



Manhattan Project National Historical Park



Location: New Mexico, Tennessee & Washington

Establishment Legislation: S. 507/Maria Cantwell and H.R. 1208/Doc Hastings

Background: Under a veil of secrecy, workers in Los Alamos, New Mexico; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and Hanford, Washington, built the world's first production-scale nuclear reactor, assembled the atomic bomb—and created a lasting impact on world history. While the project was masterminded by leading scientists including J. Robert Oppenheimer and Maria Goeppert Mayer, most of the tens of thousands of workers were unaware of the actual “product” that they were helping to create. The Manhattan Project empowered thousands of women to join the workforce, from those adjusting controls of the Calutrons at Oak Ridge to scientists involved at the project's highest levels.

At the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, the National Park Service will interpret and facilitate discussion surrounding the complex stories of the [Manhattan Project](#) and the resulting impacts of atomic power and nuclear technology in the three major park site areas.

Not later than one year after this law is enacted, the Manhattan Project National Historical Park shall be established, after the Secretaries of Interior and Energy have consulted and entered into an agreement on the governance and management of these sites. The Department of Energy will continue to own the facilities, and the Department of Interior, through the National Park Service will manage for historic preservation and interpretation.

NPCA Actions:

- NPCA has supported efforts to include sites related to the Manhattan Project in our National Park System for more than four years.
- NPCA has engaged its members and supporters to help advance the legislation and worked alongside community partners and national organizations to help convince National Park Service to recommend the creation of a Manhattan Project National Historic Park. The park service issued its final recommendations in 2011.

Manhattan Project National Historical Park Act Passage: Supportive Comments by NPCA and Partners

Rob Smith, Northwest Regional Director for the National Parks Conservation Association:

“The complex stories of the Manhattan Project are ideal topics for the National Park Service – our country’s premier story tellers -- to interpret. As only a small percentage of our national parks currently interpret science and technology, the Manhattan Project National Historical Park will continue to enhance our country’s best idea, as we look towards the 2016 centennial celebration of our National Park System.”

David Nimkin, Senior Southwest Regional Director for the National Parks Conservation Association

“The National Parks Conservation Association has worked for several years with Representative Hastings and Congressional leaders from New Mexico, Washington, and Tennessee in efforts to make this park a reality. We believe that this national park will allow visitors to consider the project’s many ethical, cultural, and scientific implications. The sites will not celebrate the creation of atomic weapons, but put into context the impacts, both positive and negative, that resulted from splitting the atom.”

Don Barger, Senior Southeast Regional Director for the National Parks Conservation Association

“The entire structure of our thinking, our politics, and our global societal interactions was irrevocably altered by the Manhattan Project. With Congressional approval of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, the National Park Service will be able to help generations of world citizens understand and learn from the significance of that turning point in world history.”

Cindy Kelly, Founder and President of the Atomic Heritage

Foundation: "After 70 years, the Manhattan Project will finally be incorporated in the National Park System. The Manhattan Project's story is an epic tale of scientific and engineering ingenuity, great human collaboration and profound moral and ethical issues. The new park will engage the public in reflecting upon the nature of war, the relationship of science and society, and the continuing legacy of nuclear weapons for the world."

Clarence Moriwaki, President of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Association:

“As someone who lost family because of the atomic bomb, I agree that there is no glory in the first and only use of atomic weapons. However, the Manhattan Project is an important chapter of American history, and I believe we should recount all parts of our heritage.”

Gary Petersen, Vice President of Federal Programs for Tri Cities Development Council (TRIDEC)

“TRIDEC is thrilled that the roughly 100,000 men and women who founded the Nuclear Age under the Manhattan Project are finally being recognized for their astounding engineering feats through the approval of this new National Park site!”

“A team of individuals and organizations from across the country, including the Atomic Heritage Foundation, National Parks Conservation Association, National Trust for Historic Preservation, B Reactor Museum Association, Energy Communities Alliance as well as the communities of Oak Ridge, Los Alamos and Tri-Cities have worked for nearly five years to get this legislation passed. The positive economic and educational impacts of this new national park will be felt across the States of Washington, Tennessee and New Mexico for decades to come!”

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Learn more: <http://www.npca.org/protecting-our-parks/history-culture/manhattan-project.html>

All comments are available for media use.

For additional information, contact

Kati Schmidt, Senior Media Relations Manager

National Parks Conservation Association: 415.847.1768; kschmidt@npca.org