Communication is a broad and critical function of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association. Almost every program or action in this plan can be said to be related to communication, with each helping to define the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area and set expectations in the minds of various audiences.

Through a variety of communications activities, the Association must build the National Heritage Area’s identity and visibility, widening the scope of these activities as the entire heritage area program advances. It must take advantage of opportunities to communicate with many audiences – partners, supporters, and residents as well as visitors. This includes not only the activities described in this chapter, but also the interpretive and educational activities and audiences described in Chapter 2.

Because communication is fundamental to collaboration, this chapter also describes ways for coordinating various activities and entities, setting the stage for more detailed approaches offered in Chapters 2, 4, and 5. Technological advances in communications are especially critical in helping to organize and drive continued collaboration.

The Freedom’s Way Heritage Association’s roles in communications and collaboration are:

- To build the heritage area’s identity and visibility among multiple audiences, both residents and visitors;
- To enable partnerships, especially through communication with and networking among partners; and

This chapter covers:

- The catalytic role of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association through engagement in communication, curatorship, and partnering
- Critical elements of the partnership network – local, state, federal
- Assisting local partners through partner development and advocacy
• To use technological advances in the digital realm in innovative ways to enable all audiences to see, understand, and explore the heritage area – in the physical world as well as the “virtual reality” of the digital world.

Moreover, if the Association is successful in these roles, it is more likely (1) to maximize the economic impact of its public investment, primarily through cultural heritage tourism planning and development as discussed in Chapter 5; and (2) to be successful in developing funding relationships and resources as discussed in Chapter 6.

### 3.1 The Planning Foundation for Communications and Collaboration

As explained in Chapter 1, the Board of Directors has developed goals to guide preparation of this plan and provide broad, long-term direction as the plan is implemented. Most relevant to this chapter, every action taken to develop Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area and the Heritage Association should support the following goal:

**Goal 6: Engage and collaborate with organizations, interests and individuals to build a shared regional vision as a living link across landscapes, history and time.**

During management planning, as the Board of Directors considered the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association’s role as coordinating entity and debated mission and vision statements, they identified the following strategic organizational priorities to shape how the Association works with partners and recognizes their unmet needs:

- **Serve as a catalyst for communication and collaboration**
- **Be a positive force for creative partnerships and entrepreneurial endeavors**
- **Promote a place-based identity for the heritage endeavors**

They also arrived at a consensus that their primary aim is to **work with partners to recognize unmet needs** in accordance with the heritage area’s purpose and mission.

Sections below explain how these strategic organizational priorities play out in communications and working with partners.

### 3.2 Approach – Serving as a Catalyst

As experts in helping residents and visitors see their territories in new ways, heritage areas often enjoy quoting T. S. Eliot’s immortal line from *Little Gidding, Four Quartets* (1942): “We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”

Today, the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area can enable exploration of the history, culture, and nature of its territory in ways that were not feasible even a few years ago. It is possible, indeed, to see this region afresh, “for the first time.”
Imagine a moment that changed the way the world is perceived, forever. In 1972, the crew of Apollo 17 recorded the famous “Blue Marble” photo—the first time humans experienced an actual, full view of the earth. “It created an immediate sensation, printed on the front page of nearly every newspaper on the planet, the image of our world as we had never seen it before,” Al Reinert, the documentary filmmaker, wrote in *The Atlantic* in 2011. It is credited with giving new energy to studies of science and the environment in the late 20th century.

The original Blue Marble image was a single Hasselblad camera snapshot. Science and imaging technologies now make it possible to engage with a complex image of the earth composed of thousands upon thousands of data, capable of deep, web-based exploration (http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/view.php?id=57723).

In much the same way, technology and the digital realm give initiatives like Freedom’s Way powerful new capabilities for organizing the data and experience of large landscapes.

The Freedom’s Way Heritage Association will enhance the ways this region is perceived and experienced in both reality and the digital realm, thus helping to shape its protection and development. Developing excellent, catalytic, and innovative communications and technological capabilities will be a high priority in advancing all programs.

### 3.2.1 Audience Development

The Association will develop the broadest possible audiences for its programs. It will shape its programs to reach varied audiences and reach out to these audiences with appropriately diverse kinds of promotions. Both diversity (kinds of audiences) and numbers (sizes of audiences) will count in assessing progress as annual communications plans are developed and evaluated.

**Strategic Priority: Residents**

The residents who live within the boundaries of the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area comprise the most important audience for the sites and programs within the NHA. In order to build the public support needed for the actions described in this plan, the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area must have a strong, coherent identity. Residents need to understand the historical and social significance of the region and why it is important.

**“Company’s Coming”**

Despite the emphasis here on the residential audience, there is a certain value to the proposition that “company’s coming.” As anyone who has ever prepared their home for a guest must realize, getting ready to host visitors and show them what is special about a place adds to the level of intensity and excitement in preparing programs and enhancing communities. Thus, in planning programs for residents, Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area must always bear in mind ways to serve its potential visitors.

