

**Request for Community Support**

**BACKGROUND**

As you may know, the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance (FLTA) is working to secure a National Heritage Area designation for the Finger Lakes. This National Heritage Area designation will recognize the region’s nationally distinctive landscape, telling the stories that helped shape our nation, state, and region. The historical, cultural and natural assets will be shared on a national level. For further understanding, the National Park Service (NPS) states:

“*As a* *strategy for community-led conservation and development, national heritage areas are places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. If designated by Congress, national heritage areas are managed by local coordinating entities that accomplish goals of interpreting the heritage area history and traditions through partnerships with governments, organizations, businesses, and individuals. National heritage area coordinating entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs. A national heritage area is not a unit of the National Park System, nor is any of its land owned or managed by the NPS, unless such land was previously set aside as a unit of the National Park System. The creation of a new national heritage area does not change existing private property rights. Learn more about the NPS National Heritage Areas program here:* <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/index.htm>*.”*

**JOIN THE INITIATIVE!**

* **Activity 1: Engage with the NPS Public Comment Session**

The feasibility study, one step in the designation process, was funded by 2019 federal legislation and is well underway. Currently, a public comment session is open to gather input on the following materials prepared by the National Park Service (NPS) that inform the public about the study*:*

* *An online “Story Map” explaining the study’s purpose, authorities, and a summary of resources within the 14-county study area the NPS’ research has identified thus far can be found here:* [https://arcg.is/0eCKrj](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%253A%252F%252Farcg.is%252F0eCKrj&data=04%257C01%257CCharles_Lawson%2540nps.gov%257Ce7dc7c434f884fa6bcde08d8dcd9611d%257C0693b5ba4b184d7b9341f32f400a5494%257C0%257C0%257C637502173509775560%257CUnknown%257CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%253D%257C1000&sdata=0h3SZbZd7CW8QhCXnEy83XKwapBtS55JhgMGZzKAazA%253D&reserved=0)*.*
* *A draft narrative summary of the NPS’ research and a detailed list of resources in table format can be found on the project website at:* <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/FingerLakes>*.*
* *The public comment submission portal can be accessed from the Story Map’s “Comment Now” buttons or the project website’s “Open For Comment” tab (see links above). The direct link is* [Public Comment page](https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=415&projectID=91275&documentID=102828)*.*

During the public comment period, the NPS is looking for your input. We ask that you consider offering your support for the three areas detailed in the request for your letter of support under “Activity 2”.

Public comments will have significant impact on the progress of this project. Please encourage others to engage as well!

* **Activity 2: Write letters of support**

You are an important stakeholder in the NHA process and we ask for your written support on all of the following three topics, which can also be referenced in your online responses to the public comment session for the NPS.

*In your support letter, please let us know* ***in your own words*** *that you are in agreement with the following:*

1. ***You support the Designation of a Finger Lakes National Heritage Area*** *because it will benefit our region’s economic growth and tell the collective stories of our assets.*
2. ***The Finger Lakes National Heritage Area should consist of the counties of Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Onondaga, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne and Yates.*** *The FLTA 14-county region has been a state legislated tourism destination since 1967. Our region counties have worked together for over 100 years and as an entity, the FLTA is recognized by funding and granting institutions.*
3. ***FLTA is uniquely positioned to provide management expertise, funding ability as well as the energy and imagination necessary to create and sustain a NHA.***
   1. *We are the oldest regional Destination Marketing Organization in the nation, with a strong history of partnering with stakeholders, administering grants, developing complementary organizations that support our natural resources, promote tourism and support and sustain economic growth. We have worked for over a year gathering knowledge and resources for the NPS feasibility team and we are committed to its success.*

Your written support for this project will be critical to demonstrate the desire to have the Finger Lakes region designated as a National Heritage Area. The NPS has also asked that we gather multiple letters of support. Support letters should be sent as soon as possible and be addressed as follows:

Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance’s National Heritage Area Designation Committee

ATTN: Coleen Fabrizi, NHA Designation Committee Chair

309 Lake Street

Penn Yan, NY 14527

The original letter with signature and if applicable a corporate seal, should be mailed to the address above, and an emailed copy can be sent to me at [CindyK@fingerlakes.org](mailto:CindyK@fingerlakes.org). The letters should arrive before **5/15/2021**.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me. My contact information is below

Thank you,



Cynthia Kimble, President  
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**Mission Statement for the FLTA’s National Heritage Area Committee:**

The potential National Heritage Area designation for the Finger Lakes tourism region would recognize our region by telling the stories of that have national significance which have shaped our region’s history, culture and natural assets so as to share this information in a cohesive message for all to consider and explore.