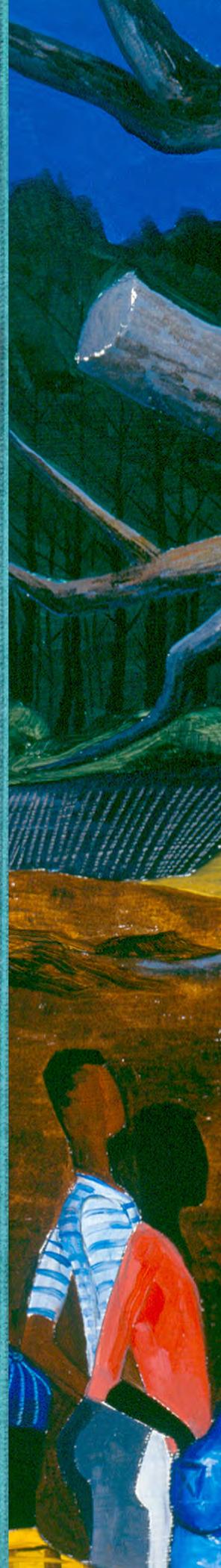


# Chapter 1

## Introduction



### **Chapter 1 divider photos (top to bottom)**

- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission Announced, Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, Charleston, Charleston County, SC – October 29, 2007 (Photo Credit: NPS)

Seated, L to R: Lana Carter, Louise Miller Cohen, Willie B. Heyward, Marquette L. Goodwine, Nichole Green, Ralph B. Johnson, Jeanne C. Cyriaque, Shirlean Spicer, Antoinette Jackson, Veronica D. Gerald

Standing, L to R: Michael A. Allen (NPS Coordinator), J. Herman Blake, Amir Jamal Touré, William Saunders, Eulis A. Willis, Althea Natalga Sumpter, John H. Haley, Charles H. Hall, David B. Frank, Ronald Daise, Emory S. Campbell

Not pictured: Patricia Barefoot, Danny Cromer, Anthony Dixon, William Jefferson, Deborah L. Mack, Glenda Simmons Jenkins

- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission Members, Sapelo Island, McIntosh County, GA – September 18, 2008 (Photo Credit: NPS)
- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission Quarterly Business Meeting, Southport, Brunswick County, NC – August 13, 2010 (Photo Credit: Althea Natalga Sumpter)
- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission Members, Jacksonville, Duval County, FL – February 11, 2011 (Photo Credit: Jerry Immel)

## **A GUIDE TO THIS DOCUMENT**

This management plan is organized in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's implementing regulations for the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) and Director's Order 12 and Handbook, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Analysis, and Decision-making*. It is organized into five chapters plus appendices. The basic contents of each chapter are described briefly below.

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The introductory chapter sets the framework for the entire document. It discusses the history of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (the Corridor), legal requirements to which the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission (the Commission) must adhere, and the purpose and need for the plan. It outlines the foundation for planning and management, which includes the vision, mission, goals, and primary interpretive themes. It describes why the plan has been prepared and the planning opportunities and issues that were raised during public scoping meetings and outreach to potential partners.

### **CHAPTER 2: CORRIDOR CONTEXT**

This chapter describes the Corridor through the lens of various resource topics. It primarily focuses on existing conditions and is organized according to the following topics: cultural resources, natural resources, socioeconomic conditions, land cover and ownership, visitor use and experience, recreational resources, and scenic resources.

### **CHAPTER 3: MANAGEMENT APPROACH**

This chapter describes the blueprint for management and implementation over the life of the plan. It covers, among other things, the organizational structure of the Corridor, an implementation and decision-making framework, implementation strategies and actions, potential partners and funding opportunities, early implementation activities, and start-up costs.

### **CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION FRAMEWORK**

This chapter outlines the basic interpretation framework for developing comprehensive interpretation across the Corridor. The chapter includes primary interpretive themes, audiences, and strategies for reaching out to and engaging audiences. In addition, it discusses the types of signage to be installed and preliminary signage cost estimates. It also outlines a process for building relationships with partners and partner sites.

### **CHAPTER 5: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

This chapter outlines the history of public and agency coordination during the planning effort, including Native American consultation, and any future requirements for compliance with applicable laws and regulations. It also includes letters of support from government agencies and other organizations, and lists those that will be receiving copies of the document.

## **COMMISSION COMMITTEES, REFERENCES, AND APPENDICES**

This chapter includes Commission committees, a summary time line of Committee activities and a list of preparers and consultants. A list of appendices and selected references are also included. The appendices are accessible on the CD.

## BACKGROUND

### WHO ARE GULLAH GEECHEE PEOPLE?

Gullah Geechee ( \ ' gə-lə \ \ ' gē-chē \ ) people are direct descendants of Africans who were brought to the United States and enslaved for generations. Their diverse roots in particular parts of Africa, primarily West Africa, and the nature of their enslavement on isolated islands created a unique culture that survives to the present day. Evidence of the culture is clearly visible in the distinctive arts, crafts, cuisine, and music, as well as Gullah Geechee language. The culture is embodied in diverse patterns of social organization reflecting the intimate and private ways communities and families meet the challenges of life.

The culture is manifested in a system of practices/principles that emerge from: (1) the diverse African origins of Gullah Geechee peoples, (2) intense interaction among people from different language groups, and (3) generations of isolation in settings where enslaved Africans and their descendants were the majority population.

The isolation continued after the Civil War ended in 1865. A hostile society led Gullah Geechee communities to remain unto themselves for almost another century. Customs, traditions, and beliefs continued to develop, often in opposition to segregation and oppression from the dominant society.

When rapid social changes after World War II led to encroachment from the dominant society, Gullah Geechee families and communities maintained insular patterns of values and social organization. Contact, interaction, conflict, as well as cooperation between different racial and ethnic groups created awareness and change. However, efforts of outsiders to penetrate, analyze, and co-opt the culture were often met by renewed determination of Gullah Geechee people to remain private and maintain their culture in besieged communities.

It is widely accepted that Gullah Geechee culture is unique and distinctive among all the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States. As a result, this management plan identifies partnership programs that will explore and document cultural values and social patterns for preservation and perpetuation.

The historical development of Gullah Geechee communities and the dynamic nature of contemporary patterns preclude a singular or definitive articulation of Gullah Geechee society and culture. Nine distinctive features emerge from community specifications as well as scholarly analyses:

- **Gullah Geechee Language:** A Creole language containing distinctive features of the African languages spoken by their enslaved ancestors.
- **Family/Community/Society:** Deep sentiments of kinship—ancestral and assumed—and cooperation that unites social groups for protection and perpetuation.
- **Spirituality/Religiosity:** Belief in divine guidance and involvement in the daily lives of individuals, families, and communities.

- **Education:** Literacy and learning as foundational to family and community strength.
- **Political Involvement/Resistance:** Unremitting refusal to acquiesce to social dominance and/or lowered status.
- **Gender Equity:** Equitable recognition of and respect for the independence, leadership, and vision of women and men.
- **Independence/Entrepreneurialism:** Confidence in the belief that economic independence and entrepreneurial efforts will result in success.
- **Land and Waters:** The earth and sea as sources of life and the sacred resting places of the departed.
- **Community-based Conflict Resolution/Reconciliation:** A belief that problems should be settled within small and intimate groups rather than by civil authorities.

This specification of Gullah Geechee culture is neither exhaustive nor conclusive. Multidimensional and dynamic, the culture varies from community to community. It will continue to change and develop as work within the Corridor engages more communities and social groups. When partnerships develop and many communities, organizations, and individuals are acknowledged, the culture will exhibit its extraordinary diversity and complexity. The aggregate Gullah Geechee culture will continually emerge from the lives and experiences of exemplars of the community, many whose contributions—however modest—must be acknowledged and celebrated.

## WHAT IS A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA?

A national heritage area (NHA) is a nationally distinctive landscape shaped by natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources recognized by the U.S. Congress. A heritage area tells a nationally important story through its geography, its natural and cultural resources, and the traditions that have evolved within the landscape.

National heritage areas are managed by a local entity in partnership with various stakeholders and partners. These stakeholders and partners include individual citizens; local, state, and federal governments; and nonprofit and private sector groups. Together, these entities work to preserve the integrity of their distinct landscape and local stories so that current and future generations understand their relationship to the land. This collaborative approach does not compromise traditional local control over, or use of, the land.

Using this approach, national heritage areas are based on their constituents' pride in their history and traditions, as well as their interest and involvement in retaining and interpreting their special landscapes. The local coordinating entity of heritage areas works across political boundaries in order to collaboratively shape a management plan and implementation strategies that preserve the area's unique and distinct qualities.

A national heritage area is not a unit of the national park system, nor is any of its land owned or managed by the National Park Service (NPS), unless such land was previously set aside as a unit of the national park system. If land within the established boundaries of a national heritage area is owned by the federal government, it is as a result of prior legislation establishing a national park,

national forest, military installation, etc. The designation of the Corridor does not, however, preclude the creation of new national park system units within the Corridor boundaries.

The federal government does not acquire land, manage land, or impose land-use controls through a national heritage area. Rather, national heritage areas accomplish their goals through partnerships with governments, organizations, businesses, and individuals. The National Park Service provides technical, planning, and limited financial assistance to national heritage areas as a partner and advisor; decision-making authority is retained by the local people and communities.

Typically, national heritage area designation begins with a grassroots, community-centered process called a “feasibility study,” rather than with an application or a questionnaire. This is an exciting process that examines a region’s history and resources in depth and provides a strong foundation for eventual success as a national heritage area. The National Park Service, as the federal body charged with managing the national heritage area program, is frequently involved with such studies to document whether an area has the resources, such as the local financial and organizational capacity, to carry out the responsibilities that come with designation. The ultimate determination of designation is made by the U.S. Congress. The Corridor, however, was not born out of a feasibility study, but rather a special resource study (see below).

For more information on national heritage areas, visit: <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/>

## **LOW COUNTRY GULLAH CULTURE SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY**

Although a large body of research had been undertaken on Gullah and Geechee culture (which is identified as Gullah Geechee culture throughout this management plan) and many preservation efforts had been completed prior to 2000, it was in 2000 that the current journey began with Congress authorizing the National Park Service to conduct a special resource study on Gullah culture. The NPS Southeast Regional Office, as directed by enabling legislation introduced by Congressman James E. Clyburn, conducted the study. The purpose of the study was to determine the national significance of Gullah culture and the suitability and feasibility of adding various elements of Gullah Geechee culture to the national park system. The *Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study and Final Environmental Impact Statement* documented the national significance of Gullah Geechee people and their culture and served to honor a distinct group of Americans who are descendants of enslaved Africans from the west and central agricultural regions of Africa, and to commemorate Gullah Geechee culture that has survived on the southeastern U.S. coast since colonial times. The study recommended the establishment of a national heritage area to protect the endangered resources associated with Gullah Geechee culture and to provide Gullah Geechee people with the greatest amount of control over their story. The full text of the study can be found on the Corridor’s Web site ([www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org](http://www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org)).

As a result of the study findings, the U.S. Congress established the Corridor in 2006 (Subtitle I of Public Law 109-338). The legislation designated the barrier islands and coastal regions along the Atlantic Ocean as the Corridor. The Corridor spans a geographical area encompassing over 12,818 square miles along the coasts of four states. The legislation established the Commission as the local coordinating entity and assigned it the duty of preparing and submitting a management plan to the Secretary of the Interior (appendix A).



**LOW COUNTRY GULLAH CULTURE  
SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY, JULY 2005**

The Commission has worked hard to provide many opportunities for the public and potential partners to provide input throughout the planning process. This input has directly influenced the content of this management plan.

Excerpts of individual public comments are featured throughout the document in blue text boxes. They note the person who made the comment as well as the public meeting at which the comment was received.

### **WHAT IS THE GULLAH GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR?**

The Corridor represents a significant story of local, regional, national, and even global importance. The Corridor encompasses a cultural and linguistic area along the southeastern coast of the United States from the northern border of Pender County, North Carolina, to the southern border of St. Johns County, Florida, and 30 miles inland. This area is home to one of the country’s most unique cultures, a tradition first shaped by enslaved Africans

brought to the southeastern United States from the primarily rice-producing regions of West and Central Africa. That culture is continued today by their descendants known as Gullah Geechee people. Gullah Geechee people are direct descendants of Africans who were brought to the United States and enslaved for generations. Their diverse roots in particular parts of Africa, primarily West Africa, and the nature of their enslavement on isolated islands created a unique culture that survives to the present day. See “Who Are Gullah Geechee People?” above for more information.

The 2006 designation of the Corridor recognizes Gullah Geechee people for maintaining their cultural traditions, an outstanding reflection of American values of ingenuity, pride, and perseverance. The intent of this designation is to help preserve and interpret the traditional cultural practices, sites, and resources associated with Gullah Geechee people.

“The most popular bill I ever sponsored was the 2006 law creating the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.”  
Congressman James E. Clyburn  
Southern Legislative Conference in Charleston, SC – August 2010

### **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN**

The purpose of this plan is to develop an integrated and cooperative approach to protect, interpret, and enhance the natural, scenic, cultural, historic, and recreational resources of the Corridor and to provide management direction for the Commission or the future management entity.

## FIGURE 1. TIME LINE LEADING TO CORRIDOR DESIGNATION

### 2000

- The Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study was authorized by Congress.
- The National Park Service held six initial public scoping meetings.

### 2001

- The National Park Service reviewed and analyzed the public comments.
- The National Park Service developed preliminary alternatives.

### 2002

- The National Park Service held seven public meetings to discuss the preliminary alternatives.

### 2003

- The National Park Service conducted peer and scholarly reviews of the study document.
- The National Park Service released the draft special resource study for public review.

### 2004

- Congressman James E. Clyburn introduced a bill to establish the Corridor.
- The National Trust for Historic Preservation placed the Gullah Geechee Coast on the 2004 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.
- The National Park Service continued development of the special resource study.

### 2005

- The bill to establish the Corridor was reintroduced in Congress.
- The National Park Service completed the Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

### 2006

- The NPS director announced the creation of the Corridor following congressional designation.

Please refer to the Planning Process section for a description of steps taken after Corridor designation.

This management plan is needed to meet the legal requirement of an approved plan, to remain eligible for national heritage area program funds, and because there is no existing plan in place to carry out the purpose for which the Corridor was designated. This plan is also needed to provide a guiding management framework to realize the vision and mission of the Corridor.

### **WHY A MANAGEMENT PLAN?**

Through the National Heritage Act of 2006, the Commission was created to oversee development of a management plan and to coordinate the implementation of its recommendations. See appendix A to review the designating law. By completing this management plan, the Commission would continue to be eligible to receive federal funds through the national heritage area program.

“The Gullah Geechee Corridor, this is the frontier.  
Our forefathers was the pioneers. . . It is a great day  
when truth comes to the forefront.”  
Marvin R. Graham  
Wilmington, NC – May 2010 Meeting

A primary duty of the Commission is to assist federal, state, and local authorities in the development and implementation of a management plan that would carry out the purpose for which the Corridor was designated.

The Commission is composed of 15 members appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Ten members are nominated by state historic preservation officers (SHPO) from each state and the other five are recognized experts in historic preservation, anthropology, and folklore and appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

Planning for the Corridor was organized around three primary questions:

- WHY was the Corridor established, and what is its overall mission?
- WHAT is the vision for the future (what kind of place should the Corridor be in the next 10 years)?
- HOW can the vision be accomplished?

Statements of the Corridor’s purpose and significance provide answers to the WHY questions and form the foundation for the management plan.

Developing a vision for the area’s future (answering the WHAT question) is the primary function of the management plan.

The HOW question is initially answered in this management plan and would be refined in more detail throughout implementation of the plan.

### **WHAT IS THE VALUE OR USEFULNESS OF MANAGEMENT PLANNING?**

The value of a management plan is in the development of a clearly defined direction for resource preservation and visitor use to best achieve its vision, mission, purpose, and goals. Management planning makes the Commission more effective, collaborative, and accountable by providing a balance between continuity and adaptability in decision making. The management plan provides a blueprint for the Commission and partners to follow throughout implementation.

Analyzing the national heritage area in relation to its surrounding ecosystems, cultural settings, and communities helps the Commission and partners understand how the Corridor can interrelate with neighbors and others in ways that are ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable. Decisions made within such a large context are more likely to be successful over time, affording everyone who has a stake in decisions affecting the national heritage area an opportunity to be involved in the planning process and to understand the decisions that are made.

National heritage areas are often the focus of much public interest. Public involvement throughout the planning process provides focused opportunities for the Commission to interact with the public and learn about public concerns, expectations, and values. Public involvement also provides opportunities for the Commission to share information about the purpose and significance of the NPS National Heritage Area program, as well as opportunities and constraints for management of the Corridor.

“...I hope that this Gullah Corridor will be like a pot of  
gumbo stew.”

Bunny Rodrigues

Wilmington, NC - May 2009 Meeting

The ultimate outcome of management planning for national heritage areas is an agreement among the Commission (or future coordinating entity); the National Park Service; other government, nonprofit, and private partners; and the public about the approach and direction for future implementation that meets the vision, mission, and goals of the Corridor.

# Map 1: Vicinity

## Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor



**Legend**

- ★ Capital
- Major City
- Major Highway
- National Park Service
- Department of Defense
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- ▭ Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor
- ▭ State Boundary



0 25 50 100 Miles

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

The basic planning process the Commission used to develop this plan is described in the following nine steps. A time line describing committee development and management plan process is also included in the section titled “Commission Committees, References, and Appendices” at the end of the document.

### **STEP 1: COMMISSION FORMED**

The Commission was officially announced in 2007 following designation of the Corridor. Commissioners were recommended by the SHPO in each of the four states, the National Park Service, and the public. Fifteen commissioners and 10 alternates were appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

### **STEP 2: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOPS**

The National Park Service assisted the Commission by conducting three technical assistance workshops in 2008 to prepare for the management planning process.

### **STEP 3: DISTRIBUTE NEWSLETTER 1 (21 PUBLIC MEETINGS)**

Approximately 6,000 newsletters were mailed to the public, agencies, and potential stakeholders and partners in all four states of the Corridor in February 2009. The newsletter introduced the Corridor and the Commission and invited the public to a series of 21 public meetings throughout the four states. The public was invited to share ideas, concerns, and their visions for what the Corridor should become. Comments and feedback were recorded during the public meetings, gathered through a response form included in Newsletter 1, handwritten letters, and via the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) Web site of the National Park Service. Transcripts of all public meetings are available on the Corridor’s Web site ([www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org](http://www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org)).

### **STEP 4: DEVELOP FOUNDATION (VISION, MISSION, PURPOSE, GOALS, AND THEMATIC TOPICS)**

Following the public meetings, the Commission developed the vision, mission, purpose, goals, and thematic topics, all of which comprise the foundation of this plan. The Commission developed these components after gleaning information from the comments submitted by the public and potential partners at the public meetings and in the response forms included in Newsletter 1. The foundational elements were, in part, a response to the issues identified during public scoping and the needs associated with the preliminary resource inventory that had been compiled early in the planning process.

### **STEP 5: POTENTIAL PARTNER MEETINGS IN SOUTH CAROLINA, GEORGIA, NORTH CAROLINA, FLORIDA**

In the spring of 2010, the Commission distributed information to each state congressional delegation representing the Corridor, government agencies, and other potential partners. This outreach was followed by in-person meetings in each of the four states.

## **STEP 6: DEVELOP PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS**

In compliance with NEPA and the NPS planning process, the Commission developed a range of different futures or alternative approaches for managing the Corridor in 2010. Three preliminary management concepts were developed. Potential implementation ideas were also identified that would work to not only address the issues identified as part of public scoping, but were also aligned with the vision, mission, and goals for the Corridor.

## **STEP 7: DISTRIBUTE NEWSLETTER 2**

In the fall of 2010, a second newsletter was mailed to the public and potential partners, including government agencies in all four states of the Corridor. The second newsletter presented the three preliminary management concepts and described potential implementation ideas for each concept. The newsletter invited the public to provide feedback on these concepts using a comment form attached to the newsletter, via a handwritten letter, or on the PEPC Web site.

## **STEP 8: FINALIZE MANAGEMENT APPROACH (IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERPRETATION)**

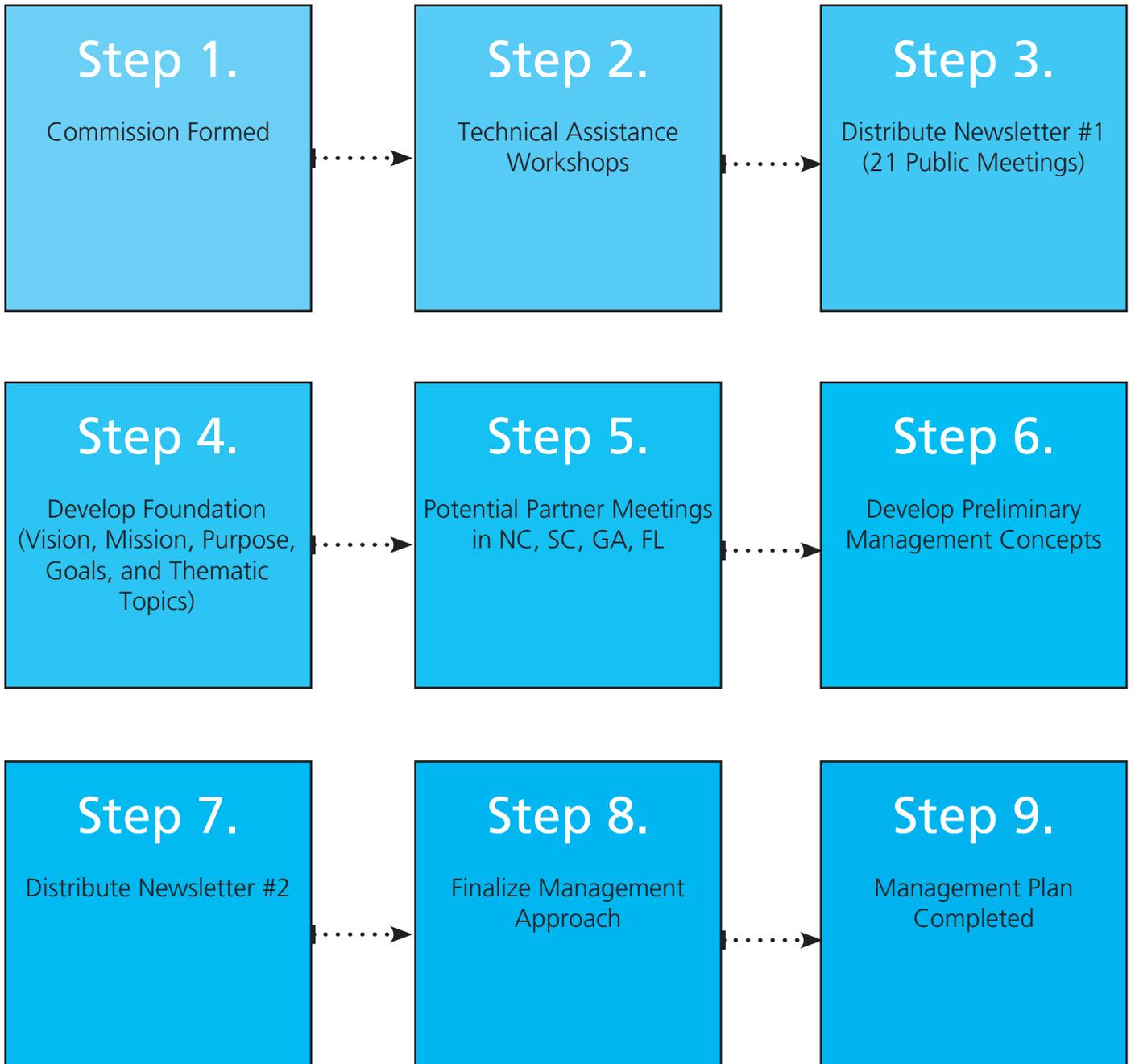
The management approach was identified in the spring of 2011 with the assistance of feedback provided by the public and potential partners about preliminary management concepts. An implementation and interpretation framework was developed to guide implementation over the next 10 years (see chapters 3 and 4).

## **STEP 9: MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPLETED**

The management plan was distributed for public review and comment in the summer of 2012. The plan will be finalized with the signature of the Secretary of the Interior.

FIGURE 2. PLANNING PROCESS

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## PLANNING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

### PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

The official public scoping comment period for the Corridor's management plan opened on February 5, 2009, and closed on August 21, 2009. During the official comment period, 125 individual correspondences were received via letter, e-mail, electronic entries into the PEPC Web site, or via hardcopy comment forms. Many people spoke at each of the 21 public meetings. Together, the public input process yielded 1,553 total comments. In addition, innumerable comments were received outside the formal public comment periods at Commission business meetings, in meetings with potential partners, and through informal conversations with community members over a period of five years. This section summarizes the issues and concerns expressed by respondents.



