

Chapter 3

EVALUATION OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE, SUITABILITY, FEASIBILITY, AND NEED FOR NPS MANAGEMENT

This chapter presents analyses required by Congress for new areas that may be candidates for designation as units of the national park system. The criteria are national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for NPS management. In addition, following the directive of the Tubman special resource study law, there is an evaluation of the feasibility of a national heritage area.

Areas comprising the current 391-unit national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the system should, therefore, contribute in their own special way to a system that fully represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The NPS is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an act of Congress. Several laws outline criteria for potential units of the national park system. To be found to be potentially eligible for inclusion in the system a proposed addition must (1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources; (2) be a suitable addition to the system; (3) be a feasible addition to the system; and (4) require direct NPS management, instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector. These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation's natural and cultural resources. They also recognize that there are other alternatives, short of designation as a unit of the national park system, for preserving the nation's outstanding resources.

An area or resource may be considered nationally significant if it is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource; possesses exceptional value or quality in

illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage; offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study; and retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource. National significance for cultural resources, such as those comprising the Auburn, New York, and Eastern Shore Maryland properties associated with Harriet Tubman, is determined by applying the National Historic Landmarks criteria contained in the Code of Federal Regulations at 36 CFR Part 65.

An area may be considered suitable for potential addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector. The suitability evaluation, therefore, is not limited solely to units of the national park system, but includes evaluation of all comparable resource types protected by others.

Suitability is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the resources being studied to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The suitability analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the potential new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond its boundaries), and be capable of efficient administration by the NPS at a reasonable cost. In evaluating feasibility, the NPS considers a variety of factors, such as: size; boundary configurations; current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands; land ownership patterns; public enjoyment potential; costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation; access; current and potential threats to the resources; existing degradation of resources; staffing requirements; local planning and zoning for the study area; the level of local and general public support; and the economic and socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system. The evaluation also considers the ability of the NPS to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected constraints on funding and personnel.

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. Most notably, state park systems provide for protection of natural and cultural resources throughout the nation and offer outstanding recreational experiences. The NPS applauds these accomplishments, and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities, and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the NPS will find that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not be recommended as a potential unit of the national park system.

Studies evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives to NPS management are not normally developed for study areas that fail to meet the four criteria for potential units, particularly the “national significance” criterion.

In cases where a study area’s resources meet criteria for national significance, but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the NPS may instead analyze an alternative status, such as “affiliated” area. To be eligible for “affiliated area” status, the area’s resources must: (1) meet the same standards for national significance that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the NPS and the nonfederal management entity.

Designation as a national heritage area is another option that may be analyzed. Heritage areas are distinctive landscapes that do not necessarily meet the same standards of national significance as units of the national park system. Both affiliated areas and national heritage areas would recognize an area’s importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the NPS.

If a special resource study finds that a resource meets the standards for potential designation as a unit of the national park system, Congress may choose to enact federal legislation creating a unit.

National Significance

As an historical figure, Harriet Tubman is nationally significant, and acknowledgement of her status as a national icon is widespread. Her importance to American history and culture is elucidated in Chapter 2. A special resource study must evaluate national significance by determining whether the resource:

- is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource;
- possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage;
- offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study; and
- retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of the resource.

If a resource is already designated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL), the national significance criteria are met without further analysis being required.

AUBURN, NEW YORK

In Auburn, NY, the primary structures and properties associated with Harriet Tubman – her residence, the Home for the Aged, and Thompson Memorial AME Zion Church—have previously been evaluated and designated as a National Historic Landmark. Since NHL designation confers national significance, the Harriet Tubman properties in Auburn require no further evaluation of national significance in this special resource study. The resources retain the integrity consistent with their NHL nomination.

The properties in Auburn offer compelling opportunities for public enjoyment. While currently there are approximately 10,000 annual visitors, the facilities would be able to attract larger numbers in the future with additional staff and outreach and the completion of restoration on the residence and the church. Visitors now tour the Home for the Aged and the grounds of property, and view a film at the visitor center. In the future, visitors would be able to tour the Tubman Residence and the Thompson Memorial AME Zion Church. At the Tubman Residence visitors may come closest to being in the presence of the physical materials of Tubman's daily life – at her family home. At the church, with which she was closely associated, visitors may absorb an environment in which Harriet Tubman's spiritual dimension is strongly expressed. From the church, visitors may walk a block away into Fort Hill Cemetery to view the gravesite chosen by Tubman for herself and family members.

