The story of Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area is intimately tied to the character of the land as well as those who shaped and were shaped by it. Here landform and climate combined to create an environment propitious to settlement, with a network of natural features, including river systems and forests, sustaining successive generations of inhabitants.

Like veins on a leaf, the paths of those who settled the region are connected, providing both tangible and intangible reminders of the past. Their stories can be found on village commons, along scenic roadways lined with stone walls, in diaries and artifacts, in a cabin by a pond, along a battle road or hidden deep within a secret glen by the bank of a meandering river. Known or yet to be revealed, they provide a narrative that links the past to the future.

A goal of this interpretive plan for Freedom’s Way is to ensure that those who live, work in, or visit the heritage area have an opportunity to explore, understand and discover places within the stories that are found here. Some, like those associated with Concord’s North Bridge or Thoreau’s Walden Pond are well known not only nationally but throughout the world. Others, like the story of Mary Haywood Fairbanks Whitcomb of Bolton, who was famous for her practice in herbal medicines, are more local “hidden” treasures, known only to locals.

This chapter outlines how heritage area partners can work together to share the stories of their communities, sites and artifacts in a cohesive and engaging manner. It does not intend to prescribe a methodology that fits all but instead imagines a process that allows for multiple perspectives, illuminating and illuminated by differing points of view.

After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the things we need most in the world.

—Philip Pullman

If history were taught in the form of stories it would never be forgotten.

—Rudyard Kipling
2.1 INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION APPROACH

Interpretation and education are public programming and communication activities through which an appreciation of the natural and cultural history of the region is shared either in formal or informal settings. Interpretation and education within Freedom’s Way will engage residents and visitors with the local landscapes, raise awareness, and inspire them to support preservation and conservation initiatives.

Freedom’s Way Heritage Association views interpretation and education as two interconnected activities that, combined, provide a comprehensive framework for life-long learning. Memorable experiences awaken curiosity which fuels an interest in discovery. Whether in a classroom or on a trail, interpretation and education within the heritage area will provide opportunities for individuals to connect with and find themselves within the heritage area’s stories and places, building upon its genus loci to empower stewardship and engage new audiences.

The Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area will align its interpretive and educational initiatives with the three goals outlined in the Vision Paper, 21st Century National Park Service Interpreter Skills, prepared by the National Park Service Advisory Board Education Committee, National Education Council and George Washington University in 2014:

- To facilitate meaningful, memorable experiences with diverse audiences so they can create their own connections (on-site and virtually) with park (in this case heritage area) resources.
- To encourage shared stewardship through relevance, engagement and broad collaboration.
- To support global citizens to build a just society through engagement with natural and cultural heritage, by embracing the pursuit of life-long learning.

As forms of public programming and communication through which an appreciation of the character of the communities and landscapes within the heritage area can be strengthened and enhanced, interpretation and education within Freedom’s way will engage residents with their local histories, raise awareness, and encourage them to support preservation and conservation initiatives.

Freedom’s Way includes many partners interested in history, landscape, storytelling, and interpretation. They range from experienced, nationally recognized organizations with dedicated resources for interpretation and outreach to small, volunteer organizations with limited capacity. All have the potential to contribute to the visitor experience across the heritage area.

Freedom’s Way Heritage Association will coordinate interpretative programs between various partners and encourage the development of interpretive experiences to engage new audiences throughout the heritage area to strengthen regional identity. Together, with its partners, the Association will create and implement a coordinated heritage area-wide presentation to enhance the quality of life within individual communities and establish a compelling regional narrative.
2.1.1 Planning Process and Existing Programs

The interpretive planning process for the heritage area has been conducted simultaneously with the management planning process, informed by a strategic planning committee, a series of stakeholder meetings and an online survey.

While the planning processes were underway Freedom’s Way Heritage Association continued to implement and expand its existing interpretive program to inform the refinement of its thematic presentation. This work, including the development of a region-wide community based exploration of “hidden treasures” has revealed both strengths and weaknesses in earlier approaches.

The organization has been highly successful in its citizen-led history initiatives with its Paths of the Patriots program serving as a vehicle for local engagement that can serve as a model for expanded community outreach. Connecting Communities Along Our Trails, inaugurated in 2014 in partnership with the Montachusett Regional Trails Committee, has provided a successful model for a community driven program that combines cultural and natural resources.

We have also learned, however, that, while programmatically the heritage area has and continues to partner with community organizations from throughout the region, we must expand those partnerships to include more youth and ethnically diverse constituencies.

A more thorough overview of current programs can be found in sections below.
2.1.2 Existing Interpretation in Freedom’s Way

In general current interpretation within Freedom’s Way is practiced on two tiers – one aimed primarily at attracting and servicing visitors to the region and the other designed primarily for local audiences.

Five interpretive topics (as demonstrated by current tourism promotion) are identified within the region:

- Concord and Lexington—events that influenced the Revolutionary War;
- Concord authors;
- Conservation and natural resources;
- Small art and local museums; and
- Specialty farms.

A preliminary list of interpretive attractions that are publicly accessible and offer public programming is included in Appendix D1. While much of the heritage tourism activity is centered within the Concord and Lexington vicinity most towns, have active historical societies with interpretive exhibits and offer interpretive and educational programming.

The Revolutionary War

Interpretation of the events associated with Concord and Lexington on April 19, 1775, is well developed. Minute Man National Historical Park is a principal attraction. Other attractions including Lexington Green and historic house museums such as the Hancock-Clarke House, Buckman Tavern, Munroe Tavern, The Old Manse, and Concord Museum also attract wide audiences.
Minute Man National Historical Park preserves approximately 1,000 acres of land associated with the events at Concord and Lexington as well as The Wayside, home to authors.

The park features two visitor centers, historic sites, witness houses, and Battle Road Trail, which extends the length of the roughly five-mile-long park and includes four miles along the preserved Battle Road.

While the grounds of Minute Man National Park are open from sunrise to sunset throughout the year, interpretive programs are offered seasonally, from April 1 through November 30. The Minute Man Visitor Center on North Great Road closes for the winter and the North Bridge Visitor Center closes for January and February.

A recently established Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee is working to coordinate the interpretive experience along the byway corridor in Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, and Arlington.

**Authors**

Key sites associated with Concord’s renowned authors intertwine with those of the Revolutionary War. Attractions include five house museums (four in Concord and one at Fruitlands Museum in Harvard) where various authors lived, as well as Walden Pond, made famous by Henry Thoreau.

Walden Pond and Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, where a number of key authors are buried are pilgrimage sites for many national and international visitors.

A guided trolley tour in Lexington and bike tours and step-on guides in Concord add to the region’s interpretive offerings.
Conservation and Natural Resources

Interpretive programming related to conservation and natural resources is undertaken at a number of venues throughout the heritage area. Drumlin Farm, Fruitlands Museum, Walden Woods Project, Nashua River Watershed Association and Beaver Brook Nature Center are a few of the many private nonprofit venues with interpretive programming. A number of federal and state sites offer a range of programming as well as recreational opportunities.

Three National Wildlife Refuges, 7,697 acres in size and part of the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge complex, are located within portions of twelve Massachusetts towns within the heritage area (see map, page 107). Attractions for birders, walkers, and wildlife enthusiasts, they also feature seasonal visitor centers at the Assabet River and Oxbow facilities.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation manages the 3,000-acre Mount Wachusett State Reservation and the 335-acre Walden Pond State Reservation surrounded by the 2,680-acre Walden Woods. Open seasonally, each includes a visitor center with interpretive information. A new visitor center under construction at Walden Pond will provide enhanced interpretation, connecting to sites of significance to Thoreau enthusiasts.

The region is home to an extensive system of hiking, biking, and walking trails (see Appendix I), each with varying degrees of existing interpretation. Regionally recognized trails include the two-state Nashua River Rail Trail, a twelve-mile rail trail linking Ayer to Nashua; the 200-mile Bay Circuit Trail extending through thirty-four towns in eastern Massachusetts; the ten-mile Minuteman Bikeway linking Bedford to
Cambridge through Arlington; and the Bruce Freeman Trail, just over six miles including Weston but ultimately to link Sudbury, Concord, Acton and Carlisle to Lowell along the twenty-five mile route of the Old New Haven Railroad Framingham & Lowell line.

**Specialty Farms and Agriculture**

The central and western portions of Freedom’s Way promote publicly accessible farm venues as principal attractions along with outdoor recreational experiences.

Freedom’s Way has a number of specialty farms that feature farm stands and pick-your-own opportunities (see Appendix D2). A particular concentration is located along the southern stretch of the heritage area from Lincoln to Sterling. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources assists by promoting farms, farm markets, and agricultural production throughout the state. Regional farms are a significant visitor attraction throughout the year, particularly in the fall. Some interpretation and educational experiences are included at these venues, but they could be greatly increased and enhanced.

**Small Art and Local Museums**

The region includes a number of high-quality museums and galleries (see Appendix D1). These include the DeCordova Museum (Lincoln), Tufts University Gallery (Medford), Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum (Arlington), Museum of Russian Icons (Clinton), Fruitlands (Harvard), Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library (Lexington), Concord Museum (Concord), and Fitchburg Art Museum (Fitchburg).
Other Sites
Freedom’s Way includes many publicly accessible sites, such as historic villages, parks, conservation lands, trails, and waterways. Some of these places have self-guided interpretation, but many do not. Interpretation of public places, especially historic villages and trails, offers an opportunity to greatly expand story-telling within the region.

A preliminary summary of the existing context for interpretation and education is included in Appendix C.

The heritage area’s mission, discussed in Chapter 1, pledges to connect people, places and communities of the heritage area through preservation, conservation and educational initiatives to protect and promote shared resources and encourage residents and visitors to explore its landscape, history and culture.

The heritage area’s vision emphasizes the inspiration of the region’s historical and intellectual traditions supporting concepts of freedom, democracy, conservation and social justice to create strong communities and a regional identity.

Interpretation is key to fulfilling this objective.

