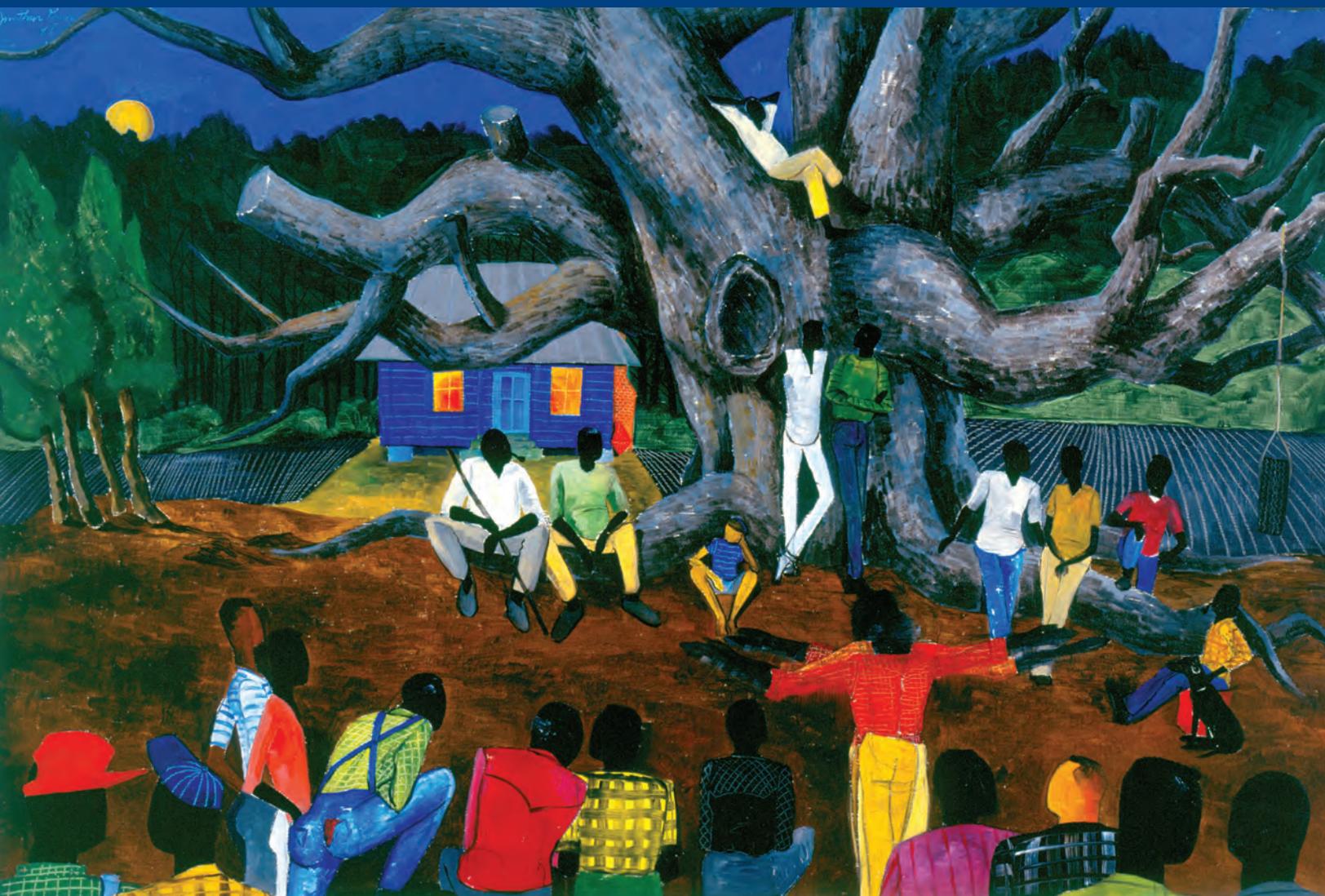




# Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor



# Management Plan

COMMENTS ON THE PAINTING “TALES”  
BY JONATHAN GREEN

Painting: Tales, 1988 – Oil on Masonite, 24” x 36” © Jonathan Green

Cultural background influences of painting:

