Connecting Stories, Landscapes, and People: Exploring the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Partnership

Sustainability Study Report

A Technical Assistance Project for the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Commission and the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc.

Conducted by the Conservation Study Institute Northeast Region National Park Service

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Suzanne E. Copping, Philip B. Huffman, Daniel N. Laven, Nora J. Mitchell, and Jacquelyn L. Tuell
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SECTION I: SETTING THE CONTEXT

Chapter 1

Background and Introduction to the D&L Sustainability Study

Congress established the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (Corridor) in 1988 as the nation’s third national heritage area.1 In 1993, the Corridor was also designated as Pennsylvania’s third state heritage park.2 Located in the eastern part of the state between Wilkes-Barre and Bristol along 165 miles of rivers, canals, and railroads, the Corridor conserves the historic transportation network that brought anthracite coal from the mines to the markets in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Corridor interprets the stories of the communities that grew up around the mountain mines and along the transportation route, the industries that flourished in the region because of the availability of coal, and the people who have lived and worked in the Corridor area. The Corridor’s authorizing legislation also established the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Commission (Commission) to assist state and local authorities in preserving and interpreting the Corridor’s historic and cultural resources and in fostering compatible economic development. The Commission’s authority is due to expire in November 2007.

Facing the possible expiration of the Commission’s authority and federal funding, Corridor management initiated the Delaware & Lehigh (D&L) Sustainability Study in 2005 to document accomplishments over the past 17 years, evaluate how the Corridor partnership has worked, and explore options for the future. Corridor management believed this study would help them make better informed decisions about the future, provide a participatory approach that would engage current and potential partners, and strengthen the case for continued investment by key state and federal partners. They also saw an opportunity to reflect on and learn from the past through an approach that builds on research conducted in other national heritage areas. By engaging in this study, D&L management has demonstrated a willingness to look critically at its accomplishments and consider adjustments to its partnership process in order to become more effective at achieving Corridor goals. D&L management also believes that its investment in a rigorous evaluation will inform the development of policy at the national level that will benefit both existing and emerging national heritage areas.

1 Public Law 100-692.
2 See http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brh/heritageparks for further information on the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program.
A. The Scope and Methods of the D&L Sustainability Study

The Commission asked the Conservation Study Institute (Institute), a program of the National Park Service Northeast Region, to provide technical assistance by conducting the sustainability study, and identified four points that the study should address:

• Evaluate progress toward accomplishing the purposes of the Corridor’s authorizing legislation and the strategies set forth in the Corridor’s Management Action Plan of 1993.
• Identify additional actions and work needed to protect, enhance, and interpret the Corridor and its nationally significant resources.
• Analyze the National Park Service and Pennsylvania Heritage Park Program (PHPP) investments to determine the leverage and impacts of these investments.
• Examine models, options, and opportunities to enhance state and local partnerships and to continue the NPS relationship, including the possibility of a permanent NPS designation or a new framework to support the work of the Corridor initiative.

In carrying out the study, the Institute’s project team investigated three primary aspects of the Corridor partnership’s efforts to date: (1) accomplishments and progress toward Corridor goals, and the leveraging of public investments; (2) the structure and operations of the current management framework; and (3) partners’ perspectives on how the partnership has worked. The team obtained data from various sources, including the Corridor management plan, annual reports, and other documentation of accomplishments and leverage, and used a variety of participatory techniques, including confidential interviews, meetings, informal conversations, and focus groups, to engage and gather insights from key individuals. These included commissioners, board members of the Commission’s nonprofit operating partner Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc. (D&L, Inc.), D&L staff, Corridor partners, individuals who played important roles in the Corridor’s formation, and people with expertise in heritage areas and partnerships.

The study was carried out in three phases. Phase one involved data collection in the three main study areas identified above, followed by an analysis of the strengths and challenges that emerged from the data. In this phase individual team members worked primarily within their assigned study areas. In phase two the team began a joint, iterative process of synthesis in which each member shared insights from his or her phase one analysis. Through joint analysis of the study data, the team refined its understanding of the D&L partnership system and identified ingredients that are critical for sustaining and enhancing this system in the future. In phase three the team identified and analyzed options and opportunities for sustaining and enhancing the D&L partnership system. While the focus of each phase was distinct, the three phases were closely linked through the team’s collective synthesis, and the findings for each phase were refined through the process of iterative analysis as the study progressed. For more on the study methodology, see appendix A.

B. The National Context

There is growing realization by Congress, the National Park Service, and the public that heritage areas are an important direction in conservation. There are currently 27 national heritage areas across the country, and legislation is pending in Congress to designate at least 17 new ones and study eight more for possible designation.

With the number of national heritage areas potentially about to double, in 2004 National Park Service Director Fran Mainella asked the National Park System Advisory Board to examine the future of national heritage areas and their relationship to the National Park Service. The board, composed of 13 citizens with various kinds of expertise and a commitment to the mission of the National Park Service, has the statutory responsibility to advise the NPS director and the secretary of the interior on policy and program matters.

After a year of deliberations, the board’s Partnerships Committee reported its findings and recommendations. The report finds that among other things, “The national heritage area approach, with its complex but essential networks of relationships and ability to leverage resources for resource conservation and economic and community development, can serve as a model for achieving NPS conservation goals with multiple partners. The process, key elements, outcomes, and impacts need to be identified and better understood.” The report also recommends investing in research “to better understand the process of collaborative conservation and partnership networks, and to better evaluate the outcomes of designation and partnership on resource conservation and community economic development over time.” Finally, the committee recommends establishing a legislative foundation for a system of national heritage areas within the National Park Service, including a policy requiring a study three years prior to the cessation of federal funding authorization to make recommendations regarding future NPS involvement.

The D&L Sustainability Study and a similar study completed a year ago by the Conservation Study Institute for the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission offer a model for how such studies might be conducted.

C. Organization of the Report

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

• Section I continues to set the context for readers, with a retrospective on the origins of the Corridor (chapter 2) and a description of the current management framework (chapter 3).
• Section II, Assessing the D&L Corridor Partnership, presents the results from the phase one analyses, including a discussion of accomplishments and leverage (chapter 4), an analysis of the existing management framework (chapter 5), and a discussion of the D&L partnership system from the perspective of the partners (chapter 6).
• Section III, The Future of the D&L Corridor, describes the critical ingredients of the D&L partnership system (chapter 7) and presents options and opportunities for the future of the D&L Corridor, including management considerations (chapter 8) and other considerations (chapter 9). Chapter 10 presents closing thoughts.

To minimize confusion regarding terminology and acronyms used in this report, readers are encouraged to consult the glossary of terms that begins on page —.
Chapter 2

Establishing the D&L National Heritage Corridor

The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor was established because of its historical significance in America’s early industrial expansion, its stories of human ingenuity and entrepreneurship, its social and cultural heritage, and the lessons of environmental devastation and recovery that are present in the region’s landscape. The Corridor’s national designation came about because of the vision, leadership, and hard work of many people and organizations. This chapter examines the Corridor’s significance and the history leading up to its designation.

A. The Heritage of the D&L Corridor

When the efficiency of anthracite coal for both domestic and industrial purposes was demonstrated in the early 1800s, the abundant deposits in the Corridor’s northern reaches sparked the development of the Lehigh Navigation System (comprising a network of mountain railroads and a canal along the Lehigh River) and the Delaware Canal along the Delaware River. The construction of this transportation system to bring anthracite coal to the growing industrial markets in Philadelphia and other coastal cities dramatically changed the region’s landscape and its people. With a new transportation system in place, industry sprang up in what had been primarily an agricultural landscape and it did not take long for the Lehigh Valley to be transformed. By the mid-1800s the valley had become the nation’s leading iron-producing region, and in 1873 the Bethlehem Iron Company made the transition from iron to steel. Although iron making was dominant, other industries—portland cement manufacturing, slate quarrying and processing, textile manufacturing, and zinc processing—were also important during the Corridor’s industrial prominence.

Also important to the heritage of the D&L Corridor are the stories of the communities that grew up around the mines and the transportation route, and of the people who have lived and worked in this region dating to precolonial times. The industrial heritage overlies an earlier story about principles of tolerance, respect, and individual freedom that were personified by William Penn and characterized the culture of the fledgling state of Pennsylvania. The social and legal reforms that Penn put in place drew people of many backgrounds to the area. Native Americans, the early European settlers, and the immigrant workers who came during the Industrial Revolution have all contributed to the ethnic diversity that still characterizes the Corridor region and its rich cultural heritage today.

A third aspect of the Corridor’s heritage relates to its scenic and recreational importance and the
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National Park Service Conservation Study Institute

The Origins of the Corridor Partnership

To understand the factors and players who were instrumental in the Corridor’s designation and to capture the thinking about the heritage area approach in its early years, the study team interviewed four people who were leaders in the early formation of the D&L Corridor. Revisiting the formation of the Corridor through the eyes of its pioneers enabled the team to explore the forces that contributed to the Corridor’s creation and provided a lens through which to view its progress since establishment. The interviews also provided an opportunity to probe the relationship of the Corridor’s designation to the national heritage area movement and the formation of the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program, and to understand the early roles of current partners.

Efforts to preserve the Delaware and Lehigh canals began as early as 1931 when Lehigh Coal and Navigation, Inc. (LC&N), transferred 40 miles of the Delaware Canal to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Over the years, as LC&N transferred additional segments of canal into public and private hands, the declining condition of some sections caused residents to voice their concern to local leaders. Many of these people had a working connection with the canals, and found value—environmental, recreational, aesthetic, and historical—in the canal system. Concerned with threats to the integrity of these waterways, some residents took action into their own hands. In 1978, the nonprofit organization Friends of the Delaware Canal helped the canal to achieve national historic landmark designation. The National Park Service first acknowledged the canal system when it documented the national significance of the Delaware and Lehigh canals in a 1977 National Urban Recreation Study. However, in the early 1980s the National Park Service declined the Commonwealth’s offer to transfer ownership and management of the Delaware Canal to the NPS because of high maintenance costs and the lack of a formal study of this proposal.

Throughout the 1980s, as preservation, parks, and recreation leaders within Pennsylvania discussed the Delaware and Lehigh canals, their ideas about the future of the region gradually merged. The thinking of these leaders was informed by visits to the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, and Lowell National Historical Park.
where they saw the impacts of NPS involvement on the preservation of historic canal resources. These leaders adapted their observations to the D&L region, where the concept of "regionalism" and its inherent possibilities led to new collaborations between the state, the NPS, and neighboring jurisdictions such as Lehigh and Northampton counties.

In 1988, the NPS and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania sponsored a seminar in Scranton to discuss the idea of a heritage approach in the Lackawanna Valley that would represent the resources and themes that were related to, but not included in, Steamtown National Historic Site. The meeting brought together economic development, historic preservation, trails, and parks experts using a heritage area approach elsewhere in the U.S. with practitioners interested in adopting this approach in Pennsylvania. The meeting strengthened political support for heritage areas in the state and has been credited with influencing the formation of the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program.

Bipartisan support from key members of Congress was critical to the D&L Corridor's national designation. Congressman Peter Kostmayer, a Democrat, first became involved in 1984 in response to constituent requests to "do something" about the condition of the Delaware Canal in Bucks County. He learned about options for conserving canals from congressional colleagues with national heritage corridors and urban historical parks in their districts. Congressman Don Ritter, a Republican, became involved through an economic development initiative to create a Lehigh River heritage corridor. As pressure from their constituents grew in breadth and intensity, Congressmen Kostmayer and Ritter joined efforts and championed legislation to establish a heritage corridor that encompassed the canals along both the Delaware and Lehigh rivers. After the Scranton seminar, in 1988 Kostmayer and Ritter, along with the state, supported a heritage conference in Bethlehem that focused specifically on the D&L region, which influenced the movement of the D&L's federal legislation through Congress.

In addition to local activism and federal and state leadership, another motivating force for the D&L's national designation was the inherent quality of the resource. As one interviewee described it, "It helps if the resource has a strong, iconic image, an image that people relate to." The Corridor's visible reminders of the past made many residents strong advocates for preservation, and their support made the designation and subsequent management planning process clearly a public priority and effort.

After Corridor designation, the National Park Service played an integral role in working with partners and residents to develop a management action plan that remains a model for heritage area planning 13 years later. An NPS official involved in the Corridor's formation and initial years characterizes the NPS role in the public planning process in this way: "We were a partner, but we didn't want to be the dominant partner. We didn't want to dictate. ... More often than not, our role was more to facilitate than to be a seat at the table. ..." NPS expertise and facilitation were very helpful in empowering local participants in the newly formed heritage corridor to define the Corridor's boundaries and historical themes, the resources it would preserve, the stories it would tell, and the network of partners it would involve. The planning process, although at times arduous, built a consensus among local leaders and residents that created buy-in and a solid foundation of public support for the Corridor. The management plan that local individuals and organizations created to carry out their collective vision for the future remains a relevant, guiding document to this day.

The team effort...it's amazing, the hands on this one—the local leaders and public, the experts from around and from afar, people from Congress, the Senate, Pennsylvania, NPS—a core of people with expertise and visions, and the skills. ... When you look at who touched this...I think those folks are the reason that this effort was successful.
Chapter 3
The Existing Management Framework for the D&L Corridor Partnership

A central purpose of the D&L Corridor’s authorizing legislation was to establish a management framework to facilitate implementation of the Corridor initiative. That framework, as refined through subsequent legislative amendments and the Corridor’s 1993 Management Action Plan, consists of several interrelated components:

• purpose, vision, and mission;
• geographic scope;
• management entity;
• partners;
• funding and other forms of support.

Each of these components is summarized below:

A. Purpose, Vision, and Mission
The starting point for the Corridor’s management framework is the purpose for which the Corridor was established, as articulated in the authorizing legislation: “...[to] preserve and interpret for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant ... certain historic and cultural lands, waterways, and structures within and surrounding the Delaware and Lehigh Navigation Canal...”. The 1998 amendment also specified an additional purpose of “enhancing economic development within the context of preservation.”

Building on these purposes, the Management Action Plan identified a “multi-faceted vision of what residents and leaders want for the Corridor” that emerged from the extensive public dialogue during the planning process. The vision includes the following elements:

• “A region that becomes even more strongly defined by the remarkable remnants of our history, and that becomes even greener, with towns centered on clean rivers;
• The continuation of the innovative capacity that has always characterized the Corridor, a capacity that ensures a healthy environment and a visible heritage for us and our children;
• A robust economic future that is based on the desirability and rarity of our singular natural and cultural environment, a park-like setting;
• Pride and an ethic of stewardship growing in the heart of every resident—we will understand the meaning of what we have, and act to uphold it.”

To achieve that vision, the management plan laid out the following mission for the Corridor initiative:

• “To conserve the historic canals and amplify the recreational and educational opportunities based on them;
• To broadly tell the story of the region by strengthening the infrastructure for interpretation and education;
• To establish a framework for stewardship which will preserve significant historic sites, enhance recreation, and conserve the natural and cultural environments;
• To provide opportunities for capitalizing on heritage development.”

Together, these purposes, vision, and mission have provided the basic guiding direction for the work that has occurred through the Corridor initiative since its establishment.

B. Geographic Scope
The area included in the Corridor is another basic building block of the management framework because it defines the geographic scope of the resources to be addressed and the political jurisdictions and public constituencies that need to be involved in management. Based on the direction of the authorizing legislation and further refinement in the management plan, the Corridor stretches for 165 miles through five counties in eastern Pennsylvania (Luzerne, Carbon, Northampton, Lehigh, and Bucks), from Wilkes-Barre in the north to Bristol in the south. Altogether, there are more than 200 municipalities in the Corridor, ranging from small townships and boroughs to some of Pennsylvania’s larger cities. The Corridor’s geographic extent is illustrated in the map on page XX.

be deeply engaged in Corridor activities in a number of different ways, including:

• Managing Lehigh Gorge and Delaware Canal heritage area management entities, the Commission has the authority to receive, use, and distribute federal funds that are appropriated for the initiative. It also has a variety of administrative authorities (e.g., to hire staff and consultants, hold hearings, receive and use donations, enter into cooperative agreements with other governmental agencies and private organizations, establish advisory groups). The Commission can acquire land and property, but only by gift, devise, or purchase from willing sellers using funds specifically given for that purpose. In addition, it must transfer any property it acquires under these terms to an appropriate public or nonprofit entity as soon as practicable. The Commission does not have authority to regulate land use or acquire land through condemnation (i.e., eminent domain).

• Providing financial and other support through the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program;
• Offering grants, technical assistance, and other services for conservation and recreation initiatives;
• Participating as a designated member of the Commission.

Several other state agencies are also actively involved in the Corridor initiative. Most notably, these include the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), and the Department of Transportation (PennDOT). These agencies have lead responsibility for many activities related to Corridor goals (e.g., managing state historic sites, implementing economic development programs, building infrastructure), and also provide staff assistance and/or funding to other collaborative projects within the Corridor.

2. Federal government

The Corridor’s authorizing legislation gives the Commission certain powers to carry out its responsibilities. As with all other national heritage area management entities, the Commission has the authority to receive, use, and distribute federal funds that are appropriated for the initiative. It also has a variety of administrative authorities (e.g., to hire staff and consultants, hold hearings, receive and use donations, enter into cooperative agreements with other governmental agencies and private organizations, establish advisory groups). The Commission can acquire land and property, but only by gift, devise, or purchase from willing sellers using funds specifically given for that purpose. In addition, it must transfer any property it acquires under these terms to an appropriate public or nonprofit entity as soon as practicable. The Commission does not have authority to regulate land use or acquire land through condemnation (i.e., eminent domain).

D. Partners

The Corridor initiative is fundamentally a regional partnership involving all levels of government, private organizations, and individuals to achieve the wide-ranging purposes, vision, and mission. Following is a brief summary of the ways in which each broad category of partners is involved in the effort.

1. State government

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is the lead state agency in the Corridor partnership. DCNR has been deeply engaged in Corridor activities in a number of different ways, including:

• Managing Lehigh Gorge and Delaware Canal state parks, which together encompass nearly half of the Corridor’s spine;
• Providing financial and other support through the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program;
• Offering grants, technical assistance, and other services for conservation and recreation initiatives;
• Participating as a designated member of the Commission.

C. Management Entity

For every national heritage area, the federal authorizing legislation identifies an organization that is given lead responsibility for coordinating the initiative and for developing and implementing a management plan. This “management entity” is a central component of the overall management framework. The D&L Corridor’s authorizing legislation created the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Commission to serve in this capacity. The Commission is a 21-member body consisting of representatives from key governmental agencies and stakeholder interests across the Corridor. Its members are appointed by the secretary of the interior based upon recommendations from the governor. The Commission was originally authorized for ten years, but received legislated extensions in 1998 and 2004. Its authority is now due to expire in November 2007. In addition to being the federally authorized management entity, the Commission has been recognized by the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program as the manager for the D&L State Heritage Park.

While the Commission has served as the official management entity since the establishment of the Corridor, participants recognized early on that a strong nonprofit partner was needed to assist the Commission and potentially serve as its successor. As a result, the nonprofit corporation Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc., was established in 2002, and the Commission and D&L, Inc., have been working in tandem ever since. They formalized their partnership for implementing the Corridor initiative through a cooperative agreement in 2003.

The Commission and D&L, Inc., currently share a staff of seven full-time and four part-time employees. The staff covers a range of disciplines, expertise, and functions, including planning, facilitation, community and economic development, resource conservation, historic preservation, volunteer coordination, and administration.

The Corridor’s authorizing legislation gives the Commission certain powers to carry out its responsibilities. As with all other national heritage area management entities, the Commission has the authority to receive, use, and distribute federal funds that are appropriated for the initiative. It also has a variety of administrative authorities (e.g., to hire staff and consultants, hold hearings, receive and use donations, enter into cooperative agreements with other governmental agencies and private organizations, establish advisory groups). The Commission can acquire land and property, but only by gift, devise, or purchase from willing sellers using funds specifically given for that purpose. In addition, it must transfer any property it acquires under these terms to an appropriate public or nonprofit entity as soon as practicable. The Commission does not have authority to regulate land use or acquire land through condemnation (i.e., eminent domain).

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2. Federal government

The Department of the Interior and, more specifically, the National Park Service hold lead responsibility on behalf of the federal government for assisting the Commission, D&L, Inc., and their partners. The secretary of the interior
is responsible for appointing commissioners, and federal funding appropriated specifically to the Corridor initiative flows through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs. The NPS has provided varying levels and types of technical assistance and staff support to the initiative since its establishment, particularly planning and interpretive assistance. The NPS also participates through its designated membership on the Commission.

Other federal agencies (e.g., the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Highway Administration) also are involved in some activities related to Corridor goals, such as environmental restoration projects, canal maintenance, and transportation infrastructure development. In addition, the authorizing legislation requires all federal agencies to consult and cooperate with the Commission and the secretary of the interior (i.e., the NPS) regarding any activities affecting the purposes of the Corridor initiative and, to the maximum extent practicable, to ensure that those activities are consistent with the management plan and the legislation.

3. Municipal and county government
The five counties and the multitude of municipalities in the Corridor have lead responsibility for many activities related to Corridor goals (e.g., managing local parks and historic sites, implementing local regulations, building infrastructure), and participate in other collaborative projects within the Corridor. They also provide the overall Corridor partnership with vital knowledge of the needs, priorities, and concerns of local residents, businesses, and organizations. Because of these important roles, local governments have eight designated seats on the Commission, or more than a third of its membership.

4. Nongovernmental partners
Organizations and individuals outside of government, including nonprofit organizations, businesses, and Corridor citizens, are also central to the partnership. These partners have lead responsibility for many initiatives related to Corridor goals (e.g., managing sites, economic development planning, providing education and interpretation), and contribute to other collaborative projects and programs within the Corridor. Although specific nongovernmental entities do not have dedicated membership on the Commission, the nine regionally based seats provide a mechanism for the representation of these interests.

E. Funding and Other Forms of Support
As alluded to elsewhere in this chapter, support for the Corridor initiative comes from all levels of the partnership and in a variety of forms (financial support, staff time, in-kind contributions, volunteer involvement, etc.). Indeed, this dependence on a breadth of support and participation is a fundamental aspect of the D&L partnership model, and of national heritage areas in general.

The primary sources of direct financial support for the Corridor initiative are federal funding through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs budget and state funding through DCNR's Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program. In accordance with the 1998 amendment to the authorizing legislation, federal funding is authorized for up to $1 million per year for operations of the Commission and up to $1 million per year in fiscal years 2000 through 2007 for implementation of the management plan. Federal funds appropriated for these purposes require at least a 1:1 match from other sources. Matches can be in financial or non-financial form. As shown in Figure 3.1, from fiscal years 1996 through 2005 actual annual federal appropriations through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs budget ranged from $310,000 to $844,000 and totaled $7.56 million overall.

During that same period, annual appropriations to the Corridor initiative through the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program ranged from $190,000 to $829,000, with total program funding to the Corridor of $6.59 million. (See Figure 3.2.) These funds have been provided through grants for a variety of purposes, ranging from early planning and Commission operations to the implementation of on-the-ground projects called for in the management plan. Grants of up to $100,000 per year with no matching requirement (either cash or in-kind) have been provided for heritage park management (i.e., to support the operations of the Commission and now D&L, Inc.). Grants for planning, studies, and implementation projects require matches from other public and private sources of 25 to 50 percent of the total cost, and these matches must be in cash rather than non-financial form.

The Commission and D&L, Inc., distribute a substantial amount of the NPS and DCNR funding to Corridor partners through re-granting programs for various implementation projects. (See Chapter 4 for further discussion of these programs.) For example, in 2005 a total of $269,750 in DCNR and NPS funding was awarded to partner organizations.

*In FY 2005, an additional $462,000 was provided through the NPS construction budget.*
SECTION II: ASSESSING THE D&L CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP

Chapter 4

Pursuing the Corridor Vision: Progress, Accomplishments, and Leverage

Individuals and organizations involved in developing the Management Action Plan of 1993 agreed to pursue a set of 175 strategies for accomplishing the purposes stated in the D&L Corridor’s legislation. Corridor management has addressed many of these strategies through hundreds of projects and programs. The investments of D&L partners in these activities have created impressive financial and non-financial impacts.

Several methodologies were used to document the D&L Corridor’s progress toward accomplishing its vision for the future. This chapter describes the progress of the initiative through:

- an overview of management plan progress;
- observations on the D&L Corridor’s progress and accomplishments;
- program and project highlights;
- investment and leverage in the D&L Corridor;
- influence on the regional economy and heritage tourism.

A. An Overview of Management Plan Progress

The Management Action Plan of 1993 refers to strategies as “actions” that will accomplish the purposes stated in the D&L Corridor’s legislation. In the context of the plan, each action describes an approach or a concrete project that the partnership should implement. Project-specific actions direct the Corridor partnership to, for example, “work with partners to design and develop an Easton landing.” Other actions, such as “support river and canal access improvement projects,” have a broader intent and require a range of projects or programs to complete. The Corridor partnership has addressed a number of both project-driven and broad-based actions with a wide range of partners and various levels of investment. Overall, the Corridor partnership has divided its attention consistently among the southern, central, and northern regions, as well as Corridor-wide, but...
Projects and investments often address multiple objectives. All of the D&L Corridor’s activities address objectives in at least one of the major categories in the management plan (i.e., navigating, interpreting, conserving, enriching), and they often cross multiple categories. Projects benefit from opportune timing, availability of resources, and partner readiness. The concurrent availability of resources (e.g., funding, willing and visionary partners, staff expertise) has been critical to many successful projects—i.e., the right people came together at the right time and the money was there to make things happen.

Some projects benefit from the passage of time. Over time, relationships develop, new technologies become available, and new and unanticipated opportunities arise that change the windows of opportunity for addressing larger, more complex, corridor-wide initiatives.

D&L Corridor successes create demands for staff assistance, a situation that requires careful consideration of how to invest staff time and expertise. As the D&L partnership has undertaken new projects and expanded its reach, corridor management has increasingly been selecting projects that maximize impact—e.g., providing grants and training that shift the responsibility for implementing activities to partners. The staff’s ability to identify strategic investments with high potential impacts has been honed by years of working in the region and knowledge of the strengths and limitations of various partners.

Partner capacity varies across the network, and building capacity is a continual challenge. Some partners are strong and have substantial capacity, while others are more limited. As D&L management has expanded its reach and focused on shifting responsibility to partners, its staff has provided more training and mentoring to those partners most in need. While initially a time-consuming investment, this support strengthens the partner network over the long term.

The staff has played multiple roles and demonstrated flexibility in response to project needs and partner capacity. D&L management often assumes different roles (as funder, advisor, mentor, connector, facilitator, and expert) over the life of a project. The staff assists with projects at all scales and geographic locations, and identifies and fills gaps in financing or partner capacity to get projects done.

Individuals in D&L management act successfully on their intuition. Leaders in D&L management reflect on its accomplishments and think about how to build on its achievements.
C. Program and Project Highlights
Following are descriptions of several programs and projects that illustrate the characteristics described above. Collectively, these activities span all three phases of the D&L Corridor’s existence, reflect both Corridor-wide and local-level work, and describe the range of approaches used by the D&L initiative to address management plan actions. These activities also illustrate the impacts of Corridor initiatives on the region’s resources, people, and organizations.

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Visually and Graphically Speaking
Project description
In 1995, with guidance from an NPS interpretive specialist, the Corridor partnership created “Visually Speaking,” a graphic identity and interpretation system with design and production guidelines and standards for interpretive panels, directional signage, publications, and printed materials. The system establishes a Corridor “look” and helps visitors and residents navigate and appreciate the region’s natural, cultural, and historic resources. Additional graphic standards were added in 1999 and the system is now called “Visually and Graphically Speaking” (VGS). Partners interested in using the D&L Corridor’s graphic identity may request technical assistance, including editing, fact-checking, and design review. D&L management approves the final design to ensure that the D&L Corridor “look” is consistent and remains distinctive. Small grants are available to fund content development and sign production.

Project impacts
Throughout the Corridor, approximately 200 wayfinding and interpretive signs have been installed. More than 34 publications have been produced, including two audio tours and a 150-page book, *D&L Trail, Towns, and Culture: The Stone Coal Way*. The VGS plan is widely considered a model for guiding successful regional interpretation. The requests for assistance in using the D&L identity package have increased in recent years, which should lead to enhanced visibility and recognition of the Corridor initiative and the thematic connections among sites across the region.

Corridor partnership investment and leverage
Corridor management: $120,000 for the original plan, technical assistance, training in end-product visualization, and project coordination NPS: technical expertise (1990–1999) with development of Visually Speaking guidelines and an interpretation and education plan, technical assistance, matching VGS grant funding.

Project impacts
In the mid-1990s a Luzerne County engineer approached the Commission about installing a sign to provide rules for trail use along the Wyoming Valley levee, where the county had planned a 22-mile trail network as part of an Army Corps of Engineers levee restoration project. On a guided walk arranged by the NPS interpretive staff, partners working with the D&L initiative, naturalists and historians recorded nearly 80 sites for signage, which were paired with photos and stories provided by local residents. On seeing the proposed interpretive signs, the engineer, a descendant of anthracite coal miners, became convinced of their power to tell the regional story and persuaded the Army Corps of Engineers to fund their installation. The panels interpret the science and history of the levee system and its people through four thematic routes. Luzerne County continues to maintain the levee system, trails, and interpretive materials. The signs were reproduced in a commemorative book, *A Story Runs Through It*, to which the Commission contributed $15,000 and Luzerne County Flood Authority contributed $15,000. Other partners included the City of Wilkes-Barre, the Wyoming Valley Historical Society, and DCNR.

Project impacts
The project introduced partners to the value of historical interpretation. It has fostered new relationships between D&L management and local authorities and has led to a new trail connecting the levee with downtown Wilkes-Barre, where the city has installed new historic waysides and a new visitor center. Currently, Wilkes-Barre is working with the D&L initiative on a $10 million project to develop the “Susquehanna Landing,” a future Corridor visitor center.
26 Connecting Stories, Landscapes, and People: Exploring the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Partnership

National Park Service Conservation Study Institute

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D&L Corridor Market Towns

Project description
In 2000, the D&L Corridor partnered with DCED and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (a statewide nonprofit), which together sought to pilot a regional Main Street revitalization approach. They introduced “Corridor Market Towns” (CMT), an initiative to help communities build local capacity for future planning and development projects that enhance downtown activity. The six pilot towns completed a visioning exercise to establish a community consensus for involvement and to help the D&L staff evaluate their readiness to undertake new projects. The D&L staff currently provides assistance with community visioning, preservation and tourism planning, façade and streetscape improvements, training, marketing, and program assessments. Mini-grants are available for downtown revitalization. Successful implementation relies on the readiness of towns to participate as lead partners in Corridor Market Town strategies, and, since the towns must request assistance, on public understanding of the CMT program and the benefits of participation. The staff’s professional expertise and creativity has greatly influenced the success of this pilot initiative.

Project impacts
Direct products include 279 individual projects and 137 façade renovations completed, underway, or planned. Since 2000, the six pilot towns have seen a net gain of 33 businesses. Grants awarded for projects have leveraged up to 54 times their value (e.g., the Jim Thorpe historic train station rehabilitation received $650,000 in Transportation Enhancements [TE] funding), with an average leverage of 3.4 times the grant amount. The CMT initiative has been so successful that Pennsylvania Downtown Center and DCED are implementing a similar small-town revitalization strategy in other regions of the state. The D&L program is now providing assistance to Corridor towns outside the original scope of the CMT pilot.

Corridor partnership investment and leverage
Corridor management: technical assistance, mentoring, and fostering of partner relationships; mini-grants; funding for seasonal interns from Kutztown and Lehigh universities.
Pennsylvania Downtown Center: $160,000 over four years.
DCED: $80,000 over four years for staff support and façade improvement grants.
DCNR: matching funding of $40,000 over two years.
PennDOT: TE funding.
Carbon County: Community Development Block Grant funding and other support.
Boroughs of White Haven, Lansford, Jim Thorpe, Lehighton, Palmerton, Slatington, and Coaldale: project leadership, financial and in-kind support and coordination.
Pennsylvania Power and Light: $75,000.
Heritage Conservancy: planning and technical assistance.
Kutztown and Lehigh universities: provision of seasonal interns.
Dozens of businesses, local organizations, and local government entities: matching funding and in-kind support for CMT projects.

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Race Street in Jim Thorpe is home to several local artists.

Corridor Market Towns Project Example: White Haven Engine House

Project description
In 2003, the town of White Haven, which was targeted for a D&L visitor center, was struggling economically following a 1990s fire that engulfed part of the downtown. Through CMT assistance, the D&L staff were able to facilitate resolution of some of the town’s post-disaster issues while also forwarding Corridor goals. The assistance came at a critical time; the White Haven Area Community Library was looking for a larger venue, the borough had income from sale of the water company and wanted to create a visitor center, and a local contractor was selling a historic railroad engine house adjacent to a planned trailhead for the D&L Trail. D&L staff members assisted White Haven in holding stakeholder meetings that led to the borough’s purchase of the engine house and a long-term lease for its use by the library and as a visitor center. The Corridor initiative helped to set the engine house within the broader regional story, and community partners came together around a very complex project. The volunteer-run library association secured funding from many sources, including a county bond issue ($200,000), TE funding ($350,000), DCNR ($35,000), a PHMC Keystone Grant ($90,000), and private contributions. Although the D&L staff continues to provide technical advice, the library association has embraced the project and become largely self-sufficient.