2.1.3 Interpretive Themes
This plan builds upon the four interpretive themes established in the 1997 feasibility study prepared for the Association and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (now the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation) by ICON Architecture, Inc. Informed by the conceptual framework developed by the National Park Service through its interpretive theme primer, the themes have been updated and revised to “provide a broad, conceptual framework” for the heritage area’s interpretation and “to accommodate and respond to a range of stories, perspectives, ongoing scholarship, evolving needs, attitudes of contemporary society, and changing political situations.” (NPS Interpretive Theme Primer, updated 06/01/2014)

The revised themes provide a fresh approach to interpreting the heritage area’s natural and cultural history, building upon previous concepts and recommendations. The physical resources of the region defined how the land was settled while the social history includes the growth of democratic institutions, Native and African-American influences, the immigration experience and the impact of urbanization. The cultural and intellectual history explores the significant literary, philosophical and religious figures and movements nurtured within the heritage area.

Theme One: A Mosaic of Subtle Beauty
An intricate network of rivers, wetlands, lakes, kettle ponds, meadows, forests, drumlins, eskers, and monadnocks combined with climate to determine how land was used, inspiring conservation of natural and scenic resources and providing economic and recreational opportunities.

Theme one is about how the land and its physical and geographical attributes determined how the region was settled and developed throughout time. While the land has changed with the imprint of
settlement, it is the region's natural features, including the landforms and rivers, that most clearly define how and where it was settled and how and why it has both inspired and been preserved by consecutive generations.

Concepts and ideas for Theme One include, but are not limited to:

- An explanation and illustration of how landforms define the character of the region and created an environment propitious for human settlement.
- An illustration of how patterns of development were based upon natural features and landforms.
- A description of how the region is shaped by rivers, river valleys and wetlands that support a range of microclimates and environmental

Fellsmere Pond at the center of a twenty-five-acre park is an integral part of the Malden municipal park system. Once a reservoir of the Boston Rubber Shoe Company, it is linked to the Boston metropolitan park system by Fellsway East. Within the park is an extensive system of stone and concrete footpaths, also used as bicycle paths. Although the city of Malden claims ownership, jurisdiction falls to the Metropolitan District Commission.

The original design of the park is an example of the landscape architecture of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., who practiced at the end of the nineteenth century. Most of the architectural features of the park are more recent, however. They include a 1935 Works Progress Administration project, a 1956 fountain in the pond (pictured), and several new bridges, drains, lighting fixtures, benches, and retaining walls (photo, opposite page) added in a restoration completed in 1981.

(Photos by Patrice Todisco.)
conditions unique to this place supporting a range of plant and animal ecosystems preserved in the region’s national wildlife areas and conservation land.

- An exploration of Native American attitudes and beliefs about the land and its spiritual and social value as contrasted with those practiced by European settlers.
- A depiction of how differing attitudes towards land ownership led to disagreements between Native Americans and European settlers resulting in, among other outcomes, King Phillip’s War.
- A description of how natural resources shaped how people used the land for habitation, cultivation, manufactures and industries.
- A description of how natural resources (bricks, clay, wood, slate) developed into industries.
- An overview of how agricultural uses impacted soil quality leading to farm abandonment and the growth of second stage forests.
- A history of how attitudes towards the physical land changed and continue to change over time.
- A description of how Native American routes followed the landscape and waterways within the region serving as a precursor to its current transportation network.
- An exploration of the impact of the land on successive generations who were inspired to conserve and preserve its resources, from Shirley’s Benton MacKaye (co-founder of the Wilderness Society, founder of the Appalachian Trail and creator of the term “urban sprawl”) to Marion Stoddart, founder of the Nashua River Watershed Association.
- A depiction of attitudes towards the value of natural resources and their importance to a regional system of natural and cultural resources as evidenced in the preservation of the Middlesex Fells by Charles Eliot and Sylvester Baxter, an area favored for timber, granite quarrying, ice industry, and its water power, preserved as the “people’s forest.”

Theme Two: Inventing the New England Community

Early settlers established regionally interdependent inland communities distinct from Boston with democratic governments, institutions, town centers, transportation networks, industries and agricultural practices reinforcing the region’s identity and sense of place.

The interplay of nature and settlement within the heritage area led to the creation of something entirely new, a landscape that was shaped by settlement patterns that become characteristically “New England” in form. Venerated by subsequent generations of writers, historians and scholars the New England landscape, of which Freedom’s Way provides a remarkably intact example, was defined by concepts of the common good, man’s triumph over and eventual reliance upon nature and the manner through which land was managed to support communal enterprise.
Concepts and ideas for Theme Two include, but are not limited to:

- Describe the town center’s role as the fundamental organizing unit of the community in terms of land use, governance, and social organization and show how this remains a hallmark of the region today.
- Trace how the “New England” Town was something new – an important reinvention of the English village plan and reflective of new institutions.
- Show how English settlers’ ideals of communal interdependence, covenanted church and town belonging is reflected in the land and structures: commons, meeting houses, graveyards, stone-walled pounds, etc.
- Explain how key institutions – governmental buildings, meeting houses, inns and taverns and commercial buildings – were sited alongside early settlers’ houses in patterns that remain typical of the New England landscape.
- Describe how early settlers incorporated some Native American farming methods and crops while replicating the English farming practices of their village of origin.
- Reveal how today’s agricultural landscape evolved from multi-crop and early town husbandry of the 1600 and 1700s and market agriculture of the mid-1800s.
- Detail how small agricultural farming communities developed connections to each other and other parts of the country through husbandry techniques.
- Describe how cottage industries begun by self-reliant, independent entrepreneurs expanded to larger scale industrial production leading to the growth of such interior towns as Gardner, Fitchburg, Nashua, and Clinton that had the natural resources necessary to support such endeavors.
- Describe how stone walls mark strong notions about private property ownership in tension with the communal ideal, and how they delineate the mixed use agriculture (tillage, pasture, meadow, woodlot, orchard) of the region’s pre-industrial farmers.

Theme Three: Revolutionary Ideas: Visionaries and Experimenters

Since before the founding of the nation, people within Freedom’s Way Heritage Area have been at the forefront of social, intellectual and cultural innovation; inspired by religious and philosophical convictions, democratic principles, a drive for self-improvement and rapid industrialization they created new ideas about relationships to both society and the natural world.

Theme three is about ideas, social, intellectual and cultural, that emanated within the region that shaped new ways of thinking about the rights of
individuals as well as the individual's role within society and their relationship to the natural world. Because history does not stop at the arbitrary demarcation line drawn by the heritage area’s border and people were remarkably mobile and connected throughout the region many of these ideas, including those connected to the American Revolutionary War, are linked to a larger geographic area. It is the pattern of settlement and the routes that these early revolutionary ideas and actions traveled within the heritage area that reinforced the eventual outcome and location of the events of April 1775.

An independent spirit fostered social and political reforms and attracted a community of creative individuals within the heritage area who reinforced and built upon the ideas underpinning the American Revolution, broadening them to apply to all regardless of race, gender or religious belief. Inspired by the genius of the place, it is within the region that the Transcendental movement found a home and flourished, providing a conceptual framework for the conservation of the natural world and the rights of humans to live freely within it that continues to resonate throughout the world.

Concepts and ideas for Theme Three include, but are not limited to:

- A discussion of how the belief in local self-governance shaped the communities within the heritage area and how threats from Great Britain to that concept shaped events leading up to, and following, the American Revolution.
- A depiction of how Puritan tenants translated to American ideals (self-governance, community responsibility, education, belief in moral excellence and a focus on hard work and thrift).
- A description of the routes that Minutemen took from surrounding communities to travel to Concord and Lexington to fight in the Revolutionary War, linking them to settlement patterns and stories intertwined with individual political beliefs.
- A description of how the desire to remember events and individuals connected to the American Revolution inspired memorialization and rituals of remembrance.

Built in 1770 for patriot minister William Emerson, The Old Manse, a National Historic Landmark, illustrates Theme Three. It became the center of Concord’s political, literary, and social revolutions over the course of the next century. In the mid-nineteenth century, such leading Transcendentalists as Bronson Alcott, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller discussed the issues of the day here, with the Hawthorne and Ripley families.

A handsome Georgian clapboard building, The Old Manse sits near the banks of the Concord River among rolling fields edged by centuries-old stone walls and graced by an orchard. From upstairs, the North Bridge is visible, where the famous battle of April 19, 1775, took place.

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne both called the Manse home for a time – and each found inspiration here. Emerson would draft his famous essay “Nature” from an upstairs room, and Hawthorne would write a tribute to the homestead called Mosses from an Old Manse. Hawthorne and his wife, Sophia, started their married life here, and poems they wrote to each other are etched on the Manse’s window panes. The heirloom vegetable garden, which has been recreated today, was originally planted by Henry David Thoreau in honor of the Hawthornes’ wedding.

(Photo by Patrice Todisco; text courtesy Trustees of Reservations.)
romanticism leading to the preservation and interpretation of historic sites throughout the heritage areas as well as the establishment of Minute Man National Historical Park in Concord, Lexington and Lincoln.

- An exploration of the spiritual beliefs of the Transcendentalists, including the concept of self-reliance, and its impact on social and literary beliefs, regionally and nationally.
- A description of how Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay, Nature, influenced the birth of the Transcendental movement.
- An overview of the life and work of Henry David Thoreau including impacts on literature, culture and the concept of social justice, both regionally and internationally.
- An exploration of how ideas, promoted by the Transcendentalists, influenced the development of educational and religious institutions in the heritage area and beyond.
- A presentation of the stories of early historic religious settlements within the region, including the Shaker Villages established in Harvard and Shirley in the first half of the nineteenth century and the Millerites in Groton in the 1840’s, linking them to broader concepts of religious experimentation within the heritage area.
- An exploration of the successes and failures of Transcendentalist living experiments, including at Fruitlands in Harvard and Walden Pond in Concord and Lincoln.
- A discussion of the role that women played during the Revolutionary War including their ability to adapt to not using British goods.
- A narrative of the story of the women, including Margaret Fuller and Lucy Stone who advocated for and pursued an “enlightened democracy” and “civic equality” on behalf of women and African Americans.
- An exploration of the stories of slavery (people, activism, legislation) in New England and the region contrasting the history of such families, such as the Royalls of Medford who owned slaves.
to the history of indentured and freed slaves who were active in the anti-slavery movement.

- An exploration of the “Village Enlightenment” of the early nineteenth century, with its outpouring of reform and improvement societies that ordered and beautified village landscapes, attacked perceived vice and injustice, and promoted learning and self-improvement.

An interpretive matrix is provided at the conclusion of the chapter detailing themes, concepts, and ideas and a preliminary overview of potential stories.

