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Blue Ridge Parkway designated a National Historic Landmark

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The Blue Ridge Parkway brings millions to local economies, especially during the height of fall color season.

Photo by Christian Gardner

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Blue Ridge Parkway has been designated a National Historic Landmark.

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced on Dec. 16 the designations of 19 new National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), reflecting the importance of the sites in sharing America's diverse history. The new NHLs are nationally significant properties for lesbian,

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bisexual, transgender and queer Americans, African Americans, Asian American Pacific Islanders, and women's history in addition to moments important in development of American technology, landscape design, and art.

"As America's storyteller, it is our privilege at the Department of the Interior, through the National Park Service, to tell our nation's history and honor the many historical chapters and heroic communities that brought us to where we all are today," said Secretary Haaland in a press release. "These newly designated historic landmarks join a list of the nation's premier historic and cultural places, all of which were nominated through voluntary and locally led stewardship."

The release stated that the "Blue Ridge Parkway (multiple, N.C. and Va.) is a masterwork of landscape architecture and transportation engineering and one of the finest examples of the collaborative work of the National Park Service and Bureau of Public Roads. It also represents the movement to conserve natural and cultural resources in the eastern United States through the expansion of the National Park System in the 1920s and 1930s.

An NHL designation is the highest federal recognition of a property's historical, architectural or archeological significance, and a testament to the dedicated stewardship of many private and public property owners who seek this designation. While the National Park Service (NPS) maintains NHL listings, most are privately owned.

The new NHLs join a select group of over 2,600 nationally significant places that have exceptional value in illustrating the history and culture of the United States. NHL theme studies supported many of these nominations and designations.

"The National Park Service is committed to helping preserve and share a fuller and more inclusive account of our nation's history, a history that is not complete until all stories are represented. These 19 newly designated landmarks help do just that," National Park Service Director Chuck Sams said. "We are proud to recognize these nationally significant places representing the diversity of the American experience and our country's collective heritage."

In addition to the new designations, the NPS has updated documentation for 14 current NHLs and has withdrawn designation of three NHLs because of demolition or destruction. View these changes on the NHL website.

Another North Carolina site was also given the designation.

The Charleston Cigar Factory (Charleston, S.C.) is nationally significant for its association with a strike led by African American women cigar workers during the winter of 1945-1946 that is highly illustrative of the post-World War II national strike wave and the links between labor and Civil Rights activism.

For more information about these landmarks and the National Historic Landmarks Program, visit www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks.