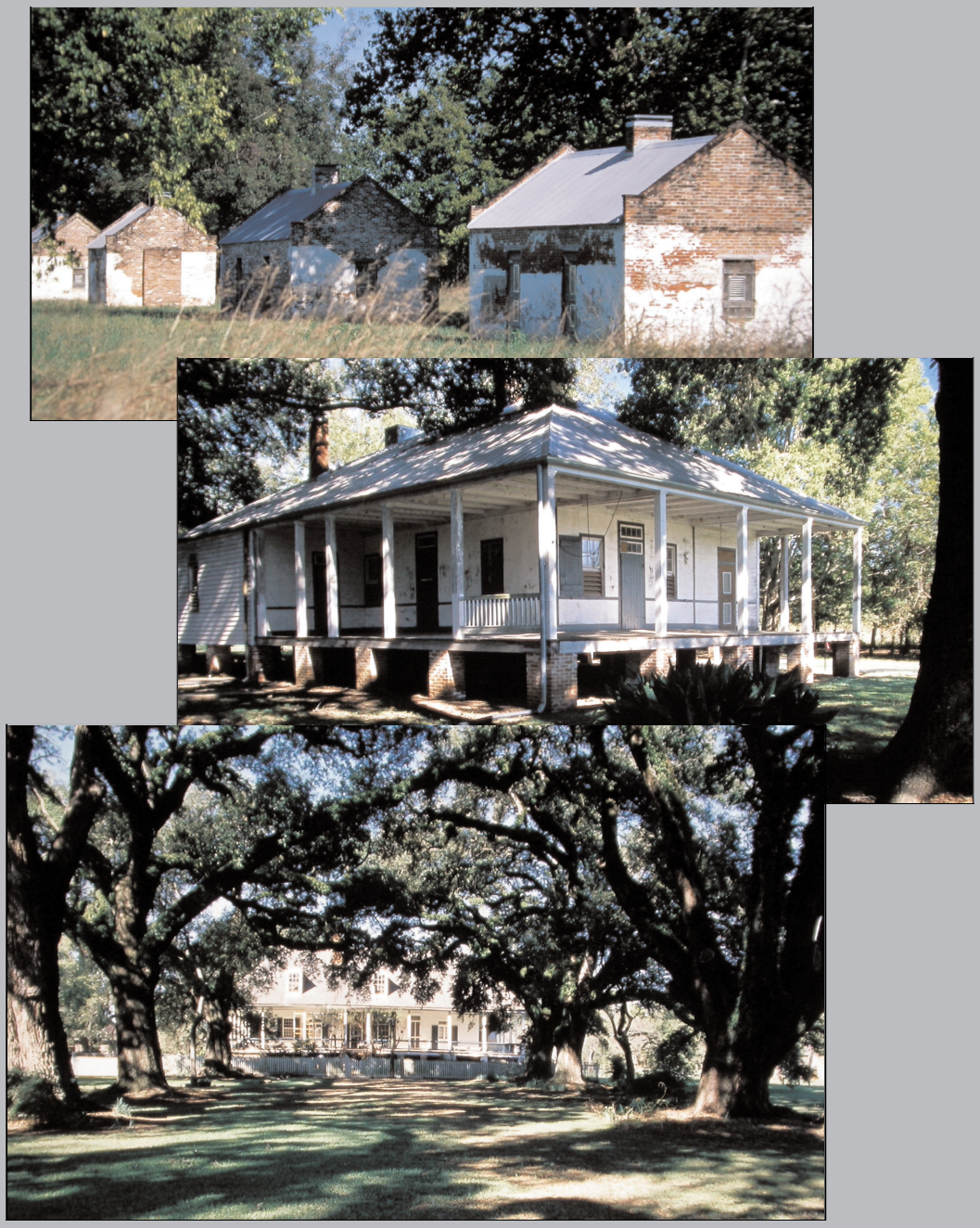
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cane River Creole National Historical Park
Louisiana

Cane River Creole National Historical Park
Long-Range Interpretive Plan



Cane River Creole National Historical Park

Long-Range Interpretive Plan

Prepared by the Department of Interpretive Planning
Harpers Ferry Center
and
Cane River Creole National Historical Park

September 2006

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Introduction

Following the completion of a congressionally mandated study of the Cane River area in 1993, legislation was introduced in Congress and approved on November 2, 1994 (Public Law 103-499 [16USC410cc]) that created Cane River Creole National Historical Park and the Cane River National Heritage Area. The national heritage area is managed by the Cane River National Heritage Area Commission, and encompasses 116,000 acres, including the national historical park and three state parks.

Congress recommended that the new park should serve as "**the focus of interpretive and educational programs on the history of the Cane River area and to assist in the preservation of certain historic sites along the river.**" The legislation designated that the park would consist of lands on the Magnolia and Oakland Plantations, but it also provided for the development of cooperative agreements with other sites in the Cane River region. The legislation also noted that Cane River Creole culture was a nationally significant element of United States heritage.

The park and heritage area are in northwestern Louisiana in Natchitoches Parish (see Regional map in Appendix A). The parish is about 150 miles northwest of Baton Rouge and 70 miles southeast of Shreveport. The largest city in the parish is Natchitoches, which is also the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase Territory, dating to 1714. Natchitoches is located in the approximate center of the parish.

The primary approach to Natchitoches, the park, and the heritage area is via Interstate 49. Visitors can access both national park units using Louisiana State Highway 494 and 119 via Louisiana State Highway 1 (see National Heritage Area map in Appendix A).

Oakland is approximately 10 miles south and Magnolia is about 20 miles south of Natchitoches along the Cane River. The park currently owns approximately 63 acres-about 44 acres of Oakland Plantation and about 19 acres of Magnolia Plantation. The authorized boundary for Oakland includes an additional 144 acres, which remain in private ownership. The enabling legislation also provided the option for the National Park Service (NPS) to acquire an additional 10 acres of land at an undesignated location separate from the park units for a shared visitor/interpretive center to serve the needs of the national historical park and the national heritage area.

The Oakland Plantation unit (see Oakland Plantation map in Appendix A) is the federal portion of the much larger historic Oakland/Bermuda Plantation. The descendants of the original settlers (the Prud'homