

# Chapter 2

## Context of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor





**Chapter 2 divider photos (top to bottom)**

- Tabby Cabin Row, Kingsley Plantation, Duval County, FL (Photo Credit: Jeanne C. Cyriaque)
- Fanner Basket and Rice Stalk (Photo Credit: NPS)
- Rice Field Canal, Georgetown, Georgetown County, SC (Photo Credit: Althea Natalga Sumpter)

## OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the cultural and natural resources, socioeconomic conditions, and land ownership and land cover within the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (the Corridor). It is not an exhaustive description of existing conditions, but provides enough information to better understand the history and current conditions in the Corridor.

For additional information on the Corridor, see the Corridor Web site at: [www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org](http://www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org) and the special resource study published prior to designation of the Corridor: *Low Country Gullah Culture Special Resource Study and Final Environmental Impact Statement*.

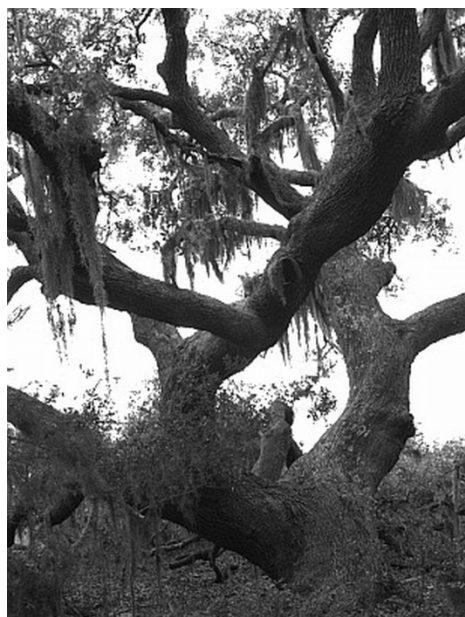
Throughout the remainder of the document, information about the Corridor is presented geographically from north to south rather than in the order identified in the designating law (South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, Florida).

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND CONTEMPORARY EVENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

### FIRST CONTACT—NATIVE AMERICAN, EUROPEAN, AND AFRICAN

The Corridor's coastal environment, extending along the Atlantic seaboard from North Carolina to Florida, has helped shape the historical settlement patterns and lifeways of the people who lived in this coastal region, which is also known as the lowcountry. Archeological evidence such as shell middens, sand and shell mounds, and shell rings associated with fiber-tempered pottery suggests that native peoples inhabited the area as early as the late Archaic period, approximately 2500 BC (Phelps 1983). Native Americans populated the area as migratory communities who practiced seasonal hunting and fishing. In time they evolved into diversified, semisedentary cultures that cultivated the region's fertile soil, while continuing to hunt and fish. These communities settled near fresh water sources such as the Savannah and Ogeechee rivers in Georgia and Waccamaw River in North Carolina. By using fire to clear land, they perfected their agricultural methods and established secure base camps for hunting, fishing, trading, and ceremonial practices.

Native American migration in and out of the lowcountry region created a network of trails such as the Great War Path, Chickamauga Path, Crawfish Springs Road, and others. Many of these early trails became roads that still exist today. Extensive use of fire for hunting and agriculture altered the landscape by creating open woodlands and fields. The broad grassy plains, pine and oak hardwood forests, and numerous rivers made the land ideal for hunting and the soil fertile for agriculture and encouraged the establishment of villages.



**LAND'S END LIVE OAK TREE  
ST. HELENA ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, SC**

By the 1600s, the area encompassing present day South Carolina was populated by approximately 15,000 native people. During the population peak, this area contained Siouan-speaking tribes such as the Chicoras, Catawbans, Santees, Sewees, PeeDees, Waterees, and Congarees; Iroquoian-speaking tribes composed mostly of Cherokees, and Muskogean-speaking tribes such as the Cusabos and Yamasees (NPS 1994). In the Cape Fear region of North Carolina, which is defined as a 50-mile radius around Wilmington, the major tribes were the Waccamaws and the Siouan speaking Cape Fear Indians. The coastal areas of Georgia were widely populated by the Euchee and Guale tribes. Some of the earliest documented tribes still remain in the region; however, in the 19th century, most Native Americans were forced by the U.S. government to move westward along what is often referred to as the "Trail of Tears."

The first recorded European contact with native peoples within the Corridor occurred in 1513 when the Spanish explorer, Juan Ponce de León encountered the Calusa Nation in Florida and claimed the area for Spain.

In 1524, King Francis I of France sent the Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazano to search for a passage to the Indies. Verrazano visited the Cape Fear coast and recorded the earliest known description of the region (Lee 1965). In successive grants of 1663 and 1665, King Charles II of

England granted to eight Lords Proprietors all of the land from the southern border of Virginia to the middle of present day Florida and from the Atlantic coastline to the South Seas (Pacific Ocean). A considerable portion of the territory contained in these grants was claimed by Spain. The English first arrived in the area of the Corridor in 1662–1663 when William Hilton and a group of Puritans explored the Cape Fear region on behalf of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In 1664, settlers from Barbados migrated to the Cape Fear region and established a settlement they named Charles Towne near the mouth of Town Creek, North Carolina (Lee 1965 and Powell 2006). In 1670, another Charles Towne (Charleston, South Carolina) was established on the west bank of the Ashley River by settlers from Barbados and England. After 1691, the northern part of the original grants was generally known as North Carolina and received a separate governor from South Carolina in 1712 and became a royal colony in 1719. In 1732, Georgia, the last of the original 13 English colonies, was granted to a board of trustees for a period of 20 years. Originally founded as a philanthropic experiment to rehabilitate debtors and serve as a military buffer against Spain, Georgia encompassed what had been the southernmost part of South Carolina. Once Europeans established themselves, native populations within the Corridor dramatically declined as a result of warfare, and diseases to which they had no immunity. Europeans also captured, enslaved, and sold many native people, some of whom were transported to other regions of mainland North America or to the Caribbean.

## **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF GULLAH GEECHEE PEOPLE AND CULTURE**

### **Enslavement in the Colony of Carolina**

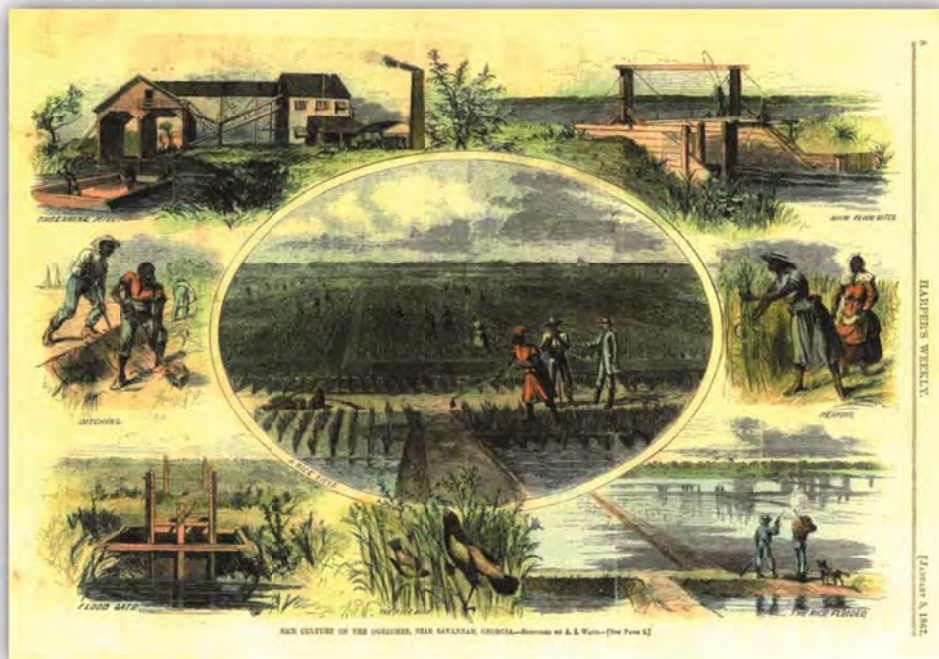
The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina dated July 21, 1669, outlined a plan for government and social organization for Carolina, recognized slavery, and specified in Article 110 that, “every Freeman of Carolina shall have absolute Power and Authority over his Negro Slaves, of what Opinion or Religion whatsoever” (Locke 1669). Thus, it is no wonder that enslaved people of African origin came to the region that encompasses much of the Corridor at the same time, and often on the same ships, as did English settlers. These enslaved Africans came from a variety of sources—Africa, primarily West Africa, England, other English colonies in mainland North America, European colonies in Central and South America, or the Caribbean, especially Barbados. Some were born in the New World. Collectively, these people constitute the charter generation of enslaved Africans within the Corridor.

### **West African Rice Heritage**

An important reason why Africans, primarily West Africans, were chosen for enslavement in the New World was that they had an agricultural tradition and knew how to domesticate animals and cultivate a variety of cereal, grain, and vegetable crops. During the first two decades of settlement, approximately 1670–1690, enslaved Africans lived, worked, and socialized with indentured white servants and enslaved or free Native Americans. Social bonds were formed and there was an interchange of culture. Enslaved Africans were afforded the opportunity to participate in a range of economic activities; in addition to growing their own food in gardens in their slave villages, they labored in the livestock industry, produced naval stores, and occasionally engaged in the fur trade.

In the last decades of the 17th century, rice was successfully cultivated in what is now South Carolina, and its production rapidly became the main economic activity. Once rice had proven itself a lucrative staple crop, the character of the physical landscape and the makeup and density of the enslaved population dramatically changed. At first, rice was grown as a subsistence crop in damp soil without irrigation. Later, the reservoir system, which involved the impounding of fresh water from streams, springs, and swamps, was used for the periodic irrigation of rice fields. By the mid-18th century, the tidal flow or tidewater method was employed to produce rice. This involved situating

rice fields adjacent to rivers and streams flowing into the ocean. Through an intricate system of canals, dikes, sluices, and trunks, the fields were flooded with fresh water that was forced upstream by the rising tides. Africans from the west coast of Africa were familiar with the technology of tidewater rice production and this knowledge was transferred to the New World with their enslavement. Most plantation owners agreed that the physical labor involved in the production of rice was work fit only for enslaved blacks. However, they were reluctant to acknowledge that Africans also had an array of technological and managerial skills that were essential to the production of rice.



**"RICE CULTURE ON THE OGEECHEE" NEAR SAVANNAH, GEORGIA  
HARPER'S WEEKLY, JANUARY 5, 1867**

There was a tremendous increase in the number of enslaved Africans imported into the lowcountry as rice cultivation spread. In 1725, planters and enslaved Africans from the Goose Creek area of South Carolina moved into the Cape Fear region of North Carolina and established rice plantations. Enslaved Africans and planters were already producing rice in Georgia before slavery was legalized in 1750. After England gained control of East Florida in 1763, planters, primarily from South Carolina and Georgia, expanded the production of rice to that region. By 1770, the U.S. rice coast extended from the Cape Fear region of North Carolina to the St. Johns River in Florida—in most areas, the black population greatly exceeded that of whites.

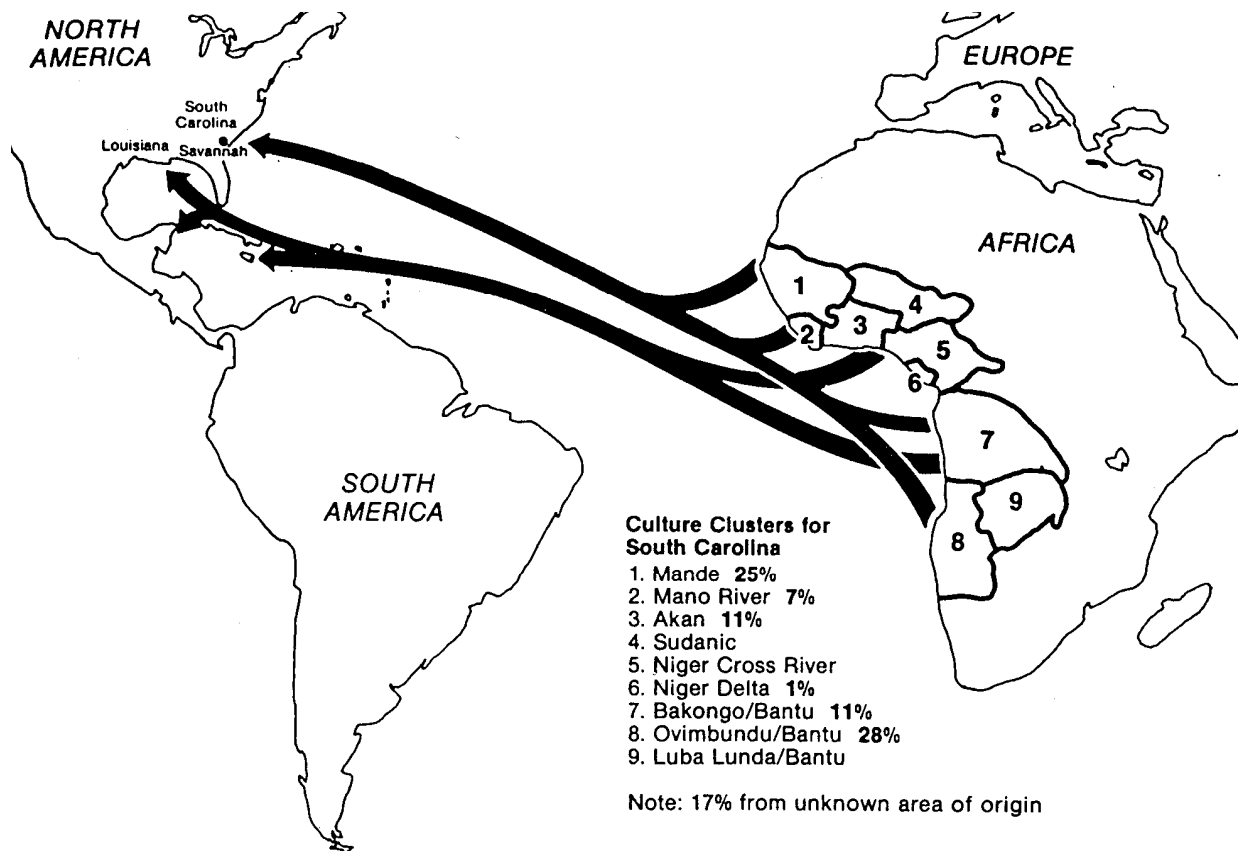


FIGURE 4. MAP OF ETHNIC GROUPS TRANSPORTED FROM WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA TO THE AMERICAS

## The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Gullah Geechee people trace the genesis of their culture to enslaved Africans, primarily West Africans, who were brought to the lowcountry by way of the Transatlantic Slave Trade during the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. The Transatlantic Slave Trade was a sophisticated and complex global conduit for the procurement, transport, and sale or disposition of human beings. Many enslaved Africans were dumped overboard, bartered away, or consigned to brokers. It was sanctioned and rationalized at various times by most civilized nations of the world, including Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, France, Denmark, and the Netherlands. By the early 1700s, the colony of South Carolina began to outpace the slave market of the Chesapeake Bay region. The city of Charles Towne (Charleston, South Carolina) eventually became the largest transatlantic slave market in North America. When slavery was legalized in Georgia, Savannah became the major slave trading center in that colony.

While the Transatlantic Slave Trade expanded in English colonies, it remained illegal in the Spanish colony of Florida. A Royal Edict in 1693 by Spain, a Roman Catholic nation, provided religious sanctuary for runaway slaves in Florida. Even before this announcement, enslaved Africans, primarily from South Carolina, had sought freedom by fleeing to Florida. Some established fortified self-sufficient maroon (term portraying fugitive runaway slaves) outposts and their survival skills enabled them to tenuously maintain their freedom. Gullah Geechee runaways were frequently welcomed by Native Americans and the two cultures formed common bonds based on their opposition to the European Americans. There was a considerable amount of cultural interchange

and intermarriage between Native Americans and Gullah Geechee fugitives who were at times referred to as Indian Negroes or Black Seminoles.

Whatever the name, they constitute an important component of the Seminole Nation—they were among those who were forcibly relocated to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in 1842. Groups of Black Seminoles migrated from Indian Territory into Mexico. In the 1820s, some Black Seminoles left mainland North America and settled in the vicinity of Red Bays, which is on Andros Island in the Bahamas. These Black Seminoles, in time, developed Gullah Geechee culture into a diaspora, to which language and basket weaving techniques comprised the core cultural components. In 1738, Fort Mose (located 2 miles north of present day St. Augustine, Florida) became the first legally sanctioned free black settlement in North America.

On March 2, 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed a bill outlawing the foreign slave trade effective January 1, 1808. However, the opening of new lands for the cultivation of sugar and cotton increased the demand for enslaved blacks, and the illegal traffic in human beings continued until demand was eliminated by the Civil War.

The significance of the Transatlantic Slave Trade for those enslaved Africans who eventually arrived on plantations in the lowcountry (before and after the foreign slave trade was outlawed) is one of survival. They had endured capture, removal from their villages, imprisonment, branding, rape and sexual assault, being forced on ships for destinations unknown, the horrors of the “Middle Passage,” and the transition from personhood to property as they were sold at market. Nevertheless, enduring bonds of friendship and fictive kinship—relationships resembling familial bonds between people who are not related by blood or marriage—were often formed among passengers on slave ships, which facilitated the development of new social arrangements on plantations.

Historians are not in agreement as to the precise region of Africa from which the majority of captives with a rice growing tradition originated. Some historians have identified the region as the west coast of Africa, others say it was the Grain Coast, or the Rice Coast, or the Slave Coast, or Senegambia, or Angola. Even with sophisticated databases on the slave trade, this issue is far from settled. The historian Charles Joyner noted the importance of the controversy, which relates to the present day Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, when he wrote that, “The unpleasant truth is that there could hardly have been a successful rice culture in South Carolina without the strength and skills of enslaved Africans” (Joyner 1984).

Enslaved Africans also brought a variety of other skills and expertise in agricultural production and other economies including metallurgy, irrigation techniques, herding, and the cultivation of vegetables such as beans, peas, okra, and yams. These were of value to Europeans in the global market of commodity and exchange. However, of all staple crops, rice was the only one that was planted, cultivated, harvested, and occasionally marketed by enslaved laborers and managers.

Planters also believed that enslaved people from the west coast of Africa had a resistance to yellow fever and malaria that enabled them to live and work on the mosquito-infested plantations during the “sickly season,” which was mainly during the summer. Plantation owners and most other white people often deserted plantations during the mosquito season. These absentee plantation owners allowed enslaved Africans to manage plantations and produce crops without any supervision by whites.





**RICE TRUNK AND CANAL, MANSFIELD PLANTATION  
GEORGETOWN, GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SC**

Enslaved Africans arrived in the lowcountry with a diverse range of cultural, linguistic, and spiritual practices. They adapted these to their changed status of experiencing the culture and language of predominantly white planters and overseers and to their new North American environment. Once on plantations, the numbers of new arrivals were often large enough to overwhelm the proto-Creole culture of the charter generation of enslaved Africans. Moreover, because many of the transplanted African peoples did not share the same cultural practices, eventually common institutions and a synthesized new Creole culture (now known as Gullah Geechee) emerged in the early communities and plantations where they lived.

The foundations of this culture rested on the ability of enslaved Africans to adjust to multiple systems of labor organization and management, and to reproduce themselves while creating and sustaining family, community, linguistic, and spiritual institutions. However, due to the dynamics and peculiar circumstances of its formation, Gullah Geechee culture is not monolithic and its manifestation varied from region to region, from rural to urban areas, and often from plantation to plantation. The isolated existence of enslaved Africans on remote plantations, their density in the general population, and their proximity to the port cities, towns, and commercial centers of Georgetown and Charleston, South Carolina; Wilmington, North Carolina; and Savannah, Georgia, also facilitated the development of Gullah Geechee culture.



**SLAVE QUARTERS, FORT KING GEORGE  
DARIEN, MCINTOSH COUNTY, GA**

## The Task System

It is often stated that the task system for organizing labor, as opposed to the gang system, promoted the formation of Gullah Geechee culture. Rather than large numbers of enslaved Africans performing the same kind of labor from dusk to dawn under the central direction of an overseer or driver, those who labored under the task system were assigned a certain amount of work to be completed in a certain amount of time. Once the task was completed, enslaved Africans were free to cultivate their own garden plots in slave villages and to hunt or fish in order to supplement their food, clothing, and shelter allotments. This task system also afforded an opportunity for the enslaved producers of food and other commodities to sell their goods and to participate in the market economy.

Under the task system, enslaved laborers were personally responsible for the quantity and quality of their labor, and if their efforts

were satisfactory, they had some time to focus on their families or to engage in religious and community activities. Besides, they were not always under the constant scrutiny or supervision of their overseers. However, the main purpose of the task system was to maximize production and it did not always work to the advantage of the enslaved who labored under compulsion and without compensation. Often the work assigned was too arduous or beyond the physical capability of a laborer to perform in the allotted time. Assigned tasks were often extended or reinterpreted, and completed tasks rarely if ever met the satisfaction of some overseers or drivers who knew exactly who was responsible and punished defective work accordingly.

Like the gang system, the task system also limited opportunities for enslaved Africans to commune together in the field, to sing secular and spiritual songs, to engage in courtship, to verbalize aggression, and to sabotage crops. In addition to rice, the task system was used in the production of indigo and naval stores; its use survived the institution of slavery. Post-emancipation labor contracts often specified the number of tasks black tenant farmers or sharecroppers would perform for landlords in return for use of their land.

Although the task system may have provided better conditions than the gang system, it did not negate the harsh living conditions under which they labored. Having to work in all extremes of weather, and often in snake-infested waters up to their knees, the mortality rate of enslaved Africans from cholera, respiratory diseases, and a variety of other ailments often exceeded the number of births on plantations. Enslaved Africans also endured extreme punishments, which along with the inhumane conditions under which they were forced to live and work, made life intolerable.

Consequently, many enslaved Africans sought every opportunity to resist their status or to escape from bondage, using a variety of strategies to do so. They incorporated a myriad of tactics such as arson, sabotage, murder, and complete insurrection. The Revolutionary War presented an

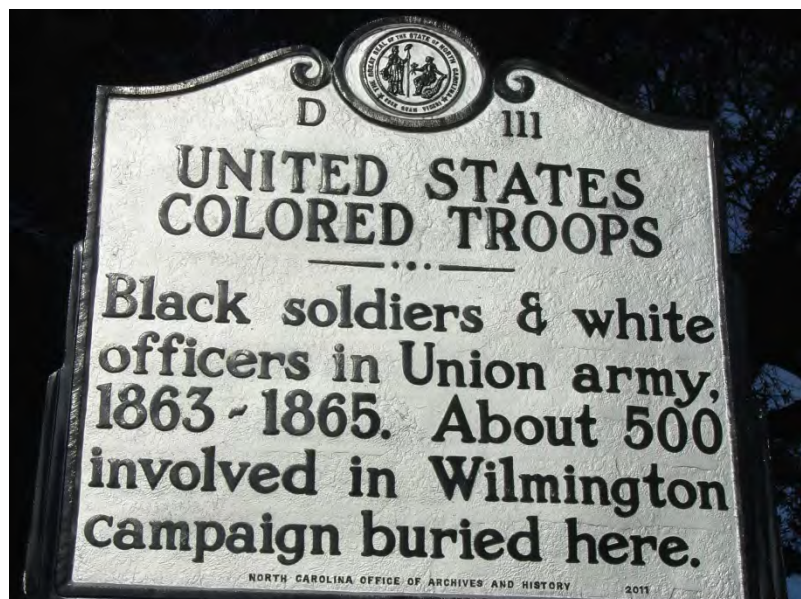
opportunity to earn their freedom by actively supporting the British or American cause. Although enslaved Africans were at first not permitted to fight in the war; ultimately, they were sent to the Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, areas to help fortify and defend these important southern cities. During the critical year of 1779, patriots in South Carolina and Georgia refused to recruit enslaved Africans in their own defense. However, many enslaved persons within the boundaries of the Corridor gained freedom by running away from their enslavers. Possibly as many as 10,000 gained their freedom by supporting the British, and some found their way to Nova Scotia and back to Africa where they helped found Freetown, Sierra Leone, and the country of Liberia.

## **The Civil War**

The Civil War disrupted Gullah Geechee culture, but it also brought positive and permanent changes to the region. Many enslaved Africans were forced by their enslavers to leave their home plantations and migrate inland to escape Union armies. Some enslaved Africans never returned. Black refugees from other regions entered the area, squatted on land, or became satellites of Union armies. In some places plantation owners and other whites abandoned the area, and there was chaos and lawlessness as formerly enslaved Africans tasted and tested their freedom.

Beginning in November 1861, and continuing until the end of the war, thousands of enslaved Africans from the Sea Islands and beyond found freedom within the confines of Union lines. Others were recruited or impressed into military service. Some African Americans, for the first time in their lives, were able to earn cash by growing cotton for the United States, by providing lumber for the construction of military installations, or by cutting wood to fuel blockading ships. In August 1862, General Rufus Saxton, with the concurrence of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, began to form the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, the first regiment of formerly enslaved Africans mustered into Union service. The 1st Regiment was later reconstituted as the 33rd United States Colored Troops (USCT).

As the war progressed, African Americans serving in USCT units performed a number of combat, combat support, or military occupation duties in most regions of the Corridor, and they campaigned from North Carolina to Florida. Except for their white officers, black soldiers served in racially segregated units, received discriminatory treatment in the form of duty assignments, and before June 1864, received less pay than white soldiers. They also could not become officers unless they were chaplains or surgeons, and if captured, there was no guarantee they would be treated as prisoners of war.



**U.S. COLORED TROOPS, NC HIGHWAY HISTORICAL MARKER  
WILMINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, WILMINGTON,  
NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NC**



Members of USCT units were not only liberators, but were carriers of culture who assisted in establishing schools, churches, religious denominations, and fraternal and political organizations throughout the Corridor.

Motivated by a desire to rid his army of the thousands of refugees who were following in its wake, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman on January 12, 1865, met with 20 black clergy and community leaders (15 of whom were formerly enslaved Africans) in Savannah, Georgia, to discuss the future of formerly enslaved Africans following their emancipation. Sherman later wrote in his memoirs that the black leaders said they would prefer to live in communities separate from white people in order to avoid racial prejudice, which they feared would take years to overcome.

## Land Ownership

The paramount desire of freedmen and the descendants of enslaved Africans was to own land. This was a universal sentiment among freedmen throughout the Corridor because they saw land ownership as the foundation of their freedom. In a letter to President Abraham Lincoln, which was dictated to a white female teacher who had spent time in the Sea Islands, a freedman states the desire of his people for land. He hoped that the teacher would personally relay his message to Lincoln. He somehow thought that he would receive a favorable response to his request, if his message was delivered by a woman. The letter is quoted at length because although the freedman's name has escaped history, his words, which the teacher attempted to copy exactly as they were heard, captures much of the essence of Gullah Geechee culture: faith in God, love of family, a commitment to labor, and a desire to hold on to land that generations of their ancestors had cultivated and nurtured. It also raises important questions regarding land ownership. The letter is quoted as follows:

My Dear Young Misus: I been a elder in de church, and spertual fader to a hep of gals no older dan oona [you]. I know dat womens has feelin' hearts, and dat de men will heardy de voice of a gal when dey too hard head for mind dose dat has more wisdom. Si I bin a beg one of dese yere little white sisters in de church, dat de Lord sends from de Nort for school we chillen, to write to oona for me to ax of oona if oona so please an' will be so kind, my missus to speak to Linkum and tell him for we how we po' folks tank him and de Lord for we great privilege to see de happy day when we can talk to de white folks and make known to the gov'ment what we wants. Do my missus tell Linkum dat we wants land-dis bery land dat is rich wid de sweat ob we face and de blood of we back. We born here; we parents' graves here; we donne oder country; dis yere our home. De Nort folks had home, antee? What a pity dat dey don't love der home like we love we home, for den dey would neber come here for buy all way from we.

Do my missus, beg Linkum for lef us room for buy land and live here. We don't ask for it for notins. We too thankful. We too satisfy to pay just what de rich buckra pay. But de done buy too much a' ready, and left we no chance. We could a bin buy all we want, but dey make de lots too big, and cut we out.

De word cum fro Massa Linkum's self, dat we take out claims and hold on ter um, an' plant um, and he will see dat we get um, every man ten or twenty acre. We too glad. We stake out an' list, but fore de time to plant dese missionaries [tax commissioners] sells to white folks all the best land. Where Linkum? We cry to him, but he too far to hear we. Dey keep us back, and we can't tell himself. Do missus speak ter um for we, an' ax Linkum for stretch out he hand an' make dese yere missionaries cut de lans so dat we able to buy. Dey good and wise men may be, but ax Linkum for send us *his*

word, and den we satisfy. Our men-ebry able bodied man from we island-been a fight for dere country in Florida, at Fort Wagner, any where dat govment send um. But his dere country. Dey want land *here*, for dere wives to work. Look at de fiels! No more but womens and chilens, all de men gone to fight, and while dey gone, de land sole from dere families to rich white buckra to scrape, and neber live on. Dey runs to de Nort; dey can't live here. What dey want to carry from we all de witeness of the land, and leave we for Govment to feed (McPherson 1965).

On January 16, 1865, Sherman signed Special Field Order No. 15, which specifically set aside the islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers from 30 miles back from the seas and the country bordering the St. Johns River, Florida. This area was approximately the coastal region from Charleston, South Carolina, to Jacksonville, Florida. The special field orders stated that these areas would be “set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war” (Sherman 1865) and that no white people would be permitted to reside there, with the exception of U.S. government and military officials. Sherman’s order did not affect the large enslaved African population in the area surrounding Georgetown, South Carolina, or the Cape Fear region of North Carolina. Major General Joseph Hawley, Commander of the Military District of Wilmington, signed a decree on April 11, 1865, seizing four major rice plantations for the use of freedmen and destitute refugees.

By the summer and fall of 1865 over 40,000 newly freed people settled on 40-acre tracts in the designated coastal areas. However, in August 1865, President Andrew Johnson granted pardons and a restoration of property to Confederate rebels. In October 1865, General Oliver O. Howard, the Commissioner of the Freedmen’s Bureau, at a meeting on Edisto Island, South Carolina, had the unpleasant duty of informing the freedmen that their land would be given back to their former enslavers, and they must agree to work for planters or be evicted.



**BATEAU BOAT**

Thus, while some Gullah Geechee people gained legal land ownership through the limited extent of Sherman’s Special Field Order, others with the assistance of the Freedmen’s Bureau, acquired land through individual or group purchases of land confiscated by the U.S. government for the nonpayment of taxes, or by claiming abandoned land. Freedmen in the Sea Islands were more successful in acquiring land than those in other regions of the Corridor, and in 1870, it was alleged that they owned more land than blacks anywhere in the South. They clung to this land, and according to the historian

George Brown Tindall, “as late as 1930 black owners of land on St. Helena Island constituted a unique society of ‘black yeomanry’” (Tindall 1952).

Elsewhere, there was no meaningful program of land redistribution within the Corridor. Gullah Geechee landowners were able to develop a self-sustaining economy based on the small-scale production of cotton, subsistence agriculture, and truck farming supplemented with fishing and harvesting shrimp and oysters. As a result, many were able to avoid the evils associated with the tenant farming and sharecropping systems. The majority of landless blacks within the Corridor worked as laborers on public works or in the timber, seafood, mining, or fertilizer industries. They

also worked in agriculture as sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or wage laborers who primarily produced cotton.

During the Civil War, there was a tremendous increase in the number of black refugees who moved into the Corridor from other regions seeking protection within Union-controlled areas. On some islands, newcomers represented approximately one-third of the population. However, these refugees did not have an adverse effect on Gullah Geechee culture. The small rural settlements established by Gullah Geechee people had strengthened cultural ties and community solidarity that helped sustain them during periods of economic distress or social turbulence in the aftermath of the Civil War. These communities were often bonded as intergenerational families who lived on family compounds or at times on the same land where they had previously been enslaved. Elders in the communities transmitted the Gullah Geechee language, stories, customs, and rituals. The close family ties and strong sense of community kept the people together during difficult times such as the Great Depression. Many of these communities have remained intact.

### **The Reconstruction Period**

During the reconstruction and post-emancipation periods, there was a great wave of institutional building within the Corridor. Emancipation eliminated the antebellum distinction between free blacks and those who were enslaved, and they expressed their new unity by cooperating with Union soldiers, Freedmen's Bureau officials, northern missionaries, teachers, and philanthropists from the North to strengthen their communities.

Freedmen had longed for an opportunity to worship their God in their own way and to choose their own religious leaders. Well before the end of the Civil War, and as soon as Union forces occupied an area, new religious institutions were established and old ones were revived. Christianity was the dominant religion of most enslaved Africans during the antebellum period. In fact, some Africans were Christians when they arrived in North America, and many freedmen later claimed that their religion was a major factor that helped them survive their bondage. African Americans withdrew from white churches, formed new congregations, or joined new denominations, especially the African American Episcopal Church and the African American Episcopal Zion.

There was a wave of church building throughout the corridor as blacks repaired war-damaged churches or constructed new ones. These churches include stately edifices in major urban areas and small white, wood-framed structures that still dot U.S. Highway 17 from one end of the Corridor to the other. In addition to serving the religious needs of their adherents, churches also provided social services and served as community centers and schools. These wooden churches testify to the fact that a historically constituted black community existed in the immediate vicinity.

Within Union-occupied areas, military personnel and northern teachers also commenced efforts to provide blacks with a formal education. Reflecting their desires for education, African Americans of all ages flocked to these schools because they understood that education was an opportunity for self-improvement. In some areas, they contributed money and their own labor to hire teachers and erect school houses. There was no system of public education anywhere in the antebellum South, and during Reconstruction, African Americans were prominent among those who agitated for public schools. Though most northern missionaries, preachers, and teachers—both black and white—were motivated by altruism and were sympathetic to the needs of freedmen, their efforts often had the effect of weakening the traditional culture of Gullah Geechee people. This was especially true of the language and speech patterns of Gullah Geechee people and their religious practices.



Blacks also established a host of fraternal organizations, militias, fire companies, veterans, and political organizations in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. Gullah Geechee people provided much of the leadership for these organizations. Black main streets emerged in towns and cities that provided opportunities for professionals and business owners to serve the African American community. Much of the potential for advancement in property ownership, entrepreneurship, political leadership, and business and professional success among African Americans in the late 19th century was stifled by the effects of legal segregation, disfranchisement, and racial and political violence. They lacked access to land and employment opportunities with fair wages. Just as they had been doing since the colonial period, Gullah Geechee people sought relief by moving to the Northern, Midwestern, and Southwestern parts of the United States, and a few returned to Africa. Some helped to establish the country of Liberia and Freetown, Sierra Leone.

### **Out-Migration During the 20th Century**

At the turn of the 20th century, the out-migration from the Corridor accelerated as thousands of Gullah Geechee people moved north in search of a better life. Many northerners who encountered Gullah Geechee people had negative perceptions of the culture. For example, they saw Gullah Geechee language as an indication of low status, ignorance, and laziness. However, beginning with the groundbreaking research of linguist Dr. Lorenzo Dow Turner, who conducted field studies into the speech forms of Gullah Geechee communities of South Carolina and Georgia during the 1930s, linguists concluded that Gullah Geechee speech was not English but was in fact a different language.

World War II brought many changes to the coastal areas within the Corridor when the U.S. military acquired lands to construct shipyards, ports, coastal defense airstrips, and other installations. These bases provided some economic opportunities for Gullah Geechee people. However, the great increase in the numbers of outsiders along the southeastern coastline and Sea Islands had an adverse effect on the people's land, language, culture, traditions, and traditional way of life of Gullah Geechee people. After World War II, commercial fishermen from outside the Corridor with their larger, motorized boats significantly undercut the livelihood of Gullah Geechee fishers and shrimpers who used small-scale methods. Bridges that connected the Sea Islands to the mainland were constructed, making these areas easily accessible. They became a catalyst for development on the coast, thereby increasing outside cultural influences on Gullah Geechee coastal communities.

Beginning with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling (U.S. Supreme Court 1954), the modern Civil Rights Movement brought more structural changes to the Corridor than any other time since the Civil War. The legal foundations of disfranchisement and Jim Crow laws for racial segregation were dismantled and Gullah Geechee people participated in a wide range of activities that helped desegregate public schools, public transportation, public facilities, and other places of public accommodation, and helped restore voting rights. However, the Civil Rights Movement resulted in important unintended consequences. On black main streets throughout the Corridor, businesses and places of entertainment or recreation disappeared as a result of integration. Historic African American educational institutions, especially high schools, were downgraded or closed, and residential neighborhoods in desirable locations witnessed the influx of outsiders and gentrification.



**ALEX AND LUTHER JONES AND A MULE  
OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SC**

## **The Late 20th Century**

The late 20th century brought a new twist to the term “plantation” within the Corridor in the form of resorts, subdivisions, golf courses and golf communities, and recreation facilities. At these seemingly modern plantations, Gullah Geechee people served primarily as a menial labor force. These developments resulted in an additional loss of Gullah Geechee land and cultural sites. Gated residential and resort communities blocked access to sacred sites and cemeteries, harvesting areas for traditional herbs and sweetgrass gathering, and points along the sea that traditionally have been open to fishing families. New roads and highways supporting new developments, including shopping centers and subdivisions, led to further encroachment on cultural sites and also negatively impacted Gullah Geechee neighborhoods. Land values and tax rates increased and the pressure to sell or otherwise acquire Gullah Geechee land for development

intensified. Despite these threats, just as in the past, Gullah Geechee culture proved its resiliency and has experienced revitalization in recent years.

## **CONTEMPORARY EVENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Revitalization of Gullah Geechee culture has resulted from a growing awareness among Gullah Geechee people and others about the contributions made to the U.S. economic and cultural fabric by enslaved Africans and their Gullah Geechee descendants. Contemporary efforts toward this trend have come through numerous undertakings by grassroots organizations, community festivals, nongovernmental organizations, cultural performers, authors, artists, educational and community institutions, movies, and television programs that used the words “Gullah” or “Geechee” in their names in order, in part, to educate and inform. The effort to translate the Bible into the Gullah Geechee language and a growing awareness of the relationship of Gullah Geechee culture and West African heritage were also among several influential contributing factors.

An article in *The New York Times* on March 1, 1987, about the Sea Island Translation Team and Literacy Project, headquartered on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, kindled national and international attention about Gullah Geechee culture and speech ways. It cited, in part:

“They are writing down a language rarely written, in a project that began more than seven years ago and is still many years from completion. It is a labor of love, they say. They are translating the Bible into Gullah.



An estimated 250,000 people along the Georgia, Carolina, and northeastern Florida coasts speak some degree of Gullah, a blend of English and West African languages that some linguists believe was developed along the trade routes that brought slaves to America” (Toner 1987).

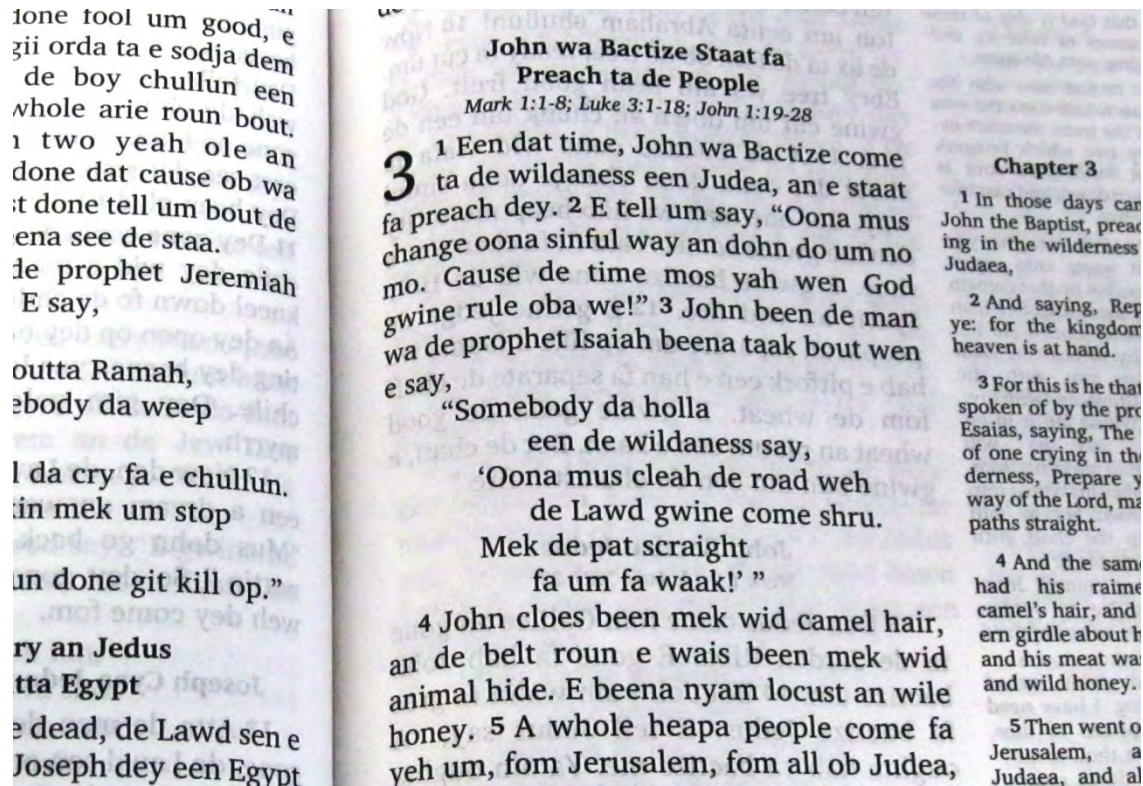


FIGURE 5. PAGE FROM DE NYEW TESTAMENT, ALSO KNOWN AS THE GULLAH BIBLE

During that same period, members of Gullah Geechee communities became aware of direct ties between their culture and West African culture through a visit from President Joseph Momoh of Sierra Leone. Having been informed about similarities in Gullah Geechee and Sierra Leonean cultures by anthropologist and educator Joseph A. Opala, Momoh contacted Opala, author of *The Gullah, Rice, Slavery, and the Sierra Leone-American Connection* (Opala 1987), to help coordinate his visit to Beaufort and St. Helena Island, South Carolina, in 1988. Cultural and lingual ties were reinforced during this event, as Gullah Geechee residents met with a West African leader who not only understood their speech, but also shared a love of rice dishes and other aspects of their cultural heritage. In 1989, at Momoh’s request, a contingent of Gullah Geechee residents traveled to Sierra Leone for the country’s first Gullah Homecoming, which is chronicled in the documentary film, *Family Across the Sea* (SCETV 1990).

