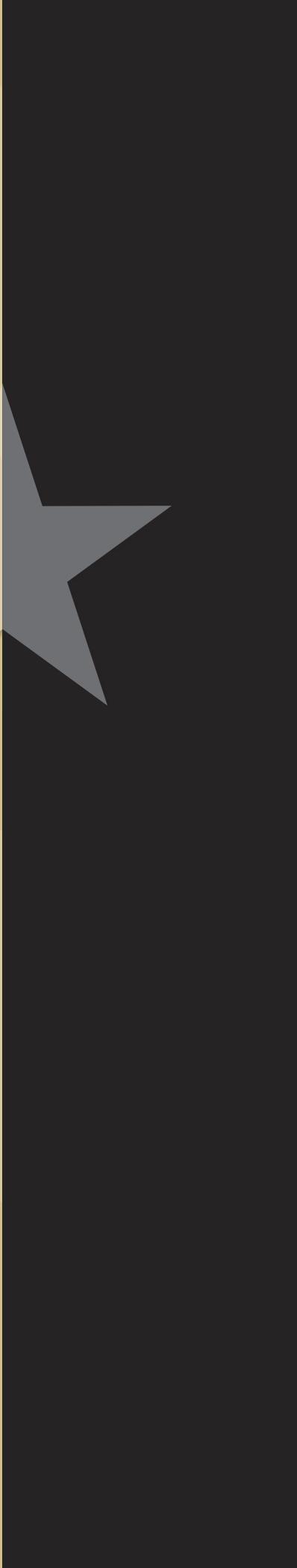




A Position Paper on _____

CULTURAL & HERITAGE TOURISM IN THE UNITED STATES





A Position Paper on Cultural & Heritage Tourism



This position paper was developed by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities for the 2005 U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Summit.

PHOTO CREDITS

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BACKGROUND

Ten years ago a seminal blueprint for cultural and heritage tourism was adopted by the more than 1,500 dedicated political and industry leaders and practitioners as part of their national agenda for the travel industry, which they developed at the 1995 White House Conference on Travel and Tourism. Recognizing the extraordinary opportunity presented by this landmark event to expand the creative dialogue between this industry and America's cultural and heritage institutions, a coalition representing the arts, historic preservation, humanities organizations and the federal cultural agencies—the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum Services, and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities—submitted a white paper, *Cultural Tourism in the United States*, to provide specific responses to the industry's nine issue areas and outline goals for the culture and heritage tourism segment.

In that paper, the authors encapsulated a definition for cultural and heritage tourism—"travel directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage, and special character of a place. America's rich heritage and culture, rooted in our history, our creativity and our diverse population, provides visitors to our communities with a wide variety of cultural opportunities, including museums, historic sites, dance, music, theater, book and other festivals, historic buildings, arts and crafts fairs, neighborhoods, and landscapes."

Its adoption at the 1995 conference initiated new relationships between unlikely partners—the cultural, heritage and tourism sectors—who sought to fulfill its key values and vision of a sustainable industry with appropriate growth. Collaborations spread across the country following the white paper's roadmap of action steps, and the results have surpassed expectations: six regional forums that catalyzed state action on cultural and heritage tourism; cultural and heritage tourism staff

positions established at convention and visitors bureaus, in state agencies and regionally; ground-breaking research by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) on the impact of cultural and heritage tourism that spawned subsequent national and local studies; and broad-based multi-sector initiatives such as North Carolina's award-winning Blue Ridge Heritage Initiative, Maine's New Century program and the White House's Preserve America program.

Over the last decade, travel industry research confirms that cultural and heritage tourism is one the fastest growing segments of the travel industry. For some travelers, cultural and heritage experiences are "value added," enhancing their enjoyment of a place and increasing the likelihood that they will return. For a growing number of visitors, however, who are tired of the homogenization of places around the world, authentic experiences are an important factor and motivator for their travel decisions and expectations.

CULTURAL & HERITAGE TOURISM TODAY

The industry today encompasses cultural and heritage specialists, who are an important resource for the travel and tourism industry in providing these customers with accurate, insightful interpretation of local assets. Communities throughout the U.S. have developed successful programs linking the arts, humanities, history and tourism. Cultural and heritage organizations—such as museums, performing arts organizations, festivals, humanities, and historic preservation groups—have formed partnerships with tour operators, state travel offices, convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs), hotels, and air carriers to create initiatives that serve as models for similar efforts across the U.S.