2.1.4 Desired Outcomes for Interpretation and Education

This plan intends that within five years the heritage area will support a multi-dimensional interpretive program that engages residents and visitors alike. In collaboration with its many partners, it will discover, curate, and share the region’s stories. It will engage new audiences in the pursuit of life-long learning experiences that elevate and empower stewardship and an appreciation of the region’s natural, cultural, and historic resources. To achieve this outcome the heritage area’s interpretive themes will amplify the organization’s mission and goals to:

- Inspire generations of life-long learners through innovative educational and interpretive initiatives that connect stories – past and present – to residents and national and international visitors

- Foster pride and a culture of stewardship to preserve the natural, historic and cultural resources of the heritage area as a legacy for future generations.
• Engage and collaborate with organizations, interests and individuals to shape a shared regional vision as a living link across landscapes, history and time.

• Promote sustainable communities throughout the heritage area that reinforce and foster awareness of its character, memories, traditions and sense of place.

The heritage area will achieve this vision by:

• Providing opportunities for partners to work collaboratively with a spirit of entrepreneurialism;

• Engaging new audiences;

• Curating resources; and

• Developing and maintaining communication tools that are vibrant, interactive, and relevant to a diverse audience.

2.1.5 Potential Audiences for Interpretation

Different audiences have different needs, capabilities, and expectations. In planning the heritage area’s interpretive presentation, it is important to be aware of the variety of audiences to be engaged, to account for differences in needs and expectations as programs are developed.

Guiding principles for interpretation (outlined further below) encourage planning for different types of experiences appropriate to different audiences – young, old, active, passive, seeking the experience, or merely passing through. While the heritage area is committed to further study regarding audience outreach in general the following audiences are among those known already to be important to the heritage area’s presentation.

Residents

Engaging residents leads to increased awareness and appreciation of the region’s nature, history, and significance. Residents form the core of Freedom’s Way citizen-led history and science initiatives and provide
meaningful links to local collections and stories. A great deal of the interpretation implemented as part of Freedom’s Way will be undertaken by local partners interpreting their own communities, sites, and landscapes, promoted as opportunities for residents to explore attractions they have not yet visited.

Residents are a challenging audience to develop. They have not necessarily learned that this is a region that expresses important truths as a whole about the places in which they live. They may know a little history about their town, and they are likely aware of such basic stories as Paul Revere’s ride and Thoreau’s experiment at Walden Pond. They may have favorite trails, farms or parks to visit. They are less likely, however, to understand they live in a region rich in historical significance that is local, national and international in scope with value to a broad range of interpretation and engagement.

A goal of the plan is to develop opportunities for residents within the heritage area, regardless of geography, age, income or ethnicity to find their place within the stories and themes, providing a framework for interpretive experiences relevant to each.

**Youth**

A primary goal of the heritage area is to engage young people using 21st century technologies as a forum for communication and outreach to build
appreciation and future support for historic and natural resources. School programming, recreational opportunities, experiential and interdisciplinary learning, living history, and the use of technology will be key to engaging young audiences, including underserved populations whose histories are now emerging.

**Heritage Visitors**

Tourists who have the leisure to make planned visits to nationally and internationally significant historic and scenic places are an audience to be cultivated within Freedom’s Way. Sites in Concord and Lexington attract both national and international visitors to the region while seasonal events such as fall foliage tours attract local visitors to the region. Chapter 5 addresses cultural heritage tourism in detail.

**Revolutionary War Enthusiasts**

Revolutionary War enthusiasts are one of the heritage area’s natural audiences drawn to Minute Man National Historical Park, the Concord Museum, Lexington, and other Revolutionary War interpretive sites within the region. With a desire to experience authentic places, Revolutionary War enthusiasts are natural audiences for and expanded interpretive experience beyond Concord and Lexington to other historic villages and their rich and engaging Revolutionary War stories.

**Conservationists**

As home of the Transcendentalists and a national center for conservation activity, the heritage area attracts conservationists who wish to see the places Emerson, Thoreau, and others made famous and to experience the region’s conserved landscapes, especially Walden Pond. Highlighting the many ways in which conservation has been a part of the region’s story is central to the heritage area’s thematic presentation.

Concord is an international destination because it is a site for theories of civil disobedience and non-violent social protest both during the
Revolutionary War and through the practices and writings of the Transcendentalists.

**Literary Pilgrims**

The region contains the homes of noted authors and many of these are preserved and interpreted as house museums. In addition people want to experience the landscapes that inspired literature and wish to link those stories to historical and geographical context.

As an example a literary tour of Concord includes The Orchard House, home of Louisa May Alcott from 1858 to 1877 where she wrote *Little Women*, The Ralph Waldo Emerson House, The Wayside, The Old Manse, Walden Pond, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, The Concord Bookshop and The Concord Free Library.

**Recreational Users**

Closely associated with the conservation audience are the many types of recreational users throughout Freedom’s Way. Hikers, bikers, runners, paddlers – recreational users are natural constituents who have a close association with and experience of the landscape. Interpretation can help enhance their experience and build support for landscape initiatives.

### 2.2 INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

The interpretive plan for Freedom’s Way uses the heritage area’s themes to embrace and support existing interpretation and interpretive sites while presenting them as a coordinated regional endeavor that can be experienced heritage area-wide.

Projects and initiatives stemming from this interpretive plan will build a unifying area wide identity, creating a sense of place that is recognizable to people of all ages and backgrounds, affording them an opportunity to be engaged in and be engaged by the heritage area’s stories.

#### 2.2.1 Heritage Area-wide Orientation and Context

Freedom’s Way Heritage Association has a responsibility to organize and present the overall interpretive context for the heritage area, orienting residents and visitors and connecting them with opportunities for exploration. The Association provides a framework through which the existing interpretive approaches and services of partners may be shared and coordinated and new interpretive experiences developed.

Regardless of the medium through which they are offered, interpretive initiatives ought to provoke and motivate both residents and visitors, enabling these audiences to relate to stories and seek connections. Furthermore, these initiatives should build a unifying identity for the entire region and link its many places to the heritage area's unique and continuing history.

The heritage area’s communication strategy, discussed in Chapter 3, Communications and Collaboration, includes an overview of the interconnected platforms through which Freedom’s Way will provide interpretive experiences through social media. These include use of social media and a continually evolving web platform that provides orientation.
and context to the region as well as an opportunity for interpretive experiences to be shared by partner organizations to participate.

However important, the website is not a substitute for user experiences and must thus be considered within a wider range of interpretive tools. These may include publications, exhibits, and kiosks within communities and at partnering sites, plus the creative development and use of mobile software applications (“apps”) and other digital technology that makes it easy for audiences to explore physically the landscapes, communities, and sites of the heritage area.

The heritage area will explore how it will integrate physical collateral such as a large format, fold-out map of the landscape that can be used for both interpretation and orientation with other more nimble, communication products that can link to on-line technologies that are easily updated. It must identify the audiences to which interpretive collateral is intended and the format most suitable to their needs.

Recreational opportunities provide an opportunity for a family of supporting publications and media with information and interpretive content. Maps and interpretive publications for specific resources within the heritage area, including historic villages, industrial communities and scenic roadways may be developed in association with interpretive and revitalization initiatives.

**ACTION:** Provide heritage area orientation information and context for the heritage area using a variety of media, introducing heritage area themes, linking to partners and the landscape, and encouraging residents and visitors to explore the region.

2.2.2 Wayfinding and Signage

Among the requirements of the Freedom’s Way enabling legislation is pursuing the role of ensuring that signs identifying public access and sites of interest are posted throughout the heritage area. Freedom’s Way fulfills this role by assisting and supporting partners in implementing wayfinding and site identification signage as identified by need and by the expressed interest of partners.

To develop an effective signage and wayfinding program, Freedom’s Way must first update its graphic identity as detailed in Chapter 3. Once this has occurred a long-term strategy for wayfinding can be developed for the heritage area that includes interpretive and directional signage with a goal of creating a legible environment that reinforces the recognition of individual places as well as the larger area. The signs will work as part of a larger, more comprehensive wayfinding program that provides orientation and assists in navigation using both signs and other means of guiding visitors – maps, digital information, etc.

The heritage area will support the installation of wayfinding signage along specified tourism and recreational routes supporting and integrating ongoing multi-community programs and initiatives such as the Battle Road Scenic Byway in Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, and Arlington, the Johnny Appleseed Trail spanning Route 2, and the twelve-mile Nashua River Rail Trail between Ayer, MA and Nashua, NH.

Freedom’s Way will work with partners and communities to identify new driving, bicycling and walking routes that would benefit from wayfinding signage exploring both low-impact and green approaches.

**ACTION:** Work with partners to identify the need for wayfinding and site identification signage with a goal of developing a comprehensive planning strategy for the development and implementation of such a program. Incorporate wayfinding and site identification signage into grant and other implementation programs for partners supported by the heritage area.


2.2.3 Supporting Existing Interpretive Attractions

As a partnership endeavor, Freedom’s Way supports the missions and programming of existing interpretive attractions within the heritage area and will work with its partners to determine their place within the heritage area’s thematic framework.

The Freedom’s Way Heritage Association will consult with existing attractions, as well as new endeavors, to determine how the heritage area can support individual needs and activities, integrating programs and projects within the heritage area’s thematic presentation to develop partnerships through which support may be provided in accordance with the availability of resources. The heritage area will use programmatic agreements as a means of developing roles and mutual support between sites and the heritage area as a whole.
In addition to promoting existing attractions, Freedom’s Way will help coordinate attractions through such means as identification and promotion of tours, itineraries, and thematic linkages. The heritage area and attractions will explore possibilities for joint programming and other initiatives.

In addition to promoting and working with individual sites, Freedom’s Way will support emerging byway initiatives including the Battle Road Scenic Byway that links a number of interpretive sites addressing key heritage area themes within Concord, Lexington, Lincoln and Arlington and the emerging Nashua River Wild and Scenic River that links eight Freedom’s Way communities.

**ACTION:** Support the missions and programming of existing interpretive attractions. Collaborate with attractions in identifying needs, seeking resources, and organizing support. Feature attractions within the heritage area-wide presentation. Use programmatic agreements where appropriate to identify roles and commitments and mutual support.

*Timeframe and Responsibility:* Ongoing action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and existing interpretive attractions.

