niagara River have also significantly benefited from National Park Service-administered Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) assistance. Since 1968, close to \$6 million has been committed to projects at Niagara Falls State Park, other state parks along the river, and in the City of Niagara Falls and the Town of Lewiston. The Niagara Gorge Trail System and the Whirlpool Park improvements were partially financed by LWCF grants totaling \$400,000 in 2000.

### *Robert Moses Parkway*

The parkway is a multi-lane, limited-access highway that follows the Niagara River from the northern end of the Grand Island Bridge to Porter (Youngstown). Though primarily managed by OPRHP, segments of the parkway are owned by the New York Power Authority (NYPA) and the state Department of Transportation (DOT). The roadway superseded pre-existing local access roads and has become the primary means of vehicular access to some of the New York state parks in the region, particularly Niagara Falls State Park and the Niagara Gorge Trail System.

The parkway was built in conjunction with the Niagara Power Project circa 1960 and originally cut through Niagara Falls State Park. It is a limited-access, four-lane highway, and since its development direct public access to the Niagara River/Gorge and parks located along it has been restricted. This has particularly been the case in the City of Niagara Falls. Several citizens' groups have continually lobbied for the removal of the parkway and the restoration of open space. Others have taken a stance in support of the parkway, citing the need to maintain this transportation corridor between the city and the communities to its north.

NYS OPRHP and NYS DOT have worked together

to address a number of the access concerns. Their efforts have included the implementation of a pilot program that has closed two lanes of the parkway to vehicular traffic and has allowed greater pedestrian access to the river/gorge as well as the creation of several at-grade crossings linking the city with the state parks. These changes have not allayed the concerns of the parkway's most outspoken critics and have raised concerns among residents of communities north of the Niagara Power Project who view the parkway as a needed commuter road. In December 2003, NYS DOT and OPRHP released a study evaluating the results of the parkway pilot program. The DOT/OPRHP study findings indicated that the pilot project conversion of the parkway improved public access to the Gorge through the closure of the southbound lanes while the remaining northbound lanes adequately and safely served vehicular traffic. The agencies intend to proceed with the design to formally convert the southbound lanes into a recreationway.

The New York Power Authority is also preparing an analysis of opportunities and constraints relative to the parkway as part of its current relicensing process.

### *Niagara River Greenway*

In 2003, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Commission (GBNRTC), Friends of the Buffalo Niagara Rivers (FBNR) and the Buffalo Olmsted Park Conservancy joined together to propose a lake-to-lake greenway and trail system. In support of this effort, they submitted a proposal for assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). The proposal called for the development of a linear park along the U.S. side of the Niagara River from Buffalo to Fort Niagara in Youngstown. The project's proponents envision a lake-to-lake multiple-use trail linking numerous parks and open space along the Niagara River in the Olmsted tradition. In June 2004, the New York State Legislature passed legislation proposed by Governor George Pataki establishing a Niagara River Greenway Commission, which would coordinate development of the greenway. The commission began conducting business early in 2005. The commission's





The Spanish Aerocar spans the Whirlpool on the Canadian side of the gorge

geographical area of involvement is a narrow corridor directly adjacent to the Niagara River. A more detailed discussion of the commission appears later in this report.

### *Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor*

The Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor is part of New York State's system of heritage areas coordinated by OPRHP. The corridor was created by the New York State Legislature in 1999 and includes Erie, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wayne Counties. The Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor coincides with portions of the Niagara National Heritage Area study area in Niagara County. An 18-member planning commission was appointed to develop a management plan that will guide its formal establishment. The heritage corridor's management plan is available as a final draft. The plan will be submitted to NYS OPRHP for agency approval in 2005. The New York State Legislature will consider legislation establishing the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor as a permanent entity following approval of the plan.

The primary focus of the heritage corridor is on the Erie Canal corridor. Geographically and thematically this state heritage corridor overlaps the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Both corridors have taken steps to ensure communication and coordination of efforts.

### *Urban Design Project/University of Buffalo (SUNY)*

The Urban Design Project is a university center devoted to service, teaching, and research in the pursuit of a critical practice of urban design. It was founded in 1990 by Professor Robert G. Shibley and is located in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of Buffalo, State University of New York.

The Urban Design Project led the "Rethinking the Niagara Frontier" project, a binational effort to stimulate reimagination and collaboration toward making the most of opportunities at hand for the future of the Niagara Region. Dozens of organizations in government, business, education, environment,

philanthropy, and community advocacy have joined with the original proponents, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust of Ontario and the Urban Design Project of the University of Buffalo to explore the possibilities.

The Urban Design Project has released three substantial reports about the Niagara Region including:

#### Rethinking the Niagara Frontier

This volume explores the possibilities of re-defining the Niagara Frontier region of New York State and Ontario, Canada, as a single, binational region centered on the Niagara River

#### Revealing Niagara

This volume presents a citizen vision for heritage and cultural tourism development in the binational Niagara Region.

#### Achieving Niagara's Future

This volume offers an assessment of Niagara Falls' waterfront planning over the last decade and makes recommendations about implementing the most promising proposals.

#### USA Niagara Development Corporation (Empire State)

USA Niagara Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Empire State Development Corporation, was created by the State of New York in January 2001. It is solely dedicated to the support and promotion of economic development initiatives by leveraging private investment and encouraging growth and renewal of the tourism industry in the City of Niagara Falls. The USA Niagara Development Corporation strategy emphasizes a block-by-block approach to revitalizing downtown Niagara Falls. It has redeveloped the Niagara Falls Conference Center in the former Falls Street Faire complex and is planning for the revitalization of Third Street as an entertainment district.

#### Niagara Experience Center

In response to the "Rethinking Niagara" initiative and still earlier proposals by local historian Paul Gromosiak, a number of local advocates developed a proposal for the Niagara Experience Center which would serve as a gateway to the Niagara Region. In support of this local initiative, USA Niagara Development Corporation has helped establish a nonprofit organization that is seeking to develop the Niagara Experience Center, a regional visitor and education center that would introduce visitors to the historic, cultural, and natural stories and attractions in the Niagara Falls area. The nonprofit board envisions the Niagara Experience Center as a unique attraction unto itself as well as a means of introducing visitors to the full history of the Niagara Falls Region. The Niagara Experience Center is in the planning and fund-raising phases.



Niagara Falls Gorge

### *Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative*

The Cultural Tourism Committee of the John R. Oishei Foundation commissioned the Institute for Local Governance and Regional Planning at the University of Buffalo to develop a comprehensive plan for cultural tourism development. The planning process included an inventory of tourism assets and opportunities, a market analysis of current and potential cultural tourism, regional priorities for development, and implementation mechanisms rooted in strong stakeholder participation. The initiative released its final strategy and blueprint for implementation in January 2005.

### *New York Power Authority—Niagara Power Project Relicensing*

The Niagara Power Project is owned and operated by the New York Power Authority (NYPA). Some lands within NYS parks and under the Robert Moses Parkway are owned by NYPA. Its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license will expire in August 2007. The five-year relicensing process has begun using an alternate method giving large numbers of stakeholders an opportunity to participate. The number of stakeholders at these meetings has ranged from 80 to 120 representatives of local interests. Numerous federal and state agencies as well as local industry, environmental groups, and advocates for public access and recreation are involved in the process. The National Park Service is represented by staff of the Northeast Region's Boston Office. A relicensing settlement has been proposed. This next license is likely to be issued for a 50-year term.

### *Seneca Niagara Falls Casino*

The Seneca Niagara Falls Casino is located in the former Niagara Falls Convention Center. The Seneca Nation plans to expand present operations and to redevelop a significant portion (over 50 acres) of Niagara Falls' downtown. Development activities include a recently completed parking garage, as well as plans for a new casino, a hotel, restaurants, and other visitor amenities. Under a licensing agreement with the state, a proportion of the casino proceeds are allocated to Niagara County and distributed among the host city and other local and county entities.

### *Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance*

The Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance (BNTA) is a group of arts, cultural, heritage, sports, food, wine, accommodation, events, and tourism partners from both the private and public sectors, who are working together to develop the binational Niagara Region as an international tourism destination in both New York and Ontario. This binational group has recently incorporated on both sides of the border to better meet the needs of its member organizations.

The BNTA sponsors numerous heritage and cultural events on both sides of the Niagara River. It has also provided cross-promotion and trade opportunities for heritage and cultural organizations to showcase their products and operations at cross-border events including an annual conference. One of the events the BNTA sponsors is the annual binational "Doors Open Niagara" event. This is a weekend celebration of heritage and architectural treasures that make up the story of both Niagaras.

### *International Peace Park*

Another binational initiative, spurred by the work of the Urban Design Project and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, is the concept of an International Peace Park. A steering committee of interested individuals and organizations was initiated by Kerry Mitchell of the Canadian Consulate in Buffalo. The geography under consideration at this time is similar to that being discussed in *Revealing Niagara*—an area that embraces all of Niagara and Erie Counties on the American side and from the Niagara River between Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake to Hamilton, Ontario, on the Canadian side. The group has created an initial draft of "First Principles for The International Niagara Peace Park." The principles articulate broad goals and objectives addressing the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Niagara Region, promotion of sustainable economic development, peaceful and creative binational cooperation, and education and research. The group is presently in the process of building a coalition to support the initiative



### Niagara Parks Commission, Ontario, Canada

The Niagara Parks Commission is a self-financed Crown agency of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism. The Commission maintains 4,000 acres (1,619 hectares) of park and recreational facilities along the length of the Niagara River from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the north. Facilities include natural areas, recreational facilities, an aerial cable car ride, numerous formal gardens, both historic and contemporary, historic sites, and golf courses, as well as restaurants and shops. The Commission receives no public funding and relies heavily on entrance and user fees as well as revenue from numerous shops and restaurants under its management, land rent and water diversion fees from Ontario Hydro, other power producers, and other shoreline property owners. A more complete description of Niagara Parks Commission facilities appears in Appendix C.

### The Potential for Heritage Tourism

David L. Herzberg's essay, "The Niagara Frontier: Border Zone or Middle Ground?," in "Rethinking the Niagara Frontier" (2001), observed that the experience of visiting Niagara Falls would benefit from making stronger connections to the heritage of the entire region: "Relying solely on the (carefully staged) drama of the falling water itself, little effort has been made to place the cataract in the context of a broader narrative that could sustain a visitor's experience beyond the 20 minutes that it mesmerizes the average tourist. ... In the Falls it boasts one of the world's largest tourist draws, but the region is so under-represented and poorly presented that visitors are there and gone...too quickly to influence the economy as they could."

According to the research of Hunter Interests Inc., presented in the "Niagara Experience Center Feasibility Study" (2002), tourism has slowly been declining on the New York side of the Falls over the last 10 years. The report found: "Much of this

decline could be attributed to the current condition on the U.S. side, which is characterized by a tired and aging infrastructure, vacant properties, lower tier amenities, and a generally run-down appearance. Under these circumstances, the justification exists for investment in new attractions and infrastructure as a way of maintaining Niagara Falls' existing tourism market share, and otherwise recapturing that which has been lost."

The recent strategic plans of the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTTC) and USA Niagara recognize the need to develop new visitor activities and marketing programs for niche markets. The region seems poised to upgrade the quality of the visitor experience and utilize its many natural, cultural, and historical assets as part of its economic development strategy. The NTTC strategic plan calls for branding the region "Niagara, USA," with the theme line "New York's Natural Wonderland." Besides proposing various marketing approaches, NTCC calls for beautifying the region and its entry points.

According to tourism consultant Robert Bentley, the North American economy is evolving from a "service" economy to an "experience" economy. Experiences are being formulated as distinct economic offerings, as services are being commodified (Robert Bentley, "Valuing Experience: Selling Authenticity; The Experience Economy and Tourism Products," presentation at First International Heritage Development Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, June 8–11, 2003). People are looking for individualized experiences, as affluence stimulates desires for more meaningful leisure time. The tourism industry is shifting from catering to groups to serving "fully independent travelers." Businesses and nonprofit organizations are creating travel "experiences" because guests will pay for them. Heritage tourism sites and national heritage areas are ideal for providing the in-depth authentic experiences that travelers are seeking.

## *Part Two*



*Affected Environment*





## Affected Environment



The American Falls

### Description of the Study Area

The central resources defining the Niagara Falls Region the Falls, Rapids, River and Gorge form the international boundary between the United States and Canada and are contained within the state of New York and the province of Ontario, respectively. This binational region is rich in natural, cultural, and recreational resources. While Niagara Falls itself is an international destination and receives approximately 7 million visitors a year on the U.S. side alone, the entirety of the Niagara River corridor contains a wealth of resources of educational, scenic, scientific, and recreational value.

Beginning at Lake Erie, the Niagara River flows north and northwest for approximately 35 miles (56 kilometers) to Lake Ontario and falls approximately 326 feet (99 meters). The Upper Niagara River flows from Lake Erie and divides at Grand Island and at Goat Island. At Goat Island it flows over the American Falls and the Canadian Horseshoe Falls from heights of 70 to 110 feet (21 to 34 meters) at the former and approximately 170 feet (52 meters) at the latter. The Lower Niagara River flows from the base

of the Falls to Lake Ontario. The Niagara Gorge extends from the base of the Falls for approximately 6 miles (9.6 kilometers) to the edge of the Niagara Escarpment at Lewiston. Water depth in the Gorge can reach up to 200 feet (61 meters). The river flows on approximately 7 miles (11 kilometers) beyond the Gorge to its mouth at Lake Ontario.

Issues and concerns affecting this study area were identified by NPS specialists, as well as input of other federal, state, and local agencies. After public scoping, issues and concerns were distilled into distinct impact topics to facilitate the analysis of environmental consequences, which allows for comparison between alternatives based on the most relevant information. The impact topics are described below. Certain topics were dismissed from further consideration. Air quality was not considered because the number of net new tourists in the region is not easily defined without a heritage area plan identifying target audiences. Coastal resources were not considered because the area has no actual coastline. Soil and water resources were not considered because no specific projects have been pro-

jected for a national heritage area, so it would be impossible to discuss impacts on these resources.

## Natural Resources

### Regional Geology

The most prominent landform in the region is the Niagara Escarpment, a *cuesta*<sup>1</sup> formation consisting of fossil-rich dolomite that stands out in an otherwise relatively flat landscape. The Niagara Escarpment reaches from eastern Wisconsin, across the Niagara Peninsula of the province of Ontario and into Niagara County, New York. The Niagara Escarpment in Canada is a designated Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Some 450 million years ago, sand, silt, and clay were deposited into a shallow sea in thick sedimentary layers forming the escarpment. These became compressed into sedimentary layers of limestones, shales, dolostones, sandstones, and reef structures. As time progressed, the softer underlying material eroded and overlying dolostone broke off, forming the present vertical face of the escarpment. The escarpment displays some of the most important exposures of fossils from the Upper Ordovician and Silurian periods found anywhere in the world <sup>2</sup>.

About 10,000 to 15,000 years ago, Pleistocene glaciers released water from Lake Erie that began spilling over the escarpment nearly 10 miles (16 kilometers) downstream from the present location of Niagara Falls. The face of the Falls continued to move upriver through the erosion of softer layers in the formation and the breaking-off of harder dolostone layers at the surface. The Falls continue to retreat upstream, but at a significantly slower rate. Since the turn of the 20th century, retreat has been further slowed by diversion of water from the Upper Niagara for hydroelectric purposes.

### Flora and Fauna

The Niagara region forms the northernmost portion of the Carolinian Zone, a forest habitat that ranges from the subtropical southern United States. In natural areas along the Niagara River Corridor, predominant upland tree and shrub species include

sycamore (*Populus* sp.), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), cottonwood (*Plantanus* sp.), white ash (*Fraxinus Americana*), hickory (*Carya* sp.), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), red oak (*Quercus borealis*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*), and witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*).

According to the New York Natural Heritage Program, there are two natural communities located within the primary study area that are documented as ecologically significant in New York State. Second to the Falls, these two communities are the most prominent features in several of the state parks that line the river: the cliffs that line the gorge (Calcareous Cliff Community), and the steep talus slopes that lie below them (Calcareous Talus Slope Community). The Niagara Escarpment has been internationally recognized for the ancient cedar trees (*Thuja occidentalis*) that grow on its face.<sup>3</sup> Further, local naturalists have identified several groves of ancient trees dotting the corridor and representing some of the oldest living woodland communities in New York State.

Based on findings by the New York Natural Heritage program, the combination of misting and wet seepage areas interspersed with dry open rock faces and calcareous bedrock produces one of the greatest assemblages of rare plants within New York State. No federally listed species of flora were identified; however, 14 state-listed species of flora are known to either occur at present or to have occurred in the past in the area. State-listed species include: ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius* var. *intermedus*), yellow giant hyssop (*Agastache nepetoides*), scarlet Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja coccinea*), slender blazing star (*Liatris cylindracea*), sky-blue aster (*Aster oolentagniensis*), elk sedge (*Carex garberi*), lesser fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis procera*), smooth cliff brake (*Pellaea glabella*), four-flowered loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadriflora*), puttyroot (*Aplectrum hyemale*), Drummond's rock cress (*Arabis drummondii*), woodland bluegrass (*Poa sylvestris*), Ohio goldenrod (*Solidago ohioensis*), and white camas (*Zigadenus elegans*).

Wildlife in the region is also diverse. The most obvious and heavily used wildlife habitat in the area is





Flora in Niagara Gorge

the Niagara River, particularly for migratory waterfowl and gulls. Bird life inventories disclose 342 species including a wide variety of waterfowl and hawks, falcons, and eagles. Gulls, however, are the main attraction of the region to birdwatching visitors, with records of 19 separate species and one-day counts of over 100,000 individual birds. According to the New York Audubon Society, the area is particularly noteworthy as a migratory stop-over and wintering site for Bonaparte's gulls (*Larus philadelphia*), with one-day counts of 10,000–50,000 (2–10% of the world population). Additionally, two migrant waterfowl species use the river in globally significant numbers: canvasbacks (*Aythya valisneria*) and common mergansers (*Mergus merganser*). The Niagara River Corridor is an Important Bird Area (IBA) designated by the National Audubon Society.<sup>4</sup> The Society and the Canadian Nature Federation are cooperating in an effort to develop a comprehensive bird conservation plan for the corridor.

Many common species of small mammals may be found, including mice and voles (*Cricetidae* sp.), eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), woodchuck (*Marmota monax*), and little brown myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), a species of bat. Larger mammals

include red fox (*Vulpus fulva*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), skunk (*Mephitis vison*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethica*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Several species of reptiles and amphibians are also common in the area including bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*), American toad (*Bufo americanus*), snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), and garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*).

One federally listed threatened species of bird, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), is a transient in the region. There are no federally listed mammals, reptiles, or amphibians in the area. State-listed species include the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), the common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingi*). One of two major nesting colonies of the common tern in the area occurs on Goat Island.

Fishes in Lakes Erie and Ontario and the Niagara River include varieties of bass, catfish, perch, pike, salmon, and trout. Coldwater species like salmon, steelhead, and trout are more abundant in the Lower Niagara River, while cool-water species (e.g., walleye) and warmwater species (e.g., bass) are more abundant in the upper river. The river's



warm-water and cool-water species are self-sustaining and support very active sport fisheries. The cold-water fisheries are sustained primarily through an NYSDEC stocking program (NYPA 1984).

Lake sturgeon is a species that was once abundant in the Niagara River and both Lakes Ontario and Erie, but recently its populations have been greatly reduced by commercial exploitation and habitat degradation. Both the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation are studying how to increase the presence of lake sturgeon.

## Cultural Resources

The Niagara Region is rich in history. It has significant associations with Native American habitation and early European contact, the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. It was also a major link in the Underground Railroad for enslaved African Americans who were entering Canada to escape servitude in the United States. The existence of ample water made it an early site for hydroelectric power and the associated electrochemical and electrometallurgical products, activities that remain important today. The Falls provided the setting for one of the earliest major visitor attractions in the United States and Canada.

Three National Historic Landmarks have been designated in the primary study area. They are described below:

**The Adams Power Transformer Building** was built in 1895 and is the only surviving structure of a hydroelectric facility that has been called “the birthplace of the modern hydroelectric power station.” Until well into the 20th century, this facility enjoyed the position of being the largest hydroelectric plant in the world, but the building, currently in private ownership, is no longer in use and requires stabilization. The structure was designed by McKim, Mead, and White and constructed of stone.

**Niagara Falls State Park** (formerly Niagara Reservation), established in 1885, was the first state park created under eminent domain.

It rescued the beauty and enjoyment of the Falls from the deleterious effects of previously built industrial and commercial development on the adjacent river bank. Frederick Law Olmsted, who was a prime participant in efforts to create the park, designed the landscape plan for the Reservation. Olmsted’s vision was to permit the beauty of the natural surroundings and the majesty of the Falls to inspire visitors, and to limit man-made intrusions as much as possible. The resource is listed as threatened/damaged by the National Park Service’s National Historic Landmark program because of the current impacts of commercial development on the visual setting of the Falls as viewed from New York.

**Colonial Niagara Historic District**, within the communities of Lewiston and Youngstown on the Niagara River, was a key portage route that linked interior North America and the Atlantic Seaboard until the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. It contains extant resources associated with relations between various Native American and European groups. The district encompasses the site of Old Fort Niagara which was developed by the French in 1726, captured by the British in 1759, and surrendered to the United States under the Jay Treaty of 1795. The British recaptured the fort during the War of 1812, but returned it to the United States after the war. The district also includes the Lower Landing Archeological District which is situated at the base of the Niagara Escarpment at the northern terminus of the historic portage around the Niagara Falls and gorge. The Lower Landing Archeological District is located within the boundary of Earl W. Brydges ArtPark State Park and is listed separately on the National Register of Historic Places.

The United States’ National Register of Historic Places contains 23 sites and districts in North Tonawanda, Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and Youngstown, including the three National Historic Landmarks listed above. The list of National

Register sites appears in Appendix D. It is probable that additional structures and sites in the region would qualify for listing on the Register. For example, in March 2004, the NYS Historic Preservation Office found two additional Niagara Falls properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places—the James G. Marshall House and St. Mary’s Nurses’ Residence. In the cities of Buffalo and Tonawanda and the town of Grand Island (located in the study context area) there are 52 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Of these National Register properties, seven are National Historic Landmarks, including the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society Building, Buffalo State Hospital, Kleinhans Music Hall, and the Darwin Martin House.

The City of Niagara Falls is currently undertaking a survey of historic properties in its historic downtown which is likely to identify additional Register-eligible sites. Both the villages of Youngstown and Lewiston have historic areas that are characterized by their relationship to the riverfront and concentrations of 19th-century commercial and domestic architecture. These historic areas and many of the individual properties of which they are composed may be eligible for listing on the National Register. The Niagara Region also has both Native American and industrial archaeological sites, located primarily along the Niagara River. These sites, which have been identified but not extensively examined, hold potential for gaining further knowledge about the cultural development of the area and should be explored in further detail during the planning process if a heritage area is designated.

Canada has a comparable system of recognizing historic places. A number of places within the study context area in Canada have been identified as national historic places having associations with a national historic person, site, or event (see Appendix E). These include Fort George, the Laura Secord Homestead, and Fort Erie. Several of these sites are owned and managed by Parks Canada or the Niagara Parks Commission.

The Niagara Region was active in the Underground Railroad, with numerous freedom-seekers including the well-known Harriet Tubman—finding their way across upstate New York to the Niagara River and across to Canada. Efforts have been made on both sides of the Niagara River to recognize and mark the places associated with this historically significant effort. Some of the places are documented historic properties while others are commemorative efforts. Located outside the primary study area in Niagara County, Murphy’s Orchard in Burt, New York, is the only site in the region formally recognized by the National Park Service’s National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program. The farmstead, which was a stop on the Underground Railroad, features public displays and offers guided tours and presentations. Within the primary study area, places like the First Presbyterian Church in Lewiston and the site of the suspension bridge in Niagara Falls are recognized as important places associated with the Underground Railroad. Within the larger context area, the City of Buffalo has identified significant extant resources associated with the Underground Railroad, including the Michigan Street Baptist Church. Buffalo also created a commemorative park at the point of the Buffalo-Fort Erie Ferry Crossing at Broderick Park. Likewise, on the Canadian side of the Niagara River, a series of commemorative plaques mark Underground Railroad sites in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls, Queenston, and Fort Erie. Organized group tours are also offered by tour groups such as Motherland Connexions in Niagara Falls. See Appendix F for a list of Underground Railroad sites and commemorative markers.

## Recreational Resources

This description of recreational resources emphasizes resource-based activities – those activities that are particular to this area and directly relate to the Niagara River, Falls, and gorge. Recreational resources such as athletic fields, golf courses, and campgrounds were not considered in this assessment.

The richness of the region’s natural resources makes the study area a destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The region attracts hunters,



Sportfishing on the Niagara River

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anglers, and birders. Joseph Davis State Park is the only public land within the study area that is open for hunting and is stocked annually with pheasant by NYSDEC. Other large public lands within Niagara and Erie Counties are also open to hunters.

There are at least 13 public fishing access areas managed by local cities and towns, Niagara County, and the NYS OPRHP allowing for shoreline fishing or boat access along the Lower Niagara River and Lake Ontario as well as at Reservoir State Park. In adjacent Erie County, the level of access to the Upper Niagara River and Lake Erie is comparable. The region is considered a major destination for sportfishing. There are numerous outfitters in both Niagara and Erie Counties enabling anglers to charter boats for fishing excursions on the river and lakes. Similarly due to good water access, recreational boating is popular in the region; both Lewiston and Youngstown offer boat slips with good access to village shops and restaurants. The Erie Canal Recreationway offers recreational boating access across the state of New York linking to

major bodies of water, including Lakes Erie and Ontario. The village of Lewiston is also a base of operations for the Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours, offering high-speed tours of the lower river up to Devil's Hole and back.