**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT MEETING  
JACKSONVILLE, DUVAL COUNTY, FL, FEBRUARY 2009**

The majority of the comments received identified specific places, people, or features that contribute to the uniqueness of the Corridor; shared stories of direct experiences of growing up in the Corridor, and of things that had been passed down through generations; and provided significant insight into Gullah Geechee cultural traditions, language, and people. Comments also provided many ideas for primary interpretive themes and suggested various ways for achieving the educational and interpretive goals of the Corridor. Most of the comments expressed support for the preservation, conservation, and restoration of resources and traditional practices; stated the need to obtain oral histories and document historical

information; and identified numerous important cultural resources. Many comments identified potential partners to assist in implementing the management plan.

All public meetings were transcribed and can be viewed in full on the Corridor Web site ([www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org](http://www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org)).

The Commission and the National Park Service greatly appreciated the participation of the many individuals and organizations during the public scoping period of the management planning process. The scoping comments guided the Commission throughout the planning process. Not only did they frame the development of the vision, mission, and goals, they also directly contributed to the creation of the management approach and primary interpretive themes. The management approach was developed by seeking and combining the most effective strategies and actions to address the issues identified during public scoping. The planning issues are included here and are linked to the management approach in chapter 3.

## PLANNING ISSUES

Planning issues define opportunities, conflicts, or problems within the Corridor. Issues were identified through public input during scoping and in cooperation with the Commission. The issues generally fall within eight topics. The eight topics are listed here with a summary description of the major issues identified under each.

“So there’s a race against time to preserve these things because of the human elements that are holding the authenticity of who we are. And language is critical to our identification.”

Rosalyn Browne

St. Helena Island, SC – June 2009 Meeting

### Cultural Resources

There is a lack of understanding about the cultural resources associated with Gullah Geechee history and traditions; therefore, myths and historical inaccuracies about resources are prevalent. The fact that there is no coordinating entity to inventory, collect, document, and archive cultural and historic resources exacerbates the issue.

There is a need for assistance in restoring, rehabilitating, and maintaining structures, sites, historic districts, and cultural landscapes.

### Natural Resources

An overarching issue is the lack of awareness and understanding by those outside Gullah Geechee communities of the negative impacts of broad-scale development on the natural resources that support Gullah Geechee culture.

### Land Issues

Issues regarding land include lack of access to traditional areas, recreation sites, seafood harvesting access areas, burial grounds, and religious sites. There is a lack of legal support to assist in resolving property issues, particularly with regard to heirs’ property and the inability to sustain traditional property ownership due to increasing property taxes, inappropriate development patterns, and destruction of traditional Gullah Geechee communities by development. Finally, as the Corridor continues to urbanize, land use restrictions negatively impact traditional practices and can negatively impact locally owned businesses.

### Economic Development

Economic development issues include the need for additional employment opportunities. Currently, Gullah Geechee people often leave the area to find work. In addition, there is a lack of appropriate economic development, adequate job training programs, and educational opportunities in the Corridor.

### Education to Build Awareness

Issues related to education are based on the premise that education is the key to building understanding and awareness of the contribution of Gullah Geechee people in the creation and continued evolution of the United States. In addition, as a result of inadequate education about Gullah Geechee history and culture, young people in the Corridor are unaware of their roots. A related issue is the lack of business education opportunities that hinder the ability of local people to start and run successful businesses within the Corridor.

## **Visitor Experience/Facilities**

Visitors to the Corridor are often unaware of the presence or significance of Gullah Geechee people to the area. There is no coordinated effort to link interpretive exhibits and programs throughout the Corridor. This is due to a lack of coordinated marketing to inform heritage travelers, inadequate wayfinding and signage, and a lack of a comprehensive interpretation/education plan to inform residents and visitors.

## **Development and Urbanization**

Urbanization and development pose a threat to cultural, historic, and natural resources within the heritage area. Based on past trends, the Corridor is expected to experience population growth over the next decade. The increasing number of people would demand housing, transportation infrastructure, and urban services, which require commercial, retail, and industrial land uses. The proposed locations, extent, and rate of development and urbanization over the next 10 to 15 years goes beyond the scope of this document. The transition of natural areas to urbanized or developed areas poses a number of threats to Corridor resources, only some of which are included here:

- loss of wetlands and the ecological services they provide
- habitat fragmentation, conversion from agricultural to urban land uses, and loss of arable land for locally grown food
- loss of traditional cultural landscapes
- increases in impervious surfaces and increased urban stormwater problems that negatively impact water quality
- deteriorating air quality as a result of increased automobile traffic

## **Management Structure and Oversight**

Issues about management structure and oversight center on the fact that the federally appointed Commission will terminate in 2016 and continued assistance from the Secretary of the Interior is not guaranteed. Short-term issues pertain to organizational structure, development of organizational capacity (such as staffing), short-term funding needs, and how to formalize relationships with partners. Long-term organizational sustainability and financial self-sufficiency of the Corridor was also identified as an issue.

## **Addressing the Issues**

The management approach in chapter 3 provides strategies for addressing these issues within the contexts of the Corridor's purpose, significance, and other aspects of the foundation for planning and management, which is outlined in the next section.

# FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

## OVERVIEW

The foundation for planning and management includes the Corridor’s purpose and significance, as well as the vision, mission, goals, and primary interpretive themes. These foundational elements serve as a mechanism to ensure that future implementation is appropriately targeted. Implementation, however, is not intended to be unilateral in nature, but rather multilateral, and the Corridor is a unique vehicle for that. The Corridor was purposefully organized to support and facilitate collaboration, inclusion, and involvement of many interests throughout implementation, yet provide Gullah Geechee people with the most control over their story. The vision, mission, and goals will only be realized through the active participation of Gullah Geechee people, communities, partners, and stakeholders.

## CORRIDOR PURPOSE

Purpose statements convey the reason(s) for which an area was designated a national heritage area. Grounded in an analysis of the designating law and legislative history, purpose statements also provide primary criteria against which the appropriateness of plan recommendations, operational decisions, and actions are tested—they provide the foundation for the Corridor’s management and use.

The purpose statements of the Corridor include the following:

- To recognize, sustain, and celebrate the important contributions made to American culture and history by African Americans known as Gullah Geechee who settled in the coastal counties of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida.
- To assist state and local governments and public and private entities in South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida in interpreting the story of Gullah Geechee people and preserving Gullah Geechee folklore, arts, crafts, and music.
- To assist in identifying and preserving sites, historical data, artifacts, and objects associated with Gullah Geechee people and culture for the benefit and education of the public.

## CORRIDOR SIGNIFICANCE

Significance statements capture the essence of the importance of an area to the nation’s history and natural and cultural heritage. Significance statements do not inventory heritage area resources; rather, they describe the area’s distinctiveness and why the area is important within its regional, national, and international contexts. The significance statements focus on the attributes that make the area’s resources and values important enough to be designated as a national heritage area. Defining the Corridor’s significance helps the Commission make decisions that accomplish the purpose of the Corridor. Significance statements answer questions such as the following: Why are Corridor resources distinctive? What do they contribute to the natural or cultural heritage of the United States?

The purpose and significance statements for the Corridor are used to guide planning and implementation decisions. This ensures that the resources and values that Congress and the president wanted preserved are understood and are the first priority.

The significance statements for the Corridor are

- The Corridor contains a unique and outstanding mosaic of tangible and intangible resources essential to understanding the heritage of a people settled far from their ancestral homeland—the connection with the African diaspora.
- The Corridor provides opportunities to learn about the history and stories of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the plantation economy; for many, these experiences evoke strong emotional responses to a long and tragic period of time in the nation’s history.
- The Corridor provides opportunities for examination, research, and learning about nationally significant periods in time that had global influence, such as Colonialism, the Revolutionary War, the Antebellum period, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement.
- The kidnapping, capture, and subsequent sale of African people as “human cargo” and the exploitation of their intellect, expertise, and technological knowledge during the Transatlantic Slave Trade created a major economic foundation for the United States of America.
- The economic foundation of the English colonies in mainland North America was partially rooted in the agricultural expertise developed on the west coast of Africa and brought to North America by African people during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The labor and ingenuity of enslaved Africans were major and essential contributors to building the foundations of the U.S. economy through a wide range of skills and applications in many industries, including but not limited to, coopers, mechanics, boat builders, sailors, trunk minders, blacksmiths, brickmakers, cooks, sawyers, and basket makers, as well as through planting, growing, harvesting, and selling crops such as rice, indigo, and cotton.
- Historically, Gullah Geechee people are creators and speakers of one of the few African American Creole languages of the United States.
- Of all African American cultures in the United States, the lifeways, folk customs, oral history, literature, crafts, arts, music, and foodways of Gullah Geechee people show the strongest continuities with indigenous cultures of Africa (primarily West Africa) and connections with other cultures of the African diaspora.
- The Corridor identifies and preserves a unique Creole culture, retaining a great deal of African cultural heritage, but intermingled with some Native American folkways and traditions. That culture survives today, especially throughout the Corridor, and represents the only African American population of the United States with a unique, long-standing name identifying them as a distinct people.