An integral but often invisible component of the cultural and heritage sector are the artists, performers, writers and other creative workers whose



skills and vision bring to life our nation's genius and ideas. These living traditions are often supported by the cultural and heritage tourism infrastructure of institutions, galleries, performance spaces and other community venues that make a significant contribution to economic and community development. The arts, humanities and heritage involve and benefit local residents in developing the narrative that creates a sense of place, which the travel and tourism industry can promote, market and brand. Cultural and heritage tourism also provides a means of preserving and perpetuating our nation's cultural heritage through education, increased revenues and audiences, and good stewardship.

Yet cultural and heritage tourism is different from other "mass market" travel industry segments in several ways. First, many cultural and heritage institutions are nonprofit organizations where tourism is only one strategy that meets their mission. In many cases, funds are dedicated to an artistic or educational mission or the preservation, interpretation and management of a resource rather than to marketing. Second, limited capacity or the fragility of cultural, natural and heritage resources and sites sometimes constrains the number of visitors that can be hosted annually or seasonally. Overuse or excess capacity can result in negative impact on resources and can diminish the quality of the visitor and resident experience. Many cultural and

A SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL & HERITAGE TOURISM

Domestic

- Eighty-one percent of the 146.4 million U.S. adults who took a trip of 50 miles or more away from home in the past year can be considered cultural and heritage tourists. Compared to other travelers, cultural and heritage tourists:
 - Spend more: \$623 vs. \$457
 - Use a hotel, motel or B&B: 62 percent vs. 55 percent
 - Are more likely to spend \$1,000+/-: 19 percent vs. 12 percent
 - Travel longer: 5.2 nights vs. 3.4 nights
- Historic/cultural travel volume is up 13 percent from 1996, increasing from 192.4 million person-trips to 216.8 million person-trips in 2002.
- The demographic profile of the cultural heritage travel segment today is younger, wealthier, more educated and more technologically savvy when compared to those surveyed in 1996.
- 35.3 million adults say that a specific arts, cultural or heritage event or activity influenced their choice of destination.

Source: Travel Industry Association of America and Smithsonian Magazine, *The Historic/Cultural Traveler*, 2003 Edition.

International

In 2004, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, there were over 10.6 million overseas visitors who participated in cultural and heritage tourism activities while within the country. The top five markets interested in cultural and heritage tourism as a share of their total visitors are: United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, France and Australia.

- The average overseas cultural and heritage tourism traveler visits the country for over 19 nights (16 nights for all overseas travelers).
- More than 72 percent are here for leisure/holidays as one of the purposes of their trip (62% for all overseas travelers).
- They are more willing to visit more than one state (41percent) compared to only 30 percent for all overseas visitors.



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heritage sites are open year round, but some resources—including performance groups—have limited schedules or operations.

Finally, cultural and heritage assets are traditionally “one of a kind” and seek to provide unique experiences not replicated in any other community. Additionally, the artistic or educational missions of these institutions, as well as the interests and work of the artists, performers and artisans, all contribute to a place’s authenticity. Hence, authenticity is a key value and influencer in branding a destination that includes, but is not limited to, its events, architecture, music, dance, cuisine, craft and artistic traditions. This uniqueness is ill-suited to cookie-cutter programming and marketing. The travel and tourism industry must work closely with cultural and heritage organizations and the community to provide quality visitor experiences without compromising the integrity of message or negatively affecting these authentic resources and living traditions. Each constituent group should be proactive in helping its partners in learning more about how their respective industries work.

THE OPPORTUNITY TODAY

The 2005 U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Summit is another watershed moment for growing this industry sector. There has never been a more important time to convene key leaders and decision makers, whose sectors and efforts have contributed to its current success. Cultural and heritage tourism has been an engine of growth over the last decade, and we can learn much from each other in developing strategies to sustain that growth into the future. This Summit also comes at a time when many believe that as a global power the U.S. has a vital interest in welcoming visitors from abroad and sharing with them a rich and nuanced picture of the diversity of America’s cultural heritage.

The goal of the Summit is to forge a new vision and design a national five-year strategy that will expand and develop cultural and heritage tourism

for the benefit our nation’s economy, residents, traveling consumers, cultural and heritage institutions, and the travel and tourism industry.

