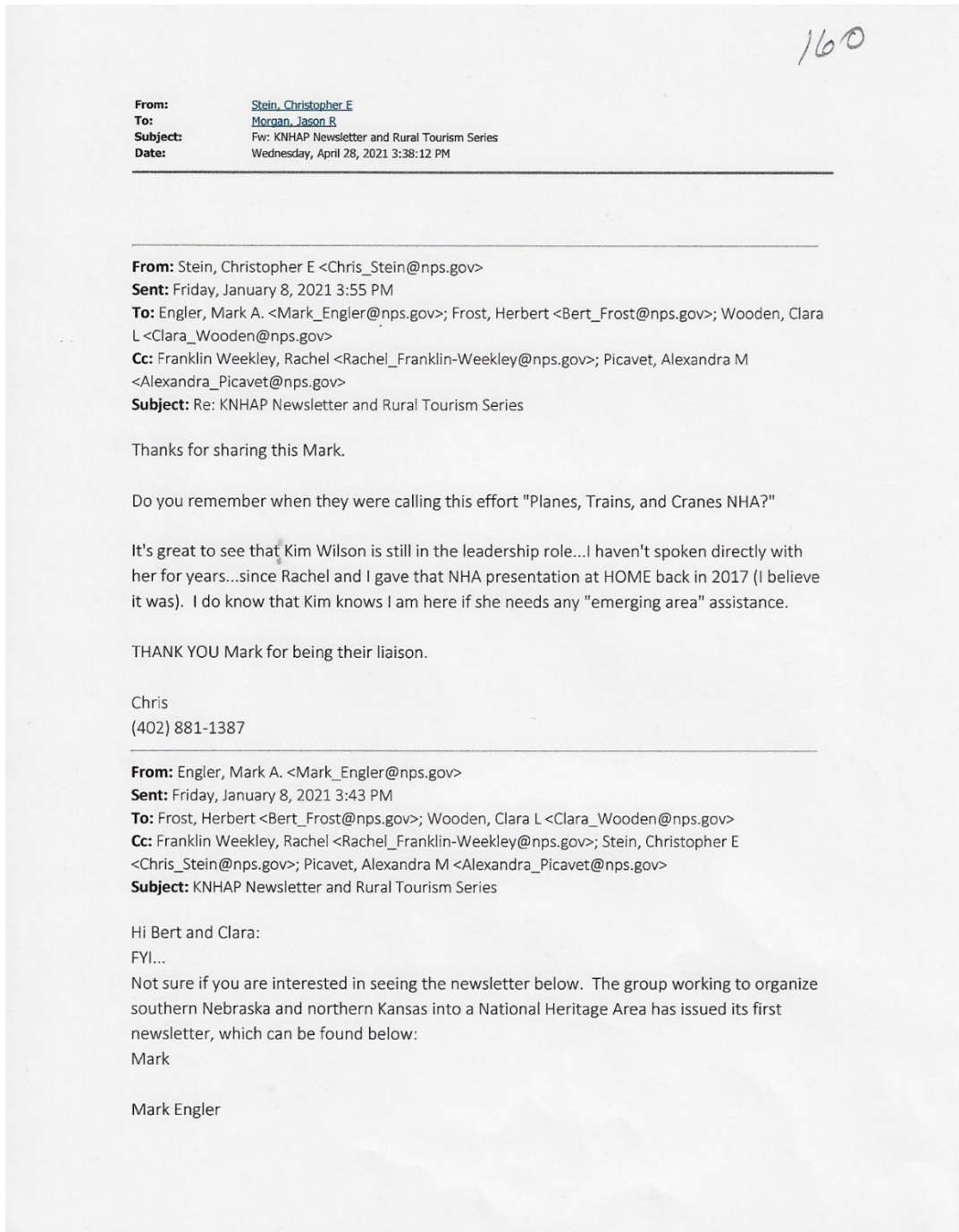


# Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership

Freedom of Information Act documents from request filed by Angel Cushing, April 2021 with the National Park Service, received July 2021, posted to Western Region Property Rights Coalition Facebook page: July 24-August 2, 2021.

## 2021 Documents



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Superintendent  
Homestead National Monument of America  
8523 West State Highway 4  
Beatrice, Nebraska 68310  
Phone 402.223.3514

**From:** Kim Wilson <kwilson4@unl.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 8, 2021 2:11 PM  
**Cc:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>; Franklin Weekley, Rachel <Rachel\_Franklin-Weekley@nps.gov>; Vachak@bluevalley.net <Vachak@bluevalley.net>; Ponyexpressmuseum@bluevalley.net <Ponyexpressmuseum@bluevalley.net>; director@visitmarysvilleks.org <director@visitmarysvilleks.org>; Chris@humanitiesnebraska.org <Chris@humanitiesnebraska.org>; John Carroll <jcarroll2@unl.edu>; Susie Haver <info@cloudcountytourism.com>; Katie Nieland <knieland2@unl.edu>; Tina Henderson <tinah@nefb.org>; Rod Wagner <rod.wagner@nebraska.gov>; ppri@hamilton.net <ppri@hamilton.net>; Nebraska Statewide Arboretum <arboretum@unl.edu>; Nebraska@audubon.org <Nebraska@audubon.org>; rowsanctuary@audubon.org <rowsanctuary@audubon.org>; Jill Dolberg <jill.dolberg@nebraska.gov>; michelle stryker <michelle.stryker@nebraska.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] KNHAP Newsletter and Rural Tourism Series

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Happy New Year! And welcome to our new newsletter connecting and keeping you informed about the activities of our new organization.....

### **The Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership**

#### **Who are we?**

We are the only grassroots organization connecting communities and attractions between 49 North Central Kansas and South Central Nebraska counties while acting as a catalyst for economic development through cultural heritage tourism.

**Our mission** is to connect communities and attractions, instill pride of place, and promote immersive experiences for residents and visitors to

enhance appreciation for the region's unique landscape and nationally significant cultural history.

**Our Vision and Goals** are focused on establishing a National Heritage Area within the 49 counties between North Central Kansas and South Central Nebraska.

**What is a National Heritage Area (NHA)?**

...NHAs are designated by Congress recognizing the national importance of the region's sites and history.

...NHAs are administered by the National Parks Service (NPS) and provides technical assistance. Matching federal funds are available.

...NHA's are grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development with the first established in 1984.

**What National Heritage Areas are NOT:**

...National Park Service Units.

...Designations that affect any private property rights.

...Designations that assume any ownership of land inside the heritage area or impose any land use controls.

See: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/what-is-a-national-heritage-area.htm>

**Join us!  
Rural Tourism Series**

Beginning Friday, January 15th, 1:00 – 2:00 (Central), we are offering a bi-weekly webinar called the **Rural Tourism Series**. This series will feature board members and invited guests sharing their knowledge and expertise on cultural heritage tourism including fundraising, Mainstreet preservation, agritourism, placemaking and many more. Join us for our very first webinar on **Marketing and Storytelling**. Please go to our Facebook page (@KNHeritage) for the webinar schedule and topics.

