

# PATHWAYS

## NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



## DRAFT FEASIBILITY STUDY

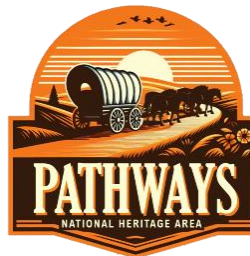
### Carbon and Natrona Counties, Wyoming

Prepared by the Pathways National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Team  
for submission to the National Heritage Area Program,  
National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

**DRAFT #2: June 1, 2024**

**June 1, 2024**

A feasibility study helps local, state, and federal decision-makers assess the merits of an area being Congressionally designated as a National Heritage Area (NHA). This feasibility study has been prepared by the Pathways National Heritage Area (PNHA) Feasibility Study Team which includes the following volunteers.



- Mr. Vernon Lovejoy, retired National Outdoor Recreation and Concessions Policy Coordinator, USDI, Bureau of Reclamation, Indian Hills, Colorado
- Dr. Glenn Haas, Emeritus Professor, Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Colorado State University
- Ms. Leslie Jefferson, CEO, *Discover Carbon County*, Rawlins, Wyoming
- Mr. Tyler Daugherty, CEO, *Visit Casper*, Casper Wyoming
- Dr. Travis Moore, Carbon County Commissioner, Rawlins, Wyoming
- Ms. Connie Hall, Chairwoman, Casper Historic Preservation Commission, Casper, Wyoming
- Mr. Craig Collins, Casper City Planner, Casper, Wyoming
- Mr. Mike Armstrong, Carbon County Comet Founder, Hanna, Wyoming
- Dr. Marcella Wells, Interpretation Specialist, Wells Resources, Inc, Fort Collins, Colorado
- Mr. Jordan Brack, Web and Digital Support, Golden, Colorado
- Mr. Karl Brack, Production Design, Freeport, Florida
- Mr. Tim Bottomley, Geographic Information Specialist, Arvada, Colorado

The PNHA Feasibility Study began on February 21, 2024, when Natrona County Commissioners voted to join the Carbon County Commissioners in support of obtaining a feasibility study for the project.

The feasibility study will be released for public comment in three successive drafts with each draft duly considering public comments and building upon the previous version. This strategy is intended to keep the community engaged and informed during the process. The projected release dates are:

- Draft #1 - March 30, 2024
- **Draft #2 - June 1, 2024**
- Draft #3 - August 1, 2024

The Final report will be submitted to the supporting partners by September 1, 2024, for submission to the National Park Service who will assess the merits of the proposed PNHA for Congressional designation.

Please visit [www.PathwaysNHA.com](http://www.PathwaysNHA.com)  
to submit comments and vote in support/opposition to  
the PNHA designation.

You can also submit a letter of support for inclusion in the final  
report by sending your signed letter to [PathwaysNHA@gmail.com](mailto:PathwaysNHA@gmail.com).



**Please  
Vote!**

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- b. National Heritage Area Act, Jan. 5, 2023 (P.L. 117-339)
- c. Wyoming History
- d. Natural Resource and Social/Economic Profile
- e. Public Engagement Process & Survey Results
- f. Photos Log of Heritage Assets
- g. Related Resources of Interest

# PART 1: THE PATHWAYS

## A. PNHA Orientation

In 1984, President Reagan signed into law the **National Heritage Act** which created what he referred to as a “*new kind of national park*.” Congress assigned the administration of the program to the National Park Service (NPS). However, National Parks and National Heritages Areas (NHA) are distinctly different.

A NHA is a congressionally designated geographic area which can encompass rural and urban communities with all their built amenities, services, and features. A NHA has no formal entrance gates, park fees, rangers, or NPS law enforcement. It has no on-site NPS management, authority, or responsibility. NHAs are not units of the NPS but rather are administered by a local community entity.

A NHA is a “*museum without walls*” spread out across many acres and even miles. Within its boundary, a NHA, such as the one proposed here, is an assemblage of significant heritage assets that may include historical evidence such as: homesteads, train depots, river crossings, military fortifications, tombstones, historic trails, markers, hotels, local museums, interpretive displays, and original in-place artifacts. These expansive historic landscapes may also include facilities and locations for hosting events and activities such as reenactments and guided tours.

What distinguishes a NHA is the combination of unique, cohesive, and unifying heritage assets that tell a significant American story - a story compelling enough to share with future generations and in a location consequential enough to benefit from preservation.

This type of national designation has become popular with communities who take pride in their heritage resources and want to preserve and share their stories with others from outside the area. Today, there are 62 Congressionally designated NHAs across 36 States. This PNHA would be the first NHA in Wyoming.



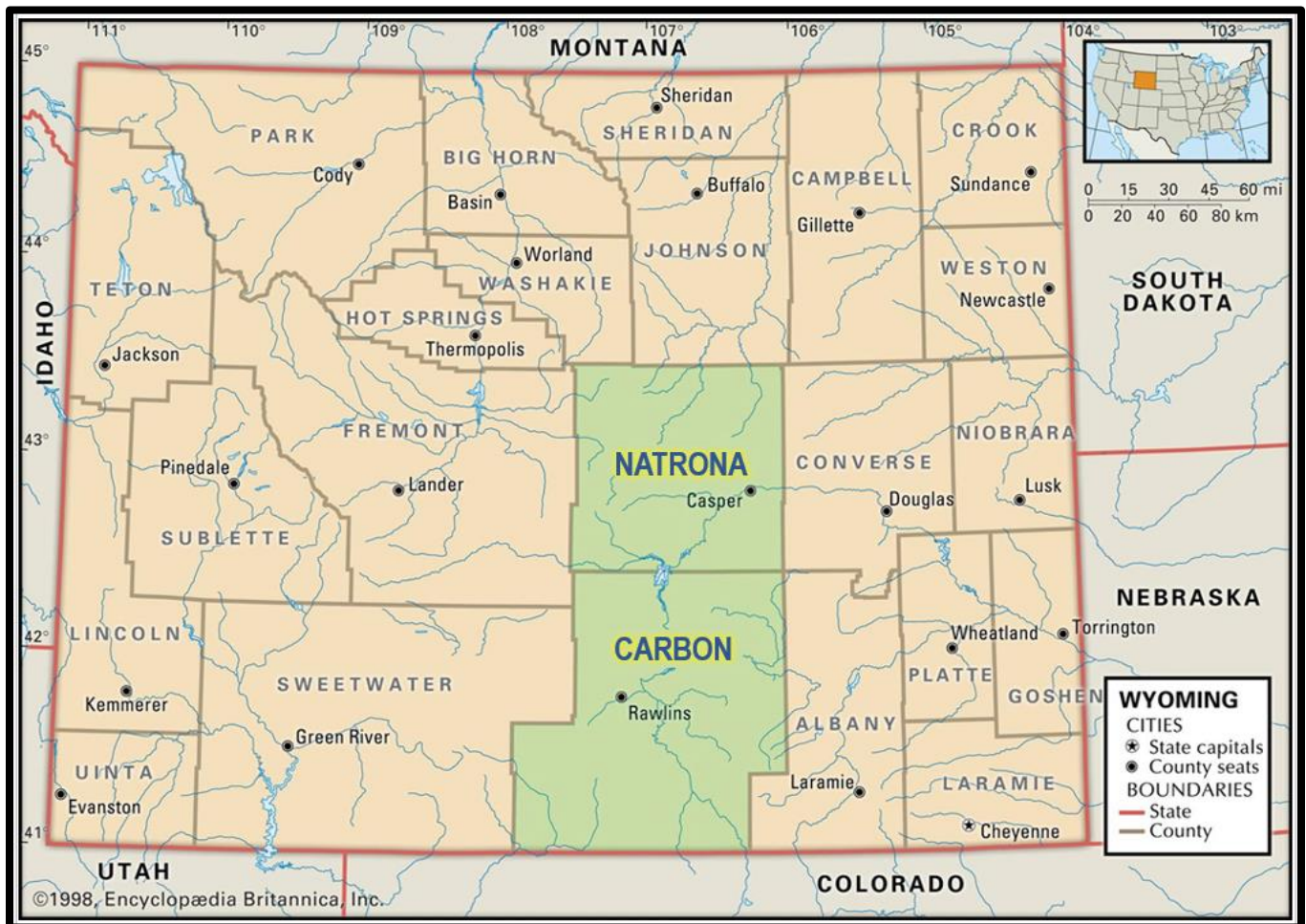
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Map 1 shows the location of the PNHA encompassing Carbon and Natrona Counties in south-central Wyoming. The two counties comprise 13,246 square miles or 8,477,440 acres of public and private land, with a 2021 population of 94,204. The PNHA is sparsely settled with an average of ninety acres per person and 71% of the residents clustered in Casper and Rawlins.

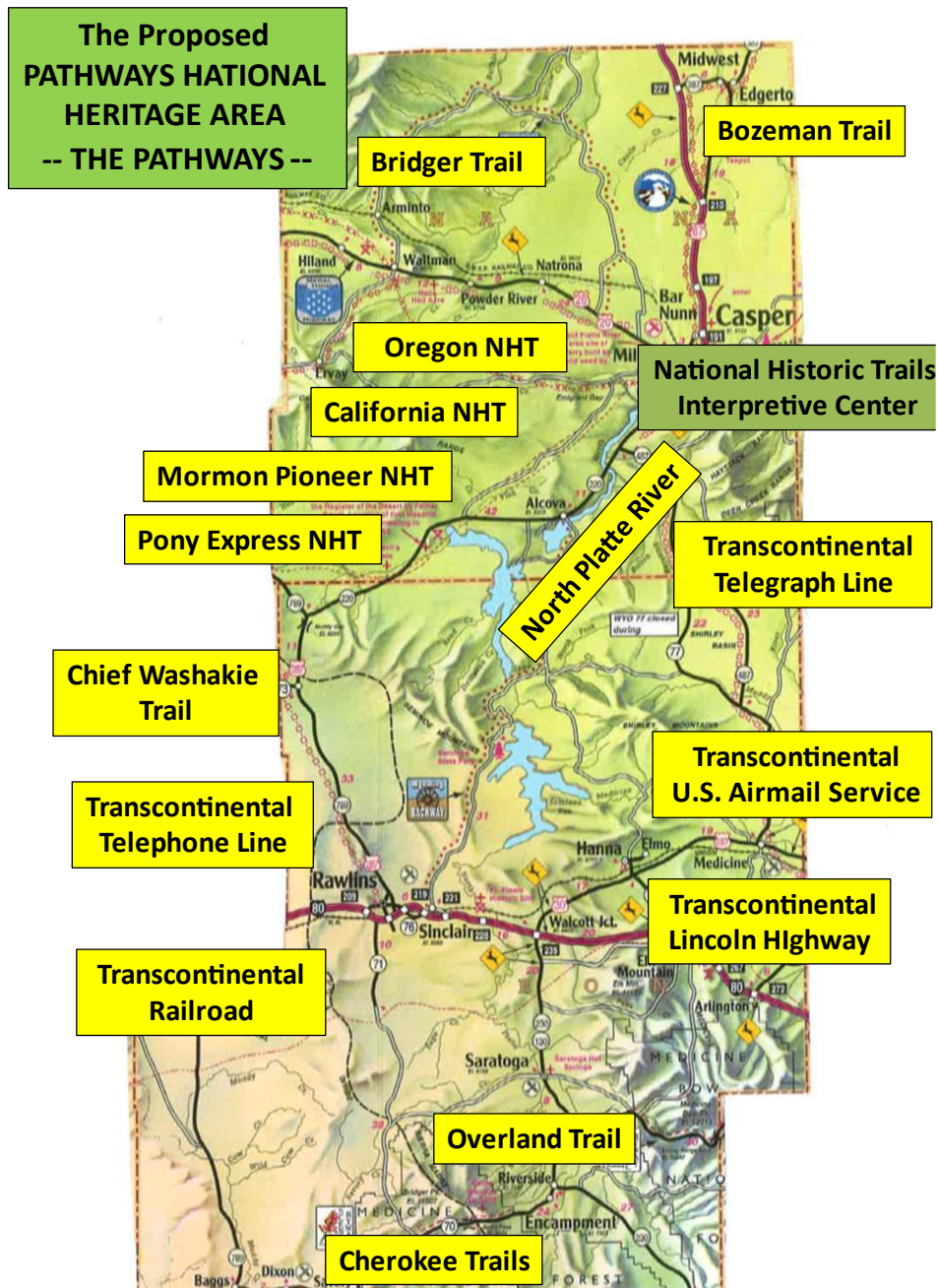
Map 1

**A National and State Locational Map of the PNHA**



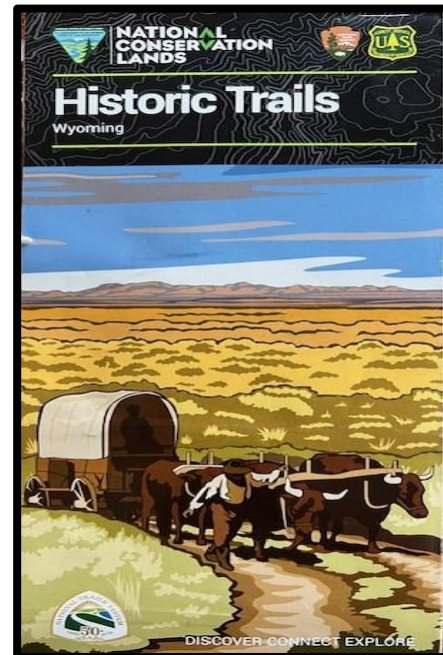
The PHNA encompasses 15 pathways which converge in south-central Wyoming. These pathways reflect the drive, courage, trials, tribulations, ingenuity, and innovation of early Americans who propelled the western expansion, settlement, and the Nation's development between the 1840—1920. Map 2 depicts a 30,000' landscape-level perspective of Carbon and Natrona counties and the fifteen pathways of national distinction which together provide the credentials and American story of the PNHA.

# The Pathways of the Proposed National Heritage Area





This section briefly describes the pathways of the PNHA. The history and significance of these pathways has been well chronicled over time through research, publications, and documentaries which are evidenced below.





## Pathway 1: The North Platte River

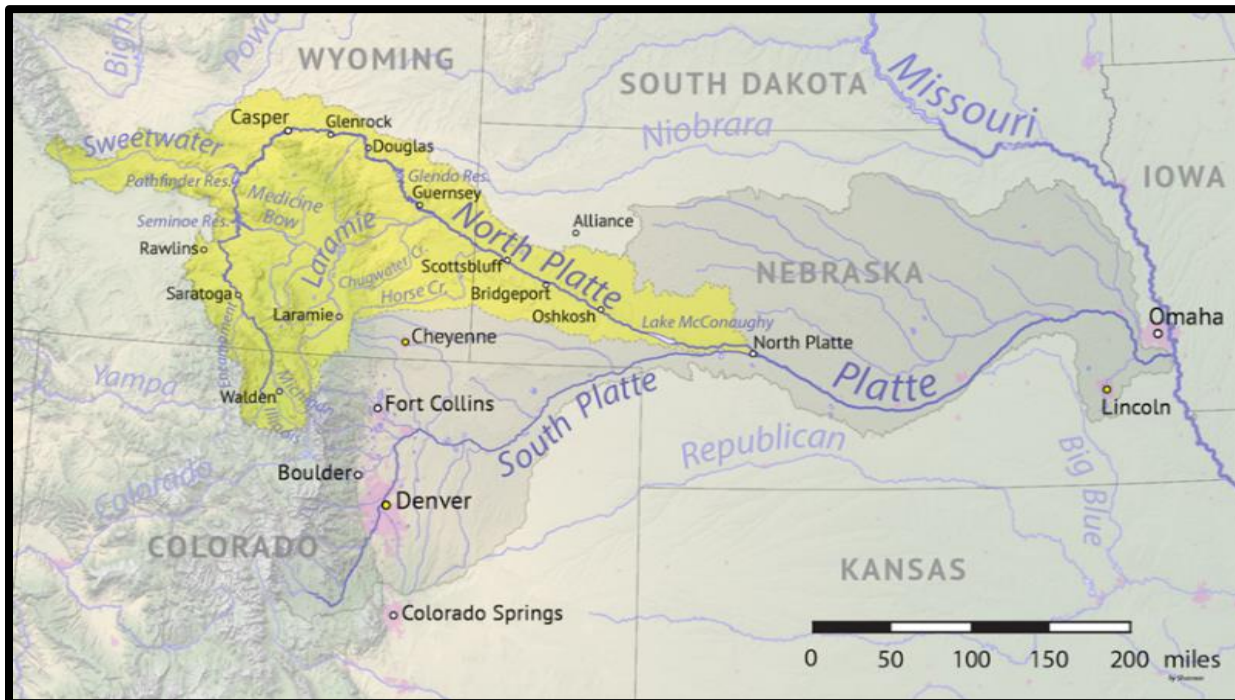
While not famed with any state or national distinction, the North Platte River was the beacon for early westward exploration and travel. From early trappers transporting beaver pelts back east to the emigrants leaving the safe harbor of Omaha to reach the west, the North Platte was a 550-mile pathway. The river corridor provided a recognizable travel route, potable water for travelers and livestock, fish and wildlife for food, forage for livestock, and protection and shelter from the heat and winds. Conversely, the river also provided impediments with respect to high flows and dangerous river crossings.

