

HERITAGE AREA IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



ECOS

Monastery of the Holy Spirit

The Plan's success depends on completing numerous initiatives implemented by Heritage Area stakeholders. The proposed management entity must coordinate these efforts, determine priorities, allocate funding and ensure that the goals are being attained as defined in the Plan.

The six program criteria are:

- 1. Marketing and Outreach:** Creating a unified visual identity for the Heritage Area is important to attract tourism which will have the added benefit of stimulating economic development.
- 2. Conservation and Education:** Natural, cultural and historic resources must be inventoried, understood, preserved and enhanced to make sure the Heritage Area's treasures will remain in place for future enjoyment.
- 3. Transportation and Recreation:** Recreation and ecologically sensitive transportation options will protect the diverse environment, while improving mobility and quality of life for residents and visitors.

4. Sites and Venues: Developing popular museums, nature trails and other additions that will attract new visitors is necessary to present, educate and protect Heritage Area treasures.

5. Planning and Community Development: Using the Heritage Area to preserve the quality of life for its residents will ensure its own significance and continued ability to engage public support.

6. Interpretation: Policies, programs and venues must be explained creatively and thoroughly to engage visitors of all ages. Appealing content and a variety of fun activities will encourage people to explore the Heritage Area's inspiring natural wonders and historic riches.

Chapter 5 details initiatives for each program criteria and begins to provide a thorough approach to define the broad efforts necessary for success. These initiatives enhance existing activities by key stakeholders, as well as define future opportunities. The management entity will initiate these programs and collaborate with stakeholders to engage additional support and funding. Program criteria define key initiatives that the management entity must implement to attain the Plan's goals, and will be used in the evaluation process of future program proposals in the Heritage Area.

These ideas will continue to evolve as the proposed management entity solicits proposals and works hand in hand with the community to make them happen. Once the management entity is established, these criteria can guide steering committees to review proposals, allocate funds, set priorities and assess the effectiveness of specific projects.

5.1 MARKETING AND OUTREACH

Marketing was determined as the number one priority by the steering committee. Initial resources must be used to create a compelling identity and brand. This critical step will increase visibility and become the impetus of the tourism program and promote economic development. Recommended initiatives:

- Design Arabia Mountain Heritage Area signage and logo system for consistent use on all documents and interpretive materials.
- Develop brochures and maps that highlight each Gateway and Route, geared to tourists.
- Complete a marketing and outreach plan that details action steps, sets priorities, and determines target media outlets, collaborators and funders.
- Engage local businesses to participate in marketing and education campaigns such as discounts at local shops and special events and activities along the trails.
- Assist and educate real estate developers on the Plan's goals to strengthen existing partnerships and create new collaborative opportunities and sponsorships.
- Implement an annual workshop or conference where citizens, businesses, organizations and local leaders can discuss topics of interest and find solutions to Heritage Area issues such as "smart growth," historic preservation, water quality, greenspace conservation and sustainable development.
- Expand the Heritage Area website to give updates, detailed venue information and, when possible, live video webcasts from Gateways, Focus Areas and the Route System.
- Promote the Heritage Area to regional organizations and businesses as a distinctive venue for hosting their own cultural events and annual meetings.
- Incorporate the significance of the Heritage Area in marketing materials for the jurisdictions, the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, local businesses and others.
- Develop a signature festival and other events that reflect the distinct character of the Heritage Area to increase tourism, engage visitors and raise money. Examples include road races, bicycle races, granite festival, Classic Granite Rock 'n Roll music festival, Mountain Music Bluegrass festival and African-American Heritage weekend.
- Maintain a master calendar for all fundraising and marketing activities taking place in the Heritage Area.

5.2 CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION

Education will play a powerful role in protecting the Heritage Area's future. Without it, visitors will not be aware of its precious features and the many ways to enjoy them. The idea is to offer multiple choices to invite people in and experience the magic for themselves. Only then will people realize how important it is to protect and preserve what we have. Through entertaining educational opportunities, the Heritage Area can reach its fullest potential as a gigantic, living museum, always emphasizing interactive experiences, and engaging all of the senses.

Existing education opportunities should be defined and prioritized. Recommended action steps:

- Create detailed literature on the history of the South River corridor, historic homesteads, early settlements, City of Lithonia and Arabia and Panola Mountains to be distributed at schools, businesses, Gateways and Welcome Facilities.
- Collaborate with South River community groups to improve water quality, habitat restoration, stream monitoring and land acquisition.
- Provide assistance in supporting a multi-county South River Greenway Overlay Corridor to implement development of open space regulations for its continued protection and enhancement.
- Label manholes and drainage inlets to raise awareness of the detrimental effects of pollution down stream in lakes and waterways.
- Obtain grants to offer educational and cultural activities for children and adults.
- Expand the Heritage Area's website to include in-depth information on topics such as Native American communities, historic African-American settlements, the role of granite and distinctive plants and animals, and other topics of interest.
- Train a corps of volunteers to effectively present the stories and history, and lead guided tours at Gateways and Welcome Facilities.
- Engage metro-Atlanta schools in learning the Heritage Area's vibrant stories in after-school programs, field trips and custom-designed Heritage Area and environmental curriculums.
- Support continuing education classes for adults that use Heritage Area venues as outdoor classrooms for bird watching, native plants and wildlife studies, and historic preservation.
- Promote college and university programs that feature the Heritage Area for case studies and lectures, classroom activities and thesis projects, to complete additional research needed on many intriguing topics that can be studied here. Offer internships in various specialties.
- Assist citizens, businesses and local leaders with advice, education and literature on the negative impacts of unplanned growth on the Heritage Area's future.
- Develop an educational treasure hunt for children. Local businesses can sponsor a different hunt each month. Kids with completed treasure hunts might receive prizes or discounts from local merchants.
- Collaborate with other metro-Atlanta attractions to offer natural, historic and cultural tours for members or visitors of Fernbank Museum of Natural History, Atlanta Botanical Garden, High Museum of Art, Atlanta History Center, DeKalb Historical Society and Stone Mountain Park.
- Create a research center where visitors can explore in-depth aspects of the Heritage Area's history, early cultures and significant events.
- Provide technical assistance for restoring and reusing historic buildings.
- Assist in renovating defined cultural landscapes for future interpretation and education.
- Provide technical assistance for conservation efforts by others that meet the Plan's goals.
- Increase public involvement with the Atlanta Wild Animal Rescue Effort (AWARE) and similar non-profits.
- Promote the completion of the future DeKalb County environmental public high school. This groundbreaking project could become a role model around the country. The actual building, as well as the curriculum, will actively engage students in environmental studies with an

emphasis on connections to the Heritage Area's natural treasures. The site is adjacent to greenspace at Davidson-Arabia Nature Preserve and is connected to the PATH trail, offering countless opportunities for students, faculty and the public to experience nature's lessons first hand.

5.3 TRANSPORTATION AND RECREATION

A themed Route System is illustrated in the Plan to encourage visitors to move through the entire Heritage Area. Consistently, the community passionately requested this popular feature, knowing full well the power of personally experiencing the wonders the Heritage Area can offer.

A tremendous asset, already in place and expanding is the multi-use trail system, with plans to extend it for many more miles. Other means for visiting and experiencing the Heritage Area first-hand must be encouraged and readily available. Recommended initiatives include:

- Design and implement a seamlessly integrated driving, walking and water Route System.
- Explore and provide assistance to implement additional transportation options such as bike and canoe rentals and electric or hybrid shuttles between Gateways, as well as special rental cars at the Mall of Stonecrest.
- Initiate the process with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to obtain Scenic Byway designation for the Evans Mill-Browns Mill-Klondike Road corridors.
- Discuss options to improve and streamline access to the Heritage Area from downtown Atlanta hotels and convention centers by MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority).
- Explore the possibility of creating a transportation management association (TMA), or something similar, to provide alternative transportation options and incentives for carpools, vanpools and other choices to driving.
- Support businesses that offer outdoor recreation activities such as canoeing, bicycling, bird watching, running, skating, horse back riding and roller blading.

- Continue marketing the multi-use trail system, and encouraging connections by stakeholders to Welcome Facilities and Gateways.
- Install wayfinding signage for easy navigation between Focus Areas, Gateways and businesses, by car and on foot.
- Encourage continued acquisition of greenspace by all public stakeholders to continue to expand recreation opportunities.
- Develop boat tours along the South River with designated launching areas.
- Support hiking programs and nature walks for groups and families.
- Assist in locating and creating controlled camping locations.

5.4 SITES AND VENUES

The Heritage Area is a marvelous, 40,000-acre collection of awe-inspiring natural wonders and historic treasures, just waiting to be explored by new audiences. In highlighting its distinctive sites and venues, visitors will begin to understand and appreciate why this can become prized ground to future generations. Recommended action steps:

- Assist with design, construction and maintenance of a Visitors Center at Vaughters' Farm, the primary Gateway.
- Collaborate, design, construct, staff and maintain the other four Gateways.
- Assist with design and maintenance of selected venues identified as interpretation opportunities within each Focus Area.
- Support the creation of a granite and quarrying museum in the City of Lithonia.
- Support additional access points to the South River.
- Provide assistance in preserving, renovating and revitalizing the City of Lithonia with emphasis on granite facades, Main Street and other prominent streetscapes.
- Support Panola Mountain State Park and Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve to provide first-class exhibits that pique visitor curiosity about natural, historic and cultural legacies.

5.5 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To realize the Plan's goals, future initiatives must weigh the importance of sustaining a high quality of life for Heritage Area residents and visitors. Recommended community development initiatives include:

- Continue to collaborate with local businesses and large institutions such as Mall at Stonecrest and New Birth Church (25,000 members) to achieve the Plan's goals.
- Assist communities and landowners in achieving National Register of Historic Places designation, and complete other historic surveys.
- Assist Heritage Area communities in creating supportive zoning that directs growth to locations that are not environmentally sensitive or historically significant.
- Assist in organizing a bed & breakfast network to promote tourism and nurture local economic development.

5.6 INTERPRETATION

Policies, programs and venues must be explained effectively, creatively and thoroughly to engage visitors of all ages. Interpretation will focus on appealing content and a variety of fun ways to teach visitors about the inspiring natural wonders and historic treasures, waiting to be explored.

Recommended action steps:

- Establish hands-on, entertaining exhibits at all Gateways and Welcome Facilities.
- Assist with the visitor experience at Gateways by providing beautifully produced brochures and maps, and well-trained volunteers.
- Create a coordinated, environmental graphics system. Install directional and educational signs at key interpretive sites and along the Route System.
- Prepare and distribute an audio driving and walking tour, available as a free download from the Internet.
- Develop exhibits, maps and brochures for other sites identified in the Plan including parking

areas, local businesses and venues operated by others.

- Offer themed tours, both guided and self-guided, throughout the Heritage Area using trained volunteers.
- Encourage communities, organizations and citizens to record oral histories. Incorporate these personal stories in videos and DVDs at Welcome Facilities and even on websites.

CHAPTER 6:

HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT

Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance



School children spend the day at Arabia Mountain

In eight short years, the accomplishments and influence of the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance ('Arabia Alliance') are impressive. Superseding an earlier group known as the Friends of Arabia, this highly effective non-profit organization has grown to be the premier force for protecting Arabia Mountain, as well as spearheading efforts to create the larger Arabia Mountain Heritage Area.

Since 1998, the Arabia Alliance has been the primary entity overseeing the dream of a Heritage Area and its protection. The group enjoys an impressive reputation and accomplished track record. As an all-volunteer organization, with no salaries paid, the Arabia Alliance's expenses are divided as follows:

65% for Planning and Community Development

Initiatives include actively seeking National Heritage Area designation from Congress, actively seeking designation on the National Register of Historic Places for Klondike and Lithonia, greenspace planning, cemetery preservation, extending the multi-use trail to increase connectivity, offering special events and promotions, and hosting retreats for environmental groups and other non-profits.

20% for Conservation and Education

Initiatives include producing and distributing the Arabia Alliance promotional video for middle school and high school students, developing signage and kiosks at the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve, sponsoring field trips for teachers and students of all ages including universities, maintaining the only website, www.arabiainalliance.org, and producing and archiving videos of Heritage Area meetings, dedications, special events and interviews with community elders

and political leaders.

10% for Marketing and Outreach

Initiatives include producing Heritage Area displays at the Mall at Stonecrest, updating the Arabia Alliance website with maps and calendars of events, producing and distributing a Heritage Area wall calendar, and cooperating with local and regional media and the DeKalb County Visitors Bureau.

5% for Sites and Venues

The Arabia Alliance maintains and operates the Lithonia Woman's Club. They coordinated the relocation of the historic Ragsdale home and work closely with private owners and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation to protect other historic homes. The Arabia Alliance organizes many community meetings, and family and school reunions at the Lithonia Woman's Club which increase loyalty and appreciation of the Heritage Area.

Based on these successes and many others, The Plan recommends that the Arabia Alliance remain the name of the management entity for the Heritage Area, yet the mission and composition must be restructured.

Initially, Arabia Alliance's priority was to preserve the "view shed" from the top of Arabia Mountain,

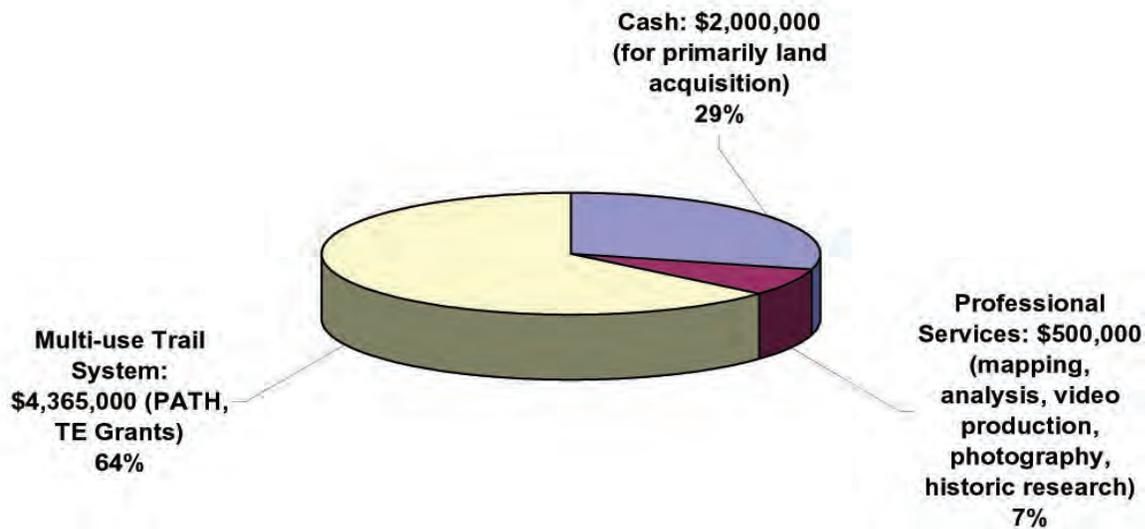


Figure 6.1: Project Donations (Excluding Land Donated) as of March 1, 2006

and the group was instrumental in protecting 535 acres that make up the original core of the Davidson-Arabia Nature Preserve. Their focus has grown to encompass the entire 64-square mile Heritage Area and today, the Arabia Alliance and its many partners oversee and assist in protecting 4052 acres.

With residential and commercial growth sprawling toward the Heritage Area at a rapid pace, the all-volunteer leadership of the Arabia Alliance recognized that success was only possible through collaboration. Before the Arabia Alliance took the big picture view, there was no system in place for three counties and other jurisdictions to work together and pool precious resources to plan for the Heritage Area's long term future. By bringing all of the stakeholders to the same table and benefiting from each partners' strengths, expertise and financial support, tremendous progress

continues to be made. The Arabia Alliance has brought all of the stakeholders together to determine which areas should be included within the Heritage Area boundary, always emphasizing the benefits of connectivity and opportunities to spotlight cultural, historic and natural legacies.

In addition to forging strong relationships with the jurisdictions, the Arabia Alliance partnered with national environmental organizations such as The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land and others to channel additional resources. The Arabia Alliance does not actually buy or own property, yet its counsel has been invaluable in assisting these and other partners to obtain public and private funding to acquire and protect valuable greenspace.

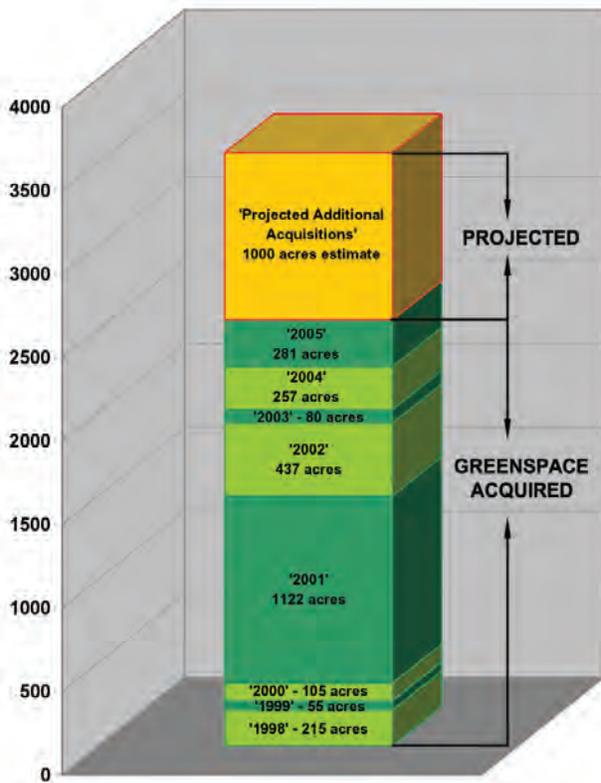


Figure 6.2: Greenspace Acquired, 1998-2005

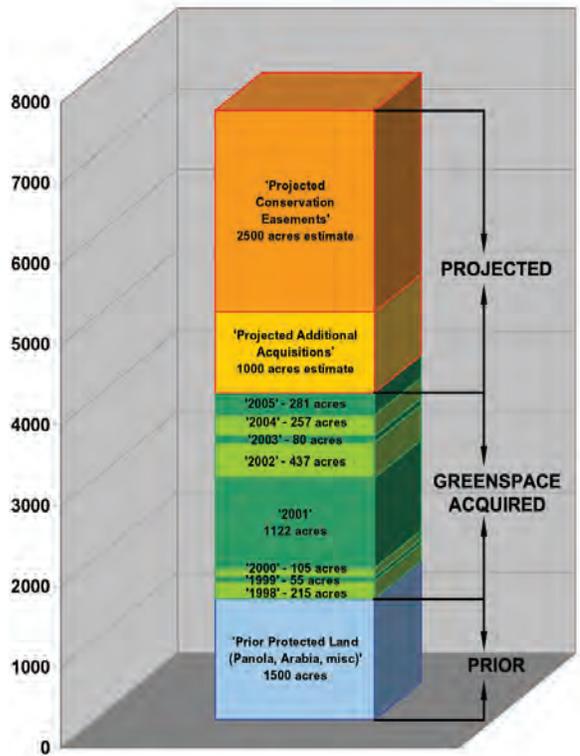


Figure 6.3: Greenspace Protected, 1969-2005

The Arabia Alliance's circle of partners has expanded to include the DeKalb County Board of Education, PATH Foundation and the Monastery of the Holy Spirit. These collaborative relationships spawned several innovative initiatives including the plan for an environmental public high school campus at Arabia Mountain, a multi-use trail system connecting the entire Heritage Area, and re-envisioning the entire 2,000 plus-acre Monastery as an environmental preserve.

Despite the Arabia Alliance's success as an effective steward, its current management structure cannot successfully meet the Plan's goals given its limited size and lack of resources. The steering committee determined that restructuring the non-profit entity, rather than completely dissolving it, is the best approach to move forward. A newly structured Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance can efficiently implement preservation programs, match and distribute federal and local monies, influence and encourage others to implement the Plan and secure additional funds.

The Arabia Alliance must continue to work closely with its stakeholders, especially the jurisdictions and the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, for assistance and guidance, benefiting from each organization's understanding of best management practices to protect historic, natural and cultural capital. This chapter outlines the functions of the restructured management entity and offers recommendations for the roles of each stakeholder.

6.1 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Arabia Alliance is a model for bringing representatives from government agencies and communities together with environmental groups and others to create an effective alliance in the truest sense of the word. Arabia Alliance's strength lies in its belief that it is better to coordinate, not duplicate. The group has played a vital role in maximizing the strengths and assets of others, demonstrating that great things can happen through vision and collaboration.

This approach should remain in place, keeping Arabia Alliance's staff as small as possible. Their efforts should continue to focus on assisting larger organizations spend their own resources wisely and effectively, rather than creating one more layer of staffing.

Successful relationships garnered by the Arabia Alliance in the past are essential for implementing the Plan's initiatives in the future. This continued involvement will bring credibility and preserve continuity that donors expect. The recommended restructured non-profit 501-c(3) entity requires a board of directors, a non-voting advisory committee and minimal staff. The **board of directors** should include representatives from all stakeholders in the Heritage Area, modeled after the successful steering committee used in the planning process to include the five jurisdictions, local communities (Klondike, Evans Mill, Flat Rock and South Rockdale), local businesses (such as the Mall at Stonecrest and major quarry companies) and the Arabia Alliance.

A **non-voting advisory committee** should include other organizations and businesses whose directives complement the Heritage Area's mission, such as The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land. A small, yet effective **staff** will be needed for day-to-day operations of the restructured entity, and should include an Executive Director with two or three assistants or interns. The board of directors and the non-voting advisory committee should be actively engaged to provide expertise. To accomplish initiatives that require design or management abilities that the board or advisory committee cannot provide, the entity may seek proposals from others, or hire private consultants for tasks such as developing marketing materials and designing Gateways. By allowing the entity to act as a non-profit, public-private partnership, the Arabia Alliance's capacities will greatly increase at a minimal cost, and the Plan's goals will be achieved.

Further, the Plan recommends that the Arabia Alliance enter into a **cooperative agreement** with

the jurisdictions and the Monastery of the Holy Spirit. This agreement is essentially an endorsement to support policies and initiatives necessary to attain the Plan's goals, provide technical and financial assistance, engage in planning the proposed Gateway venues and Welcome Facilities, provide operational support and assist with daily operations and management activities on property owned by each stakeholder.

The restructured Arabia Alliance will initiate steps to interpret the Gateways and other venues. The Arabia Alliance may not be involved in actually operating venues and Gateways, yet should support and promote the continued efforts of others. The Arabia Alliance can fill many roles including marketing, reviewing proposals by others seeking funds for initiatives that advance the Plan's goals, providing assistance to stakeholders, acquiring additional funds, and collecting and distributing federal dollars to other groups. The Arabia Alliance should solicit proposals that will advance these efforts and bring in new revenue. Other responsibilities can include providing technical and financial assistance, and developing programs that promote and protect the Heritage Area's splendid potential.

6.2 MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

The new Arabia Alliance must prioritize its resources to meet the requirements to become a National Heritage Area in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Interior (National Park Service).

By directing funds to advance the Heritage Area's mission and goals, the Arabia Alliance has a powerful opportunity. They can set the bar for other organizations to make the most of non-profit, public-private partnerships to manage a large area of land as an outdoor museum, spanning several jurisdictions.

Interpretation

Strong partnerships are already in place with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and

many others. The Arabia Alliance will continue to join forces and pool resources to produce a coordinated signage system, top quality visitor facilities and train knowledgeable staff to interpret the significance of the Heritage Area's treasures, bringing its past and present to life.

The Arabia Alliance will coordinate ongoing and future education initiatives and seek innovative approaches. Examples include:

- Solicit artists to provide creative solutions to educate and entertain visitors, young and old.
- Involve school children and area youth to create interactive, 'edu-tainment' opportunities at the Gateways. – Create downloadable audio tours on various themes, to be played while driving, biking or walking.

Sites and Venues

Protection and ongoing maintenance of specific sites will be critical, requiring collaboration and innovative strategies between the Arabia Alliance and its partners. Examples include:

- Involving local governments and private owners to provide access to potential venues for interpretation.
- Encouraging partners to maintain venues and landscapes.
- Encouraging new land purchases to preserve new and existing landscapes and sites for interpretation.

Conservation and Education

The Arabia Alliance will play an active role in developing and promoting educational activities that will make the Heritage Area a favorite destination for locals and tourists, young and old, rich and poor.

As a bridge builder to increase public awareness, the Arabia Alliance can work together with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Boards of Education in DeKalb, Rockdale and Henry counties, community groups such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Audubon Society and garden clubs to develop relevant teaching tools and interactive programs.

Protecting land and open greenspace is another important role for the Arabia Alliance, yet owning land should not be a function of the entity itself. Therefore, the Arabia Alliance can provide their expertise to others to continue to protect greenspace and natural resources. Examples include:

- Partnering with a diverse array of educational institutions to expand and enhance learning opportunities.
- Supporting greenspace initiatives offered by the State and the counties, as well as private conservation groups.
- Promoting the Heritage Area as an outdoor classroom for higher learning and other research.
- Encouraging sustainable and "smart growth" practices in all endeavors. For example, support the creation of an overlay environmental district for the Heritage Area.
- Focusing on "leading edge" environmentally sensitive solutions in all endeavors.

Planning and Community Development

To increase tourism and economic development, the Arabia Alliance must partner with the State, the jurisdictions and local businesses. Examples include:

- Helping to establish a granite and quarry museum in the City of Lithonia.
- Promoting the creation of a Heritage Area Review Board to establish specific guidelines and development regulations. The Review Board would assess and comment on new residential and commercial projects that have a direct impact on the long-term health and character of the Heritage Area.
- Sponsoring annual forums and workshops to discuss Heritage Area growth issues, solutions and success stories.
- Encouraging involvement from local businesses to increase tourism and marketability of Heritage Area attractions. Establishing unified promotional themes, cohesive materials and incentives that will entice new audiences.

Transportation and Recreation

Currently, the Arabia Alliance collaborates with PATH Foundation on route selection and construction of the multi-use trail, eventually extending it throughout the entire Heritage Area. Other entities, such as DeKalb, Rockdale and Henry counties and especially GA DNR, can also partner with the Arabia Alliance to determine the best approach for expanding recreation and transportation opportunities, always reinforcing the Plan's goals. Examples include:

- Encourage counties to incorporate multi-use trails in development codes for future residential, retail and office projects to expand the walking Route System into new parts of the Heritage Area.
- Encourage environmentally sensitive transportation between Focus Areas and Gateways such as clean-fuel shuttle buses, walking, biking, canoeing and horse back riding.
- Support the development of a water Route System and associated facilities along the South River as illustrated in the Plan.

6.3 COLLABORATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The size of the Heritage Area spanning several jurisdictions, and the diversity, quality and quantity of its assets demands meaningful collaboration. The Arabia Alliance should continue to work as a team with public, non-profit and private organizations to tap into additional talent and funding sources that will broaden its reach.

The Jurisdictions

State of Georgia

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR) State Parks and Historic Sites division manages Panola Mountain State Park, a precious gem in Rockdale County. Staff members of this division have been integral in the planning process. Their expertise and insight on how resources can be managed efficiently have been invaluable. GA DNR owns and maintains two of the proposed Gateway sites -- Panola Mountain State Park

(Natural Systems Gateway) and Vaughters' Farm (Culture and Community Gateway and proposed Visitors Center). GA DNR recently acquired the Parker homestead, the oldest home in Rockdale County, and surrounding property along the South River (the former Southernness Golf Club). This parcel complements their recent purchase of the neighboring Alexander estate. GA DNR is currently engaged in updating its master plan for Panola Mountain State Park and an expanded Vaughters' Farm. That effort continues to be coordinated with this planning process. In addition, GA DNR is pursuing the acquisition of several hundred acres to further expand Panola.

Because of their strong presence and investment at Panola Mountain, GA DNR has provided expertise to the Arabia Alliance in selecting potential land acquisitions, cost analysis, wildlife and environmental assessment assistance and general guidance on effective preservation efforts. This Plan recommends that the future role of GA DNR include researching and documenting cultural and natural resources, assisting in restoration, construction, maintenance and operation of the five Gateways, expertise in educational materials and interactive exhibits, assisting with tours, creating outdoor classrooms, and being involved with daily venue operations and maintenance at sites either owned or managed by GA DNR.

Because of the organization's strong track record in managing large land areas, coupled with its substantial investment in the Heritage Area, the Plan recommends that GA DNR discuss with the other partners and the Arabia Alliance the possibility of managing, under contract, day-to-day maintenance and staffing issues for the entire Heritage Area. Currently, GA DNR receives funding to staff and manage venues, providing an outstanding opportunity to coordinate educational exhibits at the proposed Gateways and Welcome Facilities.

DeKalb, Rockdale and Henry Counties

The counties are also dedicated allies of the Heritage Area. They have provided financial support to the Arabia Alliance's work, as well as

serving as valued members of the Plan's steering committee. Funding for this Plan was provided by DeKalb County, Turner Foundation, Rockdale County, GA DNR, the Arabia Alliance and private donors.

Their financial involvement remains critical for the Arabia Alliance to receive federal funding that requires matches from local sources. The jurisdictions should play a significant role in directing preservation efforts, educating their citizens and encouraging continued conservation through balanced, environmentally sensitive land use and regulations.

The Arabia Alliance rely on DeKalb, Rockdale and Henry counties for their continued support to acquire additional greenspace to protect wildlife habitats and potential locations for the proposed walking Route System.

DeKalb County has been a major supporter of the Heritage Area's creation and protection. Supporting the Arabia Alliance as the official steward of Arabia Mountain, DeKalb County has dedicated funding, staffing and technical expertise in land preservation, and trail design and construction.

DeKalb County through its **Parks and Recreation** and **GIS departments** has committed significant technical assistance to the Arabia Alliance. They have provided Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data and assigned a liaison to this planning process. The DeKalb County Parks Department also provides full-time rangers at the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve.

DeKalb County has led the way, through its nationally recognized Parks and Greenspace Bond program, in purchasing nearly 2,000 acres of additional greenspace in the Heritage Area in the last few years, with more to come.

DeKalb County's continued support is crucial for realizing the dreams recommended in this Plan. Creating the Route System will require leadership and funding, and the proposed Early Settlement

Focus Area Gateway at Lyon's Farm and homestead will require design and planning, construction, interpretation and maintenance.

DeKalb County Board of Education is involved in planning the proposed environmental high school campus, which will surely be a model for future high schools statewide. In addition, the Board of Education provided partial funding to the Arabia Alliance to produce an educational video on Arabia Mountain for distribution to all public high schools. This video has significantly increased awareness and appreciation of the Heritage Area and its ecological wonders throughout the community, especially with students.

Committed individuals from other DeKalb County organizations such as the DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Historical Society have donated their time and talent to complete the Feasibility Study and this Management Plan, and will remain engaged now and in the future. DeKalb County had three liaisons as members of the Plan's steering committee.

Rockdale County whole-heartedly embraces the preservation of open space and has implemented "smart growth" land use regulations that promote clustering homes together to increase open space in residential developments. Rockdale County is collaborating with the PATH Foundation and the Arabia Alliance to acquire land to extend the multi-use trail through Rockdale.

Rockdale County recently completed the Stonecrest Area Study to effectively plan and manage future growth surrounding the Mall at Stonecrest with emphasis on preserving greenspace, protecting community character and promoting a livable, walkable environment, requiring that new developments connect to the PATH system.

Rockdale County Parks and Recreation department manages South Rockdale Community Park and the DeCastro estate, and provides Geographic Information Systems data. Two

Rockdale County liaisons were members of the Plan's steering committee.

Henry County is also actively involved in planning future greenspace acquisitions. Henry County District Commissioner, Planning and Greenspace department staff and the Board of Commissioners are strong supporters of the Arabia Alliance's efforts. Recently, Henry County purchased the Wolf Rock area with limited State greenspace funds. The site is contiguous to Panola Mountain State Park and important for the rare plants that grow on the granite outcrops there. By protecting this site, Henry County has formed a tangible link to the rest of the Heritage Area's greenspace.

City of Lithonia completed an Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative planning project in 2003 that promotes economic development and an improved quality of life for its residents. Lithonia's efforts reinforce the Plan's goals for the City, and supports the proposed Gateway and granite museum there. Lithonia's leadership must support the Gateway facility at the Lithonia Woman's Club through marketing, wayfinding signs and visitor conveniences such as parking, additional streetscape improvements and water and sewer.

The Focus Area for Granite Industry and Technology exists within Lithonia. Cooperative efforts to promote these attractions will be valuable. The Mayor of Lithonia and city council members have provided their time and dedication as steering committee members for this Plan.

Summary

Highlights of partnership opportunities for the State, the counties and Lithonia include:

- Participating in the creation of a Heritage Area identity package. Once new marketing messages are complete, they will be shared with the jurisdictions to be incorporated into their own marketing and tourism initiatives for use on websites, in brochures, maps and public events.
- Designing, building and operating the

Gateways.

- Helping design, build and maintain the walking and waterway systems.
- Implementing land use regulations to preserve greenspace and promote sustainable growth.
- Creating Heritage Area overlay districts, conservation subdivision ordinances and transfer of development rights ordinances.
- Continuing to acquire greenspace to expand protected land throughout the Heritage Area.
- Requiring connectivity features such as trails and open space in zoning regulations for future developments.
- Continuing collaboration between the counties and the Arabia Alliance on transportation, land use planning, parks, public works and GIS data.
- Helping fund the Arabia Alliance's work.

Additional Public Partners

The **State of Georgia** offers several initiatives that will benefit the Heritage Area. For example, The Georgia Land Conservation Act recently established a \$100 million fund for counties, cities and the GA DNR to promote land conservation. Agencies are encouraged to partner with 501-c(3) organizations to receive the funding to develop land conservation projects, as well as buy land and conservation easements. The initiative can pay private property owners to place conservation easements on their land, providing an additional resource for protecting greenspace in the Heritage Area. The timing is ideal for the Arabia Mountain Heritage Alliance to set the standard for maximizing State funds and take full advantage of the benefits offered by the Georgia Land Conservation Act.

A fine example is the recent contract to purchase the Susong property and home by the Monastery of the Holy Spirit. This Plan recommends that the Susong home become the Welcome Facility for the Spiritual Landscape Focus Area. The Monastery is actively working with several organizations and local agencies to determine the best approach to raise funds to acquire and preserve the 275-acre parcel along the South River located in the heart of the Monastery.

The State of Georgia is encouraged to continue to acquire greenspace and conservation easements to protect land and historic sites within the Heritage Area. In addition, the State can also be instrumental in promoting the Heritage Area in their own marketing and tourism initiatives such as websites, brochures and maps at welcome centers and rest areas along the interstate.

