

# Freedom's Way

NATIONAL  
HERITAGE AREA

# 2023

YEAR IN REVIEW







#grow



# Reflecting on the Past; Looking to the Future

Eight years ago, the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area Management Plan was approved by the Secretary of the Interior. Laying out an agenda of 228 action items to be achieved within a ten-year timeframe, the plan articulated the mission, vision, goals, and guiding principles that would shape the organization's future work and serve as a benchmark for evaluation.

More than significant progress has been made in fulfilling the ambitious goals and objectives set forth in 2015. The heritage area is a catalyst for communication and collaboration that is deeply invested in the communities we serve. As a positive force for creative partnerships and entrepreneurial endeavors, in 2023 we worked with 85 organizations and engaged more than 750 individuals throughout the region.

While expanding upon our mandate to curate the region as a 'manager of the experience of place,' Freedom's Way continues to gather, organize, and provide access to information about the people, places and objects in the heritage area that make it unique. Our emphasis on inclusive storytelling continues to grow and evolve as we embrace new perspectives and support new initiatives—including those related to the semiquincentennial.

We look forward to working with you in the coming year as we 'discover the Revolution anew' and explore the enduring legacies of the American

Revolution in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area. With a dual focus on commemoration and memorialization, **How We Remember** is surveying the Revolutionary War Monuments, Memorials and Markers within the region to encourage dialogue about who is remembered and how. Our **Revolutionary Stories Podcast Series** continues to uncover seldom told stories and connect them to historic places you can visit to provide a comprehensive and authentic historical narrative from a new perspective.

Thank you for partnering with us and contributing to our success. We are grateful for the partners, donors, volunteers, and friends who support our work and appreciate their dedication to our mission and vision.

Together, we can continue to make a lasting impact in the 45 communities within the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area.

With deep gratitude,



Patrice Todisco  
Executive Director

## 2023 Board of Directors

**Suzi Fonda**, President  
**Kara Fossey**, Treasurer  
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**Sara Lundberg**  
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## Staff

**Patrice Todisco**  
Executive Director  
**Desiree Demski-Hamelin**  
Deputy Director

# Investing in Our Communities

The **2023 Partnership Grant Program** awarded \$46,510 in support of 19 projects directly impacting more than one-third of the communities we serve. In turn, over \$522,000 was generated in matching in-kind contributions, leveraging NPS funding 11:1.

Designed to provide strategic investments in the natural, cultural and historical resources that enhance the sense of place within the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, reimbursable matching grants are offered within the categories of:

- Historic Preservation;
- Education, Interpretation & Curation;
- Community Planning & Resource Conservation;
- Regional Cultural Events;
- Inclusive Storytelling; and
- Revolutionary Stories.

For the second year Freedom's Way set aside discrete

funding through the Partnership Grant Program to prioritize **Inclusive Storytelling** and **Revolutionary Stories** projects. These grants support research, documentation, and interpretation of stories that raise awareness of diverse perspectives and experiences; broaden the understanding of themes and stories relating to the American Revolution within the region; and provide insight into those whose stories have been excluded from the historical narrative.

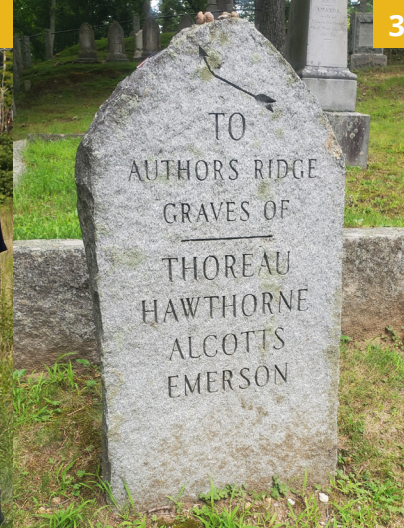
**Inclusive Storytelling** grants support the creation of interpretive products, such as waysides, web content, videos and exhibits, oral histories, podcasts, blogs, and the development of programs that share these stories with the community.

**Revolutionary Stories** grants lay the foundation for future initiatives that will engage new audiences in the stories of the American Revolution and its enduring impacts on the social and cultural fabric of our nation.

## Featured Grant Awards

1. **MASON TOWN HALL RENOVATION, PHASE I**  
Mason Town Hall Renovation Committee
2. **MASS CENTRAL RAILROAD MILEAGE MARKER PLAQUE**  
Clinton Greenway Conservation Trust
3. **THOREAU SOCIETY TEACHES INTERPRETIVE EDUCATION**  
The Thoreau Society
4. **CREATION OF AN ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR SPACE FOR ARTISTIC & EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**  
Hudson Cultural Alliance
5. **PRESERVATION OF C. 1769 RACHEL DWIGHT (GOULD) BED HANGINGS**  
Lexington Historical Society
6. **2023 FALL PROGRAM SERIES**  
Friends of Pine Hawk
7. **PATRIOTS' DAY 2023**  
Friends of Minute Man National Park
8. **2023 SYMPOSIUM: VOICES TO THE FUTURE**  
Nashua International Sculpture Symposium
9. **MONUMENT TO ENSLAVED & FREE PERSONS OF COLOR IN MENOTOMY**  
Arlington Historical Society
10. **THE STORIES OF US**  
Be Well Be Here
11. **MARKER HONORING HARRIET WILSON**  
Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire
12. **CONCORD REFORMATORY CEMETERY: NAMING THE UNNAMED, PHASE I**  
Concord Prison Outreach
13. **ON BELONGING IN OUTDOOR SPACES**  
Farrington Nature Linc
14. **REDISCOVER MAPLEDALE, PHASE I**  
Rediscover Mapledale Committee
15. **THOMAS DUGAN INTERNSHIP IN PUBLIC HISTORY**  
Concord Museum & The Robbins House
16. **TOUR OF WESTLAWN CEMETERY'S REVOLUTIONARY WAR VETERANS**  
Westford Historical Society & Museum





**GOLF CLUB IN STOW  
FOR COLORED PEOPLE**

Mapledale C. C. Believed  
Only One of Its Kind

A golf and country club exclusively for colored people is the most recent addition to the Bay State's quota of clubs.

This organization, which is known as the Mapledale Country Club, is situated in Stow, and as near as can be re-





# Discovering the Revolution Anew

As we prepare for the 250th anniversary commemoration of our nation's founding, Freedom's Way, with support from the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati and in partnership with the National Park Service and local communities, is undertaking a region-wide initiative to gather, record, interpret and share both well-known and underrepresented stories about the people, places, events and objects that relate to the periods before, during and after the American Revolution in the region.

**Revolutionary Stories: The Enduring Legacies of the American Revolution in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area** brings awareness to the diverse perspectives, inequities and experiences of those who

lived within the 45 communities that now comprise the Heritage Area during this complex period of history.

Information developed through the project will be used to develop programming, projects and itineraries to engage new audiences in the story of the American Revolution and its enduring impacts on the social and cultural fabric of our nation.

Special thanks to the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati for supporting our work.

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CINNINATI



## How We Remember

To provide a framework for exploring collective memory, memorialization and civic and social engagement, **How We Remember: A Survey of Revolutionary War Monuments, Memorials and Markers within the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area** is researching the history of the monuments, memorials, markers, and plaques within the Heritage Area with ties to the American Revolution. To date, more than one hundred have been identified, photographed and compiled into a preliminary document that places them within a historical context.

From the first Revolutionary War monument in the country, dedicated in Lexington, MA on July 4, 1799, through the Revolutionary War Memorial Drum Monument in Westford, MA dedicated on July 7, 2021, **How We Remember** provides an opportunity to reflect on who is memorialized in the Heritage Area and how, offering insight to our communities as planning for the upcoming semiquincentennial continues.



AFRICAN RESERVATION MONUMENT  
OLD BURYING GROUND, BEDFORD, MA



REVOLUTIONARY WAR MONUMENT  
BATTLE GREEN, LEXINGTON, MA



WOMEN OF MENOTOMY MEMORIAL  
MASSACHUSETTS AVE, ARLINGTON, MA





# REVOLUTIONARY STORIES

## Podcast Series

To raise awareness of the historical sites within the region with ties to the American Revolution and engage the public through storytelling, Freedom's Way has launched **Revolutionary Stories**, a collaborative history podcast.

Featured monthly in the e-newsletter and available on our website and the streaming service SoundCloud, each episode combines an introductory story with an onsite interview that provides a fresh perspective on how the place and story are interpreted today. The series will run throughout the year and include sites from throughout the region.

Visit the places and meet the people that made—and continue to make—history in the Heritage Area and explore the revolution anew by tuning in on our website at [freedomsway.org/revolutionary-stories/](https://freedomsway.org/revolutionary-stories/)!



The **Jason Russell House**, in Arlington, MA, is the site of one of the earliest battles of the American Revolution and where the fighting reached its bloodiest pitch on April 19, 1775.

✦ **Sara Lundberg, Arlington Historical Society**



The **Robbins House**, in Concord, MA, was the home of Caesar Robbins who, while enslaved, served in the American Revolution and whose descendants continued to advocate for equality and justice.

✦ **Jen Turner, The Robbins House**



The **Hancock-Clarke House**, in Lexington, MA, is where John Hancock, Sam Adams and sixteen others were awakened by Paul Revere in the early hours of April 19, 1775 and warned of the British advance.

✦ **Sarah McDonough, Lexington Historical Society**

## Webinars

To provide technical assistance on research techniques, as well as practical examples of how to create interpretive and educational experiences to share Revolutionary Stories, Freedom's Way hosted two webinars in the Fall of 2022. Both are available on our YouTube channel.

**Getting Started: An Overview of Resources & Strategies for Local History Research on Freedom's Way Towns, Land, & Inhabitants Before 1800, with an Emphasis on the Revolutionary War Period, ca 1753–1790**

✦ **Mary Babson Fuhrer, Public Historian**

**Researching the Stories of Women: Introducing Strategies & Best Practices Used to Uncover the Stories of Women in the Heritage Area During the Revolutionary War Period**

✦ **Jessie Steigerwald & Celeste Freeman, LexSeeHer**



# Cultivating a Sense of Place

## Wayfinding Signage Project

Building upon the success of our new logo and brand, in 2023 work continued with Carlisle-based brand strategy and design agency D&CO on the development of a wayfinding and signage system for the region.

The project began with field visits to sites within the region to assess existing interpretive and directional signage, followed by a workshop to understand the Heritage Area's brand awareness and promotional needs. A competitive signage analysis was completed.

A wide range of signage options were developed, including a kiosk that could promote the regional work of the Heritage Area while being tailored to the needs of individual communities.

A prototype of the kiosk, presented at the 2023 Annual Meeting, will be refined and field tested in the coming year with a goal of having a final product to share with our community partners in the spring.

**If you are interested in hosting a kiosk, please let us know!**



## Interpretive Sites Survey

Work has begun on an interpretive sites survey within the Heritage Area to explore and create new approaches for interpretation that focus on recognizing and supporting the interconnected character of the natural and cultural landscape of the region.

Divided into three independent phases, in its preliminary phase topics, historical themes and contexts were identified, reviewed, prioritized and placed within the framework of the three nationally important interpretive themes identified in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area Management Plan. Individual studies of landscape elements and features were completed, and GIS mapping of built elements begun.

Extensive field work provided a greater understanding of the historical and landscape context of the region as well as the significance of the resources and sites identified through a preliminary landscape assessment.

Designed to strengthen the opportunities for interpretation, education and the preservation of the region's natural and cultural resources to enhance its sense of place, the project amplifies the value of the Heritage Area's important sites and stories within a national context.



# Collaborating to Promote Lifelong Learning

## Connecting Communities

Following a two-year hiatus, **Connecting Communities: Walks & Talks** returned with the thematic focus “Operation Pollination.”

The series focused on native pollination systems specific to the Heritage Area, highlighting the work of our partners while sharing ways the public can help these systems thrive. We are grateful to the following individuals and organizations that donated their time and expertise to make this program possible:

- ✦ Dr. Robert Gegear, UMass Dartmouth
- ✦ Bryn Gingrich & Sara Lupkas, Lincoln Land Conservation Trust
- ✦ Kelly Gill, Xerces Society & USDA NRCS
- ✦ Nick Dorian & Jessie Thuma, Tufts Pollinator Initiative

Webinar recordings are available on our YouTube channel.



✦ TUFTS POLLINATOR GARDEN, MEDFORD, MA



Explore the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area all month long!



May 2023

## Hidden Treasures

Throughout the month of May, the Hidden Treasures Festival of Nature, Culture & History showcases events and activities hosted by local partners celebrating the unique places, objects, and stories of the Heritage Area. Hidden Treasures reinforces a shared regional identity and sense of place by encouraging people of all ages and walks of life to explore and see anew their own communities, and beyond.

This year more than 60 offerings were hosted by 65 partners in 32 of Heritage Area's 45 communities. Nearly a quarter of those partners were first-time participants.

Thank you to all those who make this regional festival worthwhile. We look forward to discovering more treasures this spring!

## Educational Opportunities Research

Work is underway to research and assess the landscape of educational opportunities available to students and educators within the Heritage Area. The project was developed to inform preliminary next steps toward realizing a suite of action items focused on the following three key areas outlined in the Management Plan:

1. On-Site Programming for School Groups,
2. Teacher Network, Training and Engagement, and
3. Student Internships.

We have engaged Elisabeth Nevins, founder and principal of Seed/Ed, to consult on the project and look forward to sharing our findings in 2024.



# Working to Preserve Our Heritage

## National Heritage Area Act of 2022

On January 5, 2023, President Biden signed into law the National Heritage Area Act (S. 1942) creating standard criteria for the funding, management and designation of National Heritage Areas across the country. S. 1942 (now Public Law No. 117-339) provides an annual authorization of up to \$1 million per year for the next 15 years for each heritage area, subject to the federal appropriation process. It extends the authorization date of 45 heritage areas, including Freedom's Way, to 2036.

One of the last bills passed in the 117th Congress, the legislation was supported by a bi-partisan vote of 326-95 in the House after passing in the Senate unopposed. Massachusetts Congressman Jim McGovern, past Chair of the House Rules Committee, was instrumental in securing the passage of the rule needed to advance the

National Heritage Areas Act to the House Floor.

Along with Congressman McGovern, we are grateful to our Congressional Delegation and their staffs who worked tirelessly to secure the passage of the National Heritage Area Act of 2022, including Senators Ed Markey, Elizabeth Warren, Maggie Hassan and Jeanne Shaheen, and Representatives Katherine Clark, Lori Trahan, Seth Moulton and Annie Kuster.

Attesting to the popularity of the program nationally, S.1942 authorized seven new National Heritage Areas.

To learn more about NHAs, their value and their work, visit the Alliance of National Heritage Areas online at [nationalheritageareas.us](http://nationalheritageareas.us).

## Congressional Delegation

### US Senators

Maggie Hassan (NH)  
Ed Markey (MA)  
Jeanne Shaheen (NH)  
Elizabeth Warren (MA)

### US Representatives

Katherine Clark (MA 5<sup>th</sup>)  
Annie Kuster (NH 2<sup>nd</sup>)  
Jim McGovern (MA 2<sup>nd</sup>)  
Seth Moulton (MA 6<sup>th</sup>)  
Lori Trahan (MA 3<sup>rd</sup>)



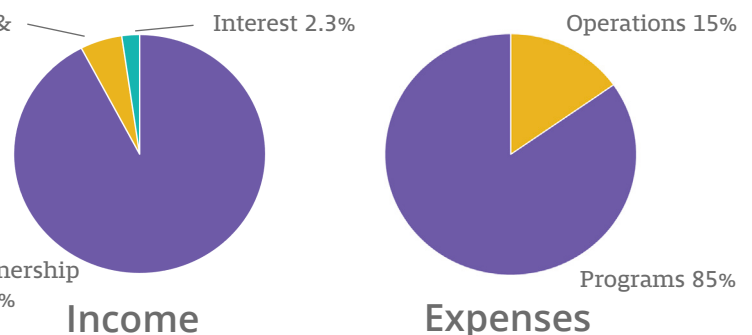
MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK SUPERINTENDENT SIMONE MONTELEONE & FREEDOM'S WAY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PATRICE TODISCO HOSTED NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIRECTOR CHUCK SAMSON WHEN HE VISITED THE REGION IN APRIL

## Financial Overview

Income	\$421,412.31
Expenses	\$382,554.41
Net Income	\$38,857.90

In-Kind Match \$564,692.58

Private Gifts & Grants 5.4% Interest 2.3%



Figures represented here are based on unaudited financials for October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023.



# Giving Thanks to Our Members, Partners & Supporters

## ✦ Individuals

Ingrid & Robert Adam • Gina Ashe • Robert Allison • Abbe Alpert • Maud Ayson • Andrew Cameron Bailey • Marsha Baker • Sarah Ballard • Franca Barricelli • Michelle Barry • Bonnie Benjamin • Sydney Blackwell • Gail Bloom • JerriAnne Boggis • Daniel V. Boudillion • Helen Bowdoin • Gina Bowker • Dean Briggs • Duncan Brown • Robert Buchwaldt • Elisabeth Carr-Jones • Timothy Castner • Marian Cohan • Russ Cohen • Michelle Collette • Sarah Collier • Dan Comly • Kimberley Connors • Margaret Coppe • Patricia Costello • Christopher Croucher • Andrea Curran • Paul Dakai • Anne DeBoalt • Jessica Desany Ganong • Ellie Di Mauro • Louis DiMola • Paul Doherty • Nick Dorian • Richard Duffy • Christine & Robert Ebstein • Kathleen Fahey • Robert Ferrara • Suzi Fonda • Kara Fossey • Susan Fougstedt • Paul Funch • Robert Gegeer • Kelly Gill • Bryn Gingrich • Reed Gochberg • Daniella Goncalves • Irene Goncharova • Charles David Gordon • Deb Grant • Linda Greene • Meaghan Guyader • Ann Himmelberger • Frannie Hodge • Gavin Holt • Leslie Howard • Stewart Ikeda • Elizabeth Kacergis • Mary Keenan • Lisa Kennedy • Jacqui Kluff • Patsy & Chuck Kraemer • Marion Knoll • Dan & Penny Lacroix • Roberta Lasky • Denise LeBlanc • Anne Lee • Nora Lewis • Robert & Jean Lidstone • Peter & Marilyn Lowitt • Will & Jeanne Ludt • Sara Lundberg • Sara Lupkas • Phil Lupsiewicz • Pamela Lynn • Meredith Marcinkewicz • Connie Baxter Marlow • Chris Martino • Sonya Martino • Sara Mattes • Mark Mikitarian • Jane Morse • Carolyn Mueller • Kevin Natwick • Susan Navarre & Tim Olevsky • David Nelson • Uli Newdst • Lisa & Brian Noble • Deborah Nowers • David Palance • Paul Przybyla • Sally Purrington Hild • Abraham Rahman • Nancy & Barry Reinbold • Heidi & Mark Ricci • Terry Robinson • Lucien Rohwein-Abel • Elizabeth Rust • Constance Schwarzkopf • Marc Sevigny • Allison Shilling • Doreen Stevens • Jenny Stimson • Marion Stoddart • Dan Thibeault • Jessie Thuma • Janet Tice • Brian Tortura • Electa Tritsch • Melanie Trottier • Jen Turner • Patrick Vallaey • Peggy Wacks • John & Nadiya Weidman • Beth Williams • Samuel Williams • David Wood • Marilyn & Thomas Zavorski