CHOPTANK RIVER REGION, MARYLAND

Since no Tubman related properties in the Maryland study area are designated National Historic Landmarks, the study process examined the question of significance for cultural resources, first by using the criteria for National Historic Landmark designation, and then by evaluating the resources in the context of the nation's history and culture.

SRS and NHL Criteria

As noted above, a determination of national significance for cultural resources in an SRS requires that the resource be evaluated by applying NHL criteria, contained in 36 CFR Part 65.

NHL Criteria require that the resources:

- are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained; or
- are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States; or
- represent some great idea or ideal of the American people; or
- embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for the study of a period, style or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; or
- have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.

NHL national significance is ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the

heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture, and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The study team and consultants undertook an extensive analysis to complete a 50-page national significance document, which addressed NHL Criterion 2, on the Harriet Tubman associated properties in Maryland for review by the NPS Associate Director for Cultural Resources. Field inspections of the Maryland resources were undertaken by the Associate Director and staff. By memorandum of May 20, 2008, the Associate Director for Cultural Resources concurred that the landscapes associated with Harriet Tubman in Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot Counties are nationally significant and meet the NHL Criterion 2. (See Appendix 3.)

SRS Criteria

Outstanding Example

The review concluded that the properties in Maryland were not only important because of their association with Tubman, but also because they constitute an outstanding surviving example of a 19th century agrarian landscape associated with events of national importance – the resistance of African Americans to enslavement and the emergence and success of the Underground Railroad in the Eastern United States. Harriet Tubman’s fame as a conductor grew from within this cultural landscape, and through that work earned her the soubriquet “Moses of Her People.” The landscape remains relatively unchanged and provides an extraordinary backdrop mosaic of wetlands, farmland, and forests present during her time.

It is the broad landscape that provides a view into the world of Harriet Tubman at mid 19th century. Chapter 2 details the cultural and natural resources of the area: The pattern of roads, watercourses, and wetlands remain intact, and while many mid 19th century structures have disappeared, or in some cases been replaced, the patterns of settlement and land use create intact cultural landscapes at Stewart’s Canal, the James Cook Farm site, Brodess Farm, and Bucktown. Stewart’s Canal remains from the 1830s when it was constructed by free and enslaved labor to open interior forests for lumbering. Brodess Farm, which is set against forest land of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, continues to be farmed. Visitors stop here to view the site of Tubman’s childhood home. At the western end of the Tubman area in Dorchester County is Bucktown Crossroads, a three-way intersection surviving from mid 19th century and containing an historic general store resembling one where the adolescent Tubman was nearly killed defending another enslaved person.

This special resource study concludes that landscapes within Maryland's Eastern Shore constitute an outstanding example of an area directly associated with Harriet Tubman, with the pattern of enslavement on the Eastern Shore, and the Underground Railroad, specifically associated with her efforts to free herself and others. The landscapes she worked in and traveled through help account for her achievements with the Underground Railroad. It is the only place where one can see physical features that contributed to her success as a conductor as well as visualize the conditions that motivated her resistance to enslavement in the first place.

Historical and Cultural Themes

Harriet Tubman's significance to American history and culture may be viewed in a framework developed by NPS, which illustrates the full range of topics in American history and culture into which the themes of every park unit and potential park unit can be placed. Using this *Revised NPS Thematic Framework* (1996) helps build a foundation for identifying and evaluating Tubman-related resources.¹ The Thematic Framework contains broad concepts, which are intended to overlap. Few sites or individuals fit purely into one theme, and for Tubman in Maryland we highlight two main cultural themes.

The theme *Creating Social Institutions and Movements*, "focuses upon the diverse formal and informal structures ... through which people express values and live their lives. Americans generate temporary movements and create enduring institutions in order to define, sustain, or reform these values. Why people organize to transform their institutions is as important to understand as how they choose to do so...."