Chapter 5 addresses the development of the cultural heritage tourism audience directly. Residents and visitors are interrelated, however. Heritage travelers generally want to go where residents like to enjoy themselves. Freedom’s Way must first be successful in reaching its...
residential audience – and thereby developing its reputation, or “brand,” as discussed below. In so doing, it will strengthen the likelihood that tourists will also respond with enthusiasm. By improving the heritage area’s brand with its residential audience, it ensures that word of mouth – the best way to reach the heritage traveler – will help to attract visiting audiences.

### 3.2.2 Planning for Communications

A plan for the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association’s communications must be a part of every annual work plan (described in Chapter 6). In general, a communications work plan identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in order to help evaluate status and progress in implementing communications planning.

A communications work plan includes the following elements:

- Opportunities for communications in the coming year – both internal to the Association’s programs (e.g., training workshops) and external (e.g., networking at partners’ events or community festivals);
- Audiences (including visitors, volunteers, communities, businesses, local and state government officials, state and federal legislators, grantors and donors, and grantees and partner organizations);
- Messages and desired outcomes, expressed in terms of objectives for affecting each audience; and
- A specific set of action items, with each action described in terms of:
  - Priority;
  - Timing considerations;
  - Marketing and promotional considerations (e.g., invitations, banners, media outreach);
  - Resources needed – including staff time, funds, volunteers, and board attention; and
  - Measurements for evaluating performance.

With regard to timing, the plan should be accompanied by an annual planning calendar. Development of such a calendar helps to identify overlaps, gaps, and annual rhythms, and aids in planning and timing the steps building up to a penultimate action. The specific set of action items for communications will vary from year to year, organized according to strategic areas of emphasis (see sidebar).

**ACTION:** Establish an annual communications plan tied to the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association’s annual work plan and budget.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Ongoing action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.
3.3 CURATING THE FREEDOM’S WAY EXPERIENCE

The heritage area-wide interpretive presentation described in Chapter 2 brings partners together to coordinate their efforts and promote them widely. Freedom’s Way provides partners with opportunities to share stories and extend their programming, reaching out to new audiences, within the context of a regional identity and experience.

The Freedom’s Way Heritage Association serves as a facilitator, host, and guide for the heritage area-wide presentation and has responsibility for aspects of its implementation. In the broadest sense, the Association serves as the curator for the Freedom’s Way experience – helping to shape all aspects of that experience, through encouraging partners’ involvement, stimulating research, assembling unique elements, and offering its own perspective.

Similar to the way a museum manages its collections, the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association envisions itself as a curator of landscapes, sites, communities, structures, routes, objects, and stories. Consider the Association’s role as manager of the “experience of place” or a “museum without walls,” to borrow phrases from the world of heritage development. The Association can gather, organize, and provide access to information, content, and collections developed by partners and others. It can also provide a point of view, by selecting, highlighting, and interpreting the targets of its curatorship.

Even the idea of stewardship set forth in Chapter 4 is encompassed by the concept of curatorship for the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area. Its “collections” need caring for just as objects in a museum do, and the same words are used in both cases – preservation, conservation.

The Freedom’s Way website and use of social media will allow the Association to combine rich information and visual material with the experience of the heritage area’s physical places. As an ongoing institution, Freedom’s Way can actively work to tell stories in new and interesting ways in order to engage new audiences. It can enrich the content of others by providing context, commentary, connections, and insight.

Using social media and the ever-growing variety of applications for managing and tapping into data sources, the heritage area can engage specific audiences and provide them with a resource through which they can connect with content they are seeking and find of interest. The heritage area can serve as a host and provider to make interesting information easier to find. In this way, the heritage area can serve as a resource and become an online attraction. The idea of serving as an active curator should drive the heritage area’s website development (see further discussion below).

3.3.1 Managing the Curatorial Role

Curating as conceived here is a complex endeavor, involving a wide range of topics and organizing varied data, in ever-increasing streams. It overlaps with interpretation and communications, including maintaining digital platforms where teachers and interpreters gain access to information that enriches their involvement in the heritage area. It also
overlaps with communications activities, including building the region’s identity and brand and attracting visitors.

A curatorial management plan would greatly aid the coordination involved. In general, like the annual communications plan described above, although less tied to an annual rhythm, such a plan should set objectives in order to help evaluate status and progress in implementing the Association’s curatorial role and receive periodic, strategic updates. Such a plan would identify:

- Priorities for topics on which to focus;
- Sources of data and relationships to manage in tapping the data;
- Assessment of users (to understand which audiences are using existing data and how, what their needs are, and the quality of their experiences);
- Priorities for supporting and incorporating ongoing development of research and opinions;
- Partnership opportunities;
- Staff development needs; and
- A specific set of action items, with each action described in terms of:
  - Priority;
  - Timing considerations;
  - Marketing and promotional considerations (which audiences to reach and how)
  - Resources needed – including staff time, funds, volunteers, and board attention; and
  - Measurements for evaluating performance.

Legislative Requirement for an Annual Report

The law establishing the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area, P.L. 111-11, requires that the Association "submit an annual report to the Secretary for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this section specifying (i) the accomplishments of the local coordinating entity; (ii) the expenses and income of the local coordinating entity; (iii) the amounts and sources of matching funds; (iv) the amounts leveraged with Federal funds and sources of the leveraged funds; and (v) grants made to any other entities during the fiscal year." While technically this report might be a communication specific to the Secretary, this requirement establishes an opportunity to create a report for general distribution.
The Association’s approach for developing its role as a curator will require a period of making ready for even more intensive involvement. The first curatorial management plan should describe a strategic, first-phase curatorial initiative that helps to grow the organization’s capability and experience as a curator, focusing especially on managing the website (discussed below). Once the organization has put time into exploring this role, employing pilot projects and other means of learning and experimentation, it should initiate a next-level effort.

3.3.2 The Freedom’s Way Website

The Freedom’s Way website is perhaps the most important medium through which the heritage area’s information and identity are communicated. It should be a primary means to engage residents, provide information, promote partners, and convey the heritage area’s message, and it should be the cornerstone of curatorship initiatives.

The Freedom’s Way website should be periodically re-designed, not only to ensure that it conveys the heritage area’s graphic identity, but also to support users’ needs and expectations.

There are two basic groups of users. The first is web visitors, including residents who wish to explore the heritage area. The second is stakeholders, comprising partners, grantees, and others interested in engaging with heritage area programs and promoting the National Heritage Area as a whole.

ACTION: Develop a curatorial management plan to ensure that data from historical research, collections and other curators, Geographic Information Systems, and other sources are used in imaginative and innovative ways.


ACTION: Develop staff capability for data management, social media development, and other technological initiatives as the digital realm evolves and its power for reaching organizations and individuals grows.


ACTION: Develop an intensive curatorial initiative to take advantage of digital information, resources, and partnership opportunities within the heritage area. Gather, organize, share, promote, and link to information appropriate to the heritage area and developed by partners and others.


Typically, heritage areas engage heavily with both groups. Their websites must be designed to function almost as two different websites that are joined in a single interface and graphic identity.

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**ACTION:** Develop a curatorial management plan to ensure that data from historical research, collections and other curators, Geographic Information Systems, and other sources are used in imaginative and innovative ways.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Immediate action and ongoing of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.

**ACTION:** Develop staff capability for data management, social media development, and other technological initiatives as the digital realm evolves and its power for reaching organizations and individuals grows.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Immediate and ongoing action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.

**ACTION:** Develop an intensive curatorial initiative to take advantage of digital information, resources, and partnership opportunities within the heritage area. Gather, organize, share, promote, and link to information appropriate to the heritage area and developed by partners and others.

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

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(Continued on page 82)
For web visitors, the website should be easy and fun to use and explore. It should be the natural place for visitors to go to see how to explore the landscape, communities, attractions, recreational opportunities, and events. The website should immediately convey the heritage area’s significance and primary interpretive themes and relate those themes to partners, programs, and initiatives.

For this audience, the Freedom’s Way website should include interpretive and curatorial content that is engaging to explore, filled with photographs, maps, and varying depths of information. Content should establish context, present the interpretive themes, and relate those themes to real places and opportunities to explore the landscape.

The website should link to the websites of partners and regional attractions. In support of the heritage area’s curatorial role, the website might also provide an overview of each attraction, draw thematic connections among them, and suggest touring routes and itineraries. It could also provide information about the interpretation and collections of smaller organizations such as historical societies and libraries to provide broader public access to their information and offerings. This feature of the website is a service to the other group of users, the partners.

The website should also address the vital issues of land conservation, historic preservation, and preserving sense of place, as described in Chapter 4. It should link to preservation and conservation partners, incorporate their messages, and include tools that partners and the general public can use for information, reference, and action. These might include access to one or more GIS databases providing an inventory of resources within the heritage area, using a graphical interface appropriate to average users. (As discussed in Chapter 4, the evolution of these databases, their coverage in the heritage area, and ways to access the data are all moving targets, with the hope that some of the complexities inherent in GIS management and access will be resolved over time.)

For stakeholders, the website should be able to deliver answers to questions involving the heritage area and Freedom’s Way Heritage Association as coordinating entity – forms, policies, directories, etc. The website should be a platform that empowers collaboration and curation among participating heritage area partners. Using the website’s technologies and power, they might work together to improve and update information available to users. For example, they might upgrade the GIS interface or create mobile-device applications based on assembled information.

### 3.4 CREATING A REGIONAL PRESENCE – PROMOTING A PLACE-BASED IDENTITY AND BRAND

Being visible is important to the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area. Residents should understand what the heritage area is and appreciate the work it undertakes. A visible presence helps build public support for heritage area initiatives and can be achieved in many ways.

The interpretation described in Chapter 2 is the primary means through which the Freedom’s Way presence will be built. On-the-ground exhibits and support materials installed through heritage area programs should help build the Freedom’s Way identity. Programs supported or promoted
by the heritage area should recognize its contribution by including its logo and acknowledging its support.

In addition, the wayfinding and signage program described in Chapter 2 will also provide visible cues within the landscape that residents and visitors alike are in a special place. There is no substitute for an effective wayfinding program in establishing regional identity.

Communications should reach out to engage residents. Printed materials and other forms of media should be used to create a strong identity for the heritage area and promote partnership programs and projects within the region. The name, Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area, should be

**ACTION:** Periodically assess, update, and redesign the Freedom’s Way website using the heritage area’s graphic identity.


**ACTION:** Evaluate the website’s service to partners; use the results of this evaluation to support periodic enhancements.


**ACTION:** Evaluate the website’s service to audiences that include visitors and residents wishing to explore the heritage area both physically and virtually; use the results of this evaluation to support periodic enhancements.


The story of libraries in Freedom's Way National Heritage Area is a deep and rich one, relating to educational trends in the region. They might even be said to be an early “technology” for sharing knowledge. Their community importance is reflected in significant buildings to be found in communities throughout the heritage area. The Winn Memorial Library in Woburn, MA, was the first of a series of library buildings designed by H.H. Richardson and a National Historic Landmark.

(Photograph at top left courtesy Woburn Public Library; photo above by Daderot via Wikimedia Commons.)
Developing an appropriate graphic identity and brand is among the most important early actions the heritage area will undertake to help create its regional presence.

Graphic identity is visual communication that is immediate and experiential. It is important for creating recognition of the heritage area’s identity throughout the region and conveying a consistent message. It generally involves a logo, but is much more – involving color, fonts, and other styling considerations to create a distinctive look for all of the heritage area’s communications, from signs to brochures to web pages. The logo, in effect, boils the graphic identity down to an at-a-glance image. It is often accompanied by a tagline, a few clever words that convey the organization’s mission.

A “brand” is a larger concept, more than simply a logo and tagline, involving building the heritage area’s reputation over time and helping something that local residents understand and view as a way to promote their regional identity.
“customers” (supporters, partners, grantees, audiences, etc.) know what the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area stands for. Two important elements of branding are developing name recognition and delivering value. A brand is developed intentionally not only from graphic identity, but also from messages conveyed through the heritage area’s interpretive programs and other communications. It must also be consistent with the actions of the heritage area’s managing entity in order to develop reliable expectations on the part of beneficiaries and users. Once the Freedom’s Way brand is developed in concept, it is important to get it across to audiences by creating programs and experiences that are consistent with the brand message.

Branding used to be more difficult to explain to audiences, but between modern celebrity culture and social media, many people today understand instinctively that branding is simply a normal part of business – right down to individuals who manage their “personal brands” on Facebook and Twitter and through blogs and Instagram. Branding must be actively managed and programs aligned to support the brand.

The heritage area’s existing graphic identity and website were developed in 2007. As this plan was going into final production, the Association was preparing to update the heritage area’s graphic identity and redesigning its website.

A complete approach to Freedom’s Way graphic identity should specify logo, graphic elements, fonts, colors, and other components. It should be

**ACTION:** Create a regional presence throughout the heritage area that is visible and recognizable to residents and visitors. Use heritage area programs to build the regional presence over time.


**ACTION:** Assess the existing graphic identity for Freedom’s Way and update or redesign it as appropriate.


**ACTION:** Develop a brand concept statement as a ready reference for use in developing and promoting heritage area programs of all kinds, enabling program leaders to understand how to manage the brand and deliver on its promises.


**ACTION:** Assess progress in branding Freedom’s Way through the annual communications plan. Evaluate brand and name recognition, reputation, and expectations of various audiences. Develop strategies to promote and strengthen the brand in response to what is learned through such assessment and evaluation.

developed to apply to a variety of anticipated formats and media. In addition to graphic components, the heritage area should develop guidelines for use of the graphic identity by both the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and partners.

The Freedom’s Way graphic identity should:

- Convey and communicate the heritage area’s regional, distinctive, place-based identity;
- Relate to New England culture and heritage;
- Be easily recognizable under the variety of conditions of its use;
- Be easy to use and adapt to different formats; and
- Be accessible and convey a sense of enjoyment and fun in experiencing the heritage area.

The Freedom’s Way brand should do all these things, as well, but is less about design and more about reputation. It will take longer to develop, and requires attention through evaluation, to understand how the heritage area’s beneficiaries and users recognize the brand and understand its value.

3.5 CULTIVATING CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area is a collective effort, involving many organizations and agencies with a stake in the success of the heritage area. Partnerships, informal or formal, are critical to achieving success.

They are so critical, in fact, that the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association has adopted a strategic priority of being a positive force for creative partnerships and entrepreneurial endeavors.

Much of this management plan applies to the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association working collaboratively with organizations and agencies with a stake in the heritage area’s success. The Association’s role includes supporting and assisting partners in this plan’s implementation. Partners must see value in the management plan’s vision and goals, and be committed to its successful implementation.

This section identifies actions related to partners and potential supporters, pointing out communications issues along with other relevant concerns in cultivating partnerships. Much of the emphasis here is on building relationships among partners to encourage support, beneficial policies, and collective action.

3.5.1 Defining Partners

“Partners” may be organizations, community groups, local governments, agencies, businesses, or nonprofits. They operate at all levels — local, regional, state, and federal. They especially include those that address the needs of local heritage in a variety of ways — including nonprofit organizations, government agencies, businesses, and such civic groups as local trail committees or organizers of local festivals and events.
Thus, as defined for this discussion, partners are entities with a direct stake in the success of the heritage area, whether formally acknowledged or not. They may be partners in the sense of having a relationship with the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association through written agreement to accomplish mutually important tasks – or they may not have a written agreement, yet work with the Association on projects or tasks by mutual consent. Formal partnerships by mutual agreement are needed when the Association extends National Heritage Area benefits to partners, in order to document roles, responsibilities, and reciprocal benefits. An early action taken by the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association during management planning was to establish policies and procedures for undertaking formal partnerships.

Formal or informal, it is useful to speak of two tiers of partners: (1) regional and state partners to collaborate on vision, strategies, incentives, and programs; and (2) local partners to take action at the local level, especially through cities and towns for implementation to meet heritage area goals. Chapter 6 explains how the Association intends to structure ways for these partners to participate in an ongoing basis in helping the heritage area grow, including an advisory committee to involve state and regional partners and networks to serve geographic subsections of the heritage area and involve Association board members.

### 3.5.2 Critical Elements of the Partner Network

The following sections of this text describe the roles of partners plus a general description of the state and federal roles to be played by various state agencies and the National Park Service.

#### Role of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association

In relating to partners, the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association communicates the heritage area’s collective vision and tracks and celebrates the entire heritage area’s progress toward achieving it; coordinates the participation and work of partners; and develops criteria, guidelines, and standards and a variety of programs to assist and support partners.

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Acton, MA, town hall and town green. Acton held public workshops in 2014 to address improvements at Kelley’s Corner. Advertising with attractive temporary banners (below) can reach neighbors who might miss outreach via newspapers, radio, or Facebook.
The Association also undertakes certain programs independently or as lead partner that benefit the entire heritage area, such as operating a website and sponsoring such regional programs as Paths of the Patriots or Hidden Treasures Weekend.

**Role of Organizational Partners**

Individual organizations, agencies, and sites in the heritage area are critical in presenting elements of the heritage area’s interpretive and other offerings, whether they do so individually or through collaboration with other organizations. They must also communicate with one another and the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association, and embrace the plan and implement it to the best of their abilities. Ideally, they see the plan and the Association as enabling them to accomplish more than they can accomplish individually and they are willing to invest, make policy changes, and otherwise align their existing programs to benefit the entire National Heritage Area as they work to enhance their own capabilities.

Relationships with partners are discussed further below in the section on “Partner Development.”

**Federal Role in the National Heritage Area**

Federal recognition provides credibility and reinforces recognition by partners and communities of the significance of the heritage area. It also brings the federal government into direct involvement in the National Heritage Area, through the Secretary of the Interior. The heritage area’s legislation states that the Secretary may provide direct technical and financial assistance or enter into cooperative agreements with the Association and other public or private entities to provide such assistance. Priorities stipulated in the legislation are actions “that assist in conserving the significant natural, historic, and cultural resources of the Heritage Area; and providing educational, interpretive, and recreational opportunities consistent with the purposes of the Heritage Area.”
As with all other National Heritage Areas, the Secretary has delegated responsibilities for the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area to the National Park Service, as discussed in the next section.

Financial assistance through grants might be available from other federal agencies. The Association should build relationships with federal agencies and their state-local counterparts, including those with economic grants or cost-share programs, so that they understand the purpose and progress of the heritage area. Possibilities include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Economic Development Administration, a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce. These agencies may not always understand that the heritage area is a Congressionally designated entity, so the Association and partners must work toward clear messages about the area’s significance and what role other agencies might play in implementing aspects of the plan.

The heritage area includes three National Wildlife Refuges, Assabet River, Great Meadows, and Oxbow, operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior. While no grants are to be

**ACTION:** Build relationships with agencies at the federal level whose work affects the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area or which can provide services and funding.

*Timeframe and Responsibility:* Ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association in concert with partners that can offer insights into opportunities and relationships.

**ACTION:** Provide routine briefings to members of the Massachusetts and New Hampshire Congressional delegations.

*Timeframe and Responsibility:* Ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association in concert with partners that can offer insights into opportunities and relationships.

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The North Bridge Visitor Center at Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, MA, is located in a brick mansion built in 1911 by descendants of the Buttrick family. (Major John Buttrick was the colonial officer who first ordered his militia to fire upon British soldiers.) The North Bridge Visitor Center features a short video about the North Bridge fight, a bookstore, and exhibits.

Among the exhibits in the park is a brass cannon, dubbed “The Hancock” in celebration of its storied past. In 1775, this cannon, recently smuggled out of Boston, was one of four brass cannons hidden in Concord. Its recovery was one of General Gage’s chief motives when he sent British troops to Concord on April 19, 1775. It is on display courtesy of the Bunker Hill Monument Association.

North Bridge Visitor Center also features the musket carried by Captain David Brown who commanded one of Concord’s two minute companies and was present at the North Bridge fight. It is on display courtesy of The Museum of the American Revolution, Philadelphia, PA.
had through National Wildlife Refuges, there is the possibility of the partnering with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the private supporter of national refuges. (The National Park Foundation similarly is a resource for National Heritage Areas thanks to their association with the National Park Service.)

The members of the heritage area’s two Congressional delegations should be encouraged to send members of their staffs to participate in meetings held by the Association as a part of their ongoing support and interest. They and their staffs can be helpful in identifying sources of federal assistance. Keeping the delegations informed and up to date should be a routine element of the Association’s communications plan.