I was born in the home of my grandparents, Oscar and Eloise Stewart Johnson, which was a small shotgun type house located in the rural Gullah community of Gardens Corners, South Carolina. There was no running water in the home, telephone, or television, but the home was heated by a pot bellied stove and did have a few electrical wires that provided light when necessary. In back of the house there was a huge Live Oak tree. In the evening it was common for family, community members, and youths to sit around the tree to tell and listen to stories and histories of our ancestors, myths, and traditions. I was most fortunate to have had a special relationship with the elders of my community as they knew I was very interested in our history and culture, with specific interest in my great ancestors. Along with their stories they shared with me how they would use particular herbs, teas, and roots to help heal common health conditions.

The painting Tales reflects my recollections of the stories told around the Oak tree. Because this is a recollection stemming from my youth, I purposely did not put facial features on the figures. In Gullah tradition, it was an insult for a child to look an adult in the face until given permission to do so. Always, elders and adults were to be respected.

When I was approximately 11 years old I and other children from the community were climbing and playing in the tree. There was a giant knot hole in the tree and I was not aware someone had poured gasoline into the hole. To see what was in the hole, I lit a match and flames shot out and severely burned my face which resulted in searing pain and I was disfigured for many months. In addition to being burned, the oak tree was destroyed by the fire and I mourned the loss of such a magnificent and magical tree. My grandmother, Eloise, knew the use of herbal and natural medicine and applied ointments and medications on my face and fortunately I was healed, but the memory of the experience has always stayed with me.

*Gullah Geechee  
Cultural  
Heritage  
Corridor  
Commission*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (the Corridor) was designated by the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Act, passed by Congress on October 12, 2006 (Public Law 109-338). The local coordinating entity legally responsible for management of the Corridor is a federal commission established by Congress and titled the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission (the Commission).

Please note that during the planning process, the Commission made a decision to remove the forward slash in reference to Gullah Geechee people, communities, history, and culture, as it was originally written in the special resource study and subsequent designating law. This change was made in order to represent one culture within the Corridor and to create a unique identity that is distinct from other Gullah Geechee cultural entities. This management plan includes a space between Gullah and Geechee wherever present in accordance with the decision. To legally accomplish this change, the Commission will include the change from “Gullah/Geechee” to “Gullah Geechee” in all instances as part of the legislation to reauthorize the Commission as the Corridor’s “local coordinating entity.”

As a national heritage area, the Corridor is not part of the national park system; however, the act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide technical and financial assistance for the development and implementation of the management plan. The Corridor focuses on a distinct African American population, a living group of people with a deeply rooted, yet evolving culture.

## CORRIDOR PURPOSE

The Corridor was created to:

- Recognize, sustain, and celebrate the important contributions made to American culture and history by African Americans, known as the Gullah Geechee, who settled in the coastal counties of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida.
- Assist state and local governments and public and private entities in South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida in interpreting the story of the Gullah Geechee and preserving Gullah Geechee folklore, arts, crafts, and music.
- 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.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Commission is to be composed of 15 voting members and 10 alternates, and is scheduled to terminate on October 12, 2016. As such, the Commission would seek the passage of legislation to reauthorize the Commission as the “local coordinating entity.” The Commission’s duties, terms of service, and bylaws could be adjusted in the reauthorizing law.

To enhance its connection to local people and communities, the Commission would establish local advisory committees that would facilitate the flow of communication and information between the public and the Commission.

The National Park Service National Heritage Area program would continue to provide limited financial and technical assistance according to the requirements of Public Law 109-338, based on congressional appropriations and program stipulations. The Commission would seek a cooperative agreement with a fiscal agent to raise funds to support implementation efforts.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Commission has undertaken a comprehensive planning process to develop this management plan. It has continually engaged the public and potential partners in developing its approach for managing the Corridor over the next 10 years. The management approach outlined in this plan is based on the purpose, significance, and designating law of the Corridor.

The management plan was developed by the Commission to guide future implementation efforts in cooperation and collaboration with partners. The plan reflects and addresses the extensive public and stakeholder involvement undertaken by the Commission and provides a blueprint for how to address the issues and concerns that were identified throughout the planning process. The vision, mission, goals, and primary interpretive themes in the plan create the foundation for future implementation.

An evaluation of the potential for significant environmental impacts resulting from the proposed strategies and actions in this plan concluded that the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act pathway was a categorical exclusion under 3.3R, which is for the “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 impacts.”

## **OVERVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The plan provides a description of Gullah Geechee people and culture and a brief historical overview. In addition the plan highlights examples of important cultural resources throughout the Corridor, summarizes the natural resources of the Corridor, discusses land ownership and land cover, and briefly touches on the socioeconomic conditions within the Corridor. This plan provides readers with a basic level of information about the Corridor in order to facilitate a better understanding of the direction for future implementation that is outlined in the management approach.

The management approach developed for the Corridor is the heart of the plan. It provides the basic building blocks for implementation. The management approach focuses on the following three interdependent pillars:

- education
- economic development
- documentation and preservation

By implementing the management approach, the Commission aims to increase understanding and awareness of Gullah Geechee people, culture, and history; support heritage-related economic development, primarily for the economic sustainability of Gullah Geechee people and communities;

promote preservation of land and natural resources related to the culture; and preserve Gullah Geechee resources, primarily through documentation.

To effectively implement the management approach, the Commission developed primary interpretive themes and an interpretation framework to assist in “Tellin We Story.” The following six primary interpretive themes would be the focus of future interpretation efforts by the Commission and partners:

- I. Origins and Early Development
- II. The Quest for Freedom, Equality, Education, and Recognition
- III. Global Connections
- IV. Connection with the Land
- V. Cultural and Spiritual Expression
- VI. Gullah Geechee Language

In addition, the Commission developed a signage plan and a process to formally identify partners.

This management plan has been distributed to other agencies and interested organizations and individuals for their review and comment. Readers are encouraged to send written comments on this management plan. Please see the “How to Comment on this Plan” discussion for further information.

## **HOW TO COMMENT ON THIS PLAN**

Comments on this management plan are welcome and will be accepted for 30 days from the date of a press release in local newspapers announcing the plan’s release. Copies of the document will be available on the Corridor Web site ([www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org](http://www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org)) and on the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) Web site (address below), as well as through hard copies and/or electronic files at libraries throughout the Corridor (see “Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals Receiving a Copy of this Document” in chapter 5).

To respond to the material in this plan, written comments may be submitted by any one of several methods below. Comments provided via the PEPC Web site are preferred. Please submit only one set of comments.

**PEPC Web site:** <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/guge>

**Mail:**

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission  
c/o Commission Chairman  
1214 Middle Street  
Sullivan’s Island, SC 29482

Note: Before including your address, telephone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.



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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| ACS   | American Community Survey                                 |
| AGO   | America's Great Outdoors                                  |
| CFR   | Code of Federal Regulations                               |
| COG   | Council of Governments                                    |
| CR    | County Road   |
| CRGIS | Cultural Resources GIS Facility                           |
| FY    | Fiscal Year   |
| GDP   | Gross Domestic Product                                    |
| GIS   | Geographic Information System                             |
| I     | Interstate  |
| NCPTT | National Center of Preservation, Technology, and Training |
| NEPA  | National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended     |
| NHA   | National Heritage Area                                    |
| NHPA  | National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended    |
| NPS   | National Park Service                                     |
| OMB   | Office of Management and Budget                           |
| PEPC  | Planning, Environment, and Public Comment                 |
| RTCA  | Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program       |
| SHPO  | State Historic Preservation Office(r)                     |
| SR    | State Route   |
| US 17 | U.S. Highway 17   |
| USC   | United States Code  |
| USCT  | United States Colored Troops                              |
| USFS  | U.S. Forest Service                                       |
| USFWS | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service                            |