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery but emancipated herself at about age 27. She devoted her life to humanitarian work on behalf of oppressed people, beginning with courageous individual acts of liberation, extending through work to aid soldiers and freedmen during and after the Civil War, to participation in the more formally organized movement to obtain women's suffrage.

Although she did not primarily employ the conventional techniques of organized reformers (writing, lobbying, creating purposeful organizations, etc.), her life work was motivated by the reformist's inclination for change. In essence, a reformer is an individual who is not satisfied with conditions as they are found and seeks to change them. Her resistance to oppression from whatever source, rooted in her deep spirituality, is a fundamental and persistent characteristic Harriet Tubman displayed throughout her life.

¹ *Revised NPS Thematic Framework* (1996), p. 8.

She began on an individual level in specific situations, often at great personal risk. In two incidents in her early life in Dorchester, she resisted enslavement. At age seven she ran away for five days to avoid beatings, and at about age thirteen she received a severe head injury intervening for an enslaved man who was targeted by an overseer. As she gained experience and reputation, she worked toward the same objectives in increasingly larger arenas. Whereas initially she used direct, physical methods, she gradually shifted to more popular tactics as part of established organizations and movements.

The area of Maryland where she grew up is the location of specific incidents in her own resistance to enslavement and her heroic activities with associates in the Underground Railroad. It is a landscape in which important interactions of groups (free and enslaved blacks, white abolitionists, slaveholders, supporters of slavery) took place, contributing to a significant chapter in American history. It is “...an outstanding surviving example of a 19th century agrarian landscape associated with events of national importance – the resistance of African Americans to enslavement and the emergence and success of the Underground Railroad in the Eastern United States.”²

The other main theme is *Shaping the Political Landscape*, which inevitably overlaps the first. The key topic here is ‘parties, protests and movements.’ Whereas this theme emphasizes political action, to Tubman overt political activity was only one element in the larger struggle for social reform. Her formal political activism encompassed abolition, emancipation, deployment of black soldiers in the Union army, equal pay for black soldiers, African American civil rights, aid to sick and aged African Americans, and suffrage for women. She persisted despite the difficulty a woman, and in particular a black woman, faced to gain access to public platforms on a regular basis.

Dorchester and Caroline counties, with significant groups of free blacks and white abolitionists, encompassed an important area of Underground Railroad activity. And it was here that Tubman first became connected to the Underground Railroad. Her contacts in Maryland led her to Philadelphia, the center of abolitionist activity in the mid-Atlantic states, and back again repeatedly to rescue others over ten years. Underground Railroad activists facilitated first, her escape, and then her multiple return rescues. This landscape of resistance and escape remains an important testament today.

² Memorandum from NPS Associate Director, Cultural Resources, May 20, 2008. See Appendix 3.

The Tubman landscapes are exceptionally valuable in illustrating themes of our nation's heritage by allowing the Tubman narratives of enslavement and escape to be played out in their actual environment. The Choptank River landscapes of Harriet Tubman invite 21st century visitors to understand more directly the themes of Creating Social Institutions and Movements and Shaping the Political Landscape by moving through the landscapes of enslaved people; by imagining escape routes; and, by being challenged to picture the devastation of families fractured by slavery. Here, visitors experience a place that has remained relatively intact from the late 19th through the 20th century, with minimal development and continuation of agricultural and forestry land uses with their associated cultural practices. These landscapes are exceptionally valuable today for helping illustrate popular and traditional culture.

Opportunities for Public Enjoyment

The sites associated with Tubman in Maryland are already popular locations for the visiting public on the Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway. In recent decades, the Harriet Tubman Organization has sponsored tours and hosted visitors who plan trips around a visit to Tubman's home territory. Informally, local guides lead groups through the landscapes, relating Tubman stories. More than 150,000 people visit the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge annually. These Maryland landscapes evoke Tubman's life and the agricultural life of enslaved people before emancipation, and illustrate stories of Underground Railroad daring. They offer superlative opportunities for enjoyment and education. They provide ample opportunities for public understanding of the impact and meaning of slavery in our nation and of one person who overcame the obstacles of this pervasive and oppressive institution.

Integrity

Seven attributes are used to evaluate integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. They have been applied to the broad Tubman landscape and collectively are found to be of sufficiently high integrity to be regarded as an unspoiled example of the resource.