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4 More information on Corridor Market Towns can be found at http://www.markettowns.net.

5 States receive Transportation Enhancements (TE) funding as a percentage of their annual Surface Transportation Program appropriation from the Federal Highway Administration. TE funding is reapportioned by each state for local projects that fit within one of 12 eligible categories related to surface transportation improvements. The program, created in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), was reauthorized in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and again in 2005 under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

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Race Street in Jim Thorpe is home to several local artists.
Easton’s Two Rivers Landing Visitor Center

Project description
In 1994, with PHPP funds, the D&L Corridor studied potential locations in Easton for the Corridor’s first “landing” or visitor center. What followed was an extraordinary confluence of events. Easton was suffering economically, but the newly elected mayor had promised downtown revitalization and wanted to build a landing quickly. The president of Binney & Smith, Inc., a Lehigh Valley native, wanted to relocate the Crayola Crayon Discovery Center to downtown Easton as part of a downtown historic redevelopment strategy. As the landing study proceeded, outgoing governor Casey announced the availability of two capital budget programs for redevelopment assistance. An advisor to the governor encouraged the D&L initiative to partner with Binney & Smith and Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums, Inc., to propose a project for a vacant downtown building that would house the Discovery Center, the National Canal Museum (a project of Hugh Moore Park), and a Corridor visitor center. With public support for the proposal, the city purchased an adjacent building and added to the proposal its plan to renovate the building for city offices. The joint project was awarded a $2.8 million capital grant, and when Two Rivers Landing opened on July 4, 1996, Governor Casey welcomed 40,000 visitors at a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Project impacts
In its first year, the landing admitted 138,000 visitors. By 2001, Easton had gained a net of 45 businesses and almost 2,000 new jobs, with 39 new full-time jobs in the landing alone. The city garage was parking 67,000 cars annually, 10 times more than in 1995. Today, Two Rivers Landing, with 300,000 visitors per year, has anchored the redevelopment of downtown Easton, and existing sites have benefited from the increased visitation (e.g., in 1999 Hugh Moore Park experienced a twofold increase in canal boat ridership). While the project required little D&C funding, it put the D&C Corridor “on the map” and demonstrated that the partnership approach to preservation can create economic development.

Corridor partnership investment and leverage
Corridor management: $38,000 for renovations to and exhibits in the National Canal Museum and Corridor visitor center, completion of the landing study, technical assistance and coordination during planning and construction.
Pennsylvania: $2.8 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program Grant.
DCNR: $37,500 for the landing study, $125,000 for the visitor center.
DCA: $187,000.
Binney & Smith, Inc.: $2 million.
Easton Economic Development Corporation Loan Pool: $2.6 million.
City of Easton: funding and project coordination.
Northampton County: $50,000.
Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums, Inc.: $121,000 in fundraising.
Lafayette College: $130,000 for exhibits.

Centre Square in Easton has been a gathering place since the 1700s.
Municipal Assistance for Conservation

Project description
In 2000, DCNR awarded the D&L initiative $30,000 for small local projects that address conservation and preservation goals. The resulting Municipal Assistance for Conservation (MAC) program provides flexible funding for small technical assistance grants (under $5,000) to help Corridor towns develop consensus on projects relating to local conservation and preservation. D&L staff members participate in the dialogue to ensure that residents discuss relevant preservation and conservation issues. In return for D&L assistance, recipient communities must commit to implementing their projects. Corridor management contracts with the Heritage Conservancy (a nonprofit partner) or a private consultant to facilitate stakeholder visioning along with assistance in creating a concept plan or sketch as a foundation for the next phase of the project. This assistance often leads to new design guidelines, streetscape plans, and development of public spaces. When the timing is critical, money and assistance can be obligated quickly through the MAC program to encourage a town to think more broadly prior to submitting a grant application or approving a municipal plan.

Project impacts
The MAC program has enabled the D&L initiative to be more engaged locally and to demonstrate its commitment to small towns in the region. While the program is focused at the local level, the strategy encourages communities to think regionally and empowers them to develop their own projects. In five of the six grant instances to date, a follow-up plan or project has been implemented within six months of completing a concept or action plan.

Corridor partnership investment and leverage
Corridor management: mentoring, technical assistance, and communications expertise; following MAC project completion, limited technical assistance including review of grant applications, networking, and preservation and fundraising advice.
DCNR: $30,000, reallocated by D&L management in amounts up to $5,000.
Heritage Conservancy: $5,000 plus staff expertise.
William Penn Foundation: $5,000.
Recipient communities and organizations: matching funding, hosting public meetings and visioning exercises, project leadership during subsequent planning and implementation activities.

Project description
In the first MAC project, the D&L staff challenged the town of New Hope to think more broadly about the canal heritage and environmental impacts as it considered the future of a public works storage area—the site of a proposed parking lot—adjacent to the canal and the historic Union Camp mill. With $5,000 in MAC funding and D&L staff assistance, the town held a community visioning session that considered the ecological and social impacts of various parking lot alternatives. The concept selected included ecological drainage design principles, plantings of native plants and trees, and a D&L kiosk to orient visitors and interpret the nearby canal. After the visioning, New Hope secured and matched a $333,000 HUD Economic Development Initiative grant to build the facility. New Hope also established a standing revitalization committee, giving the D&L initiative a seat, to foster the development of new projects. In 2003 the project won an award from the Bucks County Audubon Society for its environmentally friendly development.

Project impacts
The MAC program engaged residents in considering conservation values as a part of downtown planning and decision making. The community was able to see itself as part of a larger regional economic development strategy, and, as a result of the visioning process, has embraced the concept of heritage tourism as a way to provide a quality experience for residents and visitors. The project has leveraged several nearby improvements, including a new Canal Cultural Walk that will connect the parking lot to the downtown, renovation of the downtown visitor center, and directional signs to improve pedestrian and traffic circulation, all of which include VSG elements. The walk has received $316,000 in TE funding.
Lehigh Gap and the Wildlife Information Center

Project description
In 2002, the Wildlife Information Center, a small, nonprofit educational and research organization, was interested in purchasing and reclaiming three contaminated parcels along the Kittatinny Ridge for a wildlife refuge and a research and educational facility. The site, which contained three miles of the D&L Trail that was inaccessible under existing ownership, included diverse habitat with forested slopes, ponds and wetlands, cliffs, and savanna. The soil, however, contained toxic quantities of zinc, cadmium, and lead from past zinc smelting, and had been designated a Superfund site by the EPA. Viacom, Inc., the former owner of the smelters, was responsible for the cost of mitigation, but a restoration attempt in the early 1990s had been unsuccessful. The D&L staff provided guidance to the Wildlife Information Center on acquiring the land and helped it to connect with key organizations, including The Nature Conservancy and the Wildlands Conservancy, from which the center received grants and technical assistance for acquiring the land. While the center is a small organization, with some mentoring its staff easily grasped how to do a large-scale project and readily took on new challenges, asking for D&L assistance only when necessary. Following acquisition of the parcels, D&L staff facilitated the design of the Lehigh Gap Wildlife Refuge master site plan, which includes educational and research initiatives and a 15-mile trail network. With assistance from Viacom’s engineers and approvals from the EPA and other agencies, the center laid out 30 demonstration areas using EPA standards for decontaminating brownfields. An inexpensive revegetation strategy using native grasses is being followed to restore the landscape. The site is gradually regaining its habitat value as a stopover site for migratory birds, including raptors and songbirds.

Project impacts
The project integrates multiple nature, recreation, and cultural conservation activities. Adjacent to state game lands, part of a proposed state greenway, and a critical piece of the Lehigh River watershed, the reforested landscape will improve water quality, reduce erosion, and encourage wildlife to return to the ridge. The project provides a useful model for landscape-scale conservation and restoration. Strip mines in the area need similar treatment, and the approach is one that inspires people in spite of the scarred landscape. The project also provides opportunities to link the D&L Trail with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, nearby downtowns and county parks, and rail-trails currently under development. Having completed a $900,000 campaign for land acquisition, the Wildlife Information Center has created an environmental education partnership with neighboring towns, through which it holds monthly educational events, including hawk watches, “HawkFests,” field trips, and open houses.

The D&L Trail/Trail Tenders Program

Project description
A top priority of Corridor management has been to acquire and reconstruct privately owned sections of abandoned rail line in order to complete the entire 165 miles of the D&L Trail. Achieving its goal of 100 percent public access is a challenge, as the Corridor staff must engage with 31 separate landowners. Since 2004, the D&L initiative has provided workshops for trail owners, and future plans are to shift greater responsibility for trail maintenance and monitoring to residents and users of the spine. TE funding of up to $5 million per project has been critical to the acquisition and restoration of some sections, especially in locations where road obstructions require building a pedestrian bridge or tunnel. In addition to acquisition, planning, and construction, the D&L Trail Project includes use of VGS grants for wayfinding and interpretive signage and for promotional events. In 1998, D&L management helped create (and now coordinates) the D&L Trail Tenders, an all-volunteer organization responsible for trail construction and maintenance. In 2005, D&L management hired a full-time staff member to build the Trail Tenders’ capacity and create outreach programming and training on trail maintenance and stewardship. Since 1998, approximately 5,000 Trail Tenders volunteers have participated in trail construction, native plant restoration, general cleanup, archeological preservation and stabilization, and special events and celebrations.

Project impacts
When the Corridor was designated, 80 percent of the spine was publicly accessible; now 98 percent has been secured for public access, and 82 percent of the trail has been completed. The trail is gaining recognition as an economic tool that generates recreation, tourism, and historic preservation activities. Marketing the trail and celebrating the completion of trail segments helps to generate public enthusiasm as the D&L works to complete it.

Corridor partnership investment and leverage

Corridor management: acquisition, planning, and improvement of sections of the D&L Trail, funding for design and installation of interpretive signs, grants for planning, construction, and interpretation of structures including canal boats and lock houses; Trail Tenders coordination, educational programming, and internships.

NPS: interpretation assistance through Visually and Graphically Speaking.

DCNR: funding for a full-time “circuit rider” to coordinate trail construction projects and secure funding and access.

PendDOT: TE funding.

Municipalities: landowners and trail maintenance.

D&L Trail Tenders: almost 30,000 hours of trail construction and maintenance; educational programming.

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Caption needed.
D. Investment and Leverage in the D&L Corridor

As illustrated in the activities highlighted above, financial and other support from a broad range of partners is essential for implementing successful projects and programming. Through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs and the DCNR Heritage Parks Program, the federal and state governments have made critical financial investments in the daily operations of D&L management and in specific projects and programs. Both organizations have also committed other resources, such as staff time and expertise. However, project planning and implementation usually require additional funding and resources beyond those provided through the NPS and DCNR.

NPS and DCNR investments in the Corridor initiative help to generate or “leverage” substantial funding and resources from additional federal, state, local, and private partners, as illustrated in figure 4.2. “Leverage,” used as a verb, refers to the process of obtaining additional financial and/or non-financial commitments beyond the initial investment. “Leverage” can also be used as a noun, in which case it refers to the additional resources that are committed in response to the initial outlay. (Resources that are leveraged are also considered the “match” to the Corridor investment, as required in varying ways for NPS and DCNR funding.) For example, Corridor management invested $5,000 in the White Haven Engine House project, which generated additional funding from the Borough of White Haven, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and PennDOT. Corridor management’s initial investment leveraged additional funding, and that funding is considered leverage.

In implementing the management plan, the Corridor initiative uses both financial and non-financial resources and assets to leverage commitments from others, and these partner commitments can also come in financial and non-financial forms. The next sections explore further the D&L initiative’s leveraging activities, looking (1) leveraging financial resources, (2) leveraging non-financial resources and assets, and (3) indirect leverage.

1. Leveraging financial resources

Since its establishment, Corridor management has documented the funding received from various sources for projects it has helped to facilitate (see figure 4.2). Through fiscal year 2005, the total federal investment of $8.02 million provided through the National Park Service has leveraged nearly 12 times its financial value in direct funding from other sources. State funding totaling $6.59 million through the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program has leveraged more than 14 times its value. As a whole, Pennsylvania state agencies have supplied more than 35 percent of the funding invested in D&L Corridor projects.

These figures reflect funding for projects in which Corridor management had a direct investment and/or a leadership role. Not included are state, federal, and other investments in the region in which Corridor management has been integrally involved but has not played a leadership role. For example, the $9-million Two Rivers Landing project in Easton is included, but related projects (e.g., Easton public square, adjacent public buildings) totaling $7 million are not. Also, the state invests substantial resources through separate mechanisms for management and operations of the Lehigh Gorge and Delaware River state parks, which together account for half the length of the D&L spine. Similarly, the costs associated with maintaining other state parks and game lands within the Corridor’s boundaries are not included in these figures. Figure 3.2 (in chapter 3) illustrates how much the combination of NPS and PHPP funding has leveraged annually since 1990.

Grants administered by D&L management require a match but often leverage many times that amount in other funding and resources. For example, a Corridor Market Towns grant to restore the Jim Thorpe historic train station leveraged 54 times its value in other funding. The grant leveraged non-financial resources (e.g., volunteer time by partners to implement the project) as well. In 2005, the D&L awarded a total of $560,000 in DCNR, DCED, and NPS Heritage Partnership Programs funding. Eight partner grants and 42 CMT façade grants were awarded, which leveraged $11,500,000.

The issue of leverage is complex and warrants a separate study and analysis. Findings from this study are largely descriptive, but could inform future research on this topic.
2. Leveraging non-financial resources and assets

Along with funding, the Corridor partnership uses other assets to secure additional financial and non-financial commitments. The partnership draws on, intentionally or otherwise, the status associated with the NPS and state designations; the connections that various partners have to sources of funding, expertise, and other resources; the region’s history; personal or organizational connections and relationships; and association with the D&L Corridor identity. Sometimes the initiative utilizes its non-financial resources to generate financial commitments from project partners. For example, the involvement of Corridor staff in seeking National Register of Historic Places eligibility for the White Haven Engine House and connecting the library association with funding sources was critical in securing a significant amount of state and federal funding for that project. Sometimes the D&L initiative’s investment of resources leverages non-financial matching commitments including partner staff time, in-kind support, and volunteer time. For example, Corridor management has invested staff time to coordinate the D&L Trail Tenders. This investment has been matched by financial contributions by partners as well as tens of thousands of volunteer hours to improve the D&L Trail. In addition, partners in study interviews described the project and partnership opportunities that the D&L’s ideas, influence, clout, and credibility have created. (See chapter 6 for further discussion.) While it is difficult to quantify the impacts of non-financial investments and leverage, it is important to acknowledge their presence and their influence on the Corridor’s residents and resources.

3. Indirect leverage

Indirect leverage, which exists in both financial and non-financial forms, is created when partners or recipients of assistance from the D&L partnership invest energy, money, and time in new activities as a result of being involved or influenced by an earlier D&L partnership activity. For example, after receiving D&L assistance through the MAC program for its parking lot project, New Hope Borough is now investing money and staff time in creating an interpretive walk to connect the downtown and new heritage attractions with the canal. This investment by the borough in linking its resources and interpreting its history is an example of indirect leverage and demonstrates the ongoing influence of the Corridor partnership’s expertise, vision, and promotion of the canal story.

E. The Corridor’s Influence on the Regional Economy and Heritage Tourism

The complexity and scale of the D&L initiative make it difficult to determine the magnitude of its influence on economic and tourism activity in the region. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the D&L initiative plays an important role in generating regional economic development.

One relevant aspect is the economic impact of heritage-related tourism in the Corridor. In 2005, the D&L Corridor participated with four other national heritage areas in a study to estimate visitor impacts, based on the “Revised Money Generation Model” (or MGM2) used by national parks. This model provides a method for estimating the direct and indirect economic impacts of visitation to communities in heritage areas based on the money that visitors say they spend when they visit the region’s natural, cultural, and historic sites. Data collected from on-site visitor surveys was put through a computer model designed to generate the direct and indirect economic effects of visitation. The following results from the MGM2 analysis for the D&L Corridor are based on an estimated total of 3,876,980 annual visitors in 2005.

Direct effects of visitation within the Corridor:
- $144.5 million in sales
- 2,304 jobs
- $53.3 million in personal income from jobs
- $81.3 in total value added

Indirect effects:
- $236.1 million in sales
- 3,766 jobs
- $87.4 million in personal income from jobs
- $138.3 million in total value added

Direct effects of visitation are based on the direct economic impacts generated by visitor spending. Indirect effects represent the secondary impact of money and jobs on the regional economy. “Total value added” is the sum of personal income, profits and rents, and indirect business taxes generated by visitor sales and added to the local economy. While the extent of the economic impacts of heritage tourism directly attributable to the work of the Corridor initiative has not been established, the results provided above nonetheless demonstrate the clear significance of tourism to the Corridor’s economy.