Two other “Gullah Homecomings” have continued to raise cultural awareness. In 1987, the Moran family of Harris Neck, Georgia, visited Sierra Leone, as documented in the film *The Language You Cry In* (SCETV 1990). An elderly Harris Neck resident, Mary Moran, remembered a song she had been taught by her grandmother, who had been enslaved. She didn’t know anything about the song except the tune and the African words. In 1981, Opala carried a recording of the song made during the 1930s by linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner to numerous Sierra Leonean villages and discovered that



the song is a funeral dirge, still remembered in the Mende region. Mrs. Moran joined in singing the song, which had been passed down in Moran's family, mother to daughter, for 200 years at the Mende village where the song is still sung (Massally 2010).

"Priscilla's Homecoming," the third "Gullah Homecoming" in Sierra Leone, occurred in 2005. Mrs. Thomalind Martin Polite, a 31-year-old schoolteacher from Charleston, South Carolina, participated in the week-long national celebration, traveling with a group of Gullah Geechees, African Americans, and Americans. Polite is the seventh-generation descendant of "Priscilla," a 10-year-old Sierra Leonean girl who was brought on a slave ship to Charles Towne, South Carolina, in 1756. The discovery of a rare paper trail connected Polite to her ancestors, which included slave sale records, plantation records, and slave ship records that had been discovered by Edward Ball, a writer and descendant of Priscilla's enslavers, and Opala (Daise 2007).

The three homecoming events of Gullah Geechee people included a visit to Bunce Island, which houses the ruins of the British slave castle that had an open slave yard, or prison, at its rear. Many enslaved Africans who left Bunce Island were brought to rice plantations in former colonies within the present-day Corridor. Enslaved Africans who departed from slave ports that included Goree in Senegal, James Island in the Gambia River, Elmina Castle, and Cape Coast Castle in Ghana were transported primarily to Brazil, the West Indies, or other destinations of the African diaspora (Eltis 2000).

The Bunce Island Preservation Initiative was established in Sierra Leone in 2005 with the understanding that

... these remnants are endowed with a deep-rooted historical and spiritual significance to African-Americans and Sierra Leoneans alike that must be preserved for present and future generations. Its preservation and promotion will educate people throughout the world about the Atlantic slave trade and its terrible cost in wasted lives and broken families (Daise 2007).

In 2010, two major museum exhibits brought recognition to a traditional art form and language, two important facets of Gullah Geechee culture and heritage, and informed viewers from around the world about their global impact. The first, a traveling exhibit, *Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art*, traces the history and artistry of southern sweetgrass baskets and their cousins in Africa. Created by the Museum for African Art in New York City, in partnership with the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston and the McKissick Museum of the University of South Carolina, the exhibit includes a collection of artifacts, sweetgrass baskets, images, documents, and interpretive information about an enduring traditional Gullah Geechee art form (Museum of African Art 2010).

The second, the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum's *Word, Shout, Song: Lorenzo Dow Turner Connecting Communities through Language* exhibit in Washington, D.C., has become a traveling exhibition. It documents the historical journey made by people from Africa, with their language and music, to the Americas. The exhibit displays tell the story of linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner's discovery in the 1930s that the people of Georgia and South Carolina still possessed parts of the culture and language of their enslaved ancestors. Through Turner's collection of rare photographs, recordings, and artifacts, the exhibit showcases lingual and cultural connections of Gullah Geechee people with West African and Afro-Brazilian communities.

These events, initiatives, and exhibits, among numerous others, helped to shape what has been established as the vision of the Corridor: “an environment that celebrates the legacy and continuing contributions of Gullah Geechee people to our American heritage.”

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Given that the number of tangible and intangible resources within the Corridor are far too numerous to provide a description of each, one example is provided from each state for the five cultural resource categories identified below.

1. ethnographic resources
2. archeological resources
3. structures and districts
4. cultural landscapes
5. museum collections

Although the descriptions of numerous resources are described as “African American,” their geographical location within the Corridor validates them as “Gullah Geechee” even though the term “Gullah Geechee” may not have been regarded as a cultural identifier during the time of origin.

**TABLE 3. NATIONAL REGISTER OF  
HISTORIC PLACES: LISTINGS RELATED TO  
GULLAH GEECHEE HISTORY AND CULTURE  
WITHIN THE CORRIDOR**

| State          | No. of Listings |
|----------------|-----------------|
| North Carolina | 9               |
| South Carolina | 132             |
| Georgia        | 57              |
| Florida        | 16              |
| Total          | 214             |

Source: National Register of Historic Places

The large number of resources in the Corridor is a testament to its rich history and culture. Table 3 does not represent all listings in the National Register of Historic Places within the Corridor boundary; rather, they are listings that are associated with Gullah Geechee history, culture, and/or people that are identified on the inventory included in appendix C on the CD. Over 200 properties with significance associated with Gullah Geechee historic context have been listed in the national register, and many more properties have been identified as potentially eligible for listing. Some of the resources are contributing components to larger national register listings such as historic districts. Both the inventory and number of listings in the national register within the Corridor that are related to Gullah Geechee history and culture are subject to change. The resource inventory in

appendix C includes places listed in the national register and identifies the interpretive theme(s) and resource category(ies) for each resource identified to date.

## ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

### Description

Ethnographic resources are defined by Director’s Order 28: *Cultural Resource Management*, as any “site, structure, object, landscape, or natural resource feature assigned traditional legendary, religious, subsistence, or other significance in the cultural system of a group traditionally associated with it.” Ethnographic resources are associated with cultural practices, beliefs, the sense of purpose, or existence of a living community that is rooted in that community’s history or is important in maintaining its cultural identity and development as an ethnically distinctive people.

To date, only one national register-eligible traditional cultural property, an ethnographic resource, has been documented in the Corridor. This site is the sweetgrass basket corridor in the town of

Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. It was officially designated in June 2009 (Goodman and McCormick n.d.).

The entire Corridor has been identified as an ethnographic resource for its rich cultural complexity, which expresses itself in its folk life and traditions such as foodways, music, language and oral traditions, craft traditions, and religion and spirituality.

“Everything here is important to our existence, our culture, it’s important to the country and the world . . . it’s important to preserve the way we built our houses. . .the way we cook, the way we raise our children, our religious practices.”

Benjamin Hall  
Sapelo Island, GA – June 2009 Meeting

### **Folk Life and Traditions**

Included as ethnographic resources in this management plan are the Corridor’s rich folk life and traditions. The values and beliefs of the culture are embodied and displayed through foodways; music and performing arts; language and oral traditions; craft traditions; and religion and spirituality. Retention of African traditions within Gullah Geechee culture has survived many deliberate attempts on the part of enslavers to

suppress ethnic identities. Since the early 20th century, historians and social scientists have increasingly devoted efforts to studying and researching the social traditions and folk life of Gullah Geechee communities. A compilation of research on the culture reveals that there was no one west or central African cultural contribution. In addition, variations among communities within the Corridor exist due to their geographical and historical development, which have been documented in an extensive and growing body of scholarly work (see appendix N).

The folk life and traditions of Gullah Geechee people are actively promoted and preserved by numerous Gullah Geechee communities, nonprofit organizations, churches, and other groups throughout the Corridor. For example, aspects of the culture can be experienced at organized festivals and programs (a preliminary list of festivals within the Corridor is included in appendix J). In addition, local artisans and musicians continue to practice their crafts and form outward displays of Gullah Geechee culture within the four states, celebrating the survival of heritage and knowledge of daily living. Knowledge of folkways and traditions are also shared by elders, and now an increasing number of schools are beginning to incorporate Gullah Geechee history and culture, including folk life and traditions, into their curriculum.

### **Foodways**

The ethnic groups that contributed to the creolization of Gullah Geechee culture dominated the coastal areas of Africa from contemporary Senegambia to northern Liberia. For centuries these ethnic groups cultivated rice, a crop considered indigenous to the region that Europeans would come to label the Rice Coast (Wood 1974).

Cultural habits and diet were transplanted from this region to the European colonies of the southern coastal territory, where the topography was similar to the rice region of West Africa. Strains of indigo, rice and cotton indigenous to West Africa were introduced at differing stages of agricultural production in the colonies (Littlefield 1981).





**GULLAH GEECHEE SEAFOOD MEAL: RED RICE, CRAB, GREEN BEANS, WHITING FISH, COLESLAW, BREAD PUDDING**

Gullah Geechee traditional foodways feature, among other West African produce, transplanted rice, greens, peanuts, benne, sweet potatoes, and okra. Fish dishes and spices, also imported by enslaved Africans, manifested in new recipes using locally available foods and seasonings. Such produce as sweet potatoes, okra, greens, corn, rice, sorghum, peas, tomatoes, watermelon, and peanuts were grown on plantations in subsistence garden plots. Diets were supplemented by cultivating brown, rough, or cracked rice, rice flour, blackstrap molasses, unrefined brown sugar, and manually milled corn and cornmeal. Gullah Geechee food also contains Spanish and Native American influences with the use of chili peppers, squash, and corn. Ham, bacon, chicken, and locally caught seafood provided protein in the traditional diet. Gullah Geechee people

applied African cooking methods and seasoning styles to this wide variety of foods and herbs, inventing a form of Creole southern cooking. The continuity of these traditional foodways forms an important role in the lives and health ways of Gullah Geechee people today. Some within the culture still believe that rice must be a part of the daily meal, or a good meal has not been eaten.

## Music

Music remains an important aspect of Gullah Geechee culture. It is described as a call-and-response or shout-form of music. The shout, also known as ring shout, uses hand clapping and audible footwork. Derived from West African traditions, it evolved as a religious practice in Gullah Geechee culture. Members of a church or religious gathering may participate in the shout tradition, which is performed as a sacred ritual. Participants move in a counter-clockwise circle and use shuffling movements while vocalizing in call-and-response singing.

During enslavement, the ring shout began as a clandestine religious worship activity in brush arbors throughout the vast rice and cotton plantations that once occupied the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. Later, the ring shout was practiced in praise houses. After emancipation, the ring shout was practiced at places of worship. Its traditional practice as a group activity helped instill social consciousness. Lydia Parrish observed the ring shout practice in McIntosh County and St. Simons Island and wrote about it in her 1942 publication, *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*.

The method of using the feet and hands to create rhythms began when plantation owners prohibited the use of drums as musical instruments for fear that they could be used by the enslaved people to communicate between plantations. Polyrhythmic hand clapping and foot stomping accompanies the call-and-response delivery of traditional Gullah Geechee songs and marks a distinctive folk life tradition. The genre includes children's game songs, work songs, funeral songs, code songs, and baptism songs (Parrish et al. 1942).



**DOING THE RING SHOUT IN GEORGIA, CA. 1930s**

The shout tradition has been passed down to current generations who help keep it alive in demonstrations as well as religious practice.

The first substantial collection of Negro spirituals to appear in the United States was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1867 by Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson. The spirituals were collected in 1864 by Charlotte Forten, a free woman of color from the North who taught at Penn School on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, and had heard them sung by newly freed people (Copeland 2007). A Gullah Geechee art form, spirituals are the basis for gospel music, the blues, and jazz. The spiritual was designated as the official state music of South Carolina in 1999 (South Carolina State House 2011).

“... without African American culture, there is no soundtrack to the 20th century. There is no jazz, there are no blues, there’s no rhythm and blues, there’s no ragtime, there’s no rock and roll, there’s no reggae, no rumba, no samba, nothing. It just falls silent.”

Dr. Simon Lewis  
Mount Pleasant, SC – June 2009 Meeting

## Language and Oral Traditions

Gullah Geechee people have maintained a distinctive Creole language in the region of the Sea Islands and adjacent mainland areas that comprise the Corridor. Typically referred to as talking “Gullah” or “Geechee,” the Gullah Geechee language began as a pidgin, a simplified, ad-hoc speech variety used for communication among people of different languages. Arising out of a matrix of various African



**SAPELO ISLAND CULTURAL DAY 2003  
MCINTOSH COUNTY, GA**

languages and English, this pidgin took on a more definite form as a Creole language as it became a mother tongue and the native language of a speech community, with vocabulary from various West African languages and English, West African phonological patterns, and non-Western syntactic features. Beginning with Lorenzo Dow Turner’s groundbreaking study *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, published in 1949, linguists have determined that Gullah Geechee is not just a substandard dialect of English, but is rather a well-formed English Creole like the Patois spoken in Jamaica and the Krio of Sierra Leone, and analogous to the French Creole spoken in Haiti.

Historically, Gullah Geechee, known for years as either Gullah or Geechee, is credited with influencing the vocabulary of the Southern United States and traditional Southern speech patterns. Some English vocabulary has been borrowed from West African languages by way of Gullah Geechee. Because the Gullah Geechee language has been derided as substandard and improper English for many decades, its use has waned as a result of assimilation to English and is disappearing among the younger generation, making it an endangered language (Frank 2007a). Besides Turner’s 1949 study, a number of dissertations and scholarly articles have been written on the African sources of what has historically been identified as Gullah, its classification as a Creole language, its relationship to African American vernacular English and other varieties of English, its distinctive phonological and syntactic patterns, and its significance to the culture, including among others, Baird and Twining 1994; Cassidy 1986, 1994; Cunningham 1970; Frank 2007b; Hancock 1971, 1980, 1994; Hopkins 1992, 1994; Jones-Jackson 1978, 1983; McWhorter 1995; Mille 1990; Mufwene 1997; Nichols 1976; Parsons 1923; Twining 1977; Wade-Lewis 1988; Winford 1997, 1998; and Wolfram 1974.

Gullah Geechee has passed through the generations as an oral language. A creative, artistic use of the language is reflected in oral literature such as folktales, and has sometimes been reflected in writing, although to date there is no widely accepted written form. A written translation of the New Testament in *Gullah Sea Island Creole* published in 2005 (Sea Island Translation Team) provides a model of how the language can be written, yet other written examples exist as well. However, keeping in mind that a standard writing system is not a requirement for a language to be considered a language, the Gullah Geechee language retains its intrinsic value and significance, even in its purely oral form. Gullah Geechee is spoken as a first or only language by relatively few people today and continues to exist primarily in its oral form. For these two reasons, it is considered an endangered cultural resource of the Corridor (Frank 2007a; NPS 2005). Oral literature and history, including legends, folktales, stories, and tales of supernatural events, reflect Gullah Geechee culture. Many of the stories are examples of the manipulation of power and the hope for freedom that were passed down from formerly enslaved Africans.



## Craft Traditions

Although there are many Gullah Geechee craft traditions, three are highlighted below: sweetgrass basketry, quilting, and the making of cast nets.

Sweetgrass basketry, one of the most well-known of Gullah Geechee craft traditions, is an extension of cultural continuity from West African rice cultivation and agriculture. The fanner basket used in winnowing grain, a large flat surface circled by a short rim, has become the most commonly recognized sweetgrass basket style. The baskets are a form of coiled seagrass that grows in abundance on the Sea Islands. Early baskets were made for practical agricultural and domestic uses and were also used in bartering and as a source of income. Still common throughout the Corridor, sweetgrass artistry is prominent in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, where

creativity of the local artisan basketmakers, and the sweetgrass basketmaking tradition has been recognized nationally by the Smithsonian for its intrinsic artistic value. Roadside sweetgrass basket stands are the most visible aspect of Gullah Geechee culture displayed along U.S. Highway 17. A portion of the highway was designated as the Sweetgrass Basket Makers Highway in 2006, the same year the sweetgrass basket became South Carolina's official state craft (Michels 2011).



**SWEETGRASS BASKETS BY VERA MANIGAULT**



**"GULLAH O'OMAN QUILT" BY BUNNY RODRIGUES**

In addition to sweetgrass baskets, another common Gullah Geechee craft is quilting, which evolved from West African weaving traditions. The cover design materials of quilts featured a "staggered, 'syncopated' strip formation, and utilized differences in color to achieve the effect of highlights placed in dramatic dispersion on the quilt top" (Twining et al. 1991). Patches also can be used to make the strips of cloth before connecting the strips into a staggered pattern. The brightly colored strips or patchwork of mosaic designs and appliqués are more than utilitarian for making blankets—they are a record of the family history, passed on to the next generation. Young children were generally told the stories behind each patch or strip of cloth as part of the bedtime ritual. The quilt-making method in Gullah Geechee culture, which became a social ritual, generated what are often called story quilts. This creolized method of quilting resembles that of some West African cultures in textile patterns of cloth piecing and randomized strips (Thompson 1984).

As an extension of both Gullah Geechee traditional foodways involving catching seafood, and of craft traditions, members of the community practice a traditional method of making cast nets using locally grown cotton. Cast net fishing—a cultural continuity from the rivers of the Rice Coast of West Africa—is still practiced by a small group of net makers within the Corridor.

## Religion and Spirituality

Religion and spirituality have always played a major role in Gullah Geechee family and community life.

“Spiritual concerns could not be set apart from secular or communal ones . . . spirituality affected one’s whole system of being, embracing the consciousness, social interactions and attitudes, fears and dispositions of the community at large” (Creel 1991). Symbols and songs connected Gullah Geechee people to the Rice Coast of West Africa and the earlier enslavement of Africans from the Southwest Congo-Angolan region. A notable symbol that has been identified, which connects the culture to West Africa and Southwest Africa is the Bakongo sign of a cross found in archeological digs on plantations sites in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, with marks on the bottom of Colono Ware bowls (Ferguson 1992). The Bakongo spiritual sign of immortality in which time has no end and the future can also be the past has been interpreted as the Four Moments of the Sun; the horizontal line divides the living world from its parallel of the dead, for death means rebirth (Mbiti 1989). The cross and circle representation moving counterclockwise has evolved over the centuries into the Ring Shout found in praise houses of Gullah Geechee religious culture.

Generally, enslaved Africans gathered in brush arbors for clandestine worship services. However, many plantations, particularly in the coastal communities of South Carolina and Georgia, included a praise house, which typically was a small wood-framed building where enslaved Africans gathered nightly for spiritual services. Religious and community life centered around praise houses; worshippers transcending oppression wrought by slavery would sing songs of spiritual immortality.

Funerary rituals involved grave burials. The Gullah Geechee custom of holding homegoing (funeral) services as symbolic for recognizing the hereafter extends from the belief that a person’s spirit is eternal.

Graves were often dressed with cracked pots and markers with glass beads and sea shells to mark the connection to the water that brought descendants from Africa, primarily West African, and that would hopefully return them to Africa after death. Family members were typically interred in the same burial grounds, many of which may be undocumented and hidden from view today.

Religious practices, places of worship, and burial grounds continue to be important cultural expressions of Gullah Geechee lifeways. Practices commemorating ancestors are still found in the pouring of libations on the ground, the use of bottle trees as memorials, and the practice of a variety of healing rituals of caring for the living and the dead.