As a National Audubon-designated Important Bird Area, the region is a natural draw for local as well as visiting birders. The region is highlighted in numerous birding guides and on birding websites. Again, public lands along the Niagara River corridor offer a variety of opportunities to view the many species of birds that inhabit or traverse the region as well as occasion to observe other wildlife species. Birding/wildlife viewing is identified as an activity at all eight state parks within the primary study area and is certainly possible at numerous other locations within Niagara and Erie Counties as well as Ontario's Niagara Peninsula.

There are numerous local and regional trails traversing the study area and the surrounding region. The Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls is the western terminus of NYS Bicycle Route 5, a major cross-state route. This formally designated state bicycle route follows local roads and runs parallel to the Erie Canal/Interstate 90 corridor, and leading to Albany, New York. Another major trail through the area is the Seaway Trail, a scenic byway that follows the shoreline of Lakes Erie and Ontario for approximately 454 miles (731 kilometers). The Seaway Trail was designated as an auto tour route, but does intersect with a number of walking and biking trails.

On a more local scale, as noted earlier, the NYS OPRHP has developed the Niagara Gorge Trail System offering approximately 14 miles (23 kilometers) of trails for hikers of varying levels of expertise in Niagara Falls and Lewiston. The Niagara Parks Commission operates a 35-mile (56 kilometers) multiple-use trail running from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario on the Canadian side of the river. At North Tonawanda, there are opportunities to link trails along the Niagara River to the statewide effort to create the Erie Canal's multiple-use towpath trail. Other smaller trail initiatives include walking paths developed along the waterfront in Lewiston and Porter as well as a number of waterfront paths in North Tonawanda. Local proponents have advocated the development of a lake-to-lake greenway on the U.S. side.



Numerous opportunities to enjoy the dramatic views offered by the Niagara Falls and Gorge exist up and down the river corridor. On the U.S. side the most obvious are at Goat Island and Prospect Point at Niagara Falls State Park, Whirlpool State Park, Earl W. Brydges ArtPark, New York Power Authority's Power Vista in Lewiston, and Fort Niagara. Scenic drives along the River Road in Lewiston and Porter and along the Robert Moses Parkway offer attractive glimpses of the Niagara River, the Gorge and the Canadian shore.

## Socioeconomic Resources

### Regional Economic Overview

The Buffalo-Niagara Region is a major metropolitan economy. The region is strategically located within 500 miles (805 kilometers) of 55% of the United States population and 62% of the Canadian population. The Buffalo-Niagara Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has a population of 1,170,111, and Canada's Niagara Region has a population of 403,504. The MSA labor force is 554,500.

The region's economic base combines a mix of aerospace and defense, auto parts manufacturing, food processing, financial and legal professional services, health care and medical supplies, call centers and information technology. As an international trade area, Buffalo-Niagara accommodates 38% of the total trade conducted between the United States and Canada. Forty-two percent of the Buffalo-Niagara region is farmland, and annual farm product sales are \$620 million. The region's 30 colleges and universities enroll more than 100,000 students annually. Higher education plays an important function in educating the workforce and stimulating innovation. Tourism has long been important at Niagara Falls, and local economic development leaders are seeking to increase its role.

The Buffalo-Niagara Region has struggled economically in the wake of deindustrialization. The growth of personal income in the Buffalo-Niagara MSA between 1969 and 2001 lagged national growth—Buffalo-Niagara grew by 5.8% annually, while the national average grew by 7.8%. In every year of this period the Buffalo-Niagara income growth was

*The region is strategically located within 500 miles (805 kilometers) of 55% of the United States population and 62% of the Canadian population.*

behind the national average. Between 1997 and 2003, Erie and Niagara Counties lost 30,740 jobs. Overall, jobs in western New York declined by 5% during this period. It is worth pointing out that jobs in Erie and Niagara Counties grew in 2002 for the first time after five years of losses, while jobs were declining nationally.

The economy of Niagara Falls, New York, has suffered disproportionately from deindustrialization. Its population dropped from 102,394 in 1960 to 55,593 in 2000. International corporate consolidation has led to the closing of such industries as ESAB, Nabisco, Occidental Intermediate Chemical Division, SGL Carbon, Stratcor, The Carbide/Graphite Group, and St. Gobain Abrasives. Despite these closings, 28% of the jobs in Niagara Falls remain in the industrial sector (1997). The rising importance of the service economy is demonstrated by the growth of service jobs from 8.6% of all Niagara County jobs in 1960 to 24% of all county jobs in 1997. According to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Niagara County, the county's economy has lagged behind Buffalo's (Erie County) because Buffalo has realized job gains in the finance, real estate, and insurance sectors while Niagara County has not.

Deindustrialization and blighting impacts of industrial pollution have damaged the landscape and the economy of Niagara Falls (see Appendix H). The hazardous wastes in the Love Canal spawned the Superfund program in the late 1970s. Today Niagara County has 7 National Priority List Superfund Sites, 63 sites on the New York State Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites, and over 700 “brownfield” sites. Their cleanup will provide new land for economic development and expanding the tax base.



Niagara’s Industrial Landscape

Niagara Falls, New York, is regarded as a key element of economic development in the greater region. The name “Niagara” is considered fundamental to the region’s identity. People from around the world know about Niagara Falls, and millions are attracted there every year. Various regional economic development initiatives include both the “branding” names “Buffalo” and “Niagara.” The Buffalo International Airport recently added “Niagara” to its title.

## Tourism and the Regional Economy

Tourism and leisure, including the convention business, are becoming more important for regional economies seeking to compete globally. Upgrading the experience at Niagara Falls can strengthen the tourism economy, as well improving the overall quality of life for the area. Economic development professionals, including Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (2002), argue that the “creative class” of workers, which drives economic innovation and development, thrives in places with a high quality of life. The most economically dynamic places are “creative cities” like Boston, San Francisco, and Seattle. In order to attract the “creative class” that drives innovation and development, an attractive place with a broad variety of activities and opportunities is necessary.

At meetings concerning the proposed Niagara National Heritage Area, citizens have mentioned the importance of quality of life in shaping the local image and local economic prospects. Some people have even specifically mentioned Richard Florida’s theory of “creative cities” as something for the Buffalo-Niagara Region to follow. They have argued that the Buffalo-Niagara Region cannot reach its potential unless Niagara Falls and the Niagara River are optimized for recreational and cultural potential. This is a case where a region’s heritage helps “brand” it and attracts further development.

In order for Niagara Falls to fulfill its strategic role as a key regional attraction, it is necessary for it to upgrade the visitor experience to match the expectations of 21st-century travelers. Niagara Falls has been a major tourist attraction for almost 200 years, but there is a feeling that on the American side of the Falls the presentation of the visitor experience has not kept pace with that of Niagara Falls, Ontario. Since the early 1990s, Ontario has been embarked upon a comprehensive Provincial tourism strategy that seeks to develop Niagara Falls as its primary “gateway” attraction. The Ontario plan has focused on developing year-round tourist attractions, particularly a casino.

Opened in 1997, Casino Niagara spurred an investment boom in hotels, with the number of rooms growing from 11,000 to 16,000 (Niagara Falls, New York has 3,000 hotel rooms). The casino added 4,000 jobs to the 16,000 tourism jobs in Niagara Falls, Ontario. It increased the number of overnight visitors from 3 million to 4 million a year, according to Noel Buckley, President of the Niagara (Ontario) Economic and Tourism Corporation.

A new casino—the Fallsview Casino Resort, with 3,000 slot machines, 150 gaming tables, and theater and conference facilities—opened in 2004 in Niagara Falls, Ontario; and the existing Casino Niagara, with its 2,800 slot machines and 135 gaming tables, remains open. An added attraction of Niagara Falls, Ontario is the favorable exchange rate which stretches the U.S. dollar further. The Niagara Parks Commission and Niagara Falls, Ontario, have joined forces to create additional attractions, including the Butterfly Conservatory, a championship golf course at Chippewa, and a new aviary.

In 2001, the State of New York adopted a plan to allow an Indian gambling casino in Niagara Falls (as well as five other locations in western New York and the Catskills). The Seneca Niagara Casino, which has been open in the former Niagara Falls Convention Center since December 31, 2002, has changed the development dynamic in downtown Niagara Falls, New York. The casino, with 2,595 slot machines and 91 table games, has developed a strong following. It has given an impetus to new investment and is the keystone of the block-by-block redevelopment strategy for the downtown.

Meanwhile, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has invested \$44 million in improvements at the Niagara Falls State Park and other state-owned parks along the Niagara River Gorge. Investments include \$23 million for rebuilding the Niagara Reservation Observation Tower, \$6.5 million for the American Rapids Bridge, \$1.5 million to revamp the Gorge Discovery Center, \$1.1 million to restore the historic hay barn on Goat Island, \$2.7 million for trolleys, and \$1 million toward a new \$6 million visitor center at Fort Niagara.



Niagara Gorge Discovery Center

*The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has invested \$44 million in improvements at the Niagara Falls State Park and other state-owned parks along the Niagara River Gorge.*

These projects and others yet to be implemented have been identified in the Niagara River Waterfront Master Plan and in the Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as projects contributing to the economic and community development of Niagara Falls.





Murphy's Orchard, an Underground Railroad site

Table 1: Niagara Falls Economic Data

Population	
<b>Buffalo-Niagara MSA (2000)</b>	<b>1,170,111</b>
Niagara County	219,846
Erie County	950,265
Niagara Falls, New York	55,593
<b>Niagara Region (Canada–1996)</b>	<b>403,504</b>
Employment	
<b>Employment by Economic Sector MSA (2002)<sup>1</sup></b>	
Total Non-farm	546,600
Natural Resources, Mining, and Construction	20,400
Manufacturing	72,000
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	18,500
Wholesale Trade	23,200
Retail Trade	63,100
Information	10,700
Financial Activities	33,000
Professional and Business Services	61,400
Education and Health Services	81,300
Leisure and Hospitality	47,000
Other Services	23,200
Government	92,800
<b>Unemployment (November 2004)</b>	
Buffalo-Niagara MSA	5.7%
Niagara County	6%
Erie County	5.6%
<b>Median Household Income (2000)</b>	
Buffalo-Niagara MSA	\$37,773
Niagara County	36,844
Erie County	38,008

<sup>1</sup> New York State Department of Labor, 2002

## *Part Three*



## *Key Interpretive Themes and National Heritage Area Criteria*

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# Key Interpretive Themes and National Heritage Area Criteria



Re-enactors assemble on Parade Ground at Old Fort Niagara

## Key Interpretive Themes

The key interpretive themes identified by the study team are derived from a number of sources including the region's history and its extant resources, previous efforts to define the region such as Rethinking Niagara, current interpretive materials offered at existing attractions such as the Orin Lehman Visitor Center at the Niagara Falls State Park or Old Fort Niagara, as well as input from local experts and the public. To summarize the region's history, a historic context statement was prepared by historians on the study team. The text of the historic context statement may be found in Appendix H. It is also important to emphasize that the identification of themes was largely guided by existing related resources. In considering which themes most adequately described the area and its resources, an inventory of identified, natural, cultural, and recreational resources located within the primary study area was undertaken. Based on an analysis of this information, the team identified the themes that were the most cohesive, pervasive, and distinctive in relation to the identified resources.

The four themes are meant to be broad and comprehensive so that they are able to capture a wide range of pertinent stories and individual sites.

## Potential Niagara National Heritage Area Themes

### 1. Natural Phenomenon

At Niagara we encounter a natural phenomenon that is overwhelming in its magnitude and deeply embedded in popular consciousness. Over Niagara Falls courses the outflow of four of the Great Lakes. To understand the distinctive characteristics of the region, the primary focus must be on this unparalleled resource and the geological processes that formed it.

Geographically, this theme is probably the most narrowly focused but opens a wide range of possible interconnections. Focused on the Falls, the natural phenomenon theme embraces the Gorge and rapids. It includes the prehistoric origin of the Falls at the Niagara Escarpment at Lewiston.



View to Whirlpool Rapids Bridge from the Niagara Gorge Trail

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Valuable programmatic links can be made to other portions of the Niagara Escarpment and, indeed, throughout the Great Lakes region. Niagara is one of the major points at which the origin of the entire Great Lakes drainage system can be presented in compelling terms. An example of an approach to capturing the visitor's interest would be to discuss how the Niagara River displays almost none of the characteristics of a typical river. Like the Detroit River, the Niagara River is essentially a strait separating nearby land masses and linking adjacent bodies of water—in this case, Lakes Erie and Ontario.

*Niagara is one of the major points at which the origin of the entire Great Lakes drainage system can be presented in compelling terms*

This is a descriptive, physical theme, which presents a geological basis for the dramatic spectacle that visitors come to see. Like the Grand Canyon, the processes are still active and the “story” is easy to read. This theme also accommodates the full range of natural resources including the unusual plant and animal communities that flourish due to microclimates in the area.

The remaining three themes are cultural. They describe how people have perceived and made use of the compelling natural resource.

## 2. Tourism and Recreation

This theme addresses the development of Niagara Falls as a cultural symbol and a tourist attraction. Niagara offers an exceptional opportunity to examine American responses to the natural world. From their first encounters with the Falls until well into the 19th century, Europeans and their American descendants beheld Niagara with awe, perceiving it as an outstanding expression of the “sublime.” To these early visitors the spectacle was emblematic of the New World, in which everything appeared outsized and limitless. Niagara exemplified the concept of wilderness, with the grandeur and terror it represented.







With Niagara firmly established as an extraordinary phenomenon, it became a favored destination of travelers and is representative in large measure of the evolution of tourism in the nation as a whole. Completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 made Niagara Falls easily accessible for the first time. Thereafter, the story has been largely one of making Niagara available to an ever broader portion of the population. During this process, a place that had once appeared as the supreme manifestation of the sublime became over the next century a byword for tasteless commercial exploitation.

Later in the 19th century, Niagara emerged as a major battleground between divergent visions of the value and meaning of the Falls and the natural environment in general.

*Niagara Falls Reservation  
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American conservation movement  
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national parks.*

Educated, urban, progressive forces battled to protect the integrity of the natural wonder in the face of economic exploitation by tourism, manufacturing, and hydropower generation. The founder of landscape architecture and the public park movement in America, Frederick Law Olmsted, was a leader in this preservation movement. He lobbied for and eventually designed Niagara Falls Reservation (recently renamed Niagara Falls State Park), which was established in 1885. Niagara Falls Reservation was an early triumph of the American conservation movement and became a major influence on the creation of national parks. The story of this period, its contributions to the national conservation movement, and its relationship to the creation of

today's National Park System should be a key facet of this theme. Under Olmsted's carefully developed conception, he attempted to shift the focus from the raw terror of the Falls to a constructed park environment that was intended to inspire contemplation. The public appreciated the new Reservation, and visitation skyrocketed.

Tourism at Niagara Falls and debates over its direction have continued through more than a century since the creation of the state park. The intervening period witnessed the growth of mass tourism, the rise and decline of the honeymoon phenomenon, and the development of the Robert Moses Parkway in the 1960s. The general image of Niagara Falls was harmed by the decline of local industry and the failure of urban renewal programs to revitalize the city of Niagara Falls in the 1960s through 1980s. More recently, there have been proactive efforts to reinvent tourism. These include \$44 million worth of improvements in visitor amenities at Niagara Falls State Park and the Seneca Niagara Casino, which opened December 31, 2002.

The tourism theme is centered on the Falls and related tourist attractions and facilities in the immediate vicinity. There is less potential for interpretive links reaching further into the Niagara Region. One relationship that could prove fruitful is with the Erie Canal, which provided much of the route genteel travelers followed to Niagara Falls early in the 19th century, creating an American version of the Grand Tour.

This theme asks present-day visitors to consider the evolution of travel rituals. The study of tourism history covers, in addition to relevant landscapes and landmarks (many 19th- and 20th-century hotels and attractions have been lost to redevelopment) near the Niagara River, the astonishing array of tourist traditions and memorabilia that human ingenuity created in order to interpret an overpowering natural feature. The memorabilia takes the form of guidebooks, advertisements, postcards, posters, photographs and news accounts that are now located in both public and private collections. Such materials are available in the local history room of the Niagara Falls Public Library, the collections of Niagara University, and in the archives of local newspapers such as the Niagara Gazette. The

tourism theme also includes the traditions of outrageous, risky behavior that have flourished at Niagara such as high-wire acts and riding a “barrel” over the falls. These latter activities have colored the folklore of the Niagara Region.

Whereas these themes in general can apply on either side of the international boundary, this one allows a meaningful distinction to be made between the two sides. The American side’s Niagara Falls State Park and, particularly, Goat Island is less commercialized and more naturalistic than the Canadian side. Visitors to the island can encounter the natural resource in a way that is more intimate and accessible, with the potential to obtain a more direct awareness of the conflicts that led to the creation of the state park and what Olmsted sought to accomplish there. The Canadian side is more intensively developed for visitor use and is characterized by formal gardens and promenades, a multiple-use recreational trail, and shops, restaurants, arcades, amusements, gambling casinos, and other visitor amenities. (The American side has developed more of these tourism attractions farther away from the Falls).

### 3. Power and Industry

This theme also derives from human use of Niagara Falls. In the generation of electric power and the resultant industrial development, Niagara presents a major story of technology and its consequences. The enterprise is notable for its magnitude, its innovation, its elaborate planning, and the element of binational cooperation. Contributing resources are the present and former generating plants, power canals, reservoirs, and related infrastructure.

Like the preceding, this theme is strongly focused around the Falls and the Gorge. Thematic links could embrace industries dependent on Niagara power, but the potential may be limited by the fact that the general decline of American manufacturing has reduced the number of industrial plants in existence. Surviving plants may be off-limits for safety reasons or may be inherently uninteresting to the majority of visitors.

Although the hydropower of the Falls had been used to a limited degree during the latter half of the



Power generation evident in Niagara landscape

19th century, technical advances in the 1890s made it possible to truly harness their potential. By 1900, the violent cataract that had awed early sightseers had been tamed so that its flow could be fully regulated for hydroelectric generation. This triumph was celebrated conspicuously at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition, which, though held at Buffalo, was powered and inspired by Niagara Falls.

Although hydroelectric generation and tourism and preservation might seem antithetical, they have coexisted for a long time. As William Irwin described in *The New Niagara* (1996), during the early 20th century it was believed that the two uses could flourish side by side without detriment to either. Some technological advocates believed that Niagara Falls seemed to be leading the way toward a more benign and humane industrial system powered by abundant electricity. For a time this “New Niagara” seemed so marvelous that industrial plants such as the Shredded Wheat factory became tourist attractions. Niagara power illuminated the Falls for the edification of tourists; and the Gorge electric railway, though not intrinsically different from trolley lines everywhere, reminded them of the influence and potential of electricity. When diversion of the Falls for energy purposes threatened Niagara’s scenic qualities, however, the International Joint Commission was established in 1909 to manage a diversion regime that balanced preservation and energy needs.

Figure 3: Tourism & Recreation Theme — Resources

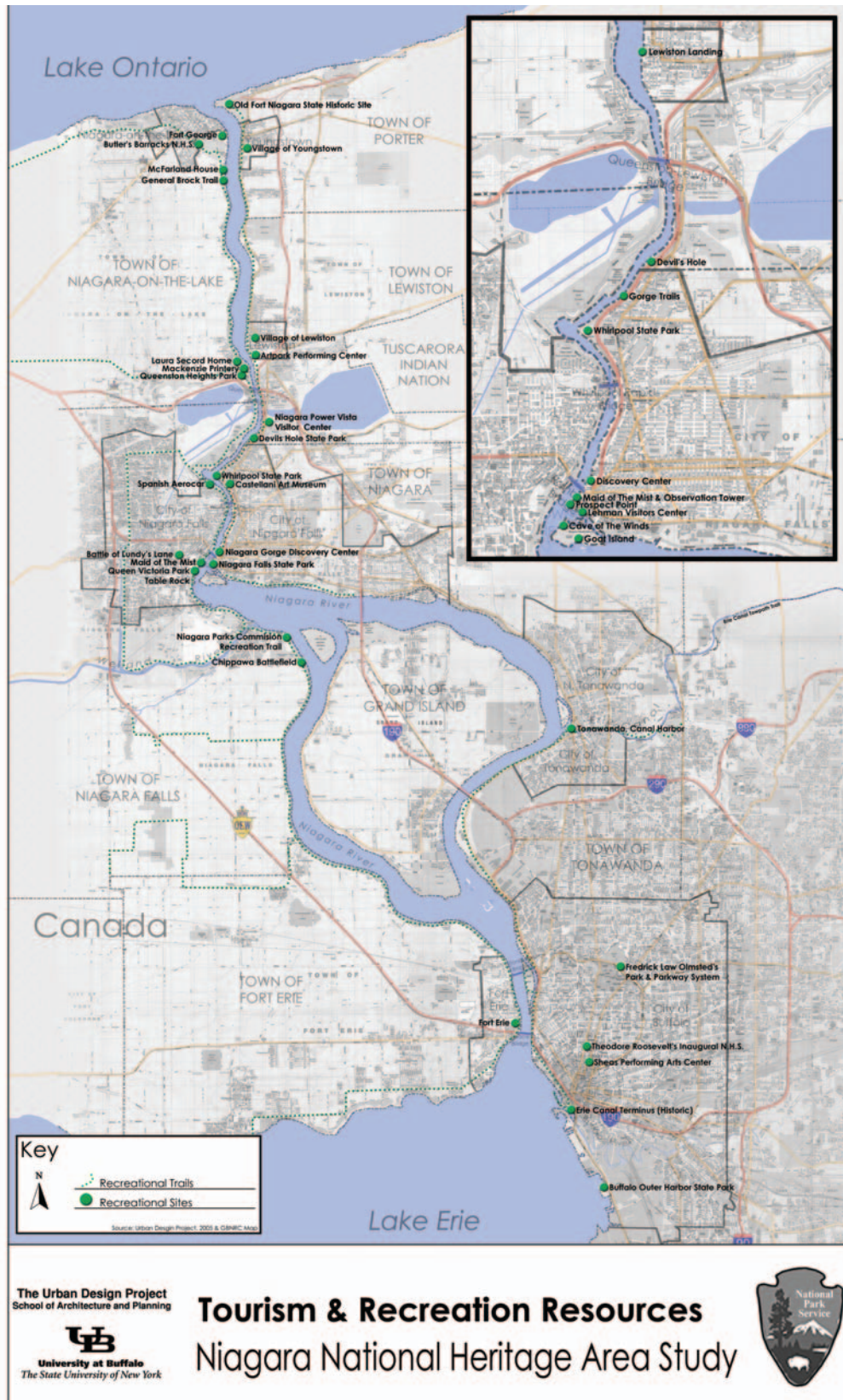




Figure 4: Power & Industry Theme — Resources



The current Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant began generating electricity in 1961. At the time of its construction it was the largest hydropower facility in the western world. Today it is the biggest electricity producer in New York State. The development of



Water outlet for hydropower plant

the Niagara Power Projects infrastructure, including the Power Vista Visitor Center and the Robert Moses Parkway, was envisioned and carried out by the politically shrewd and tenacious Robert Moses, then chairman of the New York Power Authority. Known as the “Master Builder,” Robert Moses held sway over major public works projects across the state of New York over five decades, reshaping the character of urban and regional landscapes.

One of the byproducts of industry and urban development at Niagara Falls was pollution. For years, industries spewed untreated wastes and the municipality emptied untreated sewage into the Niagara River until cleanup efforts went into effect in the latter 20th century. Pollution led to the loss of fish and wildlife habitats. Industries in the area also deposited hazardous wastes in the ground and smaller watercourses, with the most notable example being Love Canal, which spurred major national cleanup efforts starting in the late 1970s. This pollution and subsequent remediation efforts illustrate the theme of “Transforming the Environment,” from the NPS Thematic Framework.

#### 4. Borderland/Border Crossing

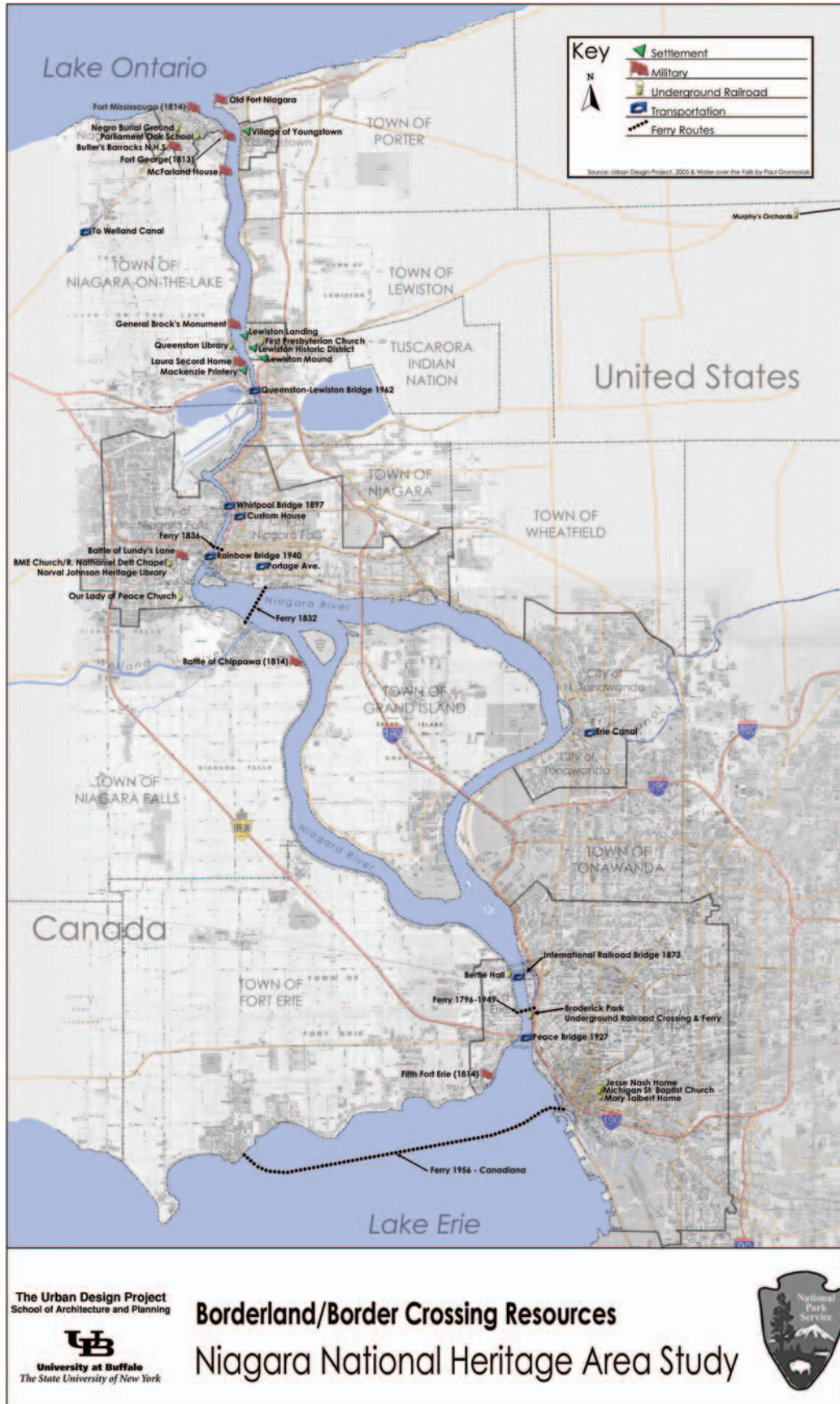
Niagara’s position on an international boundary has shaped its character in a number of ways. Whereas the preceding themes would be applicable even if the Niagara Region lay entirely within one nation, this theme depends on the accident of history that placed an international boundary down the center of the Niagara River. The region was a center of conflict, first between the colonial powers of France and Great Britain, then between the United States and its former colonial ruler. If the continent had been settled and divided along different lines, both by Indians and Europeans, the Niagara Region might not have become a zone of contention.

The most obvious reminder of this theme lies in the evidence of military activity. Fort Niagara is the most conspicuous historic landmark on the American side, though resources such as the remains of military portage roads, sites of camps, temporary field fortifications, and burial places would also contribute. The last formal military action occurred during the War of 1812, but defensive preparations, military threats, and mutual wariness persisted through much of the 19th century.

Even in the absence of overt conflict, the existence of the boundary has had far-reaching implications. The area was an important passage to the Great Lakes and the interior of the continent and contains resources that express its character as both a barrier and gateway. Undoubtedly the boundary influenced transportation developments, as each nation felt compelled to create transportation facilities skirting Niagara Falls.

Despite the friendly relations that have long endured between the United States and Canada the border is the longest undefended international boundary in the world—the boundary at Niagara remains consequential. Legal and social differences between the two nations in the period before the American Civil War made the Niagara Frontier one of many important destinations in the operation of the Underground Railroad. There have been considerable and revealing differences in each nation’s approach to tourism. The harnessing of hydroelectric power at the Falls has required binational







agreements and treaties. Security issues resulting from the attacks of September 11, 2001 make this theme as current as today's headlines.

The long-time presence of Indian tribes in the Niagara Region places the "borderland" theme in a somewhat different perspective, since their presence predated the European-imposed concept of "border." In the centuries prior to the establishment of the border between the United States and Canada, various tribes contested control of the area. After the American Revolution and the settlement of both side of the border by Americans and British Loyalists, the Indian tribes lost much of their land. The Tuscaroras, on the American side, and other members of the Six Nations, on the Canadian side, were limited to control of relatively small reservations. These reservations testify to the continued presence of these Nations in the Niagara Region. The historical Indian presence is also conveyed by the region's place names, including Ontario, Erie, Tonawanda, Cheektowaga, Chippawa, Mississauga, and Onondaga. The word "Niagara," once thought to mean "thunder of the waters" more probably means, "neck," to described the strait between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. 5

The "borderland" theme can be more expansive in both geographical and interpretive scope. Contemporary scholars David L. Herzberg, Robert Shibley, and Bradshaw Hovey have described a sprawling border region in which people on both sides of the boundary feel an affinity and have sometimes been able to make beneficial accommodations despite contrary official policies. This interpretation can address an array of economic and social issues that are in some way dependent on the existence of an international boundary. However a border region may be conceptualized, its center will inevitably lie along the Niagara River, and the feature that most strongly defines its character will be the Falls. The "border region" concept could inspire programmatic connections that would call increased attention to Niagara Falls by explaining its importance in a larger context.

*No other national heritage  
area contains a natural resource  
with the global recognition  
of Niagara Falls.*

### Relationship to National Park Service Thematic Framework

The four heritage themes of the Niagara Falls area fit within the revised "Thematic Framework" (<http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/thematic.html>) that the National Park Service adopted in 1994 for interpreting the role of historic sites in American history. The National Park Service has identified eight major historic themes that cover the full span of our nation's history. Of these, the heritage resources of the Niagara Falls area fit mainly into the following NPS categories:

1. Expressing Cultural Values  
(Tourism and Recreation)
2. Transforming the Environment  
(Natural Phenomenon; Tourism and Recreation, Power and Industry)
3. Developing the American Economy  
(Power and Industry, Tourism and Recreation)
4. Expanding Science and Technology  
(Power and Industry)
5. Changing Role of the United States in the World Community (Borderland)
6. Peopling Places (Borderland)
7. Creating Social Institutions and Movements  
(Borderland)

In comparison with other national heritage areas, the Niagara Falls area is suitable for interpretation of a range of themes that are not interpreted by other national heritage areas.

## Application of NPS National Heritage Area Criteria

The following heritage area evaluation applies the National Park Service's Interim Criteria for National Heritage Areas as described in Part One. Criteria 1 through 5 apply specifically to the composition and integrity of the resources contained within the study area. The remaining criteria apply to aspects of feasibility such as community support, organizational capacity, and level of civic engagement.

*1. The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage, through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities.*

Niagara Falls is a world-renowned scenic attraction and is a prominent feature located at one of the most highly used international gateways to the United States. It has been a major tourist destination for nearly 200 years and to a large extent epitomizes the evolution of tourism in the U.S. Its

fame has been based on being an authentic resource, a geological wonder of overwhelming magnitude. This outstanding geological feature forms the inescapable core that defines the assemblage of resources in the surrounding region. It is unique in North America and is enormously significant as a cultural icon. The Niagara Frontier has played an influential role in defining the international border between the United States and Canada. No other national heritage area contains a natural resource with the global recognition of Niagara Falls.

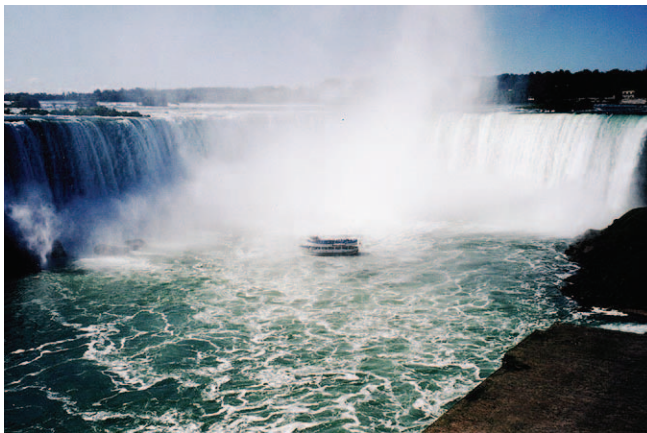
The geological resource centers on the spectacular Falls themselves and embraces related features such as the Rapids, the Niagara River Gorge, the Cave of the Winds, the Whirlpool, and Devil's Hole. Niagara Falls State Park embraces land near the Falls itself, and Devils Hole and the Whirlpool are also state parks. Considerable land in the Gorge is publicly owned through the New York Power Authority. Another state-owned facility, the Niagara Gorge Discovery Center (formerly the Schoellkopf Geological Museum) is operated by OPRHP and interprets the remarkable geology visible from its overlooks.

### Niagara River Gorge Rapids



Even where features have been developed as tourist attractions, such as the Cave of the Winds, the observation tower, and the Maid of the Mist boat, their appeal is rooted in the geology of the Falls, and they relate a segment of the dramatic geological story. The city of Niagara Falls also contains a number of commercial tourist attractions whose presence does not directly derive from the resource itself, but which draw on the vast assemblage of people brought there by the natural resource. For instance, long-established local institutions like the Niagara Falls Wax Museum offer insights into how the place has been traditionally interpreted for the visiting public, in contrast to the state park's new visitor orientation facility which offers a more contemporary presentation of information to visitors. Additionally, two historic hotels remain in downtown Niagara Falls: the Hotel Niagara, currently operated by Travelodge and the Red Coach Inn, both constructed during the 1920s.

Niagara Falls State Park, especially Goat Island, is a particularly valuable resource due to its central role in the history of tourism and the struggle to preserve the integrity of the natural resource, in which noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted figured prominently.



Maid of the Mist at Horseshoe Falls

Much of the rest of the history of tourism at Niagara Falls has been obscured by subsequent development or, like the various stunts that have enlivened the story, is essentially ephemeral. Periodic physical change has also obliterated features that once were celebrated tourist locales. By necessity, much of this story must depend on collections of tourist literature and memorabilia. The local history department of the Niagara Falls Public Library includes substantial collections related to the history of tourism in the city. Niagara University in Lewiston has created a digital library of 19th-century Niagara Falls guidebooks.

Of the other themes that have been identified as characterizing Niagara Falls, power generation is well represented by the New York Power Authority's Power Vista and other visible contemporary facilities like the power station and intake towers. Historic features like the Adams Power Plant transformer house, a National Historic Landmark (NHL), and other traces of former power plants and canals are also evident including the ruins of the earlier Schoellkopf Power Plant. The Holley-Rankine House is considered important primarily for its architecture, but is related to the history of Niagara's power generation and industrial growth. (From 1902 to 1905 it was the residence of William B. Rankine, who was active in the Niagara Falls Power Co., which earlier had built the Adams Power Plant.) The James G. Marshall House, home of the founder of Union Carbide, also conveys the depth of the region's industrial contributions. The Canadian side presents a parallel set of power-related resources, notably the Sir Adam Beck Generating Station No. 2. Although some of the industrial infrastructure remains visible, the industrial identity of Niagara Falls, New York has become less evident with the general decline of manufacturing in the region and the nation as a whole.

The theme of Niagara Falls as the scene of international rivalry is represented in the United States by Fort Niagara and related archeological resources within the Colonial Niagara NHL, but the theme is not represented extensively throughout the region. Other resources, such as the old Niagara Falls Customs House, several international bridges, and the present-day border-crossing facilities, testify to



the importance of the international boundary in defining the region's character. It is interesting to note in this context that the indigenous people who continue to live in the region do not, in theory, acknowledge an international boundary at all. In an annual ceremony, the Iroquois people of Canada and the U.S. cross the border to underscore its seamlessness to them as a community.

Despite the presence of Fort Niagara on the United States side, Canada contains more extensive evidence of international conflict and military preparation. The War of 1812 brought much military action and destruction to the New York side, but there are few landmarks and other evidence of these events at historic sites. Major battlefields and related resources from this conflict are preserved in Canada, notably the Chippawa Battlefield, the Queenston Heights Battlefield and Brock's Monument, the Laura Secord Homestead, and Old Fort Erie. This exemplifies the point that although each nation contains significant resources, Niagara is truly a binational region whose story cannot be adequately comprehended on only one side of the border. As our nation approaches the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, the important role of the Niagara Falls region in this conflict offers opportunities for tourism based interpretation and education about this major event in U.S. history.

Even in the absence of overt conflict, the existence of the boundary had far-reaching implications on other aspects of life. The area was an important passage to the Great Lakes and the interior of the continent and contains resources that express its character as both barrier and gateway. Remaining evidence of landings, portages, and military roads reflects this. Undoubtedly the boundary influenced transportation developments, as each nation felt compelled to create transportation facilities that bypassed Niagara Falls.

The Erie Canal, which was built to carry trade of the Great Lakes to the Hudson River and New York City, avoided Niagara Falls by opening into Lake Erie. The Welland Canal runs from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario parallel to the Niagara River on the Canadian side.



Adams Power Transformer Station

The study area contains some notable cultural facilities, such as the ArtPark at Lewiston and the Castellani Art Museum on the campus of Niagara University, but the city of Buffalo, with a constellation of cultural facilities, has created a stronger overall identity as a regional cultural center. Buffalo's notable historic architecture has emerged as one of the city's greatest assets in defining and marketing itself in the post-industrial era, but this asset is only indirectly related to the geological phenomenon of Niagara Falls.

Niagara has inspired many artists to paint, etch, or photograph the Falls. Many such images can be found at local museums: the Castellani Art Museum, in Niagara Falls (on the campus of Niagara University) and the Albright-Knox Art Museum and the Burchfield-Penney Art Museum, both in Buffalo. The Albright-Knox collection, for example, includes images of Niagara Falls by artists Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, John Ferguson Weir, and Hiroshi Yoshida.

Considering that the defining themes of the area that have been identified in this study derive directly from a shared geological configuration, the lack of a coordinating entity hinders the full appreciation of the resource assemblage. This is true not only between the two nations, but within each of them as well. A number of private, nonprofit advocacy groups and friends groups, in addition to New York State agencies and municipalities, are concerned in some way with resource management and tourist promotion, but there is no overarching organization or forum in which these interests can be harmonized or comprehensively discussed.

Regional tourism development requires a clear, strategic vision as well as strong leadership and sustained coordination among managers of parks and operators of tourist attractions and amenities. It is also important to identify and nurture mutually beneficial binational opportunities in the Niagara Region. Ad hoc cooperation has sometimes been effective, but an overall coordinating body could promote constructive actions such as program creation, development of thematic links, shared publicity, uniform signage and publications in short, the features that would give the region a more unified identity. Such cooperative and collaborative efforts could also apply to enhancing resource protection and interpretation directly or through marshaling greater public promotion and stewardship of heritage resources.

Organizations like the Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance and the Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth are currently engaged in efforts to formalize some of these ad hoc cooperative initiatives. While their efforts have been far-reaching, at this time their emphasis is on marketing and promotion rather than resource protection and interpretive programming.

*2. The area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a valuable part of the nation's story.*

The longtime presence of the Seneca and Tuscarora Nations near the Niagara River suggests that the resources that are essential to the character of the Niagara Region are also of great importance to these American Indian nations and may be considered ethnographic resources.

The presence of native peoples in the area stretches back thousands of years. During the colonial era, the Indian tribes played an important role as participants in the struggle for empire between the English and the French, and later between the English and the Americans. Incorporation of Native American traditions and participation of tribes in heritage area planning and implementation would add significantly to visitors' understanding of these important aspects of our nation's history.

The 200-year-old tradition of tourism at Niagara Falls has created local traditions and inspired certain beliefs in American culture such as the American



Path at Prospect Point, Naigara Falls State Park

“Grand Tour,” the Niagara Falls honeymoon, and automobile-based, working-class getaways. The local traditions are carried on by both local residents servicing the tourist trade and by the tourists themselves, who follow certain patterns when visiting the Falls. Beyond the local context, Niagara Falls has played an important role in American culture, serving as a symbol of the boundless wilderness, the divine providence inherent in nature, the potential for economic and social transformation embodied in hydroelectric power, and both the despoliation and preservation of natural wonders.

It is apparent that a type of folk life of tourism has evolved at Niagara Falls. Living in the presence of an internationally famed attraction has formed a distinctive set of attitudes that sets the area apart from neighboring portions of New York. Generations of local families have participated in the tourism industry as business owners, hoteliers, restaurateurs, tour guides and purveyors of Niagara souvenirs, and as visitors. Local ownership of the tourism infrastructure has declined as larger corporate interests from outside the region have taken hold.

Beginning with 19th-century tightrope walkers and extending through an assortment of individuals who performed stunts at the Falls, Niagara gained a reputation as a raffish sort of place, where unconventional, often risky behavior occurred. Present-day Clifton Hill, in Niagara Falls, Ontario, may represent a more controlled residual expression of this carnival atmosphere. Niagara Falls is a natural resource that has long been exploited for commercial gain. As historian Karen Dubinsky has explained in *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (1999), honeymoons at Niagara Falls are a folkway of North American mass culture. Further study is needed to understand exactly how tourism folkways and traditions developed.

Contemporary observers David L. Herzberg, Robert Shibley, and Bradshaw Hovey, in “Rethinking the Niagara Frontier” (2001), have described a sprawling but not sharply edged border region in which people on both sides of the boundary feel an affinity and have sometimes been able to make beneficial accommodations despite different official regimes. Under this conception, inhabitants of this Frontier region have developed a sensibility

shaped by subtle and fluctuating differences between the two nations combined with the relative ease of travel between the two.

One example of this kind of cross-border tradition, which is now receiving increasing recognition, is the Underground Railroad, the system of escape routes that helped black people enslaved in the United States reach freedom in Canada. Well-known Underground Railroad “conductor,” Harriet Tubman, is known to have traveled through Niagara Falls en route to St. Catharines in Ontario. Despite the inherent difficulty of documenting sites that were supposed to be secret, many have been identified; both New York and Ontario have made considerable progress in this direction. In addition, a local tour operator focuses on Underground Railroad stories.

3. *The area provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, and/or scenic features.*

Niagara Falls State Park preserves vital land on the American side of the Falls, and much of the gorge is similarly in public ownership under NYS OPRHP or the New York Power Authority. In recent years New York State has improved visitor facilities at Niagara Falls State Park to enhance the visitor experience. International agreements protect the scenic qualities of the Falls and regulate the flow of the Falls themselves. The International Joint Commission is responsible for overseeing these agreements. Early-20th-century industrialists and scientists advocated the total diversion of Niagara Falls for power generation, but this did not come to pass. Nevertheless, the flow of the Falls is intensely managed. The Niagara Power Project is aptly interpreted at NYPA’s Power Vista visitor center in Lewiston. However, the remains of power canals and tunnels as well as the ruins of the old Schoellkopf Power Plant merit further documentation, protection, and interpretation.

Most of the natural and cultural resources on the Canadian side are managed by the Niagara Parks Commission. The local management authorities on





Frontier House, Lewiston, NY

each side of the Falls lack control over protecting viewsheds on either side. Traveling north along the Gorge, views across the river in both directions retain greater integrity. The potential exists to protect and enhance existing viewsheds.

Both the villages of Lewiston and Youngstown possess well-defined historic areas that could merit National Register designation as districts. These villages would benefit from such a designation by fostering greater awareness and stewardship for the contributing structures and cultural landscape. Costumed interpreters working with the Seaway Trail offer interpretive tours of Lewiston's historic area weekly during the summer months.

Fort Niagara preserves the main resource on the United States side that depicts historic military conflict. Significant archeological resources pertaining to the 18th century and earlier periods are known to exist at the historic Lower Landing, now within the Earl W. Bridges ArtPark State Park, and may be present at other locations in the area. State ownership provides some measure of protection for archeological resources within ArtPark, but the protection of other potential archeological resources is uncertain, and important sites may remain unknown.

Some land on the edge of the Niagara River is in private ownership and thus potentially subject to adverse development (e.g., upstream of the GrandIsland Bridge and downstream of ArtPark). Trails run much of the distance from Niagara Falls to Fort Niagara along the immediate riverbank and gorge with few interruptions. The question of whether the Robert Moses Parkway encourages or impedes scenic access over much of its length is debated. Public support for completing a lake-to-lake greenway along the Niagara River presents an opportunity to provide a valuable scenic and recreational resource. In 2004, the New York State Legislature approved the creation of the Niagara River Greenway Commission to support its development.

Important aspects of the Niagara story, notably the historic development of tourism, are not fully told or integrated into the overall visitor experience. The new visitor center at Niagara Falls State Park has made progress in this direction, but this effort could be expanded.

The National Audubon Society has designated the Niagara corridor as an Important Bird Area (IBA). This designation highlights the need to protect the area from threats such as the loss of habitat. Largely due to microclimates peculiar to the area, the Falls and Gorge are known to contain a large number of rare plant species, within the context of New York State. In general, there is an overarching need for more financial support to protect and preserve the region's nationally important resources.

*4. The area provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.*

Some of the institutions mentioned earlier offer outstanding educational opportunities for Niagara themes. Old Fort Niagara is one of the most important sites on the American side of the Niagara River for depicting the story of European settlement, contact with American Indians, and the Wars for Empire, extending through 1815. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor links Niagara to the heroic story of the settlement and growth of Upstate New York and the nation. The New York Power Authority's Power Vista offers an overview of present and historic power generation in the region. For the geological story, the Niagara Gorge Discovery Center and the Orin Lehman Visitor Center at the state park complement and explain the geological marvel that is conspicuous nearby.

Niagara Falls itself, with the state park and related resources, is the area's leading recreational resource, as evidenced by the millions who visit it from all parts of the world. The park offers walking trails, overlooks, and landscaped grounds. Also within the park, visitors have access to an Observation Tower and other attractions including the privately operated Maid of the Mist and the state-operated Cave of the Winds. ArtPark offers access to the Gorge Trail, as well as multiple venues for fine and performing arts activities. Several state parks in the vicinity, such as Fort Niagara, Joseph Davis, Reservoir, and DeVeaux Woods, provide recreational day-use facilities for residents offering opportunities for both active and passive recreational activities. OPRHP has expressed a need to continue making capital improvements to ensure visitor access and safety and to improve interpretive signage and programming. Complementary resources exist on the Canadian side. Though not formally considered under this study, they are available to and are heavily used by visitors to the study area.

As a result of the presence of large areas of public land and the creation of formal pathways and trails, visual and physical access to the river's edge is improving. The state passed legislation that will facilitate the creation of a multiple-use lake-to-lake trail that would be similar to the one located on the Canadian side. There are a number of trails in the

area, including waterfront trail segments in Buffalo, North Tonawanda, Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and Porter. Throughout the study area, interpretive signage and programming could use improvement, particularly in interpreting the region's history. Recreational opportunities along the Robert Moses Parkway could be maximized and programmed, and physical links could be developed with related areas such as the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and Niagara Falls, Canada.

Institutions like the Castellani Art Museum at Niagara University, the Niagara Falls Aquarium, and the Niagara Aerospace Museum include education as part of their primary mission and develop projects that enhance educational opportunities for both their adult patrons and young people. Beyond the primary study area, the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, Ontario, also offer myriad educational and recreational opportunities. Likewise, Erie and Niagara Counties offer similar amenities on a smaller scale.

*5. Resources that are important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation.*

The region seems to be characterized by a relatively small number of resources that are currently known to be of national significance, beginning with the Falls themselves, but those few are of outstanding importance. These are obviously capable of supporting relevant interpretation, since they have been doing so for many years. Two notable examples, the New York Power Authority Power Vista and the Niagara Gorge Discovery Center, relate to the heritage themes of hydroelectric power and geology, and they exist to provide educational services. Fort Niagara preserves the main resource on the American side that depicts the historic military conflict. Its integrity has been recognized through its designation as a National Historic Landmark. Niagara Falls State Park (originally referred to as Niagara Reservation) has also been designated a national historic landmark for the original design provided by Frederick Law Olmsted. The historic importance of the Erie Canal, which enters the study area, has been recognized in its designation as a national heritage corridor, and comprehensive plans are being developed for its interpretation.

Many other resources are currently listed on or are considered eligible for the National Register for Historic Places and are important for their state and local significance. They, too, possess historic fabric that is intact and capable of supporting interpretation. Examples include the James G. Marshall House in Niagara Falls, representing the theme of Power and Industry, and the Frontier House in Lewiston, which is illustrative of the Borderlands/Border Crossing Theme.

*...the Niagara River Gorge itself offers numerous opportunities to interpret aspects of all four of the major themes identified for the area.*

Many more sites have not been fully evaluated for National Register eligibility but possess sufficient fabric to offer unique opportunities to interpret the area's themes. For instance, the Niagara River Gorge itself offers numerous opportunities to interpret aspects of all four of the major themes identified for the area. As noted previously, both Lewiston and Youngstown possess well-defined villages and waterfronts that offer great opportunities to interpret their history as border towns during times of both war and peace.

A table summarizing the distribution of resources across proposed national heritage area themes may be found in Appendix G.