The river originates in the high Colorado Rockies and travels north through Saratoga and on to Casper before looping southeast into Nebraska and beyond. The North Platte and its tributaries in the Encampment and Saratoga areas of Wyoming were a vital transportation means bringing needed wood for railroad ties and poles for the transcontinental telegraph and telephone lines.

Today, the river is rated by the Wyoming Fish and Game as a blue-ribbon fishery and provides irrigation water for many farms and ranches. The North Platte River was a major historic pathway in the western expansion, settlement, and development of the Nation, and continues today to support Wyoming's agriculture, recreation, and tourism industry.

### Map 3

#### **The North Platte River Watershed**





## **Pathway 2: The Oregon National Historic Trail (1843-68)**

Robert Stuart of the Astorians (a group of fur traders who established Fort Astoria on the Columbia River in western Oregon) became the first white man to use what later became known as the Oregon Trail. Stuart's 2,000-mile journey from Fort Astoria to St. Louis in 1810 took 10 months to complete but was a much less rugged trail than Lewis and Clark's route and had the potential to support wagon travel.

The Oregon National Historic Trail was a 2,000-mile trail connecting Missouri to the western valleys of Oregon. The route was founded by early trappers on foot and horseback. Overtime, trail improvements were made for the large-wheeled wagons. The trail was also realigned over the years because of shorter routes, safer river crossings, and commercial services such as ferries and fee bridges. Some 400,000 emigrants travelled of the Oregon Historic Trial from the early 1840s through 1869. When the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, use of the trail declined as train travel was safer, faster, and easier.

Congress designated the Oregon Trail as a National Historic Trail in 1978.

### **Pathway 3: The California National Historic Trail (1841-68)**

The California National Historic Trail was a 2,000-mile-long wagon trail connecting Missouri to central California. Assuming good fortune (i.e., weather, river crossing, equipment), the trek required five months. Gold and rich farmland inspired early settlers to go west. While several adventurous parties made the arduous trek in the early 1840's, it was the discovery of gold in 1848 that launched thousands of settlers west to California.

The route through Wyoming was shared with the Mormon Pioneer, Oregon, and Pony Express trails. The trails followed the North Platte River upstream to Casper and south to the famed Independence Rock where the Sweetwater River intersects. From there travelers turned west along the northwest fringe of the Red Desert's Great Divide Basin to South Pass after which there were several alternative routes to California.

The California trail was heavily used between 1841 and 1869. The completion of the transcontinental railroad contributed to the decline of trail use much like on the Oregon Trail.

Congress designated the California National Historic Trail in 1992.

### **Pathway 4: The Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail (1846-68)**

John Charles Frémont's exploration of the American West in the 1840s discovered the Great Basin and Valley. His detailed reports and maps had a profound influence on Brigham Young and the Mormons' decision to settle in the Salt Lake Valley. The Mormons departed the Oregon Trail near South Pass, Wyoming and followed Fremont's instructions that led them to the Wasatch Basin, in what is now Utah.

The Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail traverses some 1,300 miles between Nauvoo, Illinois, and Salt Lake City, Utah. This trail followed the same route as the Oregon, California, and Pony Express Trail along the North Platte River in Wyoming until the junction with the Sweetwater River. The trail turned west to South Pass and then southwest to their new settlement in Salt Lake Valley.

In 1847, LDS Church leader Brigham Young and his party of 148 Mormons and 72 wagons became the first Mormon settlers to cross this western route. Other parties followed during the next 20 years including the famed two handcart

companies who met a fateful early October snowstorm just west of Independence Rock near Devil's Gate.

Numerous sites and evidence of the Mormon travels still exist including the Mormon Ferry and Red Butte area near Casper, along with Independence Rock, Devil's Gate, Martin's Cove, and Split Rock. Use of the trail declined with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

Congress established the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail in 1978.

### **Pathway 5: The Bozeman Trail (1863-68)**

The Bozeman Trail was established in 1863 as a 535-mile shortcut to the gold fields of western Montana from the Oregon Trail near Casper. This trail was short-lived from 1863-68 because it passed through the hunting grounds claimed by the Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, Northern Arapahoe, and Crow Tribes. Settlers were subjected to frequent and vicious battles which led to its nickname as the "Bloody Bozeman." The trail was effectively abandoned in 1868 when the Army closed Fort Phil Kearney and military use of the trail was discontinued.

Designation as a national historic trail is currently under consideration.

### **Pathway 6: The Bridger Trail (1864-1900s)**

The Bridger Trail to the west of the Bozeman Trail was intended to be a safe alternative connecting the Oregon Trail from Casper to the Big Horn Mountains and gold fields in western Montana. Mountain man Jim Bridger established the trail under contract with the Army Corps of Engineers. The trail did receive some early settlers and wagon use but was more heavily travelled in later years. The trail was used into the 1900s as settlers continued to migrate towards the Big Horn Basin.

Two sections of the Bridger Trail are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



### **Pathway 7: The Overland Trail (1862-69)**

Formerly known as the Overland Trail and Stage Line, it was established as a safe stagecoach route in southern Wyoming, connecting Fort Collins, Colorado, with the Oregon-California Trail northwest of Rock Springs, Wyoming. Early settlers as well as stagecoach passengers used this trail between 1862-1869. To accommodate stagecoach travel, stage stations were built along the pathway including the harsh Red Desert's Washakie Basin. Use of the Overland Trail and Stage Line quickly declined with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

### **Pathway 8: The Cherokee Trails (1849-50)**

Early settlers, including members of the Cherokee Nation, used these trails to reach California and its gold fields in 1849-50. There were several routes in proximity which traversed southern Wyoming and connected with the Oregon-California Trail to the west. The northern route passed just south of Rawlins while the southern route passed by Saratoga and Encampment.

### **Pathway 9: The Chief Washakie Trail**

Chief Washakie was the leader of the eastern Shoshone Indians in Wyoming. He was noted as a fierce warrior but also a friend to the early settlers traveling west. When wagon trains were passing through Shoshone country, he was known to assist with river crossings, recovering stray cattle, and guiding settlers from Rawlins north to Oregon-California Trails.

### **Pathway 10: The Pony Express National Historic Trail (1860-61)**

The Pony Express was America's first express mail service starting in 1860. The express mail relied on continuous teams of horse and rider relays. Each rider rode about 75 miles until handing the mail to another rider. This pattern was repeated time and again across 2000 miles from Missouri to California. The mail was delivered in a startling 10 days.

The trail followed that of the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer trails through central Wyoming. The completion of the transcontinental telegraph line in 1861 ended the need for the Pony Express.

Congress established the Pony Express National Historic Trail in 1992.

### **Pathway 11: The Transcontinental Telegraph Line (1861)**

In 1841, the news of President's Harrison's death took 110 days to travel from D.C. to California. The Nation needed a quicker and more efficient means of communication. While telegraph lines were operating east of the Mississippi and in California, reliable communication from coast to coast was not the norm. As a result, Congress passed the Telegraph Act in 1860 to connect the Nation via telegraph. The first transcontinental telegraph line was completed the next year, in 1861. The telegraph line immediately made the Pony Express obsolete. Two days after the telegraph line opened, Pony Express ceased operations.

The original telegraph line through the western territories followed the early historic trails along the North Platte River finally reaching Casper, Wyoming. Construction in Wyoming was arduous. Line workers faced numerous challenges including strong winds, snow, hostile encounters with Native tribes, lack of ready timber, and bison disruptions when these large beasts knocked over early installed poles.

After a few years, the line was re-routed south with a new multi-line telegraph that followed the transcontinental railroad through southern Wyoming. This southern route was a more direct east-west connection and had greater security due to growing settlements and the presence of the Army at locations such as Fort Fred Steele.

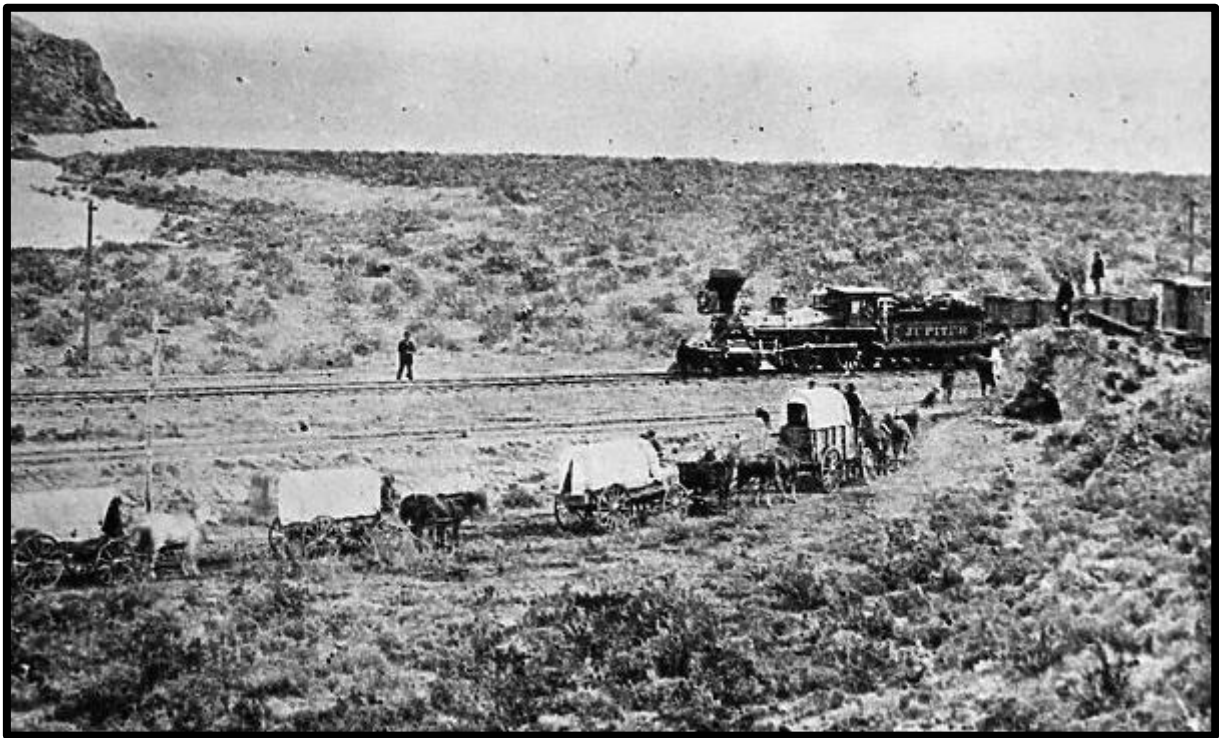
The financial benefit of the transcontinental telegraph was significant. Whereas, early transmission charges were \$1 per word (equal to \$33 in 2022 dollars), the Telegraph Act of 1860 set a rate of 30 cents per word. The transcontinental telegraph line was another transformative pathway in western expansion, settlement, and development of the Nation.

### **Pathway12: The Transcontinental Railroad (1869)**

The Nation's 1st transcontinental railroad was 1,912 miles long. It connected Council Bluffs, Iowa, with San Francisco, California. Construction of this western section started at both ends in 1863 and was completed in Utah with the commemorative golden spike in 1869. Cross-country rail passenger service began ten days after the golden spike.

The transcontinental railroad reduced the long arduous cross-country wagon travel which had taken months to days. The railroad reduced travel times across the western expanses from 6 months by wagon or 25 days by stagecoach, to just 4 days by railroad.

The southern Wyoming railroad route was attractive for its wide-open spaces and flat topography. The route was closer to forests which provided a source of railroad ties and to coal for the locomotives. The plains also contained plentiful wildlife and adequate water sources to sustain the crews .



While thousands of emigrants successfully crossed Wyoming by wagon train in the 1840s-60s, most travelers recognized that the landscape was too high, too cold, and too dry for farming. In addition, the wide-open prairies lacked ore for profitable mining.

When the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, travel by wagon and horseback began to diminish. Not only did the railroad provide a faster and safer means to migrate west, it incentivized agriculture, stimulated industrial development, and opened trade to distant eastern markets. As a result, more and more emigrants viewed Wyoming as a place to settle.

For example, there are stories of 2,000 head of cattle being loaded on rail cars in one day in Medicine Bow. Tie hacks had ready access to thousands of trees for railroad ties in the Medicine Bow and Sierra Madre mountains. They floated cut trees down the Encampment and North Platte rivers to Carbon Timber Town where they were processed for use as railroad ties and building material. Rawlins also flourished because it had a source of water needed for the early steam engines to traverse the Red Desert. The town of Hanna boomed for its abundance of critical coal.

The railroad was a transformative pathway in western expansion, settlement, and development of the Nation. Today, the Nation's first transcontinental railroad largely runs along the same route as when it was first constructed. This pathway is a tribute to American engineering, ingenuity, and innovation.

The Medicine Bow and Rawlins (below) Union Pacific train depots are on the National Register of Historic Places.



### **Pathway 13: The Transcontinental Telephone Line (1914)**

American ingenuity and innovation continued over the decades with the completion of the transcontinental telephone line in 1914. The telephone technology was invented and launched in 1876 enshrined by Alexander Graham Bell's famous words "*Mr. Watson, come here, I want you.*"

From Denver, Colorado, the telephone line turned north to Cheyenne, Wyoming, and then west to Laramie, Wyoming, and across the southern desert basins of Wyoming. At a spacing of 135 feet, the line was surveyed, holes drilled in the ground, and poles and wires installed. It took several decades, thousands of telephone poles, 6,000 miles of copper wire, and the effort by thousands of workers to connect the New York and San Francisco.

This significant pathway revolutionized American life by transforming communication, businesses, politics, diplomacy, military operations, and social interaction much like we see today with the internet and social media.

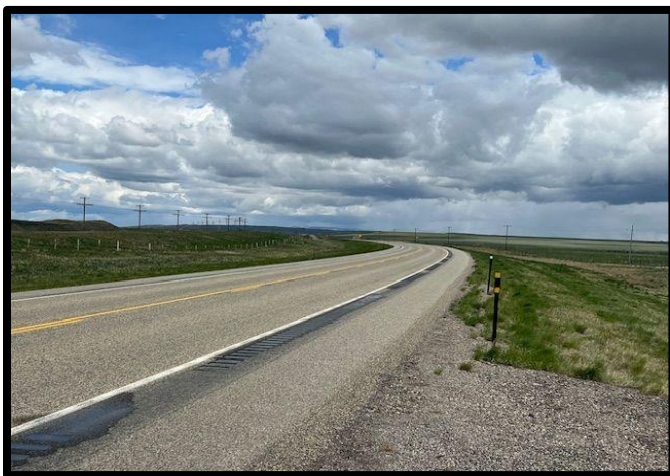


## Pathway 14: The Transcontinental Lincoln Highway (1916)

The Lincoln Highway is considered the 1<sup>st</sup> transcontinental highway designed expressly for automobiles. It was conceived in 1912 and dedicated in 1913. The highway runs from New York City to San Francisco, some 3,124 miles today.

In the eastern U.S. and through Wyoming the Lincoln Highway is U.S. Route 30. Today the highway is fragmented and replaced in sections by Interstate 80, but original stretches of the Lincoln Highway can be travelled through Laramie, Medicine Bow, Walcott Jct., Sinclair, and Rawlins. Highway markers are still intact, and memorabilia is conserved in the Medicine Bow and Rawlins museum.

The first car in Wyoming was constructed and assembled in Laramie by Elmer Lovejoy in his bicycle shop during the winter of 1897-98. Lovejoy's car was technically the first vehicle to use roads that became the Lincoln Highway.



## Pathway 15: The Transcontinental US Airmail Service Route (1920)

WW1 propelled aviation and provided a corps of trained pilots. The 2,680-mile-long airmail route linking New York and San Francisco was completed in 1920 with 15 designated stops along the way. Westbound flights could traverse the continent in 34 hours while eastbound flights could do so in 28 hours, beating the railroad service by two days. Two of the landing zones are in Carbon County.

In addition to the 15 designated stops, the airmail route was defined by 90 “intermediate fields” which served both emergency landing and navigation purposes. In Wyoming, the transcontinental airmail service route followed the Union Pacific railroad from Cheyenne, Medicine Bow, Rawlins, Rock Springs, and on to Salt Lake City. Medicine Bow had one of 15 Wyoming intermediate fields. It was known as intermediate site 32 SL-O (Salt Lake to Omaha), was located at 6,500 feet elevation with remnants today of its “pasture” runway, 51-foot-tall beacon tower, teletype office, and a 54-foot concrete arrow pointing SE towards Cheyenne, Wyoming. Under clear conditions the beacon could be seen for 40 miles. These facilities and arrow still exist next to the runway.

Site 32 SL-O Intermediate Field Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places.





## B. Justification for National Significance

The PNHA is unique and significant because it tells a more compelling and wholistic story of our Nation's westward expansion, settlement, and development in the 1840s to 1920s era. The term "Pathways" was chosen specifically because it is an inclusive term and allows for the story to embrace a variety of trails, routes, paths, roads, and rivers, as well as several technological advances in transportation and communication.



What follows is our justification of why the PNHA is a nationally significant story about America's western migration, settlement, and development.

### 1. Unique Concentration of Historic Pathways

The PNHA includes a unique concentration of major historic trails consequential to western migration. Carbon and Natrona Counties were the center of westward expansion where travelers first encountered the formidable Rocky Mountains. Nine historic wagon trails traversed the area, four of which have been designated by Congress as National Historic Trails. The national distinction of the area is further evidenced by the location of the world-class National Historic Trails Interpretive Center high on the bluff overlooking the location of the early pathways in the City of Casper, Wyoming.



Most early travelers followed the famed North Platte River across Nebraska and into Wyoming up to its northernmost point in Casper, Wyoming. From there some travelers continued north on the Bozeman and Bridger trails to seek a new life in Montana and beyond. The majority, however, turned south from this northernmost point and travelled to Independence Rock before turning west to follow the Sweetwater River.

Some travelers departed the North Platte route earlier at its junction with the South Platte River in Nebraska and travelled southwest toward the Colorado Front Range. Some settled in that area while others continued west to the central Colorado mountains to search for precious metals like gold and silver. Still others continued their westward journey on the Overland and Cherokee Trails into the southern portion of the PNHA.

But the American story of western migration, settlement, and development did not end with the historic wagon trails. Technological advances in transportation and communication shifted the human migration from the water-dependent wagon trails in the north of the PNHA to a more direct and shorter route in south-central Wyoming.

The “iron horse” ended the wagon train era as it was faster, could travel further per day, and was less dependent on water sources. Springs fed by the ground water of the North Platte River watershed enabled railroad steam engines to travel through the vast landscapes of southern Wyoming which could not otherwise have supported wagon, horse, or foot travel.

The telegraph and telephone lines followed the railroad line because the route was shorter and the military presence helped ensure their protection. Several decades later the 1st transcontinental highway followed suit as did the U.S. Airmail Service.

American ingenuity and progress in transportation and communication technology significantly contributed to America’s western migration, settlement, and development and are on full display in the PNHA.



## 2. Eras of Migration

The PNHA encompasses two profoundly significant American stories about our Nation's western migration. Both stories are often told apart but rarely together. Together, they enable us to better appreciate, understand, and have a more complete and richer historical view of our Nation's western migration.

The first significant migration story is about the “**wagon train era**” of western migration from 1840—1870s. Some 400,000 emigrants traversed the PNHA in covered wagons, pulling hand carts, riding horseback, stagecoaches, and on foot. The travel was long and arduous with one in ten never completing the journey. It is an extraordinary story of human courage, stamina, and determination.

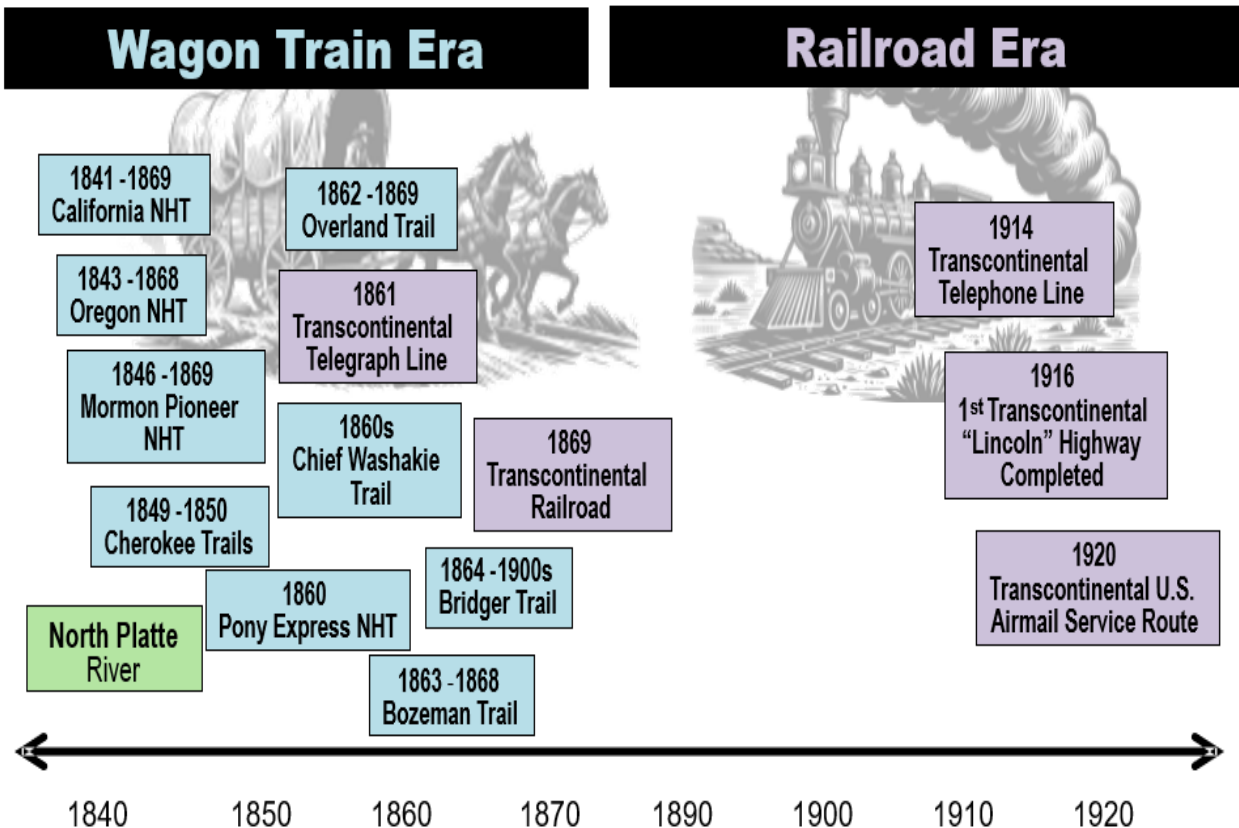
Western migration did not end with the wagon train era -- rather the means, route, and nature of the journey changed.

Historians estimate that 500,000 pioneers followed wagon trails along the North Platte River to its most northern point of Casper, Wyoming. The majority continued south to the Sweetwater River and then turned west passing over the storied South Pass, often referred to as an accident of geography because it was the lowest elevation point along the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains. Passing through the PNHA and over South Pass, it is believed that 80,000 pioneers settled in Oregon, 70,000 in the Great Salt Lake area, and 350,000 in California.

Western migration in the wagon train era slowed in the 1860s in part because the gold and silver fields were declining, but mostly because of the “railroad era.” Western migration did not end with the wagon train era---the means, route, and nature of the journey changed.

The second significant migration story is about the “**railroad era**” of western migration from 1869 into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is an extraordinary story of human ingenuity, invention, technology, and corporate—government collaboration.

# Pathways Chronology: 1840 - 1920



In the context of the PNHA, the western migration shifted from a journey along the North Platte River to a shorter more direct east-west route in southern Wyoming connecting Medicine Bow, Hanna, Fort Steele, Sinclair (formerly Parco), and Rawlins. The journey shifted from being wagon-based to railroad-based, from several months in duration to a week's time, and from arduous and difficult to relative comfort and ease.

The construction of the railroad was extraordinary. In 1867 crews laid 240 miles of track followed by 555 miles of track in 1868-69. The one hundred miles of track across the PNHA was completed in two months in the summer, 1868. The Union Pacific line was completed in May 1869 and celebrated as the Nation's 1st transcontinental railroad.

During the railroad era, the western migration shifted from a journey along the North Platte River to a shorter more direct east-west route in southern Wyoming.

Passenger rail service started in 1870. The coach fare for transport from Omaha to San Francisco was \$33.20 (\$800.00 in 2023 dollars). Traffic was light in 1870s with 24,000 passengers per year, growing to 120,000 per year in the 1880s. There is no known data on what percent of the passenger traffic was emigrate travel to the west, but it has been reported that between 1870-1900 the railroad transported 2.2 million foreign emigrants to the west.

Suffice it to say, western migration, settlement, and development spanned these two eras.

### 3. Pathways of American Progress

These historic Pathways showcase our Nation's progression in transportation technology from foot trails, riverways, horse trails, wagon and handcart trails, railroad, and highways (Figure1). They also reflect our Nation's progression in communication technology from word of mouth, pony express, telegraph line, railroad, telephone line, highways, and airmail service (Figure 2).

Advances in transportation and communication technology have been a hallmark trait of America 's western migration, settlement, and development.

Figure 1

#### Pathways of Progression – Early Transportation



Figure 2

#### Pathways of Progression – Early Communication



## 4. Vast Historic Landscapes

The PNHA is more than an assemblage of historic sites but is a large historical and natural landscape covering millions of acres. The landscape is not restored, reclaimed, altered, or “built” by humans. Absent of buffalo plus the addition of occasional electric lines, one sees the same historic landscape as 150 years ago.

Travelers can drive along rural paved roads and step back in time to see, hear, smell, and feel what early travelers experienced. One can pause at a vista and smell the sage, view the majestic clouds, watch the antelope, sense the quiet serenity, feel the brisk winds, and otherwise experience an historic landscape in stark contrast from the more urban environments where most Americans reside.







**In conclusion to the justification for national significance,** the PNHA is a national museum without walls where one can be immersed in the past, providing opportunities for heritage tourists to learn, study, experience, and contemplate yesteryear. It brings together numerous heritage sites which are themselves significant and noteworthy, but when assembled as a NHA, they tell a more complete and wholistic American story of our Western expansion, settlement, and development.

The PNHA is a unique concentration of historic pathways, a location which showcases our Nation's two eras of western migration, settlement, and development, where the progression of American ingenuity and invention in transportation and communication can be traced, but even with the passage of 150 years the vast historic Wyoming landscape remains intact to awe and inspire the visitor.

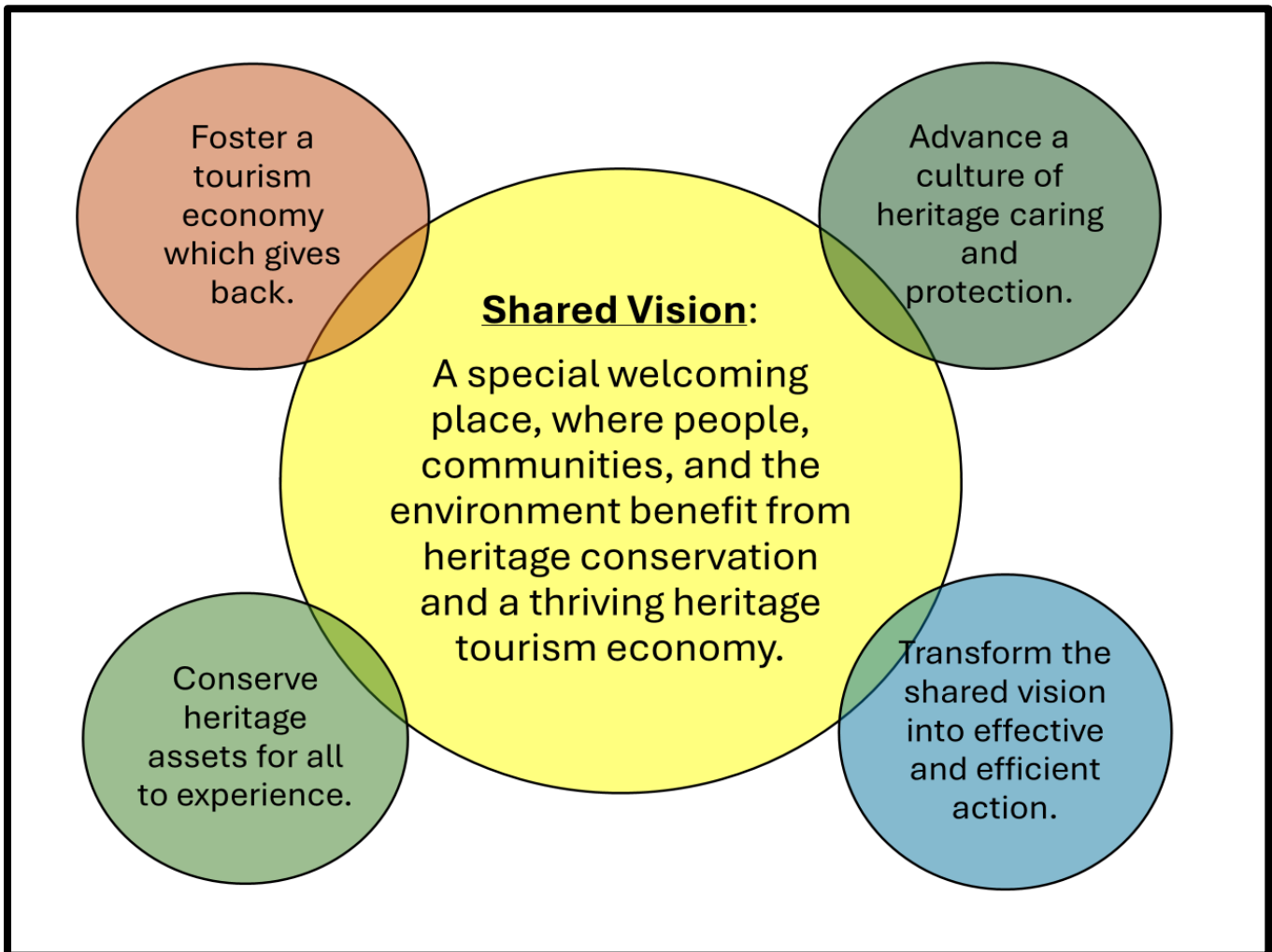
The PNHA is a national museum without walls where one can be immersed in the past, providing opportunities for heritage tourists to learn, study, experience and contemplate yesteryear.

## PART 2: THE LOCAL COMMUNITY ENTITY

### A. Vision, Mission, and Goals of the PNHA



#### VISION:



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**MISSION:** The PNHA promotes heritage tourism to procure its economic and social benefits, strengthen communities, and conserve its heritage resources.

**GOALS:** The specific goals of the PNHA are to:

1. Increase national and international recognition, curiosity, and interest in heritage tourism in the State of Wyoming
2. Inspire local and State pride, understanding, and engagement in the PNHA story
3. Support heritage conservation, protection, interpretation, and restoration efforts through collaborative grantsmanship endeavors with heritage partners
4. Expand the economic and social benefits of heritage tourism to Carbon and Natrona counties by increasing the number of heritage visitors, their length of stay, and number of expenditures
5. Communicate the PNHA story and its heritage assets through an effective and efficient mobile app.



## B. PNHA's Target Audience

There are two target audiences:

- **One target audience is the residents, landowners, schools, businesses, industry, civic organizations, and other local entities.** Inspiring an enterprising spirit is essential. Heritage conservation is dependent on an informed and engaged community of stakeholders. Without a keen understanding and sense of pride at the local level, long-term protection and restoration will be a challenge. Special attention would be directed to engaging K-12 programs and young people in educational tours, interpretive and living history programs, class projects, and internship opportunities.
- **A second target audience are heritage tourists with** several days of leisure time, resources, and curiosity for visiting the many heritage assets in the PNHA while also experiencing the culture, customs, festivals, and folklife of the local Wyoming communities. Given the national-level notoriety provided by a NHA designation, special attention would be directed towards out-of-state tourists given their potential economic impact on the State and region.

## Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism embodies the goals of increased visitation, economic enhancement, and heritage preservation. These three goals are interrelated and build a cycle of community benefit – increased visitation leads to increased economic prosperity which leads to increased historic preservation and restoration which leads to increased visitation and so forth.

Heritage tourism does not require the expensive purchase, construction, or maintenance of modern built structures. Rather, it relies on existing historical and cultural assets be they wagon trails, stage stops, homesteads, river crossings, encampments, travel routes, lodging, museums, early military forts, artifacts, reenactments, festivals, stories, and other historic evidence.

By their very nature, heritage tourists and traditional outdoor recreationists do not often share the same interests.

At the individual level, a heritage tourist seeks a more cognitive and intellectual experience as opposed to a more physical experience typical of outdoor recreation (e.g., fly fishing, backpacking, motorized off-road travel). Heritage tourism provides opportunities for people to learn and experience a different time and place. For a few hours or days, heritage tourists can be transfixed into a state of wonderment, curiosity, intrigue, and profound awe and exhilaration of yesteryear.

Compared to the average outdoor recreationist, a heritage tourist tends to be older, have more years of formal education, and a higher income. They tend to travel by auto, stay longer, participate in more activities, stay in local hotels or B&Bs, enjoy shopping, and spend more money. They seek opportunities to gain experience, experience, reflect, and contemplate. They are not active outdoor recreationists who wish to test their skills (e.g., fly fishing, walking rough trails, motorboats), challenge their stamina (e.g., wilderness treks, rock climbing), or explore remote off-road wildlands. By their very nature, heritage tourists and traditional outdoor recreationists do not often share the same interests or spaces.



## C. Interpretive Themes

### The Context for the PNHA Interpretive Themes

The PNHA encompasses an area of many existing heritage sites, facilities, and programs. Each site is noteworthy in its own right and gives an important glimpse into American history. For example, the table below provides a sample of local heritage sites and the stories they tell.

Site Name	General Location	Local Stories
National Historic Trails Interpretive Center	Casper	People and events that describe the migration of western settlers between 1840-1870
Medicine Bow Museum	Medicine Bow	General Old West and Cowboy culture; UP Railroad, Lincoln Highway, Virginia Hotel, Old West cabins
Carbon County Museum	Rawlins	County-specific objects and stories including mining, railroads, pioneers, Native Americans, etc.
Grand Encampment Museum	Encampment	Homesteading, geology, anthropology, timber harvest UP railroad
Wyoming Frontier Prison	Rawlins	Prison chronology, facilities, events, and people
Independence Rock Historic Site	Alcova, State Hwy 220	Pioneers, Geology, Mormon Pioneer Trail, Native American Indians, Oregon Trail
Martin's Cove / Mormon Handcart Visitor Center	Alcova, State Hwy 220 & 287	Martin and Willie Handcart Companies, Blizzard of 1856, Mormon pioneers
Devils Gate	Alcova, State Hwy 220	Emigrant trails, area geology/topography, Oregon, California, and Mormon trails, South Pass
Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site	I80 east of Rawlins	1868 site built to protect workers on the UP Railroad
Rock Creek Station	Elk Mountain	Major stage station on Overland Trail; historic buildings
Fort Casper	Casper	Site of early bridge and ferry crossings of the North Platte River, Military outpost in 1860s

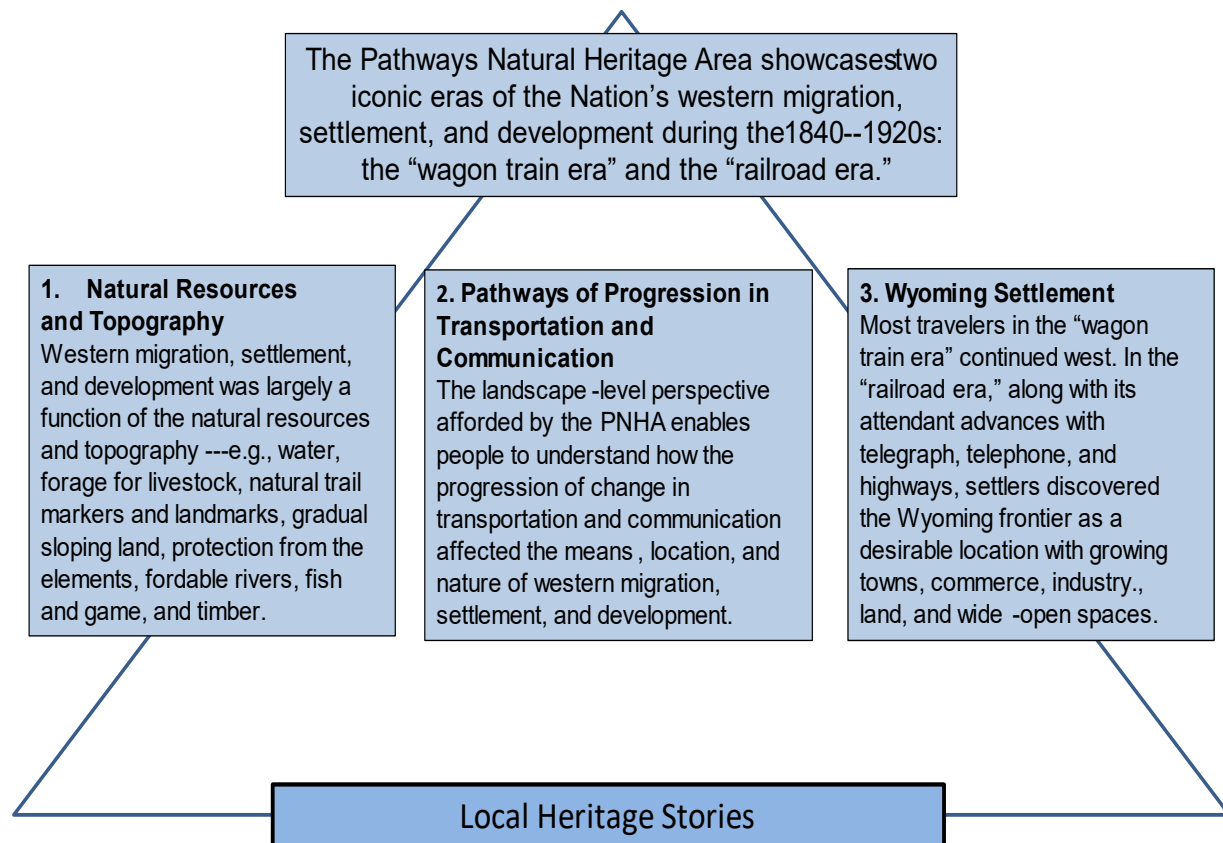
These sites tend to operate independently with few connections between them. Ironically, this autonomy among the many heritage sites has diminished their collective national significance.

The PNHA will help to bring a unifying theme, order, and collaboration to an otherwise independent collection of heritage sites. It adds a landscape-level perspective (i.e., the 30,000' view) to complement the existing site-level perspective the individual heritage sites provide. From this landscape-level view it is easier to see how western migration, settlement, and development changed in time over an 80-year period and in space in south-central Wyoming.

## Enriching, Complementing and Telling a Unique Story

The PNHA interpretive themes are intended to enrich, complement, and tell a unique story that may not be presented at the local heritage sites. The themes do not replace, repeat, or compete with the many important stories told at the local site-level. Rather, the PNHA themes capitalize on a landscape-level perspective (i.e., the 30,000' view) of how and why western migration, settlement and development changed over time, and by so doing adds to our American story and the national distinction of historic south-central Wyoming.

### Interpretive Themes





## **Theme #1:**

### **Natural Resources and Topography**

**Theme: Western migration, settlement, and development was profoundly shaped by natural resources and topography.**

Detail: In the “wagon train era,” the North Platte River was the trail marker for early western emigrants. It provided potable water, fish and wild game, forage for livestock in its floodplain, firewood, and respite from long hot summer days. The gentle uplifting slopes following the river corridor of eastern Wyoming were passable for early wagon travel.

But the natural resources and topography were also an impediment. Wagon train travel had to follow the water. Given wagons could travel 10-15 miles per day, water sources were needed in close intervals.

Travel was limited to a narrow window of the year during a few summer months due to weather, winds, mud, spring floods and impassable riverways. The rule of thumb was that wagon trains needed to have reached Independence Rock by July 4<sup>th</sup>. The Mormon Handcart tragedy of 1856 is testament of this wisdom.

In the “railroad era,” the route of western migration was less dependent on the North Platte River. The route shifted south on a more direct east-west alignment through the PNHA. Rail travel expanded that distance between watering, but the “iron horse” still required water. Early trains, with tender boxes with extra water and fuel, could travel 150 miles before resupplying. Hanna/Carbon Town and Rawlins were important supply points for the railroad.

Coal resources were essential to fuel the early locomotives and were plentiful in mines nearby in Hanna and Carbon Town. Timber resources also had to be available for railroad ties, telegraph/telephone lines, and deep mine shaft supports. Timber and lumber were also needed for bridges, highway infrastructure, and signage.

Topography was also a limiting factor for the location of rail lines. Early locomotives required slopes of less than 1.5%.

## Theme #2

### Technological Advancements in Transportation and Communication

**Theme:** Technological advancements in transportation and communication helped transform the west.

Detail: Western migration, settlement, and development in 1840-1920 was shaped by progression of American innovation, invention, and new technology (Figures 1 & 2).

Early transport was human and horse ed following the riverways and historic trails used by Native Americans and wildlife over the decades. In 1841, the first wagon train made the western trek. Soon hand carts and stagecoaches were added to the transport mix. Of course, the most profound technological advancement came with the locomotive and the transcontinental railroad completed in 1869.

Not only did the railroad increase the number of western emigrants, but it was also consequential in the settlement or “infill” of the western frontier. The railroad provided a means for ranchers and farmers to get their cattle, sheep, and food products to the eastern markets. The western agriculture industry was significantly expanded, commerce grew, the timber and coal industry flourished, which led to towns and settlement of Wyoming.

Figure 1

Pathways of Progression – Early Transportation



Figure 2

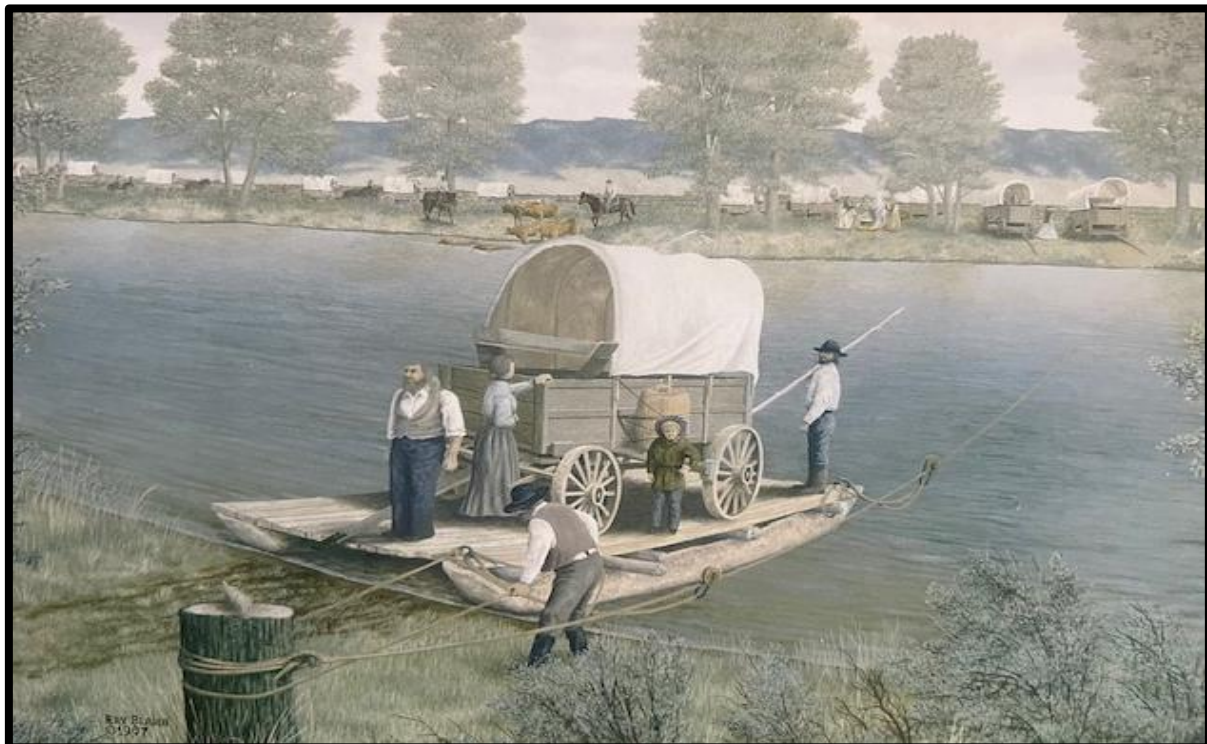
Pathways of Progression – Early Communication



Several decades later came the next significant technological changes: the automobile and airplane. While the automobile and airplane were not major drivers of western migration, they had a significant impact on western settlement, development, and lifestyles.

The progression of communication technology in 1840-1920 is like that of transportation. Early communication was by word of mouth through settlers encountering others along the trail, and layovers at various military posts, stage stops, and river crossings. The Pony Express was a bold experiment, albeit short-lived, which impacted the delivery of mail and communication across the Nation.

The invention and innovation of the railroad, telegraph, telephone, and airplane had a profound effect on western settlement and development. In 1890, the U.S. Bureau of Census declared the western frontier closed; that is, there was no discernible difference between the frontier and settlement. The construction of paved roads and the automobile further contributed to enhanced communication.



### **Theme #3:**

## **Southern Wyoming Settlement**

**Theme: The “railroad era” increased the number of western emigrants, but also spurred the settlement and development of Wyoming.**

Detail: The “wagon trails era” was a pass-through era of people traveling to destinations in California, Oregon, and Utah.

Western migration continued and expanded during the “railroad era,” but also the in-fill of the Wyoming frontier. Economic opportunity, commerce, industry, available homestead land, beautiful wide-open spaces, and enhanced communication and transport were the catalysts for attracting people to settle and raise their families in the Wyoming Territory and later State of Wyoming.

The Town of Medicine Bow is one example. With the railroad came a 5-car roundhouse, service facilities, train depot, a water tank for locomotives, and a pump station on a nearby river. It became a major supply point for military posts in the region. By the late 1870s, some 2,000 cattle per day were being shipped east by train. Suffice it to say, Wyoming settlement and its agricultural industry quickly grew.

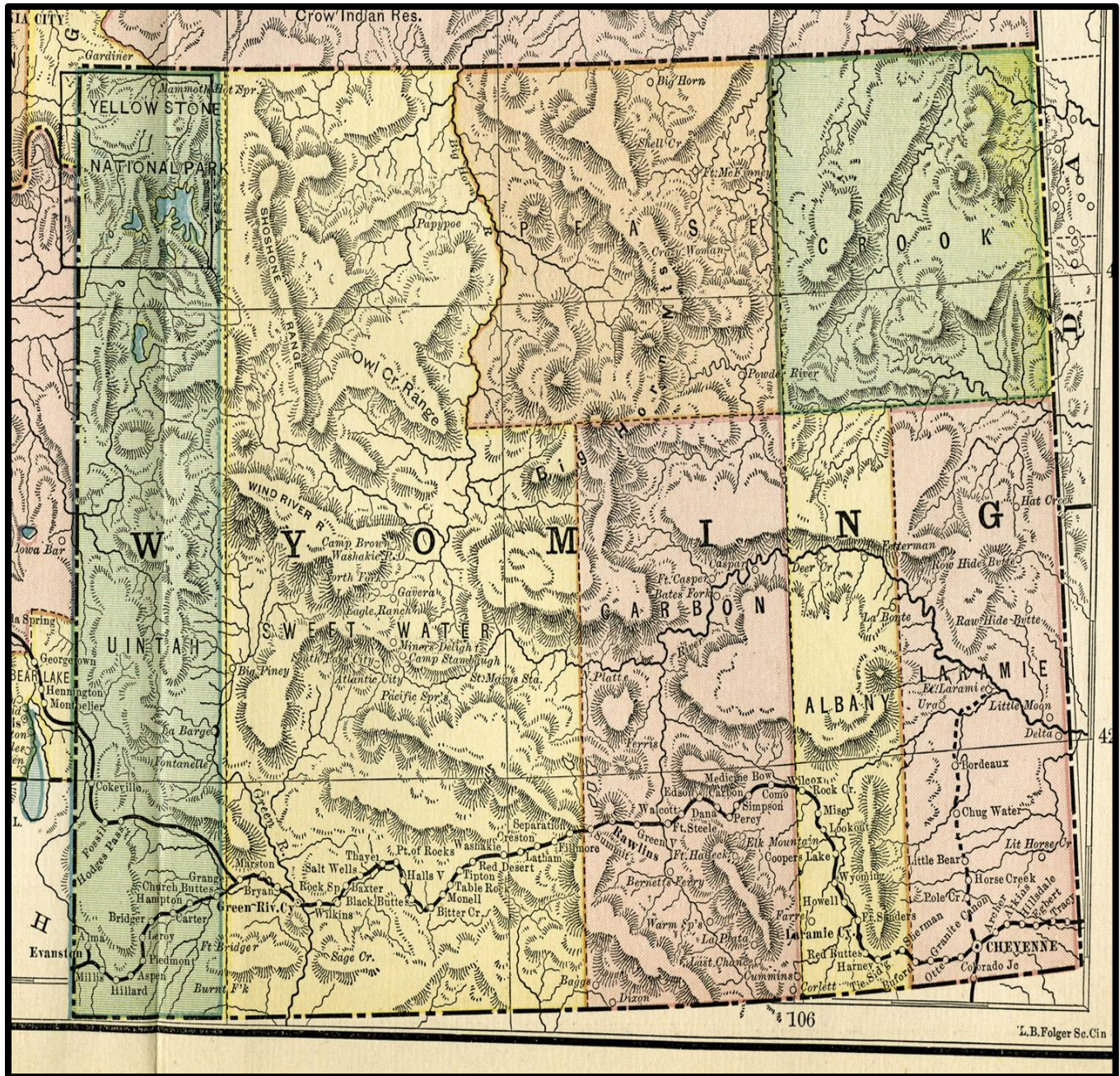
A similar story could be told about Saratoga and Encampment where railroad ties and poles were supplied to the railroad from the Medicine Bow Mountains, while Carbon Town and Hanna who provided the necessary coal supply for the locomotives.

