

Calumet Heritage Area Management Plan



April 2021



calumetheritagearea.org

Acknowledgements

“Do you want to know a secret?” sang the Beatles on their very first LP released in the US on Gary-based Vee-Jay records.

The secret of this place, as of all successful Heritage Areas, is partnership. The authors of this *Management Plan* leaned on many partners to dream, to share, to plan, and to lock into rhythm.

The plan was coordinated by the Heritage Area’s Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC). The JCC is composed of representatives from the Calumet Heritage Partnership (Karen Brozynski, Mike Longan, Gary Johnson, Benjamin Cox) and the Calumet Collaborative (Bill Steers, Sarah Coulter). The JCC has set a fine example of partnership, blending the capacities and skills of each organization into a unified vision for the Heritage Area.

The boards of each organization stood behind the work of the plan and of the JCC. They lent their diverse array of knowledge, skills, connections and passions to the Heritage Area effort. As individuals, these board members inspire; as a group, they move mountains. The Calumet Heritage Partnership has nurtured the flame of the Heritage Area idea for more than two decades. Its persistence and creativity deserve a book. The Calumet Collaborative has asserted a vision for sustainable development in this region in which “heritage” is not the dusty stack of attic-stored memories, but the wellspring of the latest thinking in building the livable cities of tomorrow.

The JCC agreed that Field Museum staff would direct the planning process and the writing of the plan. The Museum is committed to a journey of discovery across time to ensure brighter solutions for a future rich in nature and culture, and so many roads on that journey lead through the Calumet region. A number of Museum staff were involved in the plan’s preparation, but especially Madeleine Tudor, Mario Longoni, Ellen Woodward, and Mark Bouman. Colleagues from across the Museum have been engaged in this work in the Calumet region, and it has been strongly supported by President Julian Siggers, Vice President Thorsten Lumbsch, and Amy Rosenthal, Director of the Keller Science Action Center.

This Heritage Area plan speaks of the landscape bookended by two National Parks. A number of National Park Service employees have been very helpful to our thinking, especially in the way they simply carry out their work as great stewards of the nation’s stories and the region’s great places. The Calumet region is fortunate to have people like Sue Bennett, Teri Gage, Paul Labovitz, Lynda Lancaster, Mike Mencarini, and their colleagues working on its behalf. And Chris Stein in the regional NHA Office—thanks!

What kept this effort “burnin’” (as Vee-Jay artist John Lee Hooker would sing), was a secure source of financial support. ArcelorMittal was a consistent supporter across many years, and to this was joined the recent strong support of the Crown Family Philanthropies.

Support wears many hats. A large number of volunteers came together to work on this plan, especially via the Focus Area Planning Committees. Their work, and that of many other volunteers, is noted in an Appendix.

“There’s a place,” the Beatles also noted on that first disc. “Where I can go/when I feel blue/when I feel low ...” This place, this Calumet, is home to more than a million and a half people. This plan, and all the energies and desires and memories of the many actions it attempts to describe and coordinate, is dedicated to them.

The Calumet Heritage Partnership is a bi-state non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the unique heritage of the Calumet region. The Calumet Collaborative and the Field Museum are partners in the Calumet Heritage Partnership. Together, they further the development of the Calumet Heritage Area and lead the creation of a Calumet National Heritage Area.



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Cover Photo: Bascule bridges at Indiana Harbor. Carol Griskavich.