**The National Park Service’s Role in the National Heritage Area**

Freedom’s Way maintains an ongoing relationship with the nearby unit of the National Park System, Minute Man National Historical Park. This relationship is based not only on the heritage area’s enabling legislation but also on shared historical themes.

The National Park Service’s Northeast Regional Office is an important guide to National Park Service resources. That office maintains a coordinator to work with heritage areas and provide liaison with the national office. The Northeast Regional Office, working with both the Minute Man National Park and the national NHA Program office, specifically could offer:

- Regular meetings between representatives of the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area and NPS regional leaders;
- Staff exchanges to help foster mutual understanding of each other’s needs, skills, and opportunities; and
• Assistance from the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.

In addition, the Association and NPS should undertake collaborative exploration of opportunities to draw on the experience of heritage area participants in addressing challenges that are increasingly important for the NPS, as identified in A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement (August 2011, commonly called the Director’s Call to Action (see sidebar).

Exploration with the Northeast Regional Office should focus on exactly how the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area could support the “Call to Action.”

The Association should also explore establishing a memorandum of understanding or cooperative agreement with Minute Man National Historical Park to address ways to share resources and strategies for mutual benefit. For example, the park may be able to offer space in one of its many buildings to the Association for operational uses; and the Association may be the best conduit for the park to reach out to communities with close associations to the park’s themes and stories.

**ACTION:** Maintain a cooperative agreement with the NPS to obligate National Heritage Area funding for assistance with the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association’s role as coordinating entity.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Annual action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and the National Park Service.

**ACTION:** Explore the possibility of creating a memorandum of understanding or cooperative agreement with Minute Man National Historical Park addressing shared resources and strategies.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association and the National Park Service.

**Maintaining Support and Involvement in the NPS’s National Heritage Area Program**

Part of any National Heritage Area’s responsibility is finding its fit within its national community, whose interests are represented by the nonprofit Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA). This organization is invaluable in keeping its members informed about federal policy, developing consistent standards for information-gathering about heritage areas’ performance, and sharing information about members’ experience with heritage area issues.

To maintain its relations with the National Park Service and with other federal agencies, the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area should be a

**ACTION:** Maintain full membership in the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and provide the resources for staff to participate in organizational activities.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.
recognized part of this national community-building effort maintained by the heritage areas themselves. The Alliance also advocates for the annual federal appropriation for National Heritage Areas – principally by informing its members so that they can keep their individual Congressional delegations informed – so funding for membership must be found outside the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area’s federal share of its budget.

A long-term Alliance aim is to improve the National Park Service’s underlying legal authority to manage heritage areas on a programmatic basis, instead of relying on individual heritage areas’ legislation.

Role of Communities

The National Heritage Area has forty-five cities and towns in two states. Over time, as they learn about Freedom’s Way and the opportunities open to them, all should become engaged in heritage area initiatives described in Chapters 2 through 3.

As noted in Chapter 2, communities are central to the region’s story. They are the principal organizing structure for governance and social organization within Freedom’s Way, central to the region’s historical development and influence upon the landscape. As noted in Chapter 4, they are the principal means through which economic development and significant enhancements to the visitor experience can be accomplished. Community partners are discussed more below in the section on involving “communities as local partners.”

ACTION: Build relationships with community leaders and organizations; organize delivery of services to communities and community groups community by community.

Timeframe and Responsibility: Ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association in concert with partners that can offer insights into opportunities and relationships.

Partnerships with Educational Institutions

As described extensively in Chapter 2, outreach to educational institutions, both pre-K-12 and institutions of higher learning, is critical. These include school districts or administrative units, superintendents, teachers, parent-teacher groups, students and student groups, and other service organizations involved in the schools. Targets for such outreach also include the institutions of higher learning located within the heritage area, as well as others with programs that might be interested in serving the heritage area.

Role of the States – Massachusetts, New Hampshire

State coordination and support is critical for implementing several elements of the management plan, especially historic preservation, Main Street-style programming, and tourism. Education departments may be helpful in organizing outreach to schools; humanities councils may be helpful with funding for educational programs (both school-based and adult programs). State historical and natural parks are key sites for the interpretive system. Scenic roads, bikeways, and trails are affected by
actions of the two states’ Departments of Transportation. Fulfilling the requirement in the National Heritage Area’s legislation for wayfinding is logically best addressed in collaboration with both state agencies.

The governors can be helpful in expressing support for state agencies’ actions to develop and maintain the heritage area, and may be amenable to coordinating agencies’ contributions. For this reason, both governors’ offices should receive routine briefings on the heritage area’s progress. In addition, state legislators for both Massachusetts and New Hampshire can also help to influence state agencies’ support; they should also receive the courtesy of routine briefings.

**ACTION:** Provide routine briefings to the Governors and seek help with coordination of state agencies’ contributions to implementation of the management plan.

*Timeframe and Responsibility:* Ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association in concert with partners that can offer insights into opportunities and relationships.

**ACTION:** Provide routine briefings to elected officials representing heritage area jurisdictions in the state legislatures.

*Timeframe and Responsibility:* Ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association in concert with partners that can offer insights into opportunities and relationships.

**ACTION:** Build relationships with agencies at the state level in both states whose work affects the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area or which can provide services and funding.

*Timeframe and Responsibility:* Ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association in concert with partners that can offer insights into opportunities and relationships.

The rear of the Hancock-Clarke House includes the original structure from 1698, now the entrance to the museum operated by the Lexington Historical Society, which has owned the building since 1896. It is the only building still standing associated with John Hancock, the signer of the Declaration of Independence, who lived there as a child with the owner, his grandfather Rev. John Hancock. It played an important role in the evening leading up to the dawn fight nearby on Lexington Green. The National Park Service’s website on the Signers of the Declaration picks up the story there: “By the time of the Revolution, Rev. Jonas Clarke, a relative by marriage of the Hancocks, occupied the house, which had been built as a parsonage by Rev. John Hancock. Clarke encouraged Revolutionaries to use his home as a meeting place and refuge. On the evening of April 18, 1775, patriot leaders Hancock and Samuel Adams were visiting there. Around midnight, after everyone had gone to bed, Paul Revere and later William Dawes, warning the countryside of the approach of British troops, galloped up and informed the household. A few hours later, Hancock and Adams fled northward to Burlington, MA. They later moved from place to place, staying away from Boston, until they proceeded to Philadelphia to attend the Continental Congress, which convened the next month.”
Tribal Role

The Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area is obligated, by virtue of its federal status, to undertake consultation with American Indian tribes, specifically federally recognized tribes active within or with historic ties to the region influenced by the heritage area. In both Massachusetts and New Hampshire, non-federally recognized tribes may also be helpful in undertaking interpretive and other initiatives in support of the heritage area.

There are two federally recognized tribes in Massachusetts, both representing Wampanoag people, the Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Tribal Council, Inc. (formerly known as the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe), headquartered in Mashpee on Cape Cod, and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) on Martha's Vineyard.

According to the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association website maintained by the University of Massachusetts Boston, “other Wampanoag groups include the Assonet Band, Herring Pond, Seaconke, and Pocasset.” Also in Massachusetts, “the Nipmuc Indians are the tribal group occupying the central part of Massachusetts, northeastern Connecticut and northwestern Rhode Island. The Nipmuc Nation is a state-recognized band with approximately 500 enrolled members today based at the Hassanamisco Reservation (in Grafton, MA). This small 3-acre reservation is the only parcel of Nipmuc land never to have changed hands; its occupation by Nipmuc people dates back to before contact and colonization. The Nipmuc Indians of Massachusetts have several bands today, including the Chaubunagungamaug of Webster and Natick Nipmuc of Natick, in addition to the Nipmuc Nation.”

There are no federally recognized tribes at this time in New Hampshire but the Abenaki people are found there; a subgroup, the Pennacook, are described on one website as having had villages in the Freedom’s Way region within both states. Other federally recognized tribes exist in New England, however, and there are many others without federal recognition.
The National Heritage Area should work with the National Park Service to accomplish this consultation in a way that advances the interests of both the heritage area and tribes with ties to the region, federally recognized or not. The Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs can provide assistance in reaching the state-recognized Nipmuc Nation and others who may be interested in working with the Association.

3.5.3 Assisting Local Partners through Partner Development

The Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area has great potential for assisting individual partners and lending credibility to their goals and endeavors. Moreover, emphasizing working relationships among partners is an important means of accomplishing the heritage area’s goals in a mutually beneficial way.

Every action the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association’s Board of Directors, staff, and partners undertake on behalf of the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area is an opportunity for enhancing partners’ abilities to contribute to the heritage area.

This section addresses how to shape heritage area programs for partners in terms of “partner development.” This follows from our understanding of another kind of development, “resource development.” Because successful fundraising proceeds from developing relationships with sources (resources) for those funds, the activity of raising funds for organizations like the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association is now often called “resource development.” In the same sense, “partnering” should be regarded as developing relationships, for the benefit of both parties. Thus, “partner development” is our term of choice for what others might call capacity-building.

Heritage area partners typically engage in heritage area activities during startup in the hope of receiving grants. As documented below and in Chapter 6, the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association does intend to dedicate a portion of its annual federal appropriation to a matching grant program. These funds will be awarded to partners on a competitive basis in support of programs and projects that benefit the heritage area.

Monetary matching grants, however, are only one way to build partners’ capacity. In addition to grants and cooperative agreements, the Association could provide funds directly to those available to offer technical assistance to partners. Or it may determine to spend funds in other ways in order for

ACTION: Periodically inform tribal nations active within or with historic ties to the heritage area about progress on the management plan, as advised by the National Park Service. Working with the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service concerning federally recognized tribes, use periodic contact to explore further engagement and development of projects of mutual benefit.

Timeframe and Responsibility: Immediate and ongoing action of Freedom’s Way Heritage Association under advice and assistance of the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service.