*6. Residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and governments within the proposed area are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area.*

Local interest in creating a national heritage area around Niagara Falls solidified in 2001, when U.S. Senator Charles Schumer organized a panel of local leaders to meet with National Park Service officials to discuss the potential for a national heritage area. Members of the panel included federal, state, county, and municipal elected officials, businesspersons, planners, academics, union officials, foundation executives, historians, environmentalists, and other citizens. Consultations with the panel led to the "Report on the Reconnaissance Survey of the Niagara River Corridor in the State of New York Conducted March 19–20, 2001 by the Northeast Regional Office of the National Park Service" and the federal legislation initiating the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area feasibility study. Members of this panel have participated in public meetings and individual discussions since the start of the feasibility study process in May 2003. Many municipal and county officials were also consulted as part of the study process. Public meetings held in Niagara Falls in November 2003 and June 2004 revealed considerable public interest in and support for national heritage area designation. During the feasibility study process, many other local citizens have provided input on the proposed national heritage area. The "Summary of Public Involvement" section of the report provides information on the process for obtaining public input and identifies contributors. Comments resulting from the review of this draft study report will be similarly documented and taken into consideration.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) has supported the national heritage area concept since 2001, and Commissioner Bernadette Castro testified at a Congressional hearing in its favor. The NYS OPRHP has participated on the study project team in evaluating resources and heritage themes and exploring potential management alternatives.

The Urban Design Project, of the University of Buffalo, has provided technical and outreach support for the study process. Dr. Robert Shibley and Dr. Bradshaw Hovey, who have been leaders in regional planning activities in the Buffalo Niagara binational area for many years, have helped integrate the national heritage area concept into on-going regional economic and cultural tourism planning efforts.



7. *The proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area.*

The potential management entity for the Niagara National Heritage Area would have representation from local governments, as well as a wide range of organizational and citizen interests. The study has considered using a federal commission, a state commission, or a private nonprofit organization (see Management Alternatives for discussion of each) as the management entity. The study team has initially found the greatest local support for a federal commission because local stakeholders believe it could most effectively involve federal, state, tribal, and local government, as well nonprofit economic development, cultural, historical, environmental, and civic organizations. With the creation of the Niagara River Greenway Commission, a new possibility should be presented for consideration by the public as a potential management alternative during the comment period for this draft report.

Representatives of state agencies, Niagara County, the City of Niagara Falls, the Towns of Lewiston and Porter, and the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown have met with the study team and expressed interest in participating on a national heritage area management entity.

The Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation and USA Niagara, a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation of the State of New York, are organizations active in developing tourism and revitalizing downtown Niagara Falls. They have recognized that a heritage area can improve the image of Niagara Falls, develop new attractions, and result in a management entity for coordinating heritage initiatives. New York State OPRHP, which owns Niagara Falls State Park and several other state parks in the area, has made over \$44 million of improvements to the grounds and the facilities at the park. These improvements have been intended to upgrade the visitor experience and draw more visitors to Niagara. A new heritage area would complement and help expand upon these efforts at tourism development.



Sign noting site of Fort Schlosser

A key to the heritage area's success will be the enhancement of opportunities to create links among tourist attractions and amenities as well as to expand partnerships between the City of Niagara Falls and the NYS-operated parks.

Defining actual commitments, rather than general support for heritage area designation, has been hampered because the public has not yet been able to focus on the management entity alternatives contained in this report. As the public expresses its support for one of the alternatives presented, the study team will ascertain more specific commitments and partnerships that may be available involving local governments and area organizations.

*8. The management entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.*

The study team has been working with local officials and citizens to determine the most appropriate management entity for the proposed Niagara National Heritage Area. The three management entity forms under consideration are a federal commission, a state commission, and a local private nonprofit organization. Descriptions of these management entities and their possible advantages and disadvantages are in Part Three of this report.

*9. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area.*

The proposed Niagara National Heritage Area would be highly consistent with economic activity in the area. Niagara Falls has been an important attraction for 200 years, and tourism has been a significant element of the local economy. One of the reasons for interest in a national heritage area at Niagara Falls is to help strengthen the appeal of this place to visitors by telling stories related to the natural environment, history, and culture of the larger Niagara Region and enhancing connections between heritage sites within the region. Another reason is to help redevelop downtown Niagara Falls, which has suffered disinvestment in recent decades.

The Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, the Towns of Porter, Lewiston, North Tonawanda, Tonawanda, and Wheatfield, and the Cities of Niagara Falls and Buffalo, and the Counties of Niagara and Erie have been seeking to improve their economic bases and have seen tourism as an important part of that effort. For these communities, the most significant needs include maintaining physical, programmatic, and marketing links to Niagara Falls to draw visitors from the Falls; protecting their community character; and making the public aware of the resources that they have to offer.

Heritage tourism is also compatible with the efforts of two other groups that are promoting tourism in

the region: (1) the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative; and (2) the Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance. The Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative is a new effort, which is seeking to promote cultural institutions and events in Erie and Niagara Counties, while the Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance is a four-year-old effort that coordinates marketing and tourism programming on both sides of the Niagara River. Both have indicated that heritage area designation can help in these areas.

*10. A conceptual boundary map has been reviewed by the public.*

The study area maps that show conceptual boundaries for proposed Niagara National Heritage Area alternatives may be found with the Management Alternatives in the following section. The maps have been developed by the Urban Design Project of the University of Buffalo and the National Park Service. Conceptual boundaries were discussed at a public meeting on November 5, 2003 and at numerous smaller informal meetings. A revised boundary proposal was presented to the public in June 2004. Meeting participants were generally supportive of the proposal setting forth a boundary with related resources eligible for participation in the surrounding region. The public will have an opportunity to further indicate its support for a boundary during the public comment period.

## Conclusion

Based upon the analysis of natural and cultural resources in the study area, evidence of an effective thematic framework, the potential for effective public and private partnerships, opportunities for the protection of natural and cultural resources as well as recreation and education, and public support for a national heritage area designation, the study team concludes that the study area meets a number of the NPS interim criteria for designation as a National Heritage Area.

## *Part Four*



## *National Heritage Area Management Alternatives*



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## Part Four: National Heritage Area Management Alternatives



Visitors at Prospect Point in Niagara Falls State Park

### Introduction

In addition to evaluating the study area in terms of the National Park Service's interim criteria for national heritage area designation, the study team also developed a Heritage Tourism Needs Assessment and examined a range of pre-existing models for national heritage areas, both of which are described below. Drawing upon elements of these pre-existing models and in carefully considering the particular needs of the region, the study team prepared an array of four possible management alternatives. The study team also identified some opportunities for binational cooperation for future consideration. Beyond the continuation of current practices highlighted in Alternative 1, the management alternatives have many similarities.

### Heritage Development Needs

Through the review of existing studies and plans, and interviews with park managers, local elected officials, tourism and revitalization interests, and other local stakeholders, the study team developed a list of perceived heritage tourism needs. The heritage tourism needs are described on a region-wide basis, as well as for specific areas or interest groups. Many of these needs are addressed in greater detail as part of the analysis of heritage area criteria described in the previous section of the report. A matrix summarizing these needs follows.

Table 2: Summary: Niagara Falls — Heritage Area Needs Assessment

Location	Need Category	Specific Needs	
<b>Niagara Falls Region</b>	Tourism Development	Regional vision (consensus driven) Coordination/leadership/internal communication Marketing/external communication (guidebooks, brochures, websites, informational/directional signage)	Participation in mutually beneficial binational opportunities Infrastructure (dedicated coordinating body; visitor amenities; alternative transportation)
	Resource Management	Greenway/trail development (Niagara Gorge, Lower River, “lake to lake”) Interpretive signage Maximizing recreational potential of the Robert Moses Parkway	Programmatic/physical links among resources (incl. Erie Canalway NHC; Niagara Falls, Canada) More support for resource protection/preservation
<b>City of Niagara Falls, New York</b>	City/Parks Interface	Enhance opportunities to facilitate links among tourist resources and amenities Enhance opportunities for park/community partnerships	Minimize physical impact of Robert Moses Parkway as a barrier between city and Gorge
	Tourism Development	Regional tourism hub Visitor orientation (Niagara Experience Center concept)	Visitor amenities (info signage; food; rest areas)
	Downtown Revitalization	Links to city/parks interface	Links to tourism development
<b>Points North (Porter/Youngstown/Lewiston)</b>	Link to Niagara Falls	Maintain transportation corridor to Niagara Falls	Enhance physical/programmatic/marketing connections among resources
	Protect Community Character/Resources	Maintain rural/village character	Continue and enhance resource protection efforts
	Tourism Development	Marketing resources/visitor amenities Expand public awareness of resources	Improve coordination/linkages among resources and amenities in Niagara Falls region
<b>NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation</b>	Resource Management	Additional capital improvement needs Additional research/planning needs	Interpretive signage/programming Improved links among Lower Niagara River units (e.g. Goose Trail)
	Visitor Management	Broadening visitor experience beyond the Falls Ensure resource protection/visitor safety	Alternative transportation/expanded people mover routes to expand visitor experience along Lower Niagara River
	Tourism Development	Marketing resources/programming Expand public awareness of resources beyond the Falls	Increase domestic visitation/foster repeat visitation Increase opportunities for partnership with other regional initiatives
<b>New York Power Authority</b>	Resource Management	Explore potential opportunities offered by NYPA relicensing Ensure security of power-generating facilities	Integrate the NYPA/power-generating story into the regional context



## Background on National Heritage Areas and Suitability Findings

Each national heritage area is unique because it is based upon preserving and interpreting the special landscapes and historical themes of specific places. Preservation and interpretation initiatives are managed by partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and private nonprofit organizations. The National Park Service plays the role of catalyst by providing technical and financial assistance, but it does not acquire new land or supersede the authorities of existing state or local governments or other agencies.

National heritage areas most comparable to a potential Niagara National Heritage Area are those focused on a specific geographical resource like a river or a canal, such as the Erie Canalway or the Hudson River Valley. These heritage areas are contrasted with more geographically scattered, thematically oriented sites, such as Motor Cities (MI) and Tennessee Civil War Battlefields National Heritage Areas. One of the objectives of most national heritage areas has been to transform an area into a tourism destination. Niagara Falls already is a destination; in this case, Niagara would use a heritage area designation to preserve natural and cultural resources and enhance the current visitor experience.

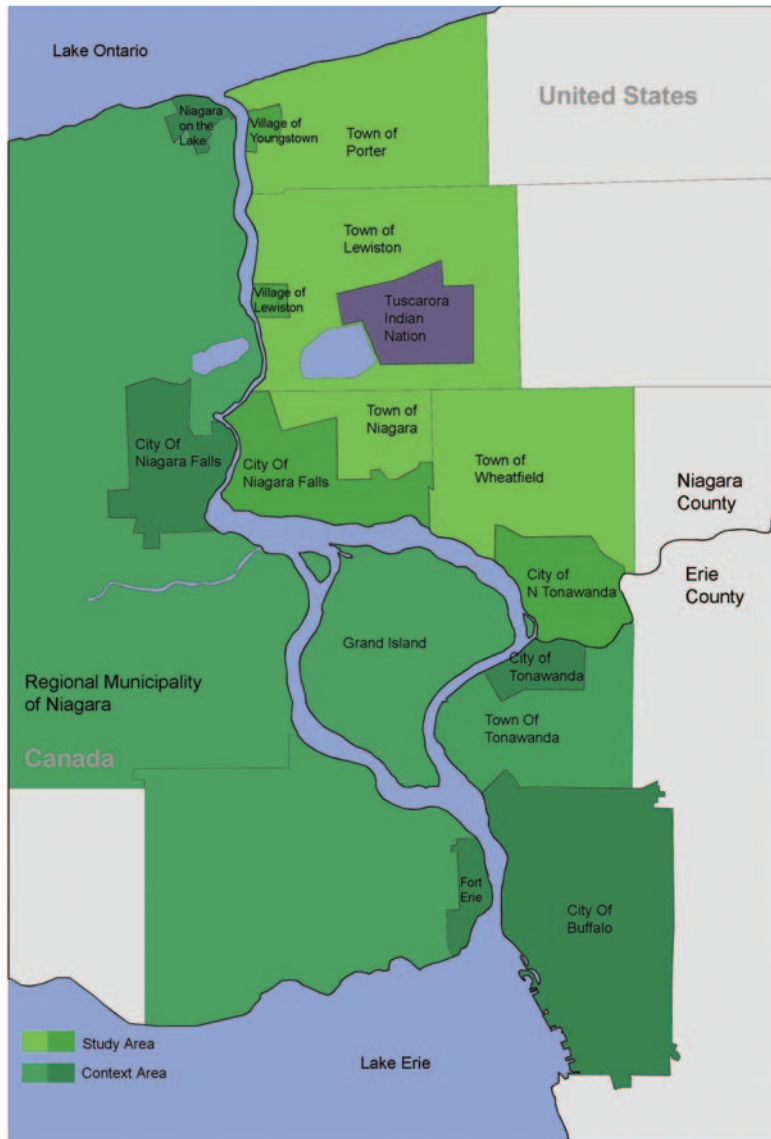
Most national heritage areas have multiple themes, similar to Niagara Falls. The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area has three major themes: Nature and Culture, Corridor of Commerce, and Freedom and Dignity. The Essex National Heritage Area's themes are Early Settlement, Maritime, and Industry. These heritage areas demonstrate how a region can interpret several major themes effectively.

Niagara Falls possesses resources and stories that are quite unlike any found in existing national heritage areas. It would be the only national heritage area focused on an internationally acclaimed natural resource and the unique cultural resources and

stories associated with an international border. It affords the opportunity to examine our heritage in the context of our relationships with our Canadian neighbors who share not only Niagara Falls, but a common place-based heritage.



Whirlpool Jet Boat Tour: Lower Niagara Falls River



**Alternative 1:**  
Continuation of Current Practices ("No Action")  
Niagara National Heritage Area Study

The Urban Design Project  
School of Architecture and Planning



## Management Alternatives

### Alternative 1:

#### Continuation of Current Practices

In developing alternatives for a national heritage area feasibility study, the National Park Service includes a management alternative that continues existing practices in the area. This describes the outcomes if no national heritage area is designated, and provides a benchmark for evaluating how impacts would change under other scenarios.

Under this alternative, no federal designation, additional federal funding beyond that provided through existing authorities, or additional authority for federal involvement would be pursued. Existing entities would continue, and possibly expand, their efforts to preserve and enhance heritage resources. The resources currently owned and operated by nonprofit organizations and local, state, and federal government would continue to be maintained and made available for public use under existing policies.

There would be no new NPS responsibility for providing funding and technical assistance for heritage planning and programs in the Niagara area. Federal programs, such as the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, the National Historic Landmarks program, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), would continue to be available to entities within the region on a competitive basis.

State and local government, private nonprofit organizations and foundations, and for-profit organizations would continue to be the primary sources of funds for the protection and interpretation of heritage resources. Existing heritage initiatives would continue. They would include the Niagara Area New York State Parks, Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative, Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation, Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and many individual nonprofit organizations, communities, and economic development groups. Nothing would prevent existing organizations from working collaboratively to establish a non-federally designated heritage entity and programming.

### *Elements Common to Alternatives 2 and 3: National Heritage Area*

Alternatives 2 and 3 would establish a Niagara National Heritage Area. The differences between the alternatives would relate to heritage area boundaries, overall goals, and how community needs are addressed. Despite differences between alternatives, each one would have common features, which are described below.

Under Alternatives 2 and 3 the management entity would be responsible for receiving and disbursing federal funds and would have authority to enter into agreements with the federal government. The management entity would be responsible for leveraging funds and in-kind services to match the federal financial assistance and be authorized to make grants to organizations carrying out projects identified in the heritage area management plan. Federal, state, local, and private historical and cultural sites and natural areas within the heritage area would operate under their own authority and, as appropriate, be a part of or work in partnership with the management entity. The NPS would provide financial and technical assistance to the heritage area's management entity to support the purposes of the national heritage area.

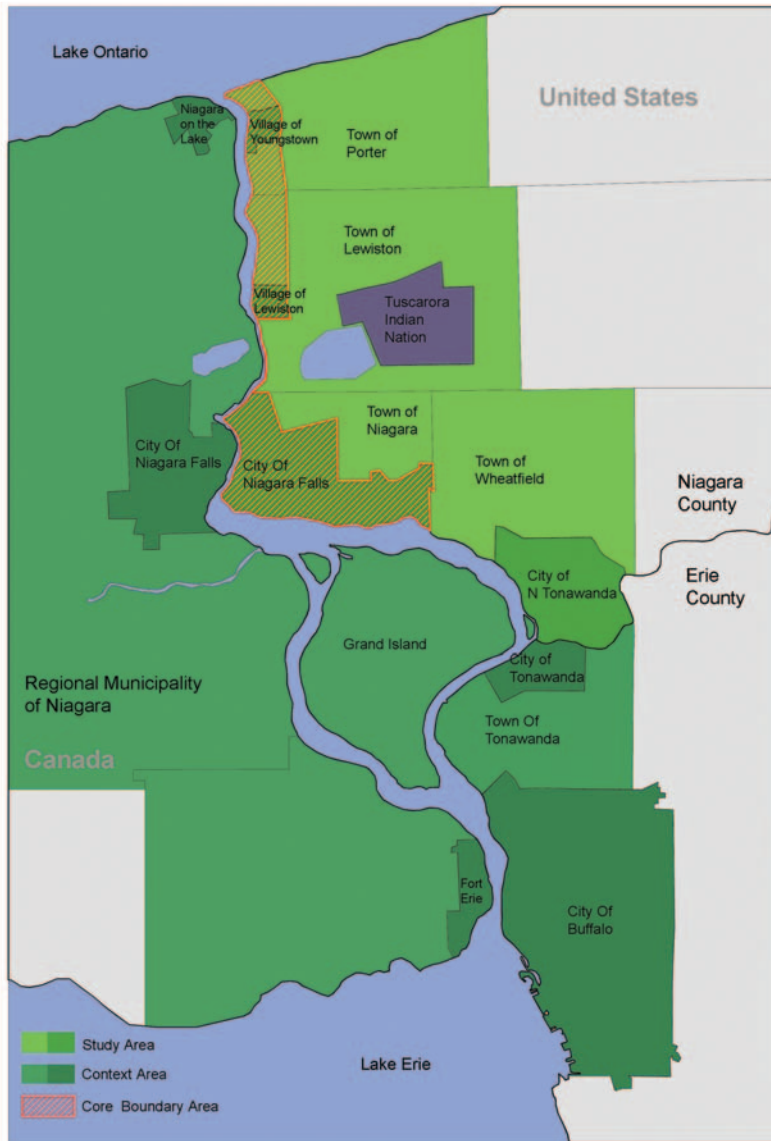
Under the following alternatives, the NPS could provide financial and technical assistance to the management entity of the heritage area and its associated partners in support of education, interpretation, historic preservation, planning, recreational trail development, and open space conservation. However, it is important to note that federal national heritage area monies could not be made available to the heritage area for land acquisition. NPS programs, such as the Northeast Regional Office, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, the Building Conservation Branch, and the Northeast Museum Services Center, could be available for project work subject to appropriated funds and NPS priorities. Many of these programs make their services available on a competitive basis.

Consistent with other national heritage areas, the management entity would be authorized to receive

up to \$1 million per year for 15 years; however the maximum total amount of funding could not exceed \$10 million. It would be required to provide a 50% match to the federal funding. After federal funding ceases, the national heritage area continues to exist, relying upon funding from other sources to meet its management responsibilities. The national heritage area also could obtain support from other funding sources, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (administered by the Federal Highway Administration), state, and municipal agencies, and private nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

Through a heritage area management plan, the management entity would develop a comprehensive interpretive and preservation program for the heritage area's resources. Heritage area projects and grants could support a signage system, interpretive exhibits, planning and preservation for historic and natural resources, publications and brochures, interpretive planning for state parks and other participating organizations, and support for research, inventories, and documentation of heritage resources.





### Alternative 2: National Heritage Area — Niagara Falls and Lower Niagara River

This national heritage area alternative entails federal designation of Niagara Falls and the Lower Niagara River as a National Heritage Area. It would include the area above the Niagara Falls rapids to the mouth of the Niagara River, at Lake Ontario. The area's boundary would include the city of Niagara Falls, the villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, and portions of the towns of Lewiston and Porter. The Alternative 2 map demarcates the proposed boundary for this alternative.

The designated management entity could include a nonprofit organization, state agency or commission or a federal commission and would represent a cross-section of public and private interests, including the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New York State Power Authority, the City of Niagara Falls, the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, the Towns of Lewiston and Porter, Niagara County, tribal, historic, cultural, and environmental organizations, economic development organizations, educational institutions, and private citizens. The coordinating entity would prepare a heritage area management plan, conduct public outreach, prioritize projects, and implement the plan in conjunction with its partners.



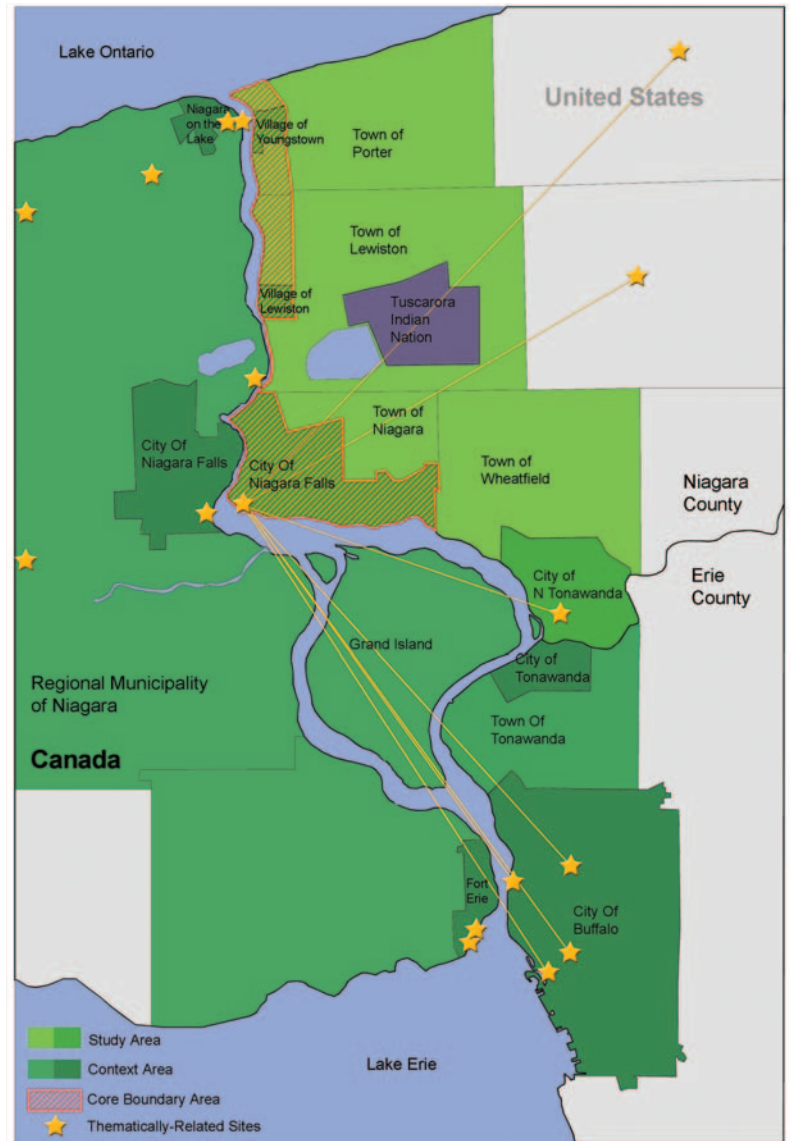
### *Alternative 3: National Heritage Area — Niagara Falls and Network of Thematically Related Sites*

This alternative includes the boundary in Alternative 2. In addition, the heritage area would include a network of sites thematically related to Niagara Falls in Niagara and Erie Counties. These additional sites would reflect the heritage themes of Natural Phenomenon, Recreation and Tourism, Power and Industry, and Borderland/Border Crossing. The Alternative 3 map demarcates the proposed boundary for this alternative.

Heritage area network members might include the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society, which frequently mounts exhibits related to Niagara, including hydroelectric power and industry; sites associated with the Underground Railroad in Buffalo and Murphy's Orchard's program in Burt, New York. The heritage area could have programmatic relationships with thematically related sites on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, although these sites would not be included in the national heritage area. Besides sites located in the immediate vicinity of Niagara Falls, such sites could include Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake and War of 1812 sites at Chippawa and Queenston Heights.

The heritage network might also undertake joint programming with both the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the nascent lake-to-lake greenway. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, which stretches from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, borders the southern end of the proposed Niagara National Heritage Area and could become a helpful partner on specific projects. The designated management entity would include a similar cross-section of public and private interests to Alternative 2 and could include representatives of thematically linked organizations elsewhere in Niagara and Erie Counties.

A potential management entity under this alternative, as in Alternative 2, could include a representative nonprofit organization, state agency or commission, or federal commission.



**Alternative 3:**  
National Heritage Area - Niagara Falls & Network of Thematically-Related Sites  
Niagara National Heritage Area Study

The Urban Design Project  
School of Architecture and Planning



University at Buffalo  
The State University of New York

## Management Entity Models

Each heritage area has been created with its own organizational approach based upon existing institutions and management needs. The National Park Service is authorized to provide technical assistance and funding to heritage areas. These areas are not managed by the National Park Service. Management decisions are made and implemented by the local management entity. The National Park Service publicizes heritage areas through its website and nationally distributed brochures and publications. Most national heritage areas are located within close proximity to NPS units and have developed complementary relationships.