Location refers to the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where historic events occurred. Perhaps the most salient image of Tubman in this Eastern Shore landscape is this historic figure moving through it, taking in the broad swath of land from Peter's Neck to Poplar Neck. In this landscape important life events took place – her birth, her enslavement, and her escape from oppression, her repeated rescues of family members and others, and incidents such as the blow

to the head and harsh mistreatment as a child. Her deep knowledge of this landscape enabled her to carry out her rescue missions and earn an important place in history.

Design is a combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. It includes spatial relationships, scale, proportion, layout of roads, paths, and the like. In the Tubman landscape in Maryland, one sees today the same road configurations, drainage ditches, field and forest patterns, scale of structures, low level of development, and proportional scale and relationship between structures and open space.

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property – the character of a place, its topography, vegetation, simple manmade features such as paths and fences, and the relationship between features, and open space. The Tubman landscapes of Maryland retain a setting that easily speaks of a traditional rural area characterized by wetlands, fields, and forests. Topography remains a flat, inundated land containing vegetation types that have been there for centuries, and the character of small-scale agriculture communities predominates.

Materials are ‘the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period or time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.’ The broad landscape of Dorchester and Caroline counties retains the composition of forests, cleared farm land, rivers, and swamps, all materials present in Tubman’s time, appearing in relatively similar relationships.

Similarly, **workmanship**, ‘the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory,’ is seen in elements in the large-scale landscape. The dominant species of flora and fauna, the wetlands and rivers, the farms, and road and drainage patterns remain.

Feeling refers to a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time even, in this case, despite the maturation of original landscapes. A visitor moving south on Maryland’s Eastern Shore notices increasing rural characteristics on entering Caroline and Dorchester counties. Development is moving south in the 21st century but, to date, large-scale subdivision has not occurred in the landscapes identified with Tubman. They still communicate a historic sense of a much earlier time.

Association refers to the connection we make today between a particular place and an important historic event or person. Maryland’s Eastern Shore in general and Dorchester County in particular, are clearly associated with Harriet Tubman. Tubman spent her first 27 years in this place and the next 10 years returning to rescue others. In that time, she gained respect and admiration for actions taken

in this landscape – her resistance to slavery, her courage and leadership in saving others from certain banishment to the deep South, and the tenacity and success that led her to be called “Moses” by other African Americans. This Maryland landscape is Tubman’s “working ground,” both during the time she was enslaved and as she risked her life to make others free. The public has come to associate this location with her exploits.

The preponderance of evidence points to a landscape that retains its integrity from Tubman’s time. Despite modest changes, the current landscape would likely be recognizable to Tubman. It evokes the setting of Tubman’s life, and it inspires rich interpretation of her story.

National Significance Conclusion

This study concludes that the resources related to Harriet Tubman in Auburn, New York, based on their previous designation as an NHL, are nationally significant for the purposes of this special resource study. It further concludes that the resources related to Harriet Tubman in Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot counties, Maryland, are nationally significant for the purposes of this special resource study because they have been found to meet NHL criteria. The resources have also been found to meet the four criteria necessary for national significance for potential new areas of the National Park System.

Suitability

For the evaluation of suitability, Tubman resources are compared to sites inside and outside the national park system to judge whether they are adequately represented in the system or if similar resources are already protected by others. Areas will be considered suitable for addition into the national park system if they represent natural or cultural themes or types of recreational resources that are not already adequately represented in the national park system, unless such areas are comparably protected and presented for public enjoyment by another land managing entity.

NPS Sites and NHLs

Using relevant topics in the *Revised NPS Thematic Framework*, the study team identified and evaluated resources already in the national park system and determined that no existing site or group of resources within or outside of the national park system fully represents Tubman’s contributions to American life

and culture. Some NPS sites recognize her peripherally, but none is dedicated specifically to her life and accomplishments.

