

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FREEDOM'S FRONTIER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area is a testing ground for debates concerning rights, freedom, and their meaning in the American democracy. Past struggles here touched off a firestorm that prefaced the Civil War. These struggles continue to the present day as our nation's concept of "freedom for all" evolves.

Freedom's Frontier is one of the largest heritage areas in the country, defined both by the geography of its 41 counties—a fabric of rivers, topography, soils, and vegetation across the states of Missouri and Kansas—and by the events that occurred here over the past two centuries. While many other heritage areas are based around physical sites, corridors, or canals, residents decided that Freedom's Frontier should be story-based. The settings within Freedom's Frontier provide rich opportunities for residents to tell the area's unique contributions to the country's story of freedom, social values, and human rights.

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) is part of a new generation of national heritage areas that are managed as grassroots organizations. Although there is a coordinating entity, the organization consists of willing partners from the heritage area who guide the planning and execution of heritage area projects. These partners meet regularly at locations throughout the area. To uphold the integrity and purpose of the heritage area, all partners have signed a pledge stating that they will support the Freedom's Frontier vision, mission, and guiding principles.



Residents have the opportunity to be part of an ongoing conversation about why this area is unique within the United States. At its core, the organization of Freedom's Frontier is a voluntary effort. The choice to participate is always available for any individual, organization, government body, or institution. By developing partnerships, we can achieve our vision for this nationally significant place and the empowering opportunities it can bring to our communities. Our hope is that you will be a part of Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area.

"There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know." - Harry Truman

OUR HERITAGE AREA

GEOGRAPHY & PEOPLE

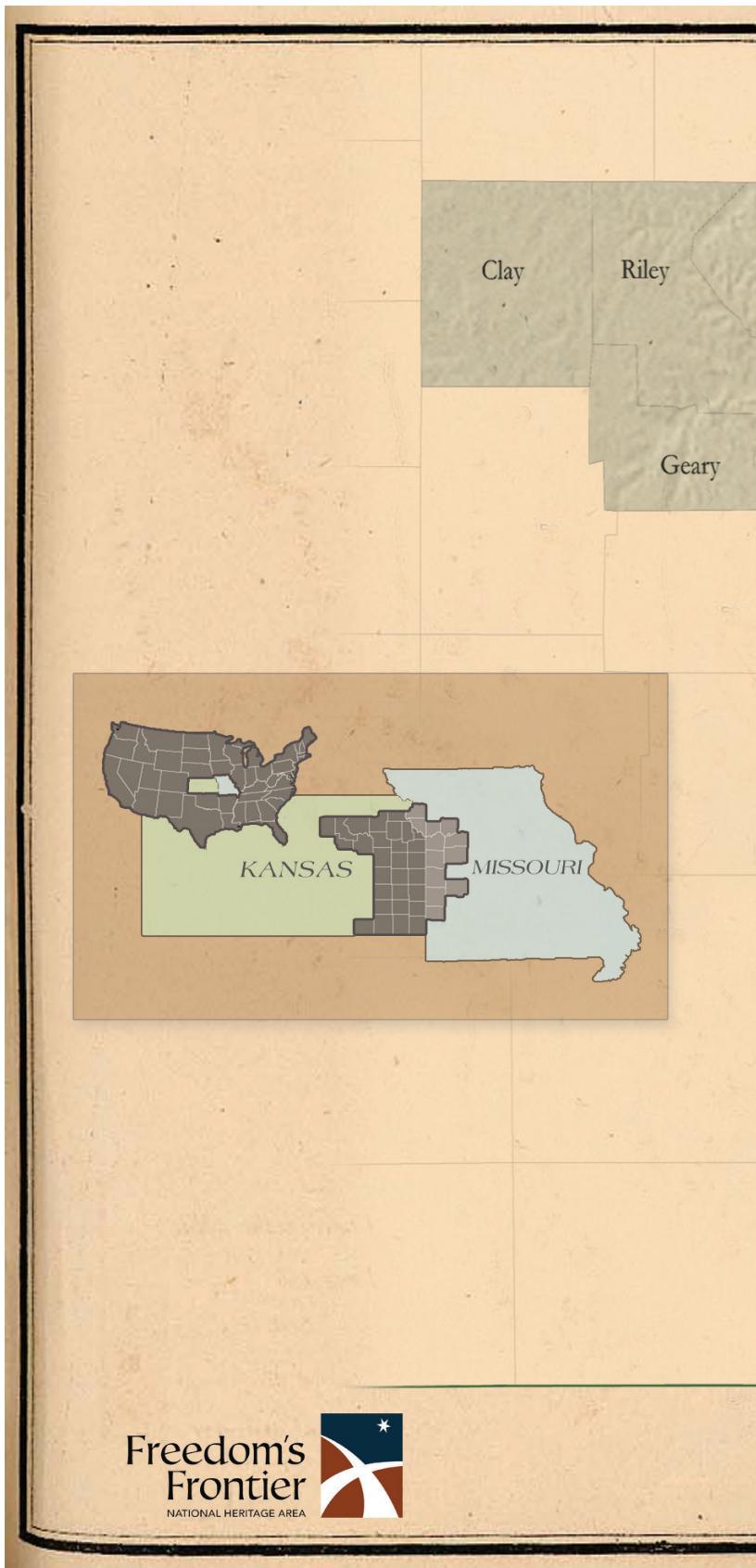
Location: 41 counties in Eastern Kansas and Western Missouri, USA