**Link to the webinars:** <https://tinyurl.com/ruraltourismseries>

**How Can You Help?**

As we move towards establishing our nonprofit status, please help us by:

- Be informed! Know what a NHA is (and what it is not)!
- “Like” us on Facebook! Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership (@KNHeritage)
- Advocate for our cause! Advocacy is necessary to move us forward!
- Speaking opportunities! Let us come and speak with your group or organization!
- Partnership! We would love to seek mutually beneficial partnerships!
- Letter of support! As we continue our pursuit of national designation, we will be collecting letters of support. If you feel comfortable, we would love to have one from you!
- Monetary support! As you read above, all national appropriation funding is a 1:1 match. Anything you or your organization can contribute can go towards this!

## Board Members

<b>Ashley Olson - NE</b> Co-chair of KNHAP Willa Cather Foundation	<b>Luke Mahin - KS</b> Co- chair of KNHAP Republic County Economic Development	<b>Kyle Peterson - KS</b> Treasurer of KNHAP Mitchell County Historical Society Museum
<b>Jenna Bartja - NE</b> Secretary of KNHAP Nebraska Tourism Commission	<b>Kim Wilson - NE</b> Executive Director of KNHAP University of Nebraska - Lincoln	<b>Jarrod McCartney - NE</b> Heritage Development of Red Cloud
<b>Carol Schlegel - NE</b> McCook/Red Willow Tourism	<b>Kelly Larson - KS</b> Lincoln County Economic Development	<b>Sue Stringer KS</b> Kansas Agritourism
<b>Roger Jasnoch - NE</b> Visit Kearney	<b>Shaley George - KS</b> National Orphan Train Complex	<b>Kristin Malek - At-large</b> University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Ideas? Questions? Please contact our executive director, Kim Wilson at [kwilson4@unl.edu](mailto:kwilson4@unl.edu) or 765-427-9643

Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership Minutes  
Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting via Zoom: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/91907580763>

Thursday, January 21, 2021, 10:00 - 12:00

**Meeting Agenda**

Blue highlighted/underlined items below are linked to documents for your convenience and review.

10:00 - 10:05 **Welcome and Changes to the Agenda** - Kim

**Review to Approve** 10 [29 20 Meeting Minutes](#) and [12 17 20](#) – Kim

Jarrod brings a motion to approve the [10/29/2020 Minutes](#), seconded by Kyle. Motion passes. Luke brings a motion to approve the [12/17/2020 Minutes](#), seconded by Kelly. Motion passes.

10:05 - 10:30 **Executive Director's Report** - Kim

1. COVID 19 Impact on Cultural Heritage Tourism - Update
2. [Becoming a 501\(c\)\(3\)](#) Process Update: Documents submitted 10-30-20 (180 days to review and send back)

Upon KNHAP's designation as a 501(c)(3), an official letter will be sent to the business address listed in our application, which is Willa Cather Foundation's. So they will keep a look out for that notification.

3. Ad Hoc Committee (Kim, Luke, and Ashley) - political support
  - a. Kansas elected officials report – Luke

Meeting with the office of the Lt. Gov. was extremely well received. They expressed a desire to see the timeline for a FS and application for NHA status accelerated. In addition to promising official letters of support from the Office of Rural Prosperity & the Department of Commerce, they committed \$15K toward the project. Luke and Shayley are setting additional meetings and hope to acquire further funding. Luke encourages people in KS to help him follow up with officials outside of his sphere of influence.

- b. Nebraska elected officials report – Ashley

Ashley received quick responses from Nebraska state senators and representatives. Meetings are now set with the Governor's office and Sen. Fischer's office.

10:30 - 10:35 **Governance Committee** - Chair, Carol Schlegel

We need to create a list of potential BOD replacements, with a special focus on curating a list of people with finance experience and any other areas where we currently feel a void or lack of representation exists on the BOD. Resumes are not expressly necessary when canvassing for folks, but they may be helpful to gage skillsets.

**Finance Committee** - Chair, Kyle Peterson

1. NCRPC -[Fiscal Agent or Pass-through Entity](#) for Kansas Funds

Kyle recommends we consider having a member of Dane Hansen Foundation on the board if we end up using them as a funding pass-through (in case we don't have nonprofit status by March). He will set a meeting with Emily from DH to establish her willingness to be a check cosigner/endorser for us.

10:35 - 11:00 **Fundraising Committee** - Chair, Jarrod McCartney

1. After the 501(c)(3) is finalized, we can go forward with separate bank accounts in Beloit and Superior.

2. Review the potential funders list on Google Drive and see who we might have a connection with and to add additional names to the list.

Need to begin creating application outlines and/or drafts for the different grants we will apply for. Kim and Ashley will plan a meeting with Peter Kewitt Foundation to better position KNHAP to pursue a grant through them.

Sue encouraged the committee to look into the Attraction Development grant which is being offered through Kansas Tourism. Deadline for submitting an application is April 30th.

3. Secure a mailing list for year-end ask letters, etc.
4. Probably need to reintroduce ourselves. We are thinking that it might be a good idea to simply invite potential stakeholders to a webinar that you and Kristin host explaining who we are and what we want to accomplish.

Grassroots support will take the most time. We need buy-in from smaller orgs throughout the study area, so beginning to lay the ground work for that now is important. The Rural Tourism Series webinars are helping us to do that currently. We need to continue to share the KNHAP Newsletter out among potential partners and existing assets to remain visible.

In-person community events may begin in September? Community outreach events can possibly be assigned as projects to Kristin's advanced event planning class. Timeframe for this would be fall, when school is back in session.

5. Another press release will make it easier to raise some initial funding from organizations rather than cold calling them.
6. Each subcommittees put together a budget request--or basically just an estimate of what their costs will be in 2021-22. Obviously the Feasibility Study will be the biggest component of the budget/fundraising.

11:00 - 11:30

**Communication and Marketing Committee** - Chair, Kristin Malek

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1gQ4ygOLgSVbpSgRKZSjSoaN8uLokgut>

1. Logo options

The 2 final KNHAP logo options were shared to FB to gauge the public's reaction. People were overwhelmingly drawn to the simpler logo but felt that the more colorful one would be appropriate for stickers and other merchandise in future. Kristin developed the simpler logo further with her intern, changing the font to make it more legible and bringing back the county lines. We will keep both logo templates so we can use them for different applications.

2. Review of the Newsletter

We need more photos for the Newsletter. Send Kim 20 contacts to receive the Newsletter if you haven't already and continue to share as you think of more.

3. Review of first webinar and determine next speakers

40 people logged on to our first webinar last Friday, along with some viewers on FB live. So the response was great and generated a lot of interest. The format was fairly informal and included lots of good discussion.

4. Webinar schedule

Looking for someone to be on our next panel Jan 29. Planning an Agritourism & Outdoor Recreation segment featuring Sue, Jenna, and a Nebraska Game & Parks representative TBD.