To enhance and sustain this industry segment, we believe the recommendations set forth in this document must be addressed and adopted. Each citizen, practitioner, and elected and appointed official plays a pivotal role in developing this industry segment.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Uniquely American Experiences

Product development encompasses the preservation, enhancement and promotion of our nation’s natural, historic and cultural resources. Cultural and heritage specialists can assist the travel and tourism industry in developing new tour itineraries, regional circuits and thematic packages of attractions and activities. However, we must first assure that the natural, historic and cultural resources that are the basis of such products are identified, preserved and enhanced.

Sustaining and developing these historic and cultural resources, which are often within the public domain, depends in part on the need to increase public and private sector investment. For cultural and heritage organizations such investment depends on: 1) adopting sound business practices; 2) increasing advocacy of the economic and social benefits of their assets; and 3) diversifying both their product mix and partnerships.

Over the last decade, the success of cultural and heritage tourism has prompted many states, regions and cities to undertake a comprehensive look at their cultural and heritage industry as a tool for economic and community development. This holistic policy and investment approach to nurturing the physical and human resources of culture and heritage, both its for-profit and nonprofit sectors, has been labeled the creative economy, which includes (but is not limited to)



the arts, preservation, design, film and music industries. Such a holistic investment by the public and private sectors will create a more competitive economy and a more vibrant community.

Every place in America—rural area, small town, Native American reservation, urban neighborhood and suburban center—has distinctive cultural and heritage assets that can potentially attract visitors and their spending. Each must discover and value its own culture and heritage and decide for itself what kind of tourism and how many visitors are appropriate/desired to meet their tourism goal, and what assets it wants to share with visitors. Each must tell its own collection of stories to visitors using various traditional media such as maps, publications, Internet sites and tours and through creative expressions including exhibits, songs, paintings, dance demonstrations and interpreters. Each community seeking to develop its tourism potential can build on its foundation of cultural and heritage resources by engaging local residents—from an existing network of volunteers who contribute services to their local cultural and heritage institutions, to artists and other experts employed in these disciplines—to help tell its story, which can be packaged in numerous ways.

Authenticity and Quality

Historic and cultural attractions express, interpret and preserve our national cultural heritage. Their contribution to the visitor experience is twofold: first, the interpretive programs and materials they present must be of high quality, providing accurate information in engaging and memorable ways. Second, the artisans, performers, writers and artists that bring a place to life for visitors should meet the highest standards of that community. The cultural and heritage segments should fulfill their important role in the travel and tourism industry by increasing understanding of the significance of authenticity and its effect on visitation, marketing and branding. Travel and tourism industry professionals should recognize visitors' desires to experience the "real America," which can best be done through its historic sites and monuments, its living traditions and landscapes, museums and other cultural organizations, and, above all else, its people.

Tourism Planning

Comprehensive planning for cultural and heritage tourism development is crucial to assuring positive visitor experiences with minimal adverse impacts on local residents and resources. Tourism plan-

ning must be locally driven and focused on the connections between natural, historic and cultural resources and the life of the community itself. Expertise provided by local cultural and heritage organizations and specialists can help the tourism industry satisfy visitor interest in "real places" by providing accurate interpretation of a destination's history and assuring the continued vitality of community life for residents and visitors alike.

The tourism planning process should take advantage of technology in coordinating and assisting efforts amongst the different sectors in the cultural and heritage tourism industry. It should also recognize and encourage the growth of small businesses—both for-profit and not-for-profit services, such as local guided tours, cooperatives selling authentic arts and crafts, galleries, bed and breakfasts, museum shops, and ethnic restaurants, which are all important components that reflect and support the local culture. Training and education will assist these institutions and self-employed creative artists to improve their business success, which furthers their sustainability and contribution to the tourism industry. Capital investments and technical expertise can enhance the cultural and heritage experiences for all audiences through increased programming and special attention to the requirements and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Public-Private Partnerships

Cultural and heritage organizations; federal, state, local, and tribal arts and humanities agencies; other federal, state, local and tribal government agencies; and the travel and tourism industry should establish public-private partnerships to identify opportunities for cultural and heritage tourism development. A foundation of these collaborations should be the implicit recognition of the value of cultural and heritage tourism to a community's quality of life and economic well-being. Equally important to partnerships is the recognition of the value of public sector leadership since many of these cultural and heritage resources belong to all Americans. As part of a knowledge base, there is a need to increase understanding and use of partnership examples at the local, state and federal levels that reflect broad coordination in delivering needed human, technical and financial resources. These partnerships can implement cooperative programs and projects and ensure the preservation of unique resources by creating greater incentives to attract private sector investment whether it be human, financial or technical. Such collabora-

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tion can leverage the potential of existing institutions, expand the economic impact of cultural and heritage tourism, and ameliorate or even avoid adverse effects of unplanned tourism.