During this study qualitative data on non-financial leverage was gathered through interviews with staff and project partners.

* Economic Impacts of Visitor Spending in National Heritage Areas. West Chester, PA: Public Works, LLC, in press.
As described in chapter 3, the legislation that established the D&L National Heritage Corridor created a federally authorized management framework to assist public and private partners in protecting and interpreting the region’s heritage resources and fostering compatible economic development. With the existing framework due to expire in 2007, part of the sustainability study involved an examination of the framework’s strengths and challenges as a precursor to considering possible options for the future. This chapter summarizes the findings of that analysis. The analysis draws particularly on meetings and conversations with commissioners, board members of D&L, Inc., and Corridor staff, as well as two focus group dialogues that were held during the study. Additional information on the methods and sources used in the analysis is presented in appendix A.

A. Purpose, Vision, and Mission

The purposes, vision, and mission of the D&L initiative represent a broad and ambitious mandate—integrating interpretation and education, conservation, preservation, recreation, and economic revitalization, with a community-based focus that emphasizes the importance of the region’s heritage and story. This broad mandate, which was directed by Congress in the authorizing legislation, helps to ensure the relevancy of Corridor programs and activities. It also provides a “big tent” for collaborating and building partnerships with diverse organizations and individuals. Moreover, it reflects a conviction that effective heritage conservation and development in the Corridor’s lived-in, working landscape require an integrated approach across multiple disciplines, rather than a more traditional approach that might address each of these concerns independently. This broad yet integrated mandate is a fundamental strength of the D&L initiative.

Corridor participants recognize the importance of the economic development and community revitalization component within the overall mandate. Linking economic development with heritage conservation, recreation, and interpretation can open up a variety of opportunities that might not be available otherwise, such as:

• increasing the connection with local, state, and federal policy and funding priorities;
• bringing in public agencies, businesses, and community organizations that might not see the relevance of a more narrowly focused effort;
• building support for other aspects of the mandate from those who may be primarily or initially focused on economic and community development concerns.

While the Corridor initiative’s broad, integrated mandate is a key strength, it also presents certain challenges. It is a demanding agenda and, coupled with the realities of working through partnerships, it can be difficult and time-consuming to sustain progress on every dimension simultaneously. Moreover, while the Corridor partnership has made considerable progress with limited resources in a relatively short amount of time, it is clear that attaining the integrated vision outlined in the management plan is a long-term proposition. The breadth of the Corridor’s mandate, the inherent challenges of cross-disciplinary work in a lived-in landscape, and the commitment to a partnership-based approach all require sustained energy, expertise, and resources over time if success is to be realized.

B. Geographic Scope

The Corridor’s substantial size and configuration (i.e., encompassing the five counties but with an emphasis on the long, linear spine) are a logical reflection of the nature of the Corridor and to successful implementation of the initiative over time, but also offers some important strengths and opportunities.

The challenges associated with the fact that the Corridor stretches 165 miles through five counties and hundreds of municipalities include:

• logistics (for instance, the inherent difficulty in convening meetings with stakeholders from throughout the Corridor, and the challenge of establishing and maintaining a meaningful staff presence across such a sizeable area);
• differing priorities and competition between different regions, counties, and municipalities;
• the time required to achieve meaningful results in such a large area, especially across all aspects of the Corridor’s broad purposes, vision, and mission.

Hanover Township Canal Park.
As a counterbalance to these challenges, the Corridor’s size offers a variety of strengths from the greater energy, capacity, funding, and political clout that are available through a large regional initiative relative to a smaller one.

The anthracite coal theme offers a potential opportunity for the D&L initiative to link thematically with sites and organizations in the adjacent Lackawanna and Schuylkill national heritage areas, the Steamtown National Historic Site, and other nearby areas (e.g., the Morris Canal across the Delaware River in New Jersey) that are also associated with the anthracite story. While such collaboration could heighten some of the challenges mentioned above, it could enhance the overall interpretation of the story and reinforce some strengths associated with working at a large regional scale. (See chapter 4.)

C. Management Entity

Overall, it appears that the Commission has been quite effective in its role as the Corridor’s management entity, providing coordination and leadership that transcend political boundaries and span the broad scope of activities. Working with diverse public and private partners, and in recent years with its operating partner D&L, Inc., the Commission and its staff have been instrumental to the substantial progress toward Corridor goals and the leveraging of public investments that have occurred over the lifetime of the initiative.

(See chapter 4.) With this record of accomplishment and a perceived high level of professionalism, the Commission and staff have earned widespread respect among their partners and have helped to establish the D&L initiative as a leader in the heritage area movement, both in Pennsylvania and nationwide.

With the management partnership that now exists between the Commission and D&L, Inc., the Corridor initiative effectively has a joint management entity. Having the two organizations working in tandem has created a rather complicated administrative arrangement, but the process of getting the nonprofit up and running and coordinating its relationship with the Commission appears to have been fairly smooth. Most importantly, the combination of the two organizations has provided the Corridor initiative with the strengths and opportunities offered by each.

The Commission’s federal standing provides stature, close, credible, and leveraging ability. Commissioners, staff, and partners note the importance of these attributes to such critical functions as securing funding, obtaining access to and having influence with key players (e.g., decision makers and regulatory agencies), and providing a widely accepted forum that brings diverse partners together. Also, with its legislatively specified representation of key interests, its evenhanded leadership, and its Corridor-wide perspective, the Commission is seen as having an unusual and valuable degree of impartiality that helps to balance more narrowly defined interests.

Meanwhile, as a nonprofit organization, D&L, Inc., is less bureaucratic than the Commission and provides the Corridor initiative with enhanced flexibility and nimbleness in a number of areas, including:

- stakeholder representation (because the composition of the board is at the discretion of its members and not directed by legislation);
- fundraising capacity (because it is more readily able to access private support from individuals, corporations, and foundations and to generate revenue from sources such as real estate investments);
- staffing (because it is not bound by federal hiring procedures or personnel policies);
- longevity (because there is not the specter of a legislated sunset).

Together, the Commission and the board of D&L, Inc., provide more opportunities for the direct involvement of diverse stakeholder interests in the management structure than either could provide on its own. However, the combined membership of both is not overly large given the broad geographic and disciplinary scope of the Corridor initiative.

While these strengths are considerable, the Commission and D&L, Inc., do have certain challenges and limitations. In particular, the Commission has struggled throughout its existence with what has been widely perceived to be a trying, time-consuming, and politically challenging appointment process through the federal government. The frustrations associated with this process have led many commissioners and some staff members to question whether the benefits of having a federal Commission are worth that effort. The Commission also has had difficulties with other administrative aspects of its federal status (for instance, regarding financial management and staffing), but these difficulties have eased as D&L, Inc., has taken on more responsibilities and other adjustments have been made. With respect to challenges associated with D&L, Inc., there is the potential for competition for funding and/or programming with other nonprofits that are working toward Corridor goals. Such competition, whether real or perceived, may be threatening to those other nonprofits, and could make it more difficult to build and sustain effective partnerships with them.
The staff that serves the Commission and D&L, Inc., has clearly been an important factor in the success of the initiative thus far. The staff is hard-working, and has a number of attributes that are well-suited to the challenges presented by the Corridor initiative’s broad mandate and partnership approach. These include an extensive knowledge of the Corridor, good relationships with key players, technical expertise, political savvy, energy, commitment, opportunism, skill at building connections across the diverse aspects of Corridor’s vision and mission, and the ability to do a lot with limited resources. Also, the staff has grown very adept at capitalizing on leverage opportunities. In general, the staff’s ability to navigate the highly complex, dynamic partnership system and integrate state and federal initiatives with the needs of other partners is one of the Corridor initiative’s greatest current strengths.

The most significant limitation associated with the staff appears to be its small size relative to the geographic scale of the Corridor, the breadth of its mandate, and the number of existing and potential partners. There is general acknowledgment among Corridor participants that the staff is stretched thin, although opinions vary about whether this is a priority for action or how best to address it.

Two other important factors in the D&L’s success to date have been the consistently strong composition of the Commission and the board of D&L, Inc., and the sustained participation by a number of key individuals (including certain commissioners, board members, and staff) who have provided continuity and institutional knowledge. With respect to composition, in addition to ensuring the representation of key stakeholders as directed by the authorizing legislation, the Commission has had an effective mix of members with diverse and complementary skills, perspectives, and connections. The board of D&L, Inc., is similarly strong, and has expanded the circle of well-qualified individuals that are now involved in Corridor management. The sustained involvement of key individuals has had important benefits for partnership-building, leveraging, working effectively with key officials, maintaining a focus on the Corridor mandate, and learning from experience. The downside is that the Corridor initiative has become somewhat dependent on a handful of key individuals who will not be involved forever. With these factors in mind, it will be important for the Commission and D&L, Inc., to continue to recruit and nurture new leaders with the necessary qualifications to help carry the initiative forward and build on past accomplishments.

**D. Partners**

Involving a wide range of partners from the public and private sectors is a fundamental aspect of the heritage area model, and much of the D&L initiative’s success to date has been due to the committed participation over time of many different organizations and individuals. Although relationships with certain partners have varied over the lifetime of the initiative, overall the D&L partnership appears to have functioned well and achieved far more than any of the partner entities or Corridor management could have achieved alone. The involvement of key partners in the D&L is examined further below, organized according to the different partner categories identified in chapter 3.

1. **State government**

As the lead state agency for the D&L initiative, DCNR has been a critical anchoring connection. Each facet of DCNR’s involvement in the Corridor has contributed significantly to the accomplishments to date: its financial and other support through the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program, its management of Lehigh Gorge and Delaware Canal state parks, its technical assistance and grant programs for conservation and recreation initiatives, and its participation as a member of the Commission. DCNR has also played an important coordinating and catalytic role with other state agencies and partners. The agency’s support for the Corridor initiative has been consistently strong, both from a funding standpoint and with respect to its working relationships. This is in part due to the sustained involvement of key staff members who understand and endorse the breadth of the Corridor mandate, and who have consistently worked within the system to further its success. Also, there is a fundamental alignment between many of DCNR’s statewide priorities (as articulated most recently in its 2004 action agenda entitled “Shaping a Sustainable Pennsylvania”) and those of the Corridor initiative. This includes a mutual emphasis on landscape-scale conservation, partnerships with the public and private sectors on planning and implementation, and promotion of compatible economic development and community well-being.

While DCNR’s involvement is widely acknowledged by Corridor participants to have been overwhelmingly positive, a few considerations have been raised that are worth noting in light of its important role. First, there is concern that DCNR’s support may not be assured in the future after key staff retire. Also, there is a perception of some internal competition between the Heritage Parks Program and other aspects of DCNR’s operations, and a sense that some in DCNR do not fully recognize or understand the complementarity between heritage parks and the rest of DCNR’s mission. These concerns are heightened by the lack of an underlying legislative framework for the state’s Heritage Parks Program. In addition, like all government agencies DCNR’s priorities continue to evolve, most recently with less emphasis being placed on the integrated approach of heritage development and more on open space, greenways, and trails. Given DCNR’s anchoring role, such policy changes have implications for the Corridor partnership and its own priorities and strategies. On a more technical level, some Corridor participants noted the complexity of certain DCNR grant processes (such as the Community Conservation Partnership Program, or “C2P2”), which has discouraged some partners from seeking funding through these mechanisms.

Other state agencies have also made important contributions to the Corridor initiative. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the Department of Community and Economic Development have participated in Corridor management through their seats on the Commission since its establishment, and each has been actively involved in various on-the-ground activities. (One good example is the Corridor Market Towns program, which, as described in chapter 4, has received essential financial and technical support from Dced and is seen as a model for other areas across the state.) Also, PennDOT has provided substantial funding and staff support to a variety of transportation-related projects that have furthered Corridor goals. At a broader level, Corridor participants suggest that the involvement of multiple state agencies (those mentioned above as well as others that have played somewhat lesser roles) creates opportunities for synergy and integration that extend beyond the normal purview of each agency individually, with the possibility of more substantial positive outcomes as a result.

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1 Prior to DCNR’s establishment in 1995, the Department of Community Affairs played a similar anchoring role on behalf of the state. DCA’s support was instrumental in the Corridor Initiative’s formative stages leading up to and following its national designation.
There also have been challenges and unfulfilled opportunities associated with the involvement of other state agencies in the Corridor initiative. Some participants hope for PHMC to play a greater leadership role given the close alignment between PHMC’s mission and many aspects of the Corridor initiative’s mandate and activities. Also, there is a perception that there may be a need and an opportunity to more fully engage DCED in Corridor activities, and to further reinforce the importance of the economic development and community revitalization component of the Corridor mandate. Some participants cite challenges in working with the complexity of PennDOT programs, which in certain instances has contributed to lost momentum and diminished confidence regarding promising projects. For instance, the broader scope of transportation enhancement programs since the early 1990s has provided Corridor partners with an expanded opportunity to complete the D&L Trail. While PennDOT has been supportive of this vision and generous with transportation enhancement funding, the complexities of the TE program and differences in working with three independent district offices are confusing and sometimes frustrating. Also, the lack of a statewide wayfinding system has prevented the D&L partnership from implementing a Corridor-wide wayfinding system.

More generally, there is no explicit consultation and consistency requirement for state agencies similar to that required for federal agencies. Establishing such a requirement could be a helpful means for ensuring that all state actions are in keeping with Corridor goals.

2. Federal government

As has been the case with DCNR at the state level, the NPS has been the critical anchoring connection for the D&L initiative at the federal level dating back to before its national designation. The Corridor’s connection to the NPS provides stature, credibility, and a valuable association with the widely recognized and respected NPS “brand.” The NPS affiliation reinforces the national significance of the D&L region and its story in the eyes of partners, residents, and visitors. Meanwhile, NPS staff assistance has provided important technical expertise and capacity, particularly for the Corridor’s early planning and subsequent interpretive activities. Federal funding provided through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs has been critical for Corridor operations and management plan implementation. This funding, and NPS involvement more generally, is seen as an important factor in leveraging support and participation by others. The impact of NPS involvement in the Corridor has been amplified because its contributions have been complemented by the strong, sustained support provided by DCNR.

However, it should be noted that NPS support for the Corridor and its working relationships with the Commission and other partners have varied over time. Many study participants recounted their frustration at various times in the Corridor’s history with certain aspects of NPS administration, including personnel procedures and requirements and the administration of federal funds for the Corridor. The Commission has sought to alleviate these problems by conducting personnel management initially through a nonprofit Corridor partner and now D&L, Inc., and by asking the General Services Administration to administer the Corridor’s federal funds. In addition, some aspects of the interpretive assistance provided by NPS personnel who worked with the Corridor initiative were not always embraced by the more established partners. For instance, some Corridor participants noted what they perceived to be inflexibility regarding issues of Corridor/partner identity and a resistance to the interpretive standards of others if they differed from those of NPS. While this issue was related in part to the involvement of NPS personnel, it is important to note that it was also tied to the broader challenge inherent in integrating the long-standing approaches of established partner organizations with the newer overarching programs of the Corridor initiative.

Other federal agencies have made important contributions with commitments of substantial funding and other assistance to Corridor projects—for instance, the Environmental Protection Agency’s involvement in clean-up and mitigation of the Superfund site at Lehigh Gap (as described in chapter 4), the Army Corps of Engineers’ support for interpretive signage on the Wyoming Valley Levee Trail (also described in chapter 4), and the Federal Highway Administration’s funding for a variety of transportation projects under the TEA-21 program. However, there appears to have been less engagement of other federal agencies as compared to similar situations elsewhere. Some Corridor partners note that there have been challenges in working with federal agencies.
This absence of secure, relatively predictable funding presents challenges, both for year-to-year activities and for longer-term considerations such as strategic planning, implementation of multiyear projects, and staff retention. Another important aspect of the NPS and DCNR funding is that they work in complementary ways. With the exception of its grants for heritage park management, DCNR funding through the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program is more restrictive than NPS funding because it is awarded for specific implementation projects and programs. In contrast, the NPS funding can be used for... rely on a combination of funding from both sources to get started and to leverage support from other sources.

Regardless, there may be value in working to cultivate relationships with key staff from relevant federal agencies (including those mentioned above and possibly the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Geological Survey) to open opportunities for future collaboration toward Corridor goals.

It is also important to note that, although the Commission has used it relatively infrequently, the consultation and consistency requirement for all federal agencies in the Corridor’s authorizing legislation is an important tool for ensuring that all federal actions are in keeping with Corridor goals.