Management entities normally create committees of heritage stakeholders and interested citizens to provide advice and assistance in planning and programming. The experience of established national heritage areas has shown that such citizen input is critical to developing effective programs and policies.

The following section of this study describes three basic models for a management entity for national heritage areas—a federal commission, the state-established Niagara River Greenway Commission, and a designated nonprofit organization.

*Each heritage area has been created with its own organizational approach based upon existing institutions and management needs.*

## Federal Commission

The federal commission has been used by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Blackstone Valley National Historic Corridor, Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, and the Delaware and Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor. A federal commission is established by Congress and representatives from a cross-section of public and private interests are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior based in part on local nominations. Commission seats for specific government agencies, nonprofit institutions, and representatives of the public are often identified in the authorizing legislation, securing more committed participation by state agencies and municipalities than might be the case if a private nonprofit organization managed the national heritage area.

The federal commission is desirable when active participation by the National Park Service is contemplated. Some commissions have assigned NPS staff as has happened with the Erie Canalway and the Blackstone River Valley.

A federal commission can increase the visibility of the heritage area, but it can take longer to implement board changes in composition because it requires changes in the commission's membership to be made by the Secretary of the Interior. The federal commission can be established for a limited period of time with the intention of its evolving into a private nonprofit organization. For example, the Shenandoah Valley National Battlefield Federal Commission was given three years to develop a management plan for the national heritage area. The management plan called for the creation of a nonprofit Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation to take over from the federal commission as the management entity. The Blackstone River Valley and the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridors are both examining options for moving toward a nonprofit management entity, among other alternatives, since the existing authorization of the commissions is lapsing.

A federal commission follows certain rules of accountability related to openness, public involvement and organizational transparency. This includes adherence to provisions of the Federal



Advisory Commission Act (FACA), which requires advance public notice of meetings, posting of agendas, and specific rules for voting.

Federal commissions may have memberships that can range as high as 27 (Erie Canalway) or 19 (Blackstone). Such a commission might meet quarterly, with more frequent meetings of a smaller executive committee or subcommittees to handle day-to-day management matters or specific tasks.

### *State Agency or Commission*

Heritage commissions or agencies established by state government have been used as a national heritage area management entity. A state agency or commission managing a national heritage area seems to be most appropriate when a state organization with compatible responsibilities is already in place. One example where a state agency acts as the management entity is the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which is managed by the Hudson Valley Greenway (a public benefit corporation of the State of New York).

In the Niagara Falls area, a state commission has emerged that could serve as a management entity for the Niagara National Heritage Area—the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Enacted by New York State legislation in 2004, the commission initiated its work in early 2005. New York State has expressed its desire to have the Niagara River Greenway Commission serve as the management entity for the Niagara National Heritage Area. According to the legislation, the Niagara River Greenway Commission is “a cooperative regional organization established to work with participating state agencies, municipalities, organizations and residents in order to implement or cause to be implemented a linear system of parks and conservation areas that will ... redefine the Niagara Riverfront by increasing landside access to the river; creating complementary access to the greenway from the river; augmenting economic revitalization efforts, and celebrating the region’s industrial heritage.”

The greenway commission has 14 members, eight of whom are appointed by the governor and six of whom are ex officio seats representing the heads of state agencies, including the Secretary of State, the commissioners of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Environmental Conservation, Transportation, and Economic Development, and the chairperson of the New York State Power Authority. The eight governor’s appointees are supposed to be residents of communities abutting the Niagara River and represent various local interests. The greenway commission would also have at least two advisory committees, one made up of local officials and another made up of local citizens representing civic, commercial, educational, recreational, and conservation organizations.

The mission of the greenway commission is to develop a plan and an Environmental Impact Statement for a Niagara River Greenway. The plan would entail recommending boundaries for the greenway, identifying existing lands along the Niagara River dedicated to open space and recreation, recommending acquisition of additional lands, providing an economic analysis of steps necessary for developing the greenway, and identifying opportunities for celebrating the region’s industrial heritage. The greenway commission would not actually manage the proposed greenway nor would it acquire land by eminent domain. The plan is supposed to be completed within two years of the startup of the commission.

A benefit of designating the Niagara River Greenway Commission as the management entity for the Niagara National Heritage Area is that it would avoid having to create an additional organization undertaking projects in the Niagara Region relating to history, culture, environmental protection, and recreation. The greenway commission could develop and implement a national heritage area management plan while also creating a Niagara River Greenway. The tasks and the constituencies are similar.

Since the state's Niagara River Greenway Commission has been established for the distinct purpose of creating a greenway along the Niagara River, its enabling legislation does not cover the broader range of preserving heritage resources and interpreting heritage themes, as described in the Niagara National Heritage Area Study. In order for the greenway commission to manage a national heritage area it may have to be authorized to expand its responsibilities to cover historic and cultural resource protection and heritage area programming. Implementing the "heritage network" concept described in Alternative 3 would require adopting boundaries extending inland from the Niagara River, as well as the ability to work with thematically related sites. The greenway commission would have to ensure that its board membership includes the full spectrum of heritage area interests within the designated national heritage area boundary.

### Nonprofit Organization

Regional nonprofit heritage organizations tend to be most appropriate where there is an existing regional nonprofit heritage organization or an organization emerges through the heritage area planning process that represents the desired cross-section of community organizations and interests. A broad local consensus is required in identifying a regional nonprofit organization to become the national heritage area management entity. A nonprofit management entity is more appropriate when an active role for the NPS is not projected.

Several national heritage areas are managed by nonprofit organizations. Quinebaug-Shetucket is managed by the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. It has a governing board of 15 members representing local organizations and state government officials. The organization has over 230 members, who elect board members annually. The Essex National Heritage Area is overseen by a large 118-member commission, with representation from each municipality and every relevant business, tourism, preservation, educational, and environmental organization in the region. The commission is a privately incorporated body having 501(c)(3) status under the United States tax code. A 23-member Executive Committee oversees the operations of the heritage area. The Essex National Heritage Area Commission ensures that a wide array of community, economic development, and heritage interests have input into the management of the area, while having a smaller executive committee oversee the day-to-day operations of the heritage area.

The federal commission, the state commission, and the nonprofit organization can name committees of heritage stakeholders and interested citizens to provide advice and assistance critical to planning and programming. The experience of established national heritage areas has shown that such citizen input is invaluable to developing effective programs and policies.

Table 3: Summary Matrix of Management Alternatives

Feature	Alternative One	Alternative Two	Alternative Three
<b>Concept</b>	Existing programs in Buffalo-Niagara Region continue.	Core National Heritage Area approach, with coordinated heritage planning, events, projects, interpretation and marketing.	Core National Heritage Area coordinates with network of thematically related sites in region on coordinated heritage planning, events, projects, interpretation and marketing.
<b>Suggested Boundary</b>	None	Boundary would encompass city of Niagara Falls, village of Lewiston, village of Youngstown.	The boundary would encompass: city of Niagara Falls, village of Lewistown, and village of Youngstown; other thematically-related sites in Niagara and Erie Counties could be heritage area members.
<b>Management Entity Type</b>	No new management entity	Entity may follow federal commission, state commission, or nonprofit organization models.	Entity may follow federal commission, state commission, or nonprofit organization models.
<b>Special Features</b>	There are several existing heritage-related initiatives that would continue, including: New York State Parks, Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation, Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative, Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance, as well as efforts from individual communities and sites.	Involves heritage stakeholders in Niagara Falls area.	Possible representation from outside core area. Involves heritage stakeholders in Niagara Falls area and at other thematically related sites. Can develop broader heritage linkages to Buffalo/Erie County, Niagara County, and Canada.



## Other Heritage Initiatives Considered But Not Recommended

### *National Heritage Area with Cooperative Partnership between National Park Service and Niagara Area New York State Parks*

This study explored the alternative of, in addition to creating a Niagara National Heritage Area, establishing a cooperative partnership between the National Park Service and the Niagara-area New York State Parks. This partnership would have authorized additional NPS financial and technical assistance to state parks administered by New York's OPRHP along the Niagara River Corridor because of their outstanding national significance. These state parks would be critical anchors of a Niagara National Heritage Area. The partnership would assist special projects intended to preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources, improve the visitor experience, and relate to identified heritage themes. Since the New York Power Authority, under the current Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process, is providing significant funding over a period of 50 years to the State for rehabilitation of Niagara-area state parks in conjunction with the Niagara Greenway Commission, the additional contemplated federal financial assistance is no longer necessary.

### *State Heritage Commission*

Some states, including New York, designate and implement very successful state heritage areas. In the process of this study, no interest was demonstrated by public officials or the general public for designating a state heritage area at Niagara Falls. Since Niagara Falls serves as a major gateway to the United States, and its resources are internationally significant, national heritage area designation appears to be the more appropriate alternative for consideration. Niagara Falls, additionally, represents an exceptionally important component of our national story, not just that of the State of New York. Designation as a national heritage area would more fully reflect the national, indeed, international value

of the resources of Niagara Falls and the region's contributing role to our nation's history and heritage.

### *American Heritage River*

The American Heritage River program provides a salaried coordinator working under the auspices of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This coordinator can work with local partner organizations and help obtain outside financial resources for local projects. The American Heritage River program is based on an executive order, not a federal law, so it is subject to change from administration to administration.

During the initial call for applications, in 1998, an application was submitted for the 35-mile Niagara River to become an American Heritage River, but it did not receive designation. The original application to obtain American Heritage River status for the Niagara River proposed program goals of increasing opportunities for public recreation on the American banks of the Niagara River, the development of river-oriented tourism amenities, and improved appreciation of the region's rich heritage. These efforts were intended to improve the local quality of life as well as upgrade the visitor experience along the Niagara River. The American Heritage River application was submitted by the Greater Niagara Elected Officials Partnership with coordination done by the City of Niagara Falls, New York and the Niagara Falls Area Chamber of Commerce.

Communities included in the Partnership were the City of Niagara Falls, the Towns of Niagara, Wheatfield, Porter, and Lewiston, and the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown.

The American Heritage River program has successfully encouraged binational cooperation between the United States and Canada along the Detroit River, which is the only formally designated binational heritage river. The Detroit River, which flows between Lakes St. Clair and Erie and like the Niagara River is actually a strait, received American Heritage River designation in 1998. The program has funded a project coordinator to develop projects with partner organizations along the river. In 2001, the federal agency Canadian Heritage designated the Detroit River a Canadian Heritage River.

The two national programs have instigated public improvements and upgraded access on their respective sides of the Detroit River as well as providing binational coordination of the river projects. Projects have included an International Wildlife Refuge on an island in the river and a Tall Ships parade.

The American Heritage River program is making no new designations. As of now, no entities in Canada are contemplating nominating the Niagara River for Canadian Heritage River designation.

### *National Wild and Scenic River*

This approach would have the potential for designation of the Niagara River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers System of the NPS, established by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. This program was enacted by the federal government to preserve rivers with important wild, scenic, and recreational characteristics. This program is primarily designed to conserve the river itself, with a program area generally stretching up to 1 mile from the river's high-water mark. The program area may stretch further inland from the river to deal with any outstanding remarkable resources that may be directly affected by actions related to the river. There are two man-

agement approaches for Wild and Scenic Rivers: federally managed and partnership managed. The federally managed Wild and Scenic Rivers are mainly in the West, where a federal agency, such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, completely owns the riverbanks. The partnership rivers, which are the predominant model in the East, are most appropriate where there is a mix of private and public land ownership. They have a project coordinator, usually employed by the NPS, who works with a local advisory council. The advisory council includes representatives from abutting communities, the county, state, and federal governments, and tribal and major nonprofit organizations. The advisory council either has to create a new nonprofit organization or develop a cooperative agreement with an existing nonprofit organization to manage funds allocated to the program. The advisory council decides how the limited funds should be allocated.

Given the local needs identified in this study, the Wild and Scenic Rivers program does not seem to be appropriate for Niagara Falls and the Niagara River. The program is intended to allow a local



Geological Feature in the Niagara Gorge



Lewiston-Queenston Bridge

citizens group to provide input on federal actions directly affecting the river, including Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) permits, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects, and federal highway projects. The local needs identified in this study have more to do with heritage interpretation and preservation, tourism, local quality-of-life amenities, and economic development. In addition, the amount of funding for Wild and Scenic Rivers tends to cover only the salary of a coordinator, organizational overhead, and some small project grants. It is significantly less than the maximum of \$1 million allowed to national heritage areas. It should be noted that this does not constitute a finding of ineligibility for the Niagara River under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

### *Preserve America*

Preserve America is a White House Initiative started in 2003 in cooperation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Preserve America program

combines recognition of communities and individuals/organizations seeking to use historic preservation for community and economic development with funding programs offered through Save America's Treasures, the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce, and the Cooperative Conservation Initiative of the Department of the Interior. The Executive Order 13287: Preserve America directs federal agencies to build partnerships that promote historic preservation and economic development and that use heritage tourism to promote preservation.

The Preserve America Community designation provides recognition. Some targeted funding may be available for heritage tourism efforts under the Cooperative Conservation Initiative. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has not set aside specific funds for Preserve America heritage tourism projects, but will consider its objectives in making awards from its regular grant programs. Dedicated staff funding is not generally available. As in the Wild and Scenic Rivers program, funding available through the Preserve America program



is significantly less than the maximum of \$1 million allowed under national heritage areas. Communities in the region would still be eligible to apply for this program.

### *National Natural Landmark*

Niagara Falls has not been designated a National Natural Landmark (NNL). The only evidence that it was even considered for designation is the “Survey of Potential National Natural Landmarks of the Eastern Central Lowlands Physiographic Province of the United States,” Vols. I & II (no date). This report includes an appendix of sites rejected for possible NNL designation, including Niagara Falls. No reasons were given for rejecting the sites. The document describes the four levels of priority ratings, noting that “Not Recommended” implies that “these are sites which apparently do not qualify as potential national natural landmarks as other better examples were selected during the screening process in lieu of them.” Current NPS staff does not believe that this survey would preclude future consideration of Niagara Falls as an NNL.

### *World Heritage Site*

The United States and Canada already have shared World Heritage Sites/Biosphere Reserves at Waterton Lakes–Glacier International Peace Park, in Alberta and Montana, and at Kluane/Wrangell–St. Elias/Glacier Bay National Park/Tatshenshimi-Alsek, in Yukon, British Columbia, and Alaska.

World Heritage Sites recognize cultural landscapes with powerful religious, artistic, or cultural associations. The World Heritage List requires national governments to nominate areas and submit a management plan. Niagara Falls would require two separate national applications. World Heritage Site designations are most useful for places needing to implement a conservation plan. The nomination process can be complicated. The benefits include a heightened profile for the site, technical assistance, and international support for conserving it.

The Niagara Escarpment was designated a biosphere reserve by UNESCO 1990. The designation is only for the portion of the Escarpment in Canada, not New York State. The Niagara Escarpment

Commission is a regulatory body that oversees protection and new development at the Niagara Escarpment in Canada.

Parties on both sides of the Niagara River are focusing on the International Peace Park designation as their vehicle for binational heritage coordination and are not seriously pursuing World Heritage Site designation.

## **Potential for Additional Binational or International Initiatives**

Two major reasons have emerged for promoting binational coordination for a Niagara National Heritage Area: (1) the resources and heritage themes of Niagara Falls, the Niagara River, and the surrounding natural and cultural landscapes are common to both the United States and Canada; (2) there have been growing efforts in recent years to foster coordination of resource management, tourism, heritage development, and economic development between communities in both countries.

A 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Park Service and Parks Canada called for binational coordination in preserving and interpreting common sites of natural and heritage importance.

The MOU listed 12 sites and themes to be addressed by the National Park Service and Parks Canada, including the Underground Railroad. Although Niagara Falls was not on the list, the MOU stated that appropriate sites could be added later.

The National Park Service study team has not found support for establishing a formal binational Niagara National Heritage Area because of the governmental complexities related to dual management, but it has found support for less complex and non-binding alternatives for coordinating heritage development efforts between the two countries:

### *Binational Heritage Partnership*

This partnership would be informal and would not require special legislation by bodies in either the United States or Canada. The partnership would

meet on a regular basis to coordinate heritage activities, promotion, planning, and interpretation. This partnership could build upon the Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance (established 2000) efforts, including binational destination advertising and brochures, and the “Doors Open Niagara” Weekend, which held coordinated open houses at heritage sites on both sides of the border in the fall of 2002 and 2003. Key partners could include state and provincial agencies, federal agencies, tourism promotion organizations, municipal governments, and heritage sites and attractions managed by non-profit and for-profit entities. The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership, which is helping to spearhead this binational alliance, also has developed a collaborative heritage tourism program with Michigan, near Detroit, focusing on the themes of the Underground Railroad, maritime history, and the auto industry.

The binational partnership could function in an ad hoc manner. No government-sanctioned governance structure would be established, and no programmatic requirements would be imposed on organizations in either country. The partnership would be driven by the common interests of participating organizations. Funding would be obtained from various sources on a project-by-project basis. The flexibility of this arrangement would make it easier to ally with other organizations, including those from Buffalo and in Ontario.

### *International Peace Park*

An International Peace Park would be a permanent, more formal entity than a binational heritage partnership. Nevertheless, it would pursue similar goals as the binational partnership. The International Peace Park is a relatively new designation of the World Commission on Protected Areas, which operates under the United Nations. It has been used in trans-boundary areas with important cultural and natural resources, including World Heritage Sites and world biosphere reserves.

It is also intended to promote and celebrate peaceful interactions between peoples and nations. A steering committee of interested organizations and individuals in the Niagara Falls Region, spearheaded by Kerry Mitchell of the Canadian Consulate in Buffalo, has drawn up a Draft Statement of Principles for establishing an International Peace Park in the binational Niagara Region. The Peace Park concept draws on the “Rethinking the Niagara Frontier” report developed by the Urban Design Project of the University of Buffalo and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust of Toronto. This report identified the theme of “War, Peace, and Freedom” as one of the core heritage themes for the binational region.

The proposed International Peace Park would encompass Erie and Niagara Counties in New York and the Regional Municipality of Niagara in Ontario. It could provide an umbrella for a range of heritage and environmental conservation and economic and community development initiatives.

The Peace Park could establish an identity and shape a course of development for the binational region. The International Peace Park would serve as a convening and coordinating mechanism for conservation and development interests on both sides of the Niagara border. The Peace Park advocates regard their effort as long term, anticipating that they might achieve International Peace Park designation in time for the bi-centennial of the War of 1812, a central event in the development of the binational region.

Priority for Peace Parks is given initially to areas declared by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. Niagara Falls and the Niagara River Gorge is not a World Heritage Site, nor is it on the tentative list of United States or Canadian sites. Currently the only two natural properties in the eastern United States designated as World Heritage Sites are Everglades National Park and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The majority of sites in the eastern United States are cultural properties.



## *Part Five*



## *Environmental Assessment*





# Environmental Assessment



The American Falls

## Introduction

As directed by Public Law (PL) 107-256, the National Park Service is preparing a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. This feasibility study describes the affected environment and considers alternatives for formal federal designation of such an area as outlined in the public law. The study also assesses the possible impacts of these alternatives relative to cultural and natural resources and the human environment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Such resources, impacts, and aspects have been given preliminary evaluation through public involvement to sense the potential for significant effects. This analysis provides the basis for a report to satisfy the Congressional request and assist in its decision making on whether to authorize the establishment of a national heritage area at Niagara.

At this level of analysis, it appears that most of the common aspects of the human environment and the resources themselves would not be subject to potentially significant effects. Only socioeconomic

impacts require an increased level of analysis. Given the suitability and feasibility of authorizing this area primarily for recognition and conservation of its heritage values, the NPS feels that the processing of an environmental assessment (EA) would satisfactorily support the feasibility study and report of it to Congress, in keeping with NEPA.

The conceptual nature of the management alternatives in this study limits the scope of the impact evaluation of environmental aspects to a relatively broad analysis, in the absence of detailed project descriptions. If the Niagara National Heritage Area were to receive federal designation, a management plan would be developed in greater detail to describe actions to be implemented. Preparation of that management plan would be accompanied by an EA and/or environmental impact statement (EIS) for project work involving federal action where it is deemed to be major and of a significant impact to the human environment.

Since this feasibility study is intended to determine if the Niagara Falls region meets the criteria for designation as a National Heritage Area and does not

propose any specific federal action beyond a recommendation of the Secretary of the Interior to Congress regarding designation, no compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is needed at this time. If a Niagara National Heritage Area management plan is developed and it identifies specific actions that may have impacts on cultural resources, Section 106 compliance would be covered at that time.



Prospect Point Niagara Falls State Park

## Overview of Socioeconomic Impacts in a Niagara National Heritage Area

Heritage area designation could be helpful to achieve obtain community and economic improvements in the Niagara Falls area. The primary goals of a national heritage area in the Niagara Falls area would be to increase appreciation of the region's nature, culture, and history, to upgrade the visitor experience, and to enhance the quality of life.

With the establishment of a national heritage area, visitation would likely increase to some degree. Heritage initiatives could increase lengths of stay and spending levels, since heritage tourists tend to spend more, stay in hotels more often, visit more destinations, and stay longer than other types of tourists. Since the early 1990s, "heritage tourism" has been one of the fastest-growing segments of tourism in the country. It is especially popular with people taking daytrips and long-weekend vacations.

The experience of existing heritage areas can provide a sense of potential tourism impacts. The heritage area designation tends to make regions more attractive to visitors. It induces greater expenditures by tourists, partly because heritage areas spawn new businesses, such as inns, restaurants, and shops, which are appealing to consumers. Heritage, cultural, and environmental tourism represent growth niches in the tourism economy because they have traditionally been underserved. Although Niagara Falls is a completely different place from most national heritage areas because it is a long-established tourist destination, it assumed that a Niagara National Heritage Area could modestly increase visitation above current levels.

Although heritage areas usually realize economic benefits, there are pitfalls associated with projecting numerical impacts. In a feasibility study, it is difficult to quantify the potential impacts of the Niagara National Heritage Area without a description of future projects, which would be only determined later, after federal designation and development of a management plan.

Another problem related to estimating potential impacts is that it is much easier to estimate visitor increases at a specific museum or performing arts venue than across an entire heritage area. The National Park Service and the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, which have developed a methodology to analyze the economic impacts of heritage areas, have learned that economic impacts need to be measured at a small number of heritage sites and larger trends and impacts have to be extrapolated from them. This study has found it is complicated to quantify the economic impact of projects that affect the region's quality of life, such as walking and bike trails, roadway signage, interpretive exhibits and brochures, and preserved historic landmarks.

## Impacts of National Heritage Designation on Local Area

Taking into account the difficulties associated with making projections about future visitation to the Niagara National Heritage Area, this study presents scenarios of future tourism impacts, based upon conservative assumptions developed from reviewing the experience of other heritage areas and



Niagara Falls. It should be stated that the projections would be realized only after the national heritage area had a full program of events, heritage trails, and upgraded promotion and interpretation. If significant additional attractions were developed, the number of visitors could increase further. This report's bibliography cites the sources used in the economic impact analysis.

If Alternative 2 or 3 were adopted, it might be reasonable to estimate an increased visitation of 2%. According to this assumption, either of these alternatives would attract 140,000 new visitors, or 56,000 new visitor parties.

This study assumes a scenario that would have 34% (19,040 visitor parties) of visitors staying overnight in local lodging, 14% (7,840 visitor parties) staying overnight in other accommodations, 29% (16,240 visitor parties) being day-trippers from outside the area, and 23% (12,880 visitor parties) being local day-trippers.

According to the Money Generation Model Version 2, visitor parties at national park sites are projected to spend \$523 per trip if they are staying in a hotel/motel/inn and \$234 per trip if they are staying somewhere else, such as a private home. The local day-tripper would spend \$56 per party, and the non-local day-tripper visitor party would spend \$85.

The annual total tourism expenditure impact is estimated to be \$13,894,160. Assuming that 46 cents is spent on secondary sales for every dollar of direct tourist expenditures, the \$13,894,160 in direct



Young Re-enactors at Old Fort Niagara

tourism expenditures would produce an additional \$6,391,314 in indirect and induced expenditures.

Under Alternative 1: Continuation of Current Practices, no federal measures would be taken to attract new visitors to the area and generate the new economic impacts that would accompany them. Nevertheless, change would continue to occur in the region and various sites might attract new tourists, but there would be no concerted preservation and interpretation measures that would accompany a national heritage area.

Type of Visitor Expenditures	Visitor Parties	Per Trip Expenditure	Total
Overnight at lodging	19,040	\$523	<b>\$9,957,920</b>
Other overnight	7,840	\$234	<b>\$1,834,560</b>
Local day-tripper	12,880	\$56	<b>\$721,280</b>
Non-local day-tripper	16,240	\$85	<b>\$1,380,400</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,000</b>	—	<b>\$13,894,160</b>

### Visitation at Niagara Sites and Events

In order to provide some context for the estimates of 56,000 additional visitor parties under Alternatives 2 and 3, they should be compared with visitation at existing Niagara Falls attractions and events.