PROMOTION

Revealing Our Character

Historic and cultural attractions and their living traditions make each destination unique. Promotional campaigns must follow a thoughtful product development process to ensure that quality services, attractions or experiences are in place before a destination is promoted.

Success will depend on all sectors—tourism, culture, heritage, nature—seeing themselves as part of the cultural and heritage tourism industry. Given the technological and media savvy of the next generation of consumers, the industry needs to reinvent and reposition itself in promoting cultural and heritage resources. Promotion will need to stay current with trends in technology in reaching new consumers, and be committed to cooperative messaging, programming and marketing that cuts across sectors, generations and interests.

Building Blocks for Tours and Conventions

Cultural and heritage assets, as well as natural resources, should be primary ingredients for group tour experiences that seek to develop new regional and thematic packages. Cultural, natural and heritage resources are also important components for individual travelers and groups who create their own itineraries by drawing on the Internet and other resources. Cultural and heritage institutions also represent a resource for destination management organizations, meeting and convention planners seeking to promote shoulder season and off-season travel.

Destination USA

Promotional campaigns for U.S. tourism should feature our nation's unique natural, historic and cultural resources, as well as the creative talent, that define and sustain our country's distinctive character. The U.S. needs a well-funded international presence that draws on the richness of these resources and artists. A successful international promotional effort depends on a proactive approach to developing new international markets and expanding public and private sector support for cooperative marketing at the local, regional and national levels. National branding campaigns need to be localized and involve community leaders and residents in articulating their heritage, culture and image.

Thematic Tourism

Thematic tours should be inclusive of natural, cultural and historic assets to maximize the opportunities for attracting a cross-section of audiences to multiple sites and events that transcend geographic boundaries. The stories, themes and partners should reflect the diversity of the U.S. and include the broader cultural and historic tourism industry. Linking similar assets together as a linear "strings of pearls" allows consumers to travel by motivation and interests—such as military history, ethnic settlements, music, commerce and industry, architecture or landscapes—to expand opportunities for these visitors to stay longer and spend more.

RESEARCH

A Lens on the Landscape

Research supports and intersects with all the key issue areas in cultural and heritage tourism. It helps identify the consumers and key trends in the industry and supports case making, advocacy and policy efforts. Although an abundance of information is being collected, there is a continuing need to increase access to the information and improve distribution of research and consistency in findings.



Data Collection and Dissemination for Domestic Tourism

Communities, their cultural and heritage institutions, and the tourism industry need national market research that identifies domestic travelers' interest in cultural and heritage activities and tracks their actual visitation to specific sites and organizations. The tourism industry and relevant federal agencies should better publicize and make easily available existing travel and tourism data, using existing Internet sites and other vehicles to publish and distribute studies and key information. All the sectors in the cultural and heritage tourism industry should examine using new tools to measure the impact of the industry, from the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), to travel and tourism satellite accounts and current employment data, to the broader examination of culture, heritage and tourism's contribution to the creative economy.

International Visitors

The Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, conducts important and relevant research on international inbound visitation to America. Given that international consumer understanding of cultural and heritage tourism is different from that of their counterparts in the U.S., it is recommended that the federal agency broaden its research and develop more detailed international visitor surveys to identify and analyze foreign visitors' motivations and activities regarding culture and heritage. Specifically, the research should capture information on interest in and visitation to national parks, heritage sites and areas; historic buildings, neighborhoods and districts; and performing arts centers, museums and other arts organizations, as well as rural and multicultural tourism experiences, including the appeal of regional and thematic tours. Public access to this additional detailed information is vital for cultural and heritage tourism practitioners to proactively develop and market desired experiences.

Data Collection by Cultural and Heritage Institutions

Individual cultural and heritage institutions, and their national affiliates, should collect meaningful data about their visitors including, but not limited to, projected visitation, actual visitation, and economic and cultural impacts and make it available to the travel industry. Cultural and heritage institutions involved in regional or thematic promotion

should improve the quality, consistency and frequency of their respective regional data. Cultural and heritage institutions should share the results of their research with their local destination marketing organizations (DMOs) including convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce and other like entities. These DMOs should use their surveys to obtain information that will assist their local heritage and cultural institutions in promoting themselves as visitor attractions and activities.

