

MLAP Project History

Northwest Florida Maritime Landscape Alliance for Preservation (MLAP)

The project's feasibility study began in 2016. In 2018 appearances began before organizations and local governments by Dr. Sorna Khakzad, a Post-Doctoral Research Associate and faculty member at the University of West Florida and the Florida Public Archaeology Network. Among other items in Dr. Khakzad's resumé is her work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Dr. Khakzad & associates' appearances at regularly scheduled meetings of local organizations such as the Okaloosa Tourist Development Council are called public outreach to "stakeholders". We contend that the property owners in the 14 county areas which they intend to "preserve" are the stakeholders. We are curious as to when we will be notified. The language from their mission statement is clear that a process of facilitated "visioning" meetings will be the only opportunity for the public to participate. By then it will be too late.

In January 2021, Dr. Khakzad and associates formed the Maritime Landscape Alliance for Preservation 501(c)3 (MLAP). The non-profit is necessary to submit the feasibility study to the National Park Service (NPS) and ultimately to Congress.

NHAs are sold on the promise that economic prosperity will explode as people from around the world flock to our area. The traffic on Highway 98 is a testament that people from all over the world find northwest Florida without a wet blanket of "protection" over it. The Heritage Foundation confirms the economic fallacy in this still relevant article written in 2007.

<https://www.heritage.org/budget-and-spending/report/national-heritage-areas-costly-economic-development-schemes-threaten>

MLAP is in the final phase of the feasibility study to be submitted to NPS. NPS will approve, but the \$700,000 (2016) will not be forthcoming until Congress acts. The annual funding will continue for 15 years. The NHA is expected to be self-sufficient, but that has never happened with any other NHA, and why should this NHA be the exception? Our tax money will continue funding the restriction of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness in perpetuity. Help us stop this project so that northwest Florida is not turned into a museum.