Numerous sites within and outside the National Park Service broadly represent ‘reform movements’ within the theme, *Creating Social Institutions and Movements*. Sites that pertain to Harriet Tubman spanning the period of American slavery and late 19th and early 20th century reform movements include:

- *African Burial Ground National Monument* in New York City – The national monument commemorates the African Diaspora, the struggles of enslaved Africans and African Americans during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, and the significant contributions of African Americans to the development of New York City.
- *Booker T. Washington National Monument* in Hardy, Virginia – The national monument commemorates the birthplace of America’s most prominent African American educator and orator of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Born into slavery, Washington was the founder of Tuskegee Institute, and became a respected orator, author, and statesman.
- *Boston African American National Historic Site* in Boston, Massachusetts – This unit contains buildings and sites connected to scores of men and women who fought for the abolition of slavery and who sheltered and assisted hundreds of self-emancipated freedom seekers.
- *Frederick Douglass National Historic Site* in Washington, DC – This site preserves Douglass’s home, Cedar Hill, and provides interpretation of the life of what many consider the most famous 19th century African American. Visitors to the site learn about his escape from enslavement on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, his efforts to abolish slavery, and his struggle for rights for all oppressed people.
- *George Washington Carver National Monument* in Diamond, Missouri – This site, the birthplace of Carver, commemorates the life of an individual born into slavery who, as part of the Tuskegee Institute, made significant contributions to improving the lives and self-sufficiency of former slaves by teaching and advancing agricultural techniques adaptable to areas of poor soils in the South.
- *Women’s Rights National Historical Park* in Seneca Falls, New York – This site commemorates the first women’s rights convention and the early leaders of the women’s rights movement in the United States. Though the park makes note of Harriet Tubman’s involvement in the women’s suffrage effort, it does not offer an expansive interpretation of her role or other aspects of her life.

The NPS *National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom* program has identified approximately 350 sites, programs, and facilities in the United States and beyond which interpret and commemorate the Underground Railroad. While several Network to Freedom sites are associated with Harriet Tubman, she is not a primary focus of the Network program, and interpretation of her is limited.

Efforts to advance social reform and civil rights are also represented in the national park system. *Tuskegee Institute* in Alabama, now a national historic site, was established in 1881 by the State of Alabama and was directed by *Booker T. Washington*, who defined and shaped it as an institution to educate African Americans for self-sufficiency; he turned it into a major center of African American education. *Maggie Walker National Historic Site* in Richmond, Virginia, the first unit of the national park system established to honor the contributions of an African American woman, commemorates the life of the first black woman to become a president of a bank. The *Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site* in Washington, DC, commemorates Mary McLeod Bethune's leadership in the black women's rights movement from 1943 to 1949.

Other sites that focus on reform and civil rights include Monroe Elementary School, in Topeka, Kansas, now the *Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site* commemorating the famous case desegregating public education; *Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site*, commemorating the test of implementation of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board*; and the *Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site* in Atlanta, Georgia, commemorating the life and work of this major 20th century leader of the civil rights movement. *Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail* in Alabama focuses on civil rights. *Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site* in Alabama was established to commemorate desegregation of the military. The *Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site* in Washington, D. C., commemorates the work of this American historian who first opened the long-neglected field of black studies to scholars and also popularized the field in the schools and colleges of blacks.

These sites all relate to periods of reform and civil rights that post-date those related to Tubman's time and works.

The National Historic Landmarks that are associated with this theme are primarily the Tubman resources in Auburn, New York, which are the subject of this study. Other thematically related sites recognized by the Secretary of the Interior for their national significance are the Chicago home of *Ida B. Wells Barnett*, a black journalist and activist who fought to end the practices of lynching, segregation, and the economic oppression of African Americans; and the Washington, DC, home of

Mary Church Terrell, who achieved prominence as the president of the National Association of Colored Women and as a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). They, too, postdate Tubman and her resistance to slavery.

Commemorating Harriet Tubman in Other Venues

In the years since Harriet Tubman's death, people have sought to keep her memory alive in diverse ways. The proliferation of places and programs bearing her name, and the arts that express her legacy, all point to Tubman's recognition as an American legend, an American hero. There is a desire on the part of many people in the United States and Canada to link efforts into a broader coalition to commemorate Harriet Tubman. Such a network of sites and organizations and programs could exchange information, assist with marketing, develop new programs, and continue to advance the public's understanding of Harriet Tubman. A sample of some current ways Tubman's memory is expressed follows.

