



## United States Department of the Interior

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

D18 (DSC-P)  
GUGE CHC

October 2, 2012 [revised December 20, 2012]

### Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Public Comment Report

#### SUMMARY

This document provides a summary of the public comments received during public review of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan. The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor was designated by an act of Congress on October 12, 2006 (Public Law 109-338). It was authorized as part of the National Heritage Areas Act of 2006. This plan represents an almost four-year-planning effort on part of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission.

A public comment period was not required for this plan because it is a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act. However, in striving to be good public servants, the Commission felt it was very important to provide another public involvement opportunity through a public comment period. Public support has been highly valuable throughout the development of this management plan and will continue to be an important aspect of implementation.

The public was asked to comment on the Management Plan between July 18 and August 17, 2012. The plan was developed with previous input from the public, stakeholders, prospective partners, and Gullah Geechee community and grassroots organizations. Press releases about the plan and the public comment period were sent to local papers, and posted on the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system and on the Commission's website.

Comments from the public as well as agencies and organizations were received in three ways: (1) direct input into the PEPC system, (2) e-mail correspondence, or (3) hard-copy letter. The public was asked to review and comment on the plan.

A total of 37 pieces of correspondence was received, including 17 PEPC entries, 17 letters, and 3 e-mails. Of these comments, 28% were provided by residents from South Carolina, 17% from Georgia, 17% from North Carolina, 11% from Florida, and the remaining 27% of comments were either from unidentified states or were from Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Ohio, California or Texas. Although the majority of respondents were individual persons, five civic groups, one federal government agency, and four state government agencies commented on the plan.

Comments were assessed on the following categories: support for the plan, suggested opportunity, suggested correction, suggested content addition, suggested collaboration opportunity and suggestion on the planning process. Overall, the comments received were very supportive of this planning endeavor and of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission.

Commenters frequently cited the importance of these efforts and regarded this planning document as a wealth of information and resources for the Gullah Geechee community and beyond. Commenters provided an array of suggested actions for the Commission as well as opportunities for collaboration with groups and organizations. In addition, commenters provided detailed information concerning resources, organizations and individuals that they would like to be recognized by the Commission and reflected in implementation of this Management Plan.

We thank you again for your thoughts, suggestions, and comments on the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan. They have been considered and will be used as this plan is implemented. We look forward to continuing to engage with partners and the public in the future.

## **Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, NHA**

### **Comment Analysis**

December 20, 2012

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan received 37 pieces of correspondence during the public review and comment period from July 18, 2012 through August 17, 2012.

Correspondence from the public as well as agencies and organizations were received in three ways: (1) direct input into the Internet-based Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system, (2) e-mail correspondence, or (3) hard-copy letter. Letters received by email or through the postal mail were entered into the PEPC system for analysis. Each of these letters or submissions is referred to as a correspondence. Once all the correspondence was entered into PEPC, each was read, and specific comments within each correspondence were identified. A total 61 comments were derived from the correspondence received.

In order to categorize and address comments, each comment was given a code to identify its general content. That coding also allowed similar comments to be grouped together. A total of 6 codes were used to categorize all of the comments received on the Management Plan: supports the management plan, suggested opportunity, suggested correction, suggested content addition, suggested collaboration opportunity, and suggestion on the planning process. All received comments are listed below within their coded categories.

#### **Supports the Management Plan**

##### **Correspondence Id: 1**

**Comment Text:** I am a native of South Carolina and have been fascinated by the Gullah-Geechee Culture and would like to see it preserved for future generations. I was not aware of this culture while growing up in SC. It is unfortunate that African Americans have not been taught nor encouraged to embrace their African heritage. Since finding out about the culture through attendance at the "Gullah Festival" for the past several years, I look forward to attending each year and definitely support preserving what is left of the culture.

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

##### **Correspondence Id: 5**

**Comment Text:** I support the Gullah Geechee Corridor that protects the significant African-American cultural highway. It is vitally important to preserve our diverse historical beginnings particularly for African Americans and Native Americans. I sincerely hope that Congress will continue to support this endeavor. As a resident of St Augustine and a previous resident of upstate NY (as well as a community volunteer) I have particular interest in the Underground Railroad as well as this initiative. St Augustine is a tourist destination richly steeped in history. This will add to the overall educational opportunities that our area has experienced through the centuries as well as provide experiences that our history books do not include. We must not lose this history!

**Organization:** Resident/Friends of the Anastasia Island Library of SJC

**Correspondence Id: 6**

**Comment Text:** Congratulations on the publication of the Gullah Geechee Corridor Management Plan. The history, images and research presented in this plan offer an excellent resource for preserving and promoting the Gullah Geechee heritage, and this plan provides an excellent outline for partners to join in and move forward.

**Organization:** Friends of Harrington School, Inc.

**Correspondence Id: 7**

**Comment Text:** I have reviewed the Management Plan and appendices and feel this is a treasure trove of valuable information and properly identifies directions for promotion and preservation of the "corridor".

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

**Correspondence Id: 8**

**Comment Text:** First, as a published author and history newspaper columnist, I congratulate you for composing a terrific and very informative document, or book.

