



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Watkinsville, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

Bill Bradberry
Chairman
Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area Commission
Niagara Falls City Hall
P.O. Box 69
Niagara Falls, NY 14302-0069

Re: Heritage Area Management Plan

Dear Mr. Bradberry:

The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation received the Management Plan for the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area on April 23, 2012. This plan was unanimously endorsed by the New York State Heritage Area Advisory Council on June 13, 2012. Pursuant to Title G, Article 35 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law (PRHPL), this agency has reviewed the plan and finds that it is consistent with the principles set forth in the enabling law. The Heritage Area management plan supports the advancement of historic preservation, education, recreation and economic and cultural benefits for the public at large and is hereby approved. With this approval, all of the requirements have been met for designation of the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area. I recommend that the approved management plan be posted on the city's web site to broaden its usefulness as a public reference.

Niagara Falls has a proud and well-recognized association with the history of the Underground Railroad, one of the greatest social justice movements in our nation's history. As historian Judy Wellman has ably documented, the location of Niagara Falls on major transportation routes between the United States and Canada and the presence of a community of free African Americans employed in the resorts at the Falls combined to make the area a prominent route to freedom for individuals escaping slavery. Surviving accounts of these escapes represent a fraction of the thousands who successfully crossed into Canada in this immediate area. Nevertheless, these stories effectively illustrate the remarkable courage of all freedom seekers and helpers and they remain a powerful source of inspiration today. The Underground Railroad Heritage Area represents a new opportunity to make your city's heritage come alive for residents and visitors alike.

I commend the City of Niagara Falls, the Heritage Area Commission and the consultants who compiled this management plan for a job well done. Congratulations and best wishes with the implementation of the plan.

Sincerely,



Rose Harvey
Commissioner

Cc: Paul Dyster, Mayor, Niagara Falls
Sam Fruscione, Chair, Niagara Falls City Council
Kevin Cottrell, Coordinator, North Star Initiative
Steven Englebright, Member, NYS Assembly
Mark Thomas, Western District Director, OPRHP
Christina Croll, Senior Planner, OPRHP
Patrick Heaton, edr Companies
Judith Wellman, Historical New York Research Assoc.