



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

**JUN 12 2019**

The Honorable Joe Manchin III  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Manchin:

Please find transmitted the Wheeling National Heritage Area (Wheeling Heritage) Evaluation Findings. In 2000, Congress designated the Wheeling National Heritage Area in Public Law 106-291 to preserve and interpret the cultural and historical resources of the area related to Wheeling as a transportation center on the National Road, the Ohio River, and the B&O Railroad as well as a key site in iron, glass, and tobacco industries and commerce. The city had a critical role in the history of the Nation during the Civil War as the capital of the Restored Virginia Commonwealth and the current separate State of West Virginia. The coordinating entity of Wheeling Heritage is Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation, a 501(c)(3) in West Virginia.

Evaluation requirements in Public Law 110-229 and other laws related to evaluation of national heritage areas prompted the National Park Service (NPS) to develop program policy to evaluate all national heritage areas prior to termination of authorization for Federal funding. This policy includes the use of independent consultants to review the progress and status of each national heritage area.

Our evaluation process determined that Wheeling Heritage addresses the legislated mandate of presenting major heritage themes of transportation, commerce, industry, and Victorian culture in America while working with the private sector, state, and local governments for economic development, preservation, and the arts, as well as interpretation and education in the region consistent with the management plan, through the Federal resources provided. Both the NPS funds and the national heritage area designation are of value to Wheeling Heritage. Wheeling Heritage successfully met their 25 percent Federal funding match requirements from 2001 to 2016, with \$6.9 million in matching funds from State, local, and private contributions to \$11.29 million in NPS Heritage Partnership Program dollars.

Our evaluation process found that Wheeling Heritage has the governance in place and staff to operate a sustainable national heritage area organization. The NPS will continue to work in partnership with Wheeling Heritage in accordance with existing laws.

A similar letter is being sent to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate; the Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, United States House of Representatives; and the Honorable Rob Bishop, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources, United States House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



P. Daniel Smith  
Deputy Director  
Exercising the Authority of the Director

Enclosure

cc: Senator Shelly Moore Capito  
Representative David McKinley