Programs

- Interpretive programs led by a first person portrayer, sponsored by the Harriet Tubman Organization, Cambridge, Maryland.
- Social service programs such as the Harriet Tubman Crisis Services in Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Award programs such as the Black Woman Lawyers Association of Michigan Biannual Harriet Tubman Awards Breakfast
- Educational programs such as Harriet Tubman Resource Center on the African Diaspora in York, Ontario

The Arts

- Theatre such as *Harriet's Return*, by Karen Jones Meadows
- Music such as Thea Musgrave's *The Story of Harriet Tubman*, and Nkeiru Okoye's *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom*
- Visual arts such as Philadelphia Mural Project and Pan African Black Facts and Wax Museum and Jacob Lawrence's *Harriet Tubman Series* owned by the Hampton University Art Museum
- Living history or one-person shows such as Oni Lasana's *Harriet Tubman... Her Story*

- Literature including Alan Schroeder, *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*, and Leon Litwack and August Meier, eds., *Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century*.

While the representation of individuals and events related to the African American experience in the United States has increased in the national park system, and a number of units commemorates the lives of men who were born into slavery, none commemorates a woman born into slavery, particularly one who has made such a lasting impression on the history of the United States during this pre and post Civil War period. Harriet Tubman's life spans the era of slavery and freedom. The resources associated with her in Auburn, New York, and Maryland provide the context not only for her story to be understood, but also the chronicle of that time of slavery and social reform.

Suitability Conclusion

This special resource study concludes that resources associated with Harriet Tubman are not adequately represented in the national park system or adequately protected by others. Resources related to Harriet Tubman in Auburn, New York, and Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot counties, Maryland, are, therefore, found to be suitable for inclusion into the national park system.

Feasibility

Areas found suitable for potential designation as units of the national park system are subjected to the feasibility evaluation which determines among other factors whether long-term resource protection can be assured and visitors accommodated. Factors used to examine feasibility include size and configuration; landownership; access; threats to the resource; and, staffing, operations and development requirements.

The Harriet Tubman resources in Auburn, New York, and Maryland are found to be feasible additions to the national park system as independent sites. Moreover, since both sites represent partnership opportunities, with shared responsibility for financing and management, they offer the prospect to reduce the costs typically incurred in traditional parks managed solely by the NPS.

Size and Configuration

The Auburn, New York, properties total less than 35 acres and contain five historic structures and three contemporary buildings. The main property on South Street, on the Fleming town line, contains 32 acres of the historic Tubman farm. Toward

the center of Auburn a mile away is the Thompson Memorial AME Zion Church (no longer used for religious purposes) with an unoccupied rectory next to it on Parker Street. Near this property is Fort Hill Cemetery containing Harriet Tubman's gravesite. There would be no need to include the Fort Hill Cemetery in a potential park boundary since the preponderance of resources do not relate to Tubman.

In Maryland, specific zones in Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot counties have been identified as historic Tubman landscapes. The acreage would amount to approximately 4,320 acres in Dorchester County, 2,120 acres in Caroline County, and 300 acres in Talbot County. While these parcels are not all contiguous, they are located in two discrete locations and form concise land masses that can be preserved and interpreted efficiently.

Landownership

The Tubman property in Auburn is owned by the AME Zion Church, which is prepared to convey a preservation easement for a potential national park site. Fort Hill Cemetery owns the Tubman gravesite, and there would be no change in ownership.

The land identified in Maryland is predominately owned by private interests. It would not be feasible for the NPS to acquire fee ownership, nor would fee ownership be appropriate since most of the land is in active agricultural use that should continue. It would be cost effective and feasible to partner with state, local, and nonprofit entities to share costs in the purchase of conservation and agricultural easements on these properties for permanent protection of the Tubman related landscapes. The State of Maryland and a number of nonprofit land conservation organizations have indicated a strong desire to participate in an easement purchase program with the NPS for this purpose. The State of Maryland is in the process of developing a Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad visitor center at its recently established park in Dorchester County and has expressed a willingness to co-operate with the NPS and share costs in the construction of the facility.

