

Incorporating Natural History into the Proposed Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area

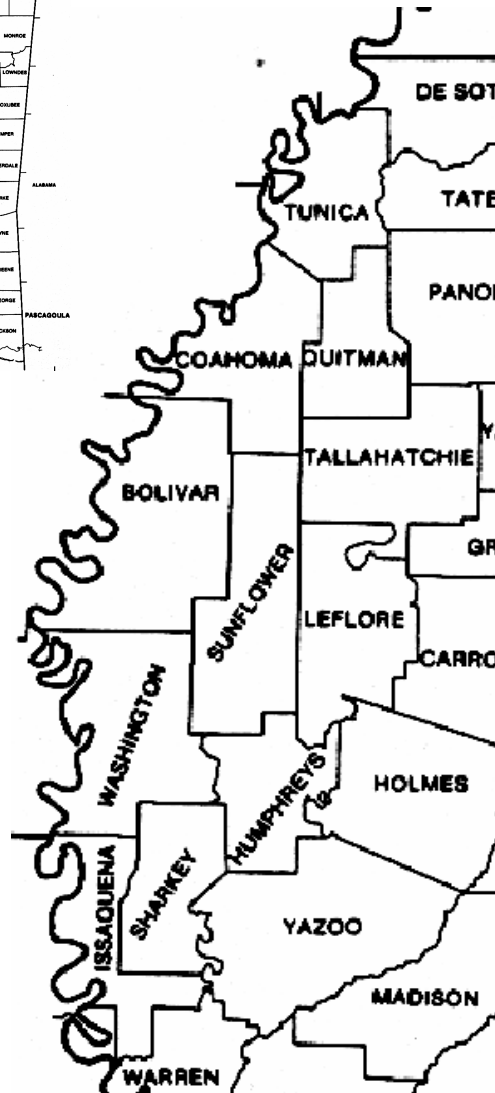
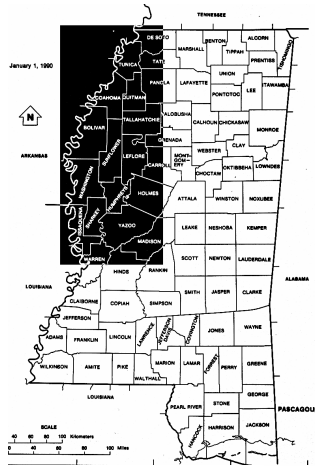
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Topics

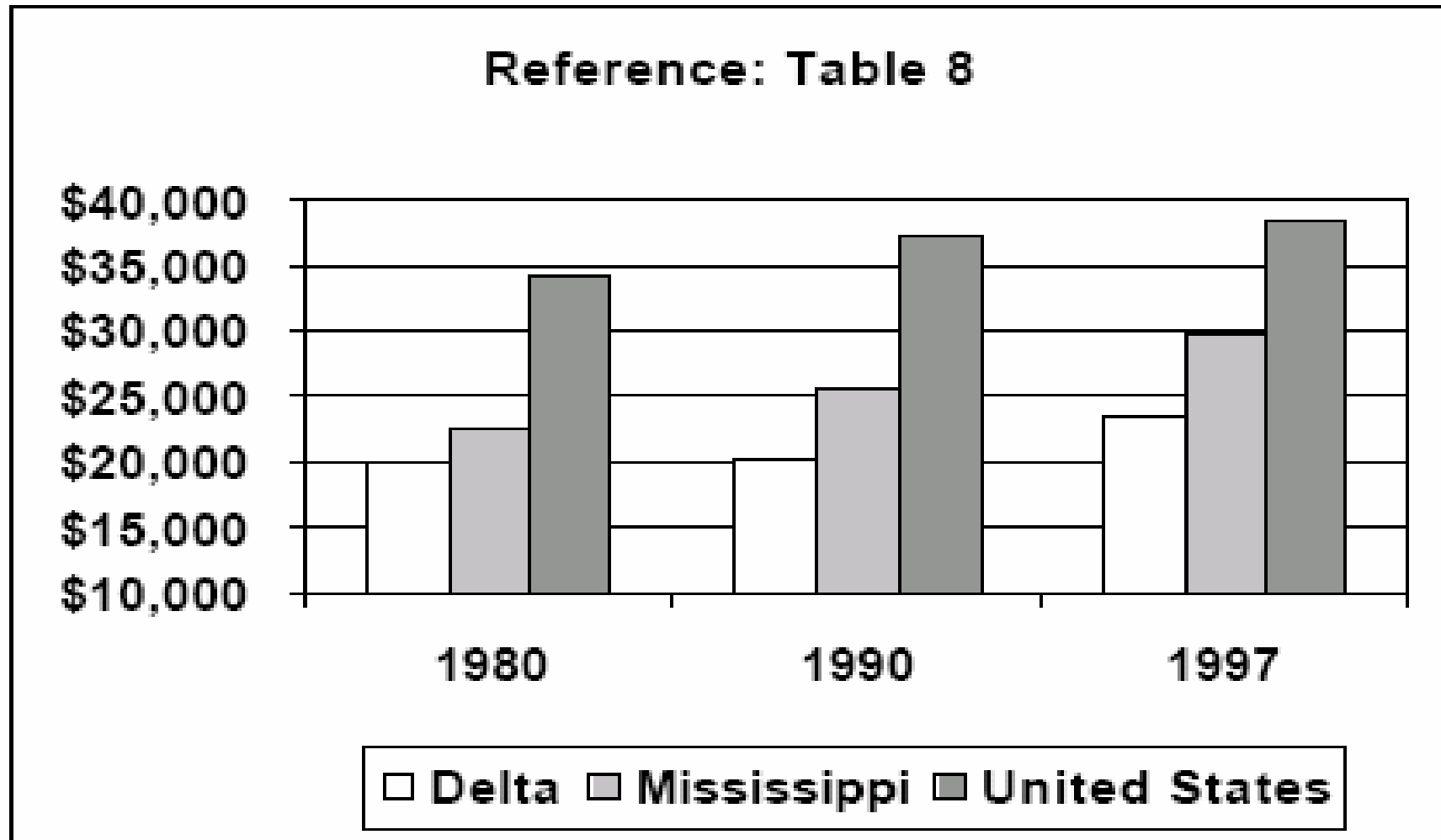
- (1) Mississippi Delta characteristics
- (2) Tourism in the Mississippi Delta
- (3) National Heritage Areas
- (4) Why a NHA in the Mississippi Delta?
- (5) Research and the Creation of the
NHA

Mississippi Delta



**19 County region in
Northwestern
Mississippi;
encompasses the
Yazoo-Mississippi
floodplain**

Figure 3. Median Household Income (in 1999 dollars).



Source: Thomas M. Kersen (2002) *The Changing Delta 1990 to 2000*, Mississippi State University.

Percent Below the Poverty Level in the Mississippi Delta, by County for 1980, 1990 and 1998

Percent for U.S. = 12.7 (1998)

Source: Thomas M. Kersen (2002) *The Changing Delta 1990 to 2000*, Mississippi State University.

County	Percent of Persons Below Poverty		
	1980	1990	1998
Bolivar	39.2	41.0	28.3
Carroll	29.8	28.4	17.9
Coahoma	39.8	44.2	28.7
DeSoto	15.5	10.7	7.4
Holmes	45.8	52.1	33.0
Humphreys	44.4	45.2	32.0
Issaquena	36.5	49.2	31.3
Leflore	33.0	37.5	27.2
Panola	34.1	33.4	20.7
Quitman	41.2	41.1	28.6
Sharkey	43.7	46.8	34.4
Sunflower	36.4	37.3	32.0
Tallahatchie	43.3	41.6	27.2
Tate	24.4	21.6	14.6
Tunica	52.7	56.3	26.1
Warren	18.4	22.1	16.9
Washington	32.8	33.4	25.8
Yazoo	35.9	38.7	28.9
Delta	32.7	32.9	24.9
Mississippi	25.9	24.5	17.6

Gaming



Tourism's Impact in Mississippi

- 91,500 jobs (state's largest private-sector employer)
- Annual payroll of \$1.6 billion
- Estimated direct sales of \$5.7 billion
- Estimated state tax revenues of \$450 million
- Estimated local tax revenues of \$144 million

Source: Mississippi Development Authority/Tourism Division. 2004.
Fiscal Year 2003 Economic Impact for Tourism in Mississippi.

National Heritage Areas

Defined

“A National Heritage Area is a place where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in the areas. Continued use of the National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance.”

Source: www.cr.nps.gov

National Heritage Areas



Management of National Heritage Areas

“National Heritage Area” is a federal designation, but does not denote land management in the traditional sense;

NHAs are managed by local groups;

state agencies, private commissions, or private voluntary organizations;

The National Park Service acts as a coordinating entity, providing expertise and access to funding for a 15-year period

National Heritage Area Designation

Designation as a National Heritage Area is made by Congress, in response to local initiative.