**Organization:** Middleton maternal ancestors from St. Helena and Ghana

**Correspondence Id: 9**

**Comment Text:** First and foremost, I'd like to commend the commission for their exhaustive effort on the impressive GGHC plan. As a result of my incredible privilege of meeting with a few of the commissioners and after reviewing the draft it seems to me that one of the goals of the Corridor is to prominently assert the uniqueness of Gullah Geechee culture.

**Organization:** University of California, Berkeley

**Correspondence Id: 10**

**Comment Text:** Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation has reviewed with great interest the Management Plan and is supportive of the creation of this plan. Our mission includes protecting and preserving the historical and cultural past on Daufuskie Island.

**Organization:** Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation

**Correspondence Id: 11**

**Comment Text:** The South Carolina State Clearinghouse does not require an intergovernmental review on all CFDA numbers. The CFDA number submitted does not require intergovernmental review from this office. A listing of the State Clearinghouse CFDA numbers requiring review are available on our website [ww.budget.sc.gov](http://ww.budget.sc.gov). You may proceed with the submission of this project to the authorized federal funding agency. South Carolina state agencies are reminded that if additional budget authorization is needed for this project, one copy of the completed GCR-1 form and one copy of the award documentation must be submitted to this office. This action should be initiated immediately, if required. Please include the State Application Identifier in any correspondence with our office regarding this project. If you have any questions please contact Karen Rhinehart at 734-2265.

**Organization:** South Carolina Budget and Control Board

**Correspondence Id: 13**

**Comment Text:** This project is very important. Our African American history and culture needs to be preserved and the corridor should be known threw-out our country! Our music, art, food and skilled and slave labor is part of the building of American History where the foundation of the South was built apon. Foreignor and Immigrants that come to this country now don't care about American History. They just want what they can get from this country and reap the benefits; of those who have suffered and died to make this country so great. Instead of thanking African Americans most of these immigrants dispizes us as a people.

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

**Correspondence Id: 14**

**Comment Text:** I would like to thank the Commissioners and the NPS for the completion of this very significant document. I especially would like to thank Queen Quet Chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation for her outstanding work as Chair of the Management plan and her dynamic and passionate leadership as Leader of the The Gullah/Geechee Nation.

**Organization:** Gullah Geechee angel network

**Correspondence Id: 15**

**Comment Text:** The Florida State Clearinghouse is in receipt of the National Park Service's and Commission's Corridor Management Plan. Department staff does not object to the National Park Service's negative determination (i.e., no effect on coastal resources) under the Coastal Zone Management Act and agrees that the proposed action meets the requirements of 15 CFR 930.35.

**Organization:** Florida State Clearinghouse

**Correspondence Id: 20**

**Comment Text:** As a young man who was raised in the heart of the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor I so greatly appreciate the current concerted efforts to not only highlight its importance to American culture and tradition, but to also include objectives to continue the legacy through youth education, positive exposure, and preservation. As a photographer and educator who is always interested in ideas of self discovery: identity and place, I know that profound success can be garnered through the efforts of engaging youth and families to celebrate the Gullah Geechee heritage and traditions.

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

**Correspondence Id: 22**

**Comment Text:** On behalf of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, I offer our sincere congratulations for the phenomenal work manifested in the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan. We are extraordinarily pleased to see North Carolina represented in a variety of ground breaking ways, ranging from institutional input and potential partnering opportunities to recognized cultural heritage resources.

**Organization:** North Carolina African American Heritage Commission

**Correspondence Id: 23**

**Comment Text:** The Golden Isles Convention and Visitors Bureau is very supportive of your efforts in preserving and promoting the Gullah Geechee heritage. We are extremely fortunate that this history has been not forgotten in Glynn County, Georgia and we are pleased to support your important efforts. We are excited about the educational opportunities this will provide our visitors and residents to the area.

**Organization:** Golden Isles Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Correspondence Id: 27**

**Comment Text:** The Florida Department of State is very pleased to see the Management Plan for the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, the fulfillment of years of effort. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the document. The plan presents an excellent overview of the history of the Gullah Geechee culture in the Tidewater region of the United States, including a small part of Northeast Florida. The extension of the southern boundary to include all of St. Johns County is appropriate. I might note that during Florida's British Period (1763-1783), black slaves cultivated rice at the New Smyrna Colony, established by Andrew Turnbull at present day New Smyrna Beach in Volusia County. The discussion of Gullah Geechee folklife and traditions is particularly useful, and will help our State Folklorist in developing strategies for surveying the St. Johns County area.

**Organization:** Florida Department of State

**Correspondence Id: 28**

**Comment Text:** The Commission is to be congratulated on the development of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan. The information compiled and developed for this plan represents a major resource for promoting Gullah Geechee history and material culture in our coastal area.

**Organization:** Coastal Georgia Historical Society

**Correspondence Id: 29**

**Comment Text:** I support your efforts in preserving this valuable culture. It is a missing and almost forgotten part of U.S. history. I would like to know more about this culture. Thank you. P.S. Please send information about the up coming Gullah festival

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

**Correspondence Id: 30**

**Comment Text:** Congratulations on the publication of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan. The history, images and research presented in this plan offer an excellent resource for preserving and promoting the Gullah Geechee heritage, and this plan provides an excellent outline for partners to join in and move forward.

**Organization:** St. Simon Land Trust

**Correspondence Id: 34   Comment Id: 298278   Coder Name: SUSAN\_MCPARTLAND**

**Comment Text:** It is important to recognize the contributions of the Gullah Geechee people and culture. We appreciate the coordination between your organization and SCDOT to assist us in interpreting the story of the Gullah Geechee people and in assisting SCDOT and other state agencies in identifying and

preserving sites associated with Gullah Geechee heritage. SCDOT is committed to working with the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission (Commission) to develop a partnership to ensure the early identification of significant Gullah Geechee resources during the planning and NEPA stages of the development of a transportation project. This partnership will also be important in developing mitigation for unavoidable impacts to cultural resources in the region. We will also work with your Commission regarding any future signage along the corridor.

**Organization:** South Carolina Department of Transportation

## Suggested Opportunity

### Correspondence Id: 2

**Comment Text:** Perhaps an initiative by the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission to raise the level of awareness by creating a project to issue a U.S. Postage Stamp would go a long way to honor, promote and enhance Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage. It may noteworthy to mention that a much-admired recent exhibition at The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in Charleston, SC featured a stunning graphic artwork of a prototype U.S. Postage Stamp honoring Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage, inspired by Bluffton, SC artist Bernice Mitchell-Tate.

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

### Correspondence Id: 7

**Comment Text:** One suggestion is that the Management Plan point out the example practices in the Related Plans section of Appendix K (e. g. Local Planning Practices, Comprehensive Plans, Overlay Districts and Historic Resource Surveys) as examples which other communities and local governments might use or enact to better protect the Gullah Geechee culture and resources in their communities.

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

### Correspondence Id: 8

**Comment Text:** 1. A DNA verification program that might help identify the tribal identities of modern Gullah descendants in cities inside and outside the corridor that would help long-alienated families to reconnect in America and ultimately to Africa;

2. An archival and historical verification program, perhaps in conjunction with the DNA initiative, that might help identify the tribal identities of modern Gullah descendants in cities inside and outside the corridor that would help long-alienated families to reconnect in America and ultimately to Africa;

3. A DNA, archival and historical verification program to identify and meet the descendants of slaveholders;

4. A comprehensive oral history program utilizing digitized recordings of modern Gullah and Geechee descendants;

5. A website and annual symposium, perhaps in conjunction with Heritage Days, that advances steps 1-4;

6. Establishing regional programs and reunions of Corridor descendants, including celebrities such as First Lady Michelle Obama, throughout the country for fundraising and genealogy programs to preserve Gullah-Geechee culture within and outside the Corridor.

**Organization:** Middleton maternal ancestors from St. Helena and Ghana

### Correspondence Id: 9

**Comment Text:** Therefore in the history section I suggest more emphasis on the rationale for pursuing particular Africans as noted by Judith Carney in Black Rice. Rice (2001) notes southern coastal plantations invested primarily in rice, and plantation owners sought out Africans from the West Africa coastal countries of Sierra Leone, Gambia, Liberia and Senegal where rice, indigo, and cotton were indigenous to the region. She also notes the introduction of an African species of rice, glaberrima that was more competitive with weeds, better adapted to soil nutrient deficiencies and did not require continuous submergence in water. The above simply further substantiate the practice of resource, knowledge and skill transference from Africa to specific coastal regions in North America, such as the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor.

**Organization:** University of California, Berkeley

**Correspondence Id:** 14

**Comment Text:** As an Elder in Wisdom circle of Elders for the Gullah/Geechee Nation, I recommend that the history of the Gullah/Geechee Nation its leadership and grassroots organization be included in the Management plan document so that history will reflect the complete evolution of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Act so that the generation to come and stakeholders will fully understand the dynamics of this unique Gullah/Geechee Culture and its strong will to sustain it self.

**Organization:** Gullah Geechee angel network

**Correspondence Id:** 17

**Comment Text:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 comments for the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Management Plans providing potential sources of Funding and Technical Assistance for Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

U.S. EPA Region 4 and the Brownfields Programs for the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Georgia will provide outreach to educate community stakeholders, businesses and local officials along the U.S. 17 Coastal Highway of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor to address Brownfields sites. The Brownfields Program utilizes corridor projects as focus areas to empower communities, tribes, states and other stakeholders to assess, cleanup and safely reuse local Brownfields sites and foster sustainable economic development. The U.S. EPA, State and Tribal Brownfields 128 (a) Program provides resources and technical assistance to support revitalization efforts by funding environmental assessments, limited site cleanups and community-based revolving loan funds. The State programs have financial and regulatory incentives that encourage voluntary cleanups and redevelopment of contaminated sites.

Brownfields Grants are also awarded competitively to eligible entities. Opportunities for funding are as follows: Brownfields Assessment Grants (each funded up to \$200,000 over three years; coalitions are funded up to \$1,000,000 over three years), Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Grants (each funded up to \$1,000,000 over five years) and Brownfields Cleanup Grants (each funded up to \$200,000 over three years). Restoring Brownfields properties can serve as cornerstones for rebuilding communities. The two key components of the Brownfields Program is building relationships and cultivating new partnerships. Building relationships with new partnerships is a key component to the success of the National Heritage areas. For More Information visit EPAs Brownfields website listed below or contact your local State Brownfields Program: [http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant\\_info/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant_info/index.htm)

**Organization:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4

**Correspondence Id:** 18

**Comment Text:** IS GGCHC to be sole source of website? GGG has had one for two years which could be supportive or discontinued if not needed. Would there be interest in supporting us on a return to a paper news product as electronics are not widely used, or easily tracked or funded. GGG could use help with its AUTHENTICITY effort--have logo, have identified basket makers as starters to get certification and labels on products to compete with "knock offs". Republic of New Africa (RNA) wants to involve the GG corridor in its plan to give former enslaved new Afrikan citizens the option to belong to the Provisional Government -- 5 states: SC, GA, ALA, MS., LA. Willie Heyward, and GGG, have also been resources on Heirs Property. Could GGCHC help get an increased turnout for these important sessions:

Beaufort, Mt.Pleasant, Pawleys?

**Organization:** Gullah Geechee Group, Inc.

**Correspondence Id:** 19

**Comment Text:** We have the joint ideas of exploring ways to involve the rap or hip-hop generation in the corridor and various aspects of the Gullah-Geechee via music and spoken-word or rap lyrics. The proposed project would involve identifying famous rap and hip-hop artists with Gullah or Geechee roots to start focusing on or composing songs that would help advance or popularize Gullah culture. Such musicians as The Roots or Jill Scott come to mind. They might even collaborate with hip-hop musicians already existing in the Gullah culture. Such an initiative would dramatically promote the GG culture among the X and New Millenium generations. Don Scott Junior and Senior

**Organization:** Middleton and Hall Families of St Helena, Charleston and Savannah

**Correspondence Id:** 21 **Comment Id:** 297411 **Coder Name:** SUSAN\_MCPARTLAND

**Comment Text:** Accordingly the Commissioners are strongly encouraged to consider broadening, within the Management Plan, the scope of collaboration with the Corridor's Departments of Transportation. (Part 4, p. 201) The purpose: to encourage and/or enhance the quality of ferry transportation within the Corridor between the bridgeless Sea Islands and between the islands and the mainland, in particular. The vision is that the relevant Departments of Transportation would collaborate to facilitate the development of a regional ferry transportation system within the Corridor, the proposed "The Gullah Geechee Sea Island Ferry System." Such a system would: 1) enable the continued inhabitation of the Corridor's bridgeless Sea Islands by small numbers of Gullah Geechee people (and others), as well as facilitate the return to these islands by the heirs of Gullah Geechee people who aspire to do so. More broadly, such a system would (i) promote off-island work opportunities in general; (ii) promote heritage tourism and economic development in the region; and (iii) serve as an alternate commuter route in parts of the Corridor, thereby relieving traffic congestion in affected areas. Note that the Management Plan would also need to include potential sources of funding to support such a collaborative effort between the Corridor's Departments of Transportation. Finally, the envisioned Gullah Geechee Sea Island Ferry System would support Corridor Goals 1 and 2.[footnote 1]

[footnote 1:] Goal 1: Foster public awareness of and appreciation for the history of Gullah Geechee people, their contributions to the development of the United States?

Goal 2: Enhance the quality of life for current and future generations of Gullah Geechee people within the Corridor. Page 2 - GGCHC Commissioners A 1995 study commissioned by the South Carolina Department of Transportation "The Daufuskie Island and St. Helena Island Public Transportation Needs Assessment Study and Plan" could serve as a basis for initiating discussion, further exploration of the benefits of such a regional ferry transportation system, its potential contribution toward helping to sustain the "living culture" within the Corridor, and early planning. (<http://oldweb.bcgov.net/councilcentral/Reports.Studies/Roads/1995%20Needs%20Study%20and%20Plan.pdf>) There were also several feasibility studies and they were favorable.

**Organization:** Daufuskie Island Land Owners

**Correspondence Id:** 33

**Comment Text:** Re: SCH File # 13-E-0000-0057; EA; Proposed project is for the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan. The above referenced environmental impact information has been

submitted to the State Clearinghouse under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. According to G.S. 113A-10, when a state agency is required to prepare an environmental document under the provisions of federal law, the environmental document meets the provisions of the State Environmental Policy Act. Attached to this letter for your consideration are the comments made by agencies in the course of this review.