**COFFIN POINT PRAISE HOUSE  
ST. HELENA ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, SC**

“...in talking about the tangible and intangible things about the culture, there’s a spirituality about our culture that you cannot place in a museum. And the only way people can get a feel for that is to actually meet people who are Gullah Geechee people.”

Liz Santigati  
St. Helena Island, SC – June 2009 Meeting

## Examples of Ethnographic Resources

**Orton Plantation, Winnabow, Brunswick County, North Carolina.** Situated on the west bank of the Cape Fear River, Orton Plantation was established by Roger Moore on lands originally granted by the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas to his brother Maurice Moore in 1725. Orton Plantation was one of the first and largest plantations in North Carolina; it was renowned for the high quality of its rice. Orton Plantation

also produced lumber, tar, and turpentine for export. At the time of his death in 1751, Moore owned 250 enslaved African workers and over 20,000 acres of land. The Orton Plantation house, which was started in 1735, ranks among the best surviving examples of colonial residences in North Carolina. Orton Plantation is currently restoring some rice fields and longleaf pine stands, and is not open to the public (Jackson, C. 2008).

**Moving Star Hall, John’s Island, Charleston County, South Carolina.** The Moving Star Young Association was founded as a mutual aid and burial society to provide assistance for its members in times of sickness and death. The Moving Star Hall was built in 1917 to provide a meeting place and praise house for its members, who were also members of several local churches. The Hall provided a meeting place during the week where prayer, songs, and preaching provided alternatives to the more formal church services on Sundays and provided leadership opportunities within the African American community. In the 1940s, the building served as the meeting place for the Progressive Club, which sought to register African Americans to vote. In the 1960s, the hall was associated with the rise of the Moving Star Singers, a folk group that recorded three albums and enhanced appreciation for the music of the Sea Islands (South Carolina Department of Archives and History 2009).

**Ossabaw Island, Chatham County, Georgia.** Ossabaw Island is the third-largest of Georgia’s barrier islands. In 1760, John Morel acquired the island to establish an indigo plantation with enslaved labor. Plantation slave census records document the presence of enslaved persons in the Morel era totaling 160. After the Morel era on Ossabaw, the Kollock Plantation journals reported 56 to 68 slaves. In 1860, 71 enslaved persons lived in nine houses on the island. When the Civil War ended, Freedmen’s Bureau agent Tunis G. Campbell, was the military governor of Ossabaw Island. His report in 1865 indicated that 78 freedmen lived on the island. In 1867, an act of Congress returned the island’s plantations to their owners, yet African Americans continued to live and work on the island although they did not own the land. In 1898, a major hurricane hit the Georgia coast, and African Americans resettled on the mainland just south of Savannah in a community known as Pin Point. This community, whose members worked in the oyster industry, still survives today. Three tabby cabins constructed from 1820–1840 remain on the island. The cabins have been preserved to interpret the lives of the people who lived on Ossabaw Island from enslavement to freedom (Cyriaque 2011).





**THREE TABBY CABINS  
OSSABAW ISLAND, CHATHAM COUNTY, GA**

**American Beach, Amelia Island, Nassau County, Florida.** American Beach is a vacation community that was created in 1935 when beaches were racially segregated in the southeastern coastal United States. The beach resort was established by seven members of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company, who were led by Abraham Lincoln Lewis, one of the first black millionaires in Florida.

American Beach was planned as an amenity for business executives and an incentive for company salespeople. As one of only a few beaches in the southeastern states open to African Americans, American Beach became a popular

summer destination through the late 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Development at the beach included hotels, restaurants, bathhouses, nightclubs, and other businesses, as well as residences. Although visitation to the beach waned with the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, which desegregated beaches in Florida and opened all other beaches to racial integration, American Beach remained an intact site important to 20th century African American history in the Corridor. In 2002, a 40-acre portion of American Beach called the American Beach Historic District was listed in the national register (Florida Division of Historical Resources 2010b). In 2004, 8 acres within the historic district were transferred to the ownership of the National Park Service. This acreage includes the large sand dune “NaNa,” which Kingsley descendent MaVynnee “Beach Lady” Betsch fought hard to preserve (NPS 2011b).

## **ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **Description**

Archeological resources are the material remains or physical evidence of past human life or activities that represent both prehistoric and historic time periods. They can be found aboveground, below-ground, or underwater; or as artifacts housed in museum collections. Information revealed through the study of archeological resources is critical to understanding and interpreting prehistory and history.

Each of the four respective state historic preservation programs promotes the preservation and stewardship of archeological resources within the Corridor by providing professional advice to private landowners and public land managers. They also provide outreach to the public and conduct research within the region to identify, record, and interpret significant archeological sites within each of the Corridor’s respective states.

There are many important archeological resources that directly relate to the primary interpretive themes developed for the Corridor. Documented sites associated with the history of Gullah Geechee people include ruins or foundations of former buildings, town sites, or sites of cultural activities. However, only limited areas of the Corridor have been the subject of archeological surveys; other unidentified archeological sites may exist within the Corridor.

## Examples of Archeological Resources

**Fort Fisher, New Hanover County, North Carolina.** Fort Fisher, south of Wilmington, was the largest earthwork fortification by the Confederacy during the Civil War. Between 1861 and 1865, Fort Fisher played a vital role in the southern war effort through its strategic location at Confederate Point (now called Federal Point), which guarded the New Inlet entrance to the Cape Fear River and kept the port of Wilmington open for Confederate supply. Fort Fisher is significant to the Corridor because its construction involved more than 500 African Americans (both enslaved and free) working alongside Confederate soldiers. The massive fort encompassed 1.0 mile of coastline and 0.33 mile of land defense. After the fall of Fort Morgan on Mobile Bay in August 1864, Fort Fisher became the last important coastal fortification under Confederate control. Fort Fisher succumbed to a massive 2.5-day amphibious assault by the Union navy and infantry on January 15, 1865, which included the 27th U.S. Colored Troops. The defeat at Fort Fisher led to the Confederacy's downfall shortly thereafter. The U.S. military also used Fort Fisher as a military post during World War II; an airstrip and highway were added to the fort's land side at that time. The State of North Carolina has owned and managed Fort Fisher since 1960, and the site is now a state historic site. Fort Fisher is listed in the national register and is a national historic landmark (North Carolina Office of State Archaeology 2010).

**Fish Haul Archeological Site, Mitchelville, Beaufort County, South Carolina.** The Fish Haul archeological site is both a prehistoric and a historic archeological site. The prehistoric components date to circa 1800 BC to 1300 BC and indicate that the site was reoccupied numerous times by early Native Americans. The site's historic component is a freedmen's village known as Mitchelville. Mitchelville was occupied during the transition period from enslavement to freedom between 1862 and the 1880s. Mitchelville was a planned town with neatly arranged streets and 0.25-acre parcels. The town was run by a supervisor and councilmen who were elected by the town's black residents. The city's laws required education, and regulated sanitation and community behavior. The Fish Haul site represents the only known freedmen village established by occupying Union troops. The site was listed in the national register on June 30, 1988 (South Carolina Department of Archives and History n.d.).



**MITCHELVILLE HISTORICAL MARKER  
HILTON HEAD ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, SC**



**BEHAVIOR CEMETERY  
SAPELO ISLAND, MCINTOSH COUNTY, GA**

**Behavior Cemetery, Sapelo Island, McIntosh County, Georgia.** Behavior Cemetery is the only known remaining Gullah Geechee burial ground contained within a slave settlement on Sapelo Island. The cemetery is believed to be associated with slave quarters near Thomas Spalding's plantation and sugar mill complex. Spalding, the most powerful landowner in McIntosh County during the first half of the 19th century, relied heavily on his 400 enslaved Africans to produce cotton and sugar cane, as these crops were similar to those found in western Africa. Behavior Cemetery reflects African burial customs, and features graves marked by personal items such as



cups, shells, or checkers that were personally associated with the deceased. Behavior Cemetery's oldest marked grave is dated 1890, but residents attest to hundreds of unmarked graves that existed before the devastating hurricane of 1898. The cemetery has been in continuous use by Gullah Geechee community members for over 120 years. Archeologists have excavated two slave cabins near Behavior Cemetery, and are currently testing the grounds for other graves or remnants of slave quarters, and to assess possible expansion of the cemetery. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1996, Behavior Cemetery remains the largest burial ground on Sapelo Island (Cyriaque 2010).



**OVERVIEW OF ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION  
KINGSLEY PLANTATION, NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT,  
TIMUCUAN ECOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVE,  
DUVAL COUNTY, FL**

**Kingsley Plantation, Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida.** Kingsley Plantation is a 60-acre unit of the 46,000-acre Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve in Jacksonville, Florida, and is managed by the National Park Service. Archeological investigations have recovered artifacts that reveal the daily life activities of the slave community at Kingsley Plantation. Archeological excavations between 1968 and 1981 recovered hundreds of artifacts such as clay pipes, handmade clay marbles, a harmonica, toothbrush, brass bell, and glass inkwell, along with other possessions found at the site of the 32 original

slave cabins, 25 of which are extant. These artifacts interpret the gardening, hunting, fishing, and cooking activities that took place after plantation work was finished, and are the only clues to the daily activities of the inhabitants of the slave quarters at Kingsley Plantation. In 2006, the University of Florida's Historical Archaeology Field School began a project at the slave quarters to learn more about slave community life (NPS 2010a). In the summer of 2010, the graves and remains of six enslaved Africans were discovered (Soergel 2011).

## STRUCTURES AND DISTRICTS

### Description

Structures are constructed works that are "consciously created to serve some human activity." They are usually immovable, although some have been relocated and others are mobile by design. They are significant for their architecture or engineering, and for the roles they played in the historical development of the Corridor. Many of the structures identified within the Corridor are sites also important for their ethnographic values and their relationship with Gullah Geechee cultural history. They are also often linked together in national register-eligible or -listed historic



**SAD IRON (HEATED AND USED TO PRESS CLOTHING)  
RECOVERED DURING EXCAVATION  
KINGSLEY PLANTATION, NATIONAL HISTORIC  
DISTRICT, TIMUCUAN ECOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC  
PRESERVE, DUVAL COUNTY, FL**



districts. These resources range from commercial roadside buildings, to churches, to rice mills, and to several historic districts.

A historic district is a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically, culturally, or aesthetically by plan or physical development. This definition includes neighborhoods and large rural properties containing multiple physical features (architectural, archeological, or landscape components). A district must be a definable geographic area that can be distinguished from surrounding properties and be based on a shared relationship between the properties constituting the district. Historic districts in the Corridor include neighborhoods, family compounds, town settlements, school complexes, and plantations.

## Examples of Structures and Districts

**Williston Middle School, Wilmington, Hanover County, North Carolina.** Originally a freedmen's school that was organized in 1865, the school was named after Samuel Williston, a northern philanthropist who generously supported the education of African American youth in the South. The city of Wilmington purchased the school in 1873, making it the first African American school in the city's free school system. In 1915, a new building was dedicated at 10th and Church streets, a new location; it was named Williston Primary and Industrial School. It quickly became the educational and social center of the African American community. After outgrowing a number of additions in the 1920s, a new Williston High School was erected in 1931, but the building was destroyed by fire in 1936, and it was replaced in 1938 by the Williston Industrial School. On May 17, 1954, the same day that the U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, a new Williston Senior High School was dedicated. Williston had an outstanding record of achievement and its students excelled in academics, sports, and other extra-curricular activities such as drama, choir, and band. However, to the dismay and resentment of many in the African American community, Williston Senior High School closed in 1968 and later the building reopened as Williston Middle School, which was racially integrated (Reaves and Tetterton, eds., 1998; Godwin 2000).



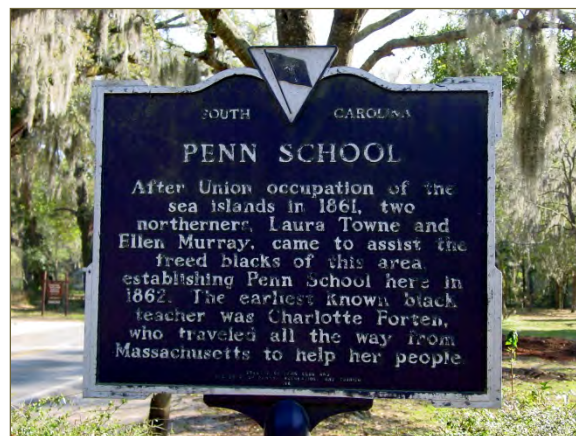
**PENN CENTER SCHOOL  
ST. HELENA ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, SC**

**Penn School Historic Landmark District, Beaufort County, South Carolina.** The Penn School Historic Landmark District is on St. Helena Island. The Penn School was founded in 1862 as a school for formerly enslaved Africans and their descendants.

When Union forces captured St. Helena Island in 1861, the plantation owners fled the island to the mainland, leaving behind their enslaved workers. The U.S. army divided up the abandoned plantations and distributed the land among Gullah Geechee people, who were descendants of Africans, enslaved and free, who formerly worked on these plantations. A group of missionaries and abolitionists from the northern states

arrived on St. Helena Island soon thereafter to establish a school for the local population.

Although education was the primary mission, the Penn School was also a community health clinic, farm bureau, and a catalyst for community action. The school complex comprised a collection of cotton houses, cabins, and deserted plantation houses located throughout the island. Although the school closed in 1948, the school buildings have become a way of preserving St. Helena Island's Gullah Geechee heritage and written history. The school's sole surviving 19th-century building is the Brick Church, a two-story brick masonry church with a gable roof built in 1855 by enslaved Africans for white plantation owners. The church, at which the first classes were held, has symmetrically arranged windows, doors, and colossal brick pilasters. By 1900, the name changed to Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School. When the school closed in 1948, it became Penn Community Services Center, an agency focusing on self-sufficiency and the advancement and development of the Sea Island community and its inhabitants. By the 1980s, it became Penn Center. Its mission is to preserve the unique history, culture, and environment of the Sea Islands through serving as a local, national, and international resource center, and by acting as a catalyst for the development of programs for self-sufficiency. The Penn Center Historic District was both listed in the national register and designated a national historic landmark in 1974 (South Carolina Department of Archives and History 2010).



**PENN SCHOOL HISTORICAL MARKER  
ST. HELENA ISLAND, BEAUFORT COUNTY, SC**



**DORCHESTER ACADEMY BOYS' DORMITORY  
MIDWAY, LIBERTY COUNTY, GA**

### **Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory, Midway, Liberty County, Georgia.**

Dorchester Academy was established during post-Civil War Reconstruction as a school for formerly enslaved Africans and their descendants. The school was established in part due to the intervention of William A. Golding, one of Georgia's first African American legislators. In addition to its function as a school, Dorchester Academy became an at-large community center in the late 19th century and through the 1930s. A fire destroyed the school's first dormitory in 1932, and the existing building was built at that time as a replacement.

George Awsumb designed the new

dormitory, the construction of which was funded by the American Missionary Association, which also funded the school's original establishment. Dorchester Academy played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s when the building served as a site for citizenship classes that were designed to help educate African American voters. This program helped spark a wave of nearly 28,000 newly registered African American voters in Georgia. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. frequently visited the boys' dormitory where he planned the Birmingham Campaign for civil rights. Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory was listed in the national register in 1986, and listed as a national historic landmark in 2006 (Cyriaque 2010).



**LINCOLNVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, FL HISTORICAL MARKER  
ST. AUGUSTINE, ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FL**

### **Lincolnville Historic District, St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida.**

The Lincolnville Historic District was established as a community of free people, many of whom had formerly been enslaved and emancipated, in 1866. By 1930, Lincolnville had become a major part of St. Augustine and had become populated by both African American and white residents. In 1964, Lincolnville became the site of civil rights demonstrations that contributed to the passing of the Civil Rights Act by Congress that year. Today, the Lincolnville Historic District comprises a 50-block area within St. Augustine. The

district includes schools, churches, a business district, and residential neighborhoods, many of which were built in the late Victorian architectural style. The district was listed in the national register in 1991 (Florida Division of Historical Resources 2010a).

## **CULTURAL LANDSCAPES**

### **Description**

Cultural landscapes are areas that reflect how people adapt and use natural resources, as expressed by the land organization or use, settlement patterns, circulation, or types of structures, and how the area reflects cultural values and traditions. The National Park Service categorizes cultural landscapes into four types: historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, historic sites, and ethnographic landscapes. Within the Corridor, there are Gullah Geechee sites that may fulfill the above definition of a cultural landscape, but have not previously been identified as such.

Cultural landscapes within the Corridor include plantations, family compounds, or other important places with ties to long-established Gullah Geechee communities.

### **Examples of Cultural Landscapes**

**Poplar Grove Plantation, Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina.** Poplar Grove is a 628-acre agricultural plantation near Wilmington that operated from 1795 through the Civil War, and post-Civil War until 1971. Until the Civil War, between 22 and 64 enslaved Africans worked and lived at Poplar Grove and raised cotton, rice, tobacco, and indigo for their enslaver, Joseph Foy. Poplar Grove was also a pioneer in the successful cultivation of peanuts, and is one of the South's oldest peanut plantations (Judah 2009). Upon Foy's death in 1861, the Foy family freed their enslaved African workers living at the Poplar Grove Plantation. The African Americans remained residents on the plantation after the Civil War and farmed the land as tenant farmers under the Foy family's ownership of the property. The African American community built a group of houses about a mile south of the plantation, called Foy Town, and took the last names of Foy, Simmons, and Nixon. Poplar Grove Plantation remained in the Foy family until the 1970s and opened as a museum in 1980. Many of the farming resources, outbuildings, and craft traditions dating to the 19th century are preserved and maintained as part of the museum interpretative program (Poplar Grove Plantation 2010).



**North and South Santee River Watershed, Multiple Counties, South Carolina.** The Santee River drains into the central coastal plain of South Carolina within the Corridor. The Santee subbasin covers 690 square miles (442,000 acres) and begins where the Santee River exits Lake Marion (USDA 2010d). About 10 miles from its mouth, the river splits into the North Santee and South Santee to form Cedar Island. These two channels reach the ocean south of Georgetown, South Carolina, at Santee Point. This lower, tidewater area includes the north and south Santee River watershed. This watershed is an important cultural landscape for the rice plantations that merged along this freshwater tidal river and associated tributaries, including Hampton Plantation State Historic Site (SCDHEC 2012). Many of the enslaved Africans who worked on these plantations in the 18th and 19th centuries cultivated rice using their knowledge of rice growing from West Africa.



**NEEDWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH  
BRUNSWICK, GLYNN COUNTY, GA**

**Needwood Baptist Church and School, Brunswick, Glynn County, Georgia.**

Needwood Baptist Church and School is just outside Brunswick on U.S. Highway 17 in an area that was once a series of plantations. The church building was constructed in the 1870s. It is a one-story, wood-frame building with two square towers on the front, including a historic bell enclosed by a front porch. The original furnishings remain in the church, including 30 original pews, the pulpit, and pastor's chair. The school building is a one-room structure that was constructed circa 1907. It was used as a school until the 1960s and later as a fellowship hall for the church (Cyriaque 2010).

**Kingsley Plantation, Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida.** Kingsley Plantation is an agricultural plantation established in the early 19th century by slave trader Zephaniah Kingsley and his wife, Anna Madgigene Jai, who was an enslaved African woman later freed by Kingsley.

The Spanish Crown granted Kingsley the land in 1803 with 74 enslaved Africans—Kingsley later purchased a large plantation on Fort George Island. Anna Madgigene Jai oversaw the organization of the slave quarters on the property, whereby the slave cabins were arranged in a circular pattern similar to those found in African villages. When the importation of enslaved people became illegal in Florida in 1821, Kingsley began training Africans in his possession, enslaved and free, to become exceptional field hands or skilled laborers. He was able to do this because of the plantation's large acreage and the large number of Africans, enslaved and free, in his possession by that time. Kingsley illegally transported and sold enslaved Africans who had been specifically trained for plantation work to the rice plantations in Georgia and South Carolina and the cotton plantations of the Sea Islands. Kingsley's strategy was successful, as records show that "Kingsley's Negroes" were in demand on the illegal market.



Twenty-three out of the original 32 slave tabby cabins are extant on the plantation, arranged in a semicircle. This area represents the slave community and homes of the men, women, and children who lived and worked on Kingsley Plantation. These cabins were made of tabby, which is a mixture of sand, water, and lime that was obtained by cooking whole oyster shells in a kiln. Whole and pieces of oyster shells were added to the mixture as aggregate. Some of the Kingsley Plantation buildings, including the barn, kitchen, and slave quarters, were built using this tabby cement and tabby bricks. As tabby was used as a building material both here and in West Africa, its survival at Kingsley represents a blend of the West African, Spanish, and Native American cultures (NPS 2005).