3. Municipal and county government

The five counties and dozens of municipalities within the Corridor have been essential to the success of the initiative to date. Much of the work toward Corridor goals occurs at the local level, and the counties and municipalities provide vital on-the-ground capacity for managing and maintaining key resources, such as parks that encompass significant parts of the spine.

Local and county governments have also contributed important financial and political support, and their investments have helped to leverage additional contributions from others. The multitude of local jurisdictions in the Corridor makes it challenging for Corridor management to be consistently aware of and responsive to the needs and circumstances of each municipality. It is difficult to build and sustain effective relationships with so many different entities, particularly given the frequent turnover among elected officials and staff at the local level. In addition, many municipalities have very limited resources in terms of funding and staff and intense competing demands. There is often considerable competition and a lack of communication even among neighboring municipalities and among regions within the Corridor. These factors combine to present a significant challenge to developing and sustaining a consistent, effective local stewardship strategy across the Corridor. Among other things, time, patience, and sustained attention will be crucial to achieving further success at the local level.

4. Nongovernmental partners

Nongovernmental partners in the D&L region (including nonprofit organizations, businesses, and local citizens) have been an indispensable component of the Corridor partnership system and its accomplishments thus far. They complement and enhance the work of the Commission, D&L, Inc., and governmental partners, and provide crucial energy, capacity, financial resources, other support (such as volunteers), and advocacy on behalf of Corridor goals and initiatives.

The capacity of the D&L’s nonprofit partners varies widely. Some are well-established and financially stable, with sufficient staff to pursue their missions effectively while also contributing toward Corridor goals; others struggle on a shoestring and are less able to make a significant impact. This variability in capacity requires Corridor staff to be adaptable in working with different organizations. Many Corridor participants agree on the need for additional attention to building partner capacity and leadership.

The sheer abundance of existing and potential nongovernmental partners presents an ongoing challenge to Corridor management in establishing and sustaining effective relationships. Given the Corridor’s size and the breadth of its mandate, there will always be more potential nongovernmental partners than could become engaged in Corridor activities.

E. Funding and Other Forms of Support

The substantial and sustained contributions of funding and other support from diverse public and private sources has been a fundamental strength of the D&L initiative and a significant reason for its success to date. The degree of state support, particularly through DCNR but also from other agencies, is noteworthy relative to that provided to similar initiatives elsewhere in the country.

The substantial federal funds appropriated through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs and state funds appropriated through the DCNR Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program have been essential in supporting the operations of the Commission (and now D&L, Inc.), and advancing specific activities related to management plan implementation. By supporting both of these indispensable aspects of the Corridor initiative, the NPS and DCNR funds have been invaluable in helping to leverage substantial contributions (both financial and non-financial) from other partners. In many instances, a comparatively small investment of NPS and/or DCNR funds for visioning, scoping, planning, or staff support has resulted in contributions many times larger from other sources. (See chapters 4 and 6 for further discussion of this leverage.)

However, neither of these essential funding sources is assured year-to-year or over the longer term. This is due to the lack at both state and federal levels of (1) secure “base” funding for the D&L initiative itself, and (2) broader legislative authorization for the heritage area programs.
Many Corridor communities exhibit pedestrian friendly amenities that respect local history.

Chapter 6
Evaluating the D&L Partnership System: The Partner Perspective

This chapter focuses on understanding how the D&L partnership system operates from the perspective of Corridor partners. In other words, how do Corridor partners work with the Commission, D&L, Inc., and Corridor staff to deliver the accomplishments described in chapter 4? In what ways do Corridor programs, activities, and investments have an impact on partners (i.e., organizations and communities) in the D&L region? Are there opportunities for strengthening or improving the D&L partnership system in the future?

To explore these issues, the sustainability study team conducted research designed to understand how the Corridor initiative works from the perspective of D&L partners. Thirty partners were interviewed, including representatives from the business community, municipal governments, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community leadership. Some of these partners have been connected with the Corridor initiative for many years, while others are new. The interviews were done in a highly confidential manner.

In the discussion that follows, the findings are presented in two broad categories: perceived strengths and perceived challenges.

A. Perceived Strengths

Analysis of interview data revealed four interconnected themes that characterize the perceived strengths of the Corridor partnership: (1) shared heritage: linking people to place; (2) collaborative framework; (3) anchoring connections; and (4) building a partner network.

1. Shared heritage: linking people to place

The notion of shared heritage serves to link people to place in the D&L region. In this way, shared heritage is an important organizing concept for the Corridor initiative's investments and programming. This theme is defined by the following subthemes: (a) a story to tell, (b) thematic boundaries, and (c) a context for civic and community engagement.

a. A story to tell

Corridor partners emphasized the importance of preserving and telling the D&L heritage story. The story describes the rise, decline, and subsequent legacy of the Industrial Revolution in the D&L region. It acknowledges the impacts that this experience has had on the region's human and natural communities, while creating a meaningful context for Corridor programs and activities. One Corridor partner said it this way:

“Well, we’re the result of the Industrial Revolution...The pollution that damaged the mountainsides was a direct result of the zinc smelting. And we’re [now] dealing with the aftermath in terms of the pollution. But, we have worked hard to spotlight all of the positive things that the zinc companies did for our communities as well. So we’re helping to tell that historical story and our current place in it, and that’s extremely vital to what we’re doing.

For some partners, the Corridor’s heritage story links geographically dispersed communities together. In this way, the story has the potential to serve as a platform for collaboration between communities and municipalities. For many partners, Corridor activities create the impetus for collaboration by providing a regional and integrated perspective:

“Well, I think the D&L: has awakened the area to the cultural, historic, and natural resources that are here. And as a result, they have had a tremendous impact. Without the Corridor, there would be far less happening in those areas...There are historical societies and there are organizations like ours that would still be doing things, but without the D&L, they would be on a lesser scale and also not connected in any way with each other. The D&L has brought it all together, so to speak.

Several partners underscored the value in working with the Corridor initiative because of its ability to connect the story to local resources. In this sense, the story helps to create community development opportunities by giving meaning

1 See appendix B for a full discussion of the research methodologies employed in this chapter.

2 In this chapter only, “D&L” and “Corridor” are used in a generic way to refer to the Corridor initiative and staff, reflecting local and partner terminology.
and texture to manufacturing infrastructure that may not otherwise be economically viable. One study participant described it like this: “We’re selling heritage—the concepts of heritage, history, and legacy. This project will transform our heritage into something that works for us, while respecting and valuing what it had been in the past. We’ll be perpetuating the whole heritage aspect [of this place] through the restoration and redevelopment of this site.”

b. Thematic boundaries

Many partners emphasized the fact that the D&L’s heritage and key interpretive themes transcend existing political and administrative boundaries. This encourages diverse partners across a spectrum of organizations because Corridor goals and activities reflect thematic interests rather than political agendas. As a result, Corridor management has become a relevant partner to a variety of nonprofit, business, and governmental entities because of its thematic focus. One Corridor partner explained it in these terms:

“No other organization has the ability to transcend boundaries right now the way that the D&L does. And the Corridor’s boundaries are thematic rather than political, it really is a very powerful tool for organizing these [efforts].”

For other partners, the thematic focus of Corridor programs and investments is instrumental in creating the necessary momentum for change. Some study participants described the direct ways that heritage can help build “political will” with community residents:

“To preserve what you have, you need hooks. We certainly want to take advantage of our heritage and not lose it. It kind of brings people together because everybody that’s from this area has the same basic past. I believe one of the ways to get consensus...is to look for places where people can agree, and build on that. “Heritage” is one of those places.”

Working with the federal and state governments to get a lot of these abandoned mines filled, rehabilitated, and reclaimed in conjunction with trying to revitalize the downtown communities, Wilks emphasized the D&L’s expertise and help, “We’ve come a long way. Today a lot of these communities look a thousand percent better.”

For other partners, heritage serves as a vehicle for engaging culturally diverse communities around a common set of goals. Working with the Corridor initiative has helped to identify the common ground that is essential for implementing community-based efforts. One local leader reflected on it like this:

“I use heritage a lot to leverage good feelings about the community, and when I say “heritage,” I include the D&L, my thinking. Heritage has important value for the community and what we have here is just outstanding — it includes Lebanese, Italian, African American, Jewish, Scotch, and Irish influences, to name a few. So we use all that. We like to talk about that because it gives people value in their lives, we believe, and it gets people empowered. I also believe that [understanding] heritage is part of the process for improving neighborhoods. Talking about our heritage not only engages community members in conversations, it gets results on the street when they know that they’re helping to improve and protect the heritage of our community.”

Some study participants described how working with Corridor programs and staff has helped to connect “young people to our past.” Other study participants noted that the “historical and regional context” provided by Corridor programming was essential in creating energy for large-scale, ecological restoration activities. Ultimately, heritage engagement may be about fostering a sense of pride and place. The Corridor initiative can play an increasingly vital role in the D&L region by telling the story of this landscape. One long-time Corridor partner reflected on it like this:

“Well, [heritage] is a strong way of connecting the residents of a community to the resources by telling the story. In the anthracite region it’s a sense of pride. There are so many negatives associated with the scarring of the landscape and the historical abuse of our service and the support this country to find work. But [heritage] is a way of connecting the history of individuals and their families and their ethnicity to the region to tell the story, which makes it extremely compelling. It benefits not only the residents of an area, but connects the story to families, friends, and visitors.”

2. Collaborative framework

Interview data suggest that the Corridor initiative serves as a framework for collaboration. This framework provides the opportunity and mechanisms for different organizations to develop partnerships in the D&L region. This theme is defined by the following subthemes: (a) a shared mission, (b) cultivating partnerships, and (c) vision and leadership.

a. A shared mission

Much of the Corridor initiative’s value lies in its ability to engage a diverse set of partners in developing a shared mission for the region. In doing so, Corridor staff have helped residents find areas of mutual interest while facilitating dialogue between town officials, the business community, nonprofit organizations, state and federal government agencies, and a host of other partners. Study participants use words like “facilitator,” “connector,” “networker,” and “nucleus” when describing the Corridor in this capacity. One local official explained the Corridor’s impact like this:

“We are building the D&L’s heritage narrative. The Corridor has broadened my horizons and given me other things to look at and think about. In many instances, participation in this dialogue encourages organizations to redeline or readjust their ways of working. There are numerous examples in which participants talk about ways in which Corridor programs have “broadened” their perspective. While individual organizations, partnerships, and government agencies may still pursue their own objectives, these stakeholders are beginning to recognize the strategic advantages in working across multiple interests. One study participant reflected on it like this:

“Initially I was a bit resistant to the federal government coming in...I was also not sure another fire drill. This type of thing had happened so often in the past. Now, after nearly two years, they’re still providing the service and the support that we thought should come out of this kind of program, but so far doesn’t. So, I’ve grown to appreciate them much more. I’ve grown to understand what they can do for us, and what we can do for them. And the partnership has grown as a result. We’re now attacking some of these long-term issues from multiple angles and we’re moving in the same direction. I have come to embrace the Corridor and I know what they can do for us. We now offer help to them wherever we can.”

Over time, these kinds of collaborative relationships may alter the way in which organizations and community leaders think about the future of the D&L region. For many organizations, their vision is now an inclusive, partnership-based approach that integrates economic revitalization, community development, and natural and cultural resource stewardship.
b. Cultivating partnerships

The Corridor initiative is unique in the D&L region, and the combination of its regional focus and integrated approach creates opportunities for robust partnerships. A number of study participants noted that having an entity (i.e., the Commission and now also D&L, Inc.) dedicated specifically to partnership building has been very effective. For some organizations, working with Corridor management has enhanced their ability to work in partnership while empowering them to think boldly.

The D&L opened up a wider world of opportunity. [Working with the D&L] allows you to be more daring, to create the proper net, or environment, for partnership building. The opportunities [created] by the Corridor allow you to think more expansively. You can be more daring, bigger, and better than what you could have been [on your own].

For some partners, Corridor programs simply provide coordination in what otherwise might be seen as a disarming and fragmented organisational environment. This provides smaller partners with the opportunity to connect their efforts with broader Corridor goals and initiatives. One study participant described the impact on her work this way:

We have seen a necessity to have the kind of coordination and collaboration that the D&L provides. The things that we need to do on a local front are often in sync with the goals of the D&L initiative. We discovered that working together gives us results.

Over time, Corridor programs and activities help build trust within large and diverse partner community. As levels of trust increase, relationships that initially developed around specific projects evolve into long-term, strategic connections that integrate local goals into a region-wide vision. One study participant reflected on his connection to the Corridor like this:

Initially we were not quite sure what their role was, but as we got to know them we gained a better understanding. Our trust level has increased dramatically and with that, of course, you get better communication and greater interpersonal relationships. And then you start building on that, and it extends, certainly not only to our organization, but also to the other organizations in the area. So now I think of it as a partnership and a cooperative relationship. Our project is only part of the whole effort, so, as much as we can, we support their initiatives on community-wide and region-wide levels.

c. Vision and leadership

Nearly every study participant noted the role that the D&L staff plays in the Corridor initiative. Many study participants used words like “vision” and “leadership” when discussing the contributions of the Corridor staff to programs and projects. There is a strong sense among study participants that individuals on the Corridor staff “make a difference.” One study participant described the impact on his organization like this:

It was unheard of to do what they did, and it was really thinking outside the box. Our organization, as much as we’ve always done, doesn’t always do so. However, working with the Corridor forced us because of their strong desire and push to do it. Knowing that the Corridor staff has the ability to think creatively really forced us to think outside the box.

For other study participants, the Corridor staff serves as a kind of “critical friend,” providing vision and leadership in making major decisions. As one study participant described it, community-based efforts play in the Corridor’s regional mission. One study participant described the process like this:

I don’t think I realized the importance of the role that they would play in helping us to develop our project. Because of their initiative, talent, and great people, they have really generated an awful lot of [energy for us]. I didn’t expect that. In the beginning, I wasn’t sure how we would be a part of their big puzzle, and I didn’t even know what I was doing. But now this partnership has developed, which allows me to call them at any time and say, “What about this?” or “We’re trying to accomplish this, what do you think of it?” It’s just great rapport that we have.

Perhaps most importantly, Corridor staff help navigate a complex sea of state, federal, nonprofit, and private entities for many partners. One local official described the Corridor’s role as providing “gentle guidance.” Another local leader explained that the Corridor’s commitment to a “transparent process” was essential for sustaining their joint efforts. Study findings like these suggest that working successfully in multidimensional partnership environments requires a special kind of organizational culture and leadership philosophy. Another local official described it this way:

Well, with my long past in working with different government agencies, it’s easy for me to be negative at times. However, working with the Del, was very positive for me personally. And that’s probably because of the individuals involved at all levels of their organization. They’re willing to help. If there’s something that has to be explored or looked into, you know they get it done. In this regard, they have exceeded my expectations. Sometimes when you have to work through the bureaucratic maze of government, you feel like a little mouse running around a maze. It can be tough. In this case, much of that maze was real simple because they had a path.

3. Utilizing the Corridor’s anchoring connections

As discussed in chapter 5, the Corridor initiative is anchored by relationships with key state and federal entities (specifically DCNR and NPS). Interview data indicate that these anchoring connections are essential. They enable the Corridor initiative to connect levels of government and leverage additional investments throughout the D&L region, while serving as important brokers in connecting the public/private partnership that defines the Corridor initiative.

This theme is defined by the following subthemes: (a) integrated synergy, (b) branding and credibility, and (c) a catalyst for leverage.

a. Integrated synergy

The Corridor management’s ability to work between various levels of government is precisely what enables communities to play meaningful roles in the Corridor partnership system. In this way, the Corridor creates opportunities for integrating agency (state and/or federal) initiatives with municipal and community needs. One state official explained it like this:

They’ve brought together various state and federal agencies to provide assistance to the smaller municipalities and regions that would not otherwise have the capacity, knowledge, or networking to tap into [existing state and federal] resources. The Corridor has had tremendous impact in these small communities in terms of development dollars and capacity building.

b. Branding and credibility

Many study participants commented on the value that state and federal heritage designations bring to the region as well as to their specific organizational objectives. In this way, relationships with key state and federal entities reinforce the branding and credibility already associated with Corridor activities. One member of the business community described it in these terms:

The fact that the National Park Service has been involved in the creation and management of the Corridor has helped to add legitimacy to the individual projects that we have undertaken…The
The designations [also] give us a certain level of credibility. Being able to say that this is a national heritage corridor and that the story of our community is of national import has put our history into a larger context. And it says that this context is important enough to the history of the state, and the nation, that you need to pay attention.

For other partners, the designations underscore the Corridor region’s heritage-based identity and brand. One community partner likened heritage corridor designation to having an “extra gold star.” Another partner referred to it like this:

Our community sits between several major destinations, and, while we have a rich industrial history, we have never been known as a tourism destination. It gives us an opportunity to have a theme, and it gives us an opportunity to be associated with some of the other, better known destinations in the region.