The **Georgia Department of Transportation** (GDOT) provides assistance to the Heritage Area in many ways. Recently, GDOT advanced the Plan's goal of protecting land by acquiring greenspace along the South River as mitigation for nearby transportation improvements. GDOT is working with PATH Foundation to extend the multi-use trail along State Highway 212 (Browns Mill Road). This section is crucial to connect Arabia to Panola Mountain. Future initiatives can include assistance in securing Scenic Byway designation for the Evans Mill-Browns Mill-Klondike Scenic Byway, coordinating transportation improvements to ensure that they complement the Plan, collaborating with Gateway locations, streetscape improvements, and route access and design. GDOT can also provide support by permitting trail construction along road rights-of-ways, and financial assistance for these projects through Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding.

As GDOT continues to secure land for mitigation purposes, required by ongoing road expansion throughout metro-Atlanta, GDOT should continue to work in concert with the Arabia Alliance to acquire sensitive landscapes, especially sites along the South River. A coordinated approach will better protect water quality and increase precious greenspace.

United States government

The **National Park Service** (NPS) **Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program** (RTCA) provides technical support to the Arabia Alliance. NPS RTCA staff should remain actively involved by continuing to provide their expertise to restore historic sites and structures, and create educational exhibits. In addition, NPS RTCA can assist with venue-specific maintenance, where possible, as well

as design and construction of walking and waterway routes. NPS can cross-promote Heritage Area attractions in their own marketing materials and public facilities.

Private and Non-Profit Partners

The monks of the **Monastery of the Holy Spirit**, in the southern tip of the Heritage Area, have cultivated and inhabited their gorgeous property for over 60 years. Their presence offers a rare opportunity to witness the 1,000-year-old lifestyle of the Trappist Order, one that is dedicated to a life of work, contemplation and solitude. Previously numbering over 100, today, they are a community of less than 50 monks spanning several generations. Formerly farmers, the monks now support the Monastery through their guest house, donations, stained glass window production, bonsai trees sales and gift shop items. The Monastery gift shop attracts more than 50,000 visitors annually, and is already the number one tourist destination in Rockdale County.

Monastery leaders fully support the need to protect and increase open space in the Heritage Area, and are proactively seeking techniques to ensure that appropriate portions of their land are permanently protected from development. A master plan of their 2,000 plus-acre property was recently completed and calls for protecting wetlands and waterways, Native American and African-American artifacts, historic religious structures and wildlife habitats.

The Monastery monks are faithful and dedicated land stewards and have generously supported the Heritage Area by reserving the Susong property for a proposed nature center and Gateway. The nature center will highlight their captivating collection of 88 species of butterflies, 48 species of dragonflies and other insects found on the property, which speaks to one facet of nature's abundant diversity in one place. In addition, exhibits on the Japanese art of bonsai trees, meditation, timbering and wetland preservation can be offered.

Another highlight of the Spiritual Landscape

Gateway at the Monastery will feature the monks' vast collection of Native American artifacts featuring priceless arrowheads, pottery shards and other objects, some dating back 10,000 years. Continuing to cultivate an open and supportive partnership between the Monastery and the Arabia Alliance will yield rich benefits and go a long way toward meeting the Plan's goals.

The Arabia Alliance can partner with the Monastery on marketing and promotional efforts, and in designing, building and operating the Spiritual Landscape Gateway.

Local businesses can also join the effort.

Increased tourism will boost demand for shopping, dining, overnight stays, hiking, biking, canoeing and other sightseeing opportunities. In the recently completed Tourism Report (See Appendix H), an estimated 25,000 visitors every year are expected within the next five years. Businesses in the Heritage Area, such as the Mall at Stonecrest, have provided support during this planning process, and are dedicated to preserving resources to encourage future tourism. Partnership efforts must focus on programs that can strengthen tourism potential while effectively protecting delicate natural areas.

Efforts to design and build walking trails and secure conservation easements that connect businesses to Heritage Area venues will be encouraged, as well as offering promotional packages with discounts on lodging, dining and car rental. Additional tourism initiatives are detailed in the Tourism Report.

The Arabia Alliance will seek expertise, staffing and funding from **philanthropic organizations** and individual donors with similar interests and philosophies. Protecting open space, preserving history, and creating entertaining educational offerings are examples of common interests shared by The Conservation Fund, the Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy and many foundations.

Community organizations, such as the Klondike Area Civic Association and the Flat Rock Archive

Stakeholder	Program Criteria					
	Marketing & Outreach	Sites & Venues	Conservation & Education	Transportation & Recreation	Planning & Community Development	Interpretation
Public Stakeholders						
DeKalb County	•	•	•	•		•
Rockdale County	•	•	•	•		•
Henry County	•	•	•	•		•
City of Lithonia	•	•	•	•		•
State of Georgia	•	•	•	•	•	•
National Park Service (RTCA)	•		•		•	•
GDOT	•			•		
Private & Non-Profit Stakeholders						
Monastery of the Holy Spirit	•	•	•			•
Heritage Area Businesses	•				•	•
Philanthropic Organizations		•	•		•	•
Community Organizations	•	•	•			•
PATH Foundation	•			•		•

Figure 6.3: Recommended Stakeholder Collaboration

are also strong supporters of the Plan and served as steering committee members. In part, because they are committed to historic preservation and documentation, the Klondike community recently received notice that it qualifies for designation on the National Register of Historic Places. Members of the Flat Rock community, home to one of the oldest African-American cemeteries in Georgia, have provided design and planning input during this process.

These community organizations will be encouraged to provide research on undocumented parts of the Heritage Area's history for educational displays and

marketing materials, and to remain vigilant in renovating historic structures and cemeteries.

PATH Foundation is dedicated to developing a first class system of interlinking greenway trails throughout Atlanta and Georgia. Their team of experienced trail builders has had phenomenal success in completing more than 90 miles of trails so far around the state. As of 2005, eight miles of paved trails have been completed in the Heritage Area. The trail meanders through forests, fields, over streams, by waterfalls, through boulders and across wetland boardwalks. As Georgia's expert in building mixed-use trails, PATH Foundation plays

an integral role in attracting financial support from the counties, private foundations and individuals, businesses and federal funding from GDOT Transportation Enhancement grants. Walking and biking trails are the backbone of the Plan's Route System, and have given new life to the community by connecting destinations, and promoting a new, healthy way to experience the Heritage Area. Many miles of trails are planned and designed, and will extend to the City of Atlanta, Stone Mountain and the Monastery. PATH has completed a major segment of the system that provides a north-south connection linking Lithonia, the Mall at Stonecrest, Vaughters' Farm and the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve to Panola Mountain. The next leg will extend to the Monastery of the Holy Spirit and northeast to MLK High School along the South River. All proposed routes complement the illustrated routes in the Plan, and will connect visitors directly to the Gateways.