**TABBY CABIN ROW, KINGSLEY PLANTATION  
NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
TIMUCUAN ECOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVE,  
JACKSONVILLE, DUVAL COUNTY, FL**

Today, Kingsley Plantation is open to the public as part of the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve operated by the National Park Service. Although the plantation once grew to more than 32,000 acres, Kingsley Plantation is now a 6-acre portion of the 46,000-acre Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve in Jacksonville, Florida.

## MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

### Description

Museums and archives in the Corridor contain collections and repositories that relate to the cultural and natural history of the region and the primary interpretive themes developed for the Corridor. These collections (prehistoric and historic objects, artifacts, works of art, natural history specimens, photographs, maps, and archival and manuscript collections) are important resources in their own right, and are valuable for the information they provide about processes, events, and interactions among people and the environment. Natural and cultural objects and their associated records provide baseline data, serving as scientific and historical documentation of the area's resources and purpose. All resource management records that are directly associated with museum objects are managed as museum property. These and other resource management records are preserved as part of archival and manuscript collections. They document and provide an information base for the continuing management of the Corridor's resources. Museum collections important to the Corridor exist in all four states and are associated with both public and privately owned museums, historic sites, and cultural centers. Locations with museum collections are listed in the resource inventory in appendix C on the CD.

### Examples of Museum Collections

**Cape Fear Museum, Wilmington, Hanover County, North Carolina.** The Cape Fear Museum contains relics, artifacts, and images pertaining to the history, science, and cultures of the Lower Cape Fear region. The collection contains more than 50,000 objects. The Cape Fear Museum collects, preserves, and interprets objects relating to the history, science, and culture of Lower Cape

Fear region, and makes those objects and their interpretation available to the public through educational exhibits and programs (Cape Fear Museum 2008).

**Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina.** The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston was established in 1985 to collect, preserve, and make public the unique historical and cultural heritage of African Americans in Charleston and the South Carolina lowcountry. Avery’s archival collections, museum exhibitions, and public programming reflect these diverse populations as well as the wider African diaspora (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture 2011). The center contains an archive of primary and secondary source materials of nearly 4,000 holdings available for research. The center also serves as a cultural center, and maintains a national register-listed historic site and operates it as a small museum that is open to the public. “Through its research facilities, museum exhibits, tours of its historic site, and cultural center, Avery tells the story of African Americans from their origins in Africa through slavery, emancipation, segregation, migration, the Civil Rights Movement, and the ongoing struggle for social and political equality” (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture 2008).



**BEACH INSTITUTE  
SAVANNAH, CHATHAM COUNTY, GA**

**Beach Institute, Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia.** The Beach Institute is a historic school building in Savannah that was the first school for African Americans. Following the Civil War, the Freedmen’s Bureau, the American Missionary Association, and the Savannah Educational Association established this school in 1867. The school is named after Alfred E. Beach, benefactor and editor of *Scientific American*. Beach Institute is a popular site for lectures and art exhibits. It serves as a community educational and cultural center today. The King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation has operated the Beach Institute since 1989 (Cyriaque 2010).

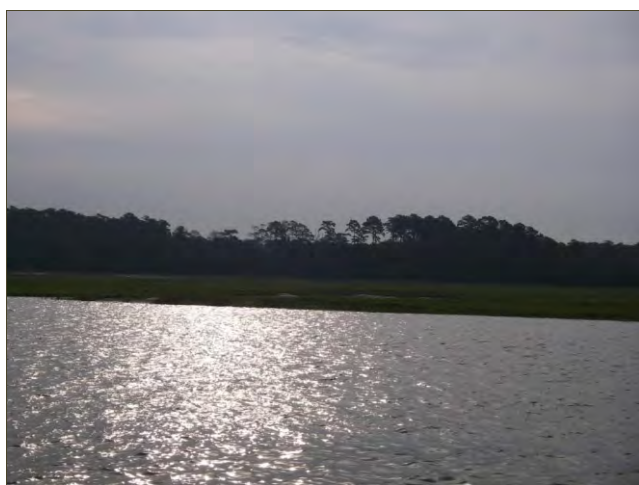
**Excelsior Museum and Cultural Center, St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida.** The Excelsior School and Cultural Center houses a collection of historical records and artifacts important to African American cultural heritage in St. Augustine, Florida, and to the Lincolnville community. Parts of the museum collections are also dedicated to historic black churches, the activities of Martin Luther King Jr., black historical and social societies, and business entrepreneurs. The Excelsior School and Cultural Center is housed in St. Augustine’s first black public high school, established in 1901, and is now a historic building (Excelsior Cultural Center 2010).

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### OVERVIEW

Natural resources in the Corridor have attracted attention for centuries. Native Americans, early settlers, railroaders, road builders, loggers, miners, and those exploring for oil and gas have all used the region. Hardwood forests provided building material and fuel. Water resources provided transport. The soils have made good cropland for tobacco, rice, sweetgrass, cotton, and indigo.

Plant and animal habitat types include agricultural fields, hardwood forests, riparian zones, swamps, marshes and wetlands, mowed lawns, and developed areas.



The Corridor lies within the Atlantic Coastal Plain geomorphic province. The predominant landscape is flat plains; other landscapes include barrier islands, wetlands, swamps, mud flats, beaches, sandbars, and coral reefs. The area was once submerged, and therefore, consists of sediments deposited as the ocean receded during the Pleistocene era. Barrier islands, beaches, sandbars, swamps, and mud flats are actively maintained by fluvial deposition and shore zone processes. Strata in the Atlantic Coastal Plain were formed during the Cenozoic era and include tertiary and quaternary marine deposits such as silts and clays, shales and sands, slightly meta-

morphosed volcanic and marine sedimentary rocks, and limestone (McNab et al. 1994).

The coastal plain is heavily mined for industrial minerals such as clay, limestone, granite, shale, crushed stone, dimension stone, feldspar, mica, lithium, olivine, phosphate, pyrophyllite and talc, heavy minerals (such as ilmenite, rutile, and zircon), and gemstones (such as emeralds, rubies, sapphires, hiddenites, garnets, diamonds, and others); mineral fuels such as coal, peat, petroleum and natural gas, and uranium minerals; and metallic minerals such as chromium, copper, gold, silver, iron, lead, zinc, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, tin, titanium, and tungsten. Not all mining activities occur within the Corridor portion of the coastal plain, and not all resources listed are mined in each state's portion of the Corridor.

The lowcountry is a place where natural, historic, and cultural resources are intertwined to form this distinctive setting. The labors of Gullah Geechee ancestors left their mark on the lowcountry environment. Early explorers who came to the Carolina Colony found tall virgin forests of longleaf pine and cypress gum that were exploited to produce naval stores. Enslaved Africans cleared the ground and constructed extensive irrigation systems to control the periodic flooding of rice fields. Rice became king, but its status was attained through the forced labor of enslaved Africans. Even today it is nearly impossible to look out over a coastal waterway and not see lingering images of rice fields—imprints of unique patterns of forced human labor. The patchwork outlines of these former rice fields remain as silent tributes to the enslaved Africans who built them.

The Corridor is home to a large number of national wildlife refuges managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Many of these wildlife preserves and ecosystems of national significance are due to the presence of former rice impoundments, which are still used to irrigate them. The refuges in the Corridor include the following:

- Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, SC
- Ernest F. Hollings Ace Basin National Wildlife Refuge, SC
- Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge, SC
- Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge, SC
- Blackbeard Island National Wildlife Refuge, GA
- Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, GA
- Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, GA
- Tybee National Wildlife Refuge, GA
- Wassaw National Wildlife Refuge, GA
- Wolf Island National Wildlife Refuge, GA

## **SOILS**

The most common sediment types in the Atlantic Coastal Plain are clays, silts, and sands. The major soil types in the Coastal Plain are Aquults. These are typical of humid climates and historically supported mixed coniferous and hardwood forests and are now often used as croplands or pastures. Aquults are composed of clays, and are usually continuously saturated, slow to drain, and found in areas where the water table is at or near the surface most of the year (McNab et al. 1994; NRCS 2010a, b).

The Corridor also contains Haplaquods and Quartzipsamments. Haplaquods are generally permanently wet, are found in swamps, wetlands, riverbanks, etc., and consist of clays, sands, and iron and aluminum oxides. Quartzipsamments are unconsolidated sandy soils that are well-drained, and are generally found in sand dunes, beaches, etc. (McNab et al. 1994; NRCS 2010a, b). The level of wetness of the Aquults and Haplaquods, along with the coarseness of the Quartzipsamments, limit the amount and types of development where these soils exist.

## **WATER RESOURCES AND QUALITY**

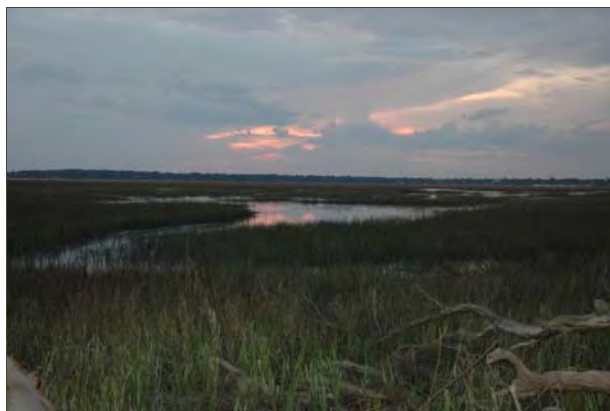
### **Surface Water**

The Corridor contains numerous blackwater rivers, lakes (including Carolina bays), pocosins, wetlands, and small- to medium-sized perennial streams. Water resources are generally of moderate density and have very low velocities. The major river basins that lie within the Corridor for each state include Cape Fear and Lumber in North Carolina; Waccamaw, Pee Dee, Santee, Edisto, Salkehatchie, Cooper, Wando, Black, Broad, Combachee, and Savannah in South Carolina; Savannah, Ogeechee, Altamaha, Satilla, and St. Mary's in Georgia; and St. Mary's, Nassau, and St. Johns in Florida. These river basins and their tributaries all drain to the Atlantic Ocean.



## Wetlands

Wetlands are abundant in the Corridor due to high water tables and poor drainage. They tend to be palustrine systems with seasonally high water levels and consist of numerous swamps, marshes, and pocosins (McNab et al. 1994). Wetlands provide important habitat for crawfish and fish, wading birds and waterfowl, alligators and other reptiles and amphibians, white-tailed deer, muskrat, otter, and other mammals. They also provide an important natural buffer for flood control from heavy rains and hurricanes, as they detain and slow rapidly moving floodwaters.



## Water Quality

The primary pollutants in surface waters of the Corridor are sediments, nutrients (such as nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers), oxygen-demanding wastes, fecal coliform bacteria, reduced levels of dissolved oxygen, and toxic substances (such as mercury, chlorine, zinc, chromium, and ammonia from pesticides and industrial activities). Sources of pollution include urban, industrial, and agricultural runoff (such as fertilizers and animal waste), development, infilling of wetlands for development purposes, recreational uses (such as boating), mining (of sand, gravel, clays, and crushed stone), hydro-modification (such as dam construction, stream channelization, channel modification, and dredging), and wastewater treatment plants (NCDEP 2002, FLDEP 2010a-c).

For more detailed information regarding each of the major river basins within the Corridor, please see appendix H.



## VEGETATION

Vegetation within the Corridor consists mainly of southern mixed oak-hickory-pine and floodplain forests. The Corridor also contains many pocosins. Needle-leaved evergreen forests predominate, followed by evergreen broad-leaved forests. The specific cover types in these forests are mainly loblolly-shortleaf pine forests, longleaf-slash pine forests, and oak-gum-cypress forests. These cover types vary between the northern and southern portions of the Corridor as well as in distances from water resources.

Some specific species include pond pine, water oak, laurel oak, swamp tupelo, sweetbay, bald cypress, pond cypress, sweetgum, live oak, red maple, and spruce pine (McNab et al. 1994). The Coastal Plain also contains numerous species of ferns, grasses, sedges, rushes, herbaceous wildflowers, and floating macrophytes. Some specific species include titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*), pitcher plants, sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*), cattail (*Typha latifolia*), orchids, lilies, and silky camellia (*Stewartia malacodendron*).

Natural vegetation in the Corridor is threatened by commercial and residential development, road construction, logging, the introduction and proliferation of nonnative invasive species, flood control measures leading to erosion, inundation of brackish water, etc., and natural phenomena (flooding, hurricanes, etc.).

## WILDLIFE

Common mammals within the Corridor include white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), swamp rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*), and many small rodents and shrews (McNab et al. 1994).

Resident and migratory nongame bird species are numerous, as are species of migratory waterfowl. Ibises, cormorants, herons, egrets, and kingfishers are common in flooded areas. Songbirds include the red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), cardinal (*Cardinalidae* spp.), tufted titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*), ruby-throated hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*), eastern towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*), wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), summer tanager (*Piranga rubra*), blue-gray gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*), hooded warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*), and Carolina wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*). Turkeys (*Meleagris* spp.), bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*), and mourning doves (*Zenaidura macroura*) are widespread throughout the Corridor, and the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) and formerly endangered bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) also inhabit this area (McNab et al. 1994).

Some of the common reptiles and amphibians found within the Corridor include the box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*), common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), eastern diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus adamanteus*), timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*), flatwoods salamander (*Ambystoma cingulatum*), gopher frog (*Rana capito*), and American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) (McNab et al. 1994).

Some of the common aquatic species in the Corridor include blackbanded sunfish (*Enneacanthus chaetodon*), bluefin killifish (*Lucania goodie*), Suwannee bass (*Micropterus notius*), Atlantic pigtoe (*Fusconaia masoni*), and Suwannee moccasinshell (*Medionidus walkeri*). Rare mussels such as the squawfoot (*Strophitus undulatus*), brook floater (*Alasmidonta varicose*), and Savannah Lilliput (*Toxolasma pullus*), also exist within the Corridor.

The Corridor is home to 33 federal- and state-listed threatened or endangered species. For the full listing of threatened and endangered species in the corridor and their potential threats, please refer to appendix H.

“But this fisherman scene goes on today, once again.  
There are men that go out with their nets on the wee  
hours of the night and fish, the black men.”

Sherry Suttles  
Atlantic Beach, SC - May 2009 Meeting

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change refers to any significant changes in average climatic conditions (average temperatures and precipitation) or seasonal variability (storm frequencies) lasting for an extended period of time. Recent reports by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program, the National Academy of Sciences, and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2007) provide clear evidence that climate change is occurring and will accelerate in the coming decades. Although climate change is a global phenomenon, it manifests differently depending on regional and local factors.

Climate change could result in many changes to the Corridor, some of which may already be occurring— such as more intense hurricanes, higher water temperatures, coastal erosion, ocean carbon chemistry and its acid/alkali balance, as well as sea level rise. The Corridor’s Sea Islands and coastline are especially vulnerable to an eventual rise in sea level. Potential impacts from sea-level rise include coastal erosion, storm-surge flooding, coastal inundation, saltwater infiltration, loss of coastal properties and habitats, declines in soil and freshwater quality, loss of transportation routes, and the potential loss of life.

The full extent of how climate change will influence the natural and cultural heritage of the Corridor is unknown. However, addressing this far-reaching and long-term issue will require both global and local initiatives. This management plan does not provide definitive solutions or direction on how to resolve these issues. Rather, this section is intended to recognize that the heritage of Gullah Geechee people and the Corridor is vulnerable to the influences of climate change, and vigilance is needed to ensure the long-term protection of the Corridor’s resources from this serious ecological threat.

## SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### OVERVIEW

This section presents an overview of the social and economic conditions within the Corridor. The purpose is to identify key characteristics of the Corridor population. Understanding the social and economic factors of Corridor residents is crucial to the development of an effective management plan.



**GULLAH GEECHEE SWEETGRASS BASKET STAND, HIGHWAY 17  
NEAR MOUNT PLEASANT, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SC**

Due to the limits of the available data (see appendix C), only general features of the entire population are presented. Where possible, characteristics of specific groups, particularly African Americans, are highlighted. However, data limits do not permit a specific analysis of the Gullah Geechee population within the Corridor.

An in-depth understanding of Gullah Geechee people cannot be implied from government data. The ultimate insights necessary for such understanding can only come from representations by the people themselves, or from auto-biographies, biographies, ethnographies, and surveys that have been conducted in Gullah Geechee communities for many years. As one observer stated: “The aggregate black

experience emerges only from individual lives such as these” (Morgan 2010).

In general, the following information will reveal that the Corridor is an area where the population is growing more rapidly than the nation as a whole, and urbanization is increasing as well. While the trend in educational attainment is positive, school enrollment has not changed significantly. The racial composition of the Corridor has changed somewhat, but the data necessary to analyze and understand this pattern is not available at this time. The sources of employment suggest a movement toward an economy comprised of knowledge-based industries rather than the traditional foundations of a rural economy.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

#### Population

Between 1990 and 2009, the Corridor population grew rapidly, particularly within the urbanized areas. As table 4 indicates, the total population of the Corridor increased from 1.7 million to 3.0 million in 20 years. The overall rate of Corridor growth was 74%, higher than the national growth rate of 24% for the same period. By individual portions of states within the Corridor, North Carolina had the highest rate of growth (168%), followed by South Carolina (94%), Georgia (64%), and Florida (46%). The primary data used in this analysis are drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau for 1990; 2000; the American Community Survey (ACS) for 2005–2009; and 2010. The detailed data from



the 2010 Census will not become available until after the management plan is completed. When possible this analysis is based on U.S. Census block groups. For detailed explanations of the Census data see: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

**TABLE 4. TOTAL POPULATION OF THE GULLAH GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR BY STATE, 1990, 2000, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY**

| State          | 1990             | 2000             | ACS<br>(2005–2009) |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| North Carolina | 138,456          | 306,325          | 371,337            |
| South Carolina | 560,731          | 922,838          | 1,088,917          |
| Georgia        | 305,216          | 454,660          | 501,195            |
| Florida        | 741,398          | 952,270          | 1,080,928          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1,745,801</b> | <b>2,636,093</b> | <b>3,042,377</b>   |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 & ACS (2005–2009)

In addition to rapid growth, the Corridor population is becoming more concentrated in urban areas in each state. This is particularly true for the following cities: Wilmington, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; and Jacksonville, Florida. The total population of these four cities in 1990 was just under 909,000 people. By 2000, this increased to just over 1.0 million, and almost 1.2 million by 2010. By 2010 these four cities contained more than a third of the population of the entire Corridor.

In each state there was at least one county whose borders were co-terminous with those of the Corridor, thus permitting a different perspective on population characteristics. These were Brunswick and New Hanover counties in North Carolina; Beaufort, Charleston, and Georgetown counties in South Carolina; Chatham, Glynn, and McIntosh counties in Georgia; and St. Johns County in Florida. These nine counties lie entirely within the Corridor boundary. A review of these specific counties gives a little more insight into more general patterns within the Corridor. The population levels in each of the nine counties entirely within the Corridor (1990–2010) and their rates of growth are given in table 5. The counties varied considerably in their growth rates in the period under consideration. However, with the exception of Charleston County, South Carolina, these counties are much more rural than urban.

A review of the general population data shows the Corridor is growing rapidly, much faster than the nation. Also noteworthy, more and more people are settling in the Corridor's urban areas. The implications of these trends for the Corridor can only be a matter of speculation without much more detailed data.

## Racial/Ethnic Composition

The racial composition of the Corridor remained fairly stable over the course of the past 20 years (figure 6). The white<sup>1</sup> population comprised 70% of the Corridor population, whereas the black or African American<sup>2</sup> population comprised 24% of the total population as of the most recent estimate.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census race category – White

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census race category – Black or African American

Six percent of the current population is made up of other racial categories. The Hispanic or Latino<sup>3</sup> population can be included in any of the racial categories.