The value of heritage designation means different things to different partners. Despite these differences, most partners interviewed felt that the state and federal designations communicate that Corridor programs, activities, and objectives add value to the region. One community partner reflected on it like this:

Members of the D&L staff have participated in numerous meetings where we’ve had people from different bureaus in the state, local politicians, and folks from business and industry. The Corridor has been very valuable as an external source that has validated our place in history. The D&L National Heritage Corridor is recognized and respected, and their support is powerful. Their support has really helped validate us.

c. A catalyst for leverage

There is a strong sense among study participants that Corridor investments and activities have leveraged resources throughout the D&L region. As noted in chapter 5, DCNR and NPS anchor the Corridor initiative in part by providing flexible funding that can be applied to a range of Corridor needs. In many instances, Corridor management is able to direct these funds in ways that have attracted substantial amounts of additional money. This kind of direct, financial leverage happens because Corridor investments enable preliminary visions, scoping, planning, and staff support. These investments serve as the foundation for building robust public/private partnerships that, in turn, leverage additional resources. One member of the business community described the process like this:

The D&L was able to come in and provide the seed money to start the planning [for this project]. This allowed the local community to work with planners and professionals to begin to look at how we could pull this project together. Ultimately, through the D&L’s facilitation, this project tied this site’s natural and historic resources together. Once that happened, we were able to bring in other partners. The initial D&L contribution of $2,000 leveraged a $400,000 public investment from other federal sources, which ultimately leveraged a $60,000,000 private development. So, dollar for dollar, there’s no greater ratio in terms of leveraging. The D&L’s a good entity to work with because they understand the importance of bringing all those people together.

Along with leveraging financial resources, Corridor programs can also leverage non-financial investments (such as in-kind contributions and volunteer support) and ideas throughout the D&L partnership system. While it is difficult to quantify, this kind of leverage is important because it creates opportunities for new partnerships and projects while generating momentum for moving existing initiatives forward:

Although the Two Rivers project wasn’t all Corridor money, it was the Corridor’s idea that basically was the catalyst. That’s probably the biggest thing that happened, and I think it made everybody else aware of what [resources] we have.

Finally, Corridor activities help to build “organizational capital” within the D&L partnership system. Many study participants noted that their initial experience in working with the Corridor exceeded their expectations. As a result, these organizations are more likely to work in partnership towards Corridor goals in the future. One study participant described it this way:

Our first joint project wasn’t very sexy in terms of preservation, but it was very important because it addressed many issues in the borough. This project also created a good story, which allowed me to pursue [heritage preservation] projects in other communities. Ultimately, my successful relationship with the D&L springboarded other opportunities down the road. For example, right now, our company is trying to purchase an old powerhouse building that was built back in the late 1800s. It’s literally located on the Delaware Canal... We want to preserve it, enhance it, and make the canal part of that development. I doubt I’d be thinking that as strongly today if not for my relationship with the D&L initiative.

4. Building a partner network

Many Corridor activities and investments have been directed at building a network of partners. The Corridor initiative’s ability to achieve its long-term goals depends significantly on the strength and effectiveness of this partner network. This theme is defined by the following subthemes: (a) partner capacity; (b) partnership system navigator; and (c) key network factors

a. Partner capacity

According to many study participants, Corridor programs play important roles in building the capacity of partner organizations. Capacity building can come in many forms. For some organizations, capacity refers to their actual ability to do project work. One study participant described the impact that Corridor efforts had on his organization’s ability to do work like this:

I want to be truthful about this—I don’t want to over-praise them because you’re doing an assessment. But my gut feeling is that the Corridor is probably essential as far as networking throughout this region. Had they not been here, we would not have accomplished some of the things that we have. I really feel that way. They’ve provided support where we’ve been unable to complete a project. In one of our projects, they’ve provided us with some help, and they’ve been able to take on a portion of the work that we would otherwise have been unable to accomplish. They were the “go-to” people here, and they really came through in that respect.

For other organizations, capacity building refers to efforts aimed at improving organizational management and operations. Many partner organizations are small nonprofits that may lack...
B. Perceived Challenges

Analysis of study data revealed five issues that are perceived by Corridor partners as the primary challenges facing the D&L initiative: (1) the spine, (2) partner capacity, (3) Corridor geography and size, (4) institutional barriers, and (5) network redundancy. The remainder of this chapter discusses these issues.

1. The Spine

Several study participants expressed concern over what they perceived to be a lack of progress toward completing the spine (the recreational trail that connects the entire length of the Corridor along the canals). For some of these partners, the Corridor represents primarily a recreational resource, and their involvement in the D&L partnership system is defined around recreation-related issues. Completion of the trail is essential for these Corridor partners because it will physically link the entire Corridor and enable them to market a unique, heritage-based recreational experience. One study participant described it in these terms:

If the spine was a completed entity, we could talk much more about the Crayola factory or other things down in Allentown because to get there you've got to get off the spine and in the car and drive there. I don't see in my mind how to market this thing because it's incomplete. If the spine was done, we could draw a big picture and say, "Hey, you can visit this whole area, and you can see this, this, this, and this," and see how connections between the Lehigh Valley, the Poconos, [and] the other counties.

2. Capacity of Corridor partners

A number of study participants noted that, as Corridor partners, their organizations often lack the capacity for the growing workload of the D&L partnership. While study findings suggest that many Corridor programs have helped to address this issue, partner capacity continues to be perceived as a significant challenge of the current D&L partnership system. One partner explained it like this:

We're just a little organization. We have great support but we're all volunteers. Nobody gets paid one penny. I put in nearly a thousand volunteer hours a year and managing this is getting to be a full-time job. It's getting to be a big problem.

3. Corridor geography and size

Several study participants referenced Corridor size and geography as challenges for the D&L partnership system. For some, interpreting the Corridor's story and linking Corridor themes in a consistent way across such a large landscape has proven difficult. For others, the sheer size of the area means that it will take more time, energy, investment, and organizational capacity to achieve long-term Corridor goals and objectives. The delay of key projects can pressure the D&L partnership system in undesirable ways. One study participant reflected on it like this:

What seems to be a challenge that we all face, is that sometimes it takes so long to get things done. And that's frustrating. We'd like to see things happen or we think the government is doing it, but we can point to results and let people enjoy the product.

4. Institutional barriers

A number of study participants reported that institutional barriers can impede the work of the Corridor initiative in significant ways. Some study participants expressed a feeling of an overwhelming amount of "red tape" and "paperwork" associated with certain projects. Other study participants felt that not all of the government agencies play the role that they should in order to play or share a commitment to seeing Corridor projects succeed. Like the issues of geography and size (discussed above), institutional barriers may compete with existing partners for already scarce resources. Other partners noted consequences in terms of mission, purpose, and focus among several organizations in the current Corridor partnership system. Although some redundancy may provide stability to the partnership system, the challenge is to develop sufficient redundancy for stability while not duplicating efforts or consuming resources. One partner explained it like this:

I'm very keen on the idea that there may be an opportunity for a closer relationship among our organizations. Each organization does something different but they're related. I think in terms of programs or interagency relationships, we might be a lot stronger doing them together.
SECTION III: THE FUTURE OF THE D&L CORRIDOR

Chapter 7

Identifying Critical Ingredients for Sustained Success

Earlier chapters of this report describe Corridor accomplishments and leverage, examine the existing management framework, and discuss the strengths and challenges of the D&L partnership system from the perspective of Corridor partners. Building on the findings from these components, this chapter identifies critical ingredients for sustaining and enhancing the D&L partnership system in the future. These ingredients represent a diverse array of inputs and processes that interact with and support each other to make possible the accomplishments and outcomes of the Corridor initiative. Put another way, these ingredients act in concert to create success and sustain the partnership work in the Corridor. It is important to note that while most of the ingredients are already in place, not all are yet fully realized (e.g., secure, sustainable funding). The critical ingredients are divided into four categories:

- structuring the partnership system
- guiding the partnership system
- cultivating the partnership system
- considering time in the partnership system

A. Structuring the Partnership System

The anchoring state and federal government connections provided by the DCNR and the NPS are extremely important to the stability and sustainability of the D&L partnership system. These two partners have played critical and complimentary roles in the Corridor partnership for a long time—the DCNR since it was formed in 1993 and the NPS since the Corridor’s formative stages. They provide credibility and reinforce the importance of the Corridor initiative for partners and communities. Other state and federal agencies play important roles in project support and implementation. Working in tandem with the anchoring agencies and the other agencies is an effective management entity that is charged with “stewarding” the mission. Public- and private-sector partners, other stakeholders, communities, and local residents perceive this entity (as even-handed and nonpartisan, possessing clout and credibility and inspiring respect). Another vital component of the system is the network of partners who must have sufficient capacity to carry out projects and take on leadership roles over time. Other critical structural ingredients include secure, stable funding from diverse sources and the ability to leverage funds, resources, and ideas. It is important to note that the ability to leverage derives primarily from the funding and participation of the two anchoring state and federal partners.

B. Guiding the Partnership System

The Corridor’s broad, integrated vision provides an overarching framework for collaboration that welcomes the diversity of D&L partners. Reinforcing the vision is the management plan that supports Corridor goals and is relevant to community and stakeholder concerns. The region’s shared heritage acts as an organizing concept for collaboration and provides a common platform for project action. Tied to the notion of heritage is the compelling regional story that connects local resources, links people and communities, and provides a further basis for collaboration. Also important are Corridor goals and boundaries that reflect thematic interests rather than political agendas or constraints. These allow the Corridor to be relevant to diverse partners and facilitate bringing the necessary players together. The personal vision and leadership provided by the Commission, D&L, Inc, and Corridor staff help to create a partnership culture that values collaboration. A number of key leadership characteristics are also necessary, including creativity and “outside the box” thinking, entrepreneurialism and a willingness to take risks, patience, mentoring skills, integrity, and collaborative leadership skills.

C. Cultivating the Partnership System

It is essential to establish collaborative processes that enhance and reinvent the partnership system. Such processes include meaningful community engagement on an ongoing basis, continually telling the story and promoting the vision in ways that connect people and communities across the Corridor, and responsiveness to local needs and priorities. Operating with an open, inclusive, collaborative approach is essential. This involves effective listening and communication; sincerity, honesty, respect, patience, and trust; shared responsibility and transparent and flexible operations; and a willingness to try new approaches. Over time, with good collaborative processes, partner organizations redefine their goals and ways of working to align with the Corridor goals and vision. Finally, a commitment to learning and to implementing the learning helps to bone the dynamic partnership system as it evolves and matures.

D. Considering Time in the Partnership System

It takes time for a system as complex as the D&L partnership to evolve and mature and for partnership-building to bear fruit. It takes time to build a strong, sustainable system because partner capacity varies and partner relationships rely on trust and effective communication for successful collaboration. It also takes time to integrate resource conservation with community and economic development goals. With an ambitious agenda such as that encompassed by the Corridor vision, there is of necessity a strategic sequencing to projects, with early projects catalyzing or setting the stage for later ones. (For example, “Visually and Graphically Speaking,” a program that created a graphic identity and interpretation system, was a necessary precursor to later efforts to develop wayfinding and interpretive signage within the Corridor.) As accomplishments are achieved and the relationships in the partnership system become more robust, partners may be able to take on more challenging, complex efforts—in essence, the bar can be raised higher with time. As the partnership system matures, there is a need for increased specialization, technical expertise, and capacity building in order to sustain partner energy and momentum in general. In addition, the nature of the relationship between partners and Corridor management may change. Partners may be able to take on greater responsibility over time, which can open the door to further learning and to strengthening of the partnership system.
Management Options and Opportunities

In anticipation of the approaching sunset of the D&L Corridor’s existing federally authorized management framework, this chapter explores possible future options for the management structure. These options have emerged from several complementary parts of the sustainability study process, including the examination of strengths and challenges of the existing framework, meetings and conversations with Corridor participants and outside experts, consideration of relevant partnership models in the conservation field and other disciplines, and the study team’s identification of critical ingredients for sustained success of the Corridor partnership system (as presented in the previous chapter).

The management options fall into three categories related to:

- the Corridor’s management entity;
- additional state, county, and municipal government involvement, with leadership by DCNR;
- additional National Park Service involvement.

Each of these categories addresses an important component of the Corridor’s overall management framework, and together they encompass the primary anchoring connections that are essential for success. Because of their mutual importance, some combination of ideas from each category may ultimately best meet the Corridor’s unique circumstances and needs.

The study team is not recommending any specific option or combination of options, but instead is presenting a range of possibilities for the Commission, D&L, Inc., and other Corridor participants to consider as they structure a management framework for the future.

A. Management Entity Options

At the center of the management framework is the management entity that is assigned responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the management plan and for receiving and disbursing public funding dedicated to the initiative. With the Commission’s federal authorization due to expire in 2007, there are several options for the management entity in the Corridor’s next phase. Note that the options in this category are mutually exclusive—that is, two or more of them would not be pursued simultaneously.

The first four of the options below would involve federal legislation that renews authorization of a management entity for the Corridor, and presumably would be accompanied by the reauthorization and subsequent appropriation of continued federal funding for the Corridor through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs budget. This funding would help support the operation of the designated management entity and the implementation of the management plan. Continued federal funding could be authorized for a limited period (e.g., an additional 10 years) or could be made permanent.

A.1. Continue the current management partnership

The Commission could be reauthorized as the Corridor’s federal management entity, and could continue its operating partnership with D&L, Inc. This would sustain the strengths that the Commission itself offers (e.g., credibility and clout as a federal entity, legislated representation of key interests), but would perpetuate its associated challenges (e.g., a cumbersome appointment process). Similarly, it would sustain the strengths that the Commission and D&L, Inc., offer together (e.g., greater flexibility for fundraising and revenue generation, broader opportunities for formal stakeholder representation on the Commission and the nonprofit’s board than through either individually), but would perpetuate the complexities associated with having the two entities operating in parallel.

A.2. Shift to D&L, Inc., only

D&L, Inc., could be authorized as the Corridor’s federal management entity, replacing the Commission after its expiration. This approach, with a nonprofit organization as the designated management entity, would be consistent with the majority of existing national heritage areas. Relative to the current situation, shifting management to D&L, Inc., alone would reduce administrative and bureaucratic hurdles, simplify the management structure, and make it more nimble. However, without the Commission there would be fewer opportunities for direct stakeholder involvement in the management entity, and other nonprofits in the Corridor could view D&L, Inc., as a greater competitor for funding and programming. Furthermore, some Corridor participants have expressed concern that D&L, Inc., would have less stature and clout with the National Park Service and other federal and state agencies than the Commission, and could be
A.3. Shift to D&L, Inc., and create a new legislatively established partnership

Under this option, the Commission could be replaced with a new representative body established through federal legislation to complement D&L, Inc. Unlike the Commission, the new federal body would not have direct management and financial responsibilities. Its primary functions would be to:

- sustain a legislated mechanism for bringing key Corridor stakeholders together (including governmental and private sector interests);
- provide sustained federal stature and clout; and
- advise and support D&L, Inc., in coordinating the Corridor initiative.

This approach would offer most of the advantages of option A.2 and fewer limitations. The new federal body would be subject to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act and to similar administrative requirements as the current Corridor Commission (e.g., the appointment process), but the consequences for the Corridor initiative likely would be reduced with the new body having no financial and management responsibilities.

A.4. Shift to D&L, Inc., and create a new advisory council through administrative action

D&L, Inc., could be authorized as the Corridor’s federal management entity, and its board could create a new advisory body to provide an additional, formal mechanism for broader stakeholder participation than the Corridor Commission. Since this new body would be advisory to the nonprofit rather than to a federal agency, and since it would be established administratively rather than legislatively, there would be reduced bureaucratic hurdles associated with federal advisory committees and with commissions and other entities established through federal legislation. This option also offered similar advantages to those described above for option A.2. However, it would not address some of the vulnerabilities identified for that option, such as the possible perception of increased competition on the part of other Corridor nonprofits and a rest could in stature and clout relative to the Commission.

A.5. Move forward without a federally authorized management entity and dedicated federal funding

Under this option, the Commission would continue to lead the Corridor initiative and its successor for Corridor operations would cease. Although there would be no new federal authorization, individual organizations and partner networks would presumably continue to work with the Corridor goals, with D&L, Inc., likely playing a lead role in coordinating Corridor-wide activities and ongoing implementation of the management plan. The national heritage corridor designation is permanent and thus would remain, and the state’s heritage park designation and significant support from the state, the Corridor would not change. While federal funding through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs budget would end, other federal funding (e.g., through transportation and environmental restoration programs) could continue to be available for relevant activities, and limited technical assistance from the NPS could be available on a competitive basis through programs such as the Great Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.

