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5 GULLAH/GEECHEE

6 CULTURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

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8 PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

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10 JUNE 29, 2009, 10:30 A.M.

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17 SAPELO ISLAND CULTURAL AND REVITALIZATION SOCIETY

18 SAPELO ISLAND, GEORGIA

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1 MEETING DISCUSSION

2 MR. HALL: Good morning, everyone.

3 THE AUDIENCE: Good morning.

4 MR. HALL: I'm Charles Hall, one of the

5 commissioners. Today we have two other

6 commissioners with us. We have Jeanne Cyriaque

7 and Althea Sumpter, who will also be giving

8 some input.

9 Our purpose here today is to get community

10 input, but let me give you a little bit of

11 background. In 19 -- in 2006, there was a law

12 passed by Congress. It was 109. It is one of

13 the subsections, and signed by the President at

14 that time, to recognize the Gullah/Geechee

15 corridor, and to appoint commissioners.

16 And so I won't tell you something that's

17 not 100% accurate I'll read it as it is stated

18 here. It was called the Gullah/Geechee

19 Cultural Heritage Act.

20 The purpose of this act was one, recognize

21 the important contribution made to American

22 culture and history by African Americans known
23 as Gullah/Geechee, who settled in the coastal
24 counties of South Carolina, Georgia, North
25 Carolina and Florida.

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2 Two, assist state and local government in
3 public and private entities in South Carolina,
4 Georgia, North Carolina and Florida in
5 implementing the story of the Gullah/Geechee,
6 and preserving Gullah/Geechee folklore, arts,
7 crafts and music.

8 And number three was to assist in
9 identifying and preserving sites, historical
10 data, artifacts and objects associated with
11 the Gullah/Geechee for the benefit and the
12 education of the public.

13 So with that, we -- we're here to get
14 input from you how we can fulfill this task.
15 And feel free, once we get into our general
16 discussion, to give input on what you think is
17 important to make this all happen.

18 But before we get started, there are other
19 guests here. We have people from -- is it
20 University of California -- which school?

21 MS. SACHS: Stamford.

22 MR. HALL: Stamford -- oh, that -- that
23 big one. Well, we welcome you. We're glad to
24 have you here and any input.

25 Now, before we get started, Jeanne is

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2 going to come up and give some additional
3 information and fill in the gap on anything
4 that I've missed.

5 MS. CYRIAQUE: Thank you, Charles.

6 Good morning everyone. Thanks for coming out
7 this morning.

8 As Charles mentioned, the act that created
9 this cultural heritage corridor occurred in
10 2006, so I just want to update you on the last
11 two years since that happened.

12 Well, when you are designated by Congress
13 to be a national heritage area, one of the
14 things that you have to do is to develop a
15 vision for your national heritage area.

16 The Gullah/Geechee National Heritage
17 Corridor is truly unique in the American

18 experience. This is -- there are over 40
19 national heritage areas that exist in this
20 country, and this was the first national
21 heritage area, designated by Congress, to
22 really capture a unique African American
23 experience.

24 So that's one thing that makes us
25 different from other heritage areas. Another
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2 thing that makes our national heritage area
3 truly unique is just the simple size and scope
4 of it.

5 Our heritage area, and I hope you get a
6 chance to look at these maps after our
7 discussion, it extends from Wilmington, North
8 Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. And that
9 takes in over 79 barrier islands, numerous
10 counties in that corridor.

11 And to even zoom in a little bit further
12 from Georgia, that's our entire coastline
13 coming from the upward City of Savannah, Bryan
14 County to the mainland which includes about
15 seven counties in Georgia 30 miles inland.

16 The corridor kind of matches the
17 establishment after the end of the Civil War.
18 The story that I know all of you have heard
19 about, that occurred in Savannah, where the
20 President was asked well, what does -- do the
21 people want. And they said, we want land,
22 which was really mirrors our corridor, 30 miles
23 inland, and the barrier islands.

24 So once we were designated, you have to
25 develop this plan to get a vision of what the
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2 people want the heritage area to interpret. So
3 the commission was formed about 2007, and we as
4 commissioners represent Georgia. We have 23
5 commissioners and they represent the four
6 states in the corridor. And we are really your
7 representatives for a while to get us going.

8 All of the commissioners -- we have fixed
9 terms and we will eventually rotate off. The
10 average life of a national heritage area is
11 about 10 to 15 years. And during that time,
12 you build your national plan, your management
13 plan it's called.

14 And so that's the activity we're now
15 engaged in. And when we got established, there
16 was a lot of myths in the newspaper that the
17 heritage area got \$1,000,000 from Congress.
18 That did not happen.
19 What happens generally is Congress will
20 give you an allocation in your early years.
21 And as you build your management plan and begin
22 to develop the heritage area, then you get more
23 funds from Congress. So I want to put that
24 myth to rest.
25 We did not get \$1,000,000. We got

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2 \$147,000 for our first two years. So most of
3 what we are doing now is going towards our
4 development of our management plan, which will
5 prove to Congress, essentially, that we're on
6 track and we're developing a scope.

7 So how do we go about getting input from
8 the public? Well, in Georgia, during this past
9 month we have begun to visit all the
10 communities in the corridor.

11 So we're really excited to be on Sapelo
12 Island because Sapelo is one of our most
13 important barrier islands to Gullah/Geechee
14 culture.

15 We truly have a unique situation here in
16 Georgia, and we want to hear from the public
17 the things that are important to you to
18 preserve. They can be physical things like
19 houses, praise houses, churches, buildings,
20 schools, or they can be what we call intangible
21 things.

22 And a lot of the people in this room are
23 engaged in some of those activities. Stanley
24 is a netmaker. That is an intangible resource.
25 So we want to hear from you today. I'm not

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2 going to talk much longer. And we just want
3 people come up to the mic, and we're taping
4 this, and just state your name, and tell us
5 what's important on Sapelo Island to you that
6 we should preserve, and what you think the
7 commission should focus on in our management
8 plan.

9 And in case you didn't sign in, please be

10 sure to do so before the end of the meeting,
11 because we have to send all this information in
12 to the federal government that we had these
13 meetings. Y'all now how it is. So I'll now
14 pass the mic on to the first person who would
15 like to speak. Don't everybody --

16 MS. SUMPTER: State your name so that we
17 can know who you -- we're having everything
18 documented so that we can actually get it
19 right.

20 MS. CYRIAQUE: And I gave everybody a
21 newsletter, which is kind just an update of
22 what we've done so far. And we need your
23 comments on our vision, mission and purpose.

24 You can give me a comment card. You can
25 -- for those of you who love to use the

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2 computers, there is a website in there you can
3 send in electronically your comments, and then
4 today you can just talk about your comments.
5 You have got a stand.

6 MR. BENJAMIN HALL: My name is Benjamin
7 Hall. This is home, Sapelo Island, and the Hog
8 Hummock Community. As has been stated, our
9 community is unique and I'm sure you've heard
10 many times part of this, of the uniqueness, is
11 because it's the last intact island-based
12 Gullah/Geechee community in the state.

