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# The Heart of the Continent Geotourism Program Nomination Guidelines

## Nomination Guidelines

The Heart of the Continent Geotourism Council is working with the National Geographic Society to create a Heart of the Continent Geotourism MapGuide website and app. National Geographic defines Geotourism as *“Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.”*

## An Opportunity for You!

Residents, visitors, community organizations, tourism stakeholders and local businesses are asked to nominate sites for potential inclusion in a co-branded National Geographic Society online interactive MapGuide website of the region. They can be your own business, site or attraction, or things you would recommend to others.

Complete an online or print *Nomination Form* and help identify destinations and experiences most distinctive to the people, places and things that capture the region’s unique character and beauty. These nominations will provide the basis for a map that will tell the story of the region and its attractions.

Nominate at: [www.traveltheheart.org](http://www.traveltheheart.org)

## What are the Guidelines for a Geotourism Site?

***A test for inclusion on the MapGuide:*** Is the spot, attraction, business, activity or experience distinctive to your region and is it authentic to the Heart of the Continent? Examples may include:

- Remarkable natural areas and geologic features such as creeks, lakes, bluffs, beaches, rivers, waterfalls, wetlands, forests, or vistas.
- Distinctive wildlife habitats and notable species of birds, mammals, flowers or trees
- Places featuring local cuisine or agricultural products: farmers markets, shops and restaurants, agri-tourism sites
- Events, ceremonies, festivals that highlight the community’s heritage, food, music and traditions
- Cultural experiences: heritage sites, museums, theaters, music, literature and performing arts
- Artist studios and galleries, craft workshop, shops featuring handmade items from the region
- Outdoor experiences such as paddling, biking, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, fishing, beaches, boat tours, water activities, parks, heritage areas or campgrounds.
- Historic places such as trails, distinctive local architecture, shipwrecks, conservation areas, First Nation sites.

- Scenic routes including hiking trails, bike routes, birding trails, scenic byways and water routes.
- Community stewardship projects, land trusts, conservation or restoration initiatives
- Locally owned and family businesses like a café, pub, craft shop, brewery, unique lodging
- Local artist or artisan, storyteller, outdoor guide or historian

***Once you identify a potential site, consider what makes the site unique:***

- What story does this site or experience help tell?
- Are there significant historic, cultural or natural features associated with the site?
- Is it under-appreciated by local residents and visitors, or is it already crowded or at capacity?
- Does the site offer a unique experience? Is there local awareness and pride in this place?
- Do the community and local businesses benefit from and support visitation at the site?
- Is interpretative or educational information available at the site?

## **Nominating a Site**

To nominate a site online, fill out an electronic site nomination form at: [www.traveltheheart.org](http://www.traveltheheart.org)

To nominate a site offline, fill out a printed nomination form and submit to the contact listed on the form. Nominations can be submitted starting April 15<sup>th</sup> through June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

### **Heart of the Continent Geotourism Program**

For more information contact:

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The National Geographic Society will be working closely with the Heart of the Continent Geotourism Council to select the sites and themes that will appear on the map. The National Geographic Society will make the final determination on wording and site selection.

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