- The Corridor includes the land area designated for settlement by freedmen by Special Field Order No. 15, issued by Union General William Tecumseh Sherman in the year 1865.
- The Corridor contains unique, human-made ecosystems that are the product of vast sums of effort and energy that were used to clear forests and develop complex irrigation systems for agricultural use.
- The Corridor seeks to improve the quality of life of Gullah Geechee people and provides excellent opportunities to encourage renewal of and gateways to a sense of pride, awareness, and respect for Gullah Geechee culture so that future generations can experience and celebrate this valuable thread of U.S. history.



**OLD SLAVE MART MUSEUM  
CHARLESTON, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SC**

### **CORRIDOR VISION, MISSION, GOALS, AND PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES**

As part of grounding the development of the management approach and the contents of the implementation plan, the Commission developed vision and mission statements. These statements provide additional criteria against which future decisions and actions should be based.

Additionally, goals and primary interpretive themes were developed to meet the mission of the Corridor and realize its vision. They are based on comments received from the public and potential partners during the public scoping process and refined throughout the planning process based on additional feedback from the public and potential partners at Commission business meetings and partner workshops, etc. The professional judgment of the Commission was used to develop the specific language. The goals and primary interpretive themes serve as guides when implementing future actions. All actions should be directly tied to or related to one or more of the goals described herein.

Primary interpretive themes are ideas, concepts, or stories that are central to the Corridor's purpose, significance, identity, and visitor experience. Primary interpretive themes provide the framework for interpretation and educational programs, influence visitor experience, and provide direction for planners and designers of exhibits, publications, audiovisual programs, and other interpretation materials. The themes are the stories visitors should know when they leave the area.

"Our children must know that they came from richness.  
They didn't come from trifling. We must teach that."

Saundra Ward  
Atlantic Beach, SC - May 2009 Meeting

## CORRIDOR VISION

An environment that celebrates the legacy and continuing contributions of Gullah Geechee people to our American heritage.

## CORRIDOR MISSION

- To nurture pride and facilitate an understanding and awareness of the significance of Gullah Geechee history and culture within Gullah Geechee communities.
- To sustain and preserve land, language, and cultural assets within the coastal communities of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida.
- To promote economic development among Gullah Geechee people.
- To educate the public on the value and importance of Gullah Geechee culture.

## CORRIDOR GOALS

**Goal 1:** Foster public awareness of and appreciation for the history of Gullah Geechee people, their contributions to the development of the United States, and their connections to the African diaspora and other international cultures.

**Goal 2:** Enhance the quality of life for current and future generations of Gullah Geechee people within the Corridor.

**Goal 3:** Protect, preserve, and restore tangible and intangible natural and cultural resources in communities and other areas that are of cultural and historical significance to Gullah Geechee people.

## PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES OF THE CORRIDOR

For more information about the primary interpretive themes, see chapter 4.

### **Theme I. Origins and Early Development**

The Corridor preserves and protects many elements essential to understanding the plantation economy such as the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the isolated geographical setting, cultural formation, cultivation of rice and other staple crops, and the task system.

### **Theme II. The Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education, and Recognition**

The Corridor provides opportunities for examining the evolution and development of significant institutions and events from the antebellum period to the present, including the period of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, religious and spiritual development, education, the Civil War and Reconstruction, civil rights and race relations.

### **Theme III. Global Connections**

The Corridor offers opportunities to examine and understand the development and evolution of Gullah Geechee identity as part of a larger, global Creole cultural identity linked to diverse regions of the world, including Africa and the Caribbean and Pacific islands.

### **Theme IV. Connection with the Land**

The Corridor promotes awareness that Gullah Geechee people have influenced the natural and cultural landscapes of the region, and their cultural identity is connected to a particular geographical setting. The ownership and retention of land and built environments, as well as access to significant cultural sites, are crucial for the preservation and survival of Gullah Geechee culture.

### **Theme V. Cultural and Spiritual Expression**

The Corridor promotes awareness that the influence of Gullah Geechee people has made a lasting impact in all areas of society, including music, arts, handicrafts, foodways, spirituality, language, education, and economic development.

### **Theme VI. Gullah Geechee Language**

The Corridor promotes awareness that a distinctive Creole language is a characteristic trait of Gullah Geechee cultural identity.

# THE CORRIDOR BOUNDARY

## BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

Section 295C(b)(2) of the designating law allows revisions to the boundary defined in section 295C(b)(1) as “those lands and waters generally depicted on a map numbered *GGCHC 80,000*, and dated September 2004.”

The Commission proposes that the Corridor boundary be defined as “those lands and waters running from the northern boundary of Pender County, North Carolina, southward to St. Johns County, Florida, from the Atlantic coast to 30 miles inland, including all Sea Islands.” This proposed boundary includes Pender County, North Carolina, and St. Johns County, Florida, which were not included in the boundary defined in the designating legislation.

The Commission recommends that no other territory be added to the Corridor in the future and that the boundaries of the Corridor be fixed.

### **Pender County, North Carolina**

The map referenced in Public Law 109-338, Subtitle I was a “draft” developed prior to the release of the 2005 *Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study Final Environmental Impact Statement* (NPS 2005). The final map in that study included Pender County because of its strong historical and cultural ties to Gullah Geechee history and culture and significance to the Corridor. Therefore, given that Pender County, North Carolina, was included in the Corridor defined by the study, the Commission proposes that Pender County be included as part of the Corridor. A resolution passed by the Pender County Board of Commissioners recognizing and supporting the inclusion of Pender County, North Carolina, in the Corridor is included in appendix D.

### **St. Johns County, Florida**

The final map in the study did not include St. Johns County. The Commission began the process of evaluating St. Johns County for inclusion in the Corridor at the urging of members of the public and potential partners. To ensure historical significance to Gullah Geechee history and culture, the Commission evaluated the county’s ability to meet a series of criteria established by the 2005 study. To this end, the Commission determined that St. Johns County possesses

- the historic presence of Gullah Geechee people in the area dating from the colonial period
- reliable documentary evidence of rice production; discernible traces of the spoken Gullah Geechee language
- a historic connection to South Carolina or that portion of the Carolinas Colony that became South Carolina
- a sense of historic connection to Gullah Geechee culture; family, and personal narratives
- aspects of the Gullah Geechee culture that are practiced and celebrated on a regular basis
- territory that is contiguous to the southern boundary specified in the designating law

Fort Mose is an important resource within the Corridor—one that has a long and significant history to Gullah Geechee people. In 1687, the first documentation of enslaved Africans escaping from the English in Carolina was recorded by Spanish authorities. Six years later, the Spanish King enacted the Edict of 1693, “granting liberty to all [runaway slaves]...the men as well as the women...so that by their example and by my liberality...others will do the same” (Twyman 1999; Landers 1999). By the early 1700s, the town of Gracia Real de St. Teresa de Mose (Fort Mose) was developing as a runaway haven for both runaway blacks and Native Americans (Dixon 2010).

Appendix D provides additional information about the history of Gullah Geechee people in Florida, the relationship between St. Johns County and the Corridor, and a historical time line of Gullah Geechee people in St. Johns County.

Throughout the planning process, Florida community members and government entities provided strong public support for extending the southern Corridor boundary. In August 2010, Florida Governor Charlie Crist sent the Commission a letter asking the Commission to include St. Augustine, Florida, and Fort Mose within the Corridor. The Florida state legislature, St. Johns County, and the City of St. Augustine also passed resolutions supporting the inclusion of St. Johns County. Copies of these resolutions are included in appendix D. Additional public comments and testimony presented during public meetings held by the Commission also supported including St. Johns County in the Corridor.

The Corridor boundary would be finalized once this plan is approved by the Secretary of the Interior. This boundary represents the area within which NHA program funds may be expended. An updated map of the Corridor, which was prepared using the latest geographic information system (GIS) technology, delineates the final boundary of the Corridor. See map 5.

Although the boundary is fixed as it relates to the expenditure of NHA program funds, the Commission plans to continue to work with communities, agencies, and organizations outside the boundary, as appropriate, to better meet the vision, mission, and goals of the Corridor, and to interpret the Gullah Geechee story that has not been bound by lines on a map.

The boundary of the Corridor encompasses approximately 12,818 square miles (8,203,808 acres; an area larger than Maryland and Delaware combined). The Corridor extends about 425 miles along the Atlantic coast and 30 miles inland from the northern border of Pender County, North Carolina, through South Carolina and Georgia to the southern boundary of St. Johns County, Florida. The Corridor encompasses all or part of 27 counties. The county names and number of acres in the Corridor are included in table 1.

## HISTORY OF CORRIDOR COUNTIES

The counties or portions of counties that comprise the Corridor boundary have a history unto themselves. The European concept of dividing land into manageable counties was introduced to

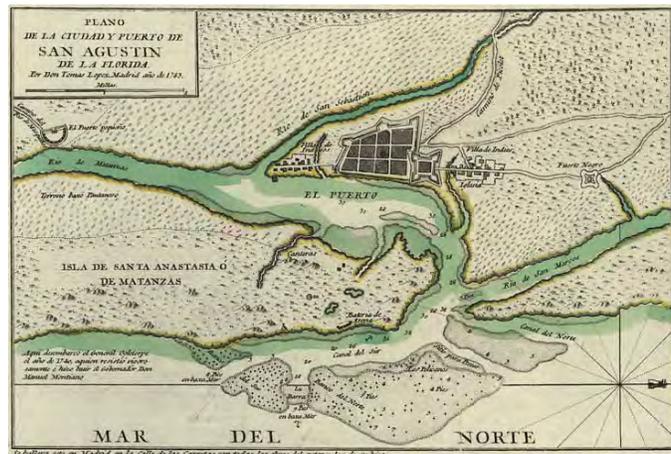


FIGURE 3. FORT MOSE 1783, ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FL

America during the colonial period, serving as a useful way to enforce local laws, collect taxes, and administer justice. Over the centuries, the demarcation of land into districts and counties has changed within the Corridor boundary as depicted on the maps on the following pages.

New Hanover County in North Carolina, for example, was divided into two separate counties (New Hanover County and Pender County) in 1875. In South Carolina, the General Assembly of South Carolina divided the state into 34 counties in 1785. These boundary lines were redrawn and reincorporated into districts in 1798 (Charleston County Online 2011). Then in 1877, Hampton County was formed from what was formerly known as the Beaufort District (Hampton County 2011). In 1912, Jasper County was formed from parts of Beaufort and Hampton counties (South Carolina's Information Highway 2011). St. Johns County, Florida, was one of two original counties in the U.S. territory of Florida that was later divided to form Duval County in 1822 and Nassau County in 1824.

**TABLE 1. COUNTY NAMES AND NUMBER OF ACRES IN THE CORRIDOR**

<b>County</b>	<b>Acres within the Corridor Boundary</b>	<b>Is Entire County within the Corridor Boundary?</b>
<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>		
Brunswick	563,246	Yes
Columbus	378,325	No
New Hanover	139,849	Yes
Pender	442,355	No
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,523,775</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>		
Beaufort	475,148	Yes
Berkeley	449,824	No
Charleston	652,246	Yes
Colleton	248,849	No
Dorchester	120,126	No
Georgetown	555,213	Yes
Horry	593,050	No
Jasper	265,002	No
Marion	34,677	No
Williamsburg	109,700	No
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,503,835</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>GEORGIA</b>		
Brantley	38,549	No
Bryan	153,418	No
Camden	414,879	No
Chatham	313,165	Yes
Effingham	128,621	No
Glynn	296,181	Yes
Liberty	217,754	No
Long	87,294	No
McIntosh	304,826	Yes
Wayne	85,566	No
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,040,253</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**TABLE 1. COUNTY NAMES AND NUMBER OF ACRES IN THE CORRIDOR**

<b>County</b>	<b>Acres within the Corridor Boundary</b>	<b>Is Entire County within the Corridor Boundary?</b>
<b>FLORIDA</b>		
Duval	442,685	No
Nassau	252,081	No
St. Johns	441,179	Yes
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,135,945</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>CORRIDOR TOTAL</b>	<b>8,203,808</b>	

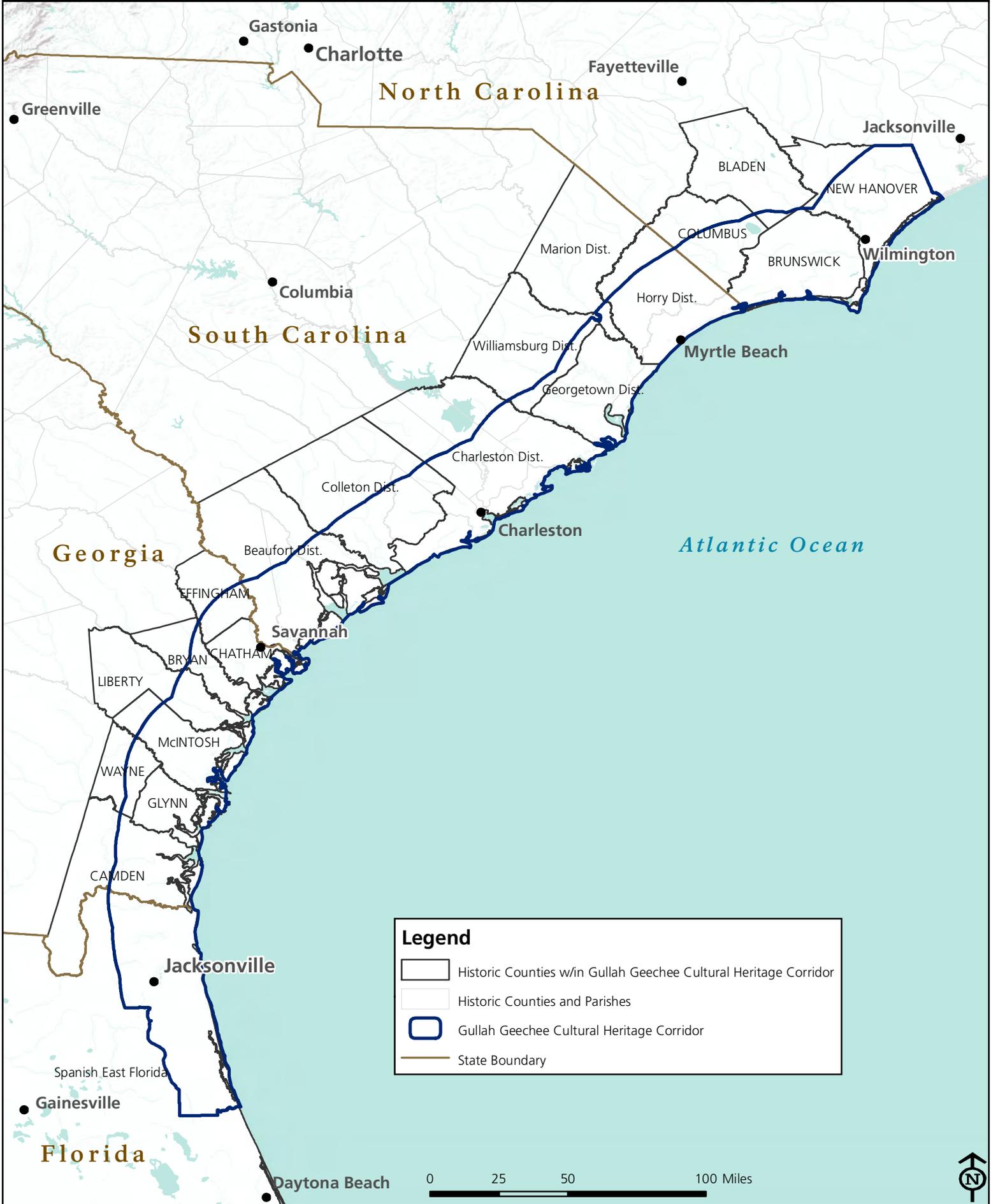
Source: Tele Atlas North America, Inc., ESRI 2008