13 And having said that, everything here is
14 important to our existence, our culture. It's
15 important to the country and the world. And
16 that means that our architecture is important.

17 It's important to preserve the way we
18 built our houses, our -- the way we cook, the
19 way we raise our children, our religious
20 practices.

21 There needs to be a lot of investment in
22 Hog Hummock. It's a precious resource. It
23 would be a tragedy to see its demise, and that
24 means we need help. The community needs help
25 of the commissioners. We need the help of the

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2 state's historical preservation division. It
3 needs help on the national level and we need
4 help in telling our story.

5 When you leave here today, I hope that you

6 will tell the story of our hummock, and also
7 the way we're struggling to continue our
8 existence as a historic community.
9 And I don't want to get into all that. We
10 have many other people here that I'm sure would
11 wish to speak, but we do have our non-profit
12 organizations in the community, SICARS, to add
13 your support for the work that it's doing.
14 And any questions you have on threats to
15 our hummock community, you can get information
16 from SICARS, which Mr. Hall is the president of
17 the board. And thank you for this opportunity.
18 MR. HALL: We need to know what's
19 important to you, what would you like to see
20 preserved that the public would be informed and
21 educated when it comes to the Gullah/Geechee
22 heritage and culture.
23 MS. CYRIAQUE: You want to speak?
24 VOICE: Not really.
25 MS. CYRIAQUE: But you do?

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2 MS. BAILEY: Thank you. Good morning.
3 My name is Cornelia Bailey, and I live here. I
4 am a Saltwater Geechee person. Sometimes we
5 make a distinction of Gullah first, but on
6 Sapelo it's Geechee first, Gullah next.
7 In South Carolina, they say Gullah first,
8 Geechee next. And so we are Geechees here,
9 Saltwater Geechee. And we live in Hog Hummock,
10 not hog hammock. Hummock is a raised piece of
11 land surrounded by saltwater on all sides.
12 A hammock, you know what that is. That's
13 where we're at is a hummock, H-U-M-M-O-C-K.
14 And one of the most precious things we need to
15 preserve is us.
16 When you preserve us, you preserve
17 everything else, because if we don't have us
18 here living in this community of Hog Hummock,
19 then there isn't a need to worry about how long
20 are church services or how we raise our kids
21 because we won't have any.
22 So the main thing is we have to have
23 economic -- some sort of solid economic base
24 center in Hog Hummock, on Greater Sapelo
25 Island, that can help the Gullah and Geechee

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2 live their lives.

3 That means our church services will
4 continue. We will have children that we can
5 raise in the old fashion way to a certain
6 extent. We can fish and hunt fix our famous
7 clams and grits the way we always did.

8 And so there's so many things to preserve,
9 but we can't do it unless the community itself
10 remains intact, and to remain intact we have to
11 have a solid land trust base, so we can buy
12 land when it becomes available to keep the
13 outsiders from invading us, which they are
14 doing now.

15 And this is the land of equal opportunity,
16 but not to sound that I don't want anybody else
17 in, a little part of me don't want nobody else
18 in.

19 We just want it to be Hog Hummock Geechee
20 Community. And in order to do that, we need
21 money so that we can buy it. We can purchase
22 the land, so we can sell it back to our
23 descendants, so they can raise their children,
24 and so forth here in their ancestral land.

25 And that's what we want to do for us, so
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2 us, we, oonuh, anyway you want to pronounce it
3 is we are the ones that own it on Sapelo.

4 MR. WALKER: Hello everybody. My name is
5 Stan Walker, and what I would like to see is
6 for us to be teaching the Gullah/Geechee
7 dialect in the schools, because right now I'm
8 listening from everybody talk, ain't nobody
9 speaking it no more.

10 So we need to preserve it. If you really
11 want us to learn, we have to have it in public
12 schools, so we can say chunk and oonuh
13 come'yuh, binnuh a day.

14 Most of the kids now, oh, can you pass
15 that, please. We want the language back.

16 MS. CYRIAQUE: Ben had mentioned
17 architecture and what is some of the
18 architectural structures on Sapelo you would
19 like to preserve?

20 MS. BAILEY: The Farmer's Alliance Hall,
21 which we're already doing. The old churches --
22 The Farmer's Alliance Hall which we have just
23 completed, both churches, Central Baptist

24 Church and The First African Baptist Church,
25 and believe it or not, we want also to see that
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2 the tabby ruins on Sapelo are preserved.
3 Somebody asked me once why do you want to
4 preserve it -- because my people built it. So
5 I don't care if it's on the state land. The
6 hands of my ancestors put that thing together
7 with hard labor, and I want to see things like
8 that also preserved, because they tell the
9 story of us. And we want to reconstruct the
10 Creek house, the Gilbert's house, and the
11 Mills' house, the Johnson's house, the Hall's
12 house and those -- the Jones' house -- those
13 houses is here and we would like to see them
14 reconstructed.

15 The house of Peggy Underwood, our last
16 midwife, we would like to see those houses
17 preserved and kept in order for our people, and
18 not point years later and say right there used
19 to be the house of the last midwife. We want
20 to be able to say that is the house of the
21 last midwife from Sapelo Island, so we have
22 structures that we need to preserve on this
23 island.

24 We have to work and have carpenters.
25 Freddy Wilson, his house also, because he built

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2 my casket. We have to have the house
3 preserved.

4 MR. BENJAMIN HALL: If I may, the
5 Rosenwald school also. It's an important
6 structure in many of our lives.

7 We received our early education there and
8 it's still being used by the community, but it
9 does need some preservation work.

10 MS. CYRIAQUE: Would anybody like to
11 comment about Cultural Day and why that's
12 important?

13 MR. HALL: As a commissioner, I didn't
14 want to give too much input, because we don't
15 want to influence your thinking or whatever you
16 say.

17 Hopefully, at the end, I plan to say a few
18 things, but -- and I'll get to Cultural Day if
19 it's not explained here. But I know there are

20 other people who are burning with some good
21 thoughts. Nettye, haven't heard from you.
22 She's been around almost as long as I have.
23 What's important?

24 MS. EVANS. Good morning. My name is
25 Nettye Handy Evans, and I'm a descendant of

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2 Sapelo. I grew up in the community of Racoon
3 Bluff where the historical First African
4 Baptist Church is located. It's 143 years old,
5 and it has been preserved by SCAD in Savannah.

6 But dealing with Cultural Days, this will
7 be the 15th annual observance of the culture on
8 Sapelo, and it has certainly become a landmark
9 activity on the island, in that people come
10 from near and far to this observance.

11 We have people coming to entertain,
12 vendors coming, and the food that's served,
13 sold on that occasion, much of it represents
14 the heritage of the island. The mullet fish is
15 very popular. The shrimp and grits is one of
16 the items on the menu.