Area: 31,021 square miles (80,344 square km)—approximately the size of South Carolina

Population: 2,811,295 (2007 est.)

Established: October 12, 2006 by the signature of President George W. Bush

Structure: Grassroots network of willing partners, volunteers, and locations. The organization is administered by the Freedom's Frontier Board of Trustees.



Freedom's
Frontier
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

"With the exception of a portion of its northeastern boundary, there is

BELOW: The 41 counties that comprise Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area.

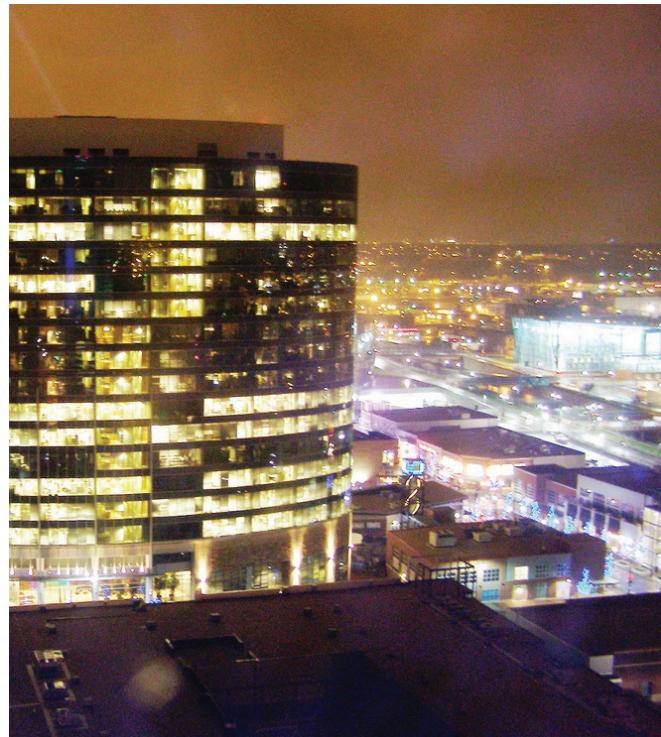


is no mountain, lake, or river, or any other natural feature to separate

THE PUBLIC BENEFITS

What is the difference between Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area and places such as Disney World™ or Colonial Williamsburg? To begin with, the residents are not employees in a "cast" of characters. They are citizens, voters, and volunteers in a living landscape. Freedom's Frontier towns and landscapes are not "re-created" or "preserved and interpreted" for a specific period, rather they are places where people live and work. These living towns and landscapes tell stories of many periods.

The awareness of how Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area is unique, historically significant, and rich in connected stories helps to build a feeling of pride and "sense of place." This plan can help residents strengthen their sense of place and build an appreciation for our shared web of stories. The benefits can be quantified both in economic numbers and in community participation, including political involvement, citizen engagement, volunteerism, and drawing new residents to the heritage area.