Return on Investment Studies

The initiatives currently defining and measuring the for-profit and nonprofit sectors of the creative industry should incorporate, examine and build on the travel industry's studies of the economic impact of tourism. All sectors in the cultural and heritage tourism industry should agree on a set of common data points so that comparisons can be made and impacts measured between these sectors. All data should be collected and analyzed to demonstrate how investments, activities and visitation contribute to the overall cultural heritage tourism goal and benefit cultural and heritage resources, residents, customers, institutions and industry.

TECHNOLOGY

Communications Tools for Today and Tomorrow

The explosive growth in technology has made a significant impact on every aspect of the cultural and heritage tourism industry. Striking a balance between keeping current with technology and having the resources to deploy these tools, as well as using these tools to enhance and not undermine an authentic experience, are key considerations for all the sectors in cultural and heritage tourism. Technology in this case encompasses three areas: 1) technology that supports business/industry strategy; 2) programmatic technology to deliver content; and 3) operational efficiency technology that helps administrators and experts work smarter.

Delivering Content

Using technology to map assets, analyze impact of potential infrastructure improvements and interpret sites will streamline the planning and development process. The design of interfaces, hyperlinks, calendars and other Internet information systems should make it easier for both individu-



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als and groups to access, organize and customize thematic, rural and regional trip itineraries. Management software will allow practitioners to track visitation and sources of revenue and to monitor capacity.

Business Application

Technological advancements should be shared among all the sectors in the cultural and heritage tourism industry, from creating and expanding shared databases to developing new partnerships with other businesses to exploit smart card and other emerging technology. With an ultimate goal of efficiency and effectiveness, technology can help cultural and heritage institutions provide customers greater flexibility in accessing information and making purchases. Mentoring programs and tapping specific technical assistance will help level the field of knowledge among all sizes of cultural and heritage institutions.

Enhanced Experiences

Cultural, heritage and tourism partners should collaborate on developing content for a broad range of high- and low-tech vehicles to meet customer preferences for information. Technology offers many opportunities to assist visitors in planning and experiencing the cultural, natural and historic riches of this nation. Exploiting the use of handhelds and other devices to overcome barriers in language and wayfinding offers potential areas of collaboration for the public and private sectors in the cultural and heritage tourism industry. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping tools, assistive audio devices, wireless machines, handhelds and other technological hardware and software provide customers the flexibility, affordability and convenience they desire.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Access to Excellence

The cultural and heritage tourism industry comprises many components large and small, ranging from heritage corridors and living landscapes to

downtowns and scenic byways to cultural centers and parks. Accurately assessing the physical needs and threats to these resources; engaging in thoughtful planning to address capacity, access and service issues; and acknowledging that infrastructure improvements should benefit both residents and visitors, requires careful delineation and coordination of the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government, as well as the private sector. Assuring the physical preservation and viability of all of these facilities and maintaining a healthy relationship between a place's natural, cultural and heritage resources is crucial to the continued vitality of the industry, to creating a multidimensional and dynamic customer experience and to preserving the spirit of the community and its residents.

The Visitor and Resident Experience

The travel and tourism industry and cultural and heritage organizations must work together to ensure that the visitor experiences available in the U.S. are memorable, visually attractive and rewarding. Quality design of environmentally sensitive signage, entryways, streetscapes and public facilities—combined with good interpretation—can illuminate the landscape for the visitor, provide coherence to the visitor's experience, and ensure that the tourism infrastructure is itself a part of a high-quality tourism and resident experience. Good design can also make an important contribution to safety and security, mitigating the physical and intangible barriers to visitors by creating a sense of welcome for visitors.

Transportation and the Visitor Experience

The cultural and heritage tourism sectors should strengthen partnerships with transportation agencies at the local, state, regional and federal levels to address how transportation affects the visitor experience. In urban areas, public transit agencies can improve the visitor experience by working with the cultural and heritage tourism partners in addressing visitor issues through cooperative marketing and wayfinding, particularly for



the international market. In sensitive landscapes and historic areas, especially in rural areas, public transport can help address the carrying capacity issues of these sites. Cultural, heritage, tourism and natural resource managers should collaborate in examining the opportunities presented by the web of bikeways, trails, historic roads and horse paths in telling the story of a place. Increasing local flexibility in developing signage and wayfinding systems that knit together sites and institutions by using trails, roads and bikeways allows communities to develop a more positive resident and visitor experience.

