



Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area

Strategic Sustainability Plan 2018-2023



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Acknowledgments

This document reflects the outcome of the Strategic Sustainability Meeting held by the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm Corridor Communities Association on March 2, 2018. The efforts of many went into this planning process. With thanks for the thoughtful consideration of following:

KMTA Board of Directors:

Janet McCabe (Outgoing President-Hope)
Dan Walker (Incoming President-Seward)
Bruce Jaffa (Vice President-Moose Pass)
Margaret Tyler (Secretary-Girdwood)
Rae Kozlowski (Treasurer-At-Large)
Sue McClure (Seward)
Martha Story (Cooper Landing)
Tom Gillespie (Seward)
Art Copoulos (Hope)
Karen Dempster (Whittier)
Michael Bernard (At Large)

KMTA Staff:

Kaylene Johnson-Sullivan, Outgoing Executive Director
Jessica Szelag, Incoming Executive Director
Katherine Schake, Program Manager
Lia Slemons, Trails Coordinator
Melissa Alger, Publications Coordinator

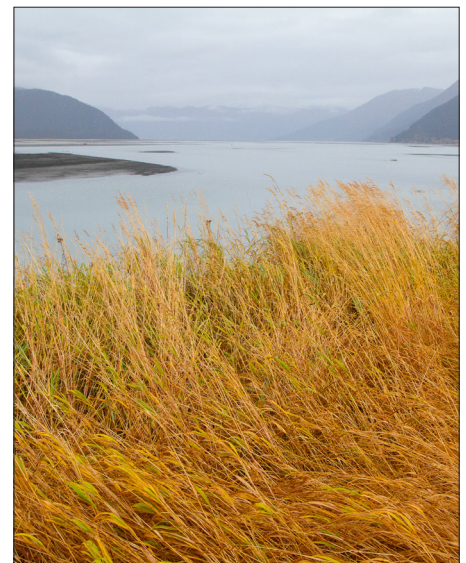
KMTA National Heritage Area also acknowledges the generous support and assistance from:

- The National Park Service
- Kenai Fjords National Park
- Chugach National Forest
- National Parks Conservation Association
- The Alliance of National Heritage Areas



KMTA Communities

Indian
Bird
Girdwood
Portage
Whittier
Cooper Landing
Hope
Moose Pass
Seward



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Letter from the President



Dan Walker

Ten years ago, a small group of dedicated Alaskans sat around a kitchen table and dreamed up a plan for a National Heritage Area that would preserve, promote, and protect the natural and historic resources of Southcentral Alaska's historic mining district and transportation corridor. The result of these early efforts led to the creation of the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm Communities Corridor Association and the designation of KMTA in 2009 as one of 49 National Heritage Areas in the United States.

Not only is this area now nationally recognized for its unique historical, cultural, natural, and recreational importance, but the KMTA CCA Board and staff have worked to award almost \$1,000,000 in federal funding to support local community projects. Through this work, KMTA CCA has increased awareness of the National Heritage Area and leveraged an additional \$1.7 million dollars in further investment within KMTA's nine communities of Bird, Indian, Girdwood, Whittier, Portage, Hope, Cooper Landing, Moose Pass, and Seward.

Today, the KMTA CCA Board of Directors and staff continue to move forward with the same mission to promote and protect our National Heritage Area while launching a renewed commitment through our 2018 Strategic Sustainability Plan. Our focus will continue to be to recognize the historical and natural beauty of the KMTA area and communities, while striving to develop efficient and effective leadership, structured and focused support for community-based projects, and area-wide undertakings under the theme of "Trails and Stories."

Through our new Strategic Sustainability Plan, KMTA will support new and historic trails in the heritage area with hands-on trail work and signage. We will save and share our stories through education programs for our children. We will publish books both new and out-of-print that document the activity of the people who make up the KMTA National Heritage Areas.

The development of this strategic plan has allowed us to examine our work, our priorities, and to map our own trail to success for KMTA CCA and the National Heritage Area now and into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Walker", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dan Walker, President, KMTA CCA



About KMTA NHA

What is a National Heritage Area?

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. NHAs tell nationally important stories that celebrate our diverse heritage. NHAs are lived-in landscapes. Consequently, NHA entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.



OUR VISION

To discover, preserve, and enable the unique relationships between the communities, resources, and landscape of the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area.