ABOVE: Downtown Kansas City. Jackson County, Missouri



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

ABOVE: Flint Hills. Geary County, Kansas.

Freedom's Frontier towns and landscapes are not "re-created" or "preserved and interpreted" for a specific period, rather they are places where people live and work. These living towns and landscapes tell stories of many periods.

(Kansas) from Missouri, on the north, east, or south. This is a circum-

FREEDOM TO DEBATE

The Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area is not framed with simple, easily digestible stories and themes. It is common when explaining conflict to define a “good side” and a “bad side.” By visiting only one location, someone might find a story about the expulsion of innocent residents by enraged Union soldiers who destroyed the countryside. But, visiting another location, one might find a different story about southern sympathizers perpetuating terrible crimes on the settlers who supported Free Statehood. Some sites might commemorate the bravery, endurance, and ingenuity of those who escaped slavery. The conflicts that occurred here in the past still stir deep emotions and ignite intense debates. These debates are relevant to the area and its residents’ ongoing reconciliation, to the nation as it continues to redefine freedom, and to the world, that is embroiled in similar struggles today.

In crafting this plan, residents agreed that there are no simple answers and no “official” stories. Like our heritage area history, this plan allows for ambiguity, complexity, disagreement, and reconciliation. Rather than “singing from the same song book,” it is this diversity of viewpoints that helps make living and visiting here such a unique experience.

Some of our most exciting stories are still unfolding today. They are not “historical” but concern how we make sense of our history, how we reconcile our versions of the past, and how we respect the multiple, often conflicting perspectives of the past. Freedom continues to be redefined today, and new residents add to the evolving diversity and web of stories in the heritage area.

What emerges in our immense heritage area is not just a story of “Free State versus Slave State”, “Masters versus the Enslaved”, “Indians versus Settlers”, or “Segregation versus Integration,” but a saga of human passions, opportunism, collaboration, ingenuity, zealotry, and hope. This is a story of the imperfect and complex human character. Freedom’s Frontier tells the uniquely American story that transpired in the center of the continent. As a National Heritage Area, this is a location where East met West, where North confronted South—and where freedom continues to be defined.



Courtesy of Lecompton Historical Society.

ABOVE: Reenactment in Lecompton, Douglas County, Kansas.

“By telling the stories of that tumultuous history. Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area will inspire people in our time and for the future to examine for themselves that ideal we call FREEDOM.”

—Judge Deanell Tacha
Chairperson, Freedom’s Frontier Board of Trustees.

stance of great importance, in estimating future influences to be given

FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS

In 2008, the Freedom's Frontier Partners and the planning team created “Foundation Documents” that express residents’ vision for the future of their area and the means to achieve it. The Foundation Documents articulate who we are as a National Heritage Area and how we will work together in the years to come. They include the Statement of National Significance, Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Guiding Principles, and Goals.

What is a Vision?

According to the National Park Service, a vision “articulates a region’s concept of what they want the heritage area to be in the future. It describes the kind of place the heritage area should be.” In the case of Freedom’s Frontier, the vision date is the year 2028—twenty years after the visioning exercises performed by FFNHA residents throughout 2008.

What is a Mission?

According to the National Park Service, “the Mission articulates how the local coordinating entity and other partners in the heritage area intend to make the vision a reality. It describes the heritage area’s purpose.”

Freedom’s Frontier Vision

Adopted 2008

Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) is an internationally recognized region in western Missouri and eastern Kansas where a young nation’s diverse definitions of freedom collided. Through sharing authentic and honestly interpreted stories, residents respect multiple views of freedom. Compelling learning experiences, interpretation, and preservation offer visitors and residents of all ages an understanding of the region’s importance. Historically aware citizens collaborate to build diverse economies for current and future generations.

Freedom’s Frontier Mission

Adopted 2008

Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) is dedicated to building awareness of the struggles for freedom in western Missouri and eastern Kansas. These diverse, interwoven, and nationally important stories grew from a unique physical and cultural landscape. FFNHA inspires respect for multiple perspectives and empowers residents to preserve and share these stories. We achieve our goals through interpretation, preservation, conservation, and education for all residents and visitors.

and received. The Ohio River, flowing between free and slave States,

Freedom's Frontier Guiding Principles

Adopted 2008

1. We will be tolerant and respectful of diverse stories from multiple perspectives.
2. We will respect property rights.
3. We will focus on authentic and engaging experiences.
4. We will honor the region's peoples, past and present.
5. We will appreciate the unique cultural and historic assets within the nationally important landscape.
6. We will invest in community engagement, education and empowerment.
7. We will sustain and grow sense of place.
8. We will value and protect the natural environment.
9. We will consider future generations in everything we do.

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles are traits or qualities that are considered worthwhile; they represent an organization's highest priorities and driving forces.

Principle statements are statements about how the organization will value visitors, suppliers, and the internal community. These statements describe actions that are the living enactment of the fundamental values held by individuals within the organization.

Private Property Protection

As stated in the enabling legislation found in the appendix of the management plan..

Nothing in this Management Plan shall be construed to require any private property owner to permit public access (including Federal, State, or local government access) to such private property. Nothing in this Management Plan shall be construed to modify any provision of Federal, State, or local law with regard to public access to or use of private lands.

is sufficient to hold them apart. Were it not for the river, these States

FREEDOM'S FRONTIER GOALS

Marsh

Goals and Supporting Tactics

According to the National Park Service, “goals identify desired conditions for a component (such as resource conservation, education and interpretation, tourism and other categories) and/or address how to reach a desired level of interaction between resources.”

Through a public process, Freedom's Frontier partners created the following four goals to guide our work, meet our mission, and steward the heritage area. Detailed tools to pursue these tactics appear in the Power of Action and the Power of Partnership sections of the plan.

1. Build awareness of the struggles for freedom that took place within the boundaries of Freedom's Frontier for current and future generations.

- We will share stories and messages about freedom through a dialogue with a wide range of audiences. Communication tools will be tailored to the needs of each audience.
- We will maintain on-line tools to engage residents in learning about Freedom's Frontier stories and the values inherent in them.
- We will work with individual destinations, sites, and tourism marketing entities to promote Freedom's Frontier in a coordinated way.
- We will encourage and promote annual events tied to significant anniversaries of Freedom's Frontier stories.

2. Enhance, sustain, and preserve the unique cultural and historic assets within our nationally important physical and cultural landscapes that fostered these stories.

- We will work with site owners and managers, event managers, collections managers, craftspeople and artists, local historians, state, county, and local agencies and other interested partners to identify the unique historic, cultural, and natural resources, and stories within the heritage area that contribute to the Freedom's Frontier story.
- We will inform individuals, organizations, and government entities about the heritage area in order to encourage them to sustain a sense of place through preservation and conservation.
- We will work with regional groups such as land trusts, environmental advocacy groups, and government agencies to protect key historic and ecological sites that support the heritage area's stories.

Back Home, April 1865. Cass County, Missouri.



Courtesy Cass County Historical Society.

could not be held asunder. They would soon be knit together by a thousand ties.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Schoolhouse. Jefferson County, Kansas. Early 1900s.

3. Inspire tolerance and respect for multiple perspectives.

- We will work with local educators and educational institutions to develop, promote, and offer educational opportunities to increase awareness of the Freedom's Frontier story in the heritage area's schools and provide programming for the general public.
- We will reach out to underserved communities both as a key audience and for input in the planning and execution of projects.
- We will work with partners such as colleges, universities, and institutes to support conferences and public forums to discuss and debate the regional and global meaning of freedom from various perspectives.

4. Empower residents to preserve and share our nationally important authentic stories in an engaging way.

- We will work with site owners and managers and event organizers to recognize Locations and Events and to improve the visitor experience and interpretation as well as to help them to meet criteria that will allow them to become recognized locations and events.
- We will work with our recognized locations and events to enhance services, interpretation, and connection to the Freedom's Frontier story and to other sites in the heritage area.
- We will continue to engage residents in planning and executing projects to increase awareness and support of Freedom's Frontier by local constituents.
- We will work with individuals, economic development organizations, tourism bureaus, and government entities to develop Freedom's Frontier as a sustainable destination.