Ideas for Partner Development

In every topic of this management plan, Freedom’s Way Heritage Association staff and regional partners are described as sources of encouragement, assistance, support, and promotion to local partners for programs and events as appropriate. This advice and support might extend beyond programming to questions of organization, operations, management, and resource development as well. Following are other ideas to be considered in developing a complete program for partner development:

- Technical assistance for program and product development;
- Technical assistance for fundraising and grant writing (especially but not limited to writing grant applications for heritage area funding);
- Awards of consulting assistance paid for by the Association (rather than dollars paid directly to the awardee), on a competitive basis with a match made by the awardee;
- Networking committees, projects, gatherings;
- Training programs and workshops;
- Matchmaking among partners, to encourage their collaboration,

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the heritage area to be successful. The wayfinding program described in Chapter 2 is one example of the latter possibility—partners would most certainly benefit from such a program.

Design of a grant program for the first phase of plan implementation is a high-priority activity. Such a program requires consideration of matching requirements, size limitations, and a focus on activities that maximize a given emphasis in implementing management plan goals, year to year. Allocation of funds to such grants in each annual budget will depend on the Board of Directors' judgment, based on (1) their sense of how much of the heritage area's budget should be devoted to initiating the Association's own programs versus supporting those of partners, and (2) what programs described in this management plan it is most useful to emphasize in a given period. The Association may choose in some years to devote grant funding to one or more specific projects of highest priority for implementing the plan.

The Freedom's Way Heritage Association by design will always have an all-volunteer board and small staff. Partners should not expect that networking and collaboration among partners will always be facilitated directly by Association directors and staff. As development of the heritage area proceeds, partners may benefit by developing their own relationships directly.

**Ideas for Partner Development**

(Continued from page 95)

- coalitions, and joint ventures;
- Quality assurance programs;
- Conferences, workshops, and expos that let partners promote their achievements;
- Best practices/technology transfer/skill-sharing/clearinghouse;
- Recognition programs (“best of,” “most improved,” etc.);
- Identifying sources of funding and program support;
- Endorsement of partners’ grant applications made to others;
- Docent and volunteer recruitment and training;
- Marketing by the Association for partners’ programs;
- Offering interesting venues for partner programs; and
- Organizing the participation of lecturers, interpreters, or educators.

**3.6 Advocacy**

As implied in the description of potential players in advancing Freedom's Way presented earlier, there are many in charge of state and federal policies and resources that can provide assistance and support. Still others with specialized expertise at the state and national levels are potential sources of advice and strategies. Moreover, within the heritage area are many potential partners that, if engaged strategically, could become a force on behalf of the heritage area’s advancement.

Brought into alignment, all of these resources could help Freedom's Way undertake dynamic interpretation, education, curatorship, and communications; help the heritage area's place-based identity reach new achievements in its already ambitious stewardship; and gain financial
resources. It might even be possible to align the objectives of various agencies whose overlapping and gaping boundaries and uneven resources are among the obstacles to planning, economic development, historic preservation, regional recreational trails, and tourism.

In a word, advocacy is needed, in order to advance the interests of the heritage area and its local and regional partners. As a National Heritage Area, Freedom’s Way is uniquely positioned to engage partners at the state and national levels and participate in a national dialogue on behalf of all these important objectives at the local level. And it can act as a forum where local interests can build relationships and tackle regional concerns related to heritage development.

As part of its outreach within the heritage area, Freedom’s Way communications and programming in general will aim to raise residents’ awareness of resource stewardship and help build their support for the heritage area’s goals.

The difficulty with expanding this proposition to advocacy is one of resources. It can require vast resources of time, energy, and attention from both board and staff. The heritage area simply does not have the necessary reserves. Unless, that is, it relies on partners for the greater portion of such work—and is quite strategic about what issues it will pursue as an advocate.

3.6.1 Engagement with National Partners

As coordinating entity for the heritage area, Freedom’s Way Heritage Association works closely with the National Park Service and participates in the Alliance of National Heritage Areas. The Association also maintains close communication with the legislators in Congress who represent Freedom’s Way communities.

Through these relationships, the Association maintains an awareness of policy and issues at the national level. Through the Alliance, the Association works with other National Heritage Areas in developing support for heritage area programming. With the National Park Service, the Association has access to technical expertise and can obtain information on a wide range of federal programs. With legislators, the Association helps provide information on issues of importance to local communities.

**ACTION:** Engage with partners at the state and national levels to support heritage area goals and programs.

**Timeframe and Responsibility:** Ongoing action of the Freedom’s Way Heritage Association.
Freedom’s Way Heritage Association will continue to engage partners at the national level on behalf of heritage area communities. In doing so, the Association will work closely with statewide organizations and agencies.

### 3.6.2 Local Advocacy

Freedom’s Way partners and the Association should support advocates at the local level to the extent possible. Independently, local and regional partners should decide when their individual organizations are able to support and assist other partners on local issues within communities.

On behalf of Freedom’s Way as a whole, the Association’s Board of Directors should consider and decide when it is appropriate to assist partners advocating on heritage issues. Decisions with regard to advocacy must be carefully weighed. The degree to which professional standards are involved, how much consensus exists on the direction to be taken, and whether heritage area involvement can help make a difference should be among the criteria to support a decision to undertake advocacy. If done well, this will go a long way toward establishing a reputation for Freedom’s Way as a strong, professional, and principled advocate for heritage issues within the region, working toward consensus among all interests on behalf of residents and resources.

**ACTION:** When appropriate and as resources allow, assist local partners in advocating for heritage issues.

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