**Organization:** North Carolina Department of Administration

## Suggested Correction

### Correspondence Id: 3

**Comment Text:** 2. Appendix K, page 14 the following corrections need to be made: The following state parks are within the Corridor boundaries:

Charles Town Landing State Park - Need to add to the list

Colonial Dorchester State Park- Need to add to the list

Hampton Planation State Park - Need to add to the list

Myrtle Beach State Park

Little Pee Dee State Park

Brookgreen Gardens State Park NOT A STATE PARK

Huntington Beach State Park

USS Yorktown State Park NOT A STATE PARK

Cypress Gardens State Park NOT A STATE PARK

Magnolia Gardens State Park NOT A STATE PARK

Edisto Beach State Park

Hunting Island State Park

**Organization:** South Carolina State Park Service

### Correspondence Id: 15

**Comment Text:** In Appendix J: List of Islands and Festivals, Big Talbot Island is not listed with the others in North Florida (Amelia, Little Talbot, etc.) but a "Talbot Island" is listed. Staff believes that this reference to Talbot Island may have been intended to be "Big Talbot Island."

**Organization:** Florida State Clearinghouse

### Correspondence Id: 22

**Comment Text:** 1) Please note that on page 213 of the management plan, former Commissioner, Dr. John Haley is pictured, speaking at a corridor outreach meeting in an N.C. Department of Cultural Resources conference room. This meeting took place in Raleigh, which is in Wake County. At this time, the caption in the plan reads Wage County. I respectfully request that this spelling be corrected to "Wake" in future printings of this document.

**Organization:** North Carolina African American Heritage Commission

### Correspondence Id: 27

**Comment Text:** Please note a couple of historical/geographical corrections. Juan Ponce de Leon would probably have first encountered the Timucuan people in northeast Florida (1513). He encountered the Calusa Nation in what is now southwest Florida on a later voyage (1521) (see page 42 of the plan). In the discussion of the rise of African American religious denominations after the Civil War, I believe the plan is referencing the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ) rather than the African American Episcopal Church (see page 52 of the plan).

**Organization:** Florida Department of State

**Correspondence Id:** 35   **Comment Id:** 298275   **Coder Name:** SUSAN\_MCPARTLAND

**Comment Text:** The HNLT provided a copy of their 2008 conceptual plan to the FWS for review following a March 10, 2010 meeting held at the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge's Visitor Center. The

conceptual plan provided sparse details about their land preservation plan, specifically how the endangered wood stork and associated habitat, as well as the recorded archaeological sites, would be protected, maintained, and/or mitigated during its implementation. It did no mention any partnership with or a continuing management role of the FWS.

**Organization:** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region

**Correspondence Id:** 36

**Comment Text:** With regard to the Management Plan, I take issue with two statements found on page 142 of the Management Plan: 1) "Implementation of the Community Development Plan for Harris Neck would be completed with the assistance of the Trust's partners, including the McIntosh County Commission." This is speculation. Or, it is a disingenuous reference to a non-binding resolution approved by the 2007 County Commission. The Development Plan has never been submitted for review for compliance with the County zoning regulations and codes so it is impossible to say at this point, whether the current or future County Commission would be supportive of such plan. Much has been talked about regarding the Development Plan, but it is so schematic in content that I believe that if it were submitted, it would be rejected on the basis of lack of detail. 2) "Under this proposal, the Harris Neck Land Trust... would acquire and exclusively own the 2,687 acres, but would partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The US Fish and Wildlife Service would maintain its presence on Harris Neck and continue certain activities such as monitoring water levels in the ponds and ensuring wildlife and habitat protection." "It [the HNLTL proposal] would ensure that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would continue to play a critical role,..." This is pure fantasy and under current law, illegal. Nowhere in the United States does US F&W manage in-holdings on behalf of a private corporation.

**Organization:** Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges

**Correspondence Id:** 36

**Comment Text:** I believe the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor is a very good idea and, with the exception of page 142, I support it. However, I strongly feel that the Commission has been misled by a small group of very earnest people who believe they are right, but are woefully short of facts. In my opinion, the entire passage of support on page 142 should be deleted from the Management Plan.

**Organization:** Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges

## Suggested Content Addition

### Correspondence Id: 3

**Comment Text:** 1. Appendix C- Hampton plantation is listed as a resource on the Resource Inventory Matrix Table. South Carolina State Park Service (SCSPS) believes that the Historic Structure, Archeological Resource and the Ethnographic Resource columns should be checked.

a. Historic structure: the plantation house may have been built by enslaved craftsmen and laborers and reflects their accomplishments and skills

b. Archaeological resource: SCSPS is currently excavating a site that may be a slave dwelling and we believe we may find others on the site. Also, there are sites associated with African American tenants and employees from the postbellum period.

c. Ethnographic resource: The African American cemetery (an inholding) and its surroundings at Hampton may have important ethnographic significance; the property has also been used for collection of plants with tradition uses; and the historic connection between park and the Germantown community

**Organization:** South Carolina State Park Service

### Correspondence Id: 6

**Comment Text:** Main Report: Map 10 Public Lands in Georgia Within the corridor there are numerous state and federally owned properties that should be represented on this map. Pls. contact GA DNR for specifics. Some I would recommend identifying include: Womsloe State Historic Site (Chatham County) St. Catherines Island Blackbeard Island Ossabaw Island Sapelo Island Jekyll Island Howfyl-Broadfield Plantation (Glynn County) Altamaha Wildlife Management Area and Butler Island Wildlife Management Area