The proposed system has already received over \$3.3 million from DeKalb County, \$1.7 million from PATH Foundation and an additional \$1.1 million in Transportation Enhancement monies and other federal funds. DeKalb County recently passed a Parks Bond referendum that allocates an additional \$3 million for PATH, focused on the Heritage Area. There are many potential funding sources to extend the trail into Rockdale County such as monies from the roads and parks and recreation sections of the 2004 Rockdale SPLOST program, Transportation Enhancement funding, potential funding earmarked from Congress, the proposed impact fees and the general fund. PATH includes a maintenance endowment for most sections of the trails they build in the Heritage Area to ensure they remain a community asset, not a liability in the future. Additional funding support is anticipated from Henry County and GA DNR to implement future sections of the multi-use trail as defined in the Plan.

Once cohesive marketing materials are developed by the Arabia Alliance, PATH can become another important partner to incorporate them in their own public relations efforts and spread the word to new audiences and outdoor enthusiasts.

6.4 FIRST PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW ARABIA MOUNTAIN HERITAGE AREA ALLIANCE

All stakeholders should approve the guidelines to establish the new Arabia Alliance. It is recommended that the jurisdictions approve and implement the Plan and its recommendations, especially participating in the newly restructured Arabia Alliance, so the Plan can become a blueprint for future initiatives statewide. To meet the Plan's goals, the restructured Arabia Alliance must engage in the following process to increase its capacity and influence.

1. Create a cooperative agreement.

The steering committee for this process has endorsed the Plan and creation of the new Arabia Alliance. By endorsing the Plan, the stakeholders show their support to cooperatively implement the Plan.

2. Create a board of directors and a non-voting advisory committee.

The new board will consist of representatives from the key stakeholders, using the planning steering committee as a model. Recommended board members include representatives from GA DNR, DeKalb County, Rockdale County, Henry County, City of Lithonia, Arabia Alliance, community members and local businesses.

The non-voting advisory committee will provide technical expertise and talent, staffing and research. Recommended members include, yet are not limited to, representatives from each counties' historical society and visitors bureau, conservation organizations, State Historic Preservation Division, each counties' Board of Education, National Park Service, PATH Foundation and other relevant public departments.

3. *Define a mission statement and by-laws.*

Every non-profit organization must have a mandate to direct its efforts and guide its actions. The new Arabia Alliance will collaborate with its stakeholders to define its mission, establish by-laws and allocate resources for achieving the Plan's goals.

4. *Assemble staff.*

With the completion of the Plan, the new Arabia Alliance must select and hire an Executive Director to guide the organization, initiate priority action steps approved by key stakeholders, engage in fundraising and partnership building and carry out the requests of the board of directors. A limited staff of two or three people, and possibly interns and qualified volunteers, will provide day-to-day assistance.

5. *Develop agreements with the jurisdictions to define roles and resources.*

To initiate the Plan's strategies, the new Arabia Alliance can recommend which services each jurisdiction can provide. Future agreements between the jurisdictions and the Arabia Alliance can define responsibilities and duration. Services provided by each can be determined based on short and long term needs and resources.

6. *Seek proposals.*

The new Arabia Alliance will seek proposals and promote initiatives by others to advance the Plan's goals. The Arabia Alliance will also set priorities and allocate funds. Once complete, each project must be evaluated for cost efficiencies and merit in achieving the Plan's goals.

When receiving technical or financial requests or proposals from groups who wish to promote Heritage Area goals, the Arabia Alliance should refer to these criteria as guidelines to determine their involvement and support:

Does this effort preserve a specific place that can be viewed or visited?

Does this effort protect a natural resource?

Does it promote economic development in a sustainable way?

Does it improve a visitor's understanding and appreciation of the Heritage Area's significance?

Does this effort encourage educational opportunities?

Does it promote tourism and having fun?

Does it encourage connectivity to other venues in the Heritage Area or the region?

Will the project require financial or technical support over time? If so, what are the implications and who will need to be involved?

CHAPTER 7:

HERITAGE AREA COST & PHASING



Kathryn Kolb

Vernal pool on Davidson-Arabia Mountain
Nature Preserve

The Plan outlines an ambitious, long-term strategy. Funding the Plan's initiatives will involve many partners, always being mindful of ways to maximize and pool sources for the greatest positive impact.

With adoption of the Plan by the partners, costs to operate the Heritage Area will rise. The restructured Arabia Alliance must provide assistance, training and programming services to its current and future partners.

These services are defined as Operational Costs and include planning and design input, retaining consultants to handle projects that fall outside of the stakeholders' expertise, and assisting partner groups advancing the Plan's goals. The Arabia Alliance must attract matching funds from its stakeholders to implement bricks and mortar initiatives detailed in Chapter 5. These expenses are defined as Capital Costs and include signage, venue improvements and marketing materials.

Sources of Operational and Capital Costs are listed in this section. They assume an estimated \$1 million allocation each year in federal funds through the National Heritage Area program, with a 1 to 2 match from the Arabia Alliance's partners. Costs do not include any annual operating expenses of the Arabia Alliance. (See Figure 7.1)

7.1 FUNDING SOURCES

While the Arabia Alliance works diligently to protect the Heritage Area's natural legacies and promote environmental stewardship in the next generation, it can also be a catalyst for improving the economic climate there. The Arabia Alliance can provide valuable technical and financial assistance to preserve and enhance cultural and historic sites and structures. The Arabia Alliance must pursue traditional and innovative ways to secure matching funds to receive federal dollars, garner support from private entities, philanthropic organizations and foundations, government agencies, and pursue its own entrepreneurial opportunities.

Private Entities

In the past, private property owners have been the largest contributors by donating valuable land. Local and regional businesses have also provided

tax-deductible donations to the Arabia Alliance. The Heritage Area will become a popular tourist magnet and the business community has much to gain by ensuring that the Plan's programs are promoted. By supporting the Arabia Alliance, local businesses will benefit from an improved quality of life that the Heritage Area will offer employees and customers. Local businesses will do well to work with Heritage Area partners on the Plan's sustainable approach to protect the attractive assets they all share.

Businesses identified as likely donors include existing national quarry industries, Mall at Stonecrest, real estate developers, and other neighboring businesses and retailers. Regional and Fortune 500 companies that should also be encouraged to advance the Heritage Area's goals include Cox Enterprises (the Atlanta Journal-Constitution), Home Depot, The Coca-Cola Company, Southern Company (Georgia Power) and many others.

Philanthropic Organizations

Now that this Plan is complete, it will be an effective fundraising tool to strengthen alliances with private foundations and individuals that share the Arabia Alliance's passion for protecting cultural, historic and environmental legacies.

Philanthropists who have already supported the Heritage Area include the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Turner Foundation, Atlanta Urban Resource Partnership, the Waterfall Foundation, Georgia Power Foundation, the Edna Wardlaw Fund, the Davidson Family, an anonymous Atlanta foundation and numerous individual donors. Fundraising competition is stiff among many worthy metro-Atlanta non-profits. As portions of the Plan become realized, the Arabia Alliance will continue to attract new and existing donors, especially those who want to see tangible, long-lasting results.