Transportation facilities in rural areas should be designed in a way that does not threaten the very attributes that make rural areas attractive places to live in or visit. Where possible, infrastructure development should use art, architecture and site design to reflect or be compatible with local culture and landscape. Transportation plans should be sensitive to the value of historic buildings and neighborhoods and to the need to preserve local communities. Transportation facilities should include services for travelers and be integrated with surrounding buildings that serve both visitor and resident needs. Finally, Transportation Enhancement and other highway funds should be used to address these and other issues, as well as leverage more public and private investment.

Impact of Infrastructure Design

Cultural and heritage organizations should ensure that their activities and facilities are accessible for travelers with disabilities. Advances in the “universal design” of products, programs, graphics, buildings, and public spaces can enhance America’s competitive edge if tapped by all sectors of the cultural and heritage tourism industry.

The cultural impact of infrastructure improvements must be considered in the planning and development of infrastructure design standards. For example, in rural areas the landscape/natural environment contributes to the traditions and cultural values of the people who settled there. Tourism infrastructure planning and development must address broader cultural and geographic regions, not just one specific tourism destination such as a park or resort. Heritage area partnerships and regional tour routes such as scenic and historic highways and themed corridors are excellent mechanisms for such planning and development.

Natural, Cultural and Historic Infrastructure

The authenticity of the visitor experience includes many pieces that encompass downtowns, living landscapes, heritage corridors, cultural institutions and historic structures and sites. We must make sites as accessible as possible to both international and domestic visitors while minimizing adverse impacts on these natural, historic and cultural resources. The natural resource, historic preservation and cultural organizations should work with the travel and tourism industry to assure the preservation and appropriate promotion of these resources.

Addressing both the capital needs and threats to these resources and demonstrating how these resources contribute to job creation and other economic benefits requires new leadership in developing public and private investment. Creating new models in economic and community development that focus on the needs of the cultural and heritage tourism entrepreneurs and organizations benefits visitors, residents, communities and the industry.

Wayfinding and Visitor Orientation

Advances in technology have created numerous opportunities to guide and orient visitors and residents to cultural, natural and historic sites and attractions. The growth in technology has many benefits, but it also threatens to create a digital divide between visitors and sites trying to meet ever-increasing technological changes. Leadership at the local, state and federal levels that includes communities, transportation and the various sectors in the cultural and heritage tourism industry should explore how to integrate and harness technology into a consistent wayfinding and orientation system. Wireless wayfinding and orientation strategies must complement maps and highway signage, which should use consistent symbols nationwide to identify cultural, historical and natural attractions.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Cultural Conversations

Education and training forms a bridge between the educational missions of most nonprofits and the commercial for-profit sectors in the cultural and heritage tourism industry. Community residents should be among the first contingent of

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cultural and heritage visitors, finding out about themselves, their neighbors and their cultural and heritage assets. In the process of educating residents about the value of its own place, the for-profit and nonprofit interests in the cultural and heritage tourism industry can address opportunities to educate their leaders and staff in crafting a cultural and heritage tourism product that integrates all the ingredients of place—natural, cultural and historical resources, and living traditions. Educating community residents is an effective means of using local citizens as tourism ambassadors for a region.

Knowledge Base

A comprehensive set of training objectives, tools and materials should be developed for all sectors in cultural and heritage tourism. While the knowledge base in each segment of the cultural and heritage tourism industry is different, education and training needs to be coordinated to create a unified team, bringing the different sectors together.

Education and training programs should include the significance and value of natural, historic and cultural resources, as well as an awareness of community development techniques such as land use planning, historic preservation and community cultural planning. Educators should involve cultural, heritage and business specialists in their training programs. Programs should include cultural sensitivity training for cultural and ethnic etiquette.

All segments in the cultural and heritage tourism industry should identify current training materials and toolkits, address the gaps with new materials and put all this material into a collective national toolkit. This information should be made broadly available in user-friendly formats through the Internet, conferences and training programs.