**Organization:** Friends of Harrington School, Inc.

### Correspondence Id: 6

**Comment Text:** Appendix C: Resources Inventory

1. Pls. add Wormsloe State Historic Site operated by Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division (Chatham Co, GA)

2. Pls. add Cannon's Point (Couper Plantation) Glynn County, GA soon to be managed by The St. Simons Land Trust with partnership of The Nature Conservancy

Appendix J: List of Islands and Festivals Pls. add Georgia Sea Island Festival (Glynn County, GA) [www.ssiheritagecoalition.org](http://www.ssiheritagecoalition.org)

Appendix K Partners

1. Under National Trust for Historic Preservation, pls. add [www.rosenwaldschools.com](http://www.rosenwaldschools.com)

2. Under Georgia Department of Natural Resources

a. Georgia State Parks and Historic sites Division The report states " The following state parks are within the Corridor:

Magnolia Memorial Park

Fort King George State Historic Site

Skidaway Island State Park

Fort McAllister State Park

Jekyll Island State Park

Crooked River State Park "

This division also operates state historic sites within the corridor: Wormsloe State Historic Site

(Chatham County) Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation (Glynn County)

b. May want to add Coastal Resources Division [www.coastalgadnr.org](http://www.coastalgadnr.org) The Coastal Resources Division is the state agency entrusted to manage Georgia's coastal marshes, beaches, waters, and marine fisheries resources for the benefit of present and future generations. The Division's service area extends from the inland reach of the tidal waters to three miles offshore.

c. And I think Ga DNR also owns/operates all or parts of the following barrier islands: Ossabaw Island, Sapelo Island, St. Catherines, and Blackbeard

3. Under Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, please add Places in Peril as one of their programs

4. Please add these Georgia partners who work to preserve Gullah Geechee heritage: St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition (GA) [www.ssiheritagecoalition.org](http://www.ssiheritagecoalition.org)  
Ossabaw Island Foundation [www.ossabawisland.org](http://www.ossabawisland.org)  
Vernacular Georgia [www.vernaculargeorgia.org](http://www.vernaculargeorgia.org)  
Georgia Conservancy [www.georgiaconservancy.org](http://www.georgiaconservancy.org)  
University of Georgia Press [www.ugapress.org](http://www.ugapress.org)

**Organization:** Friends of Harrington School, Inc.

**Correspondence Id: 10**

**Comment Text:** We were surprised to see that none of the many historical resources located on Daufuskie Island were included in the Resources List for Beaufort County, SC and wanted to comment on what must have been an oversight.

Daufuskie Island is home to the following resources which have a direct bearing on the Gullah Geechee history of the low country:

First Union African Baptist Church - established in 1880, burned in 1885 and rebuilt immediately. Renovated in 1991 and still in operation.

Brothers and Sister Oyster Union Hall - established in 1920's, where the oyster workers held meetings and parties and collected funds to help in case of sickness or death. Building renovated in 2011.

Billie Burn Museum Complex- includes the Second Mt Carmel Baptist Church, originally established in 1901, current building completed in 1942 and renovated in 2001 and currently serving as a museum of Daufuskie history. The complex includes the Janie Hamilton School, a one room school house built by the community in 1940. This building was renovated in 2009 and houses an exhibit on Gullah Life on Daufuskie Island and was recognized by the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission with a project award in 2010.

Mary Fields Elementary School - a two room school house that was built by the First Union African Baptist Church and the community in 1934. This building was recently renovated and serves as a community center for the island.

Cemeteries still exist that were established for black residents of the island during plantation era and continue to be used by families on the island as well as those who have left the island. These are: Bloody Point, Cooper River, Haig's Point, Maryfield and Webb cemeteries.

Finally, there are many existing structures on the island that were built by Gullah carpenters in the 1910 - 1940 time periods. In fact, a survey conducted by the Savannah College of Art and Design indicated that Daufuskie Island was home to the most Gullah dwellings still standing and unaltered from their original structures.

We hope the Commission will agree with us that to this list the many historical resources located on Daufuskie Island should be included in the resource list for the Gullah Geechee Management Plan.

**Organization:** Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation

**Correspondence Id:** 18

**Comment Text:** 2. Jenkins Institute should be listed as a pillar institution: 3923 Azalea Dr. N. Charleston,, SC 29405 843-744-1771. Exec. Dir. Johanna Martin-Carrington.pp.69-70. 3. Sol Legare Lodge James Island, Chas'ton. p.65 Another example. 4. Mosquito Beach, Atlantic Beach, other examples like American Beach.

**Organization:** Gullah Geechee Group, Inc.

**Correspondence Id:** 22

**Comment Text:** We are delighted that Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson is mentioned in Appendix K (Appendix K- Potential Partners and Related Plans) on page 8 as an important part of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. Additionally, we are excited to see that Ft. Fisher, along with a number of extremely significant resources, notably St. Stephen A.M.E. Church, is included in the Resource Inventory or Appendix C. We humbly request that Brunswick Town/Ft/ Anderson also be added to Appendix C. This colonial and Civil War era site was deeply impacted and shaped by the ingenuity of rice cultivating, enslaved African Americans from the colonial period into the 20th century. Additionally, the site served as a "contraband camp" or Freedmen's encampment at the close of the Civil War. As such, Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson appropriately falls under the following resource categories:

- Origins & Early Development
- Quest for Freedom, Equality,
- Education & Recognition
- Connection with the Land
- Historic Structure or District
- Cultural Landscape
- Archeological Resource
- Ethnographic Resource
- Museum Collection

Additionally, Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson's entry should appropriately feature an asterisk denoting its recognition in the National Register of historic places, as of September 1" of 1978. (Source:bjtp:/[W""'- 'OdIJlo.nccigcill)Yinr/I;)Yv'IlilQ,?,pcjf)

**Organization:** North Carolina African American Heritage Commission

**Correspondence Id:** 23

**Comment Text:** Main Report: Map 10 Public Lands in Georgia

Within the corridor there are numerous state and federally owned properties that should be

represented on this map. Pls. contact GA DNR for specifics. Some I would recommend identifying include:

Wormsloe State Historic Site (Chatham County)

St. Catherine's Island Blackbeard Island

Ossabaw Island

Sapelo Island

Jekyll Island

Howfyll-Broadfield Plantation (Glynn County)

Altamaha Wildlife Management Area and Butler Island Wildlife Management

#### Area Appendix C: Resources Inventory

1. Pls. add Wormsloe State Historic Site operated by Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division (Chatham Co, GA)

2. Pls. add Cannon's Point (Couper Plantation) Glynn County, GA soon to be managed by The St. Simons Land Trust with partnership of The Nature Conservancy

#### Appendix J: List of Islands and Festivals Pls. add Georgia Sea Island Festival (Glynn County, GA)

[www.ssiheritagecoalition.org](http://www.ssiheritagecoalition.org)

#### Appendix K Partners

1. Under National Trust for Historic Preservation, pls. add [www.rosenwaldschools.com](http://www.rosenwaldschools.com)

2. Under Georgia Department of Natural Resources,

a. Georgia State Parks and Historic sites Division The report states " The following state parks are within the Corridor:

Magnolia Memorial Park

Fort King George State Historic Site

Jekyll Island State Park

Crooked River State Park

This division also operates state historic sites within the corridor: Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation (Glynn County)

**Organization:** Golden Isles Convention and Visitors Bureau

#### **Correspondence Id: 24**

**Comment Text:** It appears as though the original Georgia Sea Island Festival, sponsored by the Saint Simons African American Coalition, Inc.; Saint Simons Island Georgia, was mistakenly omitted from the Management Plan. This brief correspondence requests for its inclusion.

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

#### **Correspondence Id: 26**

**Comment Text:** The Management Plan is very informative with vast amount of information on history and culture of the Gullah Geechee Heritage Culture Corridor, however, St. Augustine information was limited. Would the Committee consider including more Historical information on Lincolnville Historic District, Fort Mose, Florida Normal and Agriculture College, and the many Black businesses located in St. Augustine. There are at least 3 of the oldest Black churches located in St. Augustine: They are St. Benedict the Moor school, which was established for the Black Nuns, "Sister of the Oblate Society." and First Baptist church, established 1872, lack information on the other church, however, can get it if

needed.

**Organization:** Unaffiliated Individual

**Correspondence Id:** 30

**Comment Text:** We do not have any real edits or suggestions for the final report and would welcome a mention of Cannon's Point in Appendix Cas recommended by Patricia Deveau however, we do ask that you omit any language that refers to The Nature Conservancy or any partnership therein.

**Organization:** St. Simon Land Trust

**Correspondence Id:** 32

**Comment Text:** We echo the comments of Michelle Lanier, acting director of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, in requesting that the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderston State Historic Site be added to the resource inventory (Appendix C).

**Organization:** North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

**Correspondence Id:** 35

**Comment Text:** Our comments relate to "Support for the Harris Neck Land Trust Proposal" on page 142 and the Commission's December 8, 2011 letter to the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Natural Resources in Appendix F. Both the plan and the Commission's letter repeat assertions made by the Harris Neck land Trust (HNL T) and its predecessor; People Organized for Equal Rights (POER) such as the unfair implementation of eminent domain by the U.S. Government, the condemnation of 2,688 acres owned by the Gullah Geechee community, and failure to pay just compensation to the Gullah Geechee landowners. It appears that the NPS and the Commission were not provided with any documentation by the HNL T, beyond their oral testimony. Their assertions are not new and have been examined in several venues since 1979, including the General Accounting Office (1985), the District Court for the Southern District of Georgia (1979-1980), the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals (1982) the U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Committee on Merchant Marine Fisheries (1979). and the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources (2011).