Access

In Auburn, the Home is on the well traveled South Street with a driveway cutting through the middle of the property. Visitors drive in and park beyond the historic structures. During special events, more than 50 vehicles can be accommodated on the historic property. Across the road is a newly acquired one-acre parcel, which is available for overflow parking. Currently, only the Home for the Aged is open to the public, but restoration now under way will enable the Tubman Residence to be open to the public. The Thompson Church is in a residential area where street parking

is permitted, which in the past was sufficient to accommodate the congregation at services. It, too, is planned for improvements permitting public access.

In Maryland, the Tubman landscapes are largely accessible from public roads with no requirement for access to private property. Negotiated opportunities for nonintrusive road pull offs with interpretive signage exist and would permit public understanding of the role these resources played in Tubman's life. Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, with more than 27,000 acres of marshland and bird habitat, currently receives more than 150,000 visitors annually to its visitor center and its driving and walking trails. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has indicated its willingness to enter into an interagency agreement with the NPS for interpretation of Tubman related resources at the Refuge. At Poplar Neck in Caroline County the land constituting the historic Thompson farm is in private ownership and public access is not permitted. Visitors, however, have access on a county road to view potential interpretive devices.

Threats to Resources

In general, there is the potential for deterioration of structures in Auburn from lack of funds for preservation, but vigorous fund raising over the past five years has enabled the Tubman Home board to stabilize the Church and begin restoration of the Tubman residence and associated barn. The Auburn resources would benefit from a General Management Plan to give priority to resource protection and visitor service actions.

In Maryland, development pressures on the lower counties of the Eastern Shore are mounting and new development would eventually result in the irretrievable loss of important Tubman related historic landscapes. Between 2000 and 2006 the population of Caroline County grew by 9.6 percent.

Staffing and Development Requirements

In Auburn, the study team estimates that an interpretive staff of approximately five to seven full time NPS employees would be required to manage the site in partnership with AME Zion Church staff. Park administrative functions including contracting and purchasing could be managed from an established nearby NPS unit. Depending on the available and needed treatment, restoration or rehabilitation of the historic farm property would be a high priority, including a historic landscape analysis and archeological survey. The rehabilitation of the Tubman Residence is under way and should be completed and fitted for interpretation. The Thompson Church requires rehabilitation or adaptive reuse treatment. The visitor center at

the Home is functional but should be upgraded or replaced. A full new exhibit program is needed as well as a standardized signage program. Rehabilitation may be appropriate for the church rectory for administrative or visitor use. A pedestrian connection could be developed between the Thompson Church and the Fort Hill Cemetery for visiting the gravesite. Operational costs including maintenance and utilities could be shared between the NPS and the Church.

Maryland is developing and will manage the Tubman Underground Railroad Center to be operated by the Maryland Park Service. It is expected that costs including construction and operation of the center would be shared by the NPS if a unit is established. NPS would conduct interpretive programs at the site and within the larger boundary of a potential NPS unit. Approximately five to seven NPS full-time staff would be needed to share the site administration and interpretation functions. No development is anticipated on privately owned properties except where opportunities for wayside exhibits and signage can be negotiated with property owners.

Public Support

The study team has conducted an extensive public outreach program to assess public support for the potential establishment of a unit of the national park system in Auburn, New York, and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. This program has included meetings with stakeholders including local and national Tubman related organizations, affected property owners in both locations, public meetings in New York and Maryland to review preliminary study alternatives, meetings with state and local officials in both states, and with nonprofit organizations in Maryland that may be critical to the feasibility of establishing an Eastern Shore unit. The study team concludes that, to date, the indications of public support for establishing units of the national park system devoted to Harriet Tubman resources in both locations are exceptionally favorable. Additional opportunities for the public to express its concerns or support will be available upon the publication of this Special Resource Study/Environmental Assessment.

Feasibility Conclusion

This special resource study has determined that the resources associated with Harriet Tubman in Auburn, New York, and the Eastern Shore of Maryland are feasible to administer in partnership with the AME Zion Church, the State of Maryland, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private property owners if the costs of easement acquisitions and resource management are shared. The study team believes that the evidence indicates that the Church, the State, local governments, nonprofit

organizations and property owners are fully prepared to participate in a partnership with the NPS. The study team also concludes that there is widespread public support for the establishment of units of the national park system in both locations.