17 And we look forward to having not only
18 descendants come back, but people who hear
19 about us can come and learn about what's going
20 on. Stan is one of the people who will be
21 demonstrating his netmaking. Jerome Dixon is
22 here who is a basketweaver, and that's part of
23 the culture that we want to preserve on the
24 island.

25 So we hope that those of you who are here

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2 for the first time will pass the word on. It
3 is always held on the third Saturday in
4 October, and this year it happens to be October
5 17th. It's an all day function and the ferries
6 run all day long starting at 9:00 o'clock in
7 the morning for the guests and the last ferry
8 leaves at 5:00 o'clock.

9 You can go to the website and find out
10 about the cost and the time and how to purchase
11 a ticket, so y'all come.

12 MR. REGINALD HALL: Good morning. My name
13 is Reginald Hall. Mr. Hall, Charles Hall is my
14 father. Ben Hall is my uncle, a number of
15 cousins and descendants are here, but I think

16 we should cover some basics.
17 Number one being land retention, there
18 should be something set up for the
19 Gullah/Geechee as a whole to get what I know is
20 education of land retention.
21 With what I understand, there are
22 14,000,000 acres lost over the years by
23 Gullah/Geechees. At some point we have to
24 understand through education how to start
25 preserving our lands.

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2 Here on Sapelo, our understanding is we
3 were at one point 13 communities and over 500
4 plus people. We're now reduced to one
5 community, and we can go as high 60 people here
6 on the island left.

7 So I think we have to have education on
8 how to develop our economic base. The only way
9 we can survive here on Sapelo now is to have
10 some form economics brought back to the island
11 to bring descendants back outside of the mass
12 exodus we've already experienced.

13 We talk about cemeteries. I think
14 cemeteries are important in our culture.
15 Number one, you're talking about ancestors on
16 an island for over 200 years, but just within
17 the recent 100 plus days I myself at 43 years
18 old have learned that I didn't know about more
19 than one cemetery on the island.

20 So when we talk about education again, I
21 know that ceremoniously Saltwater Geechee are
22 proud of our ancestors as they lie dormant in
23 the ground to rest, but is it rest when we
24 don't know where they are?

25 So I believe it's important that we

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2 allocate if not funding, time towards education
3 on finding the cemeteries here on the island,
4 so that we can now put the proper headstones
5 and know who we are and where our families are
6 buried.

7 I know Stanley mentioned dialect. I
8 believe it's important that as I do not know
9 how to speak Geechee, it's important that at
10 some point we teach our youth about the
11 language, because how does it become preserved

12 if in fact we don't how to teach it.

13 When we talk about land, let's go back to
14 land, reclamation of lands. Over the years
15 just here on Sapelo we've lost over one billion
16 dollars worth of land.

17 The numbers are facts. We have to figure
18 out one, how to stop the loss of land through
19 what I consider illegal means.

20 My understanding, if there's no clear
21 title on heirs you cannot sell land in the
22 United States of America. At what point does
23 that stop?

24 We talk about our cooking. You know, our
25 cooking is going with our elders as they're

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2 passing away because we're not teaching the
3 youth the basics of how to cook the food.
4 Education on this island, and I'm now just
5 speaking about Sapelo. Schools had been here
6 for years all the way back to one of the
7 original Rosenwald schools, but now we have
8 none.

9 So even though the youth may enjoy going
10 across the water, imagine how many would enjoy
11 coming across the water towards the east here,
12 if for nothing else than the ecological points
13 of education about the island, if for nothing
14 else to see outside of the mainland ways how
15 island people actually have to be survivalists.

16 So when we look at all of the aspects and
17 not wanting to hold up too much time because
18 there are 20 more I could go over, because
19 right now on Sapelo we have dilapidating tabby
20 structures.

21 You're talking about structures that are
22 100 plus years old. The reason that they're
23 dilapidating is, I don't believe one we're
24 educated on how to save the structures. So why
25 don't we form or formulate some educational

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2 base of how to save our tabby structures, as I
3 believe they're important to our history. And
4 then one of my last points about Sapelo in
5 general, culture preservation.

6 When you say the word preservation it's
7 thought of as maybe 10, 20, maybe a couple of

8 decades, but we're talking about hundreds of
9 years that this culture should now be able to
10 sustain in preservation.
11 How do we do that? Educate ourselves on
12 culture first, and those are all the preceding
13 things we just talked about I think would be
14 important towards saving this section of the
15 Saltwater Geechee, but then as a template to
16 understand how, on the mainland, we have to run
17 this coast within the corridor, and implement
18 everything that's being talked about today.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. HALL: I'm sure there are other
21 burning concerns. What do you like to see
22 preserved? As we're getting people rushing to
23 the mic, let me throw a couple of things out.
24 We talked a little bit about food, but the
25 uniqueness about Sapelo as a kid was if we had
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2 a meal of red peas and rice or pumpkin and
3 rice. Do we have seeds from the old red peas
4 that have been there generations?

5 MS. BAILEY: Yes, we do.

6 MR. HALL: And I have heard a yes we do
7 have some that probably date back 100 years.
8 That's been preserved. As we plant the peas,
9 we never eat it all because we have to have
10 seeds to plant again.

11 I'm not sure about the pumpkin, but I
12 remember the distinctive taste that pumpkin had
13 when I was a kid that I didn't -- I didn't
14 rush to get.

15 The point I'm trying to make -- the point
16 I'm trying to make, how do you preserve red pea
17 seeds that 100 years from now it will still be
18 a part of Sapelo? At 4:00 in the morning I do
19 my best thinking, perhaps put it in a time
20 capsule or -- you know, we're doing this in
21 this country already. But if we can make
22 Sapelo and some of these things important
23 enough that the federal government will
24 preserve it, with all of the other things we're
25 already preserving, that's -- that's another

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2 way we can do it.

3 As we talked about cooking, there are

4 Gullah/Geechee cookbooks already published. If
5 we talk about the language, there is the
6 Gullah/Geechee Bible. All of these things, I
7 think should be preserved in a way they can
8 survive another 100 years.
9 And I know, specifically, about some.
10 There is a Gullah/Geechee songbook. So we need
11 then to look at all these things. And we've
12 already mentioned the sweetgrass baskets, so
13 with that think about where are the cemeteries
14 on Sapelo, those we know about and those we
15 don't about. And we need to find out where
16 these graves are, and with DNA, can we get
17 enough DNA from them to see who -- who we're
18 related to, in terms of the people that are
19 buried there.
20 Since we're here and alive and they're
21 there, I think we can establish some real
22 links, so perhaps you can expound on that.
23 MS. BAILEY: Talking about the red peas,
24 but we also have climbing butter beans that we
25 plant specifically on Sapelo. When I went back

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2 to Africa, I saw in West Africa the bean bush
3 with the beans growing up on the sticks like we
4 do, and I'm going that's how we plant on
5 Sapelo.

6 And so we have kept that seed in my
7 refrigerator there's that seed that we plant
8 that seed every year, so we put it up on a twig
9 or bush or something and it grows there until
10 the hard frost hit.

11 So we have also preserved and kept those
12 seeds. So there are things that we have kept,
13 and rice is something that will always be a
14 part of our culture. If you're a rice eater,
15 you're Geechee.

16 So, you know, you can't cook a dish unless
17 there's rice. You can't have a meal at least
18 once a day, that will be rice. We cook any
19 kind of rice dish that you want.

20 We will cook rice on rice, it doesn't
21 matter. Peas and rice is different. When you
22 say peas and rice or peas with rice, it's
23 different. Peas and rice we cook together.
24 Peas with rice we serve separately.

25 So it's on hand, that's how you serve that

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2 particular dish. So we have everything is
3 served with rice, especially the afternoon
4 meal.

5 So you have Mulatto rice, red rice,
6 Spanish rice, open rice, rice pearl -- you just
7 have rice with everything. I mean, you can go
8 on and on and on with what we put in our rice
9 dishes.

10 We have got our society mixers. You
11 couldn't get to the mainland, so we had rice.
12 We had seafood. We had vegetables, and to make
13 more tasteful, you combine the together a lot,
14 and it was a complete meal instead of having
15 two or three dishes.

16 Now we have one, two, three dishes, you
17 know, we had it all in one pot. So when they
18 said come on and eat, you know, come get
19 something to eat, it was all in one pot.

20 And so all on one plate, and so you get
21 whatever was given to you, so that's the
22 tradition. It was good food. It was healthy
23 food, so it wasn't greasy. It wasn't grits and
24 butter. It wasn't full of this thing and full
25 of that thing.

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2 Now you go in the cabinet now and you put
3 a little bit of thyme and you had a little bit
4 of Accent. You got a little bit of sugar. You
5 got a little bit of this thing. We messed up
6 our cultural dish by adding all that stuff
7 that we've been introduced to by outsiders.

8 We've got to -- on Cultural Day, we try to
9 do it culturally correct. And it tastes
10 better. Stanley cooks a mean dish. My son
11 Marvin, he can cook a mean dish and J.R. can
12 cook.

13 All the menfolks in here can cook, so that
14 can be documented anywhere. We wouldn't marry
15 a man from Sapelo unless he cooked. So they
16 all can cook. Everybody here can cook a mean
17 dish of shrimp and gravy with grits and so
18 forth. They all can cook.

19 So they wouldn't go hungry if there's
20 not a woman in the house or anything. They can
21 cook. They can not only cook it, they can

22 harvest it. They said the man, you know, bring
23 home bacon. The woman cooks it.
24 The menfolks, that's what you bring home
25 and cook it. So -- and they do it totally

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2 correct also. Anybody got anything to add on
3 that?

4 MR. HALL: One -- one thing, and I promise
5 not to keep jumping up, but when you mentioned
6 the cooking, I never would forget as a kid, 12
7 -- 12 years or something in that age range, my
8 mother would wash, wash clothes on Monday
9 morning.

10 And I had to cook breakfast and breakfast
11 was basically a simple one; grits, eggs and
12 bacon. But I questioned well, why do I have to
13 cook? And she said in case you get married and
14 your wife gets sick, you all will be able to
15 eat.

16 And that's another important factor based
17 on how you grew up on Sapelo. If you didn't
18 cook, you didn't eat.

19 MR. GROVNER: I'm J.R. Grovner. I didn't
20 do a lot of cooking, so I ain't one of the ones
21 that cooked a lot. A lot of the stuff that I
22 would like to see preserved, I never had a
23 chance to see rice growing on Sapelo. So
24 Cornelia had some rice, the seeds or whatever.

25 MS. BAILEY: Still got some.

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2 MR. GROVNER: So I planted some and I
3 learned growing a little patch of it, never did
4 anything with it, but sugar cane, we used to
5 grow sugar cane, had did that a few times. I'd
6 like to see that be preserved. Syrup, a lot of
7 the fishing, getting clams and stuff like that,
8 and a lot of the herbs, as far as life ever
9 lasting, stuff like that.

10 Again, she still do a lot of it. A lot
11 of the older people used to do it a lot.
12 That's some of the stuff I'd like to see
13 preserved. We used to always go get clams, you
14 know, got a lot of people still doing it, but
15 not like when I was younger, and the fishing,
16 making cast nets, seagrass baskets.

17 That's picking up more and more, stuff

18 like that, but it's still -- this is a lot of
19 stuff and I ain't coming from my mind right now
20 that I would like to preserved on the island.

21 MS. SUMPTER: What is your name?

22 MR. GROVNER: J.R. My real name is
23 Ebron R. Grovner, Jr. Everybody calls me J.R.

24 MS. SUMPTER: Thank you. It would be
25 great for everybody to actually remind us who
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2 you are. We are making sure that we --

3 MR. GROVNER: Mr. Maurice Dixon fixing to
4 stand up.

5 MS. BAILEY: He was born in the time of
6 who shot J.R. He has his father's name and
7 didn't like his father's name. We settled on
8 J.R.

9 MR. DIXON: Listen, my concern is the land
10 on Sapelo; what can we do to preserve land on
11 Sapelo, especially the older generation. We
12 lose more land through the older generation
13 than the younger generation. So maybe they're
14 retired and that's when they want to sell land.
15 They have lived their life and they want to
16 sell land.

17 We got people in this room that have sold
18 land and are trying to sell land, so where that
19 leave us. When they sell the land, the next
20 generation have nothing to look back on.

21 So that's part of my big concern on
22 Sapelo. Everything else is fine, but without
23 the land, how do you grow rice, how do you keep
24 the traditional things going.

25 We have some stuff in place, but we don't
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2 have enough stuff in place to take the land
3 on Sapelo. So also talking to the people in
4 the room to let them know that we know what's
5 going on.

6 You're out there selling land, come back
7 the next day and smile and talk to them, but
8 oh, y'all didn't do nothing wrong, but deep
9 down, you know, we were just a slapping.

10 You know, why you sell your land? You
11 come here and preach to us, come sit under the
12 tree and laugh and talk with us and you sold
13 your land.

14 So how's that helping the community. You
15 come to church, come to the meetings, oh we
16 need to do this and that. Next week you sold
17 your land. So y'all are not helping.

18 We need older people to help us preserve
19 the land so we can continue on. Y'all continue
20 to sell the land and then we can't continue on.
21 Everything die, y'all die everything going to
22 die with y'all, because we had nothing left.

23 So that's my concern on Sapelo. So we
24 can't continue to keep going without the older
25 people supporting us, so we have something in

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2 the future to work with. Thanks.

3 MS. BAILEY: That's right.

4 MS. CYRIAQUE: Basketmakers on the island,
5 you're included too. Stanley.

6 MR. WALKER: Morning. I don't have to
7 talk very much because of my voice. I am a
8 basketmaker on the island, and I learned
9 basketweaving about 10 years now. And since I
10 was doing it, I developed a love for it, and
11 that's one of the things that I would like to
12 see us keep going with, the younger people.

