

Parrhasian Heritage Park Vision Plan

The purpose of this document is to guide the creation and management of the Parrhasian Heritage Park.

A heritage park is unique in the Greek park terminology and legislation because it encompasses the full range of typical park classifications including archaeological, natural, recreation, scenic, and cultural. It also does something that is not typical for parks; the boundary encompasses the towns, villages and agrarian areas that surround the major natural, cultural or scenic resources in an area. In doing so, it enables these communities to benefit most from their own surrounding resources. This type of park is also different, in that the local community itself leads in managing the park; typically a local organization made up of people from the region including citizens from the towns and villages, business owners, farmers, as well as local and national government officials, forms to oversee the park. In addition, a heritage park does not only protect the physical resources and landscape character of a region but it serves also to promote traditional ways of life, local festivals, locally made products, and strengthens community identity. In short, the establishment of a heritage park offers great potential to revitalize an area through a grass roots movement that can increase pride in people's home region and ensure the wealth generated from these efforts is returned back to the local community.

In 2005 a small group of local community members along with David Romano and Mary Voyatzis began a discussion of creating a park in the Peloponnese with a vision of protecting and promoting the rich heritage in the area. The August 2010 inaugural workshop in Megalopolis attended by over 200 people demonstrated clear support for the idea of creating such a heritage park for Arcadia and led to an overwhelming agreement that the Parrhasian Heritage Park must be created. Based on input from workshop participants, the following steps describe how the Parrhasian Heritage Park can be created. The current planning effort to create the park is led by a Greek and US university partnership supported by the local communities in the proposed park. The future partnership will include representation from the local communities, the local government, the archaeological service representing the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the US Universities together with key advisors. This partnership will form the basis of the coalition that will oversee the creation of the park and its future development.

Overview of Vision for creating the Parrhasian Heritage Park:

The big picture:

Six major steps have been identified to create the PHP described by the Vision plan:

1. Formal creation of a coalition to oversee creation of the park
2. Envisioning the Plan, completion of a comprehensive plan for the park
3. Public involvement in the vision planning study via focused workshops
4. Complete Special History study
5. Implement programs and projects
6. Promote heritage and community

1)Coalition Organization:

To realize the Parrhasian Heritage Park, a PHP Coalition needs to be created that will oversee the creation and future management of the park. The major tasks of the coalition are described below (see Appendix B for a more detailed outline of the coalition organization):

1. Creation: A meeting should be held to create the coalition. This meeting will include all the major partners. The partners will include representation from local communities, local government, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, US universities, and key advisors (fall 2010 / spring 2011); In lieu of a meeting there could be an email exchange to create the coalition. Careful consideration will be given as to whom is to be invited and should be evaluated on a regular basis to stay current with community developments.
2. Oversee and review the work of the planning team and ensure there are clear definitions of how the planning study will be implemented;
3. Demonstrate willingness and ability to commit to working in partnership to develop the Parrhasian Heritage Park and ensure ability to represent all of the communities within the park including people from the towns, villages, businesses, farmers, and local NGO's from the local communities focused on nature and heritage conservation.
4. Work with all communities associated with the park to describe the region's identity and values associated with the region (see appendix A);
5. Create a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the US partners, national and local government. This financial plan will include an overview of major grant opportunities, and should be set into place immediately, and;
6. Seek local, regional, national and international designations for the park to solidify and promote the identity of the region.

2)Envisioning the Park:

A PHP Comprehensive Plan will inventory, evaluate and describe strategies for the park that will cover all aspects of how the park will be created and managed. As an open-ended effort the plan will guide the park over the next ten years, with findings reviewed and enhanced every year as the park develops. (see attached Comprehensive Plan document defining scope of work)

A physical location where data and valuable information concerning the PHP will be stored and made accessible will be established. It is possible that a research center to be constructed in the future could serve this purpose. Until that time a point of reference such as the Municipality of Megalopolis will be designated to facilitate this data storage and exchange.

The Comprehensive Plan will outline:

1. Gathering of inventory to identify recreational, natural, historic resources as well as economic drivers and tourist destinations.
2. Creation of a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public (presented for review at workshops)
3. Creation of strategies for promoting, preserving, and protecting the Heritage Park. These strategies will be comprehensive covering conservation, archaeology, economic drivers, marketing, and recreation opportunities.

Timeline/Schedule:

1. The PHP Comprehensive Plan will be completed by 2013 for presentation to the coalition and local communities The Document will be reviewed and enhanced every year for the next ten years thereafter. In 2023 a new Comprehensive Plan will be completed that updates the 2013 effort.
2. The effort to create a park planning template in the Mt. Lykaion Character Area will continue ahead of park-wide planning efforts. This effort includes the opportunity to develop trails, install signage, create a research center, build a museum in Megalopolis, and open a center at Ano Karyes; this work will begin Summer 2011 and will mark the start of the creation of the park.

