

The Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area

The AFNHA Heritage Area became official with the President's signing on March 12 of S.47, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, the also known as the Natural Resources Management Act. The bipartisan bill passed in the Senate on February 12, and in the House on February 26, by overwhelming majorities.

Summary:

- The Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area Act (AFNHA) designates the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area as a National Heritage Area

Background:

- The proposed Appalachian Forest Heritage Area is located in 16 counties in West Virginia and 2 counties in Maryland. This area possesses cultural, natural and historical resources that form a cohesive and nationally distinctive landscape.
- AFNHA will ensure the area is protected for the enjoyment of future generations, promote the area for tourism, and highlight its historical value.

Purpose:

- The Appalachian Forest National Heritage Act will provide a cooperative management framework to Maryland and West Virginia, the counties within those states, all levels of government and the private sector to work conjunctively to continue to conserve the cultural, natural and historical heritage and pursue economic opportunities within the designated Heritage Area.

National Heritage Area Designation:

- The National Heritage Area program is a grants and outreach program that is administered by state governments or non-profit organizations or other private corporations. The National Park Service provides an advisory role with limited technical, planning and financial assistance.
- A National Heritage Area designation does not result in additional federal land management programs, regulation or management controls.
- There are currently 49 national heritage areas.
- National Heritage Areas leverage federal funds to create jobs, generate revenue for local governments, and sustain local communities.
- National heritage areas average \$5.50 for every \$1.00 of federal investment.

More information on the AFNHA can be found on their website:

<https://www.appalachianforestnha.org/>