Table 4:  
Visitors at Niagara Falls, New York Attractions — 2001

Attraction	Visitors
Niagara Falls State Park Walk-ins/Tours	3,695,350
Fall/Rapids/Gorge Overlook	2,848,795
Niagara Reservation Tower (fee)	699,585
Cave of Winds (fee)	288,177
Viewmobile (fee)	113,785
Aquarium of Niagara (fee)	145,916
Old Fort Niagara	102,000
Niagara Gorge Discovery Center (fee)	35,720
Niagara Power Vista	140,000

### Binational “Doors Open” Weekend

The plausibility of the heritage area visitation projections can be demonstrated by comparing them with the attendance at the binational “Doors Open” weekend held in October since 2002 of open houses at heritage sites on both the American and Canadian sides of the Niagara Frontier. The “Doors Open” event demonstrates the kind of visitation that well-planned heritage events can produce.

#### Doors Open (2002)

U.S.	4,410 (26 sites)
Canada	6,469 (40 sites)
Total	10,779 (66 sites)

#### Doors Open (2003)

U.S.	12,284 (44 sites)
Canada	10,779 (44 sites)
Total	23,012 (88 sites)

## Impacts of Alternatives and Features

### Alternative 1: Continuation of Current Practices

#### Summary of Alternative

Under this alternative, there would be no formal designation of a national heritage area. Other forms of federal resource recognition or protection could be pursued by state and local entities (e.g., National Natural and Historic Landmark programs). Primary federal involvement in the area would be limited to existing competitive grant and technical assistance programs. The general lack of connection between thematically related sites in the region would continue

#### Impacts on Natural Resources

There would be no additional preservation measures for natural resources. Without such preservation efforts, an incremental decline could occur in the quality of natural resources.

#### Impacts on Cultural Resources

There would be no additional preservation measures for cultural resources. Without such preservation efforts, an incremental decline could occur in the quality of cultural resources, including such landmarks as the U.S. Custom House and the Adams Power Plant Transformer House in Niagara Falls which are in need of protective measures.

#### Impacts on Recreational Resources

No additional negative impacts to recreational resources would occur under this alternative. However, opportunities to increase public awareness of and access to recreational resources could be lost.

#### Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Experience

Existing cultural and natural sites in the Niagara Falls area would maintain the current visitor experience and levels of interpretation and other public programming. The overall visitor experience would remain largely unchanged.

### Socioeconomic Impacts

The Seneca Niagara Casino would increase visitation to Niagara Falls. This would increase visitor expenditures and sales revenues. Under Alternative 1, no federal national heritage area funds would be made available to the Niagara area to assist with the preservation and interpretation of cultural and natural resources.

### *Alternative 2: National Heritage Area — Niagara Falls and Lower Niagara River*

#### Summary of Alternative 2

Under this alternative, Congress would designate the Niagara National Heritage Area with a local management entity. The National Park Service would provide financial and technical assistance for planning, resource protection, and interpretation.

The local management entity identified in the federal legislation would be responsible for the development of a heritage management plan, establishing priorities and implementing the plan in cooperation with other parties. Through its membership and in partnership with others the local management entity would coordinate among federal, state, regional, and local programs to address the protection of cultural and natural resources and promote heritage tourism. The management entity would serve as a forum for communities, businesses, nonprofit institutions, property owners, and users of resources to work together to identify, protect, and develop heritage area resources appropriately. The management entity could function as an information clearinghouse, coordinating efforts that would increase public awareness and stewardship of local resources.

Designation as a national heritage area would recognize the importance of the Niagara region in American culture. A heritage area could help strengthen the sense of identity both within the region itself and for outside visitors. The regional approach would encourage the protection and management of complex natural, cultural, and historical resources and allow them to be treated more systematically and within a larger context.

The formal structure of a national heritage area could help ensure that participating governments and organizations, with their different needs, would have an institutionalized process for coordinating actions. The coordinated management functions could avoid duplication of services and fulfill the need for ongoing and effective communication. A national heritage area could help the Niagara Falls area realize such goals as improving the visitor experience, increasing visitation, preserving historic and natural resources, increasing appreciation of local history, culture, and the natural environment, and enhancing the community's quality of life.

#### Impacts on Natural Resources

Given the regional nature of a heritage area, it is likely that a more regional, systemic approach to natural resource management would be considered and would be beneficial.

Formal national heritage area designation could serve to increase the region's profile as a visitor destination, despite already being internationally recognized for Niagara Falls, and thereby increase visitation. The increase in visitation resulting from national heritage designation to the central resource—Niagara Falls—is likely to be moderate. Because of its extensive visitor infrastructure, Niagara Falls could easily absorb a moderate visitor increase over existing levels.

However, as a result of increased public awareness, other less well known locations such as the Niagara Gorge Trail, Devil's Hole, and other natural areas along the Niagara River may actually experience a relatively more substantial increase in visitor traffic. While increasing recognition and public awareness of these places could foster greater stewardship, there is also the possibility that higher visitation in these areas could raise issues about carrying capacity and resource impairment. Resource conditions should be monitored and appropriate adjustments to visitor management practice should be made to minimize resource degradation.



NPS technical assistance offered through the heritage area could provide support to state and local resource managers that would address a wide range of resource management issues including interpretive programming and materials, public access, carrying capacity, and resource protection.



View of the city of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

### Impacts on Cultural Resources

Similar to impacts described under natural resources, well-known resources such as the historic parklands surrounding the Falls are unlikely to see a significant surge in visitation. However, due to increasing public awareness, some lesser-known sites may experience a considerable leap in visitation. While increasing recognition and public awareness of these places could foster greater stewardship, there is also the possibility that higher visitation could raise issues of carrying capacity and resource impairment.

Taking a regional approach could enhance opportunities to interpret the region's history and bring attention to the full gamut of cultural resources in the region. The increases in visitor volume and length of stay would generate marginally greater impacts on cultural resources. Given the

existing levels of use at heritage sites, an estimated 140,000 additional visitor days would be spread across the heritage area. They would occur mainly between May and October.

New visitation (2% increase) would not likely cause additional congestion over traffic levels at existing individual sites. Cultural resources could be monitored for possible negative impacts and visitor management practice should be adjusted accordingly.

NPS technical assistance through the heritage area could contribute to cultural resource protection through support of inventory and documentation of historic resources, guidance on historic preservation planning, sustainable design, and preservation practices.

This alternative could stimulate conservation of scenic landscapes in the area and preservation of historic sites, structures and objects. The level of federal funding and technical assistance potentially available under this alternative could generate new preservation efforts. Funds would be available for the national heritage area to make grants to local heritage nonprofit organizations for preservation and interpretation of cultural resources.

### Impacts on Recreational Resources

Communities could benefit from a coordinated effort that includes National Park Service support to expand and link recreational facilities. The region's efforts to clean up and improve recreational opportunities along the Niagara River could be strengthened by recognizing the river as the spine of the heritage area.

### Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Experience

Under this alternative there would be enhanced opportunities for interpretation and education available to both visitors and area residents. Visitors would receive a broad overview of the region, indicating how specific cultural and natural sites fit into major regional themes. Developing residents' awareness and appreciation of the region's cultural and natural heritage would increase pride in the area and foster greater stewardship of heritage resources.

The federal funding and assistance available under this alternative would enhance the visitor experience by providing support and incentives for upgrading and expanding the signage system, wayside exhibits, museum exhibits, new research, and education programs.

### Socioeconomic Impacts

Under this alternative, the heritage area would receive federal designation, which reflects national recognition of the area's importance. The national heritage area designation carries with it the National Park Service "seal of approval" and receives publicity in NPS descriptive materials. National heritage areas are usually included in American Automobile Association and other national promotional materials and guidebooks. This recognition can increase the national and international marketability of the region and increase the management entity's ability to leverage funding. It is estimated that the direct annual economic impact of Alternative 2 could generate at least \$5,810,000 for the area.

Because Niagara Falls is already an established tourist destination, the expected effects would entail modest increases in visitor trips and longer vacation stays. Visitors would presumably stop at lesser-known heritage sites throughout the region. An increase in tourism expenditures would be accompanied by increased sales tax revenues, payroll and supply expenditures in the local economy, and local employment. These increases would mean added income for local businesses and could expand the market for overnight accommodations, restaurants, and other retail venues.

Under this proposed alternative, costs could range from \$150,000 to \$300,000 per year to support operations and from \$350,000 to \$700,000 per year to fund projects and grants. This breakdown is based on a projected range of total funds available per year of between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

## Alternative 3: National Heritage Area — Niagara Falls and Network of Thematically Related Sites

### Summary of Alternative 3

Under this alternative, Congress would designate the Niagara National Heritage Area with a local management entity. The National Park Service would provide financial and technical assistance for planning, resource protection, and interpretation.

The local management entity identified in the federal legislation would be responsible for the development of a heritage management plan, establishing priorities and implementing the plan in cooperation with other parties. Through its membership and in partnership with others the local management entity would coordinate among federal, state, regional, and local programs to address the protection of cultural and natural resources and promote heritage tourism. The management entity would serve as a forum for communities, businesses, nonprofit institutions, property owners, and users of resources to work together to identify, protect, and develop heritage area resources appropriately. The management entity could function as an information clearinghouse, coordinating efforts that would increase public awareness and stewardship of local resources.

Designation as a national heritage area would recognize the importance of the Niagara Region in American culture. A heritage area could help strengthen the sense of identity both within the region itself and for outside visitors. The regional approach would encourage the protection and management of complex natural, cultural, and historical resources and allow them to be treated more systematically and within a larger context.

The formal structure of a national heritage area could help ensure that participating governments and organizations, with their different needs, would have an institutionalized process for coordinating actions. The coordinated management functions could avoid duplication of services and fulfill the need for ongoing and effective communication. A national heritage area could help the Niagara Falls Region realize such goals as improving the visitor

experience, increasing visitation, preserving historic and natural resources, increasing appreciation of local history, culture, and the natural environment, and enhancing the community's quality of life.

This alternative would expand potential support for preservation and interpretation of natural and cultural resources from a narrow area around Niagara Falls to a broader range of heritage sites in Niagara and Erie Counties with thematic links to Niagara Falls.

### Impacts on Natural Resources

Given the regional nature of a heritage area, it is likely that a more regional, systemic approach to natural resource management would be considered and would be beneficial.

Formal national heritage area designation could serve to increase the region's profile as a visitor destination, despite already being internationally recognized for Niagara Falls, and thereby increase visitation. The increase in visitation resulting from national heritage designation to the central resource — Niagara Falls — is likely to be moderate. Because of its extensive visitor infrastructure, Niagara Falls could easily absorb a moderate visitor increase over existing levels.

However, as a result of increased public awareness, other less well known locations such as the Niagara Gorge Trail, Devil's Hole, and other natural areas along the Niagara River may actually experience a relatively more substantial increase in visitor traffic. While increasing recognition and public awareness of these places could foster greater stewardship, there is also the possibility that higher visitation in these areas could raise issues about carrying capacity and resource impairment. Resource conditions should be monitored and appropriate adjustments to visitor management practice should be made to minimize resource degradation.

NPS technical assistance offered through the heritage area could provide support to state and local resource managers that would address a wide range of resource management issues including interpretive programming and materials, public access, carrying capacity, and resource protection.

An additional impact of Alternative 3 is that it could extend the benefits of natural resource protection to thematically related sites in Niagara and Erie Counties.

### Impacts on Cultural Resources

Similar to impacts described under natural resources, well-known resources such as the historic parklands surrounding the Falls are unlikely to see a significant surge in visitation. However, due to increasing public awareness, some lesser-known sites may experience a considerable leap in visitation. While increasing recognition and public awareness of these places could foster greater stewardship, there is also the possibility that higher visitation could raise issues of carrying capacity and resource impairment.

*Taking a regional approach could enhance opportunities to interpret the region's history and bring attention to the full gamut of cultural resources in the region.*

Taking a regional approach could enhance opportunities to interpret the region's history and bring attention to the full gamut of cultural resources in the region. The increases in visitor volume and length of stay would generate marginally greater impacts on cultural resources. Given the existing levels of use at heritage sites, an estimated 140,000 additional visitor days would be spread across the heritage area. They would occur mainly between May and October. New visitation (2% increase) would not likely cause additional congestion over traffic levels at existing individual sites. Cultural resources could be monitored for possible negative impacts and visitor management practice should be adjusted accordingly.



NPS technical assistance through the heritage area could contribute to cultural resource protection through support of inventory and documentation of historic resources, guidance on historic preservation planning, sustainable design, and preservation practices.

This alternative could stimulate conservation of scenic landscapes in the area and preservation of historic structures and objects. The level of federal funding and technical assistance potentially available under this alternative could generate new preservation efforts. Funds would be available for the national heritage area to make grants to local heritage nonprofit organizations for preservation and interpretation of cultural resources.

An additional impact of Alternative 3 is that it could extend the benefits of cultural resource protection and interpretation to thematically related sites in Niagara and Erie Counties.

#### Impacts on Recreational Resources

Communities could benefit from a coordinated effort that includes National Park Service support to expand and link recreational facilities. The region's efforts to clean up and improve recreational opportunities along the Niagara River could be strengthened by recognizing the river as the spine of the heritage area.

#### Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Experience

Under this alternative there would be enhanced opportunities for interpretation and education available to both visitors and area residents. Visitors would receive a broad overview of the region, indicating how specific cultural and natural sites fit into major regional themes. Developing residents' awareness and appreciation of the region's cultural and natural heritage would increase pride in the area and foster greater stewardship of heritage resources.

The federal funding and assistance available under this alternative would enhance the visitor experience by providing support and incentives for upgrading and expanding the signage system, wayside exhibits, museum exhibits, new research, and education programs.

Alternative 3 extends programmatic relationships among sites beyond the geographic bounds of the heritage area. This could allow for greater opportunities to interpret important stories that transcend the narrow geography of the proposed heritage area such as the Underground Railroad and the War of 1812.

#### Socioeconomic Impacts

Under this alternative, the heritage area would receive federal designation, which reflects national recognition of the area's importance. The national heritage area designation carries with it the National Park Service "seal of approval" and receives publicity in NPS descriptive materials. National heritage areas are usually included in American Automobile Association and other national promotional materials and guidebooks. This recognition can increase the national and international marketability of the region and increase the management entity's ability to leverage funding. It is estimated that the direct annual economic impact of Alternative 3 could contribute at least \$5,810,000 to the area.

Because Niagara Falls is already an established tourist destination, the expected effects would entail modest increases in visitor trips and longer vacation stays. Visitors would presumably stop at lesser-known heritage sites throughout the region. An increase in tourism expenditures would be accompanied by increased sales tax revenues, payroll and supply expenditures in the local economy, and local employment. These increases would mean added income for local businesses and could expand the market for overnight accommodations, restaurants, and other retail venues.

Under this proposed alternative, costs could range from \$150,000 to \$300,000 per year to support operations and from \$350,000 to \$700,000 per year to fund projects and grants. This breakdown is based on a projected range of total funds available per year of between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

## Summary of Public Involvement

In May 2003, Senator Charles E. Schumer and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation held a press conference formally announcing the beginning of the national heritage area study process for Niagara Falls.

Shortly thereafter, the study team began the process of identifying and interviewing local stakeholders. To date, over 30 individuals have participated in in-depth interviews. These individuals have represented state agencies, local communities, historians, tourism interests, business interests, and the academic community along the Niagara River corridor. Although primary emphasis has been placed on meeting with stakeholders in New York State, the study team has also interviewed representatives of pertinent groups on the Canadian side as well.

Early on in the study process, the study team was made aware of a number of public processes taking place coincidentally with the NPS study. The Urban Design Project (SUNY/ Buffalo) under the direction of Robert Shibley was engaged in many of these efforts, had identified key audiences, and had assembled several useful databases. The study team has employed the Urban Design Project to help the National Park Service coordinate public involvement efforts related to the study process.

In November 2003, the study team conducted its first public meeting at the Niagara Falls Arts and Cultural Center. At the session, NPS planners described the study process and related their initial findings in terms of defining the study area, heritage tourism needs, and predominant themes. Over 100 people attended the session and commented on all



Niagara Falls at Night Time

aspects of the presentation. In February 2004, a newsletter summarizing the meeting was printed and distributed to a mailing list of 1,200 contacts and also appeared on the study's newly launched website, [www.niagaraheritagestudy.org](http://www.niagaraheritagestudy.org).

The study team continued to consult with state and local stakeholders informally as they entered the alternatives development phase of the project. In June 2004 a second newsletter describing four possible heritage area scenarios for the region was released. Again the newsletter was distributed to the full mailing list and appeared on the project website. Also in June, a public meeting and stakeholder work session were held to share and discuss the proposed alternatives. Approximately 40 people attended the public meeting and stakeholders representing local municipalities, Niagara County, New York State agencies, and the Congressional

delegation were consulted during the smaller work session. An additional information session was held for about 25 key stakeholders in November 2004. The information session included presentations by the National Park Service's National Heritage Area coordinator and executive directors of national heritage areas in the Blackstone River Valley (MA/RI) and Rivers of Steel (PA), followed by a question-and-answer period.

In fall 2005, a full study report with an executive summary will be released for public review and comment. Copies of the executive summary will be distributed to the entire mailing list. Both documents will be available in local libraries as well as in a digital format on the study's website. A final round of public and stakeholder meetings will be held shortly after the release of the study report.





*The organizations and institutions that will receive a copy of the draft study report include but are not limited to the following:*

Aquarium of Niagara  
 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
 Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society  
 Buffalo Audubon Society  
 Buffalo Common Council  
 Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau  
 Buffalo Niagara Partnership  
 Buffalo Olmsted Park Conservancy  
 Buffalo Ornithological Society  
 Castellani Art Museum  
 City of Buffalo Mayor's Office  
 City of Niagara Falls  
 City of Niagara Falls Department of Community Development  
 City of North Tonawanda  
 City of Tonawanda  
 Empire State Development Corporation  
 Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor  
 Erie County Executive's Office  
 Erie County Department of Environment & Planning  
 Erie County Industrial Development Agency  
 Erie County Legislature  
 Foit-Albert Associates  
 Friends of the Buffalo Niagara Rivers  
 Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council  
 Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum  
 Historic Riviera Theater  
 Institute for Local Governance & Regional Growth  
 John R. Oishei Foundation  
 Kenan Center  
 Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier  
 Lewiston Economic & Community Development Office  
 Maid of the Mist Corporation  
 Main Street Business and Professional Association, Niagara Falls, New York  
 New York Power Authority  
 New York State Assembly (members)  
 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

New York State Department of Transportation  
 New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
 New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
 New York State Office of the Governor  
 New York State Senate (members)  
 Niagara County Historical Society  
 Niagara County Industrial Development Agency  
 Niagara County Legislature  
 Niagara County Planning Department  
 Niagara Falls City Council  
 Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority  
 Niagara Gazette  
 Niagara Heritage Partnership  
 Niagara Historical Society Museum (Canada)  
 Niagara Parks Commission (Ontario, Canada)  
 Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation  
 Niagara University  
 Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce  
 Old Fort Niagara Association Inc.  
 Pine Avenue Business Association, Inc., Niagara Falls, New York  
 Seneca Nation  
 The Buffalo News  
 Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site  
 Tonawanda Band of Seneca  
 Town of Lewiston  
 Town of Niagara Falls  
 Town of Porter  
 Town of Wheatfield  
 Tuscarora Nation  
 University of Buffalo, School of Architecture & Planning, Urban Design Project  
 United States Army Corps of Engineers  
 United States Fish & Wildlife Service  
 United States House of Representatives (Brian Higgins, Thomas M. Reynolds, Louise M. Slaughter)  
 United States Senate (Charles E. Schumer, Hillary Rodham Clinton)  
 USA Niagara Development Corp  
 Village of Lewiston  
 Village of Youngstown  
 Western Erie Canal Heritage Area

## *Part Six*



## *Appendices*





# Appendices

## Appendix A: Study Legislation

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Study Act.  
Public Law 107-256  
107th Congress

### An Act

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area in the State of New York, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Study Act”.

### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

- (1) Secretary.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.
- (2) Study area.—The term “study area” means lands in Niagara County, New York, along and in the vicinity of the Niagara River.

### SEC. 3. NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA STUDY.

- (a) In General.—The Secretary shall conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing a heritage area in the State of New York to be known as the “Niagara Falls National Heritage Area”.
- (b) Analyses and Documentation. The study shall include analysis and documentation of whether the study area—

(1) contains an assemblage of natural, historical, scenic, and cultural resources that represent distinctive aspects of the heritage of the United States that—

(A) are worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continued use; and

(B) would best be managed—

(i) through partnerships among public and private entities; and

(ii) by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities;

(2) reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the story of the United States;

(3) provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historical, scenic, or cultural features;

(4) provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;

(5) contains resources important to the identified theme of the study area that retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;

(6) includes residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and State and local governments that—

(A) are involved in planning a national heritage area;

(B) have developed a conceptual financial plan for a national heritage area that outlines the roles for all participants, including the Federal Government; and

(C) have demonstrated support for the concept of a national heritage area;

(7) has a potential management entity to work in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and State and local governments to develop a national heritage area consistent with continued State and local economic activity; an

- (8) has a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public.
- (c) Consultation.—In conducting the study, the Secretary shall consult with—
  - (1) State and local agencies; and
  - (2) interested organizations within the study area.
- (d) Report. Not later than 3 fiscal years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report that describes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study under subsection (a).

#### SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated \$300,000 to carry out this Act.

Approved October 29, 2002.

#### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1227:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 107-668 (Comm. on Resources).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 107-179 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 148 (2002): Aug. 1, considered and passed Senate.

Oct. 16, considered and passed House.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 38 (2002): Oct. 30, Presidential statement.

## Appendix B: New York State Parks — Primary Study Area

There are 14 state parks managed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) in what is defined as the Niagara Region which embraces both Erie and Niagara counties. Eight of these state parks and historic sites are located within the primary study area, four of which incorporate segments of the Niagara Gorge Trail. The state parks within the primary study area are described below:

**Niagara Falls State Park** (also known as the Niagara Reservation) is a National Historic Landmark and is located in the City of Niagara Falls. Embracing the American side of the world-renowned Niagara Falls, the Niagara Reservation was established in 1885 and is America's oldest state park. The park is composed of Prospect Point on the mainland, the American Rapids, Goat Island, and smaller islands. Frederick Law Olmsted was active in the effort to protect the Falls for future generations and was responsible for the state park's initial design. The Olmsted Brothers firm continued its involvement with the Niagara Reservation well into the 1920s.

Several state-run attractions are offered within the park including tours of the Cave of the Winds, the Niagara Gorge Discovery Center, the Viewmobile trolley, and the Orin Lehman Visitor Center. The state also maintains significant formal gardens at Prospect Point that are designed to evoke a map of the Great Lakes. Other attractions at Niagara Falls State Park are offered by concessionaires such as the Maid of the Mist boat ride, the Observation Tower, and the Top of the Falls restaurant complex. In addition to these high-profile/high-traffic areas, the state park offers a number of natural areas, including Goat Island and the Three Sister Islands, which offer walking trails and scenic views to the Falls and the Niagara River. Additional activities offered at the state park include biking, fishing, hiking,

picnicking, recreational programs, and cross-country skiing.

**Whirlpool State Park** is also located in the City of Niagara Falls upstream from Devil's Hole and encompasses about 109 acres (44 hectares). The park offers two observation levels for viewing the mile-long stretch of rapids. The river level, accessible by walking the 300 feet (91 meters) of trails and steps that descend into the Gorge, offers several nature trails along the gorge to Devil's Hole State Park as well as access for fishing. The upper level offers views of the mile-long rapids along with a children's playground and picnic area. Biking, fishing, hiking, picnicking, nature trail, children's playground, picnic pavilions, and cross-country skiing are all offered at this park. This park is open without charge May through November, dawn to dusk. Whirlpool State Park was established in 1933.

**DeVeaux Woods State Park**, with 51 acres (21 hectares), includes ball fields, open space, and 5 acres of old-growth forest. Deeded by Samuel DeVeaux in 1853, the property was home to the DeVeaux College for Orphans and Destitute Children, later became the DeVeaux School, and was purchased in 1978 by Niagara University. The property was purchased by the state and designated a state park in 2000. A number of buildings are located within the parks—two dating back to the 19th century; a third, Schoellkopf Hall, was built circa 1926. The remaining buildings in the complex were constructed in the 1960s. New York State expects to convert these buildings for public use. The DeVeaux property is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

**Devil's Hole State Park** encompasses 42 acres (17 hectares) at the northern edge of the City of Niagara Falls, offering outstanding views to the Niagara Gorge and overlooking the lower Whirlpool rapids. Devil's Hole offers trails along both the rim and the Gorge and is part of the Niagara Gorge Trail System. A series of stone

steps provides visitors with access from the rim into the Gorge. Hiking, picnicking, and fishing are all popular activities at this location. No admission is charged. Devil's Hole State Park was established in 1927.

**Niagara Gorge Trail System** has about 14.5 miles (23.3 kilometers) of trails. The trail system consists of five different trails extending from Niagara Falls to Lewiston. Many segments of the trail are remnants of the Great Gorge Route — an electric trolley line that ran in the Gorge between 1895 and 1935. Some segments of the trail are linked, but others are not. There are segments of the trail system that follow the rim as well as descend into the Gorge. The trail system offers hiking opportunities for all skill levels. Trail brochures are available that describe each trail, the recommended skill level, and other information for prospective visitors. All of the trails are accessible from state parks including the Niagara Falls, Whirlpool, Devil's Hole, and ArtPark.

**Reservoir State Park** is a day-use park located in the Town of Niagara. Reservoir State Park is the most heavily used park in Niagara County. The park has four tennis courts, eight baseball diamonds, a basketball court, and picnic facilities and also hosts the largest softball complex in Niagara County. Other users include soccer players, runners, kite fliers, model airplane clubs, and golfers. Winter visitors come to sled and cross-country ski. Part of the park is an overlook for the Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant Reservoir. The Reservoir is a popular fishing area.