**Regional Attractions**

Regional attractions play an important role as places where residents and visitors may be introduced to the heritage area-wide presentation and in particular deserve attention in the first phase of implementing the plan as they often already provide visitor services that can support the heritage area’s thematic presentation and serve as centers from which stories can be connected to surrounding communities, landscapes and sites.

As outlined earlier in this chapter and further discussed in Chapter 3, Communications and Collaboration, Freedom’s Way Heritage Association is responsible for orienting residents and visitors and connecting them
with opportunities for exploration. In partnership with the Association, regional attractions are places where orientation and context for heritage area themes and stories may be provided and where information on opportunities to explore may be obtained. As the focus for free exploration of the heritage area, local communities, sites, and partners share their own stories within this context.

There are many existing interpretive attractions within the heritage area. The following are examples of some of the regional attractions within the heritage area. Other attractions, listed in Appendix D1, are features within the Freedom’s Way heritage area-wide interpretive presentation.

- **Minute Man National Historical Park** is the principal attraction within Freedom’s Way, interpreting the Revolutionary War events at Concord and Lexington, which are a touchstone for the heritage area. An outstanding site for interpretation as well as recreation, Minute Man has a special relationship with Freedom’s Way as the local representative of the National Park Service, which manages the National Heritage Area program. In addition to providing program support where appropriate, Freedom’s Way can work with the National Park Service to help increase resources devoted to Minute Man, which have been dramatically reduced in recent years.

- **The Walden Pond State Reservation** in Concord is part of the Massachusetts Forests and Parks System. A National Historic Landmark, Walden Pond was home to Henry David Thoreau from 1845 to 1847 and his experience there inspired the 1854 book *Walden*. Walden Pond is considered the birthplace of the American conservation movement.

- **Great Meadows, Assabet River, and Oxbow National Wildlife Refuges** combine to include 7,697 acres within the heritage area comprised of forest, wetlands, vernal pools, ponds, and rivers. Popular as sites for wildlife viewing, nature study, and birding, they are part of the Eastern Massachusetts Wildlife Refuge.
• **Mount Wachusett State Reservation** located in Princeton, contains 3,000 acres of alpine meadows, ponds, streams, fields, and forests including the largest known area of old growth forest east of the Connecticut River in Massachusetts. The mountain is part of an extensive greenway area, including Leominster State Forest, Massachusetts Audubon’s Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary, and Minns Wildlife Sanctuary, and offers seventeen miles of hiking and walking trails.

• Located overlooking the Nashua River within a magnificent landscape, **Fruitlands Museum** interprets a range of significant themes and resources for the heritage area including stories of American Indians, natural resources, utopian society, agriculture, American art, and the Shakers.

**ACTION:** Focus on encouraging regional attractions to develop themselves as places where residents and visitors may be introduced to the heritage area-wide presentation through orientation; the introduction of themes, stories, and interpretive context; and information on opportunities to explore.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Short and mid-term action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and regional attractions.
• **Middlesex Fells Reservation** was established in 1894, the beginning of the great statewide park system in Massachusetts. Its 2,575 acres are among the earliest properties acquired to protect scenic and natural lands in metropolitan Boston. Within the reservation is the 203-acre Virginia Wood, the first gift made to the world’s first land trust, The Trustees of Reservations (originally known as The Trustees of Public Reservations).

• **Drumlin Farm** in Massachusetts and **Beaver Brook Nature Center** in New Hampshire are two of the heritage area’s key agricultural and natural resource interpretive attractions. Freedom’s Way can promote each site and encourage their use as natural resource hubs, connecting to a wide range of federal, state, and local natural resource landscapes.

### 2.2.4 Partnership Media and Exhibit Program

Freedom’s Way will work to strengthen interpretation throughout the heritage area by encouraging local partners to implement interpretive presentations within their communities that create new interpretive products and experiences. These will expand opportunities for heritage tourism within the region and raise awareness about the value of community landscapes, sites, and resources as part of the heritage area wide interpretive program.

To facilitate a coordinated, heritage area-wide presentation, Freedom’s Way will establish a family of exhibit carriers and graphic formats for partners use. The family of exhibit carriers and formats will feature the heritage area’s graphic identity and reinforce the National Park Service standards for simplicity, economy and compatibility.

The presentation can be used as part of an interpretive program through which local partners may develop and install interpretive exhibits on their sites that build upon the Freedom’s Way identity and themes and utilize the heritage area graphic/brand system. Participating sites will be included in heritage area-wide orientation and interpretive materials and promotion.
ACTION: Develop a family of graphic formats and associated interpretive framework using the Freedom's Way graphic identity and brand for use by partners in a heritage area-wide interpretive presentation.


ACTION: Develop supporting formats in a variety of media using the Freedom’s Way identity, including maps, brochures, guides, apps, and other forms of technology, to support local interpretation.


ACTION: Create a program and process through which partners can develop and install interpretive exhibits or other forms of interpretive media at their sites using heritage area formats and be promoted as part of the Freedom’s Way presentation. Operate the program as an ongoing initiative managed by Association staff to be implemented over time, adding interpretive experiences in accordance with the interest and initiative of partners and the availability of resources.

*Timeframe and Responsibility: Mid-term action of the Freedom's Way Heritage Association and regional and local interpretive partners.*
The heritage area’s primary themes will be used to organize and provide context for local presentations, with the local stories of communities and partnering sites illustrating aspects of the relevant themes. Over time, a rich variety of local historic, natural, and cultural sites will be interpreted, largely through local initiative, and become an important part of the Freedom’s Way interpretive presentation.

In addition to exhibits, the heritage area will support local interpretation with apps, maps, publications, and electronic media formats that could be used to either enhance or be a substitute for on-site exhibits particularly for sites where on-site exhibits are not desired.

The Freedom’s Way interpretive formats will be available for use by a wide range of partners and will establish criteria that allows for the integration with partner formats.

### 2.2.5 Town, Village, and Community Presentation

Towns are the principal organizing structure for governance and social organization within Freedom’s Way, and are also central to the region’s historical development and landscape. Many of the heritage area’s themes can be conveyed through the lens of town history and town places.

Freedom’s Way will encourage partners within towns to organize townwide interpretive presentations as part of the heritage area-wide initiative. Local partnering organizations will be encouraged to lead development and implementation of the local presentation in accordance with Association guidelines and with support from Association staff and the Association’s Interpretation, Education, and Curatorship Committee.

The Association will assist partners in the development and implementation of interpretive planning that might include the following (suggested guidelines for preparation of community interpretive plans are included in Appendix E):

- The historical development and significance of their community;
- How it relates to heritage area themes;
Heritage area and local themes they wish to convey;

• Local subjects and stories that best convey their history and illustrate their themes;

• Places within the community where interpretation can be offered;

• How proposed interpretive sites might be physically linked; and

• The most appropriate media for identified sites and for the overall presentation.

The Association will assist town-based partners in development and implementation of their vision. It is anticipated that local community presentations will use the Freedom’s Way exhibit program. Matching grants and technical assistance may be offered to support development and implementation depending upon the availability of resources. Town, village, and community presentations will be featured in heritage area-wide orientation and promotional materials. Suggestions for thematic linkages in the following section may provide ways to set priorities in reaching out to communities and considering proposals for community assistance.

ACTION: Establish a program to assist towns, villages, and other community centers in planning and implementing community-wide interpretive presentations driven by the interest and initiative of partners and the availability of resources.

Timeframe and Responsibility: Mid-term and long-term action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and interested community partners.
2.2.6 Thematic Tours, Routes, and Linkages

As a component of the heritage area-wide presentation, Freedom’s Way will work with interested partners to organize and implement thematic interpretive presentations of significance to the heritage area, local communities and sites that will include tours that link communities and sites. These may be thematic or featured scenic routes.

Cooperative thematic presentations will coordinate and link sites that interpret similar topics, subjects, or themes. Examples might include:

- **Paths of the Patriots** – Specifically related to the events of April 1775, build upon the Paths of the Patriots program to feature interpretive presentations connecting historic villages and publicly accessible sites along historic routes traveled by local militia to Concord, Lexington, and the Battle Road Corridor. Identify driving routes, install exhibits at publicly accessible sites, prepare supporting materials, and coordinate with Minute Man National Historical Park and attractions along the Battle Road Scenic Byway.

  A Paths of the Patriots thematic presentation has the potential to be a primary interpretive initiative involving many partners, spreading the April 19th story across the entire heritage area. Local partners will tell their own stories about the lead up to, response to, and consequences of the events of April 19th. The events of Concord and Lexington, engaging many Freedom’s Way themes, could be a defining initiative.

- **Historic Villages** – Interpret the historic seventeenth and eighteenth century village centers of Freedom’s Way in a coordinated presentation and format. Link the villages across the landscape with recommended driving routes. Ask local partners to take the lead in preparing community interpretive plans for their villages, highlighting seventeenth and eighteenth century history and landscape development. Identify common themes and topics and demonstrate how and why villages are similar or different. Coordinate with a Patriot’s Path if appropriate.
• **Industrial Development** – Develop a thematic interpretive initiative focused upon the heritage area’s mill towns/cities and their development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ask interested local partners to research their industrial stories and reveal the decisions and innovations of inventors, owners and workers. Explore the interrelationship of market economies, farms, factories, and technologies and celebrate the changing immigrant stories and traditions that endure. Use the initiative to support local economic revitalization, featuring mill towns and cities as regional service centers with restaurants, shops, and visitor services.

• **Harvest Home** – Work with local farms, agricultural sites, regional conference and visitor bureaus, and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources to develop a themed presentation for agricultural attractions and community-owned farms within Freedom’s Way. Interpret the history and traditions of agriculture in Freedom’s Way over time as well as agriculture today identifying scenic driving routes and linkages. Include local farm stands, markets and restaurants that feature local foods.

• **In Thoreau’s Footsteps** – Continue and further develop ongoing programming and events associated with Thoreau and the sites and communities he visited. Support local partners in developing and implementing expanded region-wide interpretation. Connect new and existing Thoreau interpretive sites through trail development, driving routes, brochures, collaborative events and online information. Adapt or expand the initiative to include all of the Transcendentalists and literary figures within the region.