NPS Management

The need for NPS management is the final criterion for the potential establishment of a unit of the national park system. The criterion requires a finding that NPS management would be superior to other potential alternative management arrangements by other entities.

Management by Another Entity

Currently, the AME Zion Church through its Tubman Home board manages the site in Auburn, New York. The church's ownership and stewardship goes back to Harriet Tubman's lifetime, more than 100 years. It desires to continue ownership but recognizes the need for professional historic site management and advanced interpretive programming. In recent years it has been successful in halting the decline in historic structures through fund raising, but does not anticipate being able to continue at the level required for this nationally recognized and highly significant Tubman site. It is also clear that co-management with the NPS would provide the opportunity for comprehensive management planning, interpretive planning, and site management that meets the standards required for a resource of international importance, as this site has become. NPS planning and research capabilities, as well as historic preservation and interpretive and educational programming expertise would offer superior opportunities for the resources to be preserved and interpreted.

In Maryland, while the State will proceed with construction of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park and visitor facility with or without NPS participation, it acknowledges and the study team agrees that shared operation of the center provides a superior opportunity to pool resources for a superlative visitor experience. Without the establishment of a unit incorporating the larger resource base in Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot counties and its intended land protection strategy, many of these resources are likely to be forever lost to future development. The importance of recognizing the larger resource base in the region accompanied by a strong land conservation and historic preservation effort coordinated by NPS, as well as the benefits of an NPS presence for public understanding through the interpretation of the larger historic Tubman landscape confirms that NPS management would be the superior alternative. No other

management entity has been identified to accomplish these critical tasks of resource protection and interpretation of the nationally significant resources of Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot counties.

In both Auburn and Maryland, the AME Zion Church and the State of Maryland, respectively, have actively sought NPS involvement to complement their own preservation and interpretive efforts. Leaders in both locations have committed to sharing management responsibilities with the NPS.

Need for NPS Management Conclusion

This special resource study concludes that NPS management in partnership with the AME Zion Church for the Tubman resources in Auburn, New York, is clearly superior to other potential arrangements. It further concludes that NPS management of Tubman related resources on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in partnership with the State of Maryland, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private property owners is clearly superior to other potential arrangements.

Summary of Findings

The study team concludes that based on the factors cited above and the extensive analyses conducted during the course of this special resource study that the resources associated with Harriet Tubman located in Auburn, New York, and in Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot counties, Maryland, are nationally significant and suitable and feasible for inclusion in the national park system. It further concludes that there is a demonstrated need for NPS management of these resources in partnership with others described in this report.

Feasibility for National Heritage Area Designation

The law which initiated this study directed that the Secretary of the Interior also consider the potential for national heritage area designation. A national heritage area (NHA) is:

A place designated by the United States Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience

through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in the areas. Continued use of the National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance.³

More than 100 places in eastern United States and Canada may have association with Harriet Tubman. Of those places, only Auburn, New York, and the Choptank River Region of Maryland have close connections with her over time. No other areas became her base, where she lived and worked for long periods. Harriet Tubman, however, touched many places from areas of the South through the Mid-Atlantic States into the Northeast and Canada. As a whole these do not constitute the “distinctive landscape” intended by the definition of a NHA. Rather, they are disparate places, unable to be precisely identified and lacking the cohesiveness found in previously designated NHAs.

In Auburn, the Tubman sites are not extensive enough to qualify as a distinctive landscape characteristic of a national heritage area. But the Eastern Shore of Maryland could potentially qualify to “form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.” However, Harriet Tubman and the resources related to her in this region constitute only one segment of the many resources and associated themes that characterize the Eastern Shore. Its rich history, its relationship to agriculture, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Chesapeake Bay would entail multiple themes well beyond the relatively narrow focus of Harriet Tubman. A NHA feasibility study of the Eastern Shore of Maryland is beyond the scope of this special resource study. The NPS Chesapeake Bay Program Office and the Chesapeake Bay Gateway Networks, which it administers, already provide technical and financial assistance to resources surrounding the Chesapeake Bay. The study team concluded that a national heritage area is not an appropriate or realistic option for the sites commemorating Harriet Tubman and dismissed it as a potential alternative.

³ National Park Service website on National Heritage Areas, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/FAQ/INDEX.HTM>