**Organization:** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region

**Correspondence Id:** 35

**Comment Text:** The FWS has not offered compensation to the Harris Neck land rust (HNL T) or to past landowners and/or their descendants prior to the establishment of POER in 1979 and the HNL T in 2006. The Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge is part of tile Harris Neck community. It is a good neighbor and partner supporting the local tourism economy. In the 1980s, the Refuge constructed a deep water dock on Barbour River for the exclusive use by the Barbour River Waterman's Association to ensure that the shellfishing-dependent livelihood of the community would not be jeopardized by the existence of the Refuge. In order to use the dock, an individual must be a commercial shellfisherman and be a descendant of the community that lived on the Refuge prior to the Army airfield establishment. In 2011, the refurbishment of the Crabber's Dock was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act at a cost of approximately \$300,000. In addition, the Refuge ensures that HNL T members are provided access to Gould Cemetery, an inholding in the Refuge. The Refuge initiated the replacement of a fence around the cemetery in 2010. Part of this undertaking is the documentation and mapping the cemetery (Fig. 5). A technical report titled " The Gould Cemetery Documentation of a late 19th-Early

21st Century Gullah-Geechee Burial Ground, McIntosh County, Georgia" is under preparation and; will be available by November 2012. The FWS has not been approached by members of the Gullah Geechee community or the HNLTL regarding access to sacred sites for traditional spiritual practices located on the Refuge.

**Organization:** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region

**Correspondence Id:** 37

**Comment Text:** A Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges member, [name removed], asked that I send you the official briefing document prepared by the Friends group to address the Harris Neck land claims issue...Please enter this document in your records for consideration of any proposals submitted by the Harris Neck Land Trust, LLC. The information provided in the brief summarizes the Trust's claims with Friends' responses. Take special note of section IV (Opposition to Land Trust claims to refuge land) which addresses the Trust's plans for "inholdings" within Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge.

**Organization:** Friends of the Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuge

## Suggested Collaboration Opportunity

### Correspondence Id: 4

**Comment Text:** A series of roundtable discussions are needed to discuss the impact of the Multi-Billion "Cultural/Heritage" Tourism based economic development strategy in the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan. The Raccoon Hogg Community Development Corporation (CDC) in conjunction with the Gullah/Geechee Culture Initiative which is based on Sapelo Island, McIntosh County, Georgia, U.S.A. and our nonprofit partner HELP ORG INC are interested in being critical stakeholders of those roundtable discussions.

**Organization:** Raccoon Hogg CDC

### Correspondence Id: 18

**Comment Text:** WE Are VERY DISAPPOINTED not to be listed as A potential partner, especially because we were counseled repeatedly by staff not to bother applying YET since the form was going to change. Is this how the list was compiled--based on those who applied anyway? Our record speaks for us so we will submit something this time around, and hope that we are chosen as partner since our work is representative of all 3 pillars, esp. tote bags.

**Organization:** Gullah Geechee Group, Inc.

### Correspondence Id: 28

**Comment Text:** We look forward to working with the Corridor Commission, along with our local organizations, including the St. Simons African American Heritage Commission and the Friends of Harrington School. Working together, we hope to protect and promote the history and culture of this area and disseminate information to visitors, as well as local residents. We have discussed the plan with Patricia Deveau of the Friends of Harrington School, and we are in agreement with her regarding the additions she suggested in her letter of August 7, 2012.

**Organization:** Coastal Georgia Historical Society

### Correspondence Id: 30

**Comment Text:** The St. Simons Land Trust looks forward to working with the Corridor Commission, the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition and other Glynn County organizations to preserve and promote our area's heritage for the benefit of our residents.

**Organization:** St. Simon Land Trust

### Correspondence Id: 31

**Comment Text:** We read your publication of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan and would like to be included as a resource. Since 1932, The Cassina Garden Club has restored, maintained and offered tours and historical interpretation of the two remaining tabby slave cabins which were part of the Hamilton Plantation on St. Simons Island, Glynn County, Georgia. Because of our strong commitment to the care and preservation of the cabins, in 1950 Cassina Garden Club was presented with the deed to these historic cabins on Gascoigne Bluff. On June 30, 1988, these cabins were placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Artifacts from the 1997 archeological dig at the cabins are on display. We look forward to working with the Corridor Commission and other Glynn County organizations to promote the history and heritage of our community.

## Suggestion on the Planning Process

### Correspondence Id: 35

**Comment Text:** Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft 'Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Management Plan". The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region (FWS) received a copy of the draft management plan and the accompanying CD containing the appendices September 13, 2012. The cover letter that accompanied the plan indicated that it was initially transmitted to 'friends, neighbors, and partners" July 18, 2012. The only previous consultation with the FWS about the plan is included in "Appendix G: Consultation Letters" and is dated February 1, 2010. The Commission's letter requested a "current list of federally listed plant and animal species that might occur within or in the vicinity of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, and designated critical habitat, if any, for such species." Kenneth Graham [Ecological Services - RO] provided a link to the Region's listing program in an email response dated February 17, 2010. Further consultation and/or correspondence with the FWS, specifically the project leaders or managers of the ten National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) mentioned in the plan and the Regional Historic Preservation Officer/Regional Archaeologist [RHPO/RA], do not appear to have occurred. Addresses and points of contact for the FWS-Southeast Region, each NWR and the RHPO/RA are provided below.

**Organization:** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region