• **Shaker/Religious Heritage** – Several important sites and attractions within Freedom’s Way relate to the story of the Shakers, including the privately owned sites within the historic Shaker community in Harvard and the historic Shaker house at Fruitlands Museum. Create a themed tour of Shaker sites telling their stories about their beliefs in gender equality, determinism and liberty as well as their contributions to music,
business arts and architecture. Use Fruitlands as an interpretive hub to link participant sites by roles and experiences in accordance with its interests and capabilities. Develop supporting publications and online information establishing context and outlining the presentation.

- **Freedom’s Way Birding Trail** – Oxbow National Wildlife Area and Bolton Flats are premier Central Massachusetts birding locations during periods of springtime high water, identified as Watchable Wildlife sites of national significance. Using them as starting points, unify and connect birding sites throughout the heritage area, creating a cohesive trail network in support of the region’s identity as a premier destination for nature tourism.

**ACTION:** Work with interested partners in developing themed interpretive presentations linking sites interpreting common subjects, topics, and themes. Identify self-guiding tours and driving routes that can serve as linkages between communities and sites.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Short-term and long-term action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and interested partners.

### 2.2.7 Recreational Interpretive Experiences

Conservation lands, trails, back roads, and rivers within Freedom’s Way provide opportunities for a rich array of recreational experiences including hiking, biking, paddling, bird watching and skiing. Recreational experiences are an ideal mechanism to engage residents and visitors with the landscape and rich natural resources of the heritage area. Adding interpretation can enhance their experience and raise their awareness in support of conservation and cultural landscape preservation.

Freedom’s Way contains a comprehensive, interconnected trail network. Many are widely promoted, actively used by residents, and considered important community assets. In addition to regional trails, formal and informal hiking trails have been created on publicly accessible conservation lands in many communities.
The Montachusett Regional Trails Coalition has worked with local communities and partners, including Freedom’s Way, to identify, map, and promote trails within its region. This coalition of citizen activists has developed a program of trail walks integrating interpretation with recreation that has been wildly successful during the past year.

The Nashua and Concord Rivers have been the focus for water trail paddling experiences for many years and back roads within Freedom’s Way are popular routes for cyclists beyond the use as components of designated regional trails. Private sector biking and paddling businesses, clubs, and nonprofit organizations are active within the heritage area to help organize, service, and promote recreational experiences.

Freedom’s Way will engage with regional and local partners to develop a recreational infrastructure – such as trailheads with interpretive information or a guide to a regional birding trail combining information about many existing sites – and provide opportunities to merge natural and cultural landscape interpretation with recreational experiences. These can be organized and coordinated as themed interpretive opportunities utilizing the Freedom’s Way exhibit and touring programs as described above.

Freedom’s Way will especially focus on working with cycling clubs, businesses, and community partners to identify and interpret biking routes that link communities and sites and create destinations and experiences for cyclists. Routes and trail networks can be identified on a Freedom’s Way recreational and interpretive map as well as online and through apps.

The heritage area will also collaborate with paddling businesses and nonprofit conservation organizations to create comprehensive coordinated interpretation of river trails to enhance exploration of the Nashua, Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers.

**ACTION:** Work with interested partners to develop and interpret recreational experiences throughout the heritage area. Feature hiking trails, bicycling routes, and river paddling that engage residents with the landscape. Use on-site, online, and published interpretive media to tell the story of each landscape traversed and relate landscapes to heritage area themes and context. Prioritize initiatives based upon the interest and commitment of partners and the availability of resources.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Mid-term and long-term action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and interested partners.

### 2.2.8 Public Art

Public art is an important medium through which community sites may be enhanced and interpretation may be offered. Historically, monuments, sculpture, plaques, historical objects, and natural objects such as rocks have been a traditional means of commemorating places and events. Increasingly communities are creating art on commons, sidewalks, on farms, in parks and along trails to transform landscapes and invite people to enjoy what is nearby. Fitchburg, MA and Nashua NH add art to city
streets, bridges, and parks. Artists come together annually in Acton, MA, and Brookline, NH, to create art and share the process with the public.

Freedom’s Way should encourage the use of public art as an interpretive medium in communities and at sites. Public art should be incorporated into community preservation plans whenever possible. Local artists should be engaged to create works for their communities. Local arts and cultural organizations should be included in collaborative efforts to interpret local communities and sites.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS OFFERED BY FREEDOM’S WAY

Recent and current programming includes:

**Paths of the Patriots** — an intensive research initiative led by prominent historians and supported by volunteer partners in participating towns that researches and records the untold stories of ordinary citizens in the years preceding and following the Revolutionary War;

**Strollin’ and Rollin’** — citizen-led tours of towns and groups of towns within the heritage area highlighting significant cultural and historical landscapes;

**Hidden Treasures Weekend** — an intergenerational series of free public programs developed by community partners highlighting unknown stories about people, places and artifacts with their community;

**Programs and Events Offered by Freedom’s Way**

**Recent and current programming includes:**

**Paths of the Patriots** — an intensive research initiative led by prominent historians and supported by volunteer partners in participating towns that researches and records the untold stories of ordinary citizens in the years preceding and following the Revolutionary War;

**Strollin’ and Rollin’** — citizen-led tours of towns and groups of towns within the heritage area highlighting significant cultural and historical landscapes;

**Hidden Treasures Weekend** — an intergenerational series of free public programs developed by community partners highlighting unknown stories about people, places and artifacts with their community;

**ACTION:** Include public art in interpretive presentations in communities throughout Freedom’s Way. Encourage local partners preparing interpretive presentations within the heritage area program to involve local arts and cultural organizations and artists to participate in their initiatives.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Mid-term and long-term action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and interested partners.

**2.3 EDUCATION**

New England has been long known for its dedication to and support for scholarship and education. Communally funded schools were integral to the region’s early communities, in support of the Puritan beliefs that every individual should be able to read and understand the Bible; only an educated populace was considered capable of self-governance.

Over time, educational beliefs within the heritage area evolved to include attitudes and ideas linking education to social issues and through Transcendentalist ideology the right to choose what one wants to study as one sees fit. Lyceums provided (and continue to provide) opportunities for continued self-improvement as well as a forum for debate.

As the home of the Transcendentalists, the heritage area is where the seeds for the environmental movement and non-violent change were sown,
The heritage area will work to realize the goals of the U.S. Department of State’s Declaration of Learning’s 21st century mission “to bring the collective resources of both government and non-government agencies together to create tools for students, educators and learners of all ages that will better equip the next generation of leaders.” To do so it will develop innovative programs and initiatives with cross-generational appeal.
Like many of its partners, the heritage area embraces the concept of lifelong learning, engaging people of every age and every interest whenever possible. However, the heritage area places a particular emphasis upon reaching young people. The high quality on-site and in-school programs currently offered by the region’s leading attractions provide an outstanding opportunity through which additional young people and their parents may be engaged.

In prioritizing its support, Freedom’s Way emphasizes place-based experiential learning, using local sites within communities as educational venues and laboratories for learning – getting residents and young people out into the landscape, learning about the places in which they live, and connecting real places with classroom lessons.

The Association will explore a number of creative ways in which to do this looking at various methodologies for engaging individuals in learning about and sharing information about the heritage area.

Freedom’s Way brings a cultural perspective to learning. It can demonstrate the balance and competing influences of natural and man-made forces, shaping ways to think about the landscape today and providing opportunities for people to think about and appreciate cultural landscapes.

2.3.2 Heritage Area Programs and Events Offered by Freedom’s Way

Freedom’s Way Heritage Association has been organizing educational programs and events for a number of years, even before the designation of Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area. Successful programs have been further developed and expanded during the management planning process. (See sidebar starting on page 52.)

Programs have been developed in collaboration with regional partners, including the Massachusetts Historical Society and American Antiquarian Society (Paths of the Patriots), Nashua River Watershed Association (Farms, Fields and Forests: Stories from the Land), and Montachusett Regional Trails Coalition (Connecting Communities Along Our Trails). Local partners have been collaborators in the Association’s programming, whether in hosting a venue (In Thoreau’s Footsteps) or serving as citizen historians and facilitators (Hidden Treasures Weekend and Paths of the Patriots).

Freedom’s Way will continue to offer, develop, and expand lectures, workshops, author’s discussions, tours, and other educational programming at locations throughout the heritage area in collaboration with local and regional partners.

**ACTION:** Continue to develop and present a variety of Freedom’s Way educational programs and workshops for diverse audiences in collaboration with local and regional partners.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Ongoing action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association with local and regional partners.
2.3.3 Heritage Area Programs Offered by Partners

There is a wide range of organizations within Freedom’s Way that offer educational programming for the general public. These include town historical societies, town recreation committees, cultural arts organizations, land trusts, trail groups, local historic sites, local farms, local libraries, private museums, lyceums, and other local clubs and societies. Many of these organizations partner with Freedom’s Way and offer or host educational programs related to the heritage area’s themes including lectures, talks, workshops, and trail walks.

Regional organizations that offer programming include conservation entities, state parks, National Wildlife Refuges, regional historical attractions, river associations, nature groups, and others.

Larger interpretive attractions and other organizations, including conservation groups and Minute Man National Historical Park, offer programs oriented to schools and school students. These include on-site programming where students travel to the historic or natural resource venue to meet with professional interpreters and educators. They also include in-school programming where educators from the sites go to the schools to provide place-based teaching.

Freedom’s Way will continue to encourage and support the general programming of local and regional partners within the scope and framework of the National Heritage Area. Partners’ programs will be

ACTION: Create a program and process through which partners can identify relationships between their programs and heritage area themes and engage with the heritage area to promote their programs and events.

Timeframe and Responsibility: Ongoing action of local and regional partners with support from the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and regional visitor bureaus.

(Continued from page 54)

messages, context, and connections. Develop information and guidance for exploring subjects in greater detail to encourage those who are interested in independent exploration.

Accuracy: Develop research methodologies that are accurate using primary source material if possible. Clearly differentiate between those that are legends, lore, or derive from oral tradition.

Quality: Develop interpretive experiences that meet the highest standards of quality in terms of design, orientation to resource, storytelling, physical installation, accessibility, and visitor experience. Create guidelines, review processes, and technical

(Continued on page 56)
2.3.4 Living History Engagement

Although one of the most difficult media to do well, living history is a particularly effective way to engage audiences and provide meaningful educational experiences. Regional historical attractions within the heritage area, including Minute Man National Historical Park, have ongoing relationships with living history interpreters and groups and provide venues in which to present.

Freedom’s Way partners should consider how best to develop and enhance living history programs that engage residents, students, and visitors with personalities associated with the heritage area’s history through multiple mediums that include but go beyond on-site experiences. They should

 ACTION: Collaborate with regional attractions in engaging living history interpreters and providing creative mechanisms through which to share their stories including through the participation in local and regional programming and events and off-site on-line opportunities.

consider portraying a range of historic personages providing differing points of view that offer themed programming through a wide range of venues.

### 2.3.5 Local Programs and Events

Freedom’s Way Heritage Association staff and regional partners will continue to encourage, support, and provide assistance to local partners for programs and events where possible. Developing regional programmatic initiatives that connect communities within the heritage area, such as Hidden Treasures Weekend, is key to building a shared identity for the region. These will be a priority of the Association and will be integrated into its technical and funding initiatives including advice and support for organizational development, operations, management and promotion. Assistance might be offered in a variety of ways, including:

- Facilitating collaboration between partners;
- Offering interesting venues for partner’s programs;
- Organizing the participation of lecturers, interpreters, or educators;
- Providing or coordinating technical assistance;
- Advising on best practices;

**ACTION:** Organize a program through which local organizations can be engaged and supported and local educational programming can be encouraged, expanded, and enhanced in accordance with available resources.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Ongoing action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and regional partners.

(Continued from page 56)

perspectives in their thematic and historical context. Encourage audiences to test their assumptions while drawing conclusions from each story.

**Opportunities for Exploration:** Present themes and stories in ways that encourage audiences to explore communities throughout the heritage area by drawing interpretive connections, developing tempting leads, and providing information and resources that stimulate interest.

**Opportunities to Engagement and Support:** Share the heritage area’s mission, vision and goals and offer opportunities for audiences to engage in activities and initiatives at both the local and regional levels.
Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area Management Plan

2.4 WORKING WITH YOUTH

2.4.1 School Systems

School districts in Massachusetts and New Hampshire are organized by town and are an example of the importance of towns and local governance within the heritage area. Some towns with smaller populations partner with adjacent towns to create a single district, sometimes entirely and sometimes just for the upper grades. Schools have strong local affiliation with their communities.

At the state level, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and New Hampshire Department of Education provide guidance and support to local school districts. They also develop and implement state educational standards as required under state law. Both states have adopted curriculum frameworks and clear goals for student learning that guide educators in what students should know and be able to demonstrate at particular grade levels by providing clear goals for student learning. Both states also participate in the national, state-led Common Core State Standards Initiative, the purpose of which is to establish a single set of clear educational expectations for English language arts/literacy and mathematics that states can share and enhance.
voluntarily adopt. A similar program is underway for science, known as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), published in April of 2013.

The two content areas associated with state curriculum frameworks most pertinent to Freedom’s Way are history/social studies and science (including natural history and the environment). Both Massachusetts and New Hampshire have adopted curriculum frameworks for these two content areas dated to 2006, and adaptations that align to the common core standards have recently been made. Massachusetts expects to move the science standards forward to a public adoption process during the 2015-2016 school year. New Hampshire approved “Nationally Aligned K-12 Science Competency Statements” in May of 2014 that were based in part on the NGSS.

Educational and interpretive sites within Freedom’s Way that serve school students have developed their programming to directly support state curriculum frameworks directly to make sure that their programs are as useful to teachers as possible. Some provide additional instructional materials that teachers can use to coordinate classroom instruction with field activities. Programs can be customized to meet the particular needs of school districts, schools, and teachers. These programs are important in making the sites as relevant as possible to the needs of students, teachers, and the educational community.

2.4.2 School Programming by Partners

Educational programming for schools is a means through which Freedom’s Way reaches out to engage young people. High-quality educational programs are offered to schools by several of the heritage area’s leading regional partners. Freedom’s Way embraces and supports this programming and works to strengthen, enhance and expand it, reaching more students, more parents, and more communities.
School programming is directly related to Freedom’s Way interpretive themes and helps convey the heritage area’s principal message about identity, landscape, and sense of place. Practically all of the partners’ school programming is place-based and experiential, using real places and hands-on activities to teach curriculum content. Existing programs have been designed to relate to state curriculum frameworks and may be adapted and customized to the particular needs of teachers, schools, and school districts.

Supporting, expanding, and enhancing educational programming for schools is a priority for Freedom’s Way.

2.4.3 On-Site Programming for School Groups

School groups are frequent and important visitors to attractions within Freedom’s Way. Professional educators and interpreters at these attractions provide high-quality programming that engages students with their sites. Programs feature place-based and experiential learning. Attractions support their on-site educational programming with lesson plans and follow-up activities that teachers can use in the classroom. Programming can be adapted to the particular needs and interests of each student group.

Historical attractions, such as Minute Man National Historical Park, Fruitlands Museum, and the Concord Museum, and natural resource attractions and organizations, such as Drumlin Farm, Beaver Brook Nature Center, and the Nashua River Watershed Association, offer high quality place-based educational programming to engage students within Freedom’s Way.

Programming tends to be limited by the school calendar to portions of the fall and spring months, at which times sites can be overwhelmed with requests. Many school districts find it difficult to afford program, support, and transportation costs in these times of tight budgets, particularly less affluent school districts whose students would benefit from the experience most. Attractions find that students of all income groups and locations within the heritage area benefit from on-site programming; they are alarmed at the degree to which even affluent suburban students do not interact with their landscapes.

Freedom’s Way supports on-site educational programming for school students offered by the heritage area’s regional attractions. The heritage area should convene a working group of organizations and attractions providing on-site programming to review and assess the range of existing programming, its geographical reach to school districts within the heritage area, how programming might be coordinated, gaps in programming, and ways in which programming can be expanded and enhanced. Individual attractions should outline ways in which their own programming might best be supported. Heritage area support might take the form of:

- Coordinated outreach to teachers, schools, and school districts;
- Assistance and support in better adapting potential on-site educational programming to the needs and interests of teachers, schools, and school districts;
• Small grants to school districts to fund transportation costs related to field trips;

• Staff support by developing a corps of qualified paid or volunteer educators who could be made available to attractions to assist with programming for school groups;

• Technical assistance to attractions and organizations for on-site educational programming;

• Assistance and support in planning, resource development, and implementation of site enhancements to provide adequate facilities for on-site educational programming;

• Program grants to individual organizations and attractions for enhancement and expansion of on-site educational programming; and

• A coordinated development and fund raising initiative focused on on-site educational programming.

**ACTION:** Develop a coordinated approach to supporting, expanding, and enhancing on-site educational programming for school students at historical and natural resource sites and attractions.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Mid-term action of regional partners and the Freedom's Way Heritage Association.

The Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum in Arlington, MA, is housed in the historic Jefferson Cutter House (ca. 1830) beside a preserved section of the old rail line that made Arlington a desirable place for wealthy residents as early as 1870. (Ten miles of the railroad’s original alignment are now the Minuteman Bikeway – see page 3.)

Regarded as one of the most important sculptors in American art, Dallin was born in 1861 in Springville, UT. His sculpting and artistic talent was recognized at an early age, and he was sent to Boston at 19 to study. Among his most beloved works are his monuments of American Indians, which changed the face of public art in America. The Cutter House also serves as a visitor center and as offices for the Chamber of Commerce.
In addition to on-site programming, in-school programming is an important way through which students may be engaged within Freedom’s Way. In-school programming differs from on-site programming at attractions and should not be confused with ‘traveling trunk’ programs where attractions come to schools to tell their own site-related stories. While on-site programming tends to feature existing stories and interpretation at an attraction, in-school programming is directly related to school curriculum and lesson plans and brings educators specializing in certain topics into classrooms to help teachers teach those topics.

Within Freedom’s Way, in-school programming is presently offered primarily for science and natural resource related topics, not for cultural and history related topics. Within the Nashua River watershed, the Nashua River Watershed Association offers a Scientist-in-Residence program. Within the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord River (SuAsCo) watershed, Drumlin Farm offers a similar River School program.

Common to both programs, qualified educators join teachers in the classroom to teach specialized subjects directly related to curriculum and class lesson plans. Lessons are science based, experiential, and hands-on. In addition to classroom work, students are taken out into the local landscape for field work and place-based learning. Local community sites are used, helping students relate to landscapes they are familiar with and experience textbook lessons in real places through hands-on activities. Some outdoor, place-based learning can be conducted right on the school grounds. Students are encouraged to experience locally and think regionally, using the watershed as a way to connect landscapes, communities, and ecosystems.

In-school programming provides the opportunity to connect young people with the landscape in ways that are real and meaningful. Lessons are real, have school and community support, and are noticed by parents. The
complications of day-long field trips are avoided. Learning is more closely related to curriculum needs.

Through the emphasis on place-based learning, in-school programming directly addresses the heritage area mission and goals. Its support, enhancement, and expansion to school districts throughout the heritage area, should be a consideration for Freedom’s Way considered as a larger component of creative programmatic initiatives designed for school partners.

The heritage area should convene a working group of regional partners, educators, and school district representatives to outline recommendations for development of a long-term, ongoing heritage area-wide in-school program. Support might be offered in a variety of ways, including:

- Coordinated outreach to teachers, schools, and school districts;
- Direct yearly program grants to regional partners conducting in-school programming;
- Matching grants to school districts as an incentive to participate in in-school programming;
- Grants to financially disadvantaged schools, such as those in urban and rural communities, to assist them in participating;

The Fitchburg Art Museum has been the Massachusetts community’s regional treasure since 1925. According to Wikipedia, “In 2012, FAM began its rotating contemporary New England artist exhibition program, thus connecting the strength of its historical collections with contemporary art practices. Each rotating, contemporary exhibition is accompanied by an interactive educational exhibit in the Learning Lounge, where visitors young and old can learn about what they are seeing in the galleries and better understand their own reactions to the exhibits.” The museum is also working on becoming New England’s first fully bilingual English/Spanish museum.

**ACTION:** Develop a coordinated approach to assessing, supporting, expanding, and enhancing in-school educational programming that includes place-based and experiential learning in local communities.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Mid-term and long-term action of regional partners and the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.
• Encouraging existing in-school lessons on place-based science, natural resource, and ecological topics to include cultural aspects, impacts, and perspectives, including local civic action;

• Connecting existing programs and schools with local community and regional partners who can enhance science, natural resource, and ecological content with cultural and historical content; and

• Expanding the range of subjects and areas of learning available for in-school and local place-based programming to include history, civics, culture, and other curriculum-related subjects involving heritage area themes.