**TABLE 5. TOTAL POPULATION OF COUNTIES ENTIRELY WITHIN THE GULLAH GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR, 1990, 2000, 2010\***

| County                 | 1990    | 2000    | 2010    | Growth (1990–2010) (%) |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------------------|
| Brunswick County, NC   | 50,985  | 73,143  | 107,341 | 111%                   |
| New Hanover County, NC | 120,284 | 160,307 | 202,667 | 68%                    |
| Beaufort County, SC    | 86,425  | 120,937 | 162,233 | 88%                    |
| Charleston County, SC  | 295,041 | 309,969 | 350,209 | 19%                    |
| Georgetown County, SC  | 46,302  | 55,797  | 60,158  | 30%                    |
| Chatham County, GA     | 216,935 | 232,048 | 265,128 | 22%                    |
| Glynn County, GA       | 62,496  | 67,568  | 79,626  | 27%                    |
| McIntosh County, GA    | 8,634   | 10,847  | 14,333  | 66%                    |
| St. Johns County, FL   | 83,829  | 123,135 | 190,039 | 127%                   |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

\* The decision to discuss only those counties with co-terminous boundaries is a consequence of the limits of time necessary to abstract census data for the Corridor boundaries in the other 18 counties. The counties that do not lie entirely within the Corridor include the following: North Carolina (Columbus, Pender); South Carolina (Berkeley, Colleton, Dorchester, Horry, Jasper, Marion, Williamsburg); Georgia (Brantley, Bryan, Camden, Effingham, Liberty, Long, Wayne); Florida (Duval, Nassau). Time constraints required, in some instances, use of data that were more easily accessible.

Within each state the current racial composition varies from that of the Corridor as a whole. The white population within the portion of the Corridor in North Carolina is 79%, whereas that of Georgia is 64%. The black or African American population varies from 31% in Georgia to 15% in North Carolina. All other racial categories range from a high of 7% in Florida and a low of 4% in Georgia. Unlike the previously included data, table 6 includes the racial composition for the entirety of each state.

A comparison of those counties entirely within the Corridor shows that the racial composition varied widely. The percentage of the population identifying themselves as black or African American in 2010 ranges from 6% in St. Johns County, Florida, to 40% in Chatham County, Georgia. Other

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census race category – Hispanic or Latino

counties with large black or African American populations as a percentage of the total county population include Georgetown County (34%) and Charleston County (30%) in South Carolina and McIntosh County (36%) and Glynn County (26%) in Georgia. Table 7 includes the racial composition for the counties entirely within the Corridor.

**TABLE 6. RACIAL COMPOSITION BY STATE, 1990, 2000, 2010**

| Race                  | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|
| <b>North Carolina</b> |      |      |      |
| White                 | 76%  | 72%  | 68%  |
| Black                 | 22%  | 22%  | 21%  |
| Other                 | 2%   | 6%   | 10%  |
| <b>South Carolina</b> |      |      |      |
| White                 | 69%  | 67%  | 66%  |
| Black                 | 30%  | 30%  | 28%  |
| Other                 | 1%   | 3%   | 6%   |
| <b>Georgia</b>        |      |      |      |
| White                 | 71%  | 65%  | 60%  |
| Black                 | 27%  | 29%  | 30%  |
| Other                 | 2%   | 6%   | 9%   |
| <b>Florida</b>        |      |      |      |
| White                 | 83%  | 78%  | 75%  |
| Black                 | 14%  | 15%  | 16%  |
| Other                 | 3%   | 7%   | 9%   |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

**TABLE 7. RACIAL COMPOSITION BY COUNTY, 1990, 2000, 2010**

| Race                                      | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|---|------|------|------|
| <b>Brunswick County, North Carolina</b>   |      |      |      |
| White                                     | 81%  | 82%  | 83%  |
| Black                                     | 18%  | 14%  | 11%  |
| Other                                     | 1%   | 3%   | 6%   |
| <b>New Hanover County, North Carolina</b> |      |      |      |
| White                                     | 79%  | 80%  | 79%  |
| Black                                     | 20%  | 17%  | 15%  |
| Other                                     | 1%   | 3%   | 6%   |
| <b>Beaufort County, South Carolina</b>    |      |      |      |
| White                                     | 69%  | 71%  | 72%  |
| Black                                     | 28%  | 24%  | 19%  |
| Other                                     | 7%   | 5%   | 9%   |

**TABLE 7. RACIAL COMPOSITION BY COUNTY, 1990, 2000, 2010**

| Race                                     | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|--|------|------|------|
| <b>Charleston County, South Carolina</b> |      |      |      |
| White                                    | 64%  | 62%  | 64%  |
| Black                                    | 35%  | 34%  | 30%  |
| Other                                    | 2%   | 4%   | 6%   |
| <b>Georgetown County, South Carolina</b> |      |      |      |
| White                                    | 56%  | 60%  | 63%  |
| Black                                    | 43%  | 39%  | 34%  |
| Other                                    | 0%   | 2%   | 3%   |
| <b>Chatham County, Georgia</b>           |      |      |      |
| White                                    | 60%  | 55%  | 53%  |
| Black                                    | 38%  | 40%  | 40%  |
| Other                                    | 2%   | 4%   | 7%   |
| <b>Glynn County, Georgia</b>             |      |      |      |
| White                                    | 74%  | 71%  | 68%  |
| Black                                    | 26%  | 26%  | 26%  |
| Other                                    | 1%   | 3%   | 6%   |
| <b>McIntosh County, Georgia</b>          |      |      |      |
| White                                    | 57%  | 61%  | 61%  |
| Black                                    | 43%  | 37%  | 36%  |
| Other                                    | 0%   | 2%   | 3%   |
| <b>St. Johns County, Florida</b>         |      |      |      |
| White                                    | 90%  | 91%  | 89%  |
| Black                                    | 9%   | 6%   | 6%   |
| Other                                    | 1%   | 3%   | 5%   |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

Of the four major cities in the Corridor, Savannah, Georgia, has the highest percentage of the population identifying themselves as black or African American (55%), followed by Jacksonville, Florida (31%), Charleston, South Carolina (28%), and Wilmington, North Carolina (20%). The highest percentage of those identifying themselves as white in the four urban areas was in Wilmington, North Carolina (74%) and the lowest in Savannah, Georgia (38%). Table 8 includes the racial composition of these four cities over the past 20 years.

**TABLE 8. RACIAL COMPOSITION BY CITY 1990, 2000, 2010**

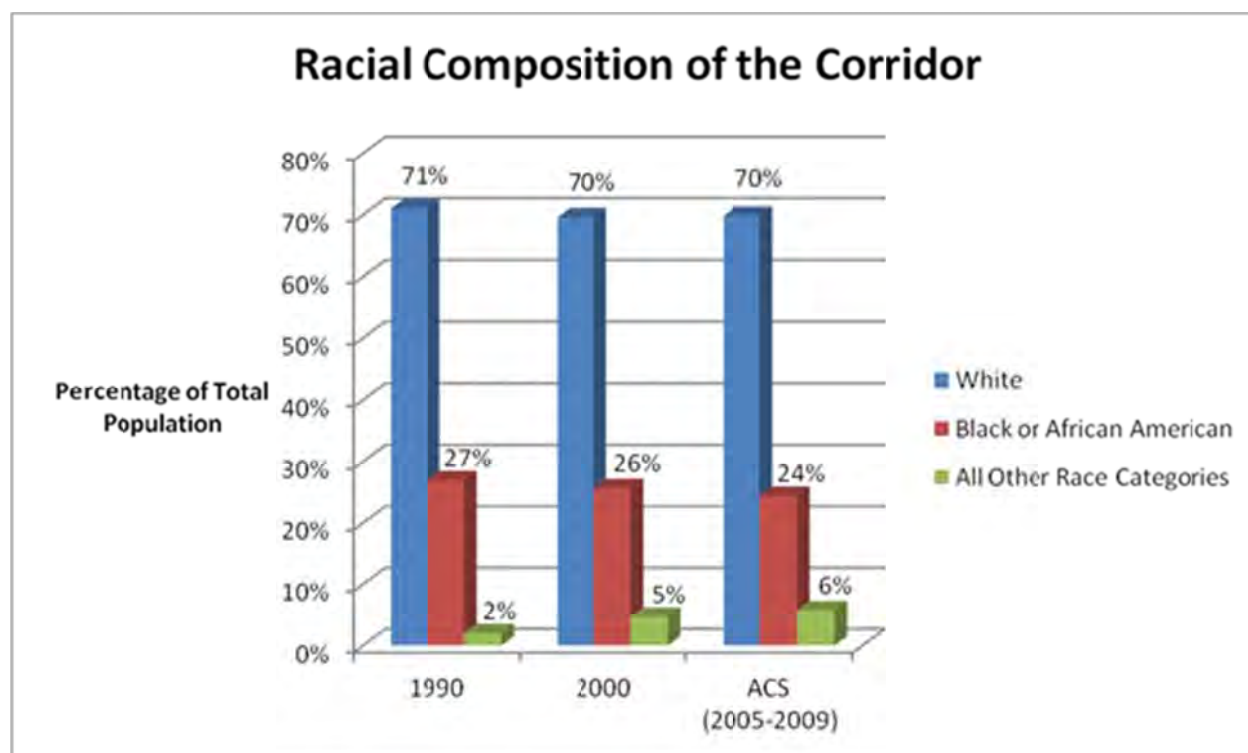
| Race                              | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|
| <b>Wilmington, North Carolina</b> |      |      |      |
| White                             | 65%  | 71%  | 74%  |



**TABLE 8. RACIAL COMPOSITION BY CITY 1990, 2000, 2010**

| Race                              | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Black                             | 34%  | 26%  | 20%  |
| Other                             | 1%   | 4%   | 7%   |
| <b>Charleston, South Carolina</b> |      |      |      |
| White                             | 57%  | 63%  | 70%  |
| Black                             | 42%  | 34%  | 25%  |
| Other                             | 1%   | 3%   | 4%   |
| <b>Savannah, Georgia</b>          |      |      |      |
| White                             | 47%  | 39%  | 38%  |
| Black                             | 51%  | 57%  | 55%  |
| Other                             | 2%   | 4%   | 4%   |
| <b>Jacksonville, Florida</b>      |      |      |      |
| White                             | 72%  | 66%  | 59%  |
| Black                             | 25%  | 30%  | 31%  |
| Other                             | 3%   | 4%   | 10%  |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 &amp; American Community Survey (ACS) (2005–2009)

Note: direct comparison is not possible; see U.S. Census Bureau for more information.

**FIGURE 6. RACIAL COMPOSITION OF THE CORRIDOR**



**NPS YOUTH EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIP  
MORRIS ISLAND, CHARLESTON COUNTY, SC**

Whereas the overall racial composition of the Corridor has remained stable since 1990, a comparison of the overall situation to urban areas as well as distinct counties, the Corridor includes a diverse racial grouping that reflects unique historical circumstances as well as recent changes. What is more, the racial composition of the Corridor population diverges significantly from the national data. In 2010, the black or African American population comprised 13% of the national population as compared to a white population of 72%.

More research is needed regarding the demographics of the Corridor and specifically about the Gullah Geechee population. For more information, see

appendix N on the CD.

## Education

Data on school enrollment and educational attainment provide a general understanding of the environment in which strategies aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness of Gullah Geechee history and culture, particularly for young people in academic settings, would be implemented.

“You know people tend to think that we are backwoods and we don’t have any directions, but we do have good upbringing, which is very important. And as a result of that, we have been able to be educated and somehow teach what’s right to our youngsters.”

Ray Funnye  
Georgetown, SC – May 2009 Meeting

## School Enrollment

While the data on black or African American enrollment was not readily available, the data in table 6 would indicate growth at the preprimary levels and stabilization at the college level. Further implications cannot be drawn from this limited information.

School enrollment as a percentage of total Corridor population shows noteworthy patterns between 1990 and 2010 (figure 7). Preprimary and College enrollment are increasing. This would indicate an increase in the grade school population, and a continuation of education beyond high school.

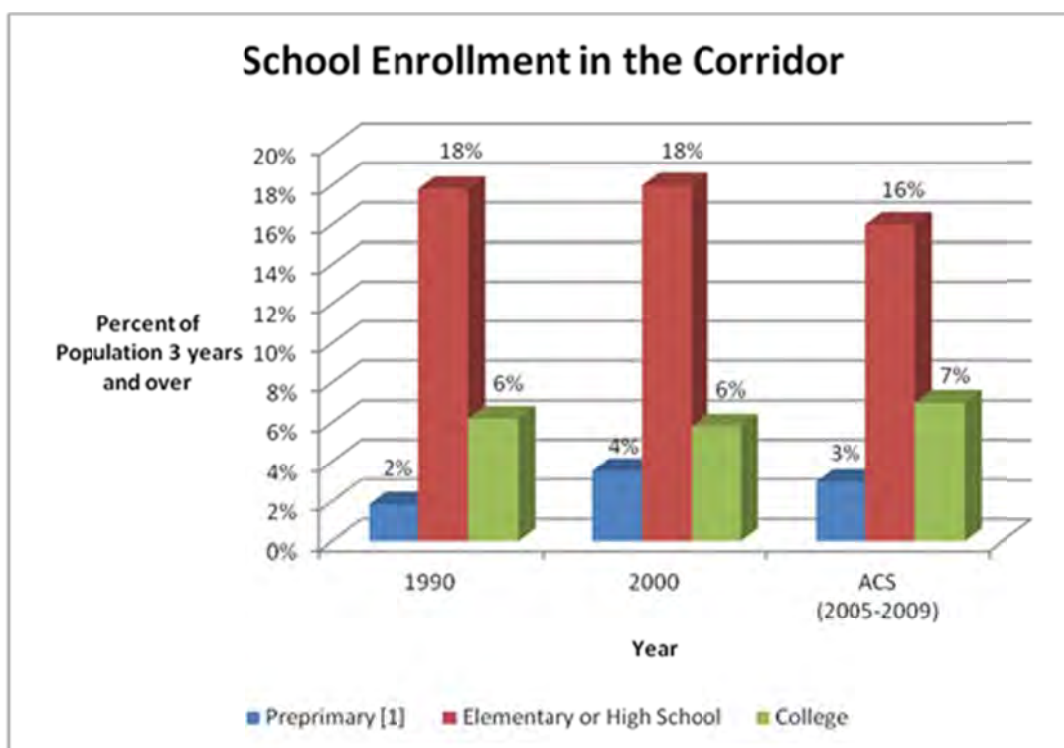
**TABLE 9. BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICANS  
ENROLLED AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL**

|                           | 1990 | 2000 |
|---------------------------|------|------|
| Pre-primary [1]           | 30%  | 34%  |
| Elementary or High School | 37%  | 36%  |
| College                   | 23%  | 23%  |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000  
[1] includes nursery school, preschool, and kindergarten

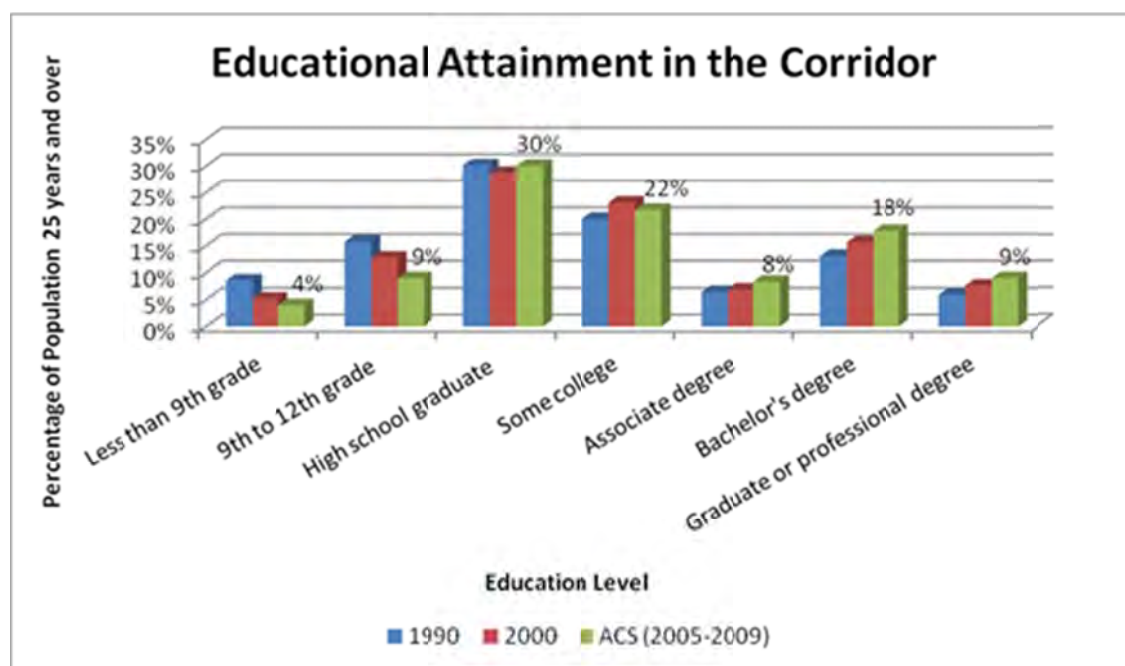
## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment for the population 25 years and over shows the emergence of positive trends. The proportion of those with less than a high school education is declining, while those with a college degree is steadily increasing. Degree attainment at associate, baccalaureate, and graduate levels shows impressive growth (figure 8).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 & American Community Survey (ACS) (2005–2009)  
 Note: direct comparison is not possible; for more information see U.S. Census Bureau (rounded to the next whole number).

**FIGURE 7. SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN THE CORRIDOR**

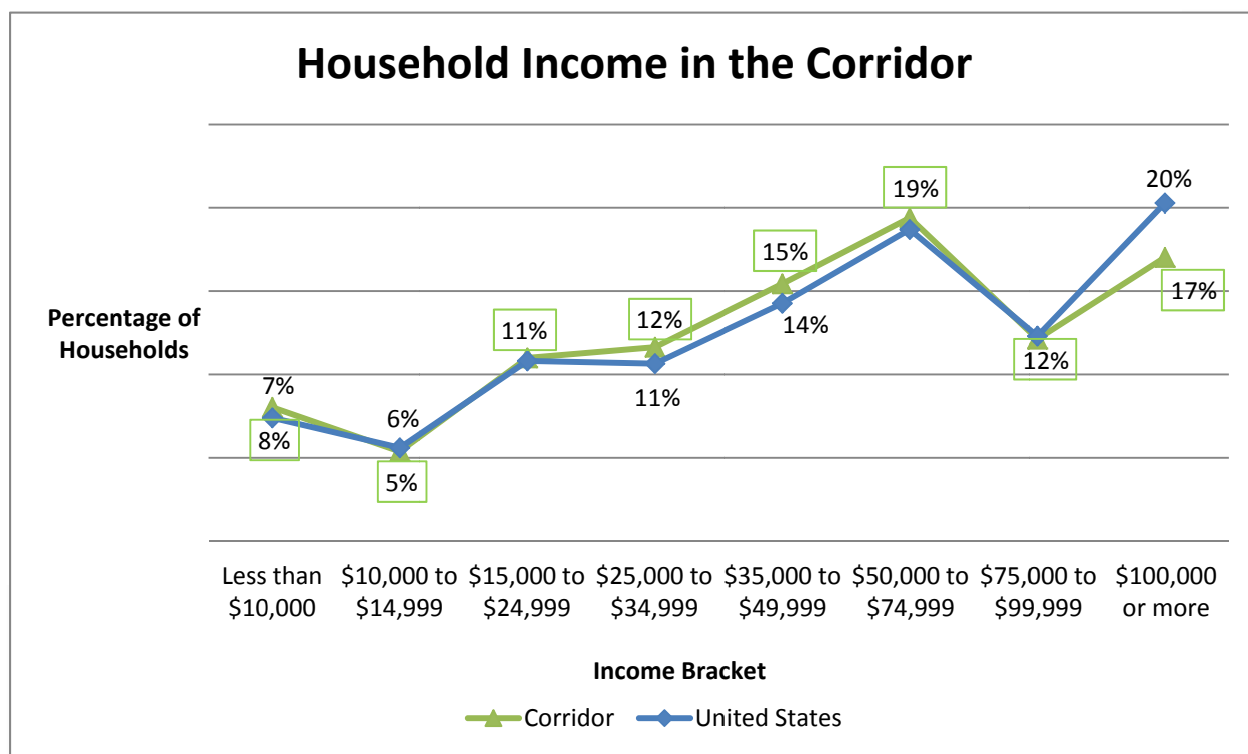


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 & American Community Survey (ACS) (2005–2009)

**FIGURE 8. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE CORRIDOR**

## Household Income

The income distribution of households (American Community Survey 2005–2009) in the Corridor provides additional perspective for understanding the social environment. In general, about 51.5% of households earn less than \$50,000 and about 48.5% earn more than \$50,000. The Corridor has a pattern of household income similar to the national distribution (figure 9).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2005–2009  
 [Note: data presented is in 2009 inflation adjusted values; American Community Survey (ACS) data represents survey of past 12 months.]

**FIGURE 9. HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE CORRIDOR**

## Housing

The information about housing units is included because a higher housing density reflects increased development pressure that will be felt by Gullah Geechee people living in the Corridor. Changes in density and location are shown in the two maps on the following pages, which depict housing density in 2010 and the projected density in 2030. Higher housing density, or more housing units per square kilometer, is depicted by darker coloration on the two maps.

