



# Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks World Heritage Nomination

## Economic Impact Study

### Frequently Asked Questions

What is World Heritage?

The World Heritage Program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established to encourage the permanent protection of cultural and natural treasures around the globe. World Heritage designation honors the world's greatest treasures, such as the Grand Canyon, the Pyramids in Egypt and Machu Picchu in Peru. The program is established by an international treaty signed by the United States and 192 other countries. World Heritage Sites remain under the same local, state or national control and management they had before inscription.

**How will World Heritage increase the economic impact of these sites?**

World Heritage is equivalent to other qualified endorsements like Consumer Reports Best Buy or the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval—it lets potential visitors know that sites are so unique and awe-inspiring that they possess value to all humanity, not just local significance. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks would be Ohio's first World Heritage sites. World Heritage substantially raises the profile of these earthworks, helping to attract domestic and international visitors who want to visit the world's most significant cultural heritage places. We refer to these visitors as "cultural heritage travelers."

**What sites are included in the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks World Heritage nomination and the economic impact study?**

The nomination is three sites in Ohio comprising seven earthworks built by the ancestors of modern American Indians nearly 2,000 years ago. It includes Fort Ancient in Warren County and the Newark Earthworks in Licking County (Ohio History Connection sites) and five sites at Hopewell Culture National Historical Park in Ross County (Mound City, High Bank Works, Hopeton Earthworks, Hopewell Mound Group and Seip Earthworks).

**What is the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks World Heritage Nomination Economic Impact Study and who performed it?**

The Ohio History Connection contracted with Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs to study the likely economic effects of World Heritage List designation for the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks. We know from other World Heritage sites that being listed as a World Heritage site helps drive tourism to a region. To what degree depends on how the site and the surrounding communities plan and develop their cultural amenities. This study helps us understand how to best spend our efforts in Ohio. While the study focuses on impacts in the counties where the sites are located—Warren, Ross and Licking counties—planning regionally will be most beneficial.

Dr. Jason Jolley and Nicole Kirchner led the project for Ohio University, with E. Brent Lane, Professor of Heritage Economics at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill as a project consultant.

**What did we learn from the study?**

The study forecasts that a range of likely economic impacts is possible, depending on how sites and communities prepare for World Heritage. Major findings include:

- Visitation to the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks sites is likely to increase by a minimum of 75-100% in the three years following World Heritage designation.
- Total economic output across Warren, Licking and Ross counties would likely increase by a minimum of \$12,521,411 annually—and could be much higher if the recommendations of the report are followed (see below).
- World Heritage disproportionately attracts high value “cultural heritage travelers,” who have unique preferences that dovetail well with the rich heritage, cultural and outdoor experiences that southern and central Ohio can offer.

### **What recommendations does the study make?**

- Develop your community and the region with cultural heritage travelers in mind. Cultural heritage travelers spend more on average than other visitors<sup>1</sup>. *Local, authentic* experiences and amenities attract these travelers, giving Ohio a chance to showcase our unique communities while maximizing economic benefit.
- Work together regionally to develop and market multi-day experiences. Converting day visitors to overnight visitors is the best way to sustainably increase economic impact. Research shows that when visitors stay overnight in Ohio, they spend about three times as much per day as day trip visitors.<sup>2</sup> On overnight trips, travelers will seek out other local experiences like outdoor activities (hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, etc.), visiting other historic sites, seeing live theater and music productions, visiting orchards and farmers’ markets, eating in locally owned restaurants, shopping in locally owned stores, and spending time in walkable downtowns.

### **Can the economic impact be larger than the study forecasts?**

Yes. With successful collaboration between the World Heritage site owners and the local communities, the study estimates that visitation may increase by up to 200%, increasing the economic impact accordingly. Another way to increase the economic impact with a moderate increase in visitation is to encourage more overnight stays. Communities across the region should work together to make it a multi-day destination as described above.

### **How did the study determine economic impact?**

The study modeled economic impact through the IMPLAN system—an industry standard for impact analysis. Estimates of visitation are one input to the model, and are based on visitation data from similar World Heritage sites, including Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Illinois and Poverty Point in northern Louisiana. The study models how much money additional visitors will spend directly during their visit (direct effects), how their spending will affect the supply chain (indirect effects); and how much more money workers employed in World Heritage related jobs will spend because they have increased income (induced effects).

Please visit [www.WorldHeritageOhio.org](http://www.WorldHeritageOhio.org) for more information and to download the economic impact study presentation, or contact World Heritage Project Coordinator Jen Aultman at [worldheritage@ohiohistory.org](mailto:worldheritage@ohiohistory.org).

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (2005). *A position paper on Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the United States*. Available at: <http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/FINASST/docs/05WhitePaperCultHeritTourism.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> TourismOhio <http://www.ohio.org/industry/updates/2017/05/2016-ohio-tourism-economic-impact-and-visitors-study>