3)Community Meetings and Workshops:

As part of the planning study, residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area will be involved in the planning. To this end the workshops will:

1. Allow community to define regional identity, values and benefits.
2. Provide an opportunity for community input regarding the Parrhasian Heritage Park proposal. This input will be documented and used as one of the components of the planning study.
 - a. Initial workshop for everyone in the regions, attended by over 200 persons - 2010
 - b. Two regional public workshops – Summer 2011
 - c. Meeting to form coalition – Summer 2011
 - d. Regional public workshops – Summer 2012
 - e. Regional public workshops – Summer 2013
3. The workshops are aimed at strengthening the relationship between the community, national and state agencies and will be conducted to produce definable and achievable actions for implementation.

4)Special History Study:

The study will show:

1. The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of Greek heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, education, outreach and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities;
2. Significance of traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a part of the region and national story;

5)Planning for Programs and Projects:

Based upon the heritage Park's regional identity, values and benefits that result from the forthcoming workshops, the PHP Coalition will identify programs and projects that will promote the heritage area and benefit the local community:

1. Programs: Recreation, revitalization, conservation, preservation, education, and outreach opportunities in the park.
2. Projects: art projects, trailheads, and tourist centers, etc.
3. Funding: Ensure description of funding mechanism is included in proposals

It is intended for the PHP Coalition to build a comprehensive list of program and projects unique to the Parrhasian Heritage Park. This list will include priorities, phasing, costs and funding mechanisms for each program and project. To meet Heritage Park criteria the planning effort will need to:

1. Provide outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and /or scenic features;
2. Promote local wealth through strategic branding and value added products;
3. Provide outstanding recreational opportunities;
4. Take care that the resources important to regional identity and community values are capable of supporting education and outreach;
5. Gather all relevant data and conduct necessary research to understand and verify that the area is suitable for development and planned use. Every measure will be taken to prevent any possibility of damage to the environment and the communities.

6)Promoting Heritage and Community:

The towns and villages are characterized by a way of life that supports people to live well. Traditions and traditional ways of doing things are valued. The PHP Coalition will take a lead role in developing a plan for the Heritage Park that capitalizes on the momentum created by the workshops and this Vision Plan that will protect and enhance the concept of *“living well.”*

The PHP Coalition will also work on developing and improving the wealth and fitness of communities by focusing on joint projects between the farmers, towns, villagers, national and local agencies, and the US partners (including the Parrhasian Heritage Foundation). The development plan will promote economic activity in the area by:

1. Providing opportunities to improve the local economy through locally led business efforts;
2. improving the rural economy through the creation of value added agrarian opportunities promoting locally produced goods, and;
3. creating a strategic effort to describe the benefits of the Heritage Park to outsiders including, but not limited to, the beauty, heritage, ways of life, and locally made goods.

The success of the Heritage Park from a “live well” perspective can be assessed by six categories that measure how well the vision plan is implemented:

1. environmental policy,

2. infrastructure,
3. quality of urban fabric,
4. encouragement of local produce and products,
5. hospitality, and
6. community gatherings

Appendix A: Regional Identity and Values

Regional Identity: To be developed by Coalition and the local community through workshops

Community Values

The following initial set of values have been identified for the Heritage Park based upon the findings of the summer 2010 workshop in Megalopolis. During the course of the planning study and in consultation with the local community they will be affirmed, revised, and expanded. In other words, they will evolve into a set of overarching principles that best fit the Parrhasian Heritage Park and those who live in it:

1. **Strengthen the identity of the communities in relation to the ancient sites and major natural features forming the backbone of the park.**
Broaden and re-establish identification of the area with the villages and towns as well as nearby heritage sites. Use preservation and interpretation to enhance the experience of the resource, and therefore the attractiveness of the area. Make it "discoverable", "memorable" "inspiring", "reachable" and aesthetically appealing.
2. **Share this unique place with others, local residents and outside visitors**
Aim for the heart of the region to be a destination that will cause a ripple effect to the surrounding community in visitation and economic improvement. Incorporate "spin off" options for visitors to see and to provide support for visits such as the hospitality industry.
A PHP team (sub-committee) will be created early on to develop a strategy for communicating the concept of the Heritage Park and the benefits it affords the community and outsiders
3. **Make improved public wellbeing a priority.**

A successful heritage park from a *live well* perspective, will demonstrate sound environmental policy, quality infrastructure and urban fabric, a thriving market for local produce and products, renowned hospitality, and the promotion of community gatherings.

4. **Identify gateways and hubs and provide connectivity.**
Create gateways along major transportation routes. Identify hubs (villages) within the park; create connections to the major ancient sites and access to the natural beauty by via roads and trails.

Appendix B: Coalition Charter

Charter to Form a Coalition Overseeing the Creation of the Parrhasian Heritage Park

August 1, 2010

Parrhasian Heritage Park Coalition (PHPC)

A committee needs to be formed that will oversee the creation of the Parrhasian Heritage Park. The area in question includes ca. 300 square kilometers of land featuring pristine mountain landscapes, rivers, valleys and small villages that relate to countless examples of the rich cultural history shaped by years of occupancy rooted in deep-seated and intact traditions. The goal is to achieve a completed plan for the park with clearly identified projects and programs within three years. The coalition formed to oversee the creation of the PHP will review and contribute to the findings, conclusions and recommendations with respect to planning study conducted to assess opportunities, strategies, projects and programs for the area. The coalition will aim to open the park in 2013. The coalition will also strive for international and national recognition for the park, but this is not dependent on the creation of the heritage area and the opening of the park.