Main Street: invite director of the Main St program in KS or NE – Elizabeth Chase. Jarrod will reach out to SHIPPO (?), as they have more info on tax credit programs. Kelly was a Main St manager in Michigan, so she's can also be a panelist.

Place-making: how physical design helps create and promote an image/brand for communities. Instead of place-making, Kim recommends the panel talk about NHAs and why themes are important. Kim will provide context. Jim Ogle to join? Kim & KS professor LaBarbara James Wigfall could both be panelists. Nadine Single (KS) can speak to first impression surveys.

Museums and other assets can begin presenting after we have circled through our board members. Orphan Train, Kyle's museum, Stur? Willa Cather Foundation can join conversation if Stur can't. Shayley can reach out to some other larger, well established museum orgs to participate.

11:30 - 12:00 **Next Steps - Work for January meeting**

1. Committee Brainstorming (20 minutes)
  - a. What to focus on over the next month? In the next three months?
2. Report out (10 minutes)

Finance: Kyle is on board with helping fundraising committee to develop grant application outlines, compile deadlines, etc. Donations we receive at this point don't need to be receipted, but private donations in future will need to be. Kyle will create a spreadsheet to keep track of in-kind contributions and email to the BOD.

Fundraising committee will meet with the Finance Committee on Feb 11. Kim will join.

Communications committee: Jenna will work on developing a 5 minute PP deck to introduce KNHAP for webinars. Kristin, Jenna, Sue, and NGPC rep will meet on Wednesday 27, 12:30 – 1:30 PM to prep for the Jan 29 webinar.

FS adhoc Committee: Kim will rework the Big Sky RFP for KNHAP so it's ready to go when we are.

3. Next Meeting, Thursday, February 18th, 10:00 - 12:00

12:00 **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 11:41 AM.

College of Engineering  
(c) 765-427-9643  
(o) 402-472-5149

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**From:** "Stein, Christopher E" <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Date:** Friday, January 22, 2021 at 1:10 PM  
**To:** (b) (6) "Coulter, Sarah"  
<sarah@calumetcollaborative.org>, Bernard Turner <bern@highlightsofchicago.com>, (b) (6)  
(b) (6) Mark Bouman <Mbouman@fieldmuseum.org>,  
Don Erickson <summit5@centurytel.net>, Kim Wilson <kwilson4@unl.edu>, John Cooke  
<cojo2@me.com>  
**Subject:** Emerging NHA call

**Non-NU Email**

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All:

Hello from Minnesota.

PLEASE be advised that, Jim Ogle, the executive director of Freedom's Frontier NHA wants to have a call where emerging NHAs can speak to established NHAs (and the Alliance of NHAs) for advice.

Before I share your names with Jim, please let me know if you are interested in participating in such a call? I also know that Jim has individually spoken with some of you in the past. Here's Jim's message to me....

**We hope to create a forum during which emerging heritage areas can share challenges and common questions to move forward with their projects more effectively. From time to time, ANHA members with specific expertise will join the call to answer questions and provide support.**

Thank you for letting me know.

Chris

Christopher E. Stein, Program Manager  
National Heritage Areas *and* Large Landscape Initiatives  
National Park Service, Interior Regions 3, 4, and 5



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**From:** [Stein, Christopher E](#)  
**To:** [Morgan, Jason R](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Emerging NHA call  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 11:06:41 AM

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**From:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 23, 2021 7:00 AM  
**To:** Kim Wilson <kwilson4@unl.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Emerging NHA call

Thanks Kim. Hope all is well?

Chris

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**From:** Kim Wilson <kwilson4@unl.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 22, 2021 2:51 PM  
**To:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>; (b) (6)  
Coulter, Sarah <sarah@calumetcollaborative.org>; Bernard Turner  
<bern@highlightsofchicago.com>; (b) (6) Mark  
Bouman <Mbouman@fieldmuseum.org>; Don Erickson <summit5@centurytel.net>; John Cooke  
<cojo2@me.com>  
**Cc:** Ashley Olson <aolson@willacather.org>; Luke Mahin <rced@nckcn.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Emerging NHA call

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Hi Chris,

The Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership would like to participate in these discussions.

Thank you,

**Kim L. Wilson**  
Professor, Landscape Architecture  
Special Projects, College of Engineering  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Executive Director, KNHAP

137a Othmer

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**From:** [Stein, Christopher E](#)  
**To:** [Morgan, Jason R](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Kim Wilson  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 3:38:02 PM

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**From:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 3:56 PM  
**To:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Kim Wilson

Thanks Mark.  
No reason whatsoever not to participate.  
Hope all is well.  
Chris

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**From:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 3:37 PM  
**To:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Kim Wilson

Hi Chirs:  
Kim Wilson is organizing a webinar for the proposed Heritage Area that she has been working on. She asked if I could talk on a panel, on this webinar discussing a sense of time and place, using the Homestead Heritage Center and other park programs and structures as an example. Do you know of any reason why I should not participate?  
Thank you Chris,  
Mark

Mark Engler  
Superintendent  
Homestead National Historical Park  
8523 West State Highway 4  
Beatrice, Nebraska 68310  
Phone 402.223.3514

*Changing the name of this National Park Service unit from Homestead National Monument of America to Homestead National Historical Park, better represents the many cultural, natural, and recreational features visitors will find here. We invite you to explore, recreate and learn at Homestead National Historical Park.*

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**From:** [Stein, Christopher E](#)  
**To:** [Morgan, Jason R](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: One more thing...  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 3:37:43 PM

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**From:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 8:20 PM  
**To:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: One more thing...

Good to know Mark. I knew you knew! . Just a friendly reminder.

PEACE

Chris

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

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**From:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2021 8:15:41 PM  
**To:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: One more thing...

Thanks Chris, I am aware that I can not advocate for the idea. It is good to get the reminder.  
Thanks for your help!  
Mark

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 11, 2021, at 7:16 PM, Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov> wrote:

I believe you know this, but...don't be "too much" of their advocate (this is one of those gray areas). Don't discourage them either. In fact, if it was me, I always encourage them. These "emerging areas" impress me to no end.

It is totally appropriate that you show how HOME fits into their project. TOTALLY! In fact, "when" (?) they are designated, you (or a staff member you designate) will be their liaison. Then you can show them all the love they deserve! You will undoubtedly become "best friends."

well. Stay well.

Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership Minutes  
Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting via Zoom: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/93058812974>

Thursday, February 25, 2021, 10:00 - 12:00

**Meeting Agenda**

*Blue highlighted/underlined items below are linked to documents for your convenience and review.*

10:00 - 10:05 **Welcome and Changes to the Agenda** - Kim

**Review to Approve [Meeting Minutes](#)** – Kim

10:05 - 10:30 **Executive Director's Report** - Kim

1. COVID 19 Impact on Cultural Heritage Tourism - Update
2. [Becoming a 501\(c\)\(3\)](#) Process Update: Documents submitted 10-30-20 (180 days to review and send back) > April.