Government Agencies

Governments will continue to play a critical role in financially supporting the Heritage Area, mainly by

matching funds and existing staff and facility costs that allow the Arabia Alliance to claim federal dollars, and by operating their own parks, schools and related facilities. The Arabia Alliance should continue to encourage DeKalb, Rockdale and Henry counties, GA DNR and the City of Lithonia to provide these matching funds in their annual budgets for years to come. In particular, GA DNR can support the Heritage Area through technical assistance, staffing, daily operations, and maintaining educational venues and Gateways.

Entrepreneurial Ventures

The Arabia Alliance has successfully engaged in entrepreneurial opportunities to increase revenue. The group recently produced a 2005 calendar showcasing stunning photographs of the Heritage Area. Other products such as T-shirts and quality novelty items are inexpensive to produce, yet offer solid economic returns, increase visibility and promote tourism. A Heritage Area Shop can be included at each Gateway to entice visitors to buy souvenirs that support continued preservation of the Heritage Area. Festivals, bicycle and water events are other avenues to explore with partners to boost attendance and attract new audiences.

7.2 PHASING AND SETTING FIRST PRIORITIES

This Plan creates a thoughtful framework for taking a long-term view to protect and promote the Heritage Area. At this stage, priorities must be determined and resources allocated accordingly. It is recommended that these four phases become the first priorities for the Arabia Alliance team.

Phase 1: Identity and Marketing

A critical first step will be developing an easily recognizable, attractive logo and environmental graphics system that reflect the Heritage Area's heart and soul. A branding expert, hired as a consultant, should drive the process that engages input from the key stakeholders and the public. Marketing messages must be clear and compelling. They must have universal appeal, resonating with diverse audiences. Based on findings in the recent Tourism Report (See Appendix H), Heritage Area attractions have tremendous potential to draw large numbers of locals and tourists, who will enjoy the

<i>Action Criteria</i>	<i>Allocation of Federal Funds (FY2011-2015)</i>	<i>Contribution of Heritage Partnerships</i>	<i>Percent (%) of Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
Heritage Marketing & Outreach Identity Package; Marketing Package; Workshops/Forums; Festivals/Events; Product Development; Website Management	\$112,500	\$225,000	15%	\$337,500
Heritage Sites & Venues Visitor Center; Secondary Gateways; Historic Structures; Granite Interpretive Museum	\$300,000	\$600,000	40%	\$900,000
Heritage Conservation & Education Guided Tours; Guidebooks and literature	\$60,000	\$120,000	8%	\$180,000
Heritage Transportation & Recreation Trail, water and driving route; Signage; Shuttle/Trolley/Hybrid Car service	\$75,000	\$150,000	10%	\$225,000
Heritage Planning & Community Development Workshops/Forums; Review Boards; Visitor survey and evaluation studies; Gateway and Focus Area Design	\$52,500	\$105,000	7%	\$157,500
Heritage Interpretation Maps and brochures; Kiosks; Interpretive exhibits; Signage; Artwork	\$150,000	\$300,000	20%	\$450,000
TOTAL	\$750,000	\$1,500,000	100%	\$2,250,000

Table 7.1: Estimated 5 Year Costs

area's richness and spend money there.

Suggested actions:

- Collaborating with stakeholders to benefit from their experience in identity building.
- Developing an identity package and marketing materials to attract new audiences. Elements include a "family" of logos, paid advertising, maps, brochures, websites and merchandise. Designing and producing a related signage system for Gateways and venues and wayfinding routes that reinforce the new identity.
- Initiating group and self-guided tours to build new audiences who will spread the word.

Phase 2: Focus Areas and Gateways

Large-scale bricks and mortar projects must be completed in a timely manner to maintain credibility and build on the momentum already felt by the stakeholders. Cemeteries, homesteads, other historic structures and significant landscapes must be restored and protected now to make sure they exist as permanent cultural capital. These efforts will attract new visitors and send a powerful message to the immediate community that the Heritage Area is a special treasure worth supporting. Everyone involved in this planning process wants the Heritage Area to be successful, and will take pride in proving to constituents that the Plan's goals are being realized. The Arabia Alliance must work diligently with its partners to reiterate the importance of making visible progress now.

Suggested actions:

- Determining exact designs for Gateways, Welcome Facilities and other points of interest within each Focus Area.
- Initiating stakeholder collaboration to fund, design, build and maintain Gateways and venues.
- Initiating the process to create inviting displays and exhibits to entertain and educate visitors.

Phase 3: The Routes

Easy access between Gateways and venues is very important in branding and connecting the Heritage

Area as one living, outdoor museum. A well designed, well marked route and trail system will become the backbone for moving people through the Heritage Area, always with sensitivity to being good stewards of its fragile beauty and historic significance.

The Plan's Route System offers terrific opportunities for education and recreation, and will attract people of all ages and incomes. Currently, the Arabia Alliance provides assistance to PATH Foundation to build the multi-use trail network. The Arabia Alliance should seek other partners to help build the proposed routes recommended in this Plan, and make their completion a priority.

Suggested actions:

- Collaborating with the jurisdictions to select routes and acquire key parcels as necessary.
- Collaborating with GDOT to secure Scenic Byway designation for the Evans Mill-Browns Mill-Klondike Road corridor.
- Collaborating with partners and businesses to provide environmentally friendly transportation throughout the Heritage Area including hybrid cars, clean-fuel and electric shuttles, bicycles, canoes and attractive walking and jogging trails.

Phase 4: Visitors Center

Visitors need to know where to begin. They must be oriented and feel welcomed. Building a Visitors Center at Vaughters' Farm is an important priority to give the big-picture overview through hands-on activities that will engage and entertain. The Vaughters' Farm setting is the most easily accessible from the interstate system and makes an attractive first impression.

From here, most visitors will be directed to other Gateways and places that interest them. They will also learn about future attractions and improvements in progress. The Visitors Center can also feature outdoor classrooms and gathering places for the public.

Suggested actions:

- Conducting a thorough site analysis of the area

surrounding the Vaughters' historic home to determine environmentally sensitive areas including wildlife habitats and view sheds. Preliminary designs and site plans for additions can be initiated, using green building principles and techniques.

- Establishing a design, funding and maintenance plan for the Visitors Center site at Vaughters' Farm with GA DNR.
- Supporting pedestrian access and other forms of connectivity to the Route System, other Gateways and venues in close collaboration with GDOT, the counties, GA DNR and PATH Foundation.
- Initiating designs for education activities and displays specifically created for the Visitors Center.



View of Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve

7.3 CONCLUSION

*"The Great Spirit is in all things. He is in the air we breathe.
The Great Spirit is our Father. The earth is our mother.
She nourishes us; that which we put into the ground she returns to us."*

- Big Thunder, member of the Algonquin nation
late 19th century

"We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune. We must keep this natural heritage for our children and our children's children, and for all who come after us."

- Theodore Roosevelt, creator of the National Park Service and
26th President of the United States

"We live healthier and more wholesome lives when we spend more time in communion with our natural environment. I believe that in the coming days and years, the cause of civil rights will become more and more about protecting open land, and about clean air and clean water. It is our fundamental right to pursue a healthy life - physically, mentally and psychologically."

- U.S. Representative John Lewis,
Fifth Congressional District, Georgia