



NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

PROPOSED VISION, MISSION & GOALS



The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFNHA) management plan will include a shared vision for the heritage area along with a related context and mission statement and goals for the program. The proposed text shown below was prepared using the perspective, direction and consensus provided by heritage area commissioners as recorded during three workshops. These program elements have also been influenced by public input and comments received during the planning process. These elements will guide and inform the preparation of the management plan alternatives and implementation strategies.

Proposed Context Statement for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

The first Niagara, or Onghiara, existed for generations as a natural wonder. Those who heard of the ‘thundering waters’ would travel great distances to look in amazement upon the mighty cascades and marvel at the magical ‘moonbow’ in its mist. In wintertime, many would make a special trip to the shimmering fantasyland in the river gorge, scaling the sculpted tumble of ice floes and gazing at the landscape encased in frozen spray. The falls, with raging cataracts above and menacing eddies below, was inspiration for myth and legend.

The second Niagara is a product of aesthetic and industrialization. When nations eventually ceased fighting over boundaries and settled the river borderlands, the falls were bypassed, no longer an obstacle to navigation and transport on the longest transcontinental waterway in the world. Canadians and Americans joined forces in harnessing the waters of Niagara to generate technological strength, power economic growth, and advance scientific knowledge. During this era repeated efforts to tame the overwhelming torrent and alter its appearance have resulted in a spectacle that now reflects a human sense of order and beauty.

Now, at this time of global transition, a third Niagara must emerge to face the future. The importance of caring for this intertwined natural and cultural legacy should be recognized and embraced by the world. Responsible stewards of this heritage must join forces to create a larger Niagara community that can adequately address the opportunities and challenges of this inheritance. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will serve as part of this community as defined below and based on the following vision and mission statements.

Proposed Vision for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is an internationally recognized biosphere, cultural icon, and renowned destination of historical significance. It enables the growth of a sustainable regional economy and the conservation of its natural and cultural resources in ways that benefit and unite its people and places. Its natural splendor and meaningful heritage are shared with millions of delighted visitors and celebrated by its residents so that its environment and communities are thriving.

Proposed Mission Statement for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

The work of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (NFNHA) is to enhance public appreciation for the communities, significant historic and natural resources, and landscapes of the Niagara region. The NFNHA works with a network of heritage area partners who seek to make interpretive, environmental, economic and social improvements that benefit residents and visitors alike. Where initiative is lacking, the NFNHA will take action to fill the gap. In pursuing this mission, the NFNHA encourages historic preservation, recreational access, and environmental recovery. We value authenticity, cultural diversity, high-quality design, energy efficiency, regional and cross-border leadership, open communication, and transparent operations.

Proposed Goals by Topic

1. **Heritage Area Management and Regional Positioning** - Work to extend the communication, coordination, and cooperation among governments, communities, and organizations that are essential to regional success in heritage tourism.
2. **Interpretation and Education** - Assure the creation of a high quality educational and interpretive program, providing partners with a framework and opportunities to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the diverse communities, cultures, resources and environments in the Niagara region.
3. **Visitor Experience and Heritage Tourism** - Offer and promote authentic regional heritage tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with a transformational experience.
4. **Engaging our Young People** - Provide interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that motivate them to develop knowledge and understanding of the community's important stories; learn useful skills and trades; and become the region's next generation of leaders.
5. **Outdoor Recreation** - Identify and support outdoor activities and programs; eco-tourism opportunities; and recreational access and facilities that enhance heritage area resources and amenities.
6. **Sense of Place, Sense of Community** - Maintain and improve sense of place and community by assisting in the recognition and restoration of significant resources and landscapes and supporting their preservation, conservation and enhancement.
7. **Historic Preservation** - Maximize the heritage area's significant historic and cultural resources as working community assets.
8. **Nature and the River** - Support restoration and enhancement of the heritage area's natural environment that uses a sustainable approach and engages the public in appreciating the river and nature.
9. **Economic Revitalization** - Foster economic revitalization through advocating the principles and best practices of heritage tourism.