Does anyone know who to contact in IRS to get an update on our filing status?

3. Ad Hoc Committee (Kim, Luke, and Ashley) - political support
  - a. Kansas elected officials (Luke) - Rep. Lisa Moser; David Toland (LT Gove.)/Rural Prosperity;

Luke: Expecting letters of support from several KS representatives. Office of Rural Prosperity has sent a letter detailing their support in the form of \$15K and a future commitment of \$5K for staff (?) They want a timeline and a deadline for FS completion by sometime in 2022 as a condition of their financial support. Mostly just want to make sure the ball keeps rolling forward. Would probably be fine if we gave them a tentative deadline and had to amend it at a later date.

- b. Nebraska elected officials (Ashley) - Jacob Wenger (Sasse); Mark Dreiling (Bacon); Jerad Reimers (Smith); Joe Hack (Fischer); Gov. Richett's Office; Recommend we gain support from the Ag industry.

Ashley & Kim had successful meetings with NE reps and political officials, all expressing their support. The governor's office wanted us to reach out to the Ag industry to make sure they're supportive/aware. Will also brief Bacon.

A strong selling point is that Nebraska has yet to take advantage of the federal funding that comes with an NHA. We do not have one in our state yet, so it's an unclaimed opportunity.

Fortenberry's office has yet to be contacted. His district is not in our study area, but it would still be good to brief him as well.

Freedom's Frontier can sit-in at these meetings to help express the positive impact of NHAs.

When do we need the letters of support? Prior to grant proposals being sent out so they can be included in those applications. It will also be needed for the FS.

4. 2021-2022 Nonprofit Corporation Biennial Report - Due April 1st.

Kim will prepare and submit this.

5. Schedule of Board Meetings

Third Thursdays, 10-12 until we move face to face and this would alternate months. This will likely begin in Fall. First meeting will be in Lincoln, KS. Funding conversations and FS prep will require more communication and collaboration among our board.

10:30 - **Governance Committee** - Chair, Carol Schlegel

1. Potential Board Members - Board members term that ends in 2023 (4).

Kelly: subcommittee was not able to meet but I started a list of potential board members and shared with the committee. In Google drive in Governance. Contact me with other people you have in mind. Good to be prepared for the unexpected by keeping a solid running list of potential replacements for when board memberships expire.

**Finance Committee** - Chair, Kyle Peterson

Shayley put together a list of Dane G Hansen affiliates that have upcoming grant deadlines. Grant narrative will be the same for all the Dane G Hansen asks. **Need an itemized list of what the FS will be comprised of with associated costs. Also need to know what amount we will be requesting from each grant; preferably the same ask will be made for each to help make it feel cohesive and fair.** Shayley's grant list is comprised of all Kansas organizations; Jarrod is working on the NE list. Recommends we use the regional planning office's 501(3)© if we don't have our status approved before the grant deadlines.

Kim: needs another Adhoc committee to look at Big Sky's FS and adapt it for our needs. Kim will take the lead but would like to have someone from KS to bounce ideas off. Sue can help. RFP will be released through our org – not through a state government agency – to avoid conflict of interest, red tape, etc.

Kim's students have done a lot of work with regards to asset compilation, so the RFP will need to request what we need, not what we already have.

Not worth our while to have public meetings until FS is in motion because they will have to be part of that process.

- 11:00 **Fundraising Committee** - Chair, Jarrod McCartney

KNHAP received \$3K from a regional partnership org in Nebraska. The funds are currently being held by Willa Cather Foundation, earmarked for KNHAP.

**Estimate needed for student work hours to include as in-kind for grant applications. Finance committee can/will organize all in-kind contributions from students and board members.**

Shayley will create the excel sheet listing grants. Fundraising and/or finance will need to create a new doc for budgetary items/in-kind contributions so we can calculate our in-kind match amount. **Are we asking for FS funding alone, or marketing as well, etc? Ashley can share details with Shayley. Kim will include her write offs/donations in the doc.**

11:00 - 11:30 **Communication and Marketing Committee** - Chair, Kristin Malek

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1gQ4ygOLgSVbpSgRKZSJSoaN8uLokgut>

1. Logo Discussion
2. Social Media
3. Review Webinar and Schedule

Luke: Kristin made further edits to the logo based on input. State lines could be heavier, colors can be swapped out. Keep working on text.

Kim: Gray is dull, 'KS' and 'NE' are too bold, 'Heritage Area Partnership' is too thin. Name is more important than the area.

Maybe adjust the region to be more centered in the logo, even though it is currently based on real location of study area?

Luke: Kristin wanted to remind folks to like and share the upcoming webinar announcement on FB. FB reach and webinar attendance continues to be great.

Kim: everyone send 20 contacts that the announcement can be shared with.

Upcoming webinar schedule panelist recommendations? BODs volunteered to reach out to potential speakers for upcoming webinars.

Need to work on a consistent and appealing KNHAP intro - discuss at next Marketing committee meeting.

Marketing committee will discuss nonprofit announcement rollout, press releases, media blitz, etc.

Kim looking to hire a summer intern that could help with FS prep. Rural Prosperity initiative is looking to deploy interns, so we may be able to get one for this initiative. Would hire through UNL but may need to cost share. Kim will look into this further.

11:30                    **Next Meeting - Thursday, March 18th, 10:00 - 12:00**

Adjourned 11:16 AM.

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**From:** [Stein, Christopher E](#)  
**To:** [Morgan, Jason R](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Heritage Area Opposition  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 3:27:26 PM

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**From:** Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 2, 2021 2:24 PM  
**To:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>; Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Heritage Area Opposition

Thank you. Good to know. Is this a meeting you are planning to attend for other purposes Mark?  
Alex

Alexandra Picavet  
Assistant Regional Director  
Communications, Legislation and Partnerships  
National Park Service, Department of the Interior Regions 3, 4, 5

402-960-0688  
apicavet@nps.gov

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**From:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 2, 2021 2:09 PM  
**To:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>; Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Heritage Area Opposition

Hi Alex and Chris:  
]FYI..  
Mark

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**From:** Carol Schlegel <carol@visitmccook.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 2, 2021 1:07 PM  
**To:** 'Kim Wilson' <kwilson4@unl.edu>; 'Kelly Larson' <lcedfdirector@outlook.com>; 'Bartja, Jenna' <Jenna.Bartja@nebraska.gov>; 'Luke Mahin' <rccd@nckcn.com>; 'Jarrod McCartney' <jmccartney@redcloudnebraska.com>; 'Ashley Olson' <aolson@willacather.org>; Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>; info@orphantraindepot.org <info@orphantraindepot.org>; mchistorical@yahoo.com <mchistorical@yahoo.com>; rjasnoch@visitKearney.org <rjasnoch@visitKearney.org>; 'Kristin Malek' <drkevents@unl.edu>; Sue.Stringer@KS.GOV

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<Sue.Stringer@KS.GOV>; (b) (6)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Heritage Area Opposition

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

I received this from our County Clerk's office this morning. I don't know how many other counties may have gotten it but I wanted you all to know it is out there.

It will be on the County Commissioners' agenda in two weeks, March 15.

Any thoughts?

---

Carol Schlegel  
Executive Director  
McCook/Red Willow County Visitors Bureau  
402 Norris Avenue, Room 318  
P. O. Box 147  
McCook, NE 69001  
308-345-1200 ext. 318  
[Carol@VisitMcCook.com](mailto:Carol@VisitMcCook.com)





JeffKansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

Meeting via Zoom: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/91709210772>

Thursday, March 18th, 2021, 10:30 - 12:30

**Meeting Agenda**

*Blue highlighted/underlined items below are linked to documents for your convenience and review.*

10:30 - 10:35 **Welcome and Changes to the Agenda - Kim**

**Review to Approve [Meeting Minutes](#) – Kim**

Sue motions to approve prior meeting's minutes. Kyle seconds. All in favor.

10:35 - 11:30 **Executive Director's Report - Kim**

1. COVID 19 Impact on Cultural Heritage Tourism - Updates

Shayley: Orphan Train is having better days with visitation. 15 people per day is getting back closer to what we'd "normally" see.

Roger: Sports markets outperforming regular years in terms of attendance. A youth speech competition begins tomorrow. However, the leisure and convention markets are still struggling and we anticipate a slower return to normalcy there.

Kim: University still hasn't approved travel yet.

Kristin: Out of 17 Universities we approached as potential partners in pursuit of a grant, none were willing/able to send a single representative to attend a conference due to travel restrictions.

Jenna: State tourism is optimistic about travel in the near future; there is pent-up demand. With commissioner approval, the commission hopes to have an in-person travel conference in late October in Grand Island.

2. [Becoming a 501\(c\)\(3\)](#) Process Update: Documents submitted 10-30-20 (180 days to review and send back) > April.

3. Kansas elected officials (Luke) and Nebraska (Ashley)

Luke met with Sen. Marshall's office. They are willing to give a letter of support when we submit our official application to become an NHA, which will be post-FS.

Kim: we have met with 10-12 elected officials and they're all on-board, with no opposition.

4. NHA Opposition Discussion

a. Red Willow County Meeting

b. How is the opposition is undermining NHAs?

i. [Document Sent to County Commissioners](#)

c. How to be proactive?

i. [ANHA Doc](#)

Carol: Spoke with county commissioners and it went well. Their main questions/concerns revolved around the NHA potentially being used as a vessel for government land grabs. Carol explained that, throughout the history of NHAs since their establishment, there has NEVER been a single instance of NHAs using their jurisdiction to impose land controls or infringe upon property rights in any way. Her commissioners were receptive and relieved to hear that. They also recognized how cloudy and convoluted the opposition doc that was sent to the county clerk was and were appreciative of Carol laying out the facts. Unfortunately, a local newspaper sensationalized the "conflict" in an article that may lead more people to question the motive for creating an NHA if they don't read beyond the

headline.

Kristin: Facebook has been a hotspot for misinformation. Luke has had a great approach to respond, which is to attempt to find common ground and respectfully provide factual information. He has also done a good job of requesting that those spreading misinformation provide evidence/support for their claims for us to delve into further which, of course, they have been unable to do.

Luke: reached out to Jim Ogle with Freedom's Frontier NHA in KS and he provided a valuable document explaining the origins/history/legislative parameters of NHAs. How do we piece together the opposing arguments and come up with a cohesive response? Luke is more concerned about the counties that KNHAP board members don't have ties to or influence in. He visited with NTV's producer/assistant producer(?) – who happens to be planning to run for governor - and feels that their initial response was likely politically motivated. Can/should we try to recruit/source a nonbiased asset or individual to act as a mediator of sorts?

Kyle: Met with city council members and was able to disperse the doc from Jim O to them and others within his network. At a recent city council (?) meeting, there was no opposition from councilmen/women but ranchers in attendance were solidly against it. They did not seem interested at all in hearing anything to the contrary of what has been rumored about the potential for land grabs, private property infringement, etc. The group that is spreading misinformation is primarily trying to get landowners fired up. KS Barn alliance had similar issues a few years back while trying to survey barns for a historic register and people created a scare that this simple process would be used to affect their property rights.

Shayley: There's been talk around town, rumors being spread, and small fires to put out. She is scheduling one-on-one meetings over coffee with some of the concerned locals to answer questions and provide fact-based information about NHAs. A well-seasoned mediator friend is going to accompany her as a nonbiased aid. Additional rumors are spreading that the NHA will affect zoning in a way to prevent the county from collecting taxes within the designated area.

Sue: has had many similar experiences when working on various projects involving trails, DOT, etc. The "not in my backyard" groups are always extremely skeptical/wary of government interference. Mary (FB lady running for governor) has a goat farm, involved with agritourism. Sue can reach out to her if necessary and try to quell her concerns.

Luke thinks it very unlikely that any discussions with her would be productive or beneficial. Similarly, he has avoided an interview with Trent Luce (radio guy), who has caught wind of the opposition and begun to stir things up. He recently hosted a meeting in Valentine, which is not even a part of our study area.

Ashley: not heard anything from the county clerk, who she warned might be receiving the opposition packet containing misinformation. She didn't hear back but plans to follow up by phone. A concerned citizens meeting is scheduled to take place in Red Cloud April 6. Ashley will meet with city commissioners as needed in advance of this meeting.

Kim: These groups have only stopped 1 NHA, but they've slowed the process/muddied the waters for others. We need to develop a strategy to get ahead of them but also continue to reinforce our positive message, the benefits of NHAs, and reassure communities after these meetings occur.

Kristin: gotten lots of FB messages. Most were polite and genuinely looking for/open to information. Since then, we've had a mixed bag of messages – many outlandish and with little to no interest in productive dialogue and information sharing. False information spreads quickly through social media, so it is important that we are proactive about sharing our message and try to get it out to as many people as possible.

Kim: Can we make it a strategy to communicate with all county commissioners throughout our study area?

Luke: suggests board members reach out to those commissioners and city councilmen/women that we have an established relationship with. If the facts come from an associate/friend, it will help underscore our reputability as an organization because the information is coming from someone local who these people already know/trust.

Jenna: we can explore sending out an industry announcement explaining what an NHA is/isn't. Kim & Jenna to discuss with our PR specialist.

Ashley/Roger: Nebraska Association of County Officials would be a good place to share our information. We should make an initial contact there to establish a relationship and get the facts out there to head-off the misinformation campaign. The association meets in Kearney in December for their annual meeting, so perhaps we can give a presentation. Kim will reach out to John Cannon, their president/chair.

Sue: KS Association of Counties would be the equivalent on the KS side. Kimberly Qualls (spelling?) is her contact there.

Kim: could also send out an updated newsletter to explain the origins of NHAs, the parameters they operate under, and the benefits.

Shayley: can place an article in the Salina Journal, their local newspaper, to share facts and benefits of NHAs, and also address/quell any local concerns specifically. Shayley will work with Betsy to draft something and share with Kim & Kristin for review prior to print.

Kristin: we can use the next webinar to share additional information about NHAs by building it into the conversation naturally. She noted that using "tourism" in the title of last week's webinar might have caused a drop in attendance, so we'll need to brainstorm some other terms we can use in its place. The title needs to be catchy and grab peoples attention so people will attend in satisfactory numbers. We can invite Jim Ogle to be one of the speakers.

Kyle: feels we need someone not on the KNHAP board to speak to this and address the elephant in the room.

Ashley: good idea would be to invite a rancher or farmer within the Freedom Frontier NHA to be a panelist and provide their real-life perspective.

Sue: can reach out to a person she knows who lives in an NHA jurisdiction and has not been negatively affected.

Luke: We can stage a question or three to Jim that will answer some of folks' concerns.

Kim: The point is not to confront – we're going to continue offering the same valuable content to our base/following but with a stronger focus on including more information about NHAs.

Kristin: we can have an all KS panel, and in the near future we can balance it with one all NE if need be. Jarrod can join Jim Ogle and we'll work on finding a suitable private property owner who has directly benefited from an NHA.

Ashley: feels it's important that she and Kim circle back to the NE Farm bureau contact the governor's office provided and schedule a meeting. That will hopefully allow them time to communicate with their producers ahead of the misinformation train. What's our stance on attending the public meetings?

Kim: would like for board members to attend to get an idea of what the opposition is using as ammunition so we can most effectively build our response.

Sue: experience in public meetings is to not engage as an individual speaker against a hoard of upset citizens – you'll get crucified. One-on-one conversations are most productive but, for these meetings it's probably best to just sit in the back and listen.

Ashley: do we need to decide who will attend each of these upcoming meetings?  
Luke will attend Thayer County public meeting. Roger will try to attend the one in Hall County – Grand Island on April 10, for which there is a \$25 registration fee.

Kristen: preparing a Facebook post (dropped it in the comments) to acknowledge the spread of misinformation and encourage people to reach out with questions; perhaps add that we are open to having a KNHAP volunteer attend public meetings?

Kim: follow this up with the benefits of an NHA (federal funding, economic development, support for ag industry, etc).

Luke has emailed the Kansas Livestock Association but has not heard back. He's already contacted everyone he has a connection with or feels like would be receptive to a conversation. As he mentioned, he feels this information would be best coming from folks that have an established trust or positive/close working relationship with/among people that the anti-NHA campaigners are targeting.

Kyle doesn't know of any additional KS organizations that would be worth reaching out to or open to hearing from us. He thinks putting our White paper or a more concise piece dispelling myths about NHAs in all the local newspapers would have the biggest impact on ranchers/farmers' perspectives. Keep it short, sweet, and informational. We could use some of our funds to buy space in the newspapers for areas where we feel it's needed most. **Kyle will create a draft and share with Kristin.**

11:30 **Governance Committee** - Chair, Carol Schlegel

1. Potential Board Members - Board member's term that ends in 2023 - 4.

Governance has not met. The recent concerns over property rights has established the importance of diversifying our board to include landowners, farmers, ranchers and/or others well-connected in that arena. **Please share recommendations with the governance committee.**

**Finance Committee** - Chair, Kyle Peterson

Ready to begin generating reports as money comes in. **All subcommittees should send Kyle a budget request estimate detailing operational costs before our next meeting.**

**Fundraising Committee** - Chair, Jarrod McCartney

Shayley: we have what we need to start submitting some grant requests! She suggests we decide on a unified ask amount in all our requests aside from a select few. Is April 1 too soon a deadline? Include Kim on fundraising committee meetings prior to grant submittal.

11:45-12:00 **Communication and Marketing Committee** - Chair, Kristin Malek

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1gQ4ygOLgSVbpSgRKZSjSoaN8uLokgut>

1. Logo Discussion
2. Social Media
3. Review Webinar and Schedule

Kim: **Reminder: Make sure all general emails regarding KNHAP, especially with regards to the anti-NHA campaign, are sent to ALL board members.**

Kristin: The pushback has generated more interest on our FB page with lots of new followers and more sharing. 40-50 people follow us that don't also "Like" us, which gives us a measure of those that are wary or have concerns. Thoughts on posting pieces of the actual NHA act to Facebook? It might be a helpful tactic in dispelling misinformation online. Taking a different approach, we could also produce a post or series of posts dispelling common myths about NHAs. We could also do a series of spotlights featuring other NHAs, providing their history and impact while also drawing

attention to the fact that there has never been a single instance of land grabbing or private property infringement.

Kristin thinks Kim should be the moderator for the next webinar, as it will set a good precedent that we are taking these concerns seriously and want to address them head-on.

Logo is good, not great but will serve its purpose for now.

12:00 Ad Hoc Committee, Feasibility Study - [Review RFP Template](#)

Sue and Kim looked over the Big Sky RFP and it looked like an easy one to adapt for our needs. Kim will start plugging in our org name and making other necessary changes where needed.

Subcommittees should plan to meet between now and our next meeting, Thursday, April 22nd, 10:30 - 12:30.

**Next Meeting** - Thursday, April 22nd, 10:30 - 12:30

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

55

**From:** [Stein, Christopher E](#)  
**To:** [Morgan, Jason R](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gov. Ricketts Statement on KNHAP  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 3:37:15 PM

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**From:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 6:07 PM  
**To:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Cc:** Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gov. Ricketts Statement on KNHAP

Please do. It would be good to know. Their Feasibility Study gets sent to Bert for me to review and recommend for him.

Thank you.

Chris

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**From:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 6:01:26 PM  
**To:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Cc:** Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gov. Ricketts Statement on KNHAP

Hi Chris:  
I do not know, but can ask.  
Mark

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 7, 2021, at 5:32 PM, Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov> wrote:

Thanks for sharing this impressive list of partner support, Mark. Do you know when they plan to finish their Feasibility Study? I have not been involved to date.

Chris

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**From:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 5:14:31 PM  
**To:** Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>; Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>

**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Re: Gov. Ricketts Statement on KNHAP

Hi Alex and Chris:

FYI...