13 Also, because of we're losing land, and
14 the grass that we use to make the baskets with
15 will be just in South Carolina because of
16 developers.

17 We are losing the grass. You have to
18 substitute the grass with pine needles which is
19 not a grass basket. It don't have the three
20 grasses. So on this island we have it. And I
21 would like to see our land where the grass
22 grows at to be preserved so that we could
23 continue to do this, and get more young people
24 involved, which is one of my concerns.

25 MR. JOHN WALKER: My main concern, being a

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2 younger person -- my name is John Charles
3 Walker.

4 MR. BAILEY: Alfonso Bailey.

5 MR. WALKER: But, you know, my main
6 concern is just being younger generation, you
7 know, jobs, trying to get jobs on the island
8 and maintain jobs at the same time.

9 You know, you have a lot people who want

10 to stay on the island, but we don't have enough
11 backing to kind of get everything going, get
12 everything moving or whatever, you know, where
13 we can keep the younger generation over here
14 and satisfied with jobs, you know.

15 And through that, you know, you got us
16 over here, like you got a lot of younger
17 generation I'm sure would, wouldn't mind going
18 out and learning how to make baskets. Me
19 myself, I know how to make one. My cousin, he
20 knows how to make one.

21 But, you know, trying to get our own
22 businesses started, like J.R. was saying, you
23 know, you got clamming, you got the oysters,
24 you got fishing and all this other stuff we can
25 also be doing, because that's also a part of

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2 our heritage. That's pretty much everyone that
3 grew up here, you know, making baskets,
4 fishing, going out in the marshes and doing all
5 this kind of other stuff. You know, if y'all
6 were willing to kind of loan us a little money,
7 you know, we can get a lot of this stuff done,
8 you know. I'm passing the mic over here.

9 MR. GROVNER: Alfonso, thank you. I got
10 a comment on what he said. On the older side,
11 not the youngest. When I was young, I was the
12 only kid on the island, and it's kind of hard
13 living on Sapelo. Ain't that many sources of
14 income.

15 And as far as like Maurice said about the
16 land, that is a real issue. We got a lot of
17 land over here we could make money off of, as
18 far as I was talking to another DNR employee
19 about growing hay and shipping it off, maybe
20 selling it.

21 That's a source of income that could be
22 that wouldn't hurt the environment. Like J.C.
23 was saying oysters, clams and stuff, you know.
24 Fortunately I was able to make it. It ain't
25 easy and stay on the island, but like he said

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2 there's a lot of people that would like to stay
3 on the island. We got kinfolk in Germany,
4 California, everywhere. Wasn't no jobs on the
5 island.

6 When I was young, I think we had 120
7 people on the island. Now we're down to 47 or
8 50, something like that, and it's steadily
9 going down. People have to leave out, ain't no
10 jobs over here. You know, I would like to
11 stay. It's hard, I'm trying to do it. I don't
12 know.

13 MS. EVANS: Again, I'm Nettye Evans. One
14 of the things we did not mention was hunting.
15 It has been a way of life in the past and the
16 preservice of meat was unusual because there
17 was hog killing time, and then wheat would be
18 smoked and kept in a smokehouse.

19 People survived because of killing deer,
20 hunting deer and raccoons, squirrels and the
21 like. All of that provided a source of food
22 for the communities. And that is something
23 that we would certainly like to see preserved.

24 You don't want -- much of the hunting that
25 is done now is done by people who come to the
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2 island to hunt, but we want to certainly
3 preserve that way of life.

4 MS. BAILEY: Y'all seem to be winding
5 down. Everybody mostly expressed -- she said
6 we still got 30 minutes. Okay. Well,
7 everybody expressed their feelings about what
8 we need and what we don't need and what we
9 should have and that's great.

10 When I was growing up on the island, we
11 had one or two entrepreneurs on the island,
12 Mr. Hall, the Hall brothers, father and mother
13 both operated the store.

14 There was one in Racoon Bluff at the time
15 also, and that basically was it, because
16 everybody who wasn't retired or going to school
17 worked for Richard J. Reynolds.

18 So you had an economic base of the Richard
19 J. Reynolds people. And once that got pulled
20 from under you, that was it. So the island was
21 sold in 1969, and the rest of it in 1976.
22 There was no jobs left.

23 If you didn't get a job with the newly
24 created Department of Natural Resources on
25 Sapelo, or the Marine Institute here since
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2 1953, that was it.

3 And when those people who were working,
4 when they died and retired, the jobs were not
5 replaced. Usually, the excuse was there was
6 budget problems, and so we understand budgets
7 as well as anyone else.

8 But that was also a way that we had to
9 leave the island. And now once again, the
10 population kept dropping. In 1974, there was
11 144 people here. Now in 2009 we have 47 people
12 here.

13 So you can see where it's not even worth
14 doing the math. What has happened, the school
15 closed here in 1978. We didn't have schools
16 anymore. The kids were then bused to the
17 mainland. And there still is -- right now we
18 have six children from the community, six kids
19 from the other part of the island whose parents
20 work here, makes a dozen children that travels
21 that boat.

22 I would like to see our community have
23 more children in the community and grows up. I
24 mean, it's pitiful when you look at we've got
25 six kids in the community going to school from
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2 when I was in the third grade, we had 118 kids
3 itself going to school, and that wasn't
4 counting the kids that was still home, and --
5 and that was in 1953.

6 So now you don't have that kind of
7 population or the population, you don't have
8 the economic base. You don't have people who
9 is here to start an entrepreneurial business to
10 keep it going.

11 And whatever we do on the island and want
12 to do on the island hinges on what DNR will let
13 us do, because they tell us we can't have this,
14 you can't do this, you can't do this. The
15 environment can't stand this. This can't do
16 this. Y'all can't bring this over. You can't
17 have this.

18 So we got so many can't haves, can't do,
19 do not, shall not, and so forth until that
20 discourages people from moving back home, us
21 from doing stuff, so I'm not here to paint
22 a pretty picture.

23 The picture is not pretty. It is ugly

24 when it comes to us surviving in Hog Hummock.

25 So we are surviving because we are survivors.

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2 We had the harshest thing called slavery and we
3 still survived it.

4 We're still trying to work around with the
5 law, within the law, and we're trying to kick
6 butts to get things and get what we need to
7 have it done on Sapelo.

8 So we need people to work with us, such as
9 y'all, and everybody else to listen to us and
10 take us seriously. We're not just talking to
11 the wind here. We're fighting for our lives.

12 We're fighting for our children. We're
13 fighting for the unborn, and that means the
14 ones we haven't even seen yet. So this is a
15 long and hard fight. And we need everybody to
16 stand up.

17 And we said we need help, we actually mean
18 we need help. We really need help. We need
19 help through this Gullah/Geechee Corridor Act.
20 We need help from our politicians. We need
21 help -- oh, forget the politicians. They don't
22 do anything.

23 So I just mention that because it needs to
24 be mentioned. We don't get any help from the
25 politicians except for the election time and

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2 they come with a card and say vote for me, you
3 know. And then the local ones say well, DNR
4 said they were going to do that, and so we
5 don't feel that we should do that.

6 So we don't get anything from them at all.
7 They don't pick up garbage. We're being taxed
8 out of existence here, because people that's
9 coming in get special privileges. They can get
10 dirt, when we can't get dirt. They can bring
11 over their equipment when we can't. We ask to
12 bring over equipment, they say no, and those
13 kind of things.

14 And so what's happened is those are
15 discouraging factors, so if you keep throwing
16 enough discouraging factors in the way, people
17 will give up. We are not about to give up.
18 We're going to fight to the end.

19 And what it is, equal justice for

20 everybody. We are indigenous people. Not only
21 do we need equal justice, we need some special
22 justice because of indigenous people.

23 We were here for 200 years. We deserve
24 some kind of special assessment that other
25 people don't have, and can't have, and

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2 shouldn't have. So we shouldn't have to bow
3 down to anyone else.

4 My thing is bow down to no man. Only
5 person you need to bow down to is God. And so
6 we're not going to bow down to anybody to
7 lessen ourselves to get what we need. The
8 lowest man would work for it and should work
9 for it. And so we shouldn't have to suffer the
10 indignities in order to survive.

11 Sapelo should be a thriving place,
12 especially Hog Hummock. With all of our
13 understanding, and our culture, and our
14 education, and our common sense that we have,
15 we have enough common sense to do anything that
16 we need to do.

17 Now, some people say, well, people in the
18 audience is not educated. If you don't have
19 common sense, forget your education. My mother
20 always said, and this is a direct quote,
21 "there's a lot of educated jackasses in this
22 world."

23 So it doesn't take education. It takes
24 common sense and tenacity to do what you're
25 going to do, and that's what we need to do, and

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2 we're going to do it, and so we just want equal
3 treatment on this island and this community.
4 And so we don't want to be think of as less.

5 We don't want DNR or anybody to have a say
6 against that. DNR people go off first. You
7 have to go off, you G8 go off, and then folks
8 in Hog Hummock last. And we should be first on
9 the list.

10 I don't want to ride a DNR boat and see
11 the guests coming over, to the Reynolds House,
12 pushing my children aside to get off the boat
13 and get their luggage so they can get off the
14 boat first.

15 They need to get off first. The guests

16 who are coming get off last, you know. They're
17 not paying me, so why should I have to wait on
18 them. So it's a whole bunch of things, and
19 it's little things that we need to correct
20 before it becomes big things.

21 If we don't correct those, we're going to
22 still be struggling, so we need to correct a
23 whole lot of stuff -- got a DNR person behind
24 us back here.

25 Because without DNR being this big entity,
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2 that it is that controls a lot, and when it
3 controls a lot it tends to control the
4 individuals. When it controls the individuals
5 it also makes you -- it diminishes you.

6 And I used to work for DNR. I refused to
7 wear their uniform, so the supervisor at the
8 time said, Cornelia, why don't you wear a
9 uniform? I said, a uniform means I belongs to
10 y'all. I belongs to no man. So I wouldn't
11 wear a uniform. When there was a VIP coming, I
12 would put the uniform on.

13 I didn't wear a uniform, because I wear no
14 man's uniform, because I belong to no one else,
15 and this community has to think in that way
16 also.

17 You belong no one. You belong to
18 yourself. You belong to this community, and I
19 told one of them once, I said, my allegiance
20 goes first to my people, my community, and the
21 job can take any place they want to after that.

22 And that's when I testified against the
23 state while I worked for them, because what I
24 was doing was right, and what they wanted me to
25 do was wrong, and I don't handle that very

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2 good.

3 So we need to band together, and not only
4 do we need to bash the outsiders that's
5 coming in, we need to bash our own people
6 selling land. Because if we don't sell the
7 land, they can't come in. They can't build
8 250,000 and \$300,000 houses, which is going to
9 raise our taxes.

10 Peoples' taxes went from 100 to \$600 in no
11 time at all in some -- some instance. Some

12 people are paying 2 to \$3,000 a year for tax.
13 How long can they hold that out without the
14 land going on the sheriff's sale? Now, who is
15 there to buy it -- these people is going to be
16 there to buy it.

17 And so henceforth the community, are we
18 going to find a way to stop that? We're just
19 fighting losing battle because we're not
20 addressing -- what we need to address is the
21 stabilization of the land, a viable land trust
22 that we can buy the land.

23 But we also have the old adage that black
24 people don't have money to buy land, so I'm not
25 going to let this black person have this land

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2 to sell.

3 I'm going to let this white man have this
4 land to sell, and he buys it, and we get left
5 out. You must remember folks, that white man
6 most of the time, he went to the bank and got a
7 loan to buy it too. You can go to the bank and
8 get a loan and buy it also.

9 So let's keep our land among ourselves,
10 and don't let other people come nearby you and
11 give you that fool idea that they can only
12 afford it and you can't.

13 And so when you are selling it for such a
14 price, \$275,000 an acre is not helping us. Our
15 community is going because of greed. Sell it
16 less if you need to sell it. Sell it first
17 to your neighbors and your kinfolks first.

18 And then if they can't buy it, if you feel
19 that you have to sell it, I guess that's your
20 choice, but think of your fellow person.

21 Stop thinking about what you need to put
22 in your pocket. And that's all I have to say.

23 Thanks.

24 MR. DIXON: Just a couple of other things
25 I want to say; one is we need to support SICARS

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2 more than we're doing so they can help
3 conditions in this community fighting with
4 people all the time. We didn't have all the
5 right people at SICARS at one point, but we're
6 turning things around hoping SICARS would be a
7 benefit to this community in the end.

8 And we need to support Reggie Hall. I
9 mean, you may not agree with everything he's
10 doing, but still support him, you know what I'm
11 saying. He's talking about or thinking about
12 or read about, go sit down and talk to Reggie.
13 He'll explain everything to you.

14 I don't agree with everything he's doing,
15 but he's doing something. So go down to
16 SICARS, talk to Reggie. See what you can do to
17 help support SICARS in the community, because
18 we need -- Reggie right now, he's a young voice
19 and all generations we need in SICARS to
20 continue on SICARS. Thank you.

21 MR. SIMPKINS: Good morning. I'm Ulysses
22 Simpkins. I am not a descendant, but I am a
23 SICARS board member. I come from the outside,
24 but I've embraced this island and the people
25 here on Sapelo have embraced me.

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2 They did begin by making me welcomed when
3 I'd come. I learned a lot about the history of
4 the island, which I did before coming here, and
5 I'm still learning some things, but there still
6 are a lot things that have gone on.

