

# Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area

## Feasibility Study and Environmental Analysis



### Frequently Asked Questions and Responses

---

- 1. What is a national heritage area and what is the purpose of establishing a national heritage area?**

National heritage areas are local and regional areas with cultural, historic, natural, and recreational resources of national importance, and local communities within these areas can band together and request the U.S. Congress officially acknowledge the area's contribution to the nation's history by "designating" it a national heritage area. Once congressionally designated, a national heritage area receives technical and financial assistance from the federal government to help it promote and conserve its important resources. National heritage areas have become catalysts for both economic growth and for resource protection. If natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources are effectively promoted via a heritage area, increased tourism results. Heritage areas also provide opportunities for resource interpretation and conservation. In our case, the Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area could increase national awareness of the importance of the Columbia River as a gateway to the Pacific Northwest.
- 2. Why create the Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area?**

Our overall goal is to interpret, preserve, conserve, enhance, and promote the story and resources of the Columbia-Pacific area of Oregon and Washington. This will occur through a collaborative effort involving residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and governments within the area. Partnerships will develop among organizations, agencies, institutions, governments, and others who possess the necessary expertise to advise and assist communities with promotion, conservation, and interpretive efforts, facilitated and coordinated by the national heritage area's management entity.
- 3. Where would the Columbia-Pacific National Heritage area be?**

The proposed Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area centers around the confluence of the Columbia River with the Pacific Ocean and the Columbia River Estuary. The area being studied covers portions of Pacific and Wahkiakum counties in Washington, and Clatsop and Columbia counties in Oregon. It stretches from Cannon Beach to Tokeland, and from the mouth of the Columbia River to Puget Island.
- 4. Will the Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area result in any additional regulations on private property?**

NO. National Heritage Area designation does not add any federal, state, or local regulations over property use or development. In 2004, the non-partisan U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) published results of a yearlong study of National Heritage Areas that included consultations with six private property rights advocacy groups. This study found that: "heritage area officials, Park Service headquarters and regional staff, and representatives of national property rights groups who we contacted were unable to provide us any examples of a heritage area directly affecting – positively or negatively – private property use."

Designation does not involve additional governmental regulation. National heritage areas recognize the importance of private lands and provide funding and other resources, not regulations or red tape, to help communities and private landowners achieve their stewardship goals.
- 5. Why are you preparing a Feasibility (Heritage Area) Study and environmental analysis?**

We are required by Congress to prepare this study and its associated environmental analysis. The purpose of the Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area feasibility study and environmental analysis is to (1) provide the United States Congress with an analysis that identifies the full range of resources and historic themes associated with the Columbia Pacific area of Oregon and Washington; (2) determine if the resources in the Columbia-Pacific study area comprise a nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography and are suitable and feasible for designation as a national heritage area; and, (3) determine the degree and kind of federal actions that may be required, if any.
- 6. What is the role of Destination: The Pacific and what is the role of the National Park Service during this study process and after the heritage area is designated by Congress?**

Destination: The Pacific is the non-profit 501(c)3 organization that is initiating the feasibility study and associated environmental analysis as one step toward Congressional designation of the proposed Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area, with guidance from the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS is the federal agency responsible for administering the National Heritage Area program. The study is being prepared in accordance with NPS guidelines.

<b>7. How long will the heritage area study and congressional designation process take?</b>	The draft feasibility study and environmental analysis document is anticipated to be available for review and comment by late Summer or early Fall 2008 (refer to the project schedule shown on page 4 of the Project Information Sheet). The final study and submission to Congress is anticipated in Winter 2009. Then, Congress will review the results of the study and make a decision, hopefully within the 2009 session, but the decision could be deferred to the subsequent congressional session.
<b>8. What happens after Congress designates the Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area?</b>	National heritage area proponents and partners will develop a management plan that will define the roles and responsibilities of the managing entity, as well as specific actions for interpreting, preserving, conserving, enhancing, and promoting the stories and resources of the Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area. Additional environmental review will be conducted on the management plan and specific actions. The structure of the managing entity will be based on the preferred management structure determined through this feasibility study and environmental analysis process. Refer to the back of this page for more information.
<b>9. What are the next steps?</b>	Once the heritage area study is completed, the final published version will be submitted to Congress requesting designation as a national heritage area. Once Congress approves designation, the management entity has three years to complete a management plan.
<b>10. Will the creation of a national heritage area affect my property rights?</b>	No - national designation would not change private property rights, taxes, zoning, or other local, state, and federal regulations already in place. See response to question #4 above for more information.
<b>11. How can I get involved in this effort?</b>	Attend public meetings and workshops about the Columbia-Pacific Heritage Area (two additional rounds of workshops will occur next year).  Donate to help underwrite the cost of conducting the Heritage Area Study. The study costs \$275,000 to complete. Every dollar counts, plus your name listed on the donor list will help show Congress a broad level of support.  Stay informed by checking the website periodically: <a href="http://www.columbiapacificheritage.com">www.columbiapacificheritage.com</a> , and stay tuned – we will be gathering letters of support for designation later in the study process.
<b>12. What management options are being considered for the proposed national heritage area if it receives Congressional designation?</b>	Here are some management options we will be evaluating as part of the Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area Study and Environmental Analysis. These options will be studied in depth and a preferred option would be implemented if the heritage area receives congressional designation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management by a community-based, non-profit organization</li> <li>• Management by the National Park Service (NPS)/other federal agency</li> <li>• Cooperative management with community-based, non-profit leading and NPS providing some resources and support related to interpretation and resource management</li> <li>• Do nothing – things continue as they are.</li> </ul> There are pros and cons to each of these options, which will be evaluated during this study process, and there may be other options identified through the study process. These options will be addressed in more detail when the study process is further along in public and stakeholder workshops held in 2008.
<b>13. What are the benefits of becoming a National Heritage Area?</b>	The potential benefits of designation include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotional and marketing opportunities</li> <li>• Strengthened identity of the region and broadened awareness of its national cultural and historical importance</li> <li>• Interpretive opportunities to tell the unique stories of this place to regional citizens and visitors from around the world</li> <li>• Increased civic pride through local initiatives</li> <li>• Upgrades to infrastructure (roads, signage, paths, walking and cycling routes, visitor and interpretive facilities, etc.)</li> <li>• Restoration, conservation, and protection of historic, cultural, recreational and/or natural resources</li> <li>• More effective management and resource conservation of existing community assets</li> <li>• Increased economic vitality from revenue generated through tourism, grants, private and corporate donations, volunteer contributions, entrepreneurial endeavors, and other sources.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>For more information:</b></p>	<p><b>Cyndi Mudge</b>  Destination: The Pacific  P.O. Box 2005, Astoria, OR 97103  <b>Phone:</b> (503) 861-4403  <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:dtp@seasurf.net">dtp@seasurf.net</a>  <b>Web:</b> <a href="http://www.columbiapacificheritage.com">www.columbiapacificheritage.com</a></p>	<p><b>Hillary Schlehuder</b>  Otak, Inc.  1218 Third Avenue, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98101  <b>Phone:</b> (206) 224-7221  <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:hillary.schlehuder@otak.com">hillary.schlehuder@otak.com</a></p>
---	-------------------------------------	---	---