Mark

Mark Engler  
Superintendent  
Homestead National Historical Park  
8523 West State Highway 4  
Beatrice, Nebraska 68310  
Phone 402.223.3514

*Changing the name of this National Park Service unit from Homestead National Monument of America to Homestead National Historical Park, better represents the many cultural, natural, and recreational features visitors will find here. We invite you to explore, recreate and learn at Homestead National Historical Park.*

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**From:** Ashley Olson <aolson@willacather.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 4:49 PM  
**To:** Luke Mahin <raced@nckcn.com>  
**Cc:** Bartja, Jenna <Jenna.Bartja@nebraska.gov>; Carol Schlegel <carol@visitmccook.com>; (b) (6) Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>; Jarrod McCartney <jmccartney@redcloudnebraska.com>; Kelly Gourley <lcedfdirector@outlook.com>; Kim Wilson <kwilson4@unl.edu>; Kristin Malek <drkevents@unl.edu>; Mitchell Co. Historical <mchistorical@yahoo.com>; Roger Jasnoch <Rjasnoch@visit Kearney.microsoftonline.com>; Shaley George <info@orphantraindepot.org>; Stringer, Sue [KDWPT] <Sue.Stringer@ks.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Gov. Ricketts Statement on KNHAP

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Hello, all,

There is an ongoing joke in our office that every time I take a day off, a crisis ensues. Today is no exception. Here is an email I sent a few minutes ago to the Nebraska's Governor's Office, Anthony Goins (Director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development) and Steve Wellman (Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture).

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Taylor, Steve, and Tony,

I appreciated the opportunity to visit with you in January about the concept of a Kansas-Nebraska National Heritage Area. At the conclusion of our meeting, you had recommended I contact the Nebraska Farm Bureau to discuss the initiative. A meeting with President McHargue has long been scheduled for next Tuesday.

To say I was distressed to receive the attached letter is an understatement. I was extremely disappointed that you did not contact me to express your concerns before opposing this initiative so publicly. I'm also disappointed in the mischaracterization in your letter describing the initiative as "the Willa Cather Foundation's plans to seek a National Heritage Area designation."

I ask that you correct the record: this project is an effort led by volunteers that make up the Kansas-Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership. I'm but one of thirteen bi-state volunteer board members representing attractions and tourism/economic development professionals in the 49-county region. The support letter I provided you in January (also attached here) was signed by representatives from over thirty organizations in Nebraska and Kansas. I fail to understand why the Willa Cather Foundation is the sole organization called out in your letter.

The purpose of briefing you in January was to create an open line of communication in the event that your offices received questions or concerns, so that we might jointly work together to address questions and evaluate the merits of this project. Resident and stakeholder feedback is central to studying the feasibility of this initiative.

Please correct the record about the Willa Cather Foundation's involvement in this project. This is not solely our initiative and I fear your implication of our organization will result in unintended and unnecessary collateral damage to our mission-driven work.

**Ashley Olson | Executive Director**  
The Willa Cather Foundation  
413 North Webster Street, Red Cloud, NE 68970  
Tel: 402-746-2653 | Fax: 402-746-2652  
Web: [www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org) | [www.VirtualCather.org](http://www.VirtualCather.org)

On Wed, Apr 7, 2021 at 4:36 PM Luke Mahin <[rced@nckcn.com](mailto:rced@nckcn.com)> wrote:

In case anyone hasn't seen this press release from the Nebraska Governor I wanted to share it with the whole board. Many people are busy right now and just wanted to pass along some additional things. Here is the link - <https://governor.nebraska.gov/press/gov-ricketts-state-leaders-oppose-federal-designation-south-central-nebraska>

Press releases from KNHAP went out to a lot of contacts and I don't plan on pulling any of them. Many news outlets done editorials supporting us



SP

already. The truth needs to be out there no matter which way this goes.

Ashley and I are doing an interview with NTV News at 11:30 am tomorrow to give the KNHAP side of the story regarding SCN land grab meetings. This can be an opportunity to counter that this project was not all the doing of Willa Cather. I'm personally offended the letter is addressed to Ashley directly and suggests Cather drove the project without extensive partnership with entities in both states throughout the process.

Kelly is going to reach out to Rep. Waymaster from KS who stated a joint meeting may be taking place to figure out what our legislators are thinking.

I don't know what will happen next but I do think we need everyone's input.

Thank you all for all your work on this,



**Luke Mahin**  
Director, Republic County Economic Development  
O: 785-374-3047 | C: 785-374-3511  
[www.republiccountykansas.com](http://www.republiccountykansas.com)  
Republic County, Kansas



**From:** [Stein, Christopher E](#)  
**To:** [Morgan, Jason R](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Letter From NE Governor in Opposition of NHA Designation  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 10:49:45 AM

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**From:** Kim Wilson <[kwilson4@unl.edu](mailto:kwilson4@unl.edu)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 10:51 PM  
**To:** Stein, Christopher E <[Chris\\_Stein@nps.gov](mailto:Chris_Stein@nps.gov)>; Engler, Mark A. <[Mark\\_Engler@nps.gov](mailto:Mark_Engler@nps.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Letter From NE Governor in Opposition of NHA Designation

Mark and Chris, I changed the meeting to 2:30 because of our 1:00 – 2:00 Rural Tourism Series. I hope this works for you all. K

---

**From:** Kim Wilson <[kwilson4@unl.edu](mailto:kwilson4@unl.edu)>  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 10:45 PM  
**To:** "Stein, Christopher E" <[Chris\\_Stein@nps.gov](mailto:Chris_Stein@nps.gov)>, "Engler, Mark A." <[Mark\\_Engler@nps.gov](mailto:Mark_Engler@nps.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Letter From NE Governor in Opposition of NHA Designation

Chris, let's meet at 1:30 on Friday. Mark, are you available to join in? I will send a zoom invite. I look forward to our conversation. K

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**From:** "Stein, Christopher E" <[Chris\\_Stein@nps.gov](mailto:Chris_Stein@nps.gov)>  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 10:28 PM  
**To:** Kim Wilson <[kwilson4@unl.edu](mailto:kwilson4@unl.edu)>, "Engler, Mark A." <[Mark\\_Engler@nps.gov](mailto:Mark_Engler@nps.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Letter From NE Governor in Opposition of NHA Designation

#### Non-NU Email

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Thank you for sharing Kim.

Might you be available at 9am or after 1pm on Friday?

Please know that "my position" limits what I can say, but we can talk about "who" you can reach out to, if that is something you'd like to know.

Bee well. Stay well.

Chris  
(402) 881-1387

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**From:** Kim Wilson <kwilson4@unl.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 10:23:02 PM  
**To:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>; Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter From NE Governor in Opposition of NHA Designation

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Chris and Mark,

I thought you would like to know how our governor views NHAs. And we are being groups in with Biden's 30 x 30 proposal as a private property land grab.

Chris, do you have time Friday to talk about these perceptions and how we can counter them? I can bring up up to date with what we've done thus far.

Thanks,  
Kim

**Kim L. Wilson**  
Professor, Landscape Architecture  
Special Projects, College of Engineering  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

137a Othmer  
College of Engineering  
(c) 765-427-9643  
(o) 402-472-5149

**From:** [Stein, Christopher E](#)  
**To:** [Morgan, Jason R](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Willa Cather Foundation responds to governor's letter  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 3:37:05 PM

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**From:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 9, 2021 1:11 PM  
**To:** sara\_contact <sara@discoverniagara.org>; jogle <jogle@freedomfrontier.org>; Holly Zane <hzane@freedomfrontier.org>; Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Willa Cather Foundation responds to governor's letter

FYI

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**From:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 9, 2021 1:08:36 PM  
**To:** Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Willa Cather Foundation responds to governor's letter

TY Alex!  
Chris

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**From:** Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 9, 2021 12:58:44 PM  
**To:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>; Franklin Weekley, Rachel <Rachel\_Franklin-Weekley@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Willa Cather Foundation responds to governor's letter

More news coverage.