**Earl W. Brydges Art Park State Park** encompasses 200 acres (81 hectares) overlooking the Niagara River in Lewiston. The central feature at ArtPark is the Performing Arts and Cultural Center, having an indoor seating capacity of 2,300 with accommodations for 2,300 more outdoors. The park also features artist studios and a smaller outdoor amphitheater. Arts programming at ArtPark is managed by the



nonprofit ArtPark & Company. ArtPark offers access to the Niagara Gorge Trail. ArtPark also encompasses some major archeological resources, including the Lower Landing Archeological District, which is a contributing resource within the Colonial Niagara National Historic Landmark District; and Lewiston Mound, which has been linked to the indigenous Hopewellian culture associated with the Hopewell Mounds in Ohio. Both the Lower Landing Archeological District and Lewiston Mound are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Park admission is free, but admission is charged to performances.

**Joseph Davis State Park** is a day-use park encompassing about 388 acres (157 hectares) located along the Niagara River Corridor midway between Niagara Falls and Lake Ontario in Lewiston. The terrain is generally flat, with fields, woodlands, and ponds. Anglers can fish for large-mouth bass in the pond near the park entrance or for a variety of freshwater fish from the fishing dock on the Lower Niagara River. The park also has a nature trail, as well as cross-country skiing/snowshoeing and snowmobiling trails and a 27-hole frisbee disc golf course. Small-game hunting is permitted only during pheasant season. Waterfowl hunting is allowed only with a special permit during season. The park is open year-round and there is no admission fee, although a parking fee is collected seasonally. The park is entering into a partnership with New York Audubon to develop a bird-of-prey center within the park.

**Fort Niagara State Park** encompasses approximately 500 acres (202.3 hectares) and is a day-use park located at the mouth of the Niagara River on Lake Ontario in Youngstown. The park features two boat launches providing access to the Lower Niagara River and Lake Ontario. Other amenities and activities include: 10,600 feet (3,231 meters) of shoreline, wooded trails, nature programming,

picnic tables, pool, tennis courts, and soccer fields. The state park has recently been one of three local venues for a major regional soccer championship tournament. Admission is charged per vehicle, and there is an additional charge for use of the boat launches.

**Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site** is located within Fort Niagara State Park. OldFort Niagara is a NYS Historic Site operated by the Old Fort Niagara Association, a nonprofit organization, in cooperation with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Old Fort Niagara is a National Historic Landmark and is included within the Colonial Niagara National Historic Landmark District.

The history of Old Fort Niagara spans more than 300 years. The fort was occupied by three nations: France, Great Britain, and the United States. Old Fort Niagara, located at the mouth of the Niagara River, controlled access to the Great Lakes and the westward route to the heartland of the continent. Visitors to the fort today will see the oldest buildings in the Great Lakes region, living-history programs, exhibits, and special events.

**Fort Niagara Light** is also located within Fort Niagara State Park; the stone lighthouse was erected in 1871–1872. This lighthouse played an important role in the development of transportation on Lake Ontario. The light is owned by the U.S. Coast Guard and managed under an agreement with the Old Fort Niagara Association. The Fort Niagara Light is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Appendix C: Niagara Parks Commission — Primary Resources

This appendix provides a description of the primary resources and attractions managed by the Niagara Parks Commission in Ontario, Canada.

**Old Fort Erie** is a reconstructed British fort from the War of 1812. It is located at the mouth of the Niagara River and overlooks the city of Buffalo. The fort was restored in 1939 as a result of the combined efforts of federal and provincial authorities.

**Chippawa Battlefield** encompasses approximately 121 hectares (300 acres) of the last remaining pristine battlefield from the War of 1812. The Battle of Chippawa, fought on July 5, 1814, was the opening engagement of the Niagara Campaign of 1814, the longest and bloodiest military operation of the War of 1812. The Niagara Parks Commission has created a self-guided walking tour for visitors. A memorial cairn was developed on the site dedicated to the memory of the regiments and First Nation warriors who fought in the battle and to commemorate the peace that has prevailed between Canada and the U.S. since that time.

**Dufferin Islands Nature Area** consists of four interlaced islands (approximately 4 hectares/10 acres) with walking paths connected together by bridges. During the summer, a swimming area is maintained. The water intake gates for the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Plant are located along the Niagara River, south of the mouth of Dufferin Islands. The Dufferin Islands are open year round at no charge.

**Queen Victoria Park** was created in 1887 as Canada's first provincial park. The park encompasses approximately 81 hectares (200 acres) of landscaped grounds including features such as large beds of annuals and perennials, a major rock garden, a hybrid tea rose garden, and mani-

cured lawns. The park's most dramatic feature is its view of both the American and Horseshoe Falls. Landscape illumination is an integral part of the park environment, including the nightly illumination of the Falls

**Oakes Garden Theater** was constructed in 1937 within Queen Victoria Park. The amphitheater is fan-shaped with the stage placed so that the Falls forms a backdrop. The amphitheater is situated within a garden setting characterized by sloping terraces, rock gardens, lily ponds, and a promenade.

**White Water Walk** is a boardwalk approximately 305 meters (1,000 feet) long immediately adjacent to the Niagara Gorge rapids. Visitors descend into the Gorge by elevator to experience this attraction. The White Water Walk is open year-round.

**Spanish Aero Car** at Whirlpool was designed by a Spanish engineer, Leonardo Torres Quevedo, and has been in operation since 1916. The cable car is suspended from six sturdy cables and offers a view of the Niagara Whirlpool. Admission is charged.

**Niagara Glen** is a natural area encompassing features of geologic interest and about 4 kilometers (2 \_ miles) of nature trails bringing visitors down the Niagara Gorge to the river's shore. Niagara Parks has developed a picnic area as well as a specialty nature boutique.

**The Floral Clock** at Queenston was originally built by Ontario Hydro in 1950. Inspired by a similar clock in Edinburgh, Scotland, the Canadian timepiece is three times the size of its Scottish counterpart. Constructed by Hydro's Niagara Region employees, Ontario Power Generation still provides the mechanical maintenance of the timepiece. Since 1976, the Niagara Parks Commission has been responsible for designing and planting the face of the clock.

**Queenston Heights Park** is a recreational and historic resource located on the north Parkway in

Queenston across from Lewiston, New York. It was the site of an important British victory during the War of 1812. Major General Sir Isaac Brock, who was killed leading his troops during the battle, is commemorated at Brock's Monument. This towering monument stands 50 meters (190 feet) high and was erected in 1856. During summer months, visitors have access to a small observatory under the statue of Brock, where, on a clear day, the skyline of Toronto is visible across Lake Ontario. The monument is operated by Parks Canada and the surrounding parklands and amenities are owned and maintained by The Niagara Parks Commission. Amenities at Queenston Heights include picnic areas, covered picnic pavilions, walking trails, tennis courts, a children's wading pool and a fine dining restaurant. Queenston Heights Park is also the start of the Bruce Trail, a 740-kilometer (460-mile) hiking trail running the length of the Niagara Escarpment, from Queenston Heights Park to Tobermory on the peninsula between Georgian Bay and Lake Huron.

**The Laura Secord Homestead** in Queenston was reconstructed in 1971 by Laura Secord Inc. Open for tours during the summer months, the Homestead features furnishings of the 1812 period. In 1998, Laura Secord Inc. donated the Laura Secord Homestead to The Niagara Parks Commission to be held in the public trust. Laura Secord is designated "a person of national historic significance" in Canada. During the War of 1812, Laura Secord undertook a perilous 32-kilometer (20-mile) journey on foot to warn the British of an imminent American attack, putting herself at risk in order to help preserve British rule in Canada.

**The McFarland House** is located just south of Niagara-on-the-Lake and was the home of John McFarland and his descendants for 150 years. The house was built circa 1800. During the War of 1812, the McFarland House was used as a hospital by both the British and the Americans, and a British gun emplacement located on the property protected the Niagara River. Restored by the Niagara Parks Commission in 1959, the house is now a historically furnished museum. Gardens at the house are maintained by the Garden Club of Niagara.

**The Mackenzie Heritage Printery Museum**, located Queenston, was the home of William Lyon Mackenzie, a 19th-century publisher and agitator for political reform. The Mackenzie Heritage Printery Museum features a hands-on environment with a working linotype, eight operating historic presses, and the restored lithography studio of Canadian artist Frederick Hagan.

**Fort George** is a reconstructed fort located on the Niagara River at Lake Ontario. The fort is designated as a National Historic Site of Canada and is owned and operated by Parks Canada. In 1796, the British complied with the terms of the 1783 Treaty of Paris, which had granted Fort Niagara to the United States. To protect their interests in Upper Canada, the British set to work immediately to construct a fort across the Niagara River. Control of the river supply route was essential to the survival of the forts west of the Niagara Region. During the War of 1812, Fort George served as the headquarters for the Centre Division of the British Army. These forces included British regulars, local militia, aboriginal warriors, and Runchey's corps of freed slaves. Major General Sir Isaac Brock, considered the savior of Upper Canada, served here until his death at the Battle of Queenston Heights in October 1813. During the 1930s, the original plans of the Royal Engineers guided the reconstruction of Fort George as a National Historic Site.



**Niagara River Recreational Trail** is a 56-kilometer (35-mile) greenway that parallels the Niagara River on the Canadian Side. It extends from Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake, through Chippawa, to Historic Fort Erie. The Niagara Parks Commission began developing the trail in 1986 and completed the final section in 1994, and continues to be responsible for its management. It is a dedicated multi-use trail system accommodating walking, cycling, jogging, in-line skating, and hiking. The Niagara River Recreational Trail links to the Bruce Trail, the Upper Canada Heritage Trail, and the Black Creek and Beaver Creek Trail.

## Appendix D: National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official inventory of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. It includes all historic areas of the National Park System, National Historic Landmarks, and properties nominated by State, Federal agencies, and Indian tribes. Below is a listing of sites in the Niagara Falls Region that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Primary Study Area (within Niagara County)

#### **City of Niagara Falls**

*Adams Power Plant Transformer House (NHL)*  
*DeVeaux School Historic District*  
*Holley-Rankine House*  
*James G. Marshall House (DOE)*  
*Niagara Falls Armory*  
*Niagara Falls Arts & Cultural Center (former High School)*  
*Niagara Falls City Hall*  
*Niagara Falls Public Library (former)*  
*Niagara Reservation (NHL)*  
*Niagara School No. 2 Museum*  
*St. Mary's Nurses Residence (DOE)*  
*U.S. Custom House*  
*U.S. Post Office*

*Whitney Mansion*  
*Johann Williams Farm*

#### **City of North Tonawanda**

*Carnegie Art Center*  
*Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum*  
*Riviera Theater and Performing Arts Center*  
*U.S. Post Office*

#### **Lewiston**

*Frontier House*  
*Lewiston Mound*  
*Lower Landing Archeological District (NHL)*

#### **Youngstown**

*Fort Niagara Lighthouse*  
*Old Fort Niagara (NHL)*  
*St. John's Episcopal Church*

### U.S. Context Area (within Erie County)

#### **City of Buffalo**

*Albright-Knox Art Gallery*  
*Allentown Historic District*  
*Berkeley Apartments*  
*Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church*  
*Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society Museum (NHL)*  
*Buffalo and Erie County Naval Military Park*  
*Buffalo City Hall Building*  
*Buffalo Gas Light Company Works*  
*Buffalo Main Light, Buffalo River*  
*Buffalo North Breakwater South End Light*  
*Buffalo State Hospital (NHL)*  
*Colonel William Kelly House*  
*Connecticut Street Armory*  
*Darwin Martin House and Complex (NHL)*  
*Delaware Avenue Historic District*  
*Durham Memorial AME Zion Church*  
*Edward M. Cotter Fireboat (NHL)*  
*Edwin M. and Emily S. Johnston House*  
*Emerson Place Row*  
*Engine House No. 28*  
*Forest Lawn Cemetery*

*NHL denotes a national historic landmark*

*DOE denotes Determined Eligible for National Register of Historic Places.*

*Fosdick Masten Park High School*  
*James and Fanny How House*  
*Kleinhans Music Hall (NHL)*  
*Lafayette High School*  
*Laurel and Michigan Avenue Row*  
*M. Wile and Company Factory Building*  
*Macedonia Baptist Church (Michigan Street Baptist Church)*  
*NASH Harbor Tug*  
*New York Central Terminal*  
*Old County Hall*  
*Parkside East Historic District*  
*Parkside West Historic District*  
*Pierce Arrow Factory Complex*  
*Prudential Building (Guaranty Building) (NHL)*  
*Shea's Center for the Performing Arts*  
*South Buffalo North Side Lighthouse*  
*St. Andrews Evangelical Lutheran Church Complex*  
*St. Paul's Cathedral (NHL)*  
*Stone Farmhouse*  
*Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site*  
*Trico Plant No. 1*  
*U.S. Post Office, Buffalo*  
*USS The Sullivans (NHL)*  
*West Village Historic District*  
*William Dorsheimer House*  
*Woodlawn Avenue Row*  
*Young Men's Christian Association Central Building*

#### City of Tonawanda

*U.S. Post Office, Tonawanda*  
*Kibler High School*  
*Tonawanda (25th Separate Company) Armory*

#### Town of Grand Island

*Spaulding Sidway Boathouse*

## Appendix E: Historic Sites of Canada (Ontario)

Note: Canada commemorates persons and events for their national historic significance as well as places. Over 1500 places, persons and events have been commemorated by the Government of Canada. These commemorations make up what is known as the system of National Historic Sites of Canada. Parks Canada monitors the system through a system plan. Parks Canada supports the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), the body which advises the Minister of Canadian Heritage on national historic significance. The agency is also responsible for protecting and operating over 140 national historic sites across the country for visitors to understand, appreciate, and enjoy.

### Niagara-on-the-Lake

*Battle of Fort George National Historic Site*  
*Butlers Barracks National Historic Site*  
*Butlers Rangers National Historic Event*  
*First Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada National Historic Event*  
*Fort George National Historic Site*  
*Fort Mississauga National Historic Site*  
*John Graves Simcoe National Historic Person*  
*Mississauga Point Lighthouse National Historic Site*  
*Niagara Apothecary National Historic Site*  
*Niagara District Courthouse National Historic Site*  
*Niagara Land Purchases National Historic Event*  
*Upper Canadian Act of 1793 Against Slavery National Historic Event*  
*William Kirby National Historic Person*

### Niagara Falls

*Battle of Chippewa National Historic Site*  
*Battle of Lundy Lane National Historic Site*  
*Electrical Development Company National Historic Site*  
*Fort Drummond National Historic Site*  
*Laura Secord National Historic Person*  
*Navy Island National Historic Site*

*Queenston Heights National Historic Site*  
*Queenston Chippewa Hydro Electric Plant (Beck 1) National Historic Site*

*R. Daniel Dett British Methodist Episcopal Church National Historic Site*

*Vrooman's Battery National Historic Site*

#### Fort Erie

*Capture of Ohio & Somers National Historic Event*

*Fort Erie National Historic Site*

*Frenchman's Creek National Historic Site*

## Appendix F: Underground Railroad Sites

#### Niagara County

*Murphy's Orchard, Burt, NY<sup>6</sup>*

*First Presbyterian Church, Lewiston, NY*

*Lockport YWCA, Lockport, NY*

*St. John's AME Church, Niagara Falls, NY*

*Suspension Bridge Site, Niagara Falls, NY*

*Martha Root House, Pekin, NY*

#### Erie County

*Michigan Street Baptist Church, Buffalo, NY*

*Broderick Park, Buffalo, NY*

*Niagara Region, Ontario, Canada*

*"The Crossing" Ferry Crossing Site, Fort Erie*

*Bertie Hall, Fort Erie*

*Little Africa/Millers Bay, Fort Erie*

*Nathaniel Dett Memorial Chapel,  
 Niagara Falls*

*Our Lady of Peace Church, Niagara Falls*

*Negro Burial Ground, Niagara-on-the-Lake*

*Parliament Oak School, Niagara-on-the-Lake*

*Queenston Library, Queenston*

## Appendix G: Theme/Resource Matrix

The following matrix on pages 98 and 99, identifies resources located within the context area for the study (see maps on pages 37, 40, 41, and 43). This matrix is meant to describe the range of resources available to interpret the proposed heritage themes. However, it is only a sampling and should not be considered definitive. As historic inventories in the region continue, more related resources are likely to be identified. It should also be noted that some of these resources are not currently interpreted but have the potential to contribute to conveying the stories represented by these themes. A selection of these resources is highlighted on theme-based maps included in this report.



## Theme Resource Matrix (as cited on page 97)

Themes	Sites & Attractions	
<b>Natural Phenomenon</b>	Niagara Falls, Rapids and Gorge ArtPark State Park (NY) Devil's Hole State Park (NY) National Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA) Niagara Falls Gorge Trail (NY) Niagara Falls State Park, including Goat Island and Cave of the Winds (NY) NYPA Power Vista (NY) Whirlpool State Park (NY) Dufferin Islands Nature Area (ON)	Niagara Glen (ON) Queen Victoria Park (ON) Queenston Heights Park (ON) Interpretive Facilities & Collections
		<b>Interpretive Facilities &amp; Collections</b> Buffalo Museum of Science (NY) Niagara Falls Discovery Center (NY) Orin Lehman Visitor Center at Niagara Falls State Park (NY)
<b>Recreation and Tourism</b>	Cave of the Winds (NY) Devil's Hole State Park (NY) Hotel Niagara (currently TravelLodge) (NY) Maid of the Mist (NY/ON) Niagara Discovery Center (Schoellkopf Museum) (NY) Niagara Falls State Park (NY) Niagara Falls Wax Museum (NY) Niagara Power Vista Visitor Center (NY) Red Coach Inn (Niagara Falls, NY) Whirlpool State Park (NY) Floral Clock (ON) Oakes Garden Theater (ON) Queen Victoria Park/ Table Rock Complex (ON) Queenston Heights Park (ON) Sir Adam Beck Generating Station	No. 2—Public Tours (ON) Spanish Aerocar (ON) White Water Walk (ON)
		<b>Interpretive Facilities &amp; Collections</b> Albright-Knox Gallery & Museum, Buffalo (NY) Castellani Art Museum, Lewiston (NY) Dare Devil Museum, Niagara Falls (NY) Niagara University, Niagara Falls (NY) – Digital Collections – 19th-century Niagara Guidebooks Niagara University – Rare Books Collection Niagara Falls Local History Collection, Niagara Falls Public Library (NY) Niagara Falls Public Library—Art Collection (NY) Historic Niagara Digital Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library (ON)
<b>Power and Industry</b>	Adams Generating Station (out of service) (NY) Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society (Pan-American Exposition Hall), Buffalo (NY) Holley-Rankine House, Niagara Falls (NY) James G. Marshall House, Niagara Falls (NY) Niagara Aerospace Museum (NY) Power Distribution Lines (NY/ON) Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant (NY) Robert Moses Intakes (NY) Schoellkopf Plant (ruins) (NY) Underground and subgrade infrastructure including hydraulic canal and pressure tunnel serving the former Schoellkopf Power Plant	Beck Intakes (ON) Canadian Niagara Power Plant (ON) International Control Structure (ON) Ontario Power Generating Station (out of service) (ON) Sir Adam Beck Generating Station No. 1 (ON) Sir Adam Beck Generating Station No. 2 – Public Tours (ON) Toronto Power Plant (out of service) (ON)
		<b>Interpretive Facilities &amp; Collections</b> Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society NYPA Power Vista Visitor Center (NY)

## Theme Resource Matrix (as cited on page 97)

Themes	Sites & Attractions
<b>Borderland/ Border Crossing</b>  <b>UR</b> = Sites associated with the Underground Railroad <sup>7</sup>	<div> Broderick Park (UR)  Crossing &amp; Ferry, Buffalo (NY)(UR)  Colonial Niagara NHL—Archeological District (NY)  Custom House, Niagara Falls (NY)  Erie Canal  Ferry Landing Sites  First Presbyterian Church, Lewiston (NY)(UGRR)  International Railway Bridge (NY/ON)  Jesse Nash Home, Buffalo (NY)(UR)  Lewiston Landing (NY)  Lockport YWCA (NY) (UR)  Martha Root House, Pekin (NY )(UR)  Mary Talbert Home, Buffalo (NY) (UR)  Michigan Street Baptist Church (NY) (UR)  Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site (NY)  Peace Bridge (NY/ON)  Portage Avenue, Niagara Falls (NY)  Queenston-Lewiston Bridge (NY/ON)  Rainbow Bridge (NY/ON)  St. John's AME Church, Niagara Falls (NY) (UR)  Seaway Trail (NY) (UR)  Suspension Bridge Site, Niagara Falls (NY) (UR)  Village of Lewiston (NY)  Village of Youngstown (NY)  Whirlpool Bridge (NY/ON)  Battle of Chippewa Site, Niagara Falls (ON)  Battle of Lundy Lane Site, Niagara Falls (ON)  Bertie Hall, Fort Erie (ON) (UR)  BME Church/R. Nathaniel Dett Chapel, Niagara Falls (ON)(UR) </div> <div> Butlers Barracks National Historic Site (ON)  Fort Erie (ON)  Fort George National Historic Site (ON)  Fort Mississauga (ON)  General Brock Monument, Queenston (ON)  Laura Secord Home, Queenston (ON)  Little Africa/Millers Bay, Fort Erie (ON) (UR)  MacKenzie Printery, Queenston (ON)  McFarland House, Niagara on the Lake (ON)  Negro Burial Ground, Niagara on the Lake (ON) (UR)  Norval Johnson Heritage Library, Niagara Falls (ON) (UR)  Our Lady of Peace Church, Niagara Falls (ON) (UR)  Parliament Oak School, Niagara on the Lake (ON) (UR)  Queenston Library (ON) (UR)  Welland Canal (ON) </div> <div> <b>Interpretive Facilities &amp; Collections</b>  Buffalo &amp; Erie County Historical Society  Costumed Interpretation (Seaway Trail in Lewiston (NY)  Motherland Connexions (UR interpretive tours)  Murphy's Orchard, Burt (NY) (UR)  Niagara Falls Local History Collection, Niagara Falls Public Library (NY)  Historic Niagara Digital Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library (ON) </div>

## Appendix H: Historic Context Statement

### Historical Context: The Niagara Frontier

Niagara Falls has been known as one of America's great natural wonders ever since the early days of European exploration. Over Niagara Falls courses the outflow of four of the Great Lakes. Remarkably, erosion of sedimentary layers has caused the Falls to cut back 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the Niagara Escarpment since the end of the last Ice Age, only 10,000 years ago. Since 1678, the Horseshoe Falls has receded approximately 1,000 feet (304.8 meters).

Father Louis Hennepin was the first European to report on Niagara Falls with his account of a 1678 visit. Hennepin was a member of LaSalle's expedition that explored and claimed the Great Lakes and the Mississippi and Ohio River systems for France. The French were the first Europeans to explore and claim the interior of the continent, because they had settled the St. Lawrence River Valley, which is the outflow of the Great Lakes. Wanting to secure the portage around Niagara Falls and access to the Great Lakes against British interests, the French erected a trading post near the mouth of the Niagara River in 1700 and built a full-fledged fort in 1720.

When the French first reached the Niagara Frontier in the late 17th century, the area was already a crossroads for the North American fur trade. A bloody war had been taking place in the area between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Algonquin-speaking tribes. Later, during the conflict between empires, the Iroquois Confederacy, which had been formed by the Mohawks, Onondagas, Oneidas, Cayugas, and Senecas in the mid-16th century, tended to be allied with the English, whereas the Algonquin tribes were allied with the French. The Senecas settled the area east of the Niagara River and played an important role in maintaining the portage around Niagara Falls. In 1722, the Tuscaroras, an Iroquoian group, who had been pushed out of North Carolina by English settlers and moved to western New York, joined the Iroquois Confederacy (also called the Six Nations or Haudensaunee, which means "People of the Long House").

During the 18th century, Niagara was a focal point of contention between the French and British Empires. When the French and Indian War (Seven Years War) ended in 1763, the Treaty of Paris awarded all French possessions in North America to Britain, and Fort Niagara became a British outpost. During the American Revolution, Fort Niagara was a British base for launching raids against the Americans and a safe haven for the Iroquois displaced by the Sullivan-Clinton campaign. The Treaty of Paris (1783), which concluded the American Revolution, drew a boundary line down the middle of the Niagara River, awarding the east bank to the United States and the west bank to Britain and its province of Canada (referred to as Quebec at the time). Britain turned Fort Niagara over to the Americans in 1796 and moved its garrison across the river to Fort George, at today's Niagara-on-the-Lake, and built a new portage road on the Canadian side of the river.

The establishment of the international boundary along the Niagara River made the Niagara Frontier one of the most contested theaters of the War of 1812. Americans invaded Canada and were repulsed, then the British took control of the American side of the river. The Treaty of Ghent (1814), which ended the war, restored the previous boundary. The War of 1812 is regarded in Canada as one of the formative moments in its national history. Americans tried to invade Canadian territory along the Niagara again during the Mackenzie Rebellion of 1837–1838 (rebels were mainly Canadian, and American participation was opposed by the U.S. government) and during the Fenian attacks of 1866 (Irish-Americans undertaking military operations against Great Britain in conjunction with an uprising in Ireland), but the Canadian frontier held secure. Peaceful relations have endured along the Niagara River ever since.