Criteria for Designation as a NHA:

- (1) Completion of a suitability/feasibility study
- (2) Public involvement in the feasibility study
- (3) Demonstration of widespread support among residents for the heritage area designation
- (4) Commitment from key constituents (e.g. governments, industry, private organizations)

Why a National Heritage Area in the Mississippi Delta?

Delta Blues



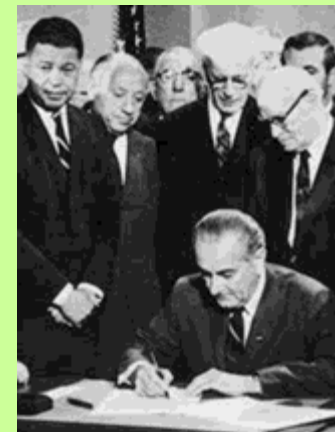
King Cotton



Great Migration



Civil Rights Movement



History of Effort to Create a Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area

- (1) National Park Service conference (1996)
Memphis, TN
- (2) Formation of Blues Highway Association (2002)
The Delta Center for Culture & Learning
- (3) Visit from Robert Stanton, former NPS
director (2003)
- (4) Share Your Heritage workshop (Aug. 2003)
- (5) Visit from Brenda Barrett (Dec. 2003)

Possible Management Entities

- (1) Delta Center for Culture and Learning,
Delta State University
- (2) University Center for Economic Development,
Mississippi Valley State University
- (3) Mississippi State Blues Commission
- (4) USDA Rural Development
- (5) Tunica RiverPark
- (6) Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University
of Mississippi
- (7) Mississippi Arts Commission/Mississippi Heritage
Program
- (8) Mississippi Department of Archives and
History/Mississippi Historical Society
- (9) Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation, Vicksburg,
MS
- (10) Mississippi Division of Tourism

Research Objectives

Purpose: Develop the potential for the proposed Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area (MDNHA) to incorporate natural history into its management approach.

Specific Objectives:

(1) Understand the ways in which natural history is incorporated as an element of local heritage in existing heritage areas.

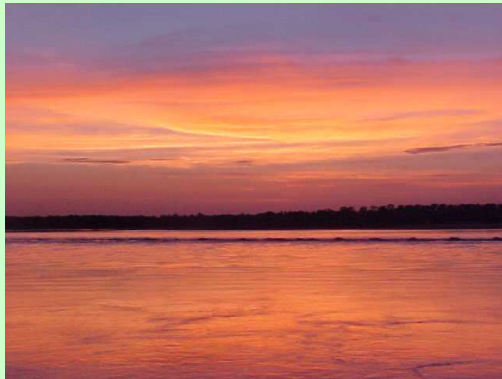
(2) Understand elements of the Delta's natural history and survey opportunities to incorporate these into the MDNHA.

(3) Identify potential partner organizations, e.g. resource management entities within the boundaries of the MDNHA.

(4) Develop opportunities to incorporate participatory research & education into the process of creating & managing the MDNHA.

Natural History of the Delta

Mississippi River/
Water

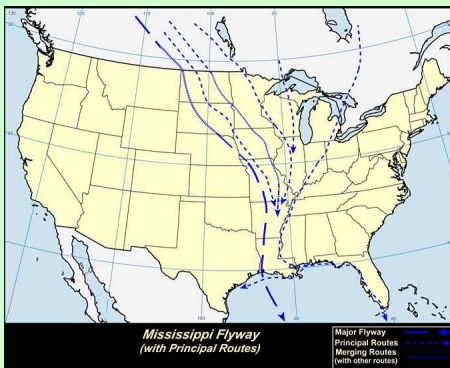


Soil/Topography

Hunting/
Outdoor Recreation



Bird Migration/
Mississippi Flyway



Bottomland
Hardwood
Forests



Role of Research in Creating Heritage Areas

According to the National Park Service:

"Federal designation depends upon Congressional support, whether the region's resources are nationally important and the degree to which the public is engaged in and supportive of designation."

Role of Research in Creating Heritage Areas

Research can play an important role in:

- (1) **Identifying** important resources, stories and interpretive opportunities;
- (2) **Understanding** local conditions, preferences, and possibilities.
- (3) Establishing **partnerships** with local agencies;
- (4) Building **community support** for the designation;
- (5) **Clarifying perceptions** about the designation.