"It's very unique to find a community where . . . the people don't look at homes as an investment, they look at it as their home. This is where they live and this is where they plan to die. They don't look at it to say, I'm going to hope my house appreciates and one day I'm going to sell it. They look at it, this is going to be my home."

George Freeman  
 Mount Pleasant, SC – June 2009 Meeting



The number of housing units in the Corridor has increased over the past few decades, resulting in a more urban landscape. As of 1990, there were approximately 786,000 housing units in the Corridor. By 2000, that figure had climbed to over 1.2 million and was almost 1.5 million as of the most recent estimates, a 90% increase since 1990.

Increasing housing densities would continue to put pressure on Gullah Geechee land and resources. The most notable changes are expected to occur between Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina, and inland and north of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

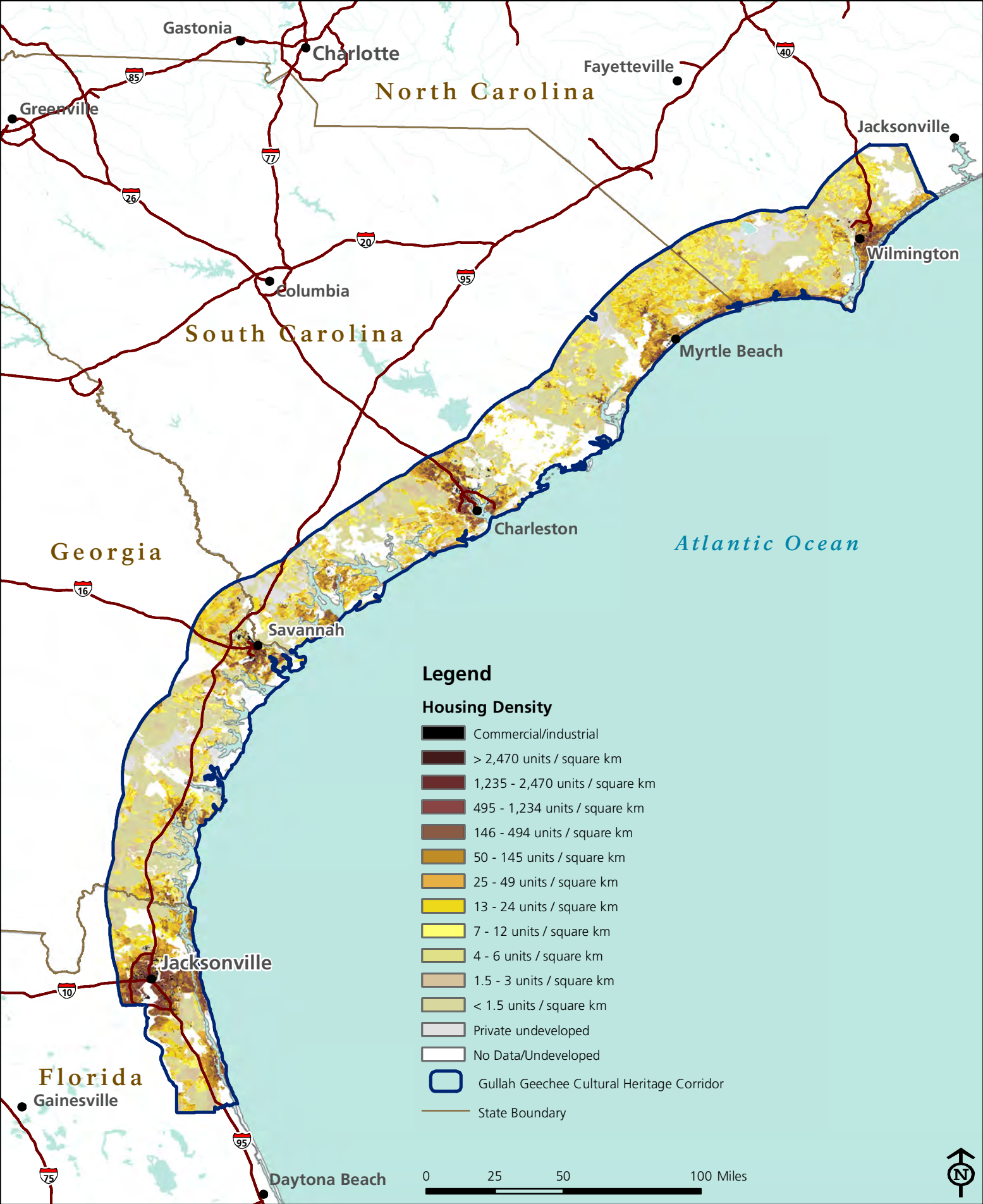


**HOMES IN THE HARRINGTON COMMUNITY  
ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GLYNN COUNTY, GA**

# Map 6: Housing Density 2010

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

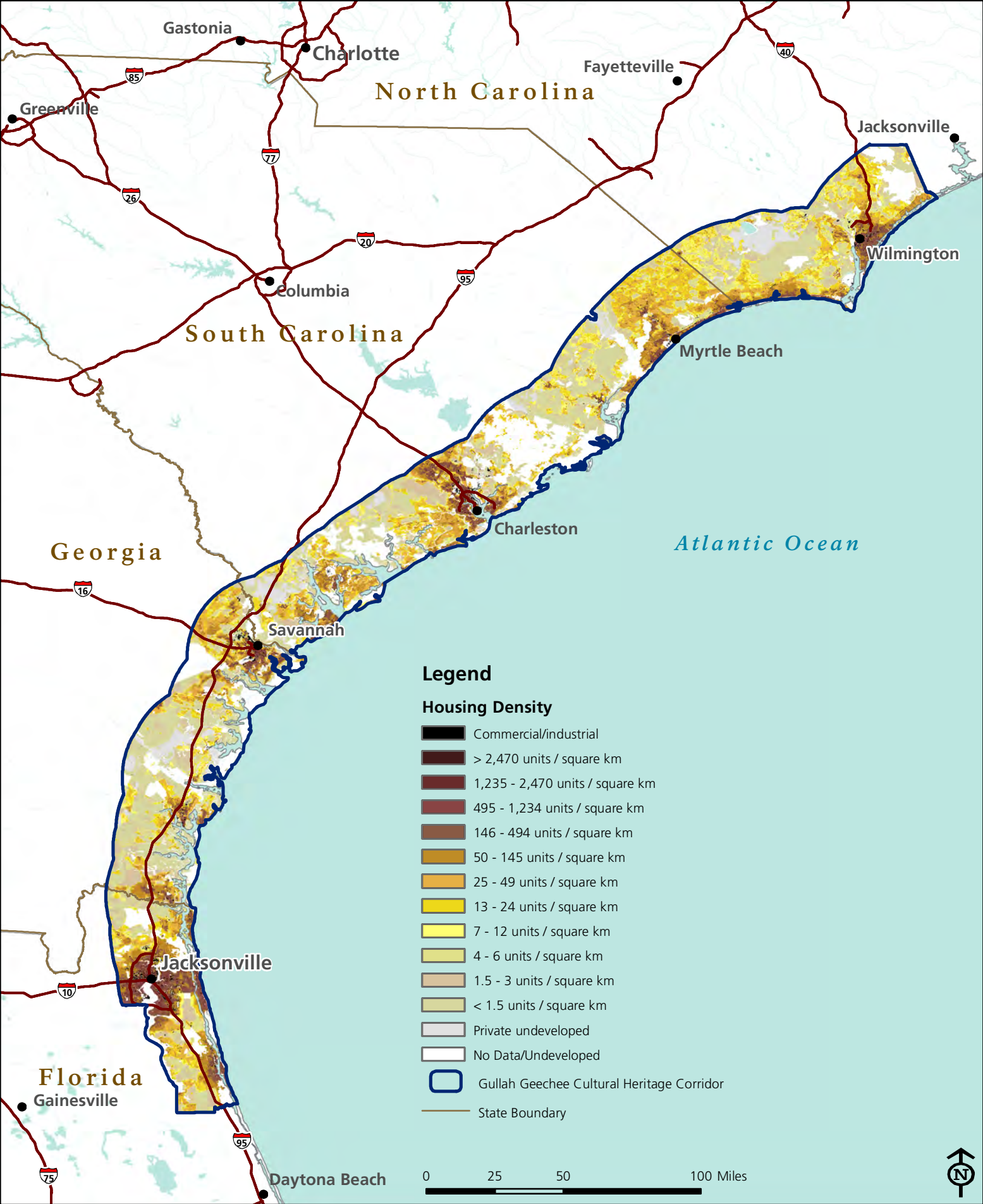
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



# Map 7: Housing Density 2030

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior





## **Employment**

The industries employing the most people within the Corridor are shown in figure 10. The number of employed civilians 16 years and over within the Corridor increased by about 17% between 2000 and the most recent estimate. The industry employing the most people in the Corridor has been the education, health, and social services sector, employing just over 19% of the Corridor's population. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining employ the lowest percentage of the working population. The combined category of arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services saw an increase in the percentage of the Corridor population working in those industries over the past decade, whereas, the manufacturing industry decreased (figure 10).

## **Demographic Summary**

In conclusion, the Corridor has experienced significant population growth and increasing urbanization in recent years, a trend that is expected to continue. The racial composition of the Corridor has remained relatively stable as a percentage of the total population. The distribution of household income in the Corridor is very similar to that of the nation. There have been only minimal changes to the percentage of the population within the Corridor enrolled in school, and educational attainment trends are positive. The percentage of the population not graduating high school is decreasing and the percentage receiving an associate degree or higher is increasing.

## **ECONOMY**

The Corridor provides diverse economic opportunities, including market- and nonmarket-based activities. Tourism, particularly heritage tourism, plays a significant role in the economy and employment within the Corridor.

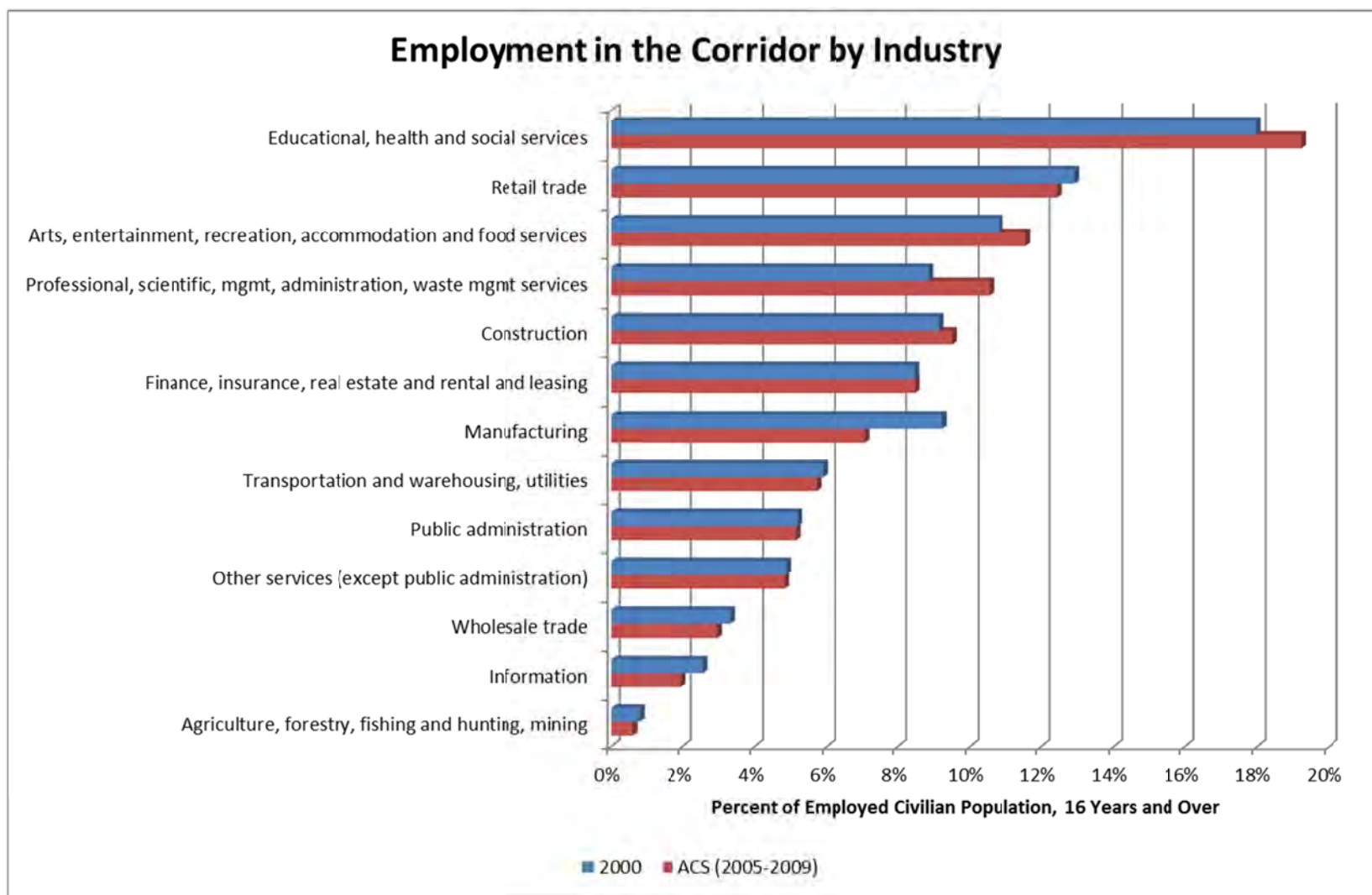
Information about the market and nonmarket economy is provided to better understand economic trends over time to inform implementation of strategies aimed at enhancing quality of life and economic opportunity in the Corridor.

## **Gross Domestic Product**

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of all goods and services produced domestically during a year. Since 1990, GDP for the counties analyzed has increased. Data presented in figure 11 are not based on the exact Corridor boundary, but counties entirely within the Corridor. Data was not available for Columbus, North Carolina, and Marion and Williamsburg counties in South Carolina and thus are not included in these figures. Although limited, these data show the value of the Corridor to the overall economy of the region as well as the individual states. The estimated GDP of those counties with available data was approximately \$134 billion.

As a percentage of each state's economy, the Corridor counties of South Carolina have the largest percentage share of the state's GDP at 28% (Marion and Williamsburg counties not included). The share of the state's GDP represented by the Corridor counties for North Carolina is 3%, Georgia is 5%, and Florida is 8% (National Ocean Economics Program 2011).





Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, ACS 2005-2009

Note: the manner in which the two data points were gathered differs and statistical challenges exist.

**FIGURE 10. EMPLOYMENT IN THE CORRIDOR BY INDUSTRY**

Based on the data available, the contribution of the African American population—and ultimately of Gullah Geechee residents—to the GDP of the Corridor is a matter of speculation. It is relatively safe to say that the economic sector employing the most people is the knowledge-based sector—education, health and social services. Furthermore, these are the sectors that impact educational attainment and income the most. These developments are in the areas where rural, agricultural-based and traditional economic activities have the least impact.

One might assume the greatest social and economic changes over the past two decades—including urbanization—are the result of people moving to the Corridor to take advantage of employment activities and the general quality of life in coastal areas.

## Heritage Tourism

The economic impact of the tourism industry is an important component of the economic health of the four respective states within the Corridor (table 10). Expenditures within the Corridor on travel and tourism contribute greatly to the tourism economy of the four states. This poses both an opportunity and a threat. One of many reasons people visit the Corridor is for the variety of resources it offers, particularly heritage resources. Heritage tourism is an increasingly lucrative segment of the tourism industry. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, “Heritage travelers typically stay longer, spend more money and... shop more, especially for unique items representative of the destination” (South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism 2004).

**TABLE 10. TOTAL STATEWIDE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM**

| By State   | Economic Impact Details   |
|--|---|
| <b>North Carolina</b><br><br>Source: Tourism Economics 2009  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The tourism sector represented 4.3% of the state’s GDP in 2008.</li> <li>▪ Total tourism expenditures of \$22.2 billion in 2008.</li> <li>▪ 8.6% of all wage and salary employment in the state is directly or indirectly dependent on tourism.</li> </ul> |
| <b>South Carolina</b><br><br>Source: South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Spending on travel or on behalf of tourism totaled \$15 billion in 2010.</li> <li>▪ Tourism generated total wages and salaries of \$4.7 billion in 2009.</li> <li>▪ Travel and tourism supports the jobs of nearly 1 in 10 South Carolinians.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Georgia</b><br><br>Source: Georgia Department of Economic Development 2010                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Total domestic and international traveler expenditures totaled \$21 billion in 2010.</li> <li>▪ \$7 billion in wages and salaries was paid to employees in Georgia’s travel industry in 2010.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Florida</b><br><br>Source: Visit Florida Research 2010  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ \$62.7 billion in total tourism spending in 2010.</li> <li>▪ 974,700 people directly employed by tourism industry in 2010.</li> </ul>  |

The Corridor is home to a wide variety of historic, natural, scenic, cultural, and folklife resources, as well as traditional outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting and fishing. Through partnerships and culturally sensitive economic development strategies, Gullah Geechee people can

claim a larger portion of the heritage tourism economy in the Corridor over time. For additional information, see appendix I.

Tourism is already an important part of the economies within the Corridor. Further, the law designating the Corridor directed the Commission to develop a management plan that would “encourage by appropriate means economic viability that is consistent with the purposes of the Heritage Corridor.” Heritage tourism contributes significantly to overall tourism in the Corridor and tourism and visitor markets need to be understood and addressed as part of implementation of the management plan. Chapter 4 provides more details about the Corridor’s plan for interpretation, visitor experience, and the mechanisms by which to build relationships that would bolster smart, conservation-minded heritage tourism.

Statistics specific to heritage tourism in the Corridor are not readily available at this time. In addition, specific visitation statistics and economic contributions of most individual sites are not known. The national parks in the Corridor do keep these statistics and they are included in appendix I to provide a sense for site-specific visitation and economic impact.

### Nonmarket Economy

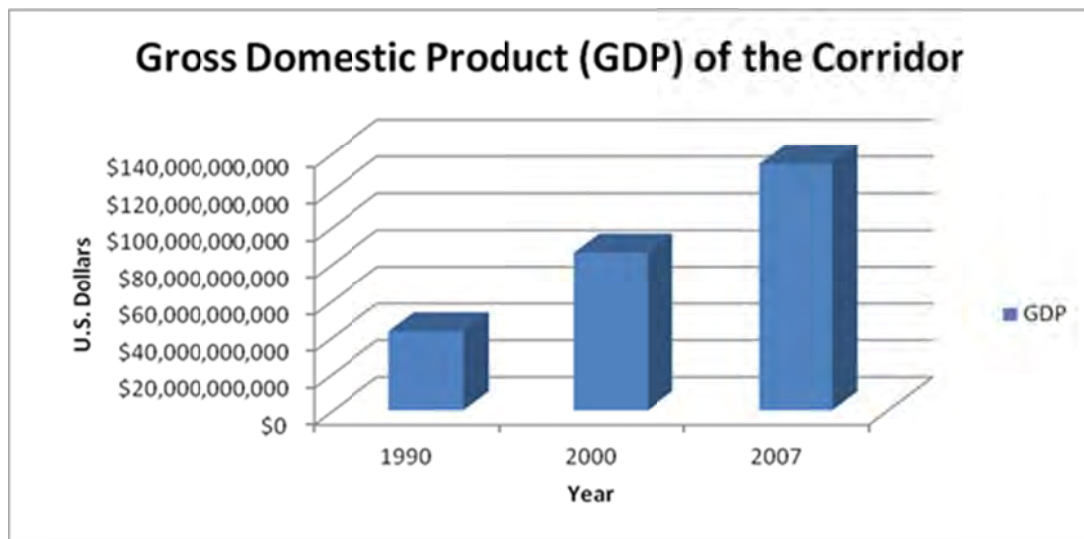
The nonmarket economy is a foundational component of the overall economy. Nonmarket values are those values that are important and valuable to society (environmental or recreation values), but that are not bought and sold in a typical marketplace. For example, the market price for fish can be easily determined, whereas the market price for environmental services, such as the value of barrier islands in protecting inland areas from storm damage, or clean water are much more difficult to determine. The nonmarket values along the Corridor have not been calculated for this document; however, the services they provide to residents and visitors increase the total economic value of the Corridor beyond the market value. More research in this area is needed.