Alexandra Picavet  
Assistant Regional Director  
Communications, Legislation and Partnerships  
National Park Service, Department of the Interior Regions 3, 4, 5

402-960-0688  
apicavet@nps.gov

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<https://www.ksnblocal4.com/2021/04/08/willa-cather-foundation-responds-to-governors-letter/>

KSNB (Hastings, NE) NBC-tv  
Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 4:01 PM

## **Willa Cather Foundation responds to governor's letter**

HASTINGS, Neb. (KSNB) - The Willa Cather Foundation said "there is no Willa Cather National Heritage Area" in response to the governor's letter Wednesday objecting to an effort to designate parts of south-central and southwestern Nebraska as a federally recognized National Heritage Area to try boost tourism.

Gov. Ricketts and other state leaders announced their opposition to the creation of a National Heritage Area in Nebraska in a letter to Willa Cather Foundation Executive Director Ashley Olson.

### **[CLICK HERE FOR TO READ FULL LETTER](#)**

Recently, the Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership announced their intent to seek a National Heritage Area designation for 49 counties in Nebraska and Kansas.

Ricketts said he was concerned that the designation requires approvals from Congress and the National Park Service. He said the designations come with "unquantifiable and unknowable risks for the future." Adding that conditions and requirements for federal management can change at any time without input from states.

Ricketts said the effort was led by the Willa Cather Foundation as a way to promote tourism and local development. He said state and local officials should maintain control as they look for ways to promote Nebraska's heritage and tourism.

On Thursday, the Willa Cather Foundation responded to the opposition with the below release:

There is no Willa Cather National Heritage Area

In a public letter to Willa Cather Foundation executive director Ashley Olson on Wednesday, Governor Ricketts expressed his opposition to “the Willa Cather Foundation’s plans to seek a National Heritage Area designation for portions of South Central and Southwestern Nebraska.”

Recent headlines suggest clarification is needed. The Willa Cather Foundation is not seeking designation as a National Heritage Area. Rather, a bi-state group of volunteers in north-central Kansas and south-central Nebraska has been working to explore the merits of a National Heritage Area designation and plan for a feasibility study that would seek feedback from local stakeholders, landowners, and residents in the region. This group is called the Kansas-Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership (KNHAP).

KNHAP is a grassroots organization connecting communities and attractions between forty-nine north central Kansas and south central Nebraska counties while acting as a catalyst for economic development through cultural heritage tourism. Volunteers from rural areas in both states serve on the committee exploring potential feasibility of this project in the region. Olson is one of thirteen volunteer committee members of KNHAP.

Olson and the Willa Cather Foundation became intrigued with the idea of seeking a National Heritage Area designation after a group of University of Nebraska-Lincoln students completed a research project that sought to examine ways to increase economic development through a more regional approach to cultural heritage tourism. In January 2020, over thirty organizations in Nebraska and Kansas signed a letter of support for the initiative, including the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism; the Nebraska Tourism Commission; the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; the Kansas Trails Council; Humanities Kansas; Humanities Nebraska, the Nebraska Forest Service, and History Nebraska. The stated mission is simply “to connect communities and attractions, instill pride of place, and promote immersive experiences for residents and visitors”  
“I joined the KNHAP meetings in 2018, although the idea has roots in Nebraska, this process has been a true collaborative effort. This is the only group that is working between both Nebraska and Kansas to be a catalyst for economic development through heritage tourism while engaging over forty organizations, agencies, and partners to date.” stated Luke Mahin, Republic County Kansas Economic Development Director and Co-chair of KNHAP.

In 1984, the first National Heritage Area, Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Area, was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. In his dedication speech, Reagan referred to National Heritage Areas as a marriage of heritage conservation, recreation, and economic development. Every administration since Reagan has had a hand in creating the 55 existing NHAs in the United States. Six NHAs were designated by President Trump in 2019.

In a statement, Olson affirmed that the Willa Cather Foundation remains focused solely on its mission to promote Willa Cather’s legacy through education, preservation, and the arts. As it relates to tourism, she noted, “We value the relationships we’ve built with community leaders in rural Nebraska and Kansas and we look forward to continued collaboration to promote this region and its cultural attractions to visitors.” She also emphasized the Foundation’s commitment to open dialogue with residents of Red Cloud, Webster County, and beyond.

“Ultimately, we too are a local business and we want to help elevate the historic sites we have to encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more money, not just with us, but with our regional neighbors too.”

*Willa Cather Foundation*

Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

Meeting via Zoom: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/91709210772>

Thursday, April 22, 2021, 10:30 - 12:30

**Meeting Agenda**

*Blue highlighted/underlined items below are linked to documents for your convenience and review.*

- 10:30 - 10:35 **Welcome and Changes to the Agenda** - Kim  
**Review to Approve Meeting Minutes** – Kim
- 10:35 - 11:30 **Executive Director's Report** - Kim
1. KNHAP Organization and Board
    - a. Reflect on the past months
    - b. Discussion: Next 6 and 12 months?
    - c. Board Membership
    - d. Next Steps
- 11:30 - 11:45 **KS Grant Funds** - Update Shaley and Luke
- 11:45- 12:00 **Communication and Marketing Committee** - Chair, Kristin Malek
1. Facebook page
  2. Rural Tourism Series
  3. Emails and Addresses
- 12:00 **Next Meeting** - May 20th or June 17th  
**THANK YOU** to all Board Members who will be leaving the Board  
**Adjourn**



288

**From:** [Stein, Christopher E](#)  
**To:** [Morgan, Jason R](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Omaha World Herald  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 3:36:46 PM

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**From:** Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 26, 2021 8:53 AM  
**To:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>; Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Omaha World Herald

THANK YOU Mark.  
PLEASE be advised that I received a FOIA request regarding this effort.  
I hope that you and yours are well? All good on the northern front.  
Did your staff person (name?) enjoy the Schoodic Institute's Citizen Science training?  
Bee well. Stay well.  
Chris  
(402) 881-1387

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**From:** Engler, Mark A. <Mark\_Engler@nps.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 26, 2021 8:19 AM  
**To:** Picavet, Alexandra M <Alexandra\_Picavet@nps.gov>; Stein, Christopher E <Chris\_Stein@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Omaha World Herald

Hi Alex and Chris:

Thought you would be interested:

[Editorial: A National Heritage Area in rural Nebraska is an opportunity, not a threat | Editorial | omaha.com](#)

Mark

Mark Engler  
Superintendent  
Homestead National Historical Park  
8523 West State Highway 4  
Beatrice, Nebraska 68310  
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**End of 2021 Documents**