# Map 2: Historic Counties as of April 12, 1811

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

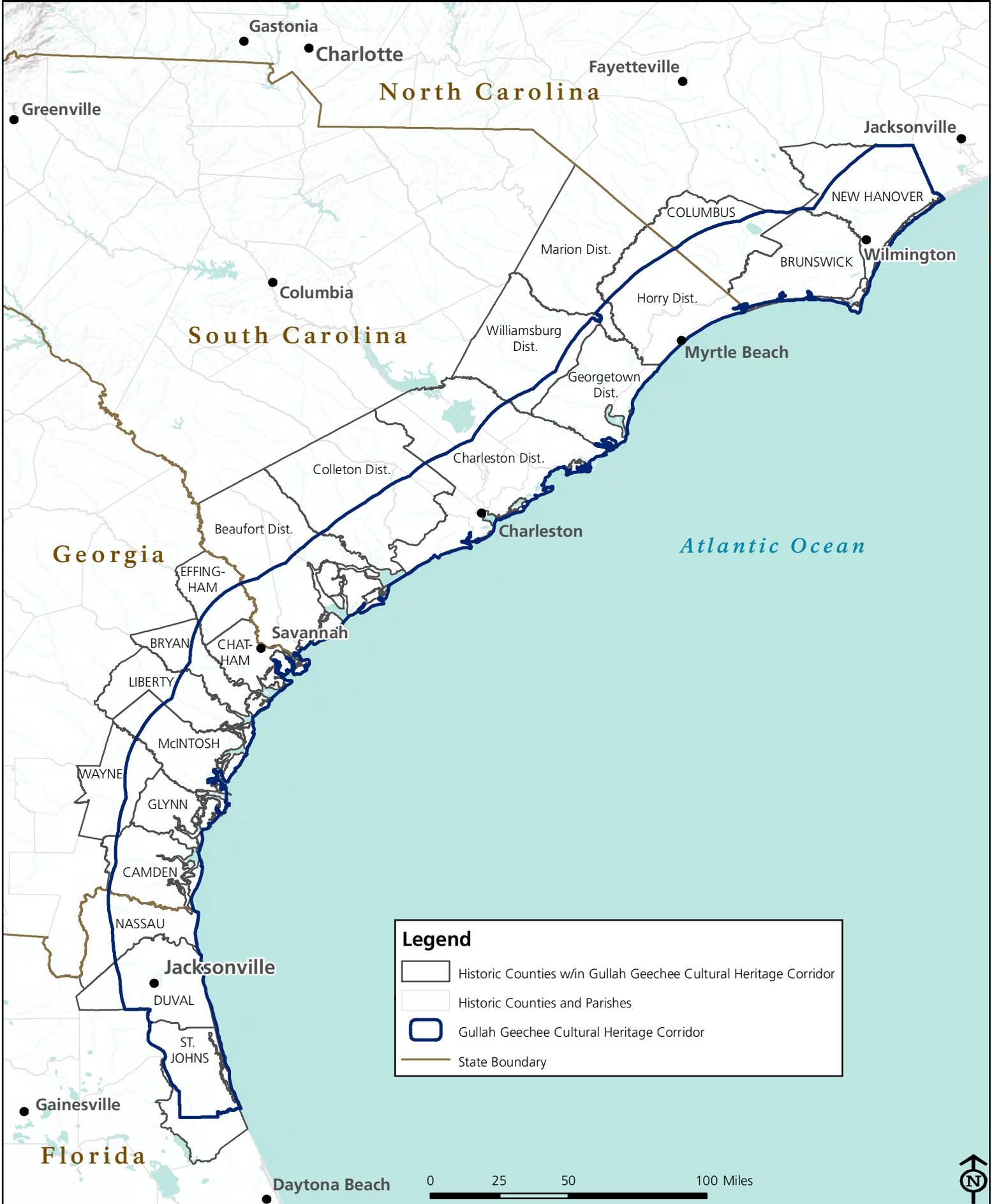


# Map 3: Historic Counties as of April 12, 1861

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

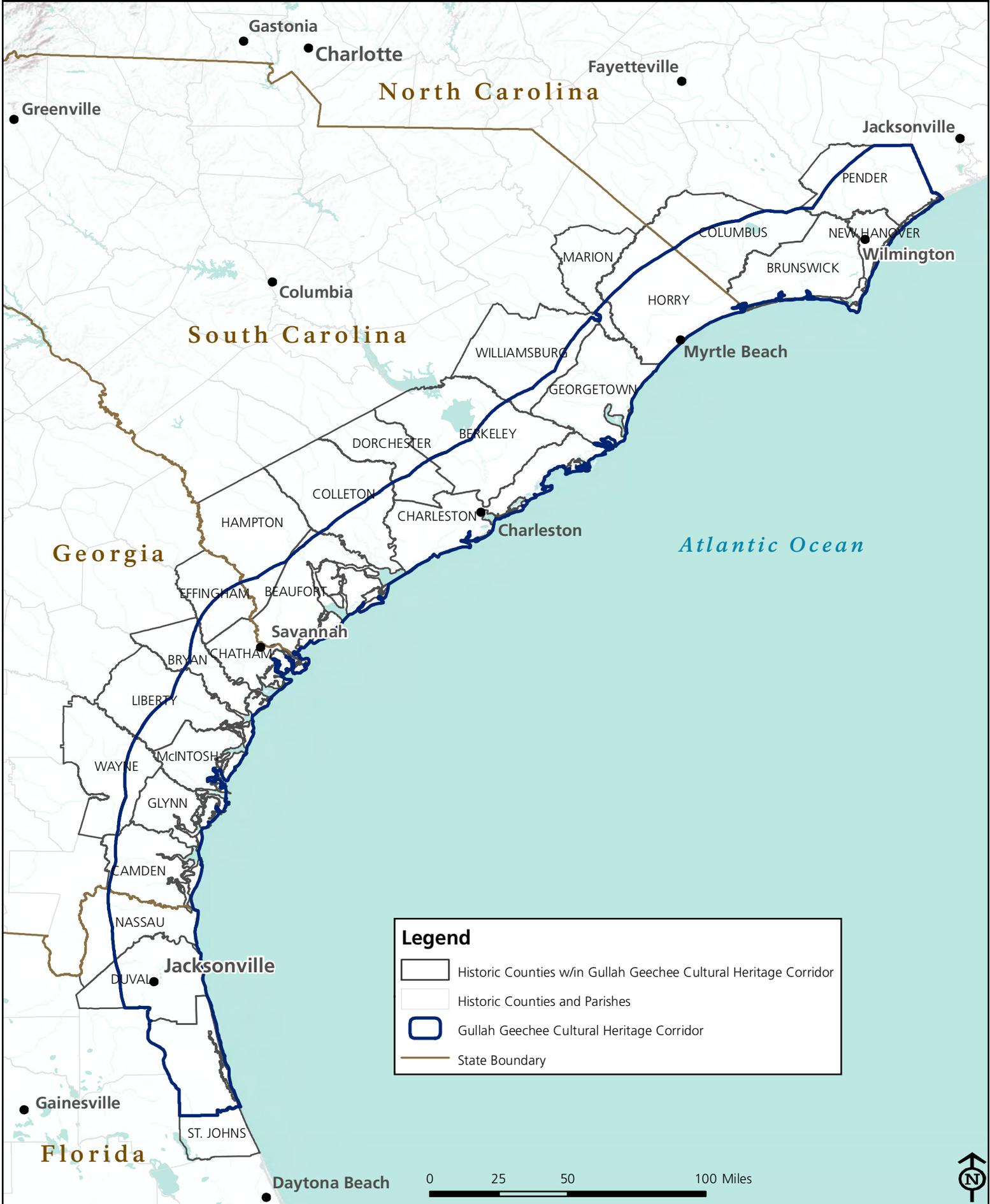


# Map 4: Historic Counties as of April 12, 1911

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor



# Map 5: Proposed Boundary

## Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



### Legend

#### Cities - Population

- 8000 - 45000
- 45001 - 245000
- 245001 - 750000

Counties

States

City Limits

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

Proposed Boundary Expansion of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

0 25 50 100 Miles



## APPLICABLE LAWS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

The following federal laws have guided the planning process. Management of the Corridor, including implementation actions, must be consistent with these laws, policies, and initiatives. The following section summarizes the key laws, policies, and initiatives governing management of and planning for the Corridor.

### THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969

This management plan has been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (Public Law 91-190, 42 *United States Code* (USC) 4321 et seq.) (40 *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] 1500–1508), Director’s Order 2: *Park Planning*, and NPS *Management Policies 2006*.

The National Environmental Policy Act establishes “a national policy, which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment.” The National Environmental Policy Act requires all government agencies to develop procedures that ensure open and honest documentation of existing resources and potential effects to these resources as a result of the proposed action. NEPA fosters public involvement as a key element of the decision-making process. NEPA compliance procedures are described in NPS Director’s Order 12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making* and the accompanying reference manual. See the next section for a description of this plan’s compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

### How this Management Plan Complies with the National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act is applicable to the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan because the Secretary of the Interior approves the management plan. Evaluation of the potential for significant environmental impacts resulting from the proposed strategies and actions in this plan concluded that the appropriate NEPA pathway was a categorical exclusion, specifically 3.3R. Categorical Exclusion 3.3R states “adoption or approval of surveys, studies, reports, plans and similar documents which will result in recommendations or proposed actions which would cause no or only minimal environmental impact.” The determination that Categorical Exclusion 3.3R was the appropriate NEPA pathway precluded the need to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

### THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 USC 1531–1543) requires federal agencies to ensure that management activities authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency, do not jeopardize the continued existence of listed endangered or threatened species of fish, wildlife, and plants, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat that is critical to the conservation of these species. Given the conceptual nature of this management plan, no effects on threatened or endangered species are expected. As specific projects are implemented, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would take place in accordance with the Endangered Species Act.

## **THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966**

Passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470) (NHPA) established a comprehensive program to preserve the historical and cultural foundations of the nation as a living part of community life. Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act delineates broad historic preservation responsibilities for federal agencies, such as the National Park Service, to ensure that historic preservation is fully integrated into all of their ongoing programs. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties that are either listed in or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The national register includes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects important for their significance in U.S. history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The goal of the section 106 review process is to seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects to historic properties that are listed in or eligible for listing in the national register. The National Park Service has determined that this management plan involves no federal undertakings on historic properties. The Commission will complete a section 106 review, as appropriate, throughout implementation of this management plan for each undertaking involving a federal nexus.

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MANAGEMENT POLICIES 2006**

Section 1.4.4 prohibits impairment of park resources and values unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. Since the Corridor is not a unit of the national park system, it is not subject to section 1.4.4 and as a result, impairment of resources and values is not discussed in this document.

Section 1.3.4 does relate to this plan because it outlines “heritage area” designation as another option for recognizing an area’s importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the National Park Service. It supports the management of heritage area resources for conservation, recreation, education, and continued use through partnerships among public and private entities at the local or regional level.

## **COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1972**

The Coastal Zone Management Act was enacted in 1972 to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, to restore and enhance the resources of the nation’s coastal zone. The act requires federal agency activities (i.e., “direct agency” activities) to be fully consistent with a state’s approved coastal management program, unless full consistency is prohibited by federal law. This plan does not propose any development in the Corridor and no management activities in this plan conflict with the coastal zone management program. Therefore, there is no effect on coastal resources in the Corridor.

## **GULLAH GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT OF 2006**

Section 295I of Public Law 109-338 requires the Commission to “establish one or more Coastal Heritage Centers at appropriate locations within the Heritage Corridor in accordance with the preferred alternative identified in the Record of Decision for the *Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study and Environmental Impact Statement*, and additional appropriate sites.” The Commission has developed criteria for the development of coastal heritage centers, which are included in chapter 3.

Section 295C(b)(2) provides for boundary adjustments if they are: (1) proposed in the management plan, and (2) approved by the Secretary of the Interior. A subcommittee of the Commission was established during the planning process to analyze, evaluate, and propose any boundary adjustments to the Corridor boundary. An explanation for the inclusion of Pender County, North Carolina, and St. Johns County, Florida, in the Corridor are included in chapter 1.

Section 295F describes the requirements of the Corridor's management plan. This section states that the management plan include the components listed in table 2, below.

## **AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS INITIATIVE OF 2010**

President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative in April 2010 to develop a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda. AGO takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should rise from the American people—that the protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective shared by all Americans.

AGO recognizes that many of the best ideas come from outside Washington, D.C. Instead of dictating policies, this initiative turns to communities for local, grassroots conservation initiatives. Instead of growing bureaucracy, it calls for reworking inefficient policies and making the federal government a better partner with states, tribes, and local communities.

The goals of the initiative are to:

- Reconnect Americans, especially children, to America's rivers and waterways, landscapes of national significance, ranches, farms and forests, great parks, and coasts and beaches by exploring a variety of efforts, including:
  1. promoting community-based recreation and conservation, including local parks, greenways, beaches, and waterways
  2. advancing job and volunteer opportunities related to conservation and outdoor recreation
  3. supporting existing programs and projects that educate and engage Americans in our history, culture, and natural bounty
- Build upon state, local, private, and tribal priorities for the conservation of land, water, wildlife, historic, and cultural resources, creating corridors and connectivity across these outdoor spaces, and for enhancing neighborhood parks; and determine how the federal government can best advance those priorities through public and private partnerships and locally supported conservation strategies.
- Use science-based management practices to restore and protect the lands and waters of this nation for future generations.

The Commission plans to explore meeting these initiatives.

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE A CALL TO ACTION STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN OF 2011**

In preparation for the centennial of the National Park Service on August 25, 2016, the NPS director released a strategic plan titled *A Call to Action*, which is a call to all National Park Service employees and partners to commit to actions that advance the agency toward a shared vision for 2016 and the

second century of the National Park Service. As partners of the National Park Service, the Commission will support and contribute to the initiative’s goals of Connecting People to Parks and Preserving America’s Special Places.

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE POLICY MEMORANDUM 12-01**

This NPS director’s 2012 policy memorandum affirms the National Park Service’s support for the National Heritage Areas Program and encourages NPS managers and staff to help the National Heritage Areas succeed, in part by partnering with and assisting, to the maximum extent possible, local heritage area initiatives.

**TABLE 2. MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS**

REQUIREMENT, SECTION 295F(A)(1-9)	HOW THE REQUIREMENT IS ADDRESSED
Include comprehensive policies, strategies, and recommendations for conservation, funding, management, and development of the Corridor.	Chapter 3 provides the framework for policies, strategies, and recommendations governing the conservation of resources, potential funding opportunities for implementation efforts, and management and development of the Corridor.
Take into consideration existing state, county, and local plans in development of the management plan and its implementation.	Plans at all levels of government within the Corridor have been considered in the development of this plan and its approach to implementation. See chapter 3, “Potential Partners and Related Plans.”
Include a description of actions that governments, private organizations, and individuals have agreed to take to protect the historical, cultural, and natural resources of the Corridor.	The Commission has received letters of support from government agencies and other organizations. See appendix G for copies of letters and commitments received.
Specify the existing and potential sources of funding to protect, manage, and develop the Corridor in the first five years of implementation.	Past sources of funding and expenditures to date are in chapter 3, “Funding and Early Implementation.” Potential sources of funding are identified in table 24 in chapter 3.
Include an inventory of the historical, cultural, and natural resources of the Corridor related to the themes of the Corridor that should be preserved, restored, managed, developed, or maintained.	An inventory of historical, cultural, and natural resources is included in appendix C and each resource is linked to the appropriate interpretive theme(s). This inventory list provides a foundation to be built upon throughout implementation; it does not include all relevant or important resources of Gullah Geechee people. More research and documentation are needed as part of implementation.
Recommend policies and strategies for resource management that consider and detail the application of appropriate land and water management techniques, including the development of intergovernmental and interagency cooperative agreements to protect the Corridor’s historical, cultural, and natural resources.	The Corridor does not own or have any regulatory authority over land or water within the Corridor boundary. The implementation framework in chapter 3 includes strategies for tangible and intangible resource protection. Implementation of these strategies would occur with the assistance of partners across agencies and political boundaries, using best management practices.
Describe a program for implementation of the management plan including plans for resource protection, restoration, construction, and specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any government, organization, or individual for the first five years of implementation.	The implementation matrix in chapter 3 outlines the strategies that the Commission has identified to meet the goals and objectives of the Corridor in a three-phased approach. Implementation is to occur in cooperation with governments, organizations, and individuals over the life of the plan.

**TABLE 2. MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS**

<b>REQUIREMENT, SECTION 295F(A)(1-9)</b>	<b>HOW THE REQUIREMENT IS ADDRESSED</b>
Include an analysis and recommendations for the ways in which federal, state, or local programs may best be coordinated to further the purposes of this subtitle.	Throughout the planning process, federal, state, and local partners have been included in the development of the management approach and implementation strategies and actions. Further coordination and collaboration would be required on a project-by-project basis throughout the life of the plan.
Include an interpretive plan for the Corridor.	Chapter 4 serves as the interpretation plan for the Corridor.

## **NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

### **NEXT STEPS**

After public distribution of the management plan, there will be a 30-day public review and comment period, after which the Commission and planning team will evaluate and address comments received, as appropriate. The plan can be implemented once it is signed by the Secretary of the Interior.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

The approval of this plan does not guarantee that the funding and staffing needed to implement the plan would be forthcoming. Implementation of the approved plan would depend on future funding and the assistance of partners and the public. Full implementation could be many years in the future. Once the plan has been approved, more detailed planning, environmental documentation, and consultations would be completed, as appropriate. The Commission may also take action in response to an immediate need or changes in future NHA program requirements. All actions undertaken by the Commission would be aligned with the management framework outlined in this plan.



**NAVASSA DOCK, NAVASSA, BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NC**

