

# MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area emphasizing institute at Snow College and working to establish an interpretive center next to Manti Temple**

MT. PLEASANT, Utah—The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area (MPNHA) is in the beginning stages of two major projects, both in Sanpete County, Utah.

The MPNHA has received funding to develop the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Institute (MPHI) in conjunction with Snow College in Ephraim. The second project is an “interpretive center” in cooperation with the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Gardens in Manti, located at the base of the Manti LDS Temple.

The purpose of both of these projects, as set forth in the MPNHA’s mission, is so people can “experience one of the most fascinating stories of the settlement of the West, the colonization story of the Mormon pioneers.”

Monte Bona, director of the MPNHA, said recently, “The ultimate goal of the MPNHA is to have the interpretive center in Manti, in conjunction with the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Institute at Snow College, serve as the major entities telling the overarching and compelling story of Mormon pioneer colonization.”

The MPNHA was created in 2006 by Congress to preserve, interpret, promote and enhance Utah’s pioneer heritage in central and southern Utah.

The MPHI started to take shape after it was included in the management plan the MPNHA developed with the National Park Service. The plan was approved by the Secretary of the Interior in 2010. The next year, the Utah State Board of Regents approved basing the institute at Snow College.

The current president of Snow College, Gary Carlston, along with Rosie Connor (a new board member of MPNHA and a new member of the Alliance for National Heritage Areas), are working “to bring the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Institute to fruition,” Bona said.

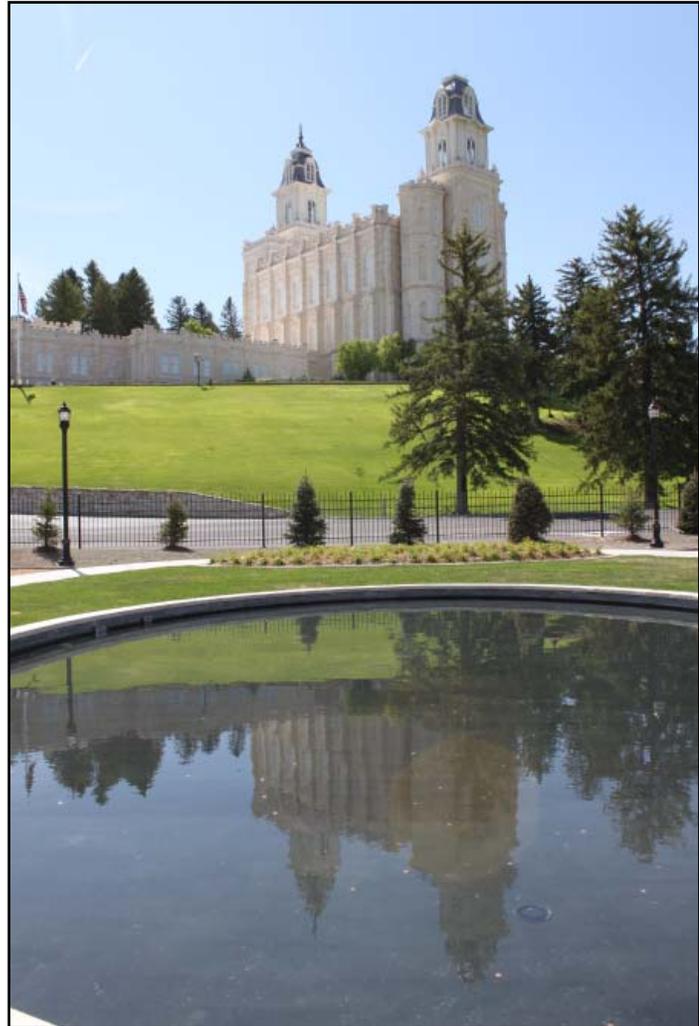
Connor said the institute is “really in its infancy,” but she believes “it will end up being something beautiful for the community.”

The MPNHA made an initial grant of \$75,408 to the MPHI. The FY 2105 task plan with the National Parks Service includes another \$98,670.

The MPHI will undertake and implement projects on behalf of and in collaboration with the MPNHA. All projects will be reviewed and approved by the board of directors for the Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance, the nonprofit advisory group to the MPHNA, for compliance with the MPNHA management plan.

Projects assigned to this task agreement include developing interpretive kiosks and related materials for the Clarion project (an effort to tell the story of a turn-of-the-century Jewish agricultural settlement in Sanpete County), conducting traditional building skills workshops to promote the preservation of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, preparing and implementing programs that will assist local businesses in producing and marketing heritage tourism, and engaging in tourism programs in the areas of living history, performance, public art and agritourism.