Nonetheless, this scenario would be a significant setback for the Corridor initiative, and in all likelihood would substantially slow the progress toward achieving its broad mandate. Without federal authorization, D&L, Inc., and the partnership overall could have reduced stature, clout, and credibility with government agencies and other stakeholders. Perhaps more importantly, the loss of dedicated federal funding would leave a substantial void—both in direct terms for Corridor operations and management plan implementation, and indirectly in leveraging support from others. D&L, Inc., would likely need to scale back its staff and focus only on core priorities. This would leave some parts of the Corridor and the partner networks with the support they now receive, and could result in some partners (e.g., those with lesser capacity) having to reduce or eliminate their work toward Corridor goals. The fact that the Corridor’s Corridor initiative is well-established and D&L, Inc., is fully functional could help to soften the blow of this scenario, but it is questionable whether or when the Corridor partnership might fully recover.

B. Options for Additional State, County, and Municipal Government Involvement, with Leadership by DCNR

From each of the sustainability study’s analytic lenses, it is evident that much of the Corridor initiative’s success is due to the substantial involvement and support of the state, the five counties, and the multitude of municipal governments. As discussed in chapters 3 and 6, the involvement and support of the state, the five counties, and the multitude of municipal governments is permanent and thus would remain, and the state’s heritage park designation and significant support from the state, the Corridor would not change.

B.1. Establish an intergovernmental partnership agreement for the Corridor

To date, the Commission has served as the formal mechanism through which key state, county, and local governmental bodies (among others) have participated in the management of the Corridor initiative. Regardless of whether the Commission expires or is reauthorized, it may be beneficial to create a formal partnership agreement to further bind these interests together and solidify their commitment to the Corridor. This agreement could be established administratively through state legislation, and would identify the ongoing roles and responsibilities of the participating agencies in supporting and working with the Corridor initiative.

At a minimum, the agreement would likely need to include those state agencies that have been most involved in Corridor activities (i.e., DCNR, PHMC, DCED, and PENNDOT), possibly other state agencies connected with the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program (including the Department of Education, Council on the Arts, and Center for Rural Pennsylvania), and the five counties. Municipal governments could also be involved, although their sheer number could present a challenge in keeping the agreement from becoming unwieldy. While DCNR has lead responsibility for the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program and landscape conservation projects statewide and has long played a key anchoring role in the Corridor, it would be well positioned to lead state and county governments. This option DCNR leadership likely would be essential for securing the involvement of others, and for the effectiveness of the agreement overall.

B.2. Establish a new management agreement, and possibly a new state designation, for the spine of the Corridor

With the Corridor’s spine now moving primarily under public control, it may be desirable to establish a formal agreement or compact between the state and county governments, and other relevant municipalities for managing and maintaining the spine. This agreement could provide a mechanism to solidify the commitment of the various parties, identify sources of support for management, and develop baseline standards for management and maintenance. In light of DCNR’s ownership and management of roughly half the spine (in the state parks), its heightened emphasis on outdoor recreation and related community and economic revitalization, and its diverse technical and financial assistance programs, it would seem both appropriate and desirable for DCNR to assume a strong leadership role in developing and implementing such an agreement.

While this type of management agreement or compact could be developed independently, it also could be authorized in conjunction with a new state designation focused on the spine that would reflect its unique partnership arrangement (for instance, a “state partnership park”). This would help to further elevate the profile of the spine and its associated resources, and could further solidify the state’s commitment to the management partnership.

C. Options for Additional National Park Service Involvement

There is a strong sense among many Corridor participants that a broader, sustained affiliation

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1. D&L, Inc., is federally authorized to become the management entity, consideration should be given to the authorities and requirements to be transferred from the Commission to D&L, Inc. (for example, the authority to receive and disburse federal funds, and the responsibility described in Section 12 of the Corridor’s original authorizing legislation that federal entities must manage and comply with the Federal Advisory Committee Act regarding any activities affecting the purposes of the Corridor).

2. A more appropriate title could be considered an “advisory council,” especially given the initial size of the membership and therefore some other titles might be more appropriate (e.g., “Corridor partnership committee”).

3. See footnote 1.

4. See footnote 1.

5. While the description of the intergovernmental agreement is oriented toward state, county, and possibly municipal participation, it could be expanded to include relevant federal agencies as well (such as the National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Park Service Conservation Service Corps). For example, the Corridor Commission could be replaced with the Corridor partnership committee. However, to do so might be more appropriate and desirable for DCNR to assume a strong leadership role in developing and implementing such an agreement.

6. The Pennsylvania Economy League is currently investigating possible models and considerations for this type of agreement or compact as part of a broader contract with the Commission and D&L, Inc.
with the National Park Service is needed in some forms, both for the credibility and branding it can provide, and for the technical expertise, additional human capacity, and other contributions that the NPS could potentially offer. Moreover, these participants believe that sustained NPS involvement is justified by the Corridor’s national significance, which was confirmed by the congressional decision to give the D&L region its national designation in 1988.

There are a number of possible forms that additional NPS involvement might take in the future, some more modest and straightforward and others more involved. The first four options could be achieved administratively, while the fifth would require legislation. Two or more of these options could be pursued simultaneously, and any could be combined with options from the previous categories.

C.1. Use available tools more broadly to convey the NPS affiliation and brand

Because national heritage areas are under the umbrella of the National Park Service, they are able to use NPS public information tools to broaden awareness about their connection to the agency and the National Park System. Using these tools to display the correlation to the NPS brand (such as working successfully through partnerships, achieving meaningful conservation in lived landscapes, and developing effective landscape-scale interpretative programs)

C.2. Seek a stronger, more consistent relationship with the NPS Northeast Region

Since its establishment, the Corridor initiative’s primary link with the NPS has been through the Northeast Region office in Philadelphia. The existing cooperative agreement between the NPS, D&L, Inc., and the Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums provides a solid platform from which to advance the relationship between the Northeast Region and the Corridor initiative in the coming years. Examples of ways in which the relationship could be strengthened to mutual advantage include:

- Regular meetings (at least annually) between Corridor and NPS regional leaders;
- A sustained annual commitment by the regional office to provide technical assistance to specified Corridor projects through relevant NPS programs (e.g., the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program and the Preservation Assistance Program). This could be accomplished through a collaboratively developed annual work plan that would specify the nature and extent of the regional office’s support;
- Staff exchanges to help foster mutual understanding of each other’s needs, skills, and opportunities;
- Establishment of a dedicated NPS “circuit rider” for the Corridor, a relatively senior regional staff position assigned specifically to help the D&L management entity and Corridor partners navigate the NPS system and access federal funding, specific expertise, and other support. This position could be shared with the adjacent national heritage areas and possibly others in the Northeast Region that would benefit;
- Collaborative exploration of opportunities to draw on the experience of Corridor participants in addressing challenges that are increasingly important for the NPS (such as working successfully through partnerships, achieving meaningful conservation in lived landscapes, and developing effective landscape-scale interpretative programs).

C.3. Seek stronger relationships with nearby NPS units

Unlike some national heritage areas, the D&L Corridor does not have an established national park unit within its borders. There may be opportunities to build closer relationships with nearby NPS units, which could help to broaden awareness of the Corridor’s NPS connection while simply contributing to Corridor goals and furthering the NPS mission. Nearby NPS units and examples of potential collaborative opportunities include the following:

- Steamtown National Historic Site (Scranton, Pennsylvania)—possible interpretive initiatives related to the anthracite coal transportation system;
- Appalachian National Scenic Trail (which crosses the Lehigh River and the Lehigh Canal at Lehigh Gap near Palmerton, Pennsylvania)—possible initiatives related to community outreach and engagement, and the development of side trails;
- Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (adjacent to the northeasternmost corner of Northampton County, along the Pennsylvania/New Jersey border)—possible conservation and interpretation initiatives related to watershed concepts and issues.

C.4. Pursue renewed NPS interpretive support

Many Corridor participants believe that further interpretive assistance from NPS could be very helpful in advancing the Corridor initiative, and suggest that such a role would be appropriate for NPS given its widely recognized expertise in this area and its past assistance with interpretive efforts in the Corridor. Further NPS interpretive support could be focused on providing:

- greater Corridor-wide interpretive cohesion through assistance to partners that are associated with the Corridor’s story (such as historic sites, museums, and local communities);
- an on-the-ground, uniformed NPS interpretive presence in the Corridor.7

Also, there may be an opportunity to obtain NPS support for a collaborative project exploring the challenges involved in achieving effective interpretation in large-scale initiatives. Such a project could be undertaken in conjunction with other national heritage areas (those adjacent to the D&L Corridor or others further removed) and/or other large-scale NPS initiatives with significant interpretive components (such as the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program and the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program).

C.5. Seek authorization of a “special resource study” to explore potential permanent NPS involvement and additional federal designations

A number of ideas emerged during this study that relate to the possibility of a permanent NPS presence in the Corridor and to other NPS-associated designations beyond the "national heritage corridor” title. These ideas would require further consideration through a congressionally authorized special resource study, followed by additional federal authorizing legislation if a permanent NPS presence or further designation is deemed appropriate and desirable.

The NPS would conduct the study through an open and participatory public process, in consultation and collaboration with the Corridor’s management entity and key partners. There would be a variety of opportunities for input and thorough consideration of questions, concerns, or suggestions that might be raised. The study would conclude with a recommendation to the president and Congress. Congress would then decide whether to authorize, through subsequent legislation, the implementation of any of the ideas explored during the study.

Examples of ideas for further NPS involvement that could be considered in a special resource study include:

- Designation of the D&L Trail as a national historic trail (as recommended in the Corridor’s 1993 Management Action Plan);
- Establishment of a permanent NPS site or sites in the Corridor;
- An additional national designation to further highlight the area’s significance and solidify a permanent connection with the NPS;
- Consideration of broader opportunities related to the anthracite coal story (for instance, possible linkages with the adjacent national heritage areas and other appropriate sites nearby, and/or potential establishment of a permanent NPS program tied to the anthracite story).

There are a number of ideas that could be considered in this study that are directly relevant to the Corridor and to other NPS areas. These include:

- Using part-time or seasonal staff could reduce the costs of uniformed personnel. Seasonal staff hired through the Student Conservation Association have proven to be cost-effective in other NPS areas.
In addition to the management options presented in the previous chapter, the project team identified a number of other options and opportunities that Corridor management could pursue to enhance and sustain the D&L partnership system. These fall into three categories:

• investment by the management entity;
• enhancing partnerships;
• operations.

Many of the options and opportunities are interrelated, so it is likely that some combination of options will best address the Corridor’s needs. As with the management options in chapter 8, the study team is not recommending any specific option(s), but is presenting an array for consideration. Following the discussion on the three categories of options, the final section in this chapter addresses the subject of funding considerations.

There are several things to note regarding the options below. First, the study team acknowledges that Corridor management is already working in some of these areas (e.g., building partner capacity). However, placing greater emphasis on this work could strengthen the partnership system as described in chapter 7 and enhance the overall success of the Corridor initiative. Also, decisions made by Corridor management among these options represent trade-offs in terms of the allocation of limited staff and financial resources. Similarly, action on any of the opportunities below may have a bearing on the management options discussed in the previous chapter, and vice versa.

A. Options and Opportunities for Investment by the Management Entity

In deciding how to allocate its funding in the coming years, D&L management may wish to consider the following.

A.1. Begin a new strategic planning process

With substantial progress made in addressing the actions identified in the management plan, a new strategic plan would complement (not replace) the existing management plan by identifying strategies to most effectively tackle the work that remains to be done. This new plan would help guide the future investment of Corridor staff and funding, identify highest priorities, meet the current needs of the partner network, and take advantage of new opportunities. A strategic planning process would offer an opportunity to engage communities and partners, both existing and potential, in providing ideas for making the partnership more effective. It could also help identify opportunities for closer relationships between D&L, Inc., and key nonprofit partners. The sustainability study findings can help inform the planning process, and the decisions made regarding the management options would undoubtedly influence the direction of the strategic plan. Many of the ideas that follow would be appropriate for further consideration within a strategic planning process if one is initiated.

A.2. Place greater emphasis on building the capacity of nonprofit and local government partners

The long-term success and sustainability of the Corridor initiative relies upon a strong network of partners who can step up to the plate, shoulder greater leadership responsibilities, and implement the shared agenda. For this to happen, capacity building must become an even greater investment priority, through such means as leadership training, a mentoring program to share best practices among Corridor partners, and further efforts to help partners secure the support, staffing, and expertise they need.

A.3. Make further use of the region’s shared heritage to bind the Corridor together

As discussed in chapter 6, the heritage that is shared throughout the D&L region transcends the Corridor’s geographical divides. It is important for the strength and resiliency of the partner network—and ultimately the long-term sustainability of the overall Corridor initiative—that this shared heritage is used effectively as an organizing principle and a platform for collaborative action. A key role for Corridor management is to continue building awareness of the region’s shared heritage and story so that an even wider array of partners come to see their missions as relevant to each other and connected through the broader regional story.

A.4. Develop a strategic interpretive plan to identify the most important aspects of the Corridor story and to set interpretive priorities

The interpretation and education plan of June 1999, developed by the NPS interpreter assigned for several years to the D&L Corridor, is an important tool in helping to understand and
interpret the many stories of the D&L Corridor. It is quite comprehensive and detailed, and, for some partners, rather overwhelming. There appears to be a need to complement this document with a targeted strategy that identifies interpretative priorities and the most important aspects of the story to tell Corridor-wide.

Together, the existing plan and a new strategic interpretation plan could provide Corridor staff and partners with a stronger foundation for building the broader regional awareness of a shared heritage envisioned in the previous paragraph.

A.5. Foster broader involvement of diverse stakeholders in Corridor activities

Maintaining a vibrant partner network is essential to sustaining the Corridor initiative, and this depends in part upon Corridor management engaging with the range of Corridor stakeholders and the general public on an ongoing basis. While Corridor management has strong relations with many stakeholders, additional outreach to local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and others would help to broaden and diversify the overall partnership and enhance its ability to achieve Corridor goals. Developing a strategy for further engagement of diverse stakeholders in Corridor activities would be an important aspect of the strategic planning process described in option A.1 above.

A.6. Place greater emphasis on public relations and marketing

Although the Corridor initiative is well known in some circles within the D&L region, and certain activities such as “Miles of Mules” have generated considerable publicity and awareness, Corridor management should consider further efforts to increase the initiative’s profile in the region. Making greater use of NPS communication tools (see chapter 8) and developing a strategic interpretive plan (as described above) are two examples of possible approaches. These and other strategies can help to build a broader understanding of what the Corridor partnership is trying to achieve, what it has accomplished to date, and how all of this is connected with the priorities of local, state, and federal government and other partners. This, in turn, could help to generate greater support for the Corridor initiative and attract new partners.

A.7. Emphasize the Corridor initiative as a driver of economic development and community revitalization

There is some recognition that the accomplishments of the Corridor partnership have enhanced the region’s economy and quality of life and may help draw new businesses and residents to the area. However, many Corridor participants believe more should be done to highlight this aspect of the partnership’s work, both because of its intrinsic value and because it can help to leverage further involvement of businesses and economically oriented public agencies at all levels of government. Some of the options described above (such as enhanced marketing and developing a strategic interpretive plan) could be used in part to emphasize how the Corridor contributes to economic development and community revitalization across the region.

A.8. Highlight ways in which Corridor activities are consistent with and contribute to state and federal priorities

For example, D&L programs are very much in line with the objectives of the Governor’s “Keystone Principles for Growth, Investment, and Resource Conservation” and DCNR’s “Shaping a Sustainable Pennsylvania.” Demonstrating more clearly how D&L programs help to further such objectives could help to solidify support for the Corridor initiative and open new opportunities with governmental partners.

A.9. Expand in-house capacity to meet the increasing range of demands

As discussed in chapter 3, there is a general sense that Corridor staff are spread thin at a time when demands are increasing. While there are differing opinions about whether or how to respond to this situation, it seems appropriate for Corridor management to weigh the merits of some level of staff expansion. This could include hiring staff for fundraising and development to increase the funding base for the Corridor partnership, or for grant-writing, technical, and other assistance to partners. (See box on page 68 for ideas related to funding opportunities.)

B. Options and Opportunities for Enhancing Partnerships

The accomplishments of the D&L Corridor are based on partnerships. There is inevitably an ebb and flow in the makeup of the partner network as organizations evolve and as projects are initiated, completed, or become more complex. Within this dynamic context and to the extent possible in light of other considerations, Corridor management should continue to seek to expand and enhance the partner network and to build the capacity of partners to assume greater leadership responsibilities. In looking to the future, Corridor management may want to consider initiating a strategic assessment of its partnerships to determine if there is redundancy in mission and effort, a thought that was raised in several partner interviews. A certain amount of redundancy can provide stability, but too much could be inefficient and could lead to counterproductive competition. Further analysis of the partner network could uncover the different dimensions of connectivity within the network as well as the degree of similarity in missions. This information could provide the basis for strengthening key existing partnerships and developing new partnerships to address gaps in the network. Such an assessment of partnerships could be included in a broader strategic planning process, as discussed earlier.

