

Background and Description of MPNHA

- Achieve tangible, quantifiable outcomes that build support and constituency.
- Operate efficiently and effectively, with the flexibility to respond to unforeseen opportunities and situations.
- Encourage communities and organizations to set their own priorities and to define their place within the MPNHA framework.

The Prehistory Of The MPNHA

While the purpose of this report is to declare the successes of the MPNHA during its first 10 years, the history of the Heritage Area goes back further. In fact, the development of the MPNHA spans more than 30 years, representing a singular achievement

in a multi-state area in heritage tourism, historical preservation and economic development.

In the early 1990s, a few dozen people came together with the goal of fostering economic development by marketing the

area's pioneer heritage. They created the Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance. That group still exists now as the governing board of the MPNHA.

In 2000, the Alliance set its sights on getting the U.S. Highway 89 corridor designated as a National Heritage Area. From 2000 to 2004, Alliance leaders, particularly Monte Bona, now executive director of the MPNHA, began meeting with county commissions, city councils and civic groups to listen to their ideas and seek their buy-in.

It wasn't always easy. An organization opposing the Heritage Area on the grounds it would open the way for federal intervention in local affairs started its own round of visits. Ultimately, Alliance leaders

made the case that under federal heritage-area law, planning and governance of the Heritage Area would remain with local people.

In 2004, the Alliance persuaded the Utah Legislature to designate Heritage Highway 89 as an official state area. With the state's support, a bill sponsored by Senator Robert Bennett creating the Heritage Area moved successfully through the United States Congress.

A Dream Realized: Just The Beginning

After years of lobbying by Central Utah supporters and their congressional delegations, Congress approved the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area on July 24 (Utah's Pioneer Day) in 2006, allowing the "special recognition" Senator Bennett spoke of to proceed in earnest.

One of the first steps was the development of a management plan to steer the direction of the MPNHA, a plan that would have to be approved by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Between 2006 and 2009, Utah State University, in cooperation with MPNHA, "inventoried" more than 1,000 historical and cultural resources in the Heritage Area that tell the Mormon pioneer story. Those were where much of the energy and many of the resources of the MPNHA would be directed, as outlined in the management plan.

The 589-page management plan was approved by U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar March 2, 2010.

The MPNHA began receiving appropriations from Congress and began supporting projects, including some that people had been talking about for years.

The goals outlined by the management plan included education and interpretation goals, revitalization goals, tourism and economic-development goals, and quality of life goals.

Overarching all efforts was the desire to bring these goals to pass in a way that would bring positive benefits across the region and to achieve tangible, quantifiable outcomes.

"Congress finds that the historical, cultural and natural historic legacies of Mormon colonization and settlement are nationally significant."

- Preamble to bill establishing the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area