7 I've not heard anything said this morning
8 that's inaccurate. Land is one of the most
9 important things with the whole situation,
10 because if you've got no place to stand, then
11 you've got nothing.

12 I once had an agricultural teacher -- I'm
13 from South Miami, Dade County. He said if you
14 can buy some land, even if it's swampland on
15 the water, don't ever sell it no matter what.
16 Hold on to it, because one day it's going to be
17 worth a lot more than you paid for it and it's
18 still yours.

19 I'm a retired educator. One of things the
20 I noticed is that blue building, the school
21 house. I keep thinking, with all the charter
22 schools that are all over this place, we can
23 have a charter school here.

24 But you don't have to have 100 kids or 50
25 kids to do that. And there's money out there

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2 to get it going. I know a lot of people lot of
3 people, Reggie, a lot of people, Nettye,

4 Charles, Ben, Alfonso -- I've talked to a lot
5 people.
6 You've talked to a lot people over the
7 years, but the great gap in communication, in
8 some cases, maybe not enough people are talking
9 to some of the right people.
10 Because there are some people out there
11 who have the interest and heart and they know
12 about it. There are people, educators in
13 Savannah where I live at now, that are retired
14 educators, who taught children 30, 35 years,
15 who have no idea where Sapelo is, never heard
16 of it. And as for me, I've been in Savannah
17 nine years. How did you find out about it?
18 Well, I'm a graduate of Massachusetts '54,
19 and I have a vested interest in barrier
20 islands. I'm from barrier islands in North
21 Carolina, South Carolina, and sitting watching
22 TV one day -- I'm not a big television fan, but
23 I do watch the news programming and
24 documentaries.
25 I'm watching one about the barrier islands

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2 in Georgia. So I got my little map out -- I
3 wait a minute. This is right down the road. I
4 can go down there. So I came, not knowing that
5 you were supposed to have a reservation.
6 So after I got to the dock, I asked him,
7 all right, how much? He looks at me and says
8 you got a ticket? I said, no. I said, how
9 much is the ticket?
10 He said you won't be going today. I said,
11 all right. What should I do? Where do get the
12 ticket? There's a visitors center. Go up
13 there and talk to them. They'll schedule you.
14 I went up. I never told her, but the lady
15 says -- I explained to her that I was a teacher
16 in South Carolina. I didn't know any better.
17 I just came on down. I thought you got on the
18 ferry and came on.
19 She said, I got good news for you. You're
20 going today. I just had two cancellations and
21 you don't have to tell them a thing. Here's
22 the ticket. So I came.
23 Yvonne Grovner was the person doing the
24 tour and I got to see all the island. I said,
25 I'm tired of writing. Yvonne said, she said

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2 write it down. So she said are you writing a
3 book? I said no. I said -- I told her who I
4 was.

5 I said, I didn't bring a camera because
6 I've never been on the island. I didn't know
7 if people would be offended by that invasion of
8 their privacy, but I would be back. So I've
9 been coming ever since as a volunteer, done a
10 lot of cultivating, one one one along with the
11 help of a lot of people sitting in this
12 room right now.

13 And I am grateful for what they're trying
14 to do and we need to get more of the word out
15 to other people, because those butter beans
16 that you're talking about, we got those in
17 South Carolina too, and we've saved some of
18 that stuff.

19 Unless I missed it, nobody was talking
20 about okra. I didn't hear that word come up.
21 Yes. Well, she knows about the rice and all
22 the things about that.

23 But I appreciate what they're doing and
24 everybody coming out. I would just say I have
25 your best interests at heart here.

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2 MS. CYRIAQUE: Thank you.

3 MR. REGINALD HALL: I just wanted to
4 mention one more thing that I think is
5 imperative, especially being a barrier island,
6 solar power, turbine -- turbine energy. I mean
7 I believe that this is one of, if not the best
8 places to conduct that type of experiment for
9 the opportunity for the cleaner environment.

10 I believe if allocated right portions of
11 funding, we would be able to almost come off
12 the grid.

13 I know there are about 17.4 cents per
14 kilowatt is being given back, once you create
15 some form of solar power for residential.

16 When we think about gardening here on the
17 island, food growth, you know the ground table
18 initiative is a big one here. My cousin J.R.
19 mentioned the -- growing hay, but we have
20 enough lands over here where we can do the sod,
21 soybeans, as I know America right now has

22 reduced the soybean growth because of lack of
23 lands being used.

24 You know Brazil is getting a lot of the
25 soybean industry. So when you talk about

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2 economic building, there's solar power and
3 ground table initiatives are really thought
4 about here on the island. I think it would be
5 a really big, big idea for Sapelo.

6 MR. HALL: Anyone else? Okay.

7 MS. FLORES: Pamela Flores -- Pamela
8 Flores. I'm a volunteer at SICARS, and being
9 here last Sunday, what I discovered is that
10 essentially the Marsh Act that the State of
11 Georgia is actually implementing or has been
12 since the 1950s, that in conjunction with this
13 newly appointed commission from the National
14 Park Service, I mean it should really be
15 working in conjunction with each other.

16 And being that division of people, the
17 ones that are here, you have researchers
18 coming. Yes, they're educated. That's what it
19 means, I mean it stands very strong.

20 So essentially, the people who live on the
21 islands could be the ones that assist with the
22 research, not just within the institution. So
23 that's my comment.

24 MR. HALL: Okay. One other thing I was
25 thinking, we do have some guests here who might

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2 have a different perspective. We'd like to
3 hear any input that you might have, in terms of
4 meeting the mandate from Congress, in terms of
5 preserving the culture and the heritage, either
6 from what you know from experience seeing in
7 the world or here today. And after you, our
8 manager is here. Fred, we'd like get some input
9 from you also. So -- and we're going to wind it up
10 -- well, I won't say what time, but can we hear
11 from you?

12 MS. ELBRON: Thank you. Sorry, Paula
13 Elbron and I am from Philadelphia, but now I
14 live in California. And it's really been a
15 great experience to hear what the concerns are
16 here.

17 I have to say that probably one of the

18 most important cultural history experiences to
19 me is learning about Gullah/Geechee culture,
20 actually probably in the early '70s. So it's
21 -- it's really disturbing at how hard everybody
22 has to fight to have a presence.

23 And the corridor seems like a great
24 initiative, but one of the things I hear is how
25 Sapelo is in this constant struggle to bring

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2 economic opportunities here, as well as
3 preserve land and culture, that intimate
4 relationship between the two.

5 I think the last comment was critical that
6 we who are not from here, we don't appreciate
7 and learn and figure out the collaborative
8 relationship with the people of the islands,
9 that we're not experts coming in at all, but
10 have a great deal to learn from the people who
11 are here, and how we can be an important link
12 to a collaborative relationship, but really
13 help us work together.

14 So every one I've heard here sounds very
15 important. I think the point of land retention
16 and economic development are absolutely
17 critical. And so for us who don't live here, a
18 plan to figure out ways in which a kind of -- I
19 think you called it a land trust -- ways in
20 which we can support the initiatives of people
21 here seem really critical.

22 So we expect in the next few days, the
23 group of people I've come with to really --
24 actually last week we were talking a bit about
25 what the possibilities, after we -- the

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2 proposal that Reginald gave me yesterday -- we
3 were trying to think through so what -- what
4 are the some of the ways that Sapelo can be as
5 it is and retain what the people want to
6 retain.

7 And the thing I think we kind of worked
8 around a lot was this point about education,
9 could the resource here be kind of like a
10 charter school as the -- as the thing, but some
11 kind of school initiative that really does make
12 this an intimate part of their curriculum of
13 the Gullah/Geechee culture, marine -- whatever

14 -- the marine resource piece. This is a really
15 critical piece.
16 The two of those together really do, I
17 think, build on what's here, and maybe able to
18 generate some funds that are from the
19 government funds to support this kind of
20 project so it might be sustainable. But I'm
21 saying more than I should.
22 What's really been so important is to hear
23 what the concerns are, and it gives us a lot to
24 think about in terms of kind of, if you will,
25 kind of a collaborative relationship.

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2 MS. CYRIAQUE: Mr. Hay, do you care to
3 speak?

4 MR. HAY: My name is Fred Hay, and I work
5 for the -- for the DNR. You've heard a little
6 bit about what we do. At least I'm watching
7 Cornelia's back.

8 You know, in listening, and listening to
9 all the comments and in most of the comments
10 I've heard and had some of the conversations
11 when I'm with people, I think one of the
12 challenges for DNR is to understand what's
13 needed, understand the initiative to make
14 changes, and then figure how to be involved
15 with that.

16 It's not always very easy. And I hate
17 this word, but I'll use it; it's not always
18 easy to tell where it's appropriate to step in.

19 As Cornelia mentioned, I think it's been
20 easy for DNR to come in as paternalistic role
21 that was vacated by the -- by the demise of
22 Mr. Reynolds and what he had here.

23 And there are times where that seems to be
24 welcome and there are times when that is not
25 welcome. And it is -- it is a constant

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2 challenge to understand where the department
3 can put its efforts, and where it shouldn't put
4 its efforts. And there's not always agreement
5 about that even within the department.

6 I think the commission is exciting,
7 because we have such a turnover in our
8 department. We've had such a turnover in the
9 last five years that the ability to redefine

10 the role of the island, or the role of the
11 department on the island, is ripe, kind of like
12 we feel the same thing nationally, I think that
13 opportunity is here.

14 It's unfortunately, though, right now
15 we're losing people -- 27 more people were let
16 go from our parks division. And we're crippled
17 by that right at the same time we feel like
18 there's all this potential to leap forward with
19 this. We're hampered by money.

20 That should not stop us, because when the
21 vision is there, the minute moneys there, you
22 insert the vision. So it's not an excuse to
23 stop. That's really the main thing for me is
24 where my heart and where my profession is
25 sometimes right in line with each other and
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2 sometimes they're not.

3 And I think I would love to see Sapelo be
4 the center of the commission's efforts in
5 Georgia, and I can say that without worrying
6 about getting dirty looks today, because there
7 are lots of other places in Georgia that are
8 equally as important, especially in the eyes of
9 the people who are there, but I don't think you
10 can argue there's a place more important than
11 Sapelo Island, for this corridor, in the State
12 of Georgia and perhaps even in the corridor
13 itself.

14 So I would like to see major resources
15 flow to this island. We all eat off the Sapelo
16 pie. And anytime that pie gets bigger, there's
17 more people coming to the table and getting
18 better fed.

19 So I would love to see the commission work
20 towards bringing those major resource inputs to
21 this island, whether that be in the form of
22 visitor centers, what have you. And I think
23 DNR -- I don't think DNR could say no to being
24 a strong partner, if that was to be the case.

25 So anyway, I enjoyed being here today. Thanks
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2 for the opportunity.

3 MR. REGINALD HALL: I just wanted to touch
4 on one more thing. It was mentioned about
5 collaborations. When we talk about state

6 entities, local entities and county entities,
7 we've run up against a brick wall, in terms of
8 collaboration. As soon as you go to one
9 entity, they say go to the next entity, because
10 we don't handle that, even though all of the
11 entities are charged with pretty much the same
12 duty, cultural preservation.

13 When you talk about a lack of cultural
14 preservation again is a form of memory
15 eradication. And I don't think -- I believe
16 that's an atrocity. As we spoke about earlier,
17 we're learning about cemeteries. We're
18 learning about our foods, but in memory
19 eradication and the entities that are involved
20 with the dollars.

21 Now we as a people do, I believe, as much
22 as we can to use the resources that we have to
23 not only develop ourselves, but economically
24 grow in some form or fashion, but it's not
25 viable or sustainable.

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2 And that's the issue. So the
3 collaborative entities, state, local and county
4 found themselves not pushing the buck, or not
5 pushing the problem off into the next one, and
6 then they say well, why don't you call the next
7 one.

8 Well, how many decades can you go through
9 of that before you have total eradication of
10 cultural, land and people?

11 MS. CYRIAQUE: Thank you. Would anyone
12 else like to comment? I'd really like to thank
13 people for coming out this morning and sharing
14 your vision. And we will take this
15 information, and hopefully we'll be back to
16 Sapelo again.

17 We were here, if look -- if you have a
18 chance look at our boards over here. We were
19 here last September. And I'd really like to
20 thank SICARS.

21 We had commissions come from all the
22 corridor and everyone was so impressed with
23 Sapelo island. It's a special place and we
24 thank you for coming.

25 MR. HALL: Well, as you know, this is

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2 concluding our meeting this morning. Again, we
3 would like to thank everyone for coming, and
4 visitors come again, come often, and let us
5 hear and give us some real input. And each one
6 of the Sapelolinians and the non-Sapelolinians,
7 we thank you for coming.

8 We have some lunch in the back, because I
9 know the commissioners have to go to Atlanta
10 today. So -- and we have to catch -- they have
11 to catch the 12:30 boat. So you're welcome to
12 whatever we have, typical of Sapelo.

13 Come again and come often.

14

15 (Concluded 11:30 a. m.)

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3 C E R T I F I C A T E

4 G E O R G I A :

5 C H A T H A M C O U N T Y :

6

7 I hereby certify that the foregoing
8 transcript was taken down, as stated in the
9 caption, and the questions and answers thereto were
10 reduced to typewriting under my direction; that the
11 foregoing pages 1 through 60 represent a true and
12 correct transcript of the evidence given upon said
13 hearing, and I further certify that I am not of kin
14 or counsel to the parties in the case; am not in
15 the regular employ of counsel for any of said
16 parties; nor am I in anywise interested in the
17 result of said case.

18 This the 31st day of July, 2008.

19

20

21 _____
Kathleen Dore, Certified Court

22 Reporter, B-2041

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