"We will never rid Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area of all conflicting feelings. We are dealing with more than Kansas AND Missouri feelings. We are also dealing with Black and Native American feelings in the midst of everything else. Perhaps more importantly than 'respecting' the perspectives of others, we must realistically acknowledge (with reason rather than emotion) that those perspectives exist and have a right to exist."

—Eileen Robertson

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area Steering Committee member—Humboldt, Kansas

ousand interlacing ties...Nothing will separate Kansas from Missouri

THE STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM ON THE MISSOURI/KANSAS BORDER

What is a Statement of National Significance?

Significance statements build on a national heritage area's purpose and clearly state why, within a national context, the area's resources and values are important enough to warrant the area's designation as such.

These statements identify the resources and values essential to managing the area and express the importance of the area to our natural and cultural heritage.

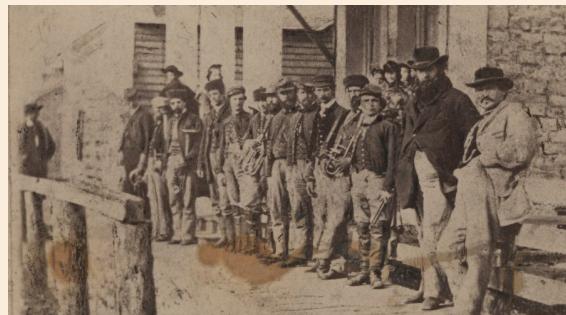
We consider places, stories, or landscapes to be nationally significant when they "contain important regional and national stories that, together with their associated natural and/or cultural resources, enable the American people to understand, preserve and celebrate key components of the multi-faceted character of the Nation's heritage."

In drafting the statement of national significance, we reviewed several National Park Service definitions of "national significance" as well as the definition of "national significance" included in the guidelines for Save America's Treasures projects.

S U B T H E M E S

Shaping the Frontier:

For the half million pioneers who traveled on the Santa Fe, California, Mormon, and Oregon Trails, the Missouri/Kansas border was the jumping off point. In this place where river travel ended, traders, miners, and emigrants purchased provisions and prepared for long overland treks. As they traveled west, many began to see the "permanent" Indian frontier beyond Missouri's western border as an obstacle to Manifest Destiny.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

FROM LEFT: General James Blunt's Headquarters Band, Cherokee County, Kansas. Lexington Courthouse, Lafayette County, Missouri. John Brown Mural, Shawnee County, Kansas.

Enduring Struggles for Freedom:

The nation's struggle for freedom did not end with the Civil War. Though the war eliminated clashes over geography, efforts to break down society's barriers continue. Since the Civil War, this place has inspired national policies and ongoing efforts to secure equal freedoms for all Americans.



THE STATEMENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Extraordinary events in the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) forever changed America. In the nineteenth century, the nation turned its eyes to the Missouri/Kansas border, where peoples with diverse definitions of freedom collided, inciting and fueling the Civil War. The impact of these events is forever woven into the nation's fabric.

Freedom's Frontier provides new opportunities for visitors and residents to explore the evolving ideal and fundamental American value of FREEDOM.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

FROM LEFT: Grinter Ferry, Wyandotte County, Kansas. Weston Bend State Park, Platte County, Missouri. Dietrich Cabin, Franklin County, Kansas.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Missouri Kansas Border War:

When Kansas was opened for settlement in 1854, a border war ensued, capturing the nation's attention. The Kansas-Nebraska Act nullified the uneasy balance established by the Missouri Compromise and left the territory's future slave status in the hands of settlers. The stakes were high for both sides. The violence of the Missouri/Kansas Border War ushered in the Civil War, consumed the region in bloody conflict through war's end, and devastated communities on both sides of the border.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.



Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

FROM LEFT: "Appeal to Reason" Newspaper, Crawford County, Kansas. c. 1900. Anti-War Demonstration, Shawnee County, Kansas. 1970.