## ✦ Organizations

Acton Memorial Library • American Heritage Museum • Andres Institute of Art • Arlington Historical Society • Arlington Human Rights Commission • Ashburnham Historical Society • Beals Memorial Library • Bedford Historical Society • Bigelow Free Public Library • Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire • Bolton Historical Society • Boulder Art Gallery • Boxborough Historical Society • Captain John Joslin, Jr. Chapter, NSDAR • Clinton Greenway Conservation Trust • Concord Art • Concord Museum • Concord Prison Outreach • Cyrus Dallin Art Museum • deCordova Sculpture Park & Museum • Dunstable Conservation Commission • Dunstable Rural Land Trust • Farrington Nature Linc • Finnish Center at Saima Park • Fitchburg Historical Commission • Fitchburg Historical Society • Forbush Memorial Library • Fort Devens Museum • Friends of Minute Man National Park • Friends of Pine Hawk • Friends of Sholan Farms • Friends of the Wapack • Groton Conservation Trust • Groton History Center • Harvard Conservation Trust • Harvard Historical Society • HEAL Winchendon • Historic New England • Historic Piano Concerts, Inc. • Hollis Heritage Commission • Hollis Social Library • Iron Work Farm in Acton • Lancaster Historical Society • Lawrence Library • LexArt • Lexington Historical Society • LexSeeHer • Lincoln Land Conservation Trust • Littleton Historical Society • Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House • Mass Audubon • Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati • Maynard Historical Commission • Maynard Public Library • Medford Historical Society & Museum • Medford Public Library • Minute Man National Historical Park • Monkeyhouse, Inc. • Munroe Center for the Arts • Nashoba Conservation Trust • Nashua International Sculpture Symposium • Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council • National Park Service • New England Forestry Foundation • North County Land Trust • Old Schwamb Mill • Pepperell Conservation Commission • Randall Library • Rauscher Farm Management Subcommittee • Shirley Greenway Committee • Shirley Historical Society • Stow Historical Society • Sudbury Valley Trustees • Thayer Memorial Library • The Food Project • The Gardner Museum • The Icon Museum & Study Center • The Old Schwamb Mill • The Shirley Meeting House • The Umbrella Arts Center • The Walden Woods Project • Town of Concord, MA • Town of Mason, NH • Tufts Pollinator Initiative • Wachusett Mountain State Reservation • Westford Historical Society & Museum • Winchendon Cultural Council • Woburn Historical Commission • Woburn Public Library • Xerces Society

## ✦ Businesses

Enterprise Bank • Fast Twitch Media • Gioiosa Design • Hannaford Bloomin' 4 Good • Heritage Strategies, LLC • MassDevelopment

The Freedom's Way National Heritage Area is comprised of a network of individuals and organizations who work in partnership with the Freedom's Way Heritage Association and the National Park Service. Without their support our work could not be accomplished. **THANK YOU!**

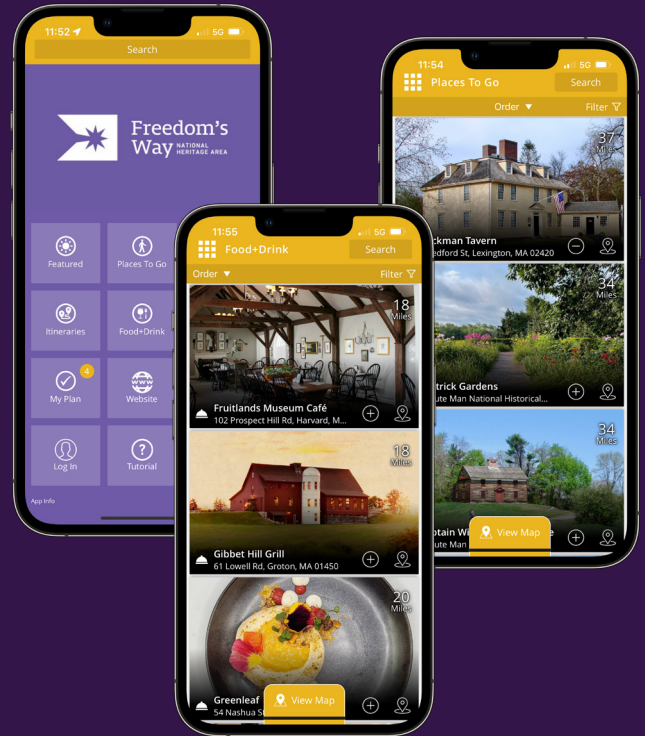


# Staying Connected

## Download the App

Available on iOS and Android devices, the Explore Freedom's Way NHA mobile app can be used to:

- Navigate an interactive map of places to go and things to do!
- Peruse our selection of thoughtfully curated itineraries or create your own!
- Create personalized travel plans using the 'My Plan' feature!
- Share the details with friends and family!



## Subscribe to the e-Newsletter



Our monthly e-newsletter includes curated content from throughout the region including "A Closer Look," upcoming events, updates on Revolution 250 programming and projects, and so much more!

## Follow Us on Social Media

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A MEMBER OF THE  
National Heritage  
Area System



Freedom's  
Way NATIONAL  
HERITAGE AREA

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