The other major MPNHA project, the interpretive center in Manti near the LDS Temple, is also a work in progress. Bona says this interpretive center is one of three key interpretive centers that are part of the MPNHA management plan. The others are in Escalante (Hole in the Rock) and Marysvale (Big Rock Candy Mountain).



**The Manti LDS Temple is seen in the reflection pool of the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Gardens, which were dedicated in 2012. The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area has provided initial funding for an interpretive center at the gardens. The center will be the key site within the heritage area for telling the Mormon pioneer story.**

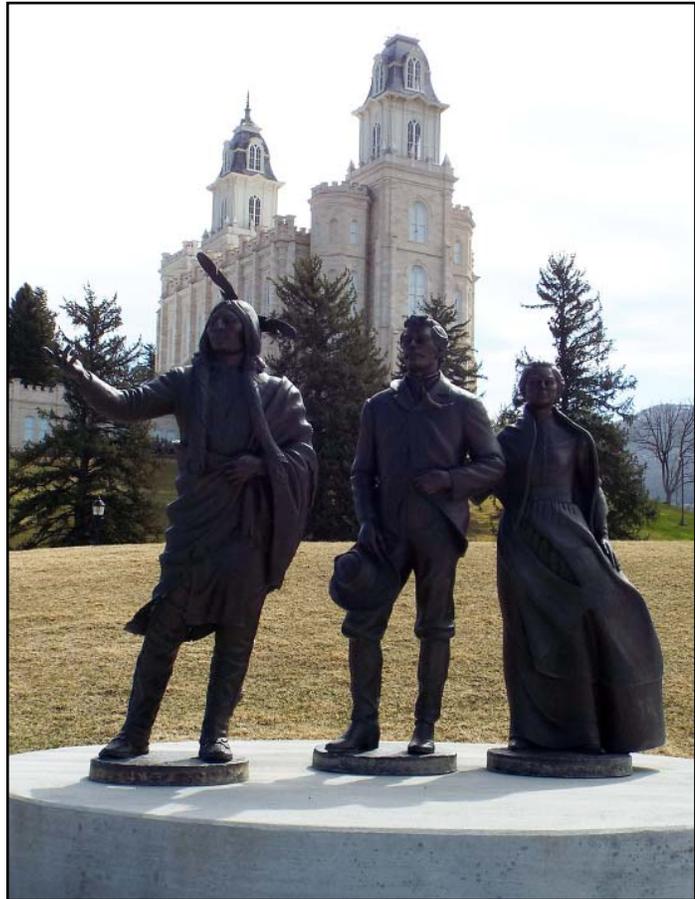
Efforts toward an interpretive center in Manti took a large step forward after the site where the interpretive center is to be located (the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Gardens) was dedicated in June 2012.

The MPNHA helped provide funding for the Pioneer Heritage Gardens, “in anticipation that there would be an interpretive center on the site—a high-quality entity that would tell the story of the Mormons,” Bona says.

Initially, Bona says, the interpretive center will consist of kiosks and placards with written information about the Mormon pioneers. A long-term vision is partnering with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to build a visitor’s center for the Manti Temple that could include exhibits about pioneer history and have guides on staff.

The MPNHA has granted \$240,000 (a \$50,000 grant in funding from the NPS and \$190,000 through a special Congressional appropriation) to the Pioneer Heritage Garden and interpretive center.

In addition to the two major projects, the MPNHA has been moving forward on an array of projects. In FY 2014, the heritage area received \$300,000 in funding. Of 20 projects listed in the management plan approved at the onset of operations, the FY 2014 annual report lists eight as “complete” and the rest as “ongoing.”



**These statues, now part of the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Gardens in Manti, Utah, represent the joint efforts of Native Americans and Mormon pioneers in the establishment of Manti in 1849. In the background is the Manti LDS Temple, completed in 1888. The statues were sculpted by Jerry Anderson of Silver Reef, Utah, and dedicated in 1997.**

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The Mormon Pioneer Heritage Area (MPNHA) is a federally designated area of central and southern Utah running along the beautiful and historic U.S. Highway 89—including the All-American Road Utah State Route 12, and Capitol Reef Scenic Byway Utah State Route 24, which both intersect with U.S. 89 and together form the MPNHA’s Boulder Loop. The area includes the counties of Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Wayne, Garfield and Kane.

The Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance is the local coordinating entity of the MPNHA and receives annual funding from the National Park Service. Its purpose is to preserve, tell and interpret the stories, history and heritage of the area, and to promote its culture and value.