Niagara Falls continued to be a barrier for waterborne transportation between the Great Lakes region and the St. Lawrence River and the Atlantic Ocean. In order to avoid the falls, the developers of the Erie Canal (1825) located its outlet on Lake Erie, above the falls at Buffalo, which became the "Queen City" of western New York and the Great Lakes. The Erie Canal connected the Great Lakes to the



Hudson River, New York City, and the Atlantic Ocean. The Canadian bypass of Niagara Falls was the Welland Canal, which ran parallel to the Niagara River between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario and ultimately connected to the St. Lawrence River. The first Welland Canal opened in 1829, with progressively larger versions opening in 1845, 1887, and 1932.

### Development of Tourism

After the American Revolution, Americans started settling the Niagara Falls area. Although the Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1784) and the Treaty of Canandaigua (1794), between the United States and the Six Nations of the Iroquois, acknowledged Indian ownership of most land in western New York, American settlers and speculators soon pushed into the area. Under the Big Tree Treaty (1797), the Senecas sold the rights to most of their land in western New York, but the treaty secured the Cattaraugus, Buffalo Creek, Tonawanda, and Tuscarora Reservations. These treaties and the rights of Indian tribes in western New York remain in effect, but somewhat strained until this day.<sup>8</sup> Many members of the Six Nations moved to the Canadian side of the Niagara River after the American Revolution and still have a reservation at Ohsweken, Ontario.

As American settlement progressed, Niagara Falls became a tourist destination. About 1800, the land around the Falls was cleared so that visitors could enjoy vistas of the magnificent scene. As the largest known waterfall in North America, Niagara Falls became a major object of interest.

By the 1820s, it became feasible for tourists to visit Niagara Falls. The first hotel opened, on the Canadian side, in 1822, and completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 facilitated travel from the Eastern Seaboard to Niagara. Access to Niagara Falls further improved when the first railroad line reached the Falls in 1838. The first American travel guide, *The Fashionable Tour*, in 1825, by Gideon Minor Davison, sketched out a “Grand Tour” of North America that included New York City, Hudson River Valley, Catskill Mountains, Saratoga Spring, and Niagara Falls, as well as Montreal and Quebec City. The creation of a “Grand Tour” of important

sites helped fashion a national identity and overcome a feeling of cultural inferiority to Europe.

Niagara Falls became the preeminent pictorial icon of North American scenic grandeur. The Hudson River School, which made landscape painting a major mode of American cultural expression between 1825 and the Civil War, promoted the connection between art, tourism, and nationalism. The foremost American landscapist Thomas Cole, who painted “A Distant View of the Falls of Niagara” (1829), argued that while the foundation of European culture was its history, the essence of American identity was its natural wilderness. Painter Frederic Church’s masterpiece was considered to be “Niagara” (1857), an expansive canvas depicting the dramatic sweep of Horseshoe Falls. Church’s “Niagara” fetched the highest price and attracted the most viewers of any American painting up to that time. Church so valued the natural grandeur at Niagara Falls that he championed efforts to preserve the natural beauty of Niagara. As popular prints and illustrated books celebrated American scenery in the mid-19th century, they often featured Niagara Falls.

During the early years of tourism at Niagara Falls, the elite came in order to witness the sublime wonder, which embodied the Romantic idea that nature was imbued with divine power. But very quickly tourist accommodations and special events began to crowd the mystical splendor of the place. Entrepreneurs discovered that tourists were looking for things to do at the Falls and that there were many money-making opportunities in serving tourists. As hotels proliferated, so did museums, curiosity shops, boat rides, and guided tours behind the Falls. The first of many sensational events to take place at Niagara occurred in 1827, when the condemned merchant ship *Michigan* was sent over the Falls aflame with a cargo of screaming animals on board. Thousands looked on and purchased refreshments and souvenirs. As the years passed, daredevils walked on tightropes over the Niagara Gorge or attempted to plunge the rapids and Falls in barrels (usually unsuccessfully).

These activities exemplified the popular culture that was emerging in America. One of the leading impresarios of public entertainments was P.T.

Barnum, who made the art of “humbug” (a sham, which people readily acknowledge, but want to see anyway because of its notoriety) a selling proposition. Barnum even tried to buy Goat Island for the permanent site of his circus. Hoaxes and carnival acts became so integral to the Niagara Falls experience that a guidebook, *The Humbugs of Niagara Falls* (1884), was published to point out the tourist traps.

The history of Niagara Falls followed the course of tourism development in the United States. After being a pastime for the leisured elite before the Civil War, tourism became an activity of the emerging middle class. Their interest in pleasure travel was enhanced by the construction of a vast national railroad network. Yet as late as 1895, only 3% of 69 million Americans took a trip of over 50 miles in a given year.<sup>9</sup> As late as the 1920s, most workers received no paid vacation. Unionization and World War II changed that, and most working families were able to take two weeks vacation annually. The automobile and improved highways made it easy for families to travel the country and visit attractions like Niagara Falls. As historian John Sears has observed in *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*, tourism has become a “nearly a universal cultural experience.”<sup>10</sup>

With the automobile came a new proliferation of tourist attractions, souvenir shops, motels, and eating places, especially on the Canadian side of the Falls. Niagara Falls became the mass tourist attraction par excellence. One of the early experiences in mass tourism was the honeymoon, and Niagara Falls established itself as the “honeymoon capital” of North America by the 1920s. Upper-class honeymooners had been attracted to Niagara Falls during the 19th century (William Dean Howells’s 1871 novel *Their Wedding Journey* described an upper-class honeymoon), but the honeymoon only became a widespread middle-class ritual in the 1920s.<sup>11</sup> During the 1940s and 1950s, working-class couples joined the honeymoon parade. The fading of Niagara Falls as a honeymoon destination and tourist attraction in the 1960s indicated proliferating competition from more glamorous honeymoon sites around the globe and the failure of Niagara Falls to update its allures.

The contrived tourist attractions that appeared at Niagara Falls represented an early wave of mass entertainment, which later evolved into amusement parks at Coney Island in the 1890s and the theme parks, such as Disneyland, of the second half of the 20th century. These well-capitalized, up-to-date popular attractions surpassed the appeal of Niagara Falls, which suffered as a tourist draw. Interestingly, one of Niagara’s strategies for reinventing itself is to build gambling casinos (Ontario side in 1996 and New York State in 2003) and try to emulate the glitzy seductions of Las Vegas. Other tourism strategies relate to improving the experience for those interested in the nature, history, and culture of the Niagara Region, including upgrading the Niagara Falls State Park and the Niagara Gorge Trail and establishing a national heritage area.

### Conservation of Nature

Niagara Falls started its career as a tourist attraction as a spectacle of nature. As museums, sideshows, souvenir shops, and industries crowded around the site, it became more difficult for visitors to appreciate the natural wonder. The problem of conserving the natural environment, which the Hudson River School artists had first identified, came to the fore, and Niagara Falls became the leading example of environmental abuse.

Around the time of the Civil War, Frederick Law Olmsted introduced the concept of parks as a way to conserve nature for public enjoyment. He designed Central Park (1858) in New York City, which became a model for urban parks, and planned Yosemite (1864) in California, which was the country’s first wilderness park. Yosemite was originally managed by the state and later by the federal government. In 1872, Yellowstone became the country’s first national park. The earliest national parks were in the West, where the federal government owned vast expanses of undeveloped land and could readily designate park areas for conservation.

Niagara Falls, whose desecration many thoughtful people decried, was difficult to protect because the land around it was developed, privately owned, and divided between two nations. A prolonged public campaign, initiated by artist Frederic Church in

1869, lasted until 1885, when the State of New York finally established a public reservation at the Falls. Ontario created the Niagara Parks Commission in 1888 to preserve the Canadian side of the Falls. The Niagara Falls Commission has been notable for using revenues from its operations to support conservation, beautification, and recreation on the Canadian side.

Frederick Law Olmsted was instrumental in creating the “Free Niagara” (prior to the state reservation, a private amusement park charged admission for visitors to view the Falls and enjoy side attractions) by authoring an 1879 report containing recommendations for a public reservation. He then designed the state reservation, which opened in 1885. Olmsted, characteristically, tried to reintroduce a sense of wilderness around the Falls, as opposed to the Canadian side, which developed a manicured urban park with all sorts of activities and eateries. Olmsted, who had called for banning commercial intrusions on Yosemite, also sought to prohibit commercial establishments from the Niagara Falls Reservation. The establishment of publicly owned parks at Niagara Falls provided momentum to efforts to spend public money for aesthetic improvements and nature conservation, not only in such areas of New York State as the Catskills and the Adirondacks, but in natural areas around the country that became national parks. The conservation of Niagara Falls made a direct impact on the eventual establishment of the National Park Service.<sup>12</sup>

During the Progressive Era and the administration of conservationist President Theodore Roosevelt, the United States expanded its national parks and forests, conserving them for aesthetic and recreational purposes, while managing them efficiently to utilize their forest and mineral resources. This was the approach of U.S. Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot, who defined conservationism as practical scientific management of resources to achieve maximum utility. At Niagara this movement translated into efforts by the International Joint Commission to preserve scenery while pursuing the world’s most extensive power production scheme. The Burton Act of 1906 and a binational treaty of 1909 called for limiting the amount of water diverted from the Falls for hydropower generation to 25% of

the flow in order to preserve the scenic falls. The Burton Act lapsed by 1913, and these diversion flows were gradually adjusted upward to the 85% of the flow that today is diverted for hydropower (mainly during the night, when no one can see the trickling falls).

### Technology and Progress

It had been understood early in the 19th century that Niagara Falls represented perhaps the greatest source for industrial power in North America. Until the 1870s, the overwhelming scale of the Falls made it impossible to harness its energy. In that decade, industrialists began to utilize the hydropower to drive machinery, and large factories sprouted around the Falls. The first hydroelectric power was produced at Niagara Falls in 1881. In 1895, Edward Dean Adams introduced the idea of generating power at a large central station and transmitting the electric power beyond the immediate area of the Falls. Adams developed an intake canal upstream on the Niagara River from the Falls with a power station beside it; the water then flowed through a tailrace tunnel under the city and was discharged back into the river below the Falls.

The key to Adams’s success was the development of multi-phase alternating current (AC) by Nikola Tesla. Thomas Edison’s direct current (DC), first transmitted from a New York City power plant in 1882, could not be distributed easily over long distances. Tesla’s innovation, which was used in generators built by George Westinghouse, enabled long-distance transmission so that customers would not have to be located near the power plant. Tesla’s alternating current won the “battle of the currents” after proving effective at Niagara Falls.

The first commercial hydroelectric power from Niagara Falls was transmitted to Buffalo in 1896. It vaulted Buffalo into the ranks of the foremost industrial cities in America. One of the world’s largest steel mills, Lackawanna Steel Company (later Bethlehem Steel), moved from Scranton, Pennsylvania, to take advantage of the cheap Niagara electricity. Buffalo celebrated its newly exalted status with the 1901 Pan-American Exposition, which highlighted the use of electricity for night lighting and operating appliances.



The promise of abundant cheap power made Niagara Falls the world capital of electro-chemical and electro-metallurgical industries, which included such companies as the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA), Carborundum (which developed the world's hardest abrasive as well as graphite), Union Carbide, American Cyanamid, Auto-Lite Battery, and Occidental Petroleum. These were enterprises that depended upon abundant cheap power. At its industrial peak, in 1929, Niagara Falls was the leading manufacturer in the world of products using abrasives, carbon, chlorine, and ferro-alloys.<sup>13</sup>

This era marked a high tide of faith in technological progress, as inventors, writers, and the public believed that technology would create a Utopian society. Edward Bellamy's novel *Looking Backward* (1888) described an advanced American society in 2000 that thrived on technological breakthroughs. King Camp Gillette, inventor of the safety razor, proposed building "Metropolis," a 60-million population Utopian city around the falls to take advantage of its abundant power.<sup>14</sup> The American comic strip "Buck Rogers" projected Niagara as the future capital of the nation. British physicist Lord Kelvin said in 1897 that the diversion of all of Niagara Falls for power and the loss of its scenic qualities was justified because of the projected social benefits from hydropower development. The establishment of the Shredded Wheat factory by the Natural Food Company at Niagara Falls in 1901 was intended to create a model environment for progressive labor relations.

The romance with technology at Niagara was fading by the 1920s, as Niagara lost its leadership role in electric power innovation. It became possible for electric-power-intensive industry to locate in many localities besides the Niagara Falls region. Niagara Falls enjoyed economic prosperity, but the city was no longer celebrated as a potential Utopia. A serious setback for hydroelectric power occurred in 1956 when the Schoellkopf Power Station collapsed into the Niagara River. The romance of hydroelectric power and technological progress revived during the 1950s and early 1960s, when Robert Moses opened the new power generation plant below the Falls in 1961. The unconditional love affair with technology in both Niagara Falls and around the country, however, was coming to a close.

Some of the changing attitudes toward industry were driven by concern over pollution. At Niagara Falls, where a revolution in organic chemistry in 1930s and 1940s led to the fabrication of new products such as plastics, these processes created many new hazardous waste products, whose lethal properties people did not yet understand. In the late 1940s, the Hooker Chemical and Plastics Corporation of Niagara Falls stored barrels of toxic wastes in an unused power canal left over from the 1890s, the Love Canal, which was located several miles from the tourist area around the falls. In the 1950s, Hooker (later Occidental Chemical) gave the grassed-over canal to the City for a playground, and the city built a public school adjacent to it. Eventually the underground storage containers ruptured, and deadly chemicals, including the lethal dioxin, escaped into the surrounding ground. By the 1970s, the harm to human health was evident, as 50% of the children in the neighborhood were born with birth defects.

In 1978, a citizen-based environmental movement emerged to remedy the situation and obtain reparations for local residents. Over 939 families evacuated from the area. The Love Canal affair reflected a growing awareness of the threats to biological existence from toxic chemicals and marked the beginning of federal and state efforts to clean up Superfund and "brownfield" sites. Today over 250 hazardous waste sites have been identified along the Upper Niagara River. Hooker Chemical dumps alone hold over a million tons of waste products.<sup>15</sup>

Since the 1970s, industry has been in decline in the Buffalo-Niagara region as well as in the rest of America's Northeast-Midwest "Rust Belt." Long-established manufacturing has become less competitive with the Sun Belt and other countries, particularly those in the Far East. The multinational corporations that controlled plants in Niagara Falls closed plants that were outmoded and inefficient. The City of Niagara Falls, New York, has lost about half its population and tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs since 1960, and much of its industrial district has been abandoned. Although the city has long been a tourist attraction, its economic base was primarily industrial for much of the 20th century. Today, Niagara Falls, like many older "Rust Belt" cities, is making the difficult transition to a post-industrial, service-oriented economy.

## Appendix I: Participants in Niagara National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Public Process

The following people participated in public meetings, individual and stakeholder meetings, or submitted written comments.

Harvey Albond, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Meredith Andreucci, USA Niagara Development Corporation  
 Vincent Anello, Mayor, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Bob Baxter, Niagara Heritage Partnership  
 Loraine Baxter, Ransomville, NY  
 Laurence and Lyn Beahan, Snyder, NY  
 Joan Bell, Hamilton Area Conservation Authority, Hamilton, ON  
 Greg Betterson, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Bill Bradberry, Lake Worth, FL  
 Clinton Brown, Buffalo, NY  
 Laurene Buckley, Castellani Art Museum  
 Noel Buckley, Niagara Falls (ON) Tourism  
 David Burgio, Mayor, North Tonawanda, NY  
 Michael A. Casale, Niagara County Planning  
 Carla Cavasin, Niagara Parks Commission (ON)  
 Dave Clark, OPRHP/ Fort Niagara State Park  
 David Colligan, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy  
 Jim Comerford, USA Niagara Development Corporation  
 Max Coykendall, Attorney, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Maureen Curry, NYS OPRHP/Prospect Park  
 Tom DeSantis, Department of Community Development, City of Niagara Falls, NY  
 Joel Destino, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Susan Diachun, Ransomville, NY  
 David H. Drake, Jr., Niagara Falls, NY  
 Willie Dunn, HCRC Inc., Niagara Falls, NY  
 Paul Dyster, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Rebecca Dyster, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Denise Easterling, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Irene Elia, Former Mayor, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Robert Emerson, Old Fort Niagara,

Youngstown, NY  
 Scott Ensmenger, North Tonawanda, NY  
 Don Erb, Tonawanda, NY  
 Drew Eszak, Buffalo, NY  
 H. William Feder, Ph.D., Niagara Falls, NY  
 Donna Fernandes, Buffalo Zoo, Buffalo, NY  
 Samuel M. Ferraro, Commissioner, Niagara County Department of Planning, Development & Tourism  
 Amy Fisk, Niagara County Planning  
 Bonnie Foit-Albert, Buffalo, NY  
 Donna Ford, Central One Network – Black History  
 Frank Frandina, Niagara Falls, NY  
 TWB Frank, Williamsville, NY  
 Tony Fryer, Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier  
 Tom Garlock, Niagara Falls Bridge Commission  
 Marjorie Gillies, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Christopher Glynn, Maid of the Mist Corporation  
 James V. Glynn, Maid of the Mist Corporation  
 Ray Goll, OPRHP/ Niagara Region  
 Mike Gomez, Buffalo, NY  
 Torbin Green, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Paul Gromosiak, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Robert Harris, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Richard Hastings, Youngstown, NY  
 Annemarie Hauptner, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Charles Hendler, Buffalo, NY  
 Chief Leo R. Henry, Tuscarora Nation  
 Kim Hicks, Office of State Senator Byron Brown, Buffalo, NY  
 Rick Hill, Tuscarora Nation  
 Eve Holberg, Buffalo, NY  
 Michele Holbrook, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Buffalo, NY  
 Don Honkala, North Tonawanda, NY  
 Michele Hope, USACE, Buffalo, NY  
 James Hufnagel, Wilson, NY  
 Allen James, OPRHP/Niagara Region, Niagara Falls, NY  
 Joan E. Johnson, Niagara Falls, NY

<i>Rohit Kapoor, Buffalo, NY</i>	<i>the-Lake, ON</i>
<i>Ronald R. Kelly, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Max Rosen, Buffalo, NY</i>
<i>Bruce Kershner, Williamsville, NY</i>	<i>David Rosenwasser, Niagara Tourism &amp; Convention Corporation (NTCC), Niagara Falls, NY</i>
<i>Art Klein, Tonawanda, NY</i>	<i>Gary J. Rouleau, Office of State Senator George Maziarz, Lockport, NY</i>
<i>Caroline Knight, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>James Rozanski, Buffalo, NY</i>
<i>Pam Kowalik, Buffalo News, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Ed Rutkowski, OPRHP/Niagara Region, Niagara Falls, NY</i>
<i>Jack Krajewski, Buffalo Association of Professional Geologists</i>	<i>Irene Rykaszewski, Lewiston Art Council, Lewiston, NY</i>
<i>Kathie Kudela, Lewiston, NY</i>	<i>Jim and MaryAnn Sandoro, Buffalo, NY</i>
<i>Charles E. Lamar, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Anthony Saviese, Niagara Falls, NY</i>
<i>Joe Malnorich, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Adair Saviola, Buffalo Zoo, Buffalo, NY</i>
<i>Sandra Maslen, Former Supervisor, Village of Lewiston, NY</i>	<i>Linda Schneekloth, Buffalo, NY</i>
<i>Tom Maxian, OPRHP/Niagara Falls State Park</i>	<i>Jane Schroeder, Office of U.S. Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Niagara Falls, NY</i>
<i>George Maziarz, NYS Senator, 62nd District, Lockport, NY</i>	<i>Jonathan Schultz, Maid of the Mist Corporation</i>
<i>Joe McCoy, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>John Sheffer II, Director, Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth</i>
<i>Robert McIlveen, Niagara Parks Commission, ON</i>	<i>Ken Sherman, Hamilton, ON</i>
<i>Diane McNamara, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Lee Simonson, Lewiston, NY</i>
<i>Patricia Merino, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Barbara Skye, Niagara Falls, NY</i>
<i>Cheryl Meyer, Buffalo, NY</i>	<i>Richard Soluri, Mayor, Lewiston, NY</i>
<i>Kerry Mitchell, Canadian Consulate, Buffalo, NY</i>	<i>Pam Smith, Niagara Falls, NY</i>
<i>Wilma Morrison, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Scott L. Sroka, Office of U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer, Buffalo, NY</i>
<i>Dale Morton, City of Niagara Falls, ON</i>	<i>Tim Tielman, Campaign for Buffalo, Buffalo, NY</i>
<i>Eva Niklas, Lewiston Council on the Arts, Lewiston, NY</i>	<i>Barbara Viale, Grand River Conservation Authority, Cambridge, ON</i>
<i>C.M. Offenhauer, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Therese Wegler, Office of Assemblyman Schimminger, Kenmore, NY</i>
<i>George Osborn, ArtPark &amp; Company, Lewiston, NY</i>	<i>Merton Weipert, Town Supervisor, Porter, NY</i>
<i>Jim Papasidero, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Tom Welch, OPRHP/Joseph Davis State Park/Earl W. Brydges ArtPark State Park</i>
<i>Mike Parsnick, Niagara Falls, NY</i>	<i>Jim Weld, Youngstown, NY</i>
<i>Neil Patterson, Jr. Tuscarora Nation</i>	<i>Marn A. Weld, Youngstown, NY</i>
<i>Lewis Payne, OPRHP/Niagara Falls State Park</i>	<i>Elizabeth Wells, Buffalo, NY</i>
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## Part Two: Affected Environment

- 1 A ridge-shaped landform having an asymmetrical profile in cross-section, with one side of the hill dipping more steeply than the other. H.W. Art, General Editor, *The Dictionary of Ecology and Environmental Science* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1993).
- 2 Tammemagi, Hans and Allyson, *Exploring Niagara, The Complete Guide to Niagara Falls and Vicinity* (St. Catharines, Ontario: Oakhill Publishing House, 1997).
- 3 The New York State Natural Heritage Program attributes this statement to Larsen et al. (2000). See bibliography for formal citation.
- 4 According to the National Audubon Society, an Important Bird Area (IBA) is a site providing essential habitat to one or more species of breeding or non-breeding birds. The sites vary in size, but are usually discrete and distinguishable in character, habitat, or ornithological importance from surrounding areas. Site boundaries may be either natural (rivers, watersheds) or human-made (roads, property boundaries). In general, an IBA should exist as an actual or potential protected area, with or without buffer zones, or should have the potential to be managed in some way for birds and general nature conservation.

## Part Three: Key Interpretive Themes and National Heritage Area Criteria

- 5 John N. Jackson with John Burtiniak and Gregory P. Stein, *The Mighty Niagara: One River—Two Frontiers* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003), p. 95.

## Appendix F: Underground Railroad Sites

- 6 Murphy's Orchard is the only Niagara CountNetwork member currently reconized by the National Park Service's National Underground Network to Freedom program.

A significant but distinct element of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program is the National Underground Railroad Network, a diverse collection of elements comprised of historic sites, facilities, and programs that have verifiable association with the Underground Railroad. The Network is inclusive and incorporates the broadest range of elements possible to tell the story of the Underground Railroad which occurred whenever resistance to

slavery took the form of flight. Although Murphy's Orchard is the only location formally listed in the Network, other resources may be eligible to participate in the program.

## Appendix G: Theme/ Resource Matrix

- 7 See Notes in Appendix F.

## Appendix H: Historic Context Statement

- 8 The Tuscaroras contested the taking of part of their reservation 50 years ago for the reservoir of the Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant. During the current relicensing negotiations, the Tuscaroras are seeking are still seeking damages for this project.
- 9 Edward W. Bok, "Where American Life Really Exists," *Ladies Home Journal*, October, 1895, p. 14.
- 10 John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 15
- 11 Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999), pp. 153–154.
- 12 Lary M. Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994), pp. 7–8. "Yet another motive for national parks [besides preservation of wilderness at Yosemite and Yellowstone] came from the American experience at Niagara Falls. The famous falls were America's paramount scenic wonder during the first half of the nineteenth century. However, local landowners had, in their frenzy to maximize profits, gone so far as to erect fences and charge viewers to look through holes at the spectacle. Tawdry concessions and souvenirs, filth, and squalor attended a visit to this most sublime of eastern American features. Clearly government control of such a feature to assure its availability to the public was in order."
- 13 Jackson, Burtiniak, and Stein, p. 217.
- 14 William Irwin, *The New Niagara: Tourism, Technology, and the Landscape of Niagara Falls* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), pp. 142–143.
- 15 Pierre Berton, *Niagara: A History of the Falls* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992), p. 338.

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for Heritage Partners

### **Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitor's Bureau**

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### **The Urban Design Project**

Executive Summary divider, page 5, Part One divider, pages 17, 18, 23, 30, 39, 45, 46, 53, 69, 70, 75, 76, and 80

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### **Foit – Albert Associates**

Pages 25 and 42, Part Five divider

### **Library of Congress – Historic Architectural Building Survey (HABS)/ Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)**

Pages 47 and 50

## *About this Report*

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This report has been prepared to provide Congress and the public with information about the resources in the study area and how they relate to criteria for feasibility of a national heritage area. Publication and transmittal of this report should not be considered an endorsement or a commitment by the National Park Service to seek or support either specific legislative authorization for the project or appropriation for its implementation. Authorization and funding for any new commitments by the National Park Service will have to be considered in light of competing priorities for existing units of the national park system and other programs.

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