While many Gullah Geechee residents of the Corridor are employed within the mainstream economy, many are still economically tied to the land and water. The income and livelihood of farmers, sweetgrass basket makers, fishermen, and crabbers, to name just a few, are inextricably linked to the land and water. Therefore, the importance of healthy and functioning ecosystems is critical to maintaining the quality and way of life of Gullah Geechee people. Although the value of the nonmarket economy for the Corridor has not been estimated here, it is important to note that there is a monetary value to environmental services and recreational and other markets directly tied to a well-cared for environment.



**FRESH CONCH**

The economic prospects of Gullah Geechee people are tied to the nonmarket economy and heritage tourism, two areas in which they have been involved or are likely to be involved in the future.



Source: National Ocean Economics Program, Market Data

Note: Data based on Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and excludes certain industries; based on a summation of all 27 Corridor counties in their entirety; partial county data was not readily available; Columbus, Marion, and Williamsburg counties not represented. See source for additional details.

**FIGURE 11. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT OF THE CORRIDOR**



**TURNIP GREENS FOR SALE**



## **CONCLUSION**

It is not appropriate to draw broad conclusions from limited data; however some suggestions emerge from the overview presented above. The Corridor is changing toward an urban economy that relies on knowledge-based industries. This pattern indicates a Corridor that does not engage the current Gullah Geechee population to a significant degree. However, the changing economy can incorporate Gullah Geechee people as they take advantage of educational opportunities, as well as build on an economy based on the wealth of traditional patterns of life. This management plan provides a strategic and creative approach to building on historical as well as changing social and economic patterns. Effective implementation of the management plan would strengthen local economies and enhance the quality of life of Gullah Geechee people.

## LAND OWNERSHIP AND LAND COVER

### HISTORIC LAND OWNERSHIP AND HEIRS' PROPERTY

Today, heirs' property is a critical land ownership issue affecting Gullah Geechee people, families, and communities. Heirs' property is the name given to private land that is owned by a group of family members who are the descendants of the original purchaser (Center for Heirs' Property Preservation 2011). The issue of heirs' property in Gullah Geechee culture could be partially attributed to the African tradition of communal land use that was continued in the Corridor in the form of family compounds. The issue is important because Gullah Geechee culture has been inextricably tied to the land throughout numerous generations and continues to be so today. Due to this interconnection between land and culture, the history of land ownership in the Corridor is important and described briefly. Gullah Geechee land ownership is largely the result of two congressional acts signed by President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.

During the U.S. Civil War, numerous enslavers and plantation owners abandoned the south and, as a result, all of their property holdings were considered abandoned. President Abraham Lincoln signed the Confiscation Act of 1861 in order to permit the property of those that were found disloyal to the Union to be seized by the government. However, the Direct Tax Act of June 1862 allowed the transformation of the property holdings so that the seceded states would have to pay federal taxes that had been levied on each state in 1861. The act provided for the assessment on individual parcels of land, which would be forfeited to the government if the owner failed to pay. By the end of 1862, Lincoln appointed direct-tax commissioners in South Carolina and Florida so that lands that are part of the Sea Islands—which today are within the Corridor—could then be auctioned.



**ROBERT SMALLS HOME  
BEAUFORT, BEAUFORT COUNTY, SC**

“As federal armies advanced into the South, they captured large amounts of private property, much of it abandoned by fleeing owners. The armies really could not do much with this property as it had little direct military use. But since a lot of it was cotton that had already been sold or seized by the Confederate government and that had value on the open market, something had to be done. So Congress passed the Captured and Abandoned Property Act on 3 March 1863” (Lee 2004).

As a result of the passage of these acts, many Gullah Geechee people purchased land for their family members to continue to dwell on. Many built homes on this land and used it to provide economic and physical sustainability for their families through farming, hunting, and harvesting from surrounding waterways. In many areas throughout the Corridor, this land is still privately owned by Gullah Geechee people. Their retention of the land, however, is often threatened as a result of a type of land ownership that has been defined as heirs' property. A brief description of heirs' property follows to provide context regarding this issue and how it threatens the retention of privately owned land by Gullah Geechee people in the Corridor and thus the culture itself. This summary is for informational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice.

Under heirs' property, all family members own the land as "tenants in common," which gives each family member undivided property rights. If a family member dies, however, the ownership passes down to the living "heirs" who are determined by the probate laws according to the laws of most states. For the land to legally pass from the estate of the deceased ancestor, that deceased person's estate must be probated to ensure the deceased person's debts are paid before the property passes to the lawful heirs. Most states have a time limit to probate a deceased person's estate without having to go to court. If the ancestor dies without a will, then he or she is said to have died "intestate," and no will is required to probate the estate of the deceased ancestor. The probate process can usually be completed fairly inexpensively and the land is then transferred to the heirs, either the intestate heirs or those who are named in the will. Ancestors who have died with a will often include a clause that the land is not to be sold, so that the family will always have a "place."

When probate is not completed in the time required by the state, then the property becomes "heirs' property," for which one has to go to court to determine the owners and divide the land. This action, called a "quiet title action," is usually very expensive, depending on how many generations have passed since the ancestor's death. The land is usually divided on the generational level on which at least one heir is still alive.

Traditionally, heirs' property has been managed by families through "word of mouth" by verbally transferring interest to other family members without the benefit of a written deed. In some cases, a deed has been used in an attempt to transfer interest between family members. A quitclaim deed simply transfers one's interest in land to another person without knowing if that person has an interest or what the interest percentage is. Quitclaim deeds are used when the title holder is deceased and the heirs then attempt to convey their interest to another person. Warranty deeds cannot be used to resolve land ownership because they cannot document who "owns" the land.

Heirs' property involves numerous other legal and financial issues that entangle property owners who don't secure scrupulous legal representation, which can result in the loss of land ownership. Issues include: reimbursement for taxes, partitioning or dividing the property, appraisals, surveys, attorney fees, timber sales, easements, and paying those heirs that do not want to share the land the value of their interest. Another obstacle facing heirs' property interest-holders is the added pressure from real estate developers to convince some heirs that do not have a very strong connection to the land to sell their interest to those outside the family. Any heir has the right to go to court and demand his/her share of the value of the land. However, if the heirs in possession of the land or those who want to keep the land within the family cannot pay those heirs for their interest, the court can sell the land, often at fire-sale prices.

If a developer or other interested party convinces at least one family member to sell his or her interest, the action allows the developer to own a right in the property and then to have lawyers challenge the rights of the heirs to stop them from building on the family parcel or purchasing the entire thing. This has led to many families losing their land due to "forced partition sales" in which

judges ask them to settle the matter among themselves and when that is not done, all parties are forced to have their land sold and the subsequent profit divided according to the interest that each party is entitled to.

Recent progress has been made in slowing the loss of heirs' property through forced partition sales by having all of the heirs convey their interest in a limited liability company or a family trust so that the family can still control the property and have input into the management of the land. The more difficult aspect of this approach is to get the family members to agree to this land retention strategy. Some of the heirs may have very different intentions. For example, some may live elsewhere and never have visited the parcel or have maintained an understanding about the cultural importance of retaining family land.

A few nonprofit and public interest entities within the Corridor address the land-loss issue among heirs' property interest-holders through a combination of mediation, litigation, and education. Whereas the legal view of land ownership as a commodity does not exist within Gullah Geechee culture; rather, land ownership is regarded as the essence of life, as having a "place" for which one's ancestors have struggled and sacrificed. The ability of Gullah Geechee people to continue to live on their privately owned land within the Corridor is critical to the culture's long-term survival. Family compounds remain the economic and spiritual centers in which Gullah Geechee culture thrives.

## CURRENT LAND OWNERSHIP

The Corridor is the ancestral home of Gullah Geechee people, although today the land is both publicly and privately owned and managed and used for many diverse purposes. Given the importance of land and land ownership to the continuation of Gullah Geechee culture, a quick summary of the current land ownership in the Corridor has been provided as context and to identify potential partners—the agencies that manage the publicly owned land.



**SIGN ON ST. SIMONS ISLAND  
GLYNN COUNTY, GA**

The majority (82.5%) of land within the Corridor is either privately owned or unrestricted for development, or there is no known restriction. Private land use and development is largely controlled by counties and cities through comprehensive plans, zoning, and subdivision ordinances. The next largest landowner is the federal government, which owns 7.6% of the land within the Corridor. The federal agencies managing land within the Corridor include the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Department of Defense, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The four Corridor states own a combined

5.7% of the land within the Corridor. This land is managed by a wide variety of state agencies, including state park and recreation departments, state fish and game, and cultural affairs. Over 4% of the Corridor is covered by water. Note: as a result of different source data, the total acreage used to determine land ownership in table 11 is slightly different from that identified in chapter 1, primarily as a result of the delineation of the coastline (table 12).



The maps on the following pages identify large tracts of public lands within the Corridor, many of which have strong connections to Gullah Geechee history, culture, and people. The managers of these public lands are considered to be potential partners of the Commission. The tables following those maps show the basic land ownership breakdown within the Corridor as a percentage of the total Corridor acres per state. Although most of the land within the Corridor is privately owned, the amount of land within the Corridor owned by Gullah Geechee people is unknown.

"I think land retention is so important because without the lands there is no people, and without the people there is no culture."

Reginald Hall  
Georgetown, SC - May 2009 Meeting

Please note: the data source used has categories that do not specifically match the exact state's agency name. For example, in North Carolina, 7.2% of Corridor acres in the state are owned by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, the state's equivalent of the more generic agency name "fish and game." This is just one example, and other discrepancies may exist.

As shown in the land ownership tables 11 to 13, the majority of land within the Corridor is privately owned. More than 80% of the land within the Corridor in each state is privately owned and almost 90% in North Carolina. In North Carolina, the next largest landowner following private ownership is the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (state fish and game); in South Carolina it is the U.S. Forest Service; in Georgia it is the Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Resources Division (state fish and game); and in Florida it is the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (State Department of Natural Resources).

Many of these public lands protect traditional and nontraditional outdoor recreation opportunities such as paddling, hunting, and fishing, as well as scenic resources. As a result, there is a large range and breadth of opportunities available to tourists and residents alike within the Corridor. See appendix L for more information about recreational and scenic resources.

## LAND COVER BY STATE

### Generalized Land Cover

Over two-thirds of the Corridor comprises wetlands and forest—10% is developed and another 10% is either grasslands or pasture. The remaining area that is not open water is primarily cultivated agriculture and scrub/shrub land. The land cover percentage differs within each state. For example, 11% of the North Carolina portion of the Corridor is cultivated agriculture, 40% of the South Carolina portion is wetlands, 36% of the Georgia portion is forest, and 23% of the Florida portion of the Corridor is developed.

# Map 8: Public Lands in North Carolina

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



# Map 9: Public Lands in South Carolina

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



# Map 10: Public Lands in Georgia

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

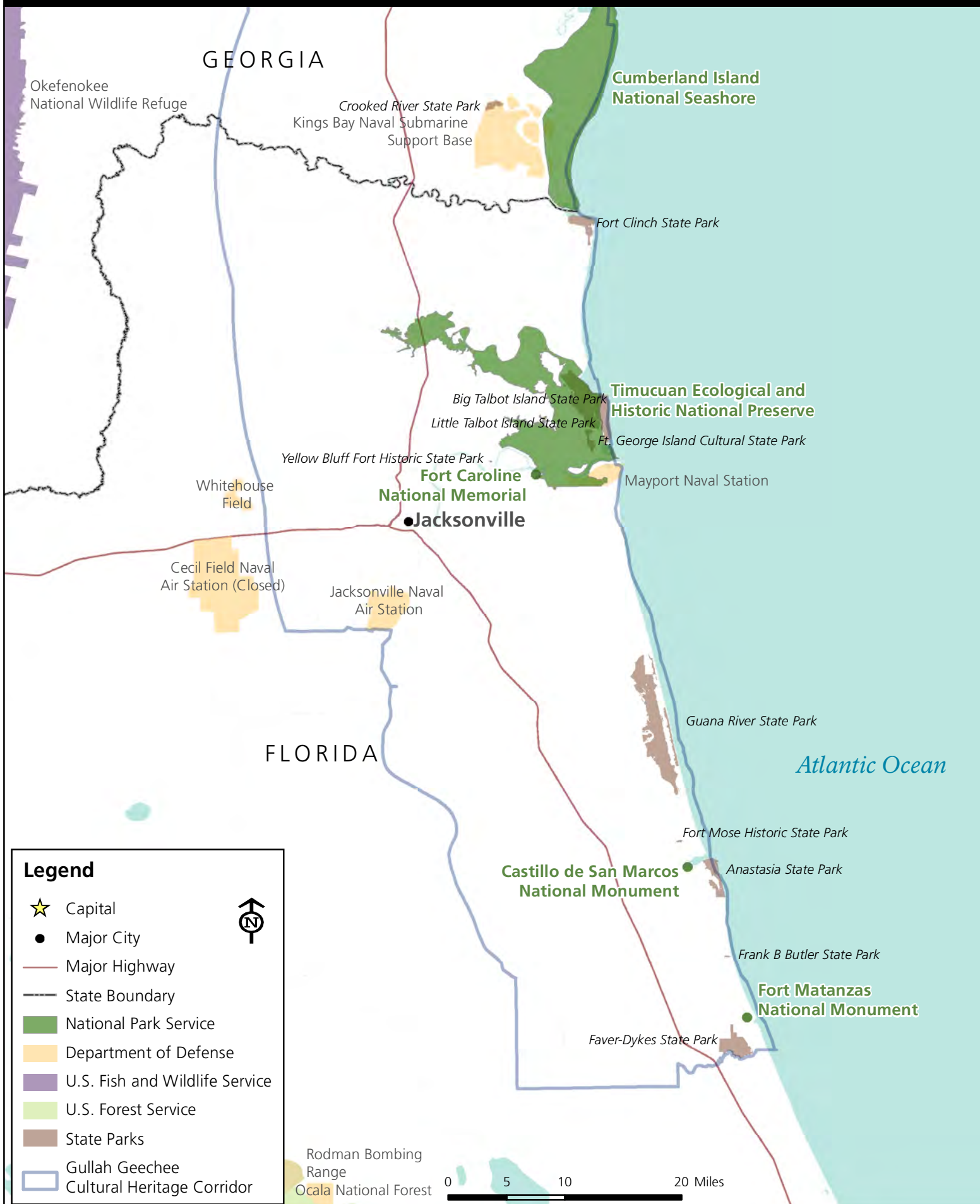




# Map 11: Public Lands in Florida

## Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



**TABLE 11. PERCENTAGE OF LAND OWNERSHIP BY STATE**

| General Ownership |   | Owner | Percentage of Total |
|-------------------|---|-------|---------------------|
| North Carolina    |   |       |                     |
| Private           | Private Unrestricted for Development/No Known Restriction |       | 88.6%               |
| State             | State Fish and Game                                       |       | 7.2%                |
| Water             | Water   |       | 1.8%                |
| Private           | The Nature Conservancy                                    |       | 1.0%                |
| Federal           | Department of Defense                                     |       | 0.7%                |
| State             | State Cultural Affairs                                    |       | 0.3%                |
| State             | State Park & Recreation                                   |       | 0.2%                |
| State             | State Coastal Reserve                                     |       | 0.1%                |
| Federal           | National Park Service                                     |       | < 0.1%              |
| South Carolina    |   |       |                     |
| Private           | Private Unrestricted for Development/No Known Restriction |       | 80.8%               |
| Federal           | Forest Service  |       | 7.2%                |
| Water             | Water   |       | 4.0%                |
| Federal           | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service                            |       | 2.0%                |
| Federal           | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration           |       | 1.9%                |
| State             | State Cultural Affairs                                    |       | 1.5%                |
| State             | State Fish and Game                                       |       | 1.2%                |
| Federal           | Department of Defense                                     |       | 1.1%                |
| State             | State Park & Recreation                                   |       | 0.3%                |
| Federal           | National Park Service                                     |       | < 0.1%              |
| Private           | Private Conservation                                      |       | < 0.1%              |
| Georgia           |   |       |                     |
| Private           | Private Unrestricted for Development/No Known Restriction |       | 81.3%               |
| State             | State Fish and Game                                       |       | 6.6%                |
| Federal           | Department of Defense                                     |       | 4.3%                |
| Water             | Water   |       | 3.9%                |
| Federal           | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service                            |       | 1.4%                |
| Federal           | National Park Service                                     |       | 1.4%                |
| State             | State Cultural Affairs                                    |       | 0.5%                |
| State             | State Coastal Reserve                                     |       | 0.4%                |
| State             | State Park & Recreation                                   |       | 0.2%                |

**TABLE 11. PERCENTAGE OF LAND OWNERSHIP BY STATE**

| General Ownership | Owner   | Percentage of Total |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>Florida</b>    |   |                     |
| Private           | Private Unrestricted for Development/No Known Restriction | 81.1%               |
| Water             | Water   | 7.7%                |
| State             | State Department of Natural Resources                     | 3.6%                |
| Federal           | National Park Service                                     | 2.6%                |
| State             | State Department Land                                     | 1.6%                |
| State             | State Park & Recreation                                   | 1.1%                |
| State             | State Coastal Reserve                                     | 0.7%                |
| State             | State Fish and Game                                       | 0.6%                |
| Federal           | Department of Defense                                     | 0.6%                |
| Private           | Private Conservation                                      | 0.3%                |

**TABLE 12. LAND COVER AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CORRIDOR BY STATE  
(HIGHEST TO LOWEST BY TOTAL LAND COVER)**

| Land Cover Type        | North Carolina | South Carolina | Georgia | Florida | Total Corridor |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Wetlands               | 36%            | 40%            | 41%     | 27%     | <b>38.0%</b>   |
| Forest                 | 28%            | 30%            | 36%     | 27%     | <b>31.0%</b>   |
| Developed              | 8%             | 8%             | 8%      | 23%     | <b>10.0%</b>   |
| Grasslands/Pasture     | 11%            | 9%             | 9%      | 11%     | <b>10.0%</b>   |
| Open Water             | 2%             | 5%             | 4%      | 8%      | <b>5.0%</b>    |
| Cultivated Agriculture | 11%            | 4%             | 0.6%    | 2%      | <b>4.0%</b>    |
| Scrub/Shrub            | 4%             | 4%             | 0.7%    | 0.4%    | <b>3.0%</b>    |
| Barren Land            | 0.3%           | 0.3%           | 0.3%    | 0.7%    | <b>0.4%</b>    |

Source: NPS-IMD 2009; Svancara and Story 2009

### Prime and Unique Farmlands

Prime farmlands is of major importance in meeting the nation's short- and long-range needs for food and fiber. The acreage of high-quality farmland is limited and the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognizes that government agencies and private landowners must encourage and facilitate the wise use of these lands. The soils that predominate in the Corridor are not considered prime farmland soils. Prime farmland soils comprise only about 7.4% of the agricultural lands within the Corridor. Most of the prime farmland areas are privately owned and used for agricultural purposes; however, there is a gradual trend in the Corridor toward the loss of prime farmlands primarily to residential subdivisions.

Of the agricultural lands within the Corridor, 22% are of statewide or unique importance. Farmland of statewide or unique importance is land other than prime farmland that has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for crop production. Those characteristics are based on certain criteria for water (soil moisture regimes and availability of water), range of soil temperature, acid-alkali balance, water table, soil sodium content, flooding, erodibility, and rock fragment content. Farmlands of statewide importance does not include publicly owned lands for which agricultural use is not allowed (NRCS 2004; USDA 2010c).

**TABLE 13. PRIME FARMLANDS IN THE CORRIDOR  
FOR ALL CORRIDOR COUNTIES AS OF 2010**

| Type of Farmlands   | Acres            | Percentage of Total |
|---|------------------|---------------------|
| Prime farmlands   | 603,132          | 7%                  |
| Farmlands of statewide or unique importance   | 1,803,374        | 22%                 |
| Prime farmlands if drained, irrigated, or protected from flooding during the growing season | 624,527          | 8%                  |
| Not prime farmlands   | 5,074,158        | 62%                 |
| Not surveyed  | 47,689           | 1%                  |
| <b>Total amount of farmland within the Corridor</b>   | <b>8,152,879</b> | <b>100%</b>         |

Source: U.S. Geological Survey 2001

Note: No farmland data were available for Brantley County, Georgia; the best data available was used, but data were missing from the USDA soils data. This information came from a variety of different survey sources and dates. For additional information, please visit:

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_00/7cfr657\\_00.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_00/7cfr657_00.html) and

<http://soils.usda.gov/technical/handbook/contents/part622.html> (Part 622.04). The following Web site lists the source dates of each soil survey by county: [http://soils.usda.gov/survey/printed\\_surveys/](http://soils.usda.gov/survey/printed_surveys/)



# Map 12: Land Cover

Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