2.4.5 Teacher Network, Training and Engagement

Several regional organizations and attractions within Freedom’s Way involved in educational programming also feature teacher training workshops and professional development. As with school programming in general, workshops are closely aligned with state curriculum frameworks and focus on the subject areas history/social studies and science, which includes natural history and the environment.

Freedom’s Way should collaborate with partners in supporting, coordinating, enhancing, and expanding existing teacher training programs. Workshops may be conducted on weekends, over school breaks, and during the summer and may be authorized to issue continuing education credits. Participants should be publicly recognized within their school districts and communities. Workshops should always be interesting, practical, and fun.

Building on these programs, Freedom’s Way has a unique opportunity to cultivate a community of teachers, or teacher network, in which participating teachers collaborate with and learn from one another while participating in a variety of programs and activities connecting to the themes and mission of the heritage area. Working with regional
attractions, the heritage area could develop a database of teachers interested in such interaction; communicate with them on a regular basis; and offer them opportunities for interaction, engagement, and support.

In the short term, Freedom’s Way might share materials from current programs such as Paths of the Patriots and In Thoreau’s Footsteps with teachers and discuss creative ways in which materials might be used. The heritage area could expand its educational partnership with Minute Man National Historical Park in recruiting teachers to attend ongoing teacher training workshops and conferences.

The heritage area might consider expanding the summer institute currently offered in partnership with Minute Man National Historical Park to provide professional development around Freedom’s Way’s themes and subjects. It might also expand its partnership with the Massachusetts Historical Society and the American Antiquarian Society. An online discussion forum could be created in relation to the institute for year round interaction of teachers. An online repository of information, guidelines, lesson plans, and support materials related to themes might be created for teachers as noted in the discussion of curriculum above.

**ACTION:** Support existing teacher training and development programs offered by regional partners. Coordinate, enhance, and expand the programming to create a heritage area-wide teacher network and professional development initiative.

*Timeframe and Responsibility: Mid-term and long-term action of regional partners and the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.*

### 2.4.6 Curriculum Frameworks

School districts in Massachusetts and New Hampshire adhere to the requirements of state curriculum frameworks that have been adopted to guide and provide standards for learning in grades K through 12. Both states have also voluntarily adapted their curriculum frameworks in accordance with the nationally recognized Common Core Standards. Educational programming offered by Freedom’s Way partners has been designed to support teachers, schools, and school districts in addressing state curriculum.

History, culture, the environment, civics, and the world of ideas are educational subjects well suited to Freedom’s Way and its principal themes. The two content areas associated with state curriculum frameworks related to these subjects are history/social studies and science (which includes natural history and the environment). Programming, instruction, lesson plans, support materials, and related activities developed by partners for school programming must meet the grade level guidelines outlined for these subjects.

**ACTION:** Consider state curriculum frameworks in developing educational programming for students.


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**Legislative Mandate**

The heritage area’s enabling legislation and its mission, vision, and goals, inform the approach to interpretation and education and the important role they play in the heritage area’s initiatives.

The heritage area’s legislation (Public Law 111-11, Section 8006 – see Appendix A) specifically cites interpretation in several sections including (1) the role of the coordinating entity, (2) the requirements of the management plan, (3) criteria for approval of the management plan, and (4) the duties and authorities of the Secretary of the Interior.

In its opening paragraphs on purposes, the legislation cites preserving special historic identity and interpreting resources for the educational and inspirational benefit of future generations (a.2 & a.3). It also notes the general purpose of increasing public awareness of and appreciation for the heritage area’s natural, historic, and cultural resources (d.1.B.iv). These purposes can be accomplished in large part through interpretive and educational programming.

With respect to the duties of the coordinating entity, Freedom’s Way Heritage Association, Inc., the legislation specifically cites establishing and maintaining interpretive exhibits and identifying points of public access and sites of interest are posted throughout the heritage area (d.1.B.vi).

The legislation states that the management plan should include an interpretive plan (Continued on page 66).
Regional partners and the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association should consult and collaborate together in coordinating how their various programs address state curriculum frameworks and the Common Core Standards. Historical partners should work with natural resource partners in preparing coordinated guidelines and lesson plans that relate cultural and natural themes and topics.

The heritage area should develop guidelines and an approach to state Curriculum Standards used by local partners with their local school districts. Heritage area partners should use the guidelines routinely as a tool in the development of new programming for residents, students, and young people throughout the heritage area.

### 2.4.7 Student Internships

Community colleges are important regional institutions that connect closely to residents and local communities. Three community colleges serve the communities of Freedom’s Way. Mount Wachusett Community College has campuses in Gardner, Leominster, and Devens serving the central and western portions of the heritage area; Middlesex Community College has campuses in Bedford and Lowell serving eastern communities; and Nashua Community College has its campus in Nashua serving communities in New Hampshire.

Freedom’s Way has collaborated with Mount Wachusett in educational initiatives previously. One way that collaboration between the colleges and the heritage area could be strengthened is through an internship program in which specific college programs place students to work with organizations within the heritage area in accordance with their area of study.

Regional interpretive attractions where student interns might work closely with professional interpreters and educators would be of particular interest. Opportunities might be available for guided research and natural resource field work with several leading nonprofit organizations. Administrative work and special projects for attractions or nonprofit organizations might be of interest as well, including students studying business and nonprofit management.

Freedom’s Way should consult with regional partners and community college programs and administrators to determine the best way through which an internship program might be organized and implemented to the benefit of students and partnering organizations.

**ACTION:** Develop a student internship program through the regional community colleges that engages students in work with regional interpretive attractions and nonprofit organizations.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Mid-term and long-term action of regional community colleges in association with regional partners and the Freedom’s Way Heritage.

### 2.5 Encouraging Research

The history of Freedom’s Way communities has been well researched over many years by both professional and avocational historians. Local
Historical societies have been the centers of much of the research undertaken at the local level and are repositories of detailed historical information about communities that is available in no other place. Historical societies are found in most towns within the heritage area and function at a fairly high level of activity and dedication. They are important in undertaking ongoing research at the local level.

Historical societies have been key partners in a number of Freedom’s Way programs over the years focused on research in relationship to heritage area themes. Perhaps most significant has been Paths of the Patriots in which local historians have researched stories relating their communities to the events of April 19, 1775, in Concord and Lexington. Freedom’s Way has also conducted an oral history program that has engaged local historians.

Historical societies are important local partners for interpretation and educational programming as well. Local research provides the information necessary to support the community interpretation encouraged by the heritage area-wide interpretive presentation discussed in this chapter.

To date, most of the historical societies engaged with Freedom’s Way have been from communities in the center/eastern portions of the heritage area along the Route 2 corridor in Lexington to Harvard vicinity. Southern,

**ACTION:** Continue to undertake historical research within Freedom’s Way communities that documents stories associated with heritage area themes and relates them to real places at the local level. Further develop heritage area programs to encourage and support research at the local level.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Ongoing action of local historical societies and historians in association with regional partners and the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.
western, northwestern, and eastern urban communities have been less engaged. Freedom’s Way has the opportunity to be a resource and partner to historical societies and historians from throughout the heritage area.

Freedom’s Way should continue to encourage and support historical research undertaken by historical societies and local historians in communities. The heritage area should continue, further develop, and expand programs such as Paths of the Patriots that bring to life the people, events, and stories relating heritage area themes to real places in local communities.

The heritage area should continue to collaborate with other regional partners such as the American Antiquarian Society, Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati and Massachusetts Historical Society in encouraging, supporting, and providing forums for local research.

2.5.1 Regional Research

New England and the Boston metropolitan area in particular are centers for education and academic activity. Colleges and universities within the region undertake research across a variety of disciplines that informs our understanding of New England history and landscape and helps shape a vision for future action. In addition to general historical research, programs such as the Harvard Forest, Brandeis University Environmental Studies Program, and University of New Hampshire’s Sustainability Institute are undertaking research and programming directly related to the heritage area’s goals and interests.

Partners within Freedom’s Way should stay in touch with research and programming being undertaken regionally that informs the mission and interests of the heritage area and local communities. Where appropriate, resulting recommendations and thinking should be incorporated into Freedom’s Way programs and initiatives. Partners should collaborate in publicizing, promoting, and implementing their recommendations within the heritage area as appropriate.

**ACTION:** Monitor and stay in touch with the research undertaken by organizations and educational institutions at the regional and state levels related to history, landscape, and community development within Freedom’s Way.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Ongoing action of regional partners and the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.
**A Mosaic of Subtle Beauty**