Wyoming became the 44<sup>th</sup> State admitted to the Union in 1890. The two maps that follow show how Wyoming settlement, development, and population affected the demarcation of counties, roads, and towns. Map1 is the Wyoming Territory in 1882 and Map 2 is the State of Wyoming in 1895. Note the early existence of Carbon and Natrona Counties and the railroad with its many young towns in 1895.



Map 4

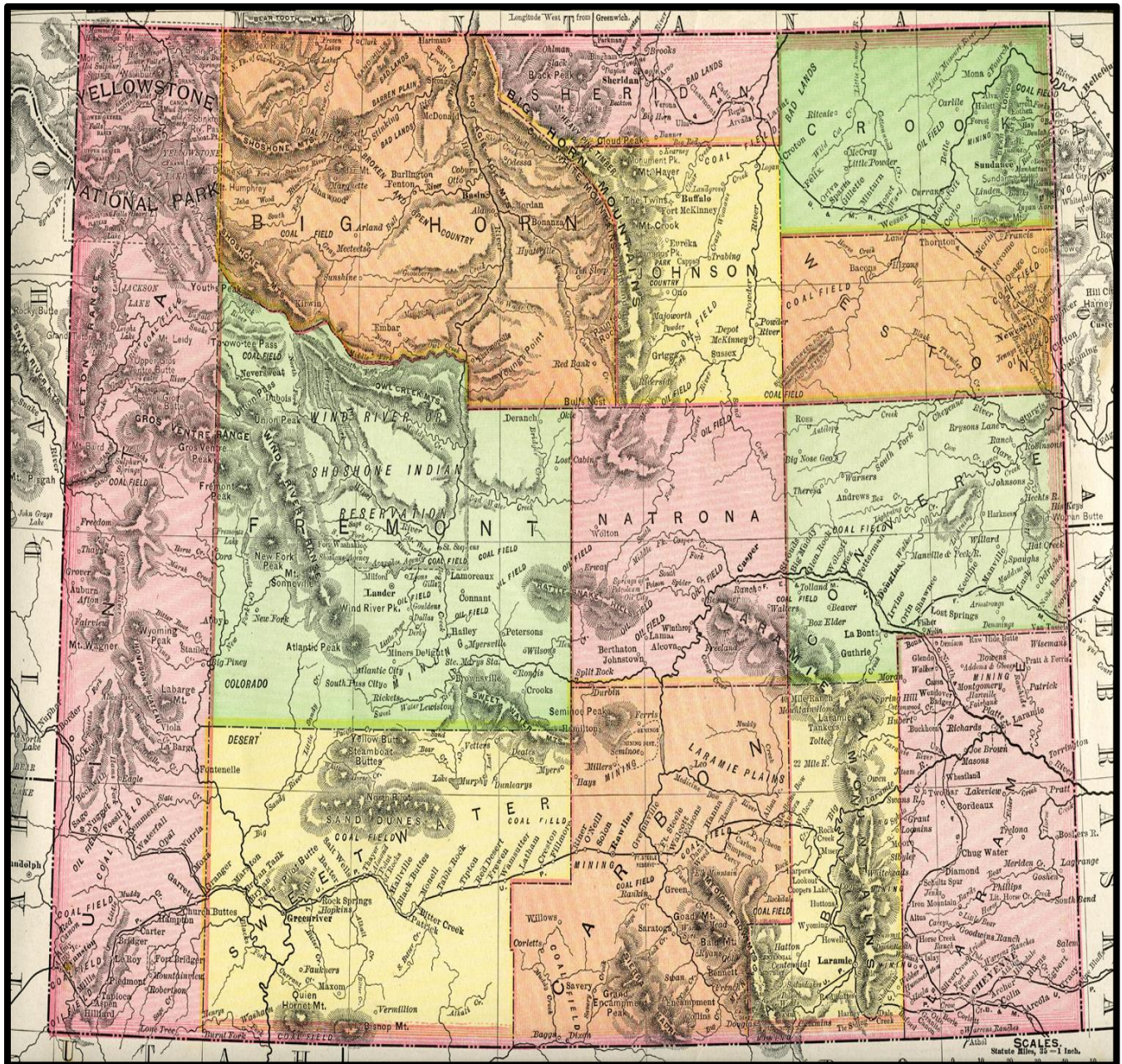
1882 Map of Wyoming Territory





Map 5

1895 Map of Wyoming Territory





## **D. Visitor Experiences**

Becoming visitor-centric is increasingly important for heritage sites that offer education and interpretive opportunities. Adopting a visitor-centric philosophy means that there is a shared sense among the site or agency staff with that of the visitors. It recognizes that the visitor experience occurs over time from planning, travel, site visit, and post-visit experience. Creating an overall vision for the visitor experience is important including a set of desired visitor outcomes. Below is a broad vision and more specific desired visitor outcomes are included.

### **Vision for Pathways Visitor Experience**

Visitors to the Pathways Natural Heritage Area (PNHA) have a special opportunity to explore and discover the natural resources, scenic beauty, and rich culture and history of pathway corridors in south central Wyoming. First-hand engagement with the specific pathways and their associated sites and stories should be stimulating and relevant. Visitors will leave with a sense of understanding and appreciation for the important national story of western migration, settlement, and development.

### **Desired Visitor Outcomes**

#### **1. Awareness and Decision-making (Pre-Visit)**

- Visitors will easily locate information about PNHA online and/or in printed materials.
- Visitors will easily understand and feel confident about their options for navigating the PNHA.

#### **2. Orientation, Wayfinding and Comfort (Pre-Visit and Onsite)**

- Visitors feel confident in orienting themselves to the various PNHA heritage sites and feel comfortable using the PNHA mobile app.
- Visitors will feel welcomed and have a clear and unambiguous sense of national distinction while visiting the PNHA.
- Visitors will recognize their own personal needs and challenges and organize heritage area activities accordingly.

- Visitors will recognize their personal responsibility for helping protect and conserve the heritage sites.

### **3. The Story and its Cohesiveness (On-site)**

- Visitors will see and experience stories about western culture and history at the various heritage sites and realize the linkages between those sites to the overall PNHA themes and stories.
- Visitors will feel the powerful American story of western migration, settlement, and development as they traverse the PNHA.
- Visitors will easily find part(s) of the PNHA story to which they can relate.

### **4. Relevance, Discovery, Learning, and Stewardship (Onsite and Post-Visit)**

- Visitors will form a clearer and more meaningful connection to the various places of the PNHA.
- Visitors will act as stewards of the PNHA.
- Visitors will reflect with a sense of discovery and awe after visiting the diverse landscapes of the PNHA.
- Visitors will share their experiences with others following their trip.



## E. PNHA Mobile App

Tourism marketing and promotion continues to evolve. Transitioning away from costly 4-color brochures, magazines, and highway signs, and towards digital sources of information is a priority. Today, digital resources can be accessed anytime across most of the Nation and world. Although there will always be a place for printed materials, tourists increasingly expect information that is readily accessible, current, and comprehensive.

The tourism industry has realized that trip planning is an important part of a total visitor experience that may begin months before the actual trip. The industry also realizes that trip planning has a direct impact on travel decisions such as where to go, how long to stay, what experiences are available, and what is the desired route of travel.

Whereas Google searches can provide detailed information quickly for many heritage sites, it does not easily facilitate viewing and planning across multiple destinations, does not make connections between sites, and does not provide information about ancillary amenities and services. Also, most Google information is not real-time or near-real time.

In 2021, the NPS launched an innovative mobile app which includes all 440 NPS units. This app is easily modified and can post travel alerts in near real-time. Also useful for travelers to any NPS unit is the supporting information provided on the app -- things to do, lodging options, nearby amenities and services, visitor centers, park news, calendar of events, weather, and road conditions. One of the revenue streams for the local coordinating entity could be from advertising on the PNHA app.



PNHA will develop and launch a separate stand-alone app that is similar in nature to the NPS mobile app. The PNHA mobile app could post information about the two hundred heritage sites that relate to the theme of western expansion, settlement, and development between 1840s -1920s. Because each heritage site has a legal owner (e.g., private rancher, business, trust, cooperative, civic organization, non-governmental organization, community, county, state, or federal agency), the mobile app would only be populated with heritage sites with willing opt-in owners.

Willing owners would opt-in to the app by signing an agreement that their heritage site may be included as part of the app, and that the site would be available for public access under appropriate terms and conditions (e.g., operating hours, mode of travel access, size of party, closed times, areas, or seasons). If an owner opts-in but later changes their mind for whatever reason, they can opt-out and easily be removed from the app.

For a heritage site to be included in the mobile app, the owner would need to opt-in.

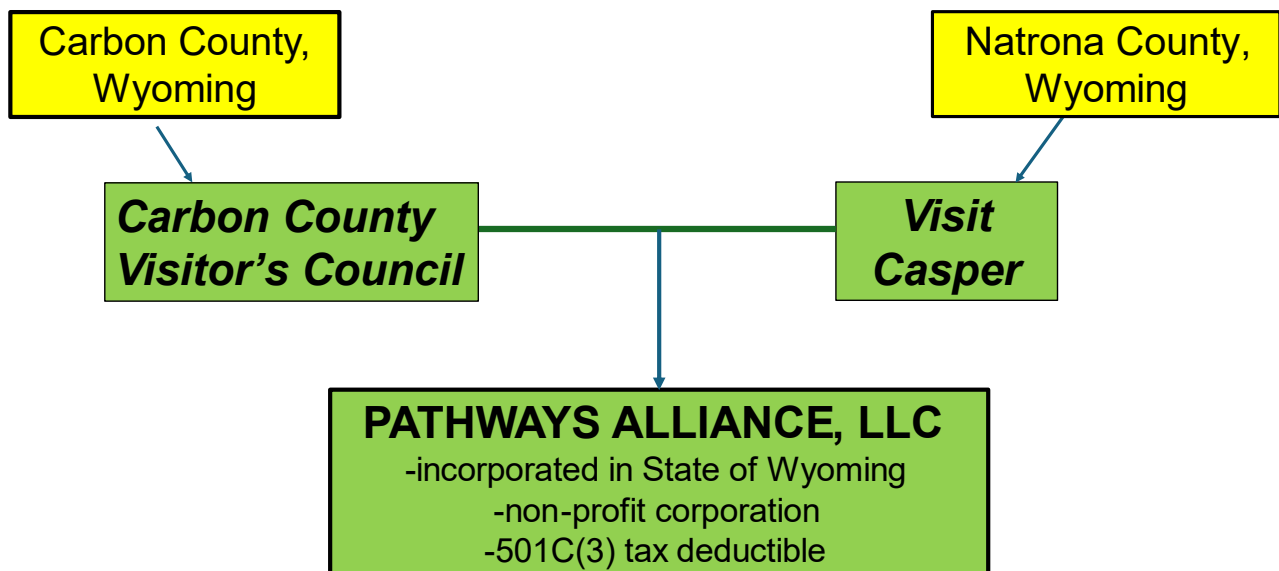
There are some areas of the PNHA without internet connection. Users of the app will be advised to download the app information prior to travel or arrival so information can be accessed where there is no internet connectivity.

## F. Business Plan

### Local Community Entity

Due consideration was given to assigning the local coordinating role to an existing entity such as the Carbon County Tourism Council, Casper Parks and Recreation Department, Casper Historic Preservation Commission, or the National Historic Trails Center Foundation. These options were rejected because they did not allow for a fair and balanced representation of Carbon and Natrona Counties.

The local community entity for the PNHA would be called the “Pathways Alliance, LLC.” The LLC would be a non-profit 501c3 tax deductible corporation incorporated in the State of Wyoming and developed in partnership by the *Carbon County Visitor’s Council* and *Visit Casper*. The Alliance will serve as an intergovernmental bridge connecting the authorized tourism organizations in Carbon and Natrona counties.



The *Carbon County Visitor's Council* (CCVC) was formed in 1987 by a joint powers agreement between the Carbon County Commissioners and the towns of Baggs, Elk Mountain, Encampment, Hanna, Medicine Bow, Rawlins, Riverside, and Saratoga. Its mission is to promote events, tourism, and the hospitality industry in Carbon County. CCVC is managed by an 11-member Board, 3 full-time and 3 part-time staff, and funded by a 4% lodging tax which accrued \$1.2M dollars in 2023.

*Visit Casper* was formed in 1989 by a joint powers agreement between Natrona County, City of Casper, and several town councils. Its mission is to bring visitors to Natrona County in support of our local economy and quality of life. Visit Casper is managed by a 9-member board, 7 full-time and 2 part-time staff, and funded by a 4% lodging tax which accrued \$1.9M in FY 2023.

**It is proposed that the Pathways Alliance be managed by an 11-member Board of Directors.** Its composition would ensure a balanced community-based leadership team.

#### Proposed Composition of Alliance Board

- Visit Casper ED (standing appointee)
- CC Tourism Council ED (standing appointee)
- City of Casper appointee
- City of Rawlins appointee
- Natrona County CC appointee
- Carbon County CC appointee
- Wyoming SHPO appointee Wyoming Tourism Office appointee
- Historic Trails Interpretive Center appointee
- 2 At-large members appointed by the Board
  
- (Ex-Officio) NPS National Heritage Program Advisor
- (Ex-Officio) Bureau of Land Management



**Board membership would be staggered on a 3-year term basis not to exceed two successive terms (6 years) for any one person.** After a 2 -year hiatus a member may be reappointed.

The executive director of *Visit Casper* and the CCVC, or their appointees, would be standing perpetual members of the PNHA Board. The Board Chair and Vice Chair would be rotated every two years between the executive director of Visit Casper and CC Tourism Council, one serving as Chair while the other as Vice Chair.

The non-profit organization would be in a strong position to foster State and local economic activity.

**The full Board would elect the officers of secretary, treasurer, and one at-large.** These five officers would serve as the Executive Committee to handle matters in a timely fashion with ratification of decisions at the next regular business meeting of the Board. The full Board would convene in person or electronically at least on a quarterly basis.

The Board may establish advisory committees as needed to ensure representation from different interests and stakeholders (e.g., agriculture industry, state, and federal agencies).

**By alternating the leadership role of the Pathways Alliance between the two county tourism offices and having representation from the Wyoming State tourism office, the non-profit organization would be in a strong position to foster State and local economic activity.**

## 5-Year Work Plan

PNHA 5-Year Work Plan		
Phases	Timeframe	Outputs
<b>Phase 1—PNHA Formation</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporation of PNHA---501c3 State of Wyoming corporation; articles of incorporation, bylaws, founding board members, state, and federal copyright of name</li> <li>Prepare operating procedures manual---development of policies and procedures for PNHA and Board functioning, accounting, staffing, recordkeeping</li> <li>Develop and initiate PNHA national awareness and promotion campaign; work with communities and private sector as to utilizing PNHA designation</li> <li>Develop PNHA APP—layout and design of PNHA app; identify willing heritage sites to be listed on app; select content to be included; develop operating procedures; test, evaluate and revise</li> <li>Set up Grant Seeking Program---identify potential funding sources; develop grant seeking strategy for PNHA; collaborate partners in their grant seeking efforts</li> </ol>	<b>YEARS 1 &amp; 2</b> <p>assumes 2 FTEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>½ year interim director yr. 1; full-time yr. 2</li> <li>Mobile app, coordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional and national promotion, awareness, recognition, and interest.</li> <li>Formal incorporation of Pathways Alliance LLC</li> <li>Board of Directors is seated</li> <li>PNHA mobile app initiated and tested</li> <li>Grant seeking program organized, and plan approved</li> <li>Pathways management planning process organized and initiated</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2---PNHA Management Plan</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with PNHA national promotion campaign and app refinement/expansion</li> <li>Solicit grants and donations for PNHA and partners</li> <li>Implement management planning process with partners, heritage site managers, and other stakeholders.</li> <li>Prepare core elements of 5-year management plan---vision, mission, goals, objectives, activities, priorities, schedule, responsible people/parties, timeline, budget.</li> <li>Submit draft for NPS review and Secretarial approval.</li> </ol>	<b>YEAR 3</b> <p>assumes 3 FTEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director</li> <li>Mobile app. coordinator</li> <li>Office support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional and national promotion, awareness, recognition, and interest, and increased visitation.</li> <li>PNHA mobile app tested and upgraded.</li> <li>Grant seeking program generating money.</li> <li>Pathways management planning drafted in year 4.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3---Plan Implementation</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management plan drafted and submitted to NPS</li> <li>Management plan approved</li> <li>Implementation of plan</li> </ol>	<b>YEARS 4-5</b> <p>assumes 4 FTEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director</li> <li>Mobile app coordinator</li> <li>Office support</li> <li>Grants Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional and national promotion, awareness, recognition, and interest, and increased visitation.</li> <li>PNHA mobile app tested and upgraded</li> <li>Grant seeking program underway</li> <li>Approval and implementation of Pathways management plan</li> </ul>

## 5-Year Revenue Streams

<b>5-Year REVENUE STREAMS</b> (cash and value of in-kind contributions)					
REVENUES	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
In-kind Publicity: Third-party no-cost NHA publicity and promotion (e.g., Wyoming state highway maps, Wyoming State Tourism Official travel guide and website, <i>Visit Casper</i> and Discover Carbon County Official Guides and website, NPS information and website, travel magazine coverage, hotel websites, private travel tourism publications, newspaper, and radio publicity, WYODOT state highway signage)	\$75K	\$100K	\$125K	\$125K	\$150K
<i>Visit Casper</i> (i.e., money, staff time, office and meeting space, equipment, services, utilities, communications)	\$25K	\$25K	\$25K	\$30K	\$30K
<i>Discover Carbon County</i> (i.e., money, staff time, office and meeting space, equipment, services, communication, utilities)	\$25K	\$25K	\$25K	\$30K	\$30K
Business & Corporate In-kind contributions (e.g., app development, marketing, equipment, planning, accounting, grant development, Board service)	\$25K	\$25K	\$20K	\$20K	\$25K
Individual, civic, and corporate cash donations	\$15K	\$15K	\$15K	\$20K	\$20K
Fees for advertising on app		\$10K	\$15K	\$20K	\$25K
Grants (i.e., state, federal, corporate, foundations, trusts)			\$50K	\$75K	\$75K
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$165K</b>	<b>\$200K</b>	<b>\$275K</b>	<b>\$320K</b>	<b>\$350K</b>
NPS matching financial assistance to assist with NHA start-up and developing management plan	\$150K	\$150K	\$150K	\$300K	\$300K
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$315K</b>	<b>\$350K</b>	<b>\$425K</b>	<b>\$620K</b>	<b>\$650K</b>

## 5-Year Expenses

5-Year EXPENSES					
EXPENSES	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
PNHA Director (startup 1/2-year Interim appt for year 1; Interim year 2; Director hired for year 3-5)	\$40K	\$75K	\$80K	\$90K	\$95K
Mobile App development coordinator	\$50K	\$55K	\$60K	\$65K	\$70K
Office support		\$20K	\$38K	\$41K	\$45K
Grants Director				\$80K	\$85K
Fringe at 25%	\$25K	\$40K	\$45K	\$69K	\$55K
APP development outsourced (development in year 1-2; testing and revision year 3; operation/management 4-5)	\$45K	\$50K	\$45K	\$20K	\$25K
Grantsmanship program (development in yr. 1-2); Full implementation yr. 3-5)	\$50K	\$35K	\$20K	\$20K	\$25K
Travel (networking, annual Alliance conference, Heritage site visits, NPS Denver, NHA visits)	\$20K	\$20K	\$22K	\$25K	\$30K
National and international promotion of PNHA	\$40K	\$25K	\$30K	\$30K	\$35K
Office, communication, Board meetings, equipment	\$20K	\$15K	\$15K	\$15K	\$15K
Bookkeeping and accounting (outsource)	\$10K	\$10K	\$15K	\$20K	\$20K
Heritage site partnership projects	\$15K	\$15K	\$25K	\$95K	\$100K
Management Plan development			\$30K	\$50K	\$50K
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$315K</b>	<b>\$350K</b>	<b>\$425K</b>	<b>\$620K</b>	<b>\$650K</b>



## PART 3: PUBLIC CONCERNS WITH PNHA

In the spirit of transparency, the PNHA Feasibility Study Team acknowledges that some residents, albeit very few, have expressed a concern with the proposed NHA designation. Questions about a new national designation are to be expected and most can be clarified with full information and an open discussion. Several of these public concerns are discussed below.



### A. Trespass and Loss of Private Property Rights

Trespassing on private ranches, farms, and private property is a historic problem in the West. The concern is that a national designation might exacerbate the situation (e.g., private land trespass, resource destruction). The PNHA proposes four actions to help control trespass and infringement on private property rights from a PNHA designation.

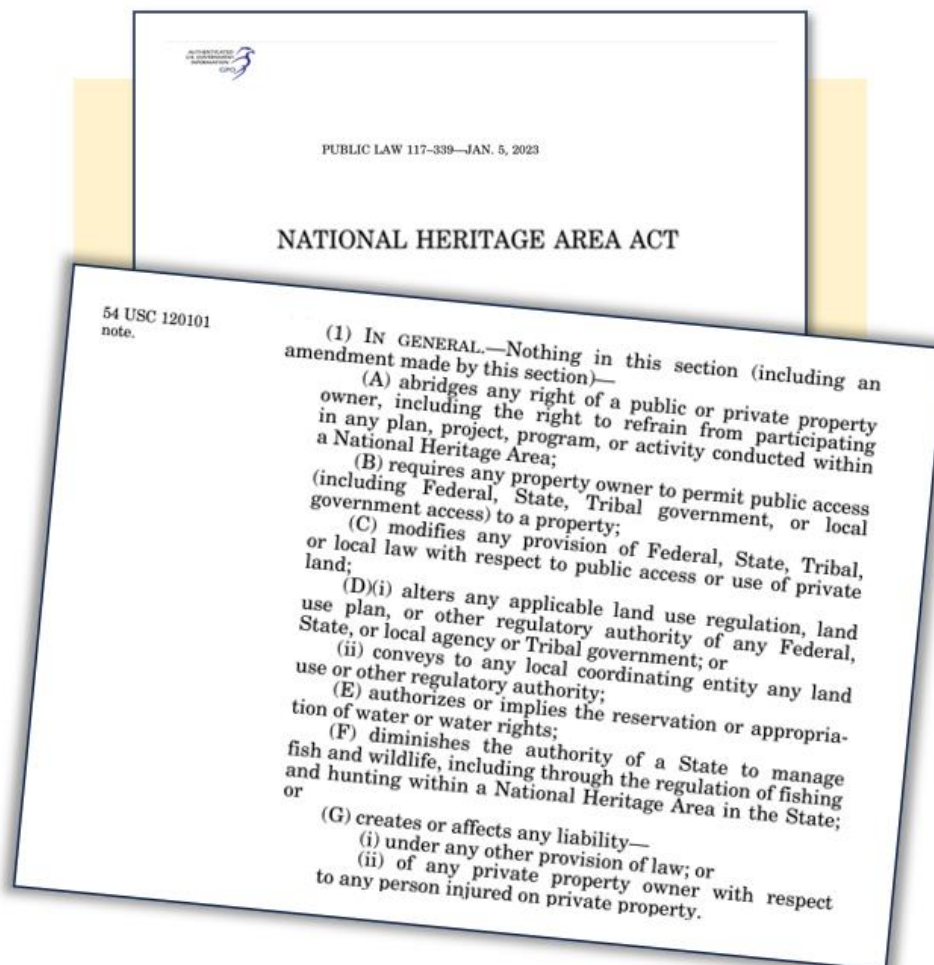
#### 1. Strong Legal Protections

Federal Law provides strong private property rights protections regarding National Heritage Areas. Specifically, the National Heritage Area Act of January 5, 2023 (P,L, 117-339) Section 120104 includes these key property rights provisions:

- Nothing in the Act abridges the rights of public or private property owners, including the right to refrain from participating in the National Heritage Area.
- Similarly, nothing in the NHA Act requires any property owner to permit public access to a property.



- Furthermore, NHA designation does not modify any provision of law with respect to public access or use of private land, nor does it alter any applicable land use regulation, plan, or regulatory authority.
- NHA designation does not affect water or water rights, nor does it diminish the authority of a State to manage fish and wildlife, including through the regulation of fishing and hunting within a National Heritage Area.
- Finally, the Act states that nothing in the statute creates or affects any liability---(i) under any provision of law; or (ii) of any private property owner with respect to any person injured on private property.



## **2. Embellishment of the Legislation Creating the PNHA**

The Wyoming congressional delegation will be instrumental in preparing the legislative drafts for the PNHA designation. If there are issues or concerns that need stricter interpretation or clarification, providing legislative clarification would be one avenue for doing so.

## **3. Private Property Owner Representation in Local Coordinating Entity**

The local coordinating entity with administrative responsibility for the PNHA could establish Bylaws which dictate that Board selection will include the seating of one or more private property owners to ensure their concerns are known.

Alternatively, an Advisory Committee to the Board could be established with private landowner representation for the same purpose.

## **4. Property Owner Opt-In Requirement**

The mobile app will not include any information about private property unless the owner willingly opts-in to the program, and then only when the owner provides and approves the information to be posted.

This information could include nearby backroads, trails, or other attractions which may be the cause of inadvertent trespass. Likewise, private property warnings and regulations would be made clear on the app.

## B. Federal Overreach

It is understandable that when one mentions a new national land use designation, some people become concerned about federal control, imposition of new rules and regulations, and loss of local authority and property rights.

There is evidence to the contrary. The BLM has been exceptional in their support of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center and several well-managed historic sites. The NPS has four units in the PNHA. Two of these trails were Congressionally designated in 1978 while the two others in the 1990s. During this 50-year span of time the relationship between the NPS and the communities and counties has been compatible and benign with no controversy or infringement.

The historic relationship between federal agencies and the heritage assets of the PNHA is evidence of no federal overreach, eminent domain, loss of private property rights, lawsuits, devaluations, or control of heritage sites.



Furthermore, since NHAs are not units of the NPS, there is no chance of overreach. The National Heritage Area Act of 2023 is also clear on this issue. The role of the NPS is solely to assist NHAs with national recognition, financial support, and technical assistance.



## C. Crowding and Congestion

Some residents expressed concern that they did not want more people at their favorite campground or lake, or fishing in their favorite blue-ribbon spots.

As stated in Chapter II, heritage tourists are different than outdoor recreationists visiting the area today. Heritage tourists do not typically go to the same places as outdoor recreationists such as state park campgrounds, wilderness areas, remote reservoirs, or gold medal trout streams.

Crowding and congestion has been reported to be a problem on some holidays/weekends at some outdoor recreation sites in the area, but there are no known similar situations at the area's heritage sites. Furthermore, current lodging occupancy rates in the 50-60% range would suggest that ancillary food or lodging services would welcome more heritage travelers.

However, at some point in the future crowding and congestion did become a problem at specific heritage sites. the mobile app could provide near real-time information encouraging visitors to other places and/or times.

## D. Heritage Resource Protection

A few people expressed concern that more visitors will harm the archaeological efforts currently underway or in the future.

There is agreement that tourists can do harm and damage a heritage site, and that tourists should not be allowed to go anywhere and do anything. A heritage site needs active management with signage, trails, rules, sanitation, and enforcement. While the proposed PNHA will not directly own or manage any heritage sites, the local coordinating entity could establish minimum management requirements to be in place before a site could be included on the mobile app.

Where the PNHA would be helpful for heritage resource protection is when partnering with local heritage site managers to solicit grants and gifts to support heritage resource protection and restoration. The distinction as a NHA will add credibility and access to funding programs that individual heritage sites usually do not typically have.

## E. Opt-In to Join the PNHA Mobile App

The PNHA mobile app will require a signed ***opt-in*** agreement from the heritage site owner who wants to be included in the app. The PNHA will not oblige or require any managing entity to participate in the NHA program. Thus, there is no interest in or need for an opt-out approach.

## PART 4: CONGRESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NHA DESIGNATION

The 2023 National Heritage Area Act (P.L. 117-339) states that the Secretary (Interior) may carry out or review a study to assess the suitability and feasibility for each proposed National Heritage Area to be designated a National Heritage Area.

Section 120103 (a) Studies (3) “REQUIREMENTS” of the Act states that this study must include analysis, documentation, and determinations on whether the proposed National Heritage Area complies with each of the following criteria.



### Criterion 1: Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources

**Has an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that:**

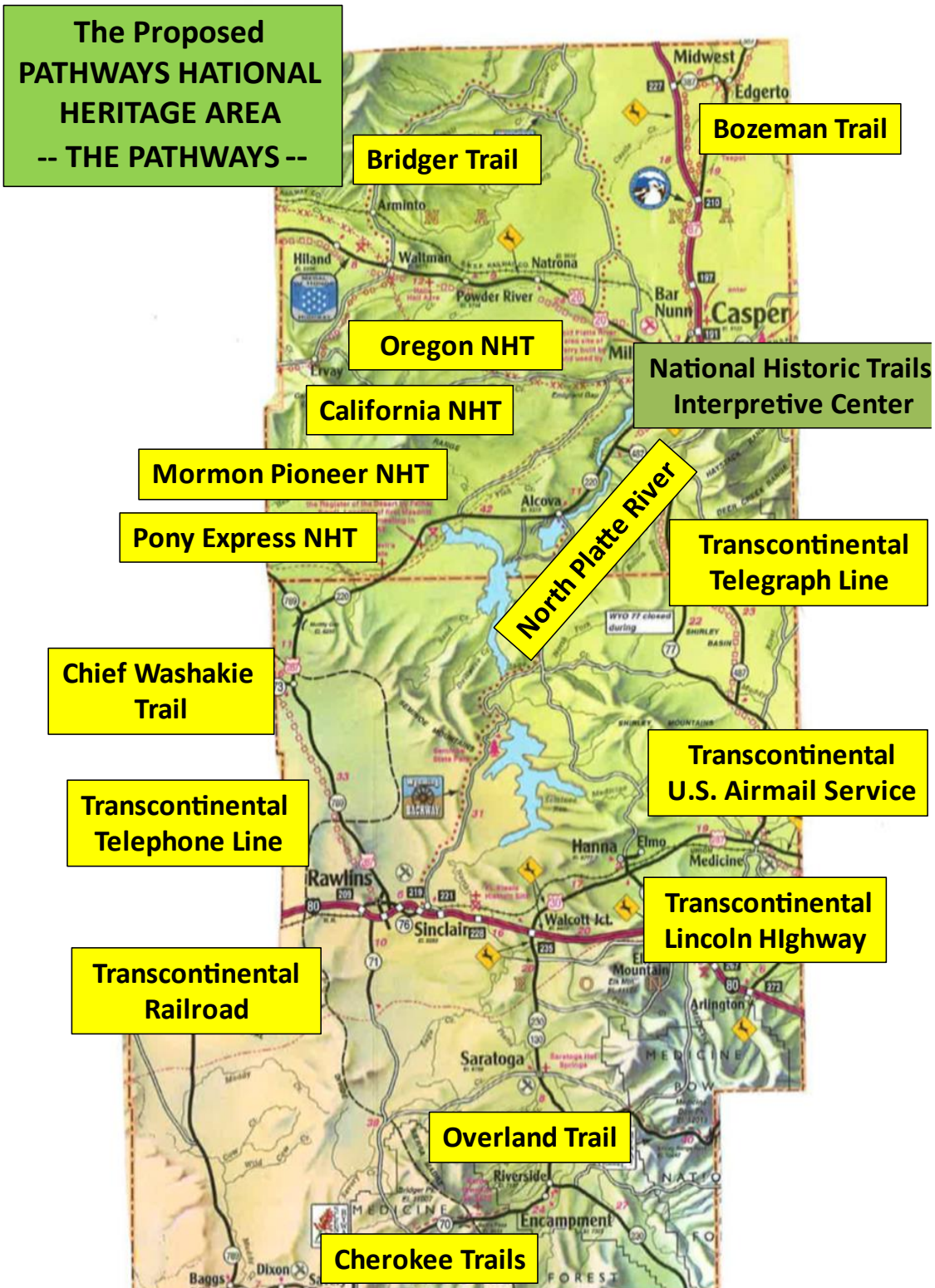
- a) Represent distinctive aspects of the heritage of the United States**
- b) Are worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use; and**
- c) Would be best managed through partnerships among public and private entities; and by linking diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities.**

Gold, silver, available land, and the opportunity for a new life motivated thousands of Americans westward during the 1840s-1920s. The PNHA has fifteen renown pathways which enabled western migration, settlement, and development, and collectively, tell a unique and powerful American story.

1. Bozeman Trail
2. Bridger Trail
3. California National Historic Trail
4. Cherokee Trails
5. Chief Washakie Trail
6. Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail
7. North Platte River
8. Oregon National Historic Trail

9. Overland Trail
10. Pony Express National Historic Trail
11. First Transcontinental Telegraph Line
12. First Transcontinental Telephone Line
13. First Transcontinental "Lincoln" Highway
14. First Transcontinental Railroad
15. First Transcontinental U.S. Airmail Service Route



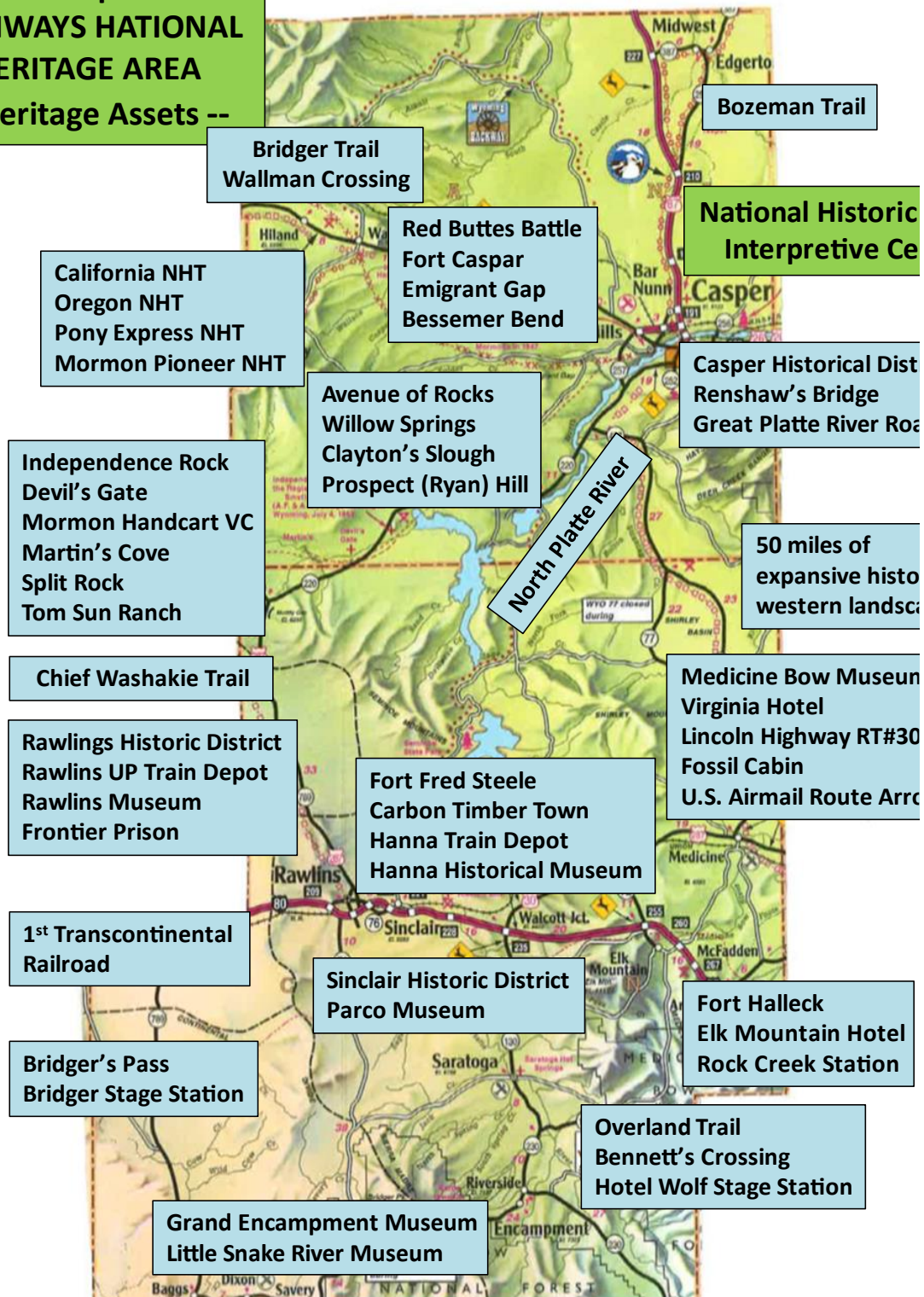


These historic Pathways reflect our Nation's progression in transportation technology from foot trails, riverways, wildlife and horse trails, wagon and handcart trails, railroad, and highways. They also reflect our Nation's progression in communication technology from word of mouth, pony express, telegraph line, railroad, telephone line, highways, and airmail service.

The credentials of these Pathways and surrounding lands have been well chronicled by hundreds of historians, archeologists, researchers, academics, artists, and authors. The stories are told countless publications, scientific studies, public broadcasting specials, television shows, museum exhibits, and documentaries. The integrity and importance of the Pathways has been credentialled by local, state, and federal tributes such as:

- 4 Congressionally designated National Historic Trails that are units of the National Park Service
- The Congressionally authorized National Historic Trails Interpretive Center administered by the Bureau of Land Management
- 2 National Historic Landmarks
- 88 sites on the National Register of Historic Places
- 19 Historic Districts on the National Register of Historic Places
- Approximately 47% of the PNHA are public lands and waters managed by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and by the State of Wyoming
- 4 units of the National Wilderness Preservation System plus 7 additional units under consideration
- North Platte River (aka., The Great Platte River Road)
- 5 Wyoming Scenic Byways and Backways
- 2 Wyoming State Parks
- Independence Rock State Historical Site and National Landmark.
- Fort Fred Steele State Historical Site
- Mormon Handcart Historical Site
- 15 museums with artifacts, exhibits, and stories of western expansion, settlement, and development
- 50+ miles of the famed transcontinental Lincoln Highway to drive and experience first-hand
- 75 miles of the transcontinental Union Pacific railroad to drive along and still serving our Nation since 1869
- 4 historic railroad depots
- Rawlins Springs, a City Interpretive Park

**The Proposed  
PATHWAYS NATIONAL  
HERITAGE AREA  
-- Heritage Assets --**



Pathways were not randomly established. Natural resources set the marker for where and when people travelled, and for some who did not survive. Historic trails followed the water and gentle topography along the North Platte River and did not challenge the Red Desert to the south. The railroad, telephone and telegraph lines, and airmail service were much less dependent on topography, wildlife, vegetation, and forage, but weather and winds were a factor in their routing.

Natural resources today define and impact the nature of heritage tourism. There remains large swaths of wide-open natural landscapes, big skies and cloud formations, long distant viewsheds, smells of sage and prairie grasses, herds of antelope, soaring hawks and eagles, and forests and plains like those early Americans experienced. The beauty of the visual resources in the PNHA remain stellar and provide a powerful experience of awe, wonderment, and contemplation.

The PNHA pathways and historic sites are owned and managed by different private, local, state, and federal agencies. They are also dispersed across many communities and counties. Thus, the most effective and efficient approach to assisting the numerous communities and historic sites would be by a local community-driven entity operating under the auspices as a National Heritage Area Act. Congressional designation would encourage needed partnerships among private and public entities, including residents and landowners, to thrive and build a better tomorrow. Part 2 describes the proposed Business Plan.

## DETERMINATION:

**☑ The Pathways NHA satisfies criterion #1.**



## Criterion 2: Traditions, Customs, Beliefs and Folklife

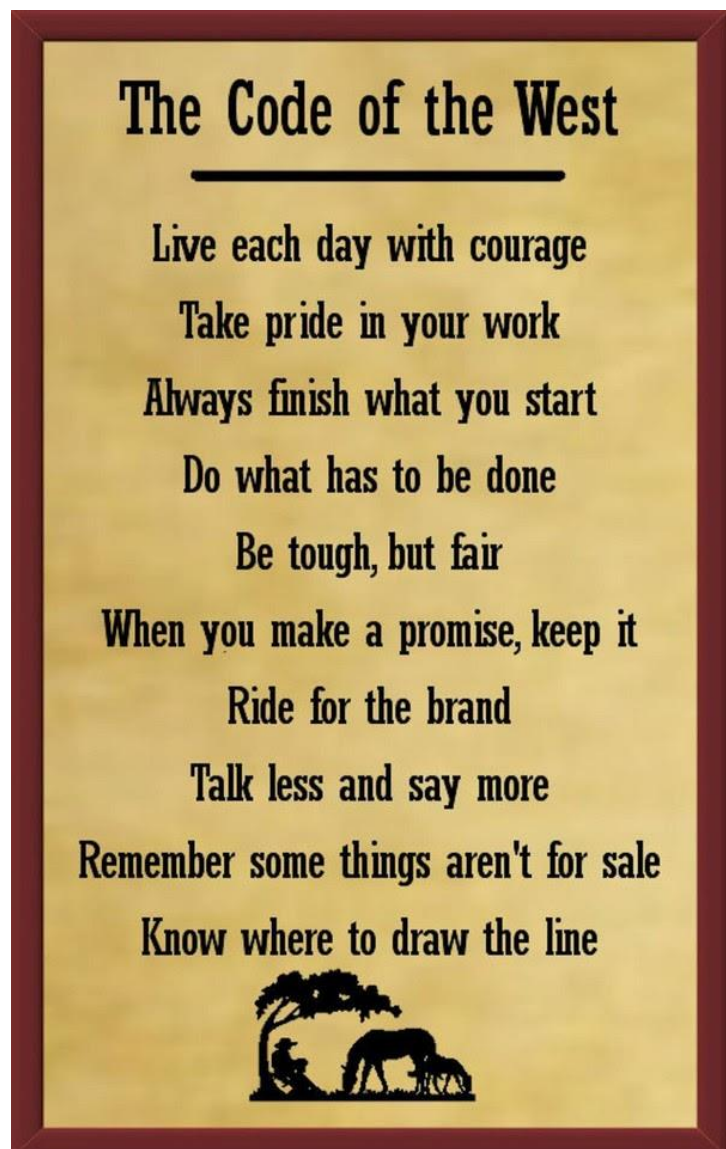
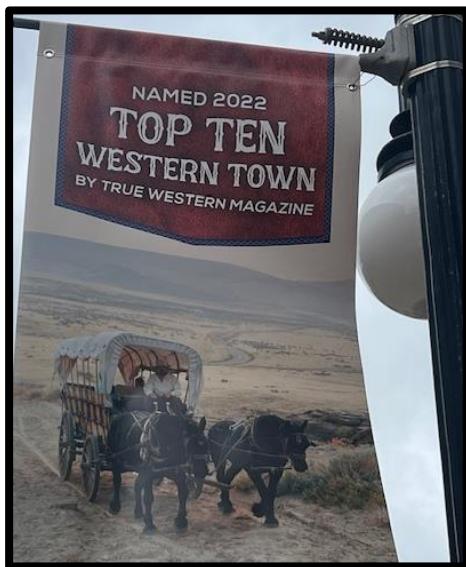
**Reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the story of the United States.**

The PNHA embodies the traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife from the eras of western migration settlement, and development. Several examples are provided.

### Code of the West

The American cowboy is the iconic image of the West. The cowboy image was born the western expansionist and remains today. For example, the Wyoming State logo is the cowboy and its officially adopted “Code of the West” reflects the virtues of the American cowboy.

For decades Wyoming residents have maintained a time-honored ethos of independence, freedom, loyalty, self-reliance, ruggedness, honor, hard work, love of the land, and can-do attitude.



## Dress

From weddings to funerals, riding a horse to buckin' a saloon (i.e., dancing), the accepted dress remains cowboy boots, blue jeans, wide-brim hat, long sleeve shirt, bandana, and a big silver belt buckle.

This fact is reinforced by the famed Lou Taubert Ranch Outfitters, the oldest western apparel retail store in Wyoming, established in 1919, with 55,000 square feet of western attire featuring 12,000 pairs of cowboy boots. Wyoming today exemplifies the “old West” in dress and demeanor.

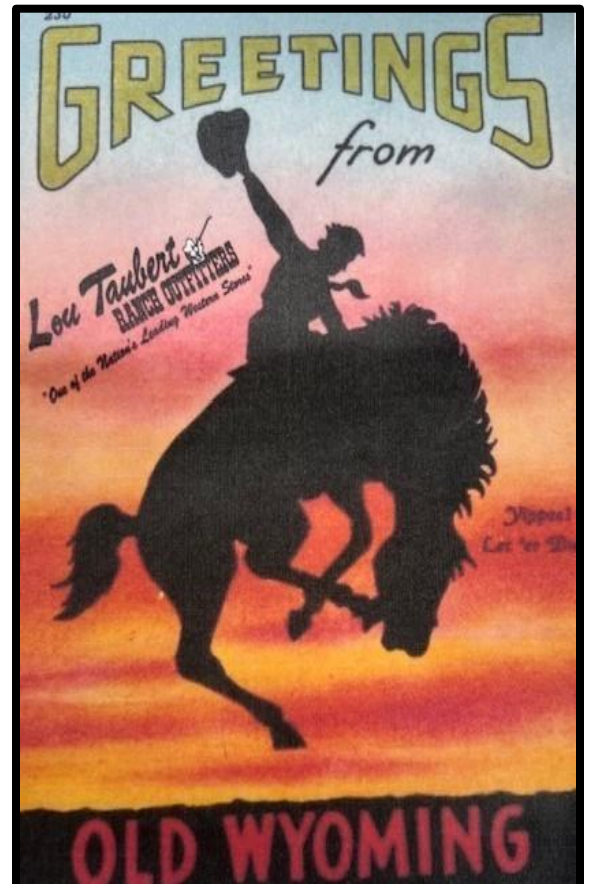




## Rodeos

Rodeos have been referred to as the core of Wyoming culture. They are the iconic special events that distinguish true western culture. The PNHA has many prestigious rodeos each year.

- The College National Finals Rodeo
- Central Wyoming Fair and Rodeo
- Woodchoppers Jamboree and Rodeo (Interesting Note---while cowboys were corralling cattle and sheep, woodchoppers were tie hacking and corralling wooden ties to build America's transcontinental railroad)
- Platte River Rodeo
- Saratoga Bullfest
- Little Snake River Rodeo
- Working Ranch Cowboy Association Rodeo
- Carbon County Fair and Rodeo
- Within a short distance, the granddaddy of them all—the Cheyenne Frontier Days Rodeo



## Living History and Education

Residents within the PNHA deeply value and respect their heritage. A significant amount of time and effort is allocated to conserving, interpreting, and helping both residents and travelers appreciate the trials and tribulations of our western expansion, settlement, and development. Several of the most notable venues are listed below:

- National Historic Trails Interpretive Center (Casper)---a world-class museum of interpretive presentations, events, classes, and re-enactments. The Center has 7 galleries, multimedia programs, and always memorable simulated covered wagon ride and river crossing. There are also summer youth interpretive events, Civilian Pioneer Living History Event and Pioneer trail treks.





- Fort Casper Museum and Historic Site (Casper)---a noteworthy regional attraction with a museum, interactive exhibits, reconstructed military post, cemetery, living history programs, special school programs, and historic Platte River ferry crossing exhibit. Numerous programs and special events are hosted.



Fort buildings are open  
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

**WE'RE ON FACEBOOK:**  
[Facebook.com/  
FortCasperMuseum &  
FortCasperMuseumAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/FortCasperMuseum)

**FORT CASPAR  
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION**

Fort Casper Museum  
4001 Fort Caspar Road  
Casper, WY 82604

Phone: 307-235-8462  
Fax: 307-235-8464  
E-mail: [fcaspar@casperwy.gov](mailto:fcaspar@casperwy.gov)  
[www.fortcasparwyoming.com](http://www.fortcasparwyoming.com)

**FORT CASPAR  
MUSEUM**

Past to Present - Discover Central Wyoming

## Fort Caspar Museum Calendar of Events 2022

### June

3 America250! Monument Dedication by the DAR in front of the Museum, 5:30 pm

9 OLLI Class: *The History of the DAR in Wyoming* (enroll thru Casper College/OLLI Program) \$ R

10 Pony Express Re-Ride: horse change at Fort Caspar. Will occur in the afternoon; call the Museum on the day of event for ETA.

18 Lunch and Learn: *The Wyoming State Flag & the Women Who Made It Fly* (see page 2) \$ R

### July

10 *Patriotism from Peaks to Plains: WY Women of the DAR* exhibit closes

13 *Rock Art in WY* exhibit opens

23 Caspar Collins Day—FREE

### August

20 Archaeology Day—FREE (see page 2)

### October

8 *Rock Art in WY* exhibit closes

21 Ghost Investigations at the Fort R \$

22 Ghost Investigations at the Fort R \$

28 Ghost Investigations at the Fort R \$

29 Ghost Investigations at the Fort R \$

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
Dec. 3rd is *Candlelight Christmas at the Fort*

**Key to Calendar**

\$ = Cost associated with event

R = Reservations recommended or required

*Please Note:* All events are subject to change, so please call or check our website for more up-to-date information.

- Mormon Handcart Visitor's Center and Martin's Cove---a world-class visitor center which details the tragic circumstances of the 1856 stranded Mormon travelers. As estimated 20,000 school age children visit the center each year. Most impressionable is the 4-hour handcart trek where you experience first- hand, albeit for a short-time, what our early settlers experienced.

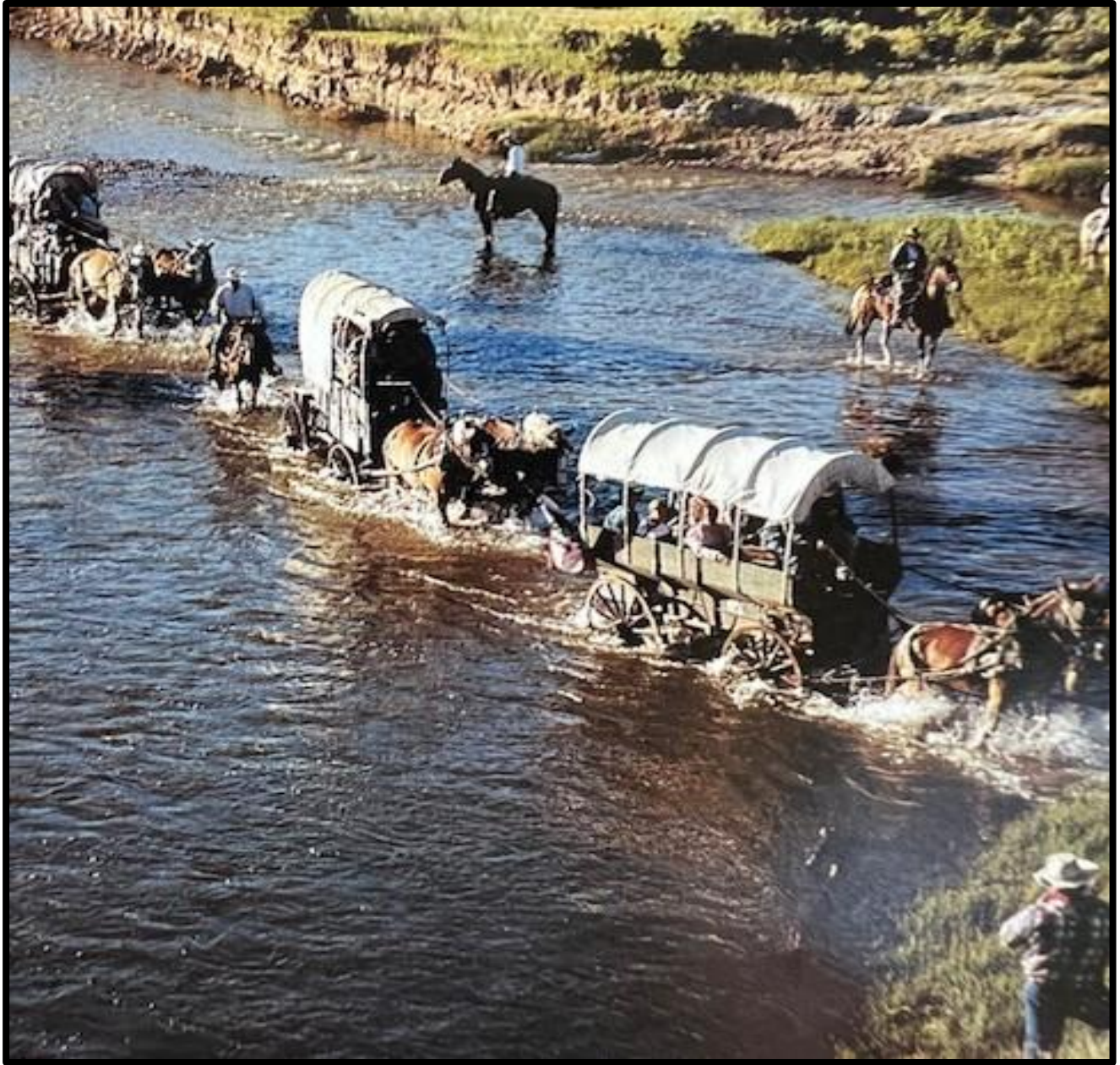




- Great Encampment Museum---a regional “GEM” of southern Wyoming with an outstanding museum, historical research library, and 12 historical buildings with artifacts from the early ranching, timber, and mining days. Special events, living history, and guided tours enhance the learning experience at the Great Encampment.
- Historic Trails West---an extraordinary and unique private venture offering 2-hour, 4-hour, or 1-day adventures riding in the pioneer’s footsteps on the historic trails in an authentic Prairie Schooner Wagon. Two-day, 3-day and 5-days wagon treks are also available. Ride the actual trails and pleasure in rich interpretive stories.







- Other significant museums and visitor centers with interpretation and artifacts of western expansion include the Carbon County Museum, Saratoga Museum, Medicine Bow Museum, Hanna Museum, Little Snake River Museum, Elk Mountain Museum, among others.



## Landscape

It is noteworthy to point out that the PNHA encompasses some 13,340 square miles, or 8,537,600 acres. Given a total 2022 population of some 96,000, this equates to 90 acres for every resident. Suffice it to say the PHNA has wide-open spaces akin to the 1850s.

The PNHA includes large swaths of wide-open natural landscapes, big skies and cloud formations, long distant viewsheds, smells of sage and prairie grasses, herds of antelope, soaring hawks and eagles, and forests and plains like those early Americans experienced. The visual resources and beauty of the PNHA are beyond words to fully describe, overwhelming to contemplate, and are the same today as 1850. The scenic values have been retained to share with all.





DETERMINATION:

☒ **The Pathways NHA satisfies criterion #2.**

## Criterion 3: Conservation Opportunities

**Provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, or scenic features for recreation and education.**

The historic wagon-train trails have high quality modern interpretive modern facilities, programs, and heritage protection and management. A sampling of these existing heritage sites includes the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, Fort Caspar National Historic Place, Bessemer Bend National Historic Site, Martins Cove National Historic Place, Devils Gate Historic Site, Independence Rock State Historic Site and National Landmark, Rawlins Springs, and other features.

In contrast, there is significant opportunity to conserve the historic and cultural assets in the technologic pathways----UP railroad, Lincoln Highway, telegraph and telephone lines, and the US Airmail Service beacon and landing site. These stories are not well interpreted. What makes this opportunity even more opportunistic is that the existing historic infrastructure is at risk of losing its integrity. Below is a sampling of opportunities in the PNHA to conserve historic and cultural features.

- Rawlins Railroad Depot
- Rawlins Springs
- Parco Historic District
- Fort Fred Steele
- Hanna Train Depot
- Medicine Bow Train Depot
- U.S. Air Mail Site 32







## Opportunities for Recreation and Education

### Historic Sites

- Bessemer Bend National Historic Site
- Pathfinder Dam Historic Civil Engineering Landmark
- Martins Cove National Historic Place
- Devils Gate Historic Site
- Parco National Historic District
- Frontier Prison National Historic Place
- Fort Caspar National Historic Place
- Fort Halleck National Historic Register Site
- Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site
- Independence Rock State Historic Site
- Stone Ranch Stage Stop Historic Site

### Nationally Significant Natural and Recreational Assets

- USDA Medicine Bow National Forest
- USDI Bureau of Land Management lands and sites
- Platte River Wilderness Area
- Savage Run Wilderness Area
- Encampment River Wilderness Area
- Huston Park Wilderness Area
- Ferris Mountain Wilderness Study Area





- Bennet Mountains Wilderness Study Area
- Sweetwater Rocks Wilderness Study Areas
- Encampment Canyon Wilderness Study Area
- Prospect Mountain Wilderness Study Area
- Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- US Fish and Wildlife Refuges (Pathfinder and Steamboat)
- Seminoe State Park
- Alcova to Seminoe Scenic Backway
- Miracle Mile “blue ribbon” stretch of North Platte River
- Bureau of Reclamation’s Alcova, Pathfinder, and Seminoe Reservoirs
- Snowy Range Scenic Byway
- South Big Horn/ Red Wall Scenic Backway
- Wyoming Historical Track
- Great Divide and Washakie Basins
- Red Desert
- Several hundred miles of trails for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking.
- [www.wyomingcarboncounty.com](http://www.wyomingcarboncounty.com)
- [www.wyomingnatronacounty.com](http://www.wyomingnatronacounty.com)

### **Carbon County Museums**

- Baggs Outlaw Shop
- Carbon County Museum
- Elk Mountain Museum
- Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site
- Grand Encampment Museum
- Hanna Basin Museum
- Little Snake River Museum
- Medicine Bow Museum
- Parco/Sinclair Museum
- Saratoga Museum
- Wyoming Frontier Prison

### **Natrona County Museums**

- ART 321—Casper /Artists Guild
- Bishop House
- Casper Planetarium
- Crimson Dawn Park and Museum
- Fort Caspar Historical Site and Museum
- Good Aviation and Veterans Museum
- Mormon Handcart Historic Site and Visitor Center
- National Historic Trails Interpretive Center

- Nicolaysen Art Museum
- Salt Creek Museum
- Tate Geological Museum
- The Science Zone
- Werner Wildlife Museum
- Western History Center
- Wyoming Veterans Museum
- Casper Mountain ski area

### DETERMINATION:

**☑ The Pathways NHA satisfies criterion #3.**

## **Criterion 4: Identified Themes**

**Contains resources that:**

- **Are important to any identified themes of the proposed National Heritage Area**
- **Retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation**

**SEE PART 2, Section C**      Pathways Interpretive Themes

### DETERMINATION:

**☑ The Pathways NHA satisfies criterion #4.**

## Criterion 5: Involvement, Planning and Support

**Includes a diverse group of residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and state and local governments that:**

- **Are involved in the planning of the proposed National Heritage Area**
- **Have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles of all participants in the proposed National Heritage Area, including the Federal Government, and**
- **Have demonstrated significant support for the designation of the proposed National Heritage Area.**

The PNHA planning and development effort has involved a diverse group that includes residents, businesses, nonprofit organizations and state and local government representatives.

**The PNHA Feasibility Study Team** is listed below:

- Mr. Vernon Lovejoy retired National Outdoor Recreation and Concessions Policy Coordinator, USDI, Bureau of Reclamation, Indian Hills, Colorado
- Dr. Glenn Haas, Emeritus Professor, Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Colorado State University.
- Ms. Leslie Jefferson, CEO, *Discover Carbon County*, Rawlins, Wyoming.
- Mr. Tyler Daugherty, CEO, *Visit Casper*, Casper, Wyoming.
- Dr. Travis Moore, Carbon County Commissioner, Rawlins, Wyoming.
- Ms. Connie Hall, Chairwoman, Casper Historic Preservation Commission. Casper, Wyoming.
- Mr. Craig Collins, Casper City Planner, Casper, Wyoming.
- Mr. Mike Armstrong, Carbon County Comet Founder, Hanna, Wyoming.
- Dr. Marcella Wells, Interpretation Specialist, Wells Resources, Inc, Fort Collins, Colorado.
- Mr. Jordan Brack, Web and Digital Support, Golden, Colorado
- Mr. Karl Brack, Production Design, Freeport, Florida
- Mr. Tim Bottomley, Geographic Information Specialist, Arvada, Colorado

**Study Team members have engaged numerous groups in presentations, interviews, and email communications.** Below are a partial list of organizations and people engaged in the planning effort (with the number of contacts to date in parentheses).

### **Carbon County**

Carbon County Board of County Commissioners (3)  
Carbon County Council of Governments—12 mayors (2)  
Carbon County Discover Carbon County Tourism Office (10+)  
Medicine Bow Museum (3)  
Hanna Basin Museum (1)  
Grand Encampment Museum (2)  
Virginian Hotel (3)  
Hotel Wolfe (1)  
Saratoga Museum (1)  
Elk Mountain Museum (1)  
Historic Elk Mountain Hotel (2)  
Rawlins County Museum (2)  
Rawlins Historic Prison (1)  
Little Snake River Museum (1)  
Parco Historic District (2)  
Women's PEO (1)  
Town of Sinclair (3)  
Town of Hanna (2)

### **Natrona County**

Natrona County Board of County Commissioners (3)  
Natrona County Historic Preservation Commission (2)  
City of Casper City Council (1)  
City of Casper Planning Office (10+)  
City of Casper Parks and Recreation (2)  
Visit Casper Tourism (10+)  
Casper Chamber of Commerce (1)  
Fort Caspar Museum (2)  
Mormon Handcart Historic Site (2)  
Historic Trails West (2)  
Rotary Club (1)  
Casper Mountain ski area  
Lou Taubert Ranch Outfitters

### **State of Wyoming**

Wyoming State Parks State Office (1)  
Wyoming SHIPO Office (2)  
Wyoming State Tourism Office (3)  
Wyoming Game and Fish (1)



Wyoming Stock Growers Association (2)  
Wyoming Farm Bureau (2)  
National Historic Trails Interpretive Center (4)  
Wyoming State Historical Society  
Alliance for Historic Wyoming (4)  
Wyoming Senator John Barrasso staff (1)  
Wyoming Senator Cynthia Lummis staff (1)  
Wyoming Representative Harriet Hageman staff (1)

### **Indigenous Tribes**

Eastern Shoshone Tribe (2)  
Northern Cheyenne Tribe (2)  
Ute Indian Tribe (2)  
Northern Arapahoe Tribe (2)  
Crow Tribe (2)

### **Federal Agencies**

Bureau of Land Management—Rawlins Field Office and Casper District Office (6)  
Bureau of Land Management State Office  
U.S. Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Reclamation, Wyoming Area Office (2)  
Medicine Bow National Forest (2)  
NPS National Heritage Program Regional Coordinator (3)

### **Media Contacts**

Rawlins Times  
Cowboy State Daily (3)  
Wyofile-statewide (3)  
Oil City News (2)  
Casper Star (2)  
Bigfoot radio-Carbon County (3)  
K2 radio Casper (1)  
WY PBS (2)

### **Other Entities**

Cache La Poudre National Heritage Area (2)  
South Park National Heritage Area (1)  
Pony Express Association  
Lincoln Highway Association  
Oregon - California Trails Association  
Sheridan Land Trust  
Union Pacific Railroad  
Creating Flourishing Churches

- **Conceptual Work Plan and 5-Year Revenue Streams and Expenses**

**SEE Part 2, Section F Business Plan**

- **Demonstrated Support**

**SEE APPENDIX A FOR LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

**DETERMINATION:**

**☑ The Pathways NHA satisfies criterion #5.**

## Criterion 6: Management Entity

**Has a potential management entity to work in partnership with the individuals and entities described in item 5 (above) to develop the proposed National Heritage Area while encouraging State and local economic activity.**

**SEE PART 2, Section F** Local Community Entity

### DETERMINATION:

☒ **The Pathways NHA satisfies criterion #6.**

## Criterion 7: Conceptual Boundary

**Has a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public.**

**The PNHA boundary** is defined by the boundaries of the Carbon and Natrona counties, Wyoming. The demarcation is clear, well-marked and known, integrates with various state and federal records and databases, and serves the practical purpose of designating a NHA.

**This boundary was recommended by the county commissioners and no public objections were offered to do otherwise.**

Initial boundary discussions proposed that the northern PNHA boundary would be several miles north of Casper, the county lines would serve east and west PNHA boundary, and the southern boundary would be several miles north of Saratoga.

The County Commissioners felt this configuration was too unwieldy and discounted several key heritage assets, and requested that all of Carbon and Natrona Counties be included in the PNHA. Thus,

- a. The PHNA boundaries are those of Carbon and Natrona counties in central and southern Wyoming. Combined, the two counties comprise 13,246 square miles or 8,477,440 acres, with a total approximate 2022 population of 95,000 people.
- b. Casper is the largest city in Wyoming with a population of 58,656 in 2022. The North Platte River that includes 5 Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs, City of Casper, Casper Mountain, and Interstate 25 are major features.
- c. The City of Rawlins is the largest city in Carbon County with a population of 8,298 in 2021. The North Platte River, Bureau of Reclamation Seminoe Reservoir, Union Pacific Railroad, Towns of Saratoga, Encampment, Baggs/Dixon, Hanna, Elk Mountain, Medicine Bow National Forest, and Interstate 80 are major features.

### DETERMINATION:

**☑ The Pathways NHA satisfies criterion #7.**



**In summary, the Pathways National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Team concludes that the PNHA meets each of the Congressional criteria for designation.**

- The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use.
- The area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the national story.
- It provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and /or scenic features, as well as outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.
- Resources in the area are important to the identified interpretive themes and retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting these interpretations.
- A diverse group of residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area have been involved in planning and development of a proposal for coordinating and supporting the PNHA.
- The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area, and a management entity has been proposed to work in partnership to develop the proposed NHA.
- The conceptual PNHA boundary map is supported by the public.

**This concludes Draft #2, June 1, 2024, of the  
Pathways National Heritage Area Feasibility Study.**

**Revisions, corrections, appendixes, and supporting documents  
will be added in Draft #3 planned for an August 1, 2024, release.**