



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Senate Action Approves Abraham Lincoln Heritage Area

Today's Senate passage of the Public Lands bill (SB 2739), if signed into law, would designate a 42 county area of central Illinois as the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. The legislation names the Springfield-based not-for-profit, Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, that promotes the Lincoln Legacy sites in the region now, as the management entity for the National Heritage Area.

Hal Smith, Director of Looking for Lincoln, who would also direct the National Heritage Area, said, " We are fortunate to be at the epicenter of Lincoln's adult life and hold many of the nation's Lincoln treasures in our midst. If the legislation is signed into law, it will create a very unique opportunity for Illinois to further preserve, develop and interpret a number of significant historic sites that are an important part of the Lincoln story."

"We have a responsibility to future generations to preserve as much of the Lincoln Legacy as is possible. There are structures that need to be restored and preserved and many more that make up the Lincoln Story Trail, that need to be further developed and interpreted. The more sites we can preserve and the better we present the stories of Lincoln, the greater the likelihood we will have a valued visitor experience, that will mean more people traveling to our area, resulting in a stronger regional economy."

"We are grateful to Senator Durbin and the entire Illinois Congressional delegation for seeing this legislation through the Congress. We are hopeful it will be signed into law so we may begin the formal assessment process of identifying and prioritizing potential projects for development in the Heritage Area. This will be accomplished through the creation of a Management Plan, with public participation across central Illinois. The completed plan must be approved by the National Park Service.

The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition currently promotes communities and sites throughout 42 counties of central Illinois that share the Lincoln Legacy. For more information on sites currently promoted by the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Area go to www.lookingforlincoln.com.

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