OUR INTERWOVEN STORIES

The three sub-themes of Freedom's Frontier offer a window through which to consider how Americans have debated American ideals of freedom, justice, local control, and property rights from the beginning of settlement to the present day.

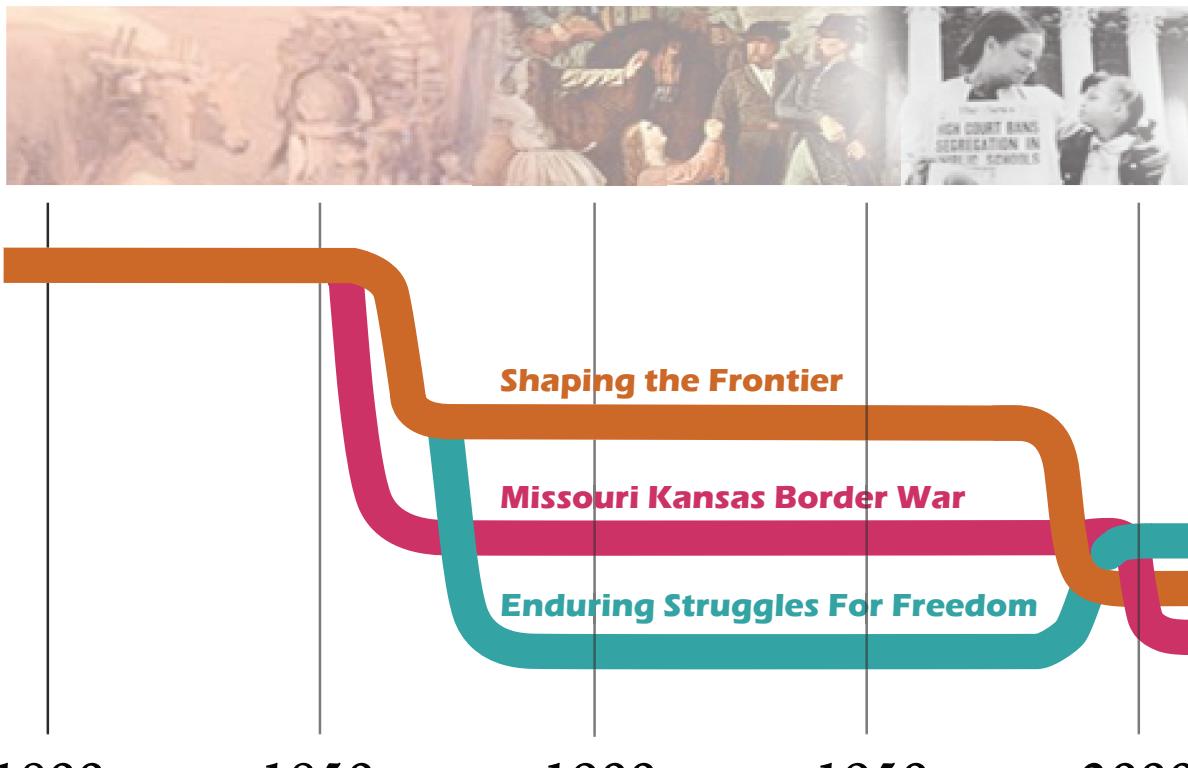
The power behind our stories and themes is that they illustrate the debates over these ideals. However, no historic site or story in Freedom's Frontier exists in isolation or gives a view of the big picture. Stories, landscapes, historic sites, and events are interconnected; and links can be made over this landscape through the stories that are shared. Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area will celebrate this web of stories in many and varied ways.



Courtesy of The Arabia Steamboat Museum.

ABOVE: Buttons uncovered from Arabia Steamboat which sank in Platte County, Missouri in 1856.

TIMELINE FOR THE STATEMENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Role of Willing Partners

The Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area organization is a grassroots collaboration that is managed by active and willing citizens. This plan gives residents the tools to make their own decisions, to change course over time, and to define the kind of recreational and interpretive experiences that they would like to share with others. This plan defines a vision for an economically sustainable region with a shared awareness of its complex stories of freedom.

Why Is It Important to Participate?