What is the Purpose of the PHP Coalition

For its success, the PHP will need guidance, direction, and support from the proposed PHPC. The planning effort the coalition will oversee will seek:

7. To protect the unique vernacular features of the region which have developed over time to exemplify the Greek agricultural landscape.
8. To preserve and provide access to the areas of outstanding natural beauty found in the area, such as the Neda River gorge.
9. To highlight and protect significant archaeological sites including: the first Greek sanctuary to be recognized on the World Heritage List, the Temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassai; one of the famous Pan-Hellenic

- sanctuaries, Mt. Lykaion, that features the only visible hippodrome in the Greek world, and an altar that may have been used over 5,000 years ago in the Sanctuary of Zeus.
10. To allow citizen and government collaboration on planning to share their concerns about localized needs.
 11. To encourage economic growth associated with tourism, bringing an estimated one million new visitors to the area.
 12. To establish guidelines for managing change in the region.
 13. To protect the integrity of the existing cultural and natural landscape.
 14. To support the traditional culture that exists in the modern day.

What are the goals of the coalition?

Creating the PHPC will lead citizens from the towns and villages, business owners, farmers, as well as local and national government agencies and organizations to agree on ways to manage and enjoy the local natural, historic, cultural, educational, scenic or recreational resources that are important to the heritage of the Greece. The major areas the coalition can focus on include:

1. Community Revitalization
2. Cultural Conservation
3. Economic Development
4. Education and Interpretation
5. Heritage Tourism
6. Historic Preservation
7. Natural Resource Conservation
8. Recreation
9. Stewardship Building
10. Strategic Engagement
11. Health and therapeutic sources

In addition –the coalition will strive to introduce legislation that will be adopted and passed by the Greek state to create national recognition for the Parrhasian Heritage Park. In addition, the coalition will work to gain international recognition for the park through a UNESCO World Heritage designation.

How the coalition will work?

The committee, comprised of a diverse group of community members and local associations will review, and approve the comprehensive plan, which requires collaboration with and support from residents, business interests and non-profit organizations. The comprehensive planning effort led by the PHP Planning team, a partnership between the US and Greek parties, will

provide necessary information to the coalition to inform decision making. The coalition will share information with local citizens through a series of public meetings and publications. Local citizens and business owners partner with local and national governments to create strategies for resource conservation, community revitalization and economic development projects. In summary, the coalition is a public commission established to guide community-centered decisions and oversee park programs. Participation in projects and programs is always voluntary, with land ownership remaining under the jurisdiction of local governments and citizens.

Strategies for Success

There are both tangible and intangible benefits. Through focusing on the above goals a successful coalition will promote regional identity, improve community life, and oversee planning projects that enhance the character of the region. There is also a focus on community pride in its history and traditions, and the encouragement of residents' stewardship in retaining and interpreting the landscape for future generations. Educational and inspirational opportunities will encourage visitors and economic development will occur in the form of cultural tourism, local museums, festivals and visiting university groups. Most importantly, the park offers a way to protect a lasting legacy that balances between resource protection and economic development through tourism.

1) Regional Identity: The Parrhasian Heritage Park is a name that associates important historic, archaeological and natural features within the context of culture, tradition and geography.

1. Fosters pride and stewardship
2. Encourages connections to local history and place
3. Supports continuation of cultural traditions
4. Promotes interest in the region and invites tourism

2) Community: The success of a heritage park depends upon the participation of individuals in the region.

1. Working together towards the social well-being of the region
2. Collaboration between local and national governments

3) Planning: Strategies that work towards the highest vision of health and prosperity for the region.

1. Natural resources – Protect nature while balancing with human needs
2. Cultural resources – Recognize customs, foods, and handicrafts unique to the region
3. Archaeological resources – Protect the irreplaceable national heritage

4. Recreational opportunities - Promote enjoyment of resources for the community and outsiders

Appendix C: Findings from the 2010 Megalopolis Workshop

Appendix D: Terminology

Comprehensive Plan: The physical master planning for the park including the vision, values, and actions that will occur within the park.

Vision Plan: Document describing all the steps needed to create the park.

PHP: Parrhasian Heritage Park

PHP Coalition: The organization that will run it all (representation from the local communities, local government, Ministry of Culture, Parrhasian Heritage Foundation, Mt. Lykaion Excavation and Survey Project). NGOs, Foundations etc

Planning Team: These folks will work on the Comprehensive plan and report back to the PHP coalition

Promoting Heritage and Economy: This covers Outreach, Education, Wealth Generation, Value Added Products and Branding (It would be nice if we can think of a better phrase to summarize this).