

# National Park Service News Release

**Release Date:** July 17, 2023

**Contact:** [SER.Communications@nps.gov](mailto:SER.Communications@nps.gov)

## National Park Service seeks public comment on Great River Road historic context study

*Public commenting period runs July 17 – Aug. 31, 2023*



*Photo by Brian M. Davis, executive director, Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation*

**ATLANTA** – The National Park Service (NPS) today opened a 45-day public comment period on a study to evaluate an eleven-mile stretch of Great River Road, along the west-bank of the Mississippi River, for possible designation as a National Historic Landmark (NHL).

"This eleven-mile stretch of Great River Road is multi-layered and complex with a rich history spanning three centuries of land use by many cultures, including postbellum and descendant communities," said **Alesha Cerny**, regional historian with the NPS National Historic Landmarks program. "National Register listing and NHL designation efforts in this area have been piecemeal, resulting in individually-recognized properties."

The NPS is reviewing a letter of inquiry, the first step of the NHL nomination process, to determine if this section of Great River Road appears to meet the [criteria for NHL designation](#). NPS staff will use the research and analysis of the study to decide if the Great River Road area is a good candidate for nomination as a National Historic Landmark. If the result is positive, NPS will work with the proponent to prepare an NHL nomination. If the result is negative, NPS will prepare a detailed response explaining its determination that the property is not eligible for further consideration. The study will enable the NPS, stewards, policy makers, civic planners and the public to better understand the corridor and take appropriate action where necessary.

The NPS has commissioned HHM & Associates to conduct the study, documenting this portion of Great River Road in narrative and graphic formats and placing it into a regional and national context. The effort – expected to run through summer 2024 – involves research, a field survey, photographic documentation, Geographic Information Systems analysis and public engagement.

### ***Opportunity for Public Comment***

The NPS will host an in-person public meeting with a virtual attendance option to discuss the Great River Road study and answer questions about the project. The hybrid public meeting will take place on Monday, July 31 at 4 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Church Hall, 2361 Highway 18, Edgard, Louisiana.

The NPS welcomes public comments and encourages the public to share any historical documents, such as historic photographs, newspaper clippings or other items with the project team. The public may submit written comments for consideration in the study:

### **Online (the preferred method)**

Visit <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/RiverRoad>

Select “Open for Comment” on the left menu bar, open the “July 2023 Public Meeting” folder and click on the green “Comment Now” button to access the online commenting form; or

**By Postal Mail**, send comments to:

Alesha Cerny

Attn: Great River Road Study

National Park Service

100 Alabama Street, SW

Atlanta, GA 30303

Written comments on the draft study must be submitted online or be postmarked by Aug. 31, 2023, to be considered.

For more information about the Great River Road historic context study, including public meeting details, virtual log-in instructions and more, visit the planning website at

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/RiverRoad>.

[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

### ***About the Great River Road***

Louisiana's Historic River Road contains sites associated with the Louisiana African American Heritage Trail and is part of the larger Great River Road National Scenic Byway, which follows the course of the Mississippi River for roughly 3,000 miles from Northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. The eleven-mile section identified for this effort is already part of the State-certified River Road Cultural District and the local Parish-designated River Road Historic District.

### ***About the National Historic Landmarks Program***

National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places that have exceptional abilities to illustrate and interpret American cultural heritage. The [National Historic Landmarks Program](#), established in 1935, is administered by the National Park Service on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior and is responsible for helping to preserve and protect the almost 2,600 NHLs in the United States. The agency works with preservation officials, private property owners, and other partners interested in nominating properties for National Historic Landmark designation. The program provides states and local communities with technical assistance, recognition and funding to help preserve our nation's shared history and create close-to-home recreation opportunities.