Visitor and Resident Education and Training

Hospitality issues and concerns should be part of the education and training of all sectors of the cultural and heritage tourism industry. In addition

to tourism planning and development issues, this should include visitor service issues. All the sectors should assure that needed information about the destination community, including any safety issues, reaches front-line staff such as ticket sellers, hotel clerks, concierges, bus and taxi drivers, tour guides and others who interact with the traveling public every day.

The cultural and heritage tourism industry should facilitate cooperation and understanding amongst the marketing and communications staffs to broaden awareness and promotion of area attractions, and keep them informed about visitor interests, needed visitor services, and planned promotional campaigns.

All the interests in cultural and heritage tourism should join together in celebrating the diversity and uniqueness of place. This includes preparing communities to receive visitors, addressing fears and concerns, as well as enhancing their appreciation of the value of their own traditions, heritage, culture and institutions. In particular, educational efforts should assist smaller organizations in participating as equal and full partners. It also means educating the community about the benefits of cultural and heritage tourism and educating travelers about the culture of their destinations. Finally, training and education should assist residents and visitors in understanding and welcoming different cultures in a sensitive and respectful way.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism Entrepreneurs

Recognizing and supporting cultural and heritage entrepreneurs—business owners, self-employed artists and artisans and others—as legitimate and important to local economies should be part of the training programs developed by the cultural and heritage tourism industry. These include identifying public and private sources of seed funding or training assistance for new or existing businesses or artists and artisans. All sectors should cooperate in encouraging university or college arts administration and tourism

management programs, both undergraduate and graduate programs, to develop and integrate curricula that address cultural and heritage tourism and entrepreneurship.

SUSTAINABILITY

Preserving a Viable Sense of Place

The 1995 White House Conference on Travel and Tourism's issue paper states, "The responsibilities of the travel and tourism industry, the states and communities, and the federal government include making certain that tourism development and activities are carried out in such a way as to sustain or improve the natural, social, and cultural foundations of a destination."

The stewards of natural, cultural and historical assets must be assured that cultural and heritage tourism respects the traditions, values and sensitivities associated with these assets. They must believe that tourism and other development activities provide sustainable benefits that do not sacrifice the integrity of a community's assets for greater marketability. Sustainability addresses both programmatic needs, and the viability of the resources themselves. Strengthening local leadership and support from all the stakeholders is key to striking a balance between an optimal visitor experience and economic opportunity and the needs of the community to preserve and sustain its historic, cultural and natural resources.

Sustainability

The implications of tourism and other development should include impacts not just on natural resources, but also on historic and cultural resources such as the built environment and local ways of life that attract visitors to a destination. In planning for tourism, the stakeholders should anticipate developmental pressures and apply limits and management techniques that sustain natural resources, heritage sites and local culture and institutions.

Sustainability should conserve resources; respect local culture, heritage and tradition; focus on quality balanced with economic opportunity for residents; optimize the visitor experience through a creative mix of cultural, natural and historic resources; and measure success not in numbers alone, but also in the integrity of the experience that contributes to economic viability of the institutions, resources, community and its residents.

Access with Minimum Impact

The cultural and heritage tourism industry should work with local communities to find ways to ensure visitor access to natural, historic and cultural resources in ways that will avoid damaging or destroying those resources. New technologies (e.g., lightweight viewing platforms in fragile landscapes, specialized vehicles, software) and creative management practices (e.g., conservation easements, design guidelines) should be used wherever possible to minimize impact. Representatives of the industry should be a voice for resource protection as well as promotion.

Cultural Stewardship

Poorly planned tourism development can endanger not only a destination's environment, but also the very culture of the people who live there. Local cultural organizations should: 1) work with the travel and tourism industry to improve visitor awareness of the need to preserve natural, historic and cultural resources by minimizing the impacts of visitation; 2) expand or develop training and outreach programs for all the stakeholders in cultural and heritage tourism to address planning, marketing, product development, technology, economic opportunity and their effects on sustainability; and 3) focus on educating government agencies, civic leaders, natural resource managers and others on the inherent potential of cultural, natural and heritage assets, and the need for investment in these assets, to provide educational value, recreation opportunities and a stimulus for community and economic development.