Freedom's Frontiers is part of a new generation of National Heritage Areas that are managed through a coordinated grassroots effort. Input from the residents of Freedom's Frontier builds a heritage area that is responsive to the needs of its residents and preserves its shared heritage. Each individual contributes different skills, knowledge, and experiences. There are many kinds of opportunities to become involved ranging from researching stories to saving landscapes to promoting events. Each of the Toolkits included in the Power of Action is filled with ideas for how residents can take action in historic preservation, tourism & marketing, and interpretation & education. Individuals and organizations can benefit from being involved, making the area stronger as a whole. Participants will have the chance to meet people from all walks of life from throughout the region and to learn more about its history and ecology. Working together, partners in Freedom's Frontier can achieve the Vision for this heritage area.



ABOVE: Partnership team meeting. Warrensburg, Johnson County, Missouri. 2008

Opportunities to Get Involved

There are a number of opportunities to participate in Freedom's Frontier and to play a vital role in the heritage area.

- Stay informed on heritage area happenings by subscribing to our e-Newsletter, becoming a fan of our Facebook page, or watching the website for updates.
- Get involved by attending meetings, joining a committee, providing feedback, and volunteering for special task forces or other opportunities.
- Spread the word by talking about Freedom's Frontier to your neighbors, friends, and business associates or becoming a liaison for your local heritage, professional, or civic organization.

For more information, please visit Freedom's Frontier's website at www.freedomfrontier.org or contact:

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area
P.O.Box 526
Lawrence, KS 66044
Phone: 785.856.5300
Email: info@freedomfrontier.org

OVERVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Created by citizens of western Missouri and eastern Kansas in 2008 and 2009, This plan builds from many discussions about how we understand the places where we live and our ability to share them with others.

The first two sections, The Power of Place and The Power of Story, describe the uniqueness of this area—why it is an extraordinary place, why its history occurred here and nowhere else, and why it is something needing national recognition. The plan’s Power of Action and Power of Partnership sections offer a better understanding of tactics for improving the quality of the heritage area and the experience of its stories.

Partners in Freedom’s Frontier aim to achieve their goals in order to positively affect businesses, communities, and other institutions. They want to reinvest a sense of pride in the area. That pride is derived from the area’s fiery history and significant contributions to how we think about what it means to be a free people in a free country.

This plan builds from many discussions about how we understand the places where we live and our ability to share them with others.

Section 1: The Power of Place

The Power of Place explores the qualities that make this 31,000 square mile heritage area a unique place in the world. Starting with a discussion of natural history dating back 100 million years, this section describes how mountain formations, glaciations, topography, shifts of weather, and vegetation shaped human settlement. This section explores how the natural geography of the area shaped settlement, agriculture, movement, and sites where conflict occurred. By looking at natural systems and the relatively recent human geography of the last several centuries, we can begin to ask how the land contributed to Freedom’s Frontier’s diverse stories.

Section 2: The Power of Story

After considering the immense scale of the heritage area and the broad span of time that shaped its landscape, we turn to the Power of Story. We learn about the connection between land and stories and the connections between different stories throughout the heritage area. This chapter explores the idea of four “cultural watersheds” located along the major river systems in the area.



"The land is principally prairie, interspersed with extensive groves of timber, consisting of linden, hickory, oak, locust, walnut, sycamore, cedar, cottonwood and elm, of which there will be sufficient for all practical purposes."

—Nathan Hart Parker, 1865

ABOVE: Native Landscape in Johnson County, Missouri.

Section 3: The Power of Action

The Power of Action offers clear toolkits to help citizens and groups manage and improve Freedom's Frontier as a National Heritage Area. The toolkits offer tips, models, links to more information, and questions for groups to explore. The toolkits speak to Heritage Preservation, Tourism & Marketing, and Storytelling.

Section 4: The Power of Partnership

The Power of Partnership builds on the Toolkits to provide in-depth information for site managers, partners and other FFNHA members. This chapter describes how to implement goals through operation plans that focus on Heritage Preservation, Recreation and Natural Resource Conservation, Interpretation & Education, Tourism & Marketing, and Economic Development.

Appendices

The Appendices define the terms that we use and provide background data and information that inform the recommendations of this plan.



Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area

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