In addition to the general idea of a strategic assessment of key partnerships, more specific options and opportunities related to partnerships that surfaced during the sustainability study include:

B.1. Strengthen partnerships with DCED and tourism entities

This could be tied to efforts to place greater emphasis on economic development and community revitalization, as discussed in option A.7 above.

B.2. Pursue closer partnerships with agencies (state and federal) that have not been deeply involved in the Corridor initiative

The Corridor might benefit from the greater involvement of state agencies such as the Pennsylvania Historical and Museums Commission and PennDOT, and federal agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

B.3. Pursue further partnerships with academic institutions

This could include larger projects undertaken through a cooperative agreement with Lehigh University and state and community colleges within the Corridor.2


As an example, the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area and Montgomery County Community College are partnering to develop a comprehensive curriculum on national heritage areas that will include conservation, historic preservation, recreation, community revitalization, and heritage tourism.
C.3. Consider the composition of the D&L, Inc., board

In looking ahead to the possible termination of the Commission and a transition to D&L, Inc., as the management entity, the Commission and board may want to think about the board’s composition. This would be especially important if the Commission expires and no new representative entity is created. Considerations could include board size, the degree to which it is representative of key stakeholder interests, and whether other attributes are needed among its membership (e.g., additional expertise, connections, access to funding).

C.4. In the case of Commission expiration, consider a temporary “transition committee” for D&L, Inc., to provide institutional knowledge

Although the Commission and the board have been co-managing the Corridor initiative for the past two years, there could still be benefit in appointing a temporary committee made up of past and current Commission members and other past key players to advise the board for a specified period of time if the Commission expires.

C.5. Introduce a process for succession planning in anticipation of the retirement of key individuals

With the anticipated retirement of key participants both within the Corridor management and among some key partners, D&L management might want to consider how best to ensure the transfer of institutional knowledge and sustain the smooth functioning of the Corridor’s ongoing initiatives and partner relationships. This is especially important with a partnership-based initiative in which much of the success of the effort relies upon good interpersonal relations.

D. Funding Considerations

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the financial investments by the state through the DCNR Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program and by the federal government through the NPS Heritage Partnership Programs have been essential to the progress made to date by the D&L Corridor partnership. Although these investments have created an impressive record of leverage (see chart on page ——), the existing funding arrangement is not ideal. The lack of assurance and predictability from year to year puts this leveraging capacity at risk, and impedes strategic planning and implementation of multiyear projects. For the Corridor initiative to meet its full potential there is a need to secure sustainable funding, ideally from a diversified base. One step that Corridor management could take to increase fundraising capacity is to hire development staff, as mentioned in option A.9 above. Other ideas of possible funding opportunities that emerged during the study are listed in the box below. These ideas would require further consideration to determine which might be best suited to the circumstances of the D&L initiative.

Potential opportunities to expand funding sources

- Pursue greater support from corporations, foundations, and individuals
- Establish corporate sponsorships for the D&L Trail (e.g., bridges, trailheads)
- Investigate opportunities for funding economic development projects near gaming sites through revenues from Pennsylvania’s new gaming legislation, which includes a provision for multi-county cooperative applications and initiatives
- Investigate funding opportunities through state and regional authorities, tax credits, and other public funding sources (e.g., new market tax credits through the Pennsylvania Housing and Finance Agency, Multitran Financing Facilities Investment)
- Pursue opportunities to generate earned income in partnership with others, such as rent from rehabilitated structures (as has been done successfully in Lackawanna Valley National Heritage Area)
- Pursue funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and/or Department of Energy for educational centers (e.g., extending the EPA partnership in Lehigh Gorge to include the planned educational center, as described on page ——)

B.4. Evaluate partnership opportunities with like-minded organizations and initiatives in adjacent regions

Corridor participants suggested the Morris Canal in New Jersey and the Lower Delaware National Wild and Scenic River as potential partners.

C. Options and Opportunities Related to Operations

Some of the options and opportunities related to Corridor management’s operations are temporary in nature while others are more long-term considerations. The latter could be considered within a strategic planning process.

C.1. Consider the merits of concentrating more staff attention on completing the D&L Trail and the spine

As discussed in chapter 6, some partners view the Corridor as too large and diverse for individual staff to cover its entirety for any given program area. Having staff “closer to the ground” would enable them to build stronger local relationships. One possibility would be to have staff located in each of the Corridor’s major regions (i.e., north, central, and south).

C.2. Consider decentralizing staff in strategic locations

Some participants see the Corridor as too large and diverse for individual staff to cover its entirety for any given program area. Having staff “closer to the ground” would enable them to build stronger local relationships. One possibility would be to have staff located in each of the Corridor’s major regions (i.e., north, central, and south).
By effectively utilizing a collaborative approach to landscape conservation that relies on the active participation of partners from both the public and private sectors, the D&L partnership has become a model within and outside the region and has contributed to the evolution of heritage area programs at the state and federal levels. The initiative has fostered preservation of the region’s heritage through hundreds of projects and partnerships, broadened awareness of the economic benefits and enhanced quality-of-life that protecting heritage resources can provide, and leveraged millions of dollars from public and private sources. The support and leadership of local people and the long-standing commitment by the state since before the Corridor’s national designation have enabled the D&L partnership to mature and prosper. Yet while the initiative has addressed much of the broad mandate from Congress articulated in its management plan, there are still miles of trails to establish and maintain, resources and stories to discover and interpret, new partners to engage, and more residents to inspire. Engaging the public and new leaders in the Corridor partnership and fostering broader local stewardship of the Corridor’s resources will be a continual challenge. This report establishes a benchmark that will allow Corridor management to chart its future progress in terms of programs and partnerships.

The Corridor initiative’s work in building a diverse partner network to achieve its multifaceted mandate is impressive, but considerable work still remains to be done. As D&L management deliberates on the future of the Corridor, it will need to consider how best to reinforce the partnership system and employ it most effectively in order to build on past accomplishments. One key consideration in this effort will be to determine how to secure the vital anchoring connections provided by DCNR and NPS. Furthermore, the D&L initiative will continue to face an ever-changing array of partners within and outside the Corridor. Changes in the priorities, leadership, politics, capacity, and budgets of both public and private partners will shift the dynamics of relationships, creating new challenges and opportunities. These shifts will test the strength of the partnership system and the ability of Corridor management to guide it with flexibility and creativity. Successfully navigating and responding to change will be essential for the Corridor initiative to continue to thrive over time. The complexity and dynamic nature of this partnership system highlights the need for continued organizational learning and adaptive management.

In the bigger picture, developing a deeper understanding of the D&L initiative’s collaborative, network-based approach is relevant to the future of this heritage area and other regional landscape conservation initiatives. The D&L Corridor’s experience can also inform the application of the emerging “governing by network” concept in a variety of disciplines, and can help in identifying essential roles for governmental partners and other critical ingredients for success that may cut across disciplinary boundaries. In the end, a better understanding of the D&L initiative will help inform the developing practice of conserving lived-in landscapes far beyond the D&L Corridor boundaries, both within and outside of designated heritage areas.

*Network governance represents an increasingly popular model of program delivery and policy implementation. This topic is currently receiving considerable attention in the public policy/administration literature, and numerous authors have identified the need to conduct additional research on this topic. For example, see Stephen Goldsmith and William D. Eggers, Governing by Network (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2004); Maarten A. Hajer and Hendrik Wagenaar, eds., Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and The American Review of Public Administration 36, no. 3 (March 2006).


Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Reconstructing Cultural Landscapes: The Challenges of Conservation of Nature and Culture, and the people and organizations that carry them out. Also referred to as “Corridor (or D&L) partnership” and “Corridor (or D&L) management.”

Corridor (or D&L) management: The management entity that carries out the Corridor initiative, the people and processes that interact as a system to achieve accomplishments within the Corridor.

Corridor (or D&L) partner: Any public or private organization, institution, agency, or individual that collaborates with the Commission, board, and staff on specific initiatives. Also referred to as “Corridor (or D&L) cooperation,” “D&L Market T owns initiative,” and “MAC.”

Corridor (or D&L) cooperation: Any public or private organization, institution, agency, or individual that collaborates with the Commission, board, and staff on specific initiatives. Also referred to as “Corridor (or D&L) support” and “MAC.”

Corridor (or D&L) support: Any public or private organization, institution, agency, or individual that collaborates with the Commission, board, and staff on specific initiatives. Also referred to as “Corridor (or D&L) cooperation” and “MAC.”

Corridor Market T owns: A program that involves the Corridor initiative’s outreach to the private sector to leverage investments of the Corridor initiative. Also referred to as “Corridor (or D&L) cooperation,” “D&L Market T owns initiative,” and “MAC.”

Corridor (or D&L) program(s): Specific activities, projects, or investments of the Corridor’s initiative.

Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc. (D&L): The nonprofit organization created in 2002 to work with the Commission and the partner network to implement the 1993 Management Action Plan. Also referred to as “Corridor (or D&L) cooperation,” “D&L Market T owns initiative,” and “MAC.”

Delaware & Lehigh Market T owns: A program that involves the Corridor initiative’s outreach to the private sector to leverage investments of the Corridor initiative.

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In conducting the D&L Sustainability Study, the study team employed a range of methods, as discussed previously on page 49 of this report. The discussion below provides more details on the methods used to obtain the data reported in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

1. Methods for Chapter 2.B

The historical narrative in chapter 2.B is based on interviews with four individuals, selected in consultation with D&L staff. They were selected to represent a diverse set of perspectives and experiences of organizations and individuals who played leadership roles in the history of the Corridor. The study team also conducted site visits to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and local leaders. The interviews were semi-structured to allow participants to identify and describe significant turning points and to avoid leading the interviewees to give responses that deviated from the predetermined script. The interviews were transcribed, and any notes were used to support the findings.

2. Methods for Chapter 4

Chapter 4 documents the Corridor partnership’s progress as well as its current management framework. The study team used a three-step approach to analyze the progress as accurately as possible, while acknowledging some inherent limitations to the comprehensiveness of the data. For example, it was not possible to compare documents from all projects with the same degree of accuracy in all instances. The analysis was not limited to the current management framework, but also included data from previous management frameworks. The data was analyzed against the AHP model to assess the impact of different decision-making stages on the current management framework.

3. Methods for Chapter 5

In analyzing the Corridor initiative’s existing management framework, the study team selected key individuals involved in the management framework. The study team then conducted a series of interviews with these individuals to gather information on the evolution of the management framework and to identify key challenges and opportunities for improvement. The data was analyzed against the AHP model to assess the impact of different decision-making stages on the current management framework.

Appendix A
D&L Sustainability Study Methodology

The study team used a range of methods, as discussed previously on page 49 of this report. The discussion below provides more details on the methods used to obtain the data reported in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

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of community-based, collaborative programs.
5. How has, if at all, your relationship with the D&L Corridor impacted the way you work?
6. To what extent is your organization a beneficiary of the D&L Corridor project or program?
7. What specific factors, if any, would increase the likelihood of achieving these goals?
8. How do you/your organization measure your effectiveness in achieving these goals?
9. What are your organizational goals/misions for the D&L Corridor region?
10. How has, if at all, your relationship with the D&L Corridor impacted the way you work?
11. What are the implications of your organization's commitment to the D&L Corridor region?
12. In your view, what role(s) does the Corridor Commission play in this relationship?
13. How, from your perspective, has the D&L Corridor staff integrated these multiple goals?
14. How, from your perspective, would you characterize the D&L Corridor project or program?
15. How has, if at all, your organization's relationship with the D&L Corridor project or program impacted your work?
16. What is your/your organization's vision for the D&L Corridor region in the future?
17. What future actions do you foresee that would support these goals?
18. In your opinion, the D&L Corridor project or program has had an impact on your work.
19. In the future, which other organizations, or people, would you like to partner with the D&L Corridor?
20. How, if at all, have your relationships with the D&L Corridor project or program changed?
21. How, if at all, has your organization's relationship with the D&L Corridor project or program impacted your work?
22. In your opinion, what role(s) should the Corridor Commission play in this relationship?
23. How does your organization benefit from the D&L Corridor project or program?
24. In what ways do you measure your effectiveness in achieving these goals?
25. What are your organization's goals/misions for the D&L Corridor region?
26. How has, if at all, your organization's relationship with the D&L Corridor project or program impacted your work?
27. How do you/your organization measure your effectiveness in achieving these goals?
28. How does your organization benefit from the D&L Corridor project or program?
29. How has, if at all, your organization's relationship with the D&L Corridor project or program impacted your work?
30. How do you/your organization measure your effectiveness in achieving these goals?
31. What are your organization's goals/misions for the D&L Corridor region?
32. How has, if at all, your organization's relationship with the D&L Corridor project or program impacted your work?
33. How do you/your organization measure your effectiveness in achieving these goals?
34. What are your organization's goals/misions for the D&L Corridor region?
35. How has, if at all, your organization's relationship with the D&L Corridor project or program impacted your work?
36. How do you/your organization measure your effectiveness in achieving these goals?
37. What are your organization's goals/misions for the D&L Corridor region?
38. How has, if at all, your organization's relationship with the D&L Corridor project or program impacted your work?
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42. How do you/your organization measure your effectiveness in achieving these goals?
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52. What are your organization's goals/misions for the D&L Corridor region?
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55. What are your organization's goals/misions for the D&L Corridor region?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOUTH NAVIGATING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brock Creek Corridor, Yardley Borough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSX and Amtrak Tunnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Canal Waie, New Hope</td>
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<td>D&amp;L Trail Tymbris Road Detour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware Canal, Bristol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lagoon Restoration, Bristol Borough</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lock #16 Restoration and Preservation</td>
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<td>Lock #4 Stabilization</td>
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<td>Pedestrian Bridge over Route 13</td>
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<tr>
<th>UNDERSTANDING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bucks County Audubon Society Visitor Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware Canal State Park Signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lock #13 Interpretive Signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Hope Signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington Crossing Exhibits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watershed Interpretive Exhibits, Honey Hollow Environmental Education Center</td>
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<th>CONSERVING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barn at Elm Lane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brittle Marsh Preservation and Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canal Towns Historic Districts Study, Bucks County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durham Mine Bat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grayebones Land Acquisition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ground Hog Lock 2223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Areas Inventory/Open Space Preservation Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Hope Lock House</td>
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<td>Tohickon Aqueduct, Delaware Canal State Park</td>
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<td>Bridge Street Car Park, New Hope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brittle Canal Visitor Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canal’s End Reach Visitor Center Feasibility Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation Enterprise Program</td>
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<td>Delaware Canal and Train Station, Bristol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware Canal-Spartine Park Linkage Trail, Bristol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mercer Museum Outreach Study, Lower Bucks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monticello Watersheds Complex</td>
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<td>New Hope Visitor Center</td>
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<tr>
<th>CORRIDOR-WIDE NAVIGATING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D&amp;L Drive Enhancements</td>
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<tr>
<td>D&amp;L Trail (Trails, Recreation, Access, Interpretation, Linkages) Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>D&amp;L Trail Plan and Design</td>
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<td>D&amp;L Trail Tenders</td>
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<td>Inventory and Assessment of the Trail System</td>
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<td>NPS Trail Workbook</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corridor and Reach Maps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corridor Directional Signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corridor Exhibit Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corridor Interpretation and Education Plan</td>
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<td>Corridor Map and Brochure</td>
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<td>Education Partnership</td>
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<td>Interactive Orientation kiosks Development</td>
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<td>Visually and Graphically Speaking Implementation</td>
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<td>Visually Speaking, Additional Elements</td>
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<td>Web-Accessible Information on D&amp;L National Heritage Corridor</td>
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<td>Greenway-Linkage Study</td>
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<td>Municipal Assistance for Conservation</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania Greenway Sojourn</td>
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<td>Shaping the D&amp;L Drive</td>
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<td>Corridor Market Towns/Student Internships</td>
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<tr>
<td>D&amp;L Consultant, Adjunct Historian</td>
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<tr>
<td>D&amp;L Trail Partnership Study</td>
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<td>DCRP Circuit Rider Grant, Trail Manager</td>
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<td>Economic Indicators Study</td>
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<td>Lehigh University Community Fellows Program</td>
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<td>Mapping to Inform Decision Making</td>
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<td>Miles of Mules</td>
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<td>Old House Road Show</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania Heritage Tourism Development Plan</td>
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<td>Preservation Pennsylvania/Lehigh Preservation League</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trail Internships with Student Conservation Association</td>
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<td>World Canal Conference Planning</td>
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Figure B.2. Projects and programs that address management plan actions