Stakeholders in Stewardship

In planning and executing development, the involvement of stakeholders—local community leaders; resource managers; cultural and heritage institutions; artists, interpreters and performers; tourism, business and other representatives—is key to creating and sustaining cultural and heritage tourism projects and resources. Sustainability requires investment in fine-tuned assistance like micro-lending institutions, common venues, and Internet sales and marketing, as well as in other areas to help communities and individuals participate and stay viable in the tourism economy. Sustainable cultural and heritage tourism should strive to give local stakeholders more control over their product mix and their story, and instill an ethic of inclusiveness and sense of participation in a larger global enterprise.



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PUBLIC POLICY & SUPPORT

Cultural and heritage tourism is a major industry, and an instrument of federal, state, tribal and local policy (rural and urban; community and regional development; transportation; recreation; public education). Arts, humanities and heritage resources and their creative workers, together with the travel industry, are a key to healthy and vibrant communities, increasing their competitiveness as places to live, work and visit.

There is a public interest and role for supporting and sustaining these resources in collaboration with the travel industry and the private sector at large. The nation's and local communities' stake in improving, enhancing and sustaining the quality of life for Americans, and the contributions of the cultural and heritage tourism industry in this effort, need to be taken into account by decision makers and responsible planning and management authorities. As a global power and a nation of immigrants, the U.S. has a vital national interest in cultural and heritage tourism for increasing understanding of other cultures and peoples, as well as using the arts and humanities to transmit our confidence in the free exchange of ideas to strengthen our economic, cultural and diplomatic relationships.

Partnership Framework

Legal, financial and policy barriers, both real and imagined, to effective cultural and heritage tourism programs exist at all levels of government. Business and the not-for-profit sector should work together to support the development and expansion of cultural and heritage tourism to the maximum extent with appropriate policies, programs and funding. Programs and policies should enhance and support partnerships as strategic, efficient and effective and increase federal inter-agency partnerships, as well as cross-sector state, local, tribal and private sector partnerships in support of cultural and heritage tourism.

Key Values

The cultural and heritage tourism industry should develop alliances and messages that effectively convey the public benefits of its industry, including but not limited to economic value, authentic experiences, and "sense of place." In policy, programs and process, leaders should advocate for and implement policies that also align with public values of diversity, accessibility and sustainability. Public policymakers, the cultural and heritage tourism industry and private leaders should recognize and actively address the needs of preserving, protecting and sustaining the broad array of cultural, natural and historic resources and creative talent that form the backbone of our national identity.

Investment

Public sector development policies and programs often do not acknowledge cultural and heritage tourism strategies as true sustainable development in terms of job creation, tax revenue and leveraged investment. There is therefore a broad lack of understanding of this sector by public agencies, and insufficient community and entrepreneurial assistance available in the form of grants and loans, tax incentives, sales and marketing support, and similar mechanisms to help the travel and tourism economy be competitive and viable. Civic, government and private sector leaders should build on policies at the state, local and federal levels to foster complementary strategies, tools and resources to encourage and leverage private investment in cultural and heritage tourism and support citizen volunteerism.

International

Our nation's cultural, heritage and natural assets play a significant role in attracting international visitors. With the increasingly global reach of our creative industries, public and private sector leaders should cultivate an international approach that puts greater emphasis on cultural and heritage tourism as a way to

illuminate the international roots of our history, language and cultural expressions. At all levels, leaders should expand sponsorship of international scholarly and cultural programs— exhibits, artistic exchanges and collaborations, performances, etc.—tapping into tourism marketing efforts and expertise to raise awareness and access to these offerings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Position Paper on Cultural & Heritage Tourism in the United States is the work of many talented people who were brought together to review the original 1995 white paper, *Cultural Tourism in the United States*, published by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and the American Association of Museums. The resulting document reflects their experience and success in developing a thriving cultural and heritage tourism industry. A debt of gratitude is also due the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, whose vision and leadership in meeting the goals of the original white paper has contributed to this success and affirmed the public sector's role in supporting the nation's cultural life.

Finally, my thanks to the members of Partners in Tourism and the Cultural & Heritage Tourism Alliance for their contributions to revising this white paper, to the Shop America Alliance for their support of the 2005 Summit and to Cheryl Hargrove, Helen Marano and Barbara Steinfeld for their help in realizing this document. Thanks as well to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies for editorial assistance.

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Partners in Tourism is a coalition of national associations and federal agencies building a common agenda for cultural and heritage tourism.

www.culturalheritagetourism.org

National Partners

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www.artsusa.org

Alliance of National Heritage Areas
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This publication funded through
a generous contribution from:

