National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Aerial photo by Tommy Hailey using powered parachute funded by Tile National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NPS).

The New Philadelphia Townsite

Special Resource Study

Spring Newsletter
April 2016

Letter from the National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) is conducting a special resource study of the New Philadelphia Townsite in the State of Illinois. The purpose of the study, as directed by Congress, is to evaluate the national significance of the site, and the suitability and feasibility of adding it to the national park system. In addition, Congress charges the Secretary of Interior to consider alternatives for the preservation, protection and interpretation of the New Philadelphia Townsite by Federal, State or local government entities or any other interested individuals. These alternatives may encourage partnerships and other efforts to protect the New Philadelphia Townsite by means that do not necessarily require direct NPS management.

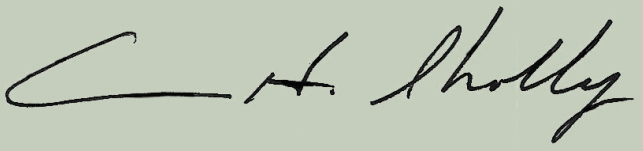
Please join us for a public meeting to be held on May 11, 2016, from 6 to 8 PM, at the Pike County Farm Bureau in Pittsfield (see page 5 for the address). At the meeting, the NPS team will explain the study process, answer questions, and gather ideas for potential management alternatives.

This special resource study will take place within the next two years. During this time, the NPS will assess local support by providing opportunities for your comment. At the conclusion of the study, NPS will forward our findings to the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary will make a recommendation for the site, and submit the study and recommendation to Congress for their consideration.

The purpose of this newsletter is not only to provide you with information about this planning effort, but also to ask for your input. By sharing your ideas and opinions about the New Philadelphia Townsite, you can help us shape its future.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about and comment on this study. You may provide your thoughts at the public meetings or online at: **http://parkplanning.nps.gov/New_Philadelphia_Special_Resource_Study** We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



Cameron H. Sholly
Regional Director, Midwest Region
National Park Service

Introduction

New Philadelphia, located near Barry, Illinois, was founded in 1836 by Frank McWhorter, an enslaved man from Kentucky who bought his own freedom and the freedom of 15 family members. New Philadelphia is the first town known to be platted and officially registered by an African American before the Civil War. The rural community situated near the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers flourished at first, but later fell in decline when the railroad bypassed the community in 1869; it was eventually dissolved in 1885. The site of New Philadelphia, an archeological site with no visible above-ground evidence, was designated a National Historic Landmark on January 16, 2009.

What is a Special Resource Study?

A special resource study is a report to Congress by the National Park Service regarding the potential for a site to be added to the national park system.

The National Park Service was created to conserve unimpaired outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The treasures in this system have been set aside to protect, preserve, and share our nation's greatest stories. Usually a new unit of the national park system is established by an act of Congress. Before making a decision, Congress requires reliable information about the quality of resources and the potential for visitor enjoyment and efficient management. The NPS collects this information for the Department of the Interior through special resource studies. The Department then provides a recommendation to Congress for any potential designation. This process ensures that only those candidate sites that are most deserving of national designation are included within the national park system.





Watercolors depicting New Philadelphia circa 1915, by Thelma Elise McWorter Kirkpatrick Wheaton, great granddaughter of Frank McWorter, founder of New Philadelphia (New Philadelphia Association)

Special Resource Study Criteria

(NPS *Management Policies 2006*, Section 1.3)

For the Secretary of the Interior to recommend new parklands, an area must:

- Contain nationally significant natural and/or cultural resources; and
- Be a suitable new unit of the national park system that represents a natural or cultural theme or type of recreational resource that is not already adequately represented in the national park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land-managing entity; and
- Be feasible to manage as a unit of the national park system as determined by size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. It must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Important feasibility factors include landownership, acquisition costs, life cycle maintenance costs, access, threats to the resource, and staff or development requirements; and
- Require direct NPS management that cannot or will not be accomplished by another government entity or by the private sector.

How to Participate in this Study

The NPS places a high value on public participation and strives to encourage participation in all aspects of decision-making. As the study unfolds we will provide opportunities for you to learn more and send in comments. *

- **Project Website –** **http://parkplanning.nps.gov/New_Philadelphia_Special_Resource_Study** will contain updates and other information about the special resource study.
- **Public Scoping Meeting –** A meeting to discuss this project is currently scheduled to take place on May 11, 2016, from 6 to 8 PM, at the Pike County Farm Bureau in Pittsfield (address below). Presentations will start promptly, followed by an open-house format where you can speak individually with NPS staff to learn more and provide comments. This will enable a large number of people to comment within a fairly short time frame. See public meeting information on the front page.

**Note: To help us be able to contact members of the public about this project, please provide us your e-mail address as part of your comment on our project website during this public scoping comment period.*

We would like to hear your thoughts and ideas about the following:

1. Do you have any ideas about how best to preserve and interpret the resources of the New Philadelphia Townsite?

2. What kinds of experiences do you want to have at the New Philadelphia Townsite? What do you think would need to be done to facilitate these experiences?

3. What role(s) should various organizations such as New Philadelphia Association, Archaeological Conservancy, New Philadelphia Land Trust, and the National Park Service play in the future of the site?

4. How should we let people know about the site?

5. Do you have other ideas or comments you would like to share with us?

Please provide your thoughts at the scheduled public open house or online at **http://parkplanning.nps.gov/New_Philadelphia_Special_Resource_Study**

Thank you for your interest in the New Philadelphia Special Resource Study!

Public Open House Information

May 11, 2016 | 6 to 8 PM

Pike County Farm Bureau
1301 E Washington Street
Pittsfield, IL 62363



Atlas Map o f Pike County 1872 (Andreas, Lyter Co., 1872, 8 4 . Illinois Historical Survey Collections, University of Illinois, Urbana-Campaign)

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Thank you for your interest in the New Philadelphia Special Resource Study!