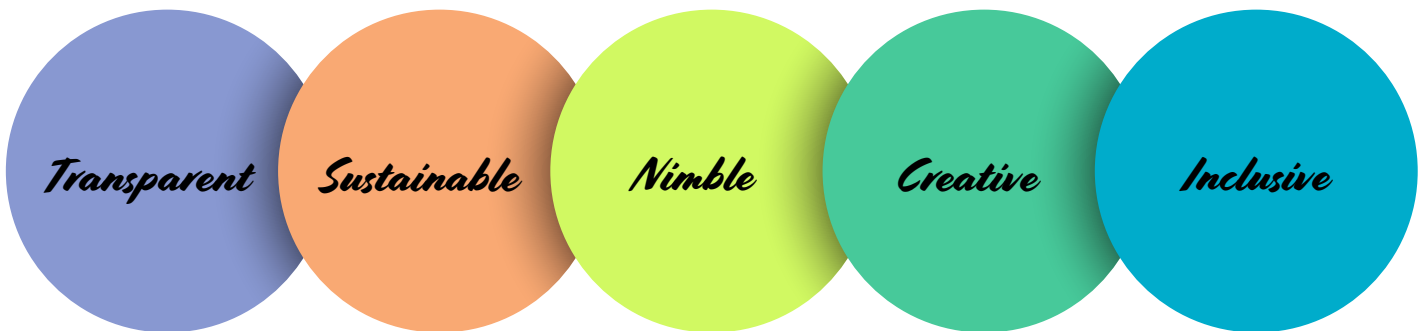
OUR MISSION

To recognize, preserve, and interpret the historic, scenic, natural resources, and cultural landscape of the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm historic transportation corridor, and to promote and facilitate the public enjoyment of these resources.



Values & Strategies

Values



Strategies

These KMTA strategies will guide our work to promote, protect, and preserve the historical, natural, and recreational opportunities within the KMTA National Heritage Area:

- Strengthen sense of community and identity through NHA resources;
- Restore/Preserve historic trails and byways;
- Promote cultural, historical, natural, scenic, and recreational resources through support of museums, educational programs, and published material;
- Create signage to tell the story of the KMTA NHA; and
- Educate the public, particularly school children, regarding the history and resources of the KMTA NHA.

The KMTA Strategic Sustainability Plan is a guide for the KMTA Board and staff as we work to achieve sustainability grounded in fiscal stability through diversification of long-term funding sources.

Management Plan

The KMTA NHA Management Plan was developed with the input of local residents, non-governmental organizations, Alaska Native entities, and national and state entities that manage trails, transportation facilities, lands, and resources. The National Park Service is charged with technical assistance and oversight of the federal funds appropriated by Congress for the development of the NHA. The Management Plan meets the requirements of the legislation and the vision of communities and organizations within the National Heritage Area. Its purpose is to encourage preservation and conservation of the region's nationally important story. It intentionally leaves room for flexibility so that themes and objectives can evolve at the grass-roots level. A long-term goal of the management plan is develop a strategic plan for sustainability as federal funding for the program becomes less certain over time.

Goals & Objectives



INCREASE AWARENESS OF KMTA

KMTA will increase awareness and knowledge of the National Heritage Area among residents, travelers, and community partners.

- Create a marketing plan to reach diverse audiences
 - Develop KMTA marketing material to distribute
 - Host 'signature events' such as bike races, trail building parties, etc.
 - Maintain an updated website of KMTA projects
 - Develop a social media presence
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DIVERSIFY FUNDING SOURCES

KMTA will seek funding from diverse funding sources, including grants, publications, partnerships, and events.

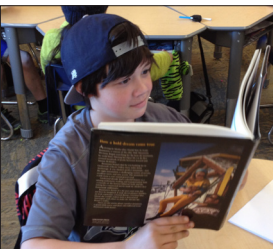
- Explore new grant opportunities to fund projects especially through public-private partnerships
 - Explore sponsoring events and services such as fundraisers
 - Evaluate the creation of an endowment fund
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STRENGTHEN GRANT STRUCTURE

KMTA will strengthen its grant structure by creating clear application requirements, project goals, evaluation criteria, and timelines that are easy for prospective grantees to understand and are relevant to our mission.

- Develop protocol and procedures for effective and efficient operations
 - Develop clear grant application timelines, trainings, and review procedures
 - Promote and hold grant information sessions in our communities
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PUBLISH EDUCATIONAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIAL

KMTA will continue to publish books and other products to tell the story of the Heritage Area's people, places, and history.

- Publish books in various genres
 - Produce videos, brochures, or other material detailing the history of the area
 - Continue to develop and promote educational curricula for teachers
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Goals & Objectives



IMPROVE BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

KMTA will improve Board effectiveness through Board Members' attendance and participation in NHA training and conferences.

- Participate in monthly NHA webinars with best practices information
 - KMTA Board Members will guide and participate in community outreach
 - Increase Board participation in organization committees, events, and identifying grant opportunities
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DEVELOP DIVERSE PARTNERSHIPS

KMTA will develop diverse partnerships with service agencies, businesses, community leaders, and project partners.

- Develop partnership with tourist industry and cruise ship entities
 - Develop cultural and historical material to provide partners
 - Cultivate partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and granting agencies to promote the NHA
 - Cultivate public-private partnerships with businesses, non-profits, government, and other granting agencies.
 - Develop partnerships with Alaska Railroad, INHT, Alaska Huts, and other for-profit and non-profit entities
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DEVELOP SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

KMTA will develop 'Signature Projects' to focus efforts and guide grant funding. (Signature Projects are large long-term projects with KMTA as the sponsoring organization.)

- Partner with Iditarod NHT partners from Seward through Girdwood
 - Develop a Trails, Education, and Publishing Program
 - Establish a biannual Community-Based Grants Program
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PRIORITIZE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

KMTA will make youth engagement and education a priority and will work to attract younger people to participate in KMTA's projects and activities.

- Continue to promote and fund school field trips in the Heritage Area
 - Develop relationships with schools in the Heritage Area to promote our curriculum materials and projects
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