

APPENDIX F: EARLY IMPLEMENTATION

Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission

Position Statement regarding McLeod Plantation, South Carolina

The Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission (GGCHCC) takes the position that the McLeod Plantation (James Island, SC) should be preserved, protected and interpreted because of its importance to the history and culture of the Gullah/Geechee people.

For this reason the Commission holds that ownership of the McLeod Plantation should only be transferred to an agency or group that will preserve and protect the property in a manner consonant with this goal.

Appropriate interpretation of the McLeod Plantation in both historical and contemporary terms will contribute to an understanding of the unique contributions of Gullah/Geechee people to American and South Carolina history, and provide valuable education to the general population.

Established by Congressional action in 2006, the GGCHCC is mandated to identify and preserve sites, historical data, artifacts and objects associated with the Gullah/Geechee for the benefit and education of the public.

The mission of the GGCHCC (October 2009) is to sustain and preserve land, language and cultural assets within the coastal communities of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina and Florida.

For information about the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission see:

www.nps.gov/guge

December 15, 2009

Mr. P. George Benson
President
College of Charleston
66 George Street
Charleston, SC 29424

Dear President Benson:

On behalf of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission (GGCHCC), I am writing to inform you of our stand against the College of Charleston's decisions pertaining to the acquisition and plans for development of the McLeod Plantation on James Island, SC. Several Commissioners and our National Park Service affiliate discussed our and the College's concerns about this matter with Mr. Steve Osborne, Executive Vice President for Business Affairs, on October 29. Based on the understandings received, the GGCHCC finds the College of Charleston's plans inappropriate and injurious to the legacy of Gullah/Geechee people. Said plans will destroy a valuable cultural asset with the invasion of athletic fields and other inappropriate uses.

The GGCHCC takes the position that the McLeod Plantation should be preserved, protected and interpreted because of its importance to the history and culture of the Gullah/Geechee people. For this reason, the Commission holds that ownership of the McLeod Plantation should be transferred to an agency or group that will preserve and protect the property in a manner consonant with this goal.

Appropriate interpretation of the McLeod Plantation in both historical and contemporary terms will contribute to an understanding of the unique contributions of Gullah/Geechee people to American and South Carolina history, and provide valuable education to the general population. Established by Congressional action in 2006, the GGCHCC is mandated to identify and preserve sites, historical data, artifacts and objects associated with the Gullah/Geechee for the benefit and education of the public. The mission of the GGCHCC (October 2009) is to sustain and preserve land, language and cultural assets within the coastal communities of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina and Florida.

We beseech you to alter plans as aforementioned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Campbell".

Emory Campbell
Chairman

The Post and Courier

McLeod meeting

C of C, Gullah Geechee leaders discuss plantation

By [Diane Knich](#)

The Post and Courier

Wednesday, December 23, 2009

McLeod Plantation, with its striking row of slave cabins, has deep historical significance to the Gullah Geechee people that needs to be protected, community representatives told leaders at the College of Charleston Tuesday.

The college announced in September that it is considering purchasing the 40-acre property on James Island from the Historic Charleston Foundation for \$4 million. The college is now in a period of "due diligence," exploring whether to buy the property and how much to pay for it, President George Benson said.



File/Staff

The slave cabins are a reminder of McLeod's past, and preservation programs are among the possible academic uses for the site.

College leaders invited representatives from African-American history and heritage groups to the college Tuesday to listen to their thoughts and concerns about the future of McLeod, Benson said.

Thomesena Stokes-Marshall, project director for the Sweetgrass Arts Festival Association, said she hopes basket makers can pick sweetgrass at McLeod. "There are sweetgrass plants that have been there forever," she said.

She wanted the college to "engage members of the African-American community" if it purchases the plantation.

Michael Allen, Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor coordinator for the National Park Service, said the college invited community leaders "through goodwill" so they could provide "good guidance and good reasoning."

The common thread running through all who participated was the emphasis on the importance of using the plantation to educate the public about the history and culture of the Gullah Geechee people, Allen said.

The plantation's slave cabins, main house and fields are all historically significant, he said.

Tom O'Rourke, executive director of the Charleston Park and Recreation Commission, wasn't invited to the meeting. He said the commission was interested in buying the property before the college and the Historic Charleston Foundation came to a tentative agreement.

"But we've turned the page," he said. "There's a buyer and a seller, and we are neither."

The college and its foundation have not decided whether to purchase the property, he said. The move would require approval from the college's Board of Trustees, which meets Jan. 29, and the foundation's Board of Directors, which meets Feb. 8. The college likely will decide early in February, he said.

Even if the college doesn't buy the property, Tuesday's meeting "felt like a historic meeting for the College of Charleston," Benson said.

Read more about the college's plan to buy McLeod plantation

[College seeks piece of history](#), published 09/26/09

It pulled important community groups together to talk directly to representatives from the college, he said.

After the meeting, Benson said, "I was inspired. I was moved as we were largely on the same page."

Other groups represented at the meeting were Friends of McLeod, the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission and the African American Historical Alliance of South Carolina.

Benson said the college isn't certain what it will do with the property if it decides to buy it. The only thing that's certain is that it will be "preserved and shared."

Reach **Diane Knich** at 937-5491 or dknich@postandcourier.com.

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Gullah/Geechee

Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, Inc.

1214 Middle Street

Sullivan's Island, SC 29482

843.881.5516 x 12

July 15, 2011

Ken Salazar, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Tom Vilsack, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

RE: FY13 Collaborative LWCF Request, SC Longleaf
Landscape, Longleaf Focal Area

Dear Messrs. Salazar and Vilsack:

The Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission sincerely appreciates the partnership efforts of the Francis Marion National Forest and Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge.

We are working diligently to increase understanding and awareness of Gullah/Geechee people, culture and history through Education, Economic Development, and Documentation and Preservation. Your efforts to assist in the preservation of the Natural and Cultural landscape within the Corridor's boundaries are admirable.

The potential to partner with the Francis Marion National Forest and Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in the establishment of a Heritage Center at the jointly managed Sewee Visitor's Center complies with a potential need that is identified in the Corridor's developing Management Plan. Our Partnership Applications will be available when our website, <http://GullahGeecheeCorridor.org>, is launched during late Summer 2011. We look forward to the Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests formalizing its proposal at that time.

Executive Committee

Emory S. Campbell
Chairman, South Carolina
Eulis A. Willis
Vice Chairman, North Carolina
Charles H. Hall
Secretary, Georgia
Ralph B. Johnson
Treasurer, Florida

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Dr. Antoinette Jackson
North Carolina
Lana Carter
Dr. John H. Haley
Alternate
Dr. David B. Frank

Staff Liaison

Michael Allen
Gullah/Geechee Coordinator
National Park Service

Salazar and Vilsack
July 15, 2011
Page Two

We wholeheartedly support your departments' response to President Obama's, "America's Great Outdoors" initiative and Congressional support for collaboration between land management agencies that share LWCF funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'C' and a trailing flourish.

Emory S. Campbell
Chairman
Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission

ESC/zg



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September 15, 2011

Mr. Teddy E. Pryor, Jr. Chairman
Charleston County Council
Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Service Bldg.
4045 Bridge View Drive
North Charleston, SC 29405

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Dr. David B. Frank

Dear Mr. Pryor:

At its regular meeting on August 19, 2011, the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission ("The Commission"), unanimously passed the enclosed resolution against the proposed extension of South Carolina Interstate I- 526. The Commission has determined that the proposed extension is inconsistent with the legislative goals of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and The Commission's management plan for protecting and preserving Gullah/Geechee culture.

We urge you to oppose this proposal that would devastate an already regrettably threatened Gullah/Geechee culture that has become a nationwide treasure. Your opposition to this proposed extension of Interstate I-526 would be in keeping with your pledged partnership with the Commission in managing the preservation of Gullah/Geechee culture. We have enclosed a proposed resolution.

Thank you for your cooperation in fulfilling our obligation to preserve our cultural and environmental coastal heritage that has made us the envy of other spoiled areas in our nation.

Sincerely,

Staff Liaison

Michael Allen
Gullah/Geechee Coordinator
National Park Service

Emory S. Campbell, Chairman

Cc Commissioners

Enclosure



Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, Inc.

1214 Middle Street

Sullivan's Island, SC 29482

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RESOLUTION

By The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission

Executive Committee

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Staff Liaison

Michael Allen

Gullah/Geechee Coordinator

National Park Service

WHEREAS, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission (The Commission) seeks to enhance, protect and promote the Gullah heritage from Wilmington, North Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida;

WHEREAS, the Gullah Geechee culture is a tradition first shaped by captive Africans brought to the southern United States and continued in later traditions by their descendants;

WHEREAS, the Gullah Geechee culture is integral to our coastal history, past, present and future in coastal South Carolina and our sea islands – Johns, James and Yonges island;

WHEREAS, the extension of I-526 would threaten the long-term residents on the sea islands, many of whom share our Gullah Geechee heritage;

WHEREAS, the extension of I-526 would facilitate other development including a cross island road across Johns Island that would displace many residents;

WHEREAS, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission seeks to protect the Gullah Geechee heritage on Johns Island from destructive transportation projects that facilitate land loss and therefore loss of culture;

Therefore, be it resolved by the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor Commission:

Opposes the extension of I-526 across the sea islands, including any route that terminates on Johns Island or James Island;

Supports the communities of the Sea Islands to further improve existing infrastructure in a manner that would not contribute to land loss or division of communities or culture;

Supports and is actively engaged with the sea island community through continued work and advocacy.

Resolution continued

Be it further resolved that the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission has determined that the proposed I-526 extension would devastate the Gullah Geechee Culture in the James and Johns Island area and therefore should not be built.

Be it further resolved that the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission requests that the Charleston County Council oppose the extension of Interstate 526 and urge the South Carolina Department Of Transportation to abandon the proposal.

Adopted this 19th Day of August 2011



Gullah/Geechee

Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, Inc.

1214 Middle Street

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September 23, 2011

Paul Bradley, Forest Supervisor
Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212

RE: FY13 LWCF Request, Fairlawn Plantation

Dear Mr. Bradley:

The Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission Fully supports the land protection efforts of the Francis Marion National Forest.

As determined in the initial planning for the GUGE corridor, cultural heritage sites are being lost at an alarming rate. A number of archaeological sites on Fairlawn date from the colonial period through the antebellum period including the original plantation house site and out buildings, slave settlements, a rice mill and canal. Protecting portions of Fairlawn will ensure some of these cultural treasures remain intact.

We are working diligently to increase understanding and awareness of Gullah/Geechee people, culture and history through Education, Economic Development, and Documentation and Preservation. Your efforts to assist in the preservation of the Natural and Cultural landscape within the Corridor's boundaries are admirable.

We wholeheartedly support Congressional funding for Fairlawn Plantation through the FY2013 Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Sincerely,
Emory S. Campbell
Chairman
Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission

ESC/zg

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David B. Frank

Staff Liaison

Michael Allen

Gullah/Geechee Coordinator

National Park Service

Honorable Doc Hastings, Chairman

Honorable Edward J. Markey, Ranking Democratic Member

US House of Representatives

Committee on Natural Resources

Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2011

Dear Congressman Hastings:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in support of the Harris Neck Trust.

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission was designated by Congress in 2006 (PL 109-338). Its purpose is to preserve, protect and sustain Gullah Geechee Culture which primarily exists in the area between Wilmington, NC and Jacksonville, FL from the Atlantic Ocean 30 miles westward. Gullah Geechee is widely known as one of the most distinguished cultures in America having evolved over the past century and half on land acquired by formerly enslaved people. Over the next 90 days this Commission will have a management plan completed that includes ways that will effectively preserve the culture.

The Harris Neck community is an integral part of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage area. Its history embodies Gullah Geechee culture in that families traditionally lived self-reliant lives through the harmonious use of the land and waterways. Typical of Gullah Geechee people, after the American Civil war, families in the Harris Neck community were able to use their own resources, employing ancestral knowledge and skills that enabled them to enjoy a self-sustaining community.

This promising American future of prosperity was abruptly interrupted in 1942 when 2688 acres of their property was obtained by the Federal Government during WWII for public use without just compensation. In addition to the very important emotional value, the affected families lost an important resource for fishing and farming as well as sacred sites

for traditional spiritual practices. It is apparent that in the case of Harris Neck, Eminent Domain was unfairly implemented. Families were left worse off than before their land was taken. Left without any place to live, these families had expected to return to their land after the war. Instead the government returned the land to the county.

We believe that this is a wrong that the Federal Government could easily be made right by approving the proposal of the Harris Neck Land Trust. Moreover return of the property to the community would restore their trust in the Federal Government that has steadily eroded since 1942. We view their proposal as a perfect example of the partnerships that this Commission promotes between public and private sectors to preserve Gullah Geechee Culture.

After hearing the testimony of Harris Neck Land Trust representatives, I believe that you will agree that their proposal will be mutually beneficial to all parties. Furthermore our entire nation will profit from having preserved an important area that embodies critical cultural and environmental assets.

I strongly urge the subcommittee to recommend acceptance of the Harris Neck Land Trust Proposal.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Emory S. Campbell, Chairman