An intricate network of rivers, wetlands, lakes, kettle ponds, meadows, forest, drumlins, eskers and monadnocks combined with climate to determine how land was used, inspiring conservation of natural and scenic resources and providing economic and recreational opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts*</th>
<th>Topics and Stories*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme #1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain and illustrate how land forms define the character of the region and created an environment propitious for human settlement.</td>
<td>• Walden to Wachusett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illustrate how patterns of development were based upon natural features and landforms.</td>
<td>• Connecting Communities Along Our Trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe how the region is shaped by rivers, river valleys and wetlands supporting a range of microclimates and environmental conditions unique to this place supporting a range of plant and animal ecosystems preserved in the region’s national wildlife areas and conservation land.</td>
<td>• Land Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore Native American attitudes and beliefs about the land and its spiritual and social value as contrasted with those practiced by European settlers.</td>
<td>• Glaciers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Depict how differing attitudes towards land ownership led to disagreements between Native Americans and European settlers resulting in, among other outcomes, King Philip’s War.</td>
<td>• Monadnocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe how natural resources shaped how people used the land for habitation, cultivation, manufactures, and industries.</td>
<td>• Kames</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reveal how agricultural uses impacted soil quality, leading to farm abandonment and the eventual reforestation of the region.</td>
<td>• Drumlins</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide an overview of how attitudes towards the physical landscape changed, and continue to change, over time.</td>
<td>• Eskers (Boxborough) Kettle Holes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe how Native American routes followed the landscape and waterways within the region serving as a precursor to the existing transportation network.</td>
<td>• Bogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore the impact of the land on successive generations who were inspired to conserve and preserve its resources, from Shirley’s Benton MacKaye (co-founder of the Wilderness Society, founder of the Appalachian Trail and creator of the term “urban sprawl”) to Marion Stoddart (founder of the Nashua River Watershed Association).</td>
<td>• Floating bogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Depict how attitudes towards the value of natural resources and their importance to a regional system of interconnected natural and cultural resources impacted the preservation of specific sites.</td>
<td>• Old Growth Forest</td>
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<td>• Tophet’s Chasm</td>
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<td>• Quarries</td>
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<td>• Settlement patterns</td>
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<td>• River systems</td>
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<td>• Great Ponds</td>
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<td>• Great Meadows</td>
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<td>• Major watersheds</td>
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<td>• Native American Trails</td>
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<td>• Wapack Trail</td>
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<td>• Redemption Rock</td>
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<td>• Native American Ceremonial Sites</td>
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<td>• King Philip’s war</td>
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<td>• Metacom</td>
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<td>• John Hanson Mitchell</td>
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<td>• Marion Stoddart</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Benton MacKaye</td>
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<td>• USFW Sites</td>
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2: Interpretation & Education
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<tr>
<th>Concepts*</th>
<th>Topics and Stories*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme #1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe how the region’s proximity to urban populations offers scientific, scenic, historic, and educational value providing opportunities for ongoing interpretation.</td>
<td>• Nahum</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe the players, the stakes, the context, the politics, economics, and “winners and losers” in early conflicts between nature, development, and compatible use. Describe and evaluate how the issues, stakes, and people involved changed over time.</td>
<td>• Native American land management techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Trace the history of Mount Wachusett from its role as an important Native American site to development as a recreational facility.</td>
<td>• Annual migrations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A depiction of attitudes towards the value of natural resources and their importance to a regional system of natural and cultural resources as evidenced in the preservation of the Middlesex Fells by Charles Eliot and Sylvester Baxter, an area favored for timber, granite quarrying, ice industry, and its water power, preserved as the “people’s forest.”</td>
<td>• Fish Weirs</td>
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<td>• Clay deposits</td>
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<td>• Forestry</td>
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<td>• Town Land Trusts</td>
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<td>• Herbal/plant medicinal use</td>
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<td>• Use of water</td>
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<td>• power/mills</td>
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<td>• Ponds and the ice industry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mt Wachusett</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Nashoba Praying Village (Littleton)</td>
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<td>• Middlesex Fells</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Inventing The New England Community**

*Early settlers established regionally interdependent inland communities distinct from Boston with democratic governments, new institutions, town centers, transportation networks, industries and agricultural practices that defined the region’s identity and sense of place as characteristic of New England.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Topics and Stories</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme #2</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Farms, Fields and Forests: Stories From the Land</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>- Describe the town center’s role as the fundamental organizing unit of the community in terms of land use, governance, and social organization and show how this remains a hallmark of the region today.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Historic Land Use Patterns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>- Trace how the “New England” Town was something new - an important reinvention of the English village plan and reflective of new institutions.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Town Government Structure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Explain how key institutions- governmental buildings, meeting houses, inns and taverns and commercial buildings were sited alongside early homesteads in patterns which remain typical of the New England landscape.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Burying Grounds</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Describe how early settlers incorporated some Native American farming methods and crops while replicating the English farming practices of their villages of origin.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Meeting Houses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Reveal how today’s agricultural landscape evolved from early multi-crop and husbandry of the 1600 and 1700s and market agriculture of the mid-1800s.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Town Commons</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Detail how small agricultural farming communities developed connections to each other and other parts of the country through the necessity of husbandry techniques.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Training Fields</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Describe how cottage industries begun by self-reliant, independent entrepreneurs expanded to larger scale industrial production leading to the growth of interior towns such as Gardner, Fitchburg, Nashua and Clinton which had the natural resources necessary to support such endeavors.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Trails to Turnpikes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Show how English settlers’ ideals of communal interdependence, covenanted church, and town belonging is reflected in the land and structures: commons, meetinghouses, graveyards, stone-walled pounds, etc.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Taverns and Road Houses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Described how stone walls mark strong notions private property ownership in tension with the communal ideal, and how they delineate the mixed used agriculture (tillage, pasture, meadow, woodlot, orchard) of the region’s pre-industrial farmers.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Historic Town Centers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Reveal how “kinship ties” and economic networks within the heritage area impacted development and economic growth.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Methods of enclosure</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Schoolhouses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Railroad and Depots</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Middlesex Canal</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>- Henry Bigelow</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Amory Maynard</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Fredrick Tudor</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Milk Runs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Cattle Drive</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Chair City</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Quarries</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Economic Development Patterns</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Ethnic Settlements</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Westminster Crackers</strong></td>
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<td>Concepts</td>
<td>Topics and Stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Detail how the landscape scale of the region impacted the scale of agricultural production within a national context.</td>
<td>• John Chapman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain how nucleated settlement patterns were dispersed as a result of transportation infrastructure.</td>
<td>• Buttrick Pattern Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Trace immigration settlement patterns linking them to agriculture, industrialization and cultural ties; reveal how they impact social and cultural activities today.</td>
<td>• Fort Devens</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Detail how the region’s proximity to, yet distance from, the coast impacted its development.</td>
<td>• Marquis Mills</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tell the story of how the abuse of the region’s natural resources fostered a climate of environmental activism leading to their restoration.</td>
<td>• Converse Rubber Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reveal how Fort Devens, a military facility, allowed for the preservation of protected land that became the core of the National Wildlife Area and a larger regional open space and protected area.</td>
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</table>
# Revolutionary Ideas: Visionaries and Experimenters

Since before the founding of the nation, people within Freedom’s Way Heritage Area have been at the forefront of social, intellectual and cultural innovation; inspired by religious and philosophical convictions, democratic principles, a drive for improvement and rapid industrialization they created new ideas about relationships to society and the natural world.

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<thead>
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<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Topics and Stories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme #3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Patriot’s Paths</strong></td>
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<td><strong>In Thoreau’s Footsteps</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Hazard Family</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Alcotts</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Margaret Fuller</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Abigail Abbot</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Ralph Waldo Emerson</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nathaniel Hawthorne</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Shakers</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Millerites</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Voluntary Societies</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Henry David Thoreau</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Temperance Reform</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Anti Slavery Reform</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Private Lyceums</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Public Lecture Circuits</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Social Libraries &amp; Reading Societies</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Competing Church Sects</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Millerism</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Rise of “refinement”</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Production of new “refined” goods</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Francis Drake</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Luther Burbank</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Horace Cleveland</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Hutchinson Family Singers</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Abbot Spaulding</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Harriet Wilson</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nathaniel Thayer</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Louise Doyle</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Discuss how the belief in local self governance shaped the communities within the heritage area and how threats from Great Britain to that concept shaped events leading up to, and following, the American Revolution.

- Depict how Puritan tenants translated to American ideals (self-governance, community responsibility, education, belief in moral excellence and a focus on hard work and thrift).

- Describe the routes that minutemen took from surrounding communities to travel to Concord and Lexington to fight in the Revolutionary War, linking them to settlement patterns and stories intertwined with individual political beliefs.

- Describe how the desire to remember events and individuals connected to the American Revolution inspired memorialization and romanticism leading to the preservation and interpretation of historic sites throughout the heritage areas as well as the establishment of Minute Man National Historical Park in Lexington and Concord.

- Explore the spiritual beliefs of the Transcendentalists, including the concept of self-reliance, and its impact on social and literary beliefs, regionally and nationally.

- Describe how Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay, Nature, influenced the birth of the Transcendental movement.

- An overview of the life and work of Henry David Thoreau including its impact on literature, culture and the concept of environmental conservation and social justice, both regionally and internationally.

- Explore of how ideas, promoted by the Transcendentalists, influenced the development of educational and religious institutions in the heritage area and beyond.

- Present the stories of early historic religious settlements within the region, including the Shaker Villages established in Harvard and Shirley in the first half of the 19th century and the Millerites in Groton in the 1840’s, linking them to broader concepts of religious experimentation within the heritage area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Topics and Stories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme #3</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Committees of Correspondence</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Shay’s Rebellion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Explore the successes and failures of Transcendentalist living experiments, including at Fruitlands in Harvard and Walden Pond in Concord and Lincoln.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Discuss the role that women played during the revolutionary war including their ability to adapt to not using British goods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A narrative of the story of the women, including Margaret Fuller and Lucy Stone who advocated for and pursued an “enlightened democracy” and “civic equality” on behalf of women and African Americans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Explore the stories of slavery (people, activism, legislation) in New England and the region contrasting the history of families, such as the Royalls of Medford who owned slaves, to those indentured and freed slaves who were active in the anti-slavery movement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reveal the story of the dual legacy of freedom and slavery within the heritage area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Explore the “Village Enlightenment” of the early 19th c, with its outpouring of reform and improvement societies that ordered and beautified village landscapes, attacked perceived vice and injustice, and promoted learning and self-improvement.</td>
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<td>- Trace how voluntary societies became associations; detail their role and contribution to civic life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Relay the story of religious culture including “challenges” to the integration of diverse beliefs and perspectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Track the story of political discontent linking causes to outcomes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The concepts, topics and stories listed here are a representative, partial list. They represent some examples that represent types of stories that could illustrate the themes. This is not all-inclusive (in fact it could never be) nor is this intended to exclude any topic. A park interpretive theme is successful only if other topics and stories could be included within it.

**About the Matrix:** The sections in the matrix allow people with different learning styles and interests to get a broader picture of what may be encompassed in a particular theme in ways that a theme statement cannot do alone.

**Concepts:** “Concepts” are written as objectives to provide managers and interpreters with guidance and consistency to align personal services, exhibits or media with park significance. The concepts and ideas are designed to be added to or changed as new information comes to light. Park interpretive themes should be relatively timeless so the list of concepts/ideas and topics/stories can be added or changed without having to change the theme. Because the objectives can be used for programs, exhibits, and media they can also save effort and eliminate the stress that comes with the pressure to develop brand-new, original themes for every interpretive program or product.

**Testing the Themes:** When testing interpretive themes to guide the park interpretive program now and for the future, the question to answer is not, “What’s missing?” In fact, there should be a lot missing and the concepts and ideas and topics and stories can only be validated if people can begin to see many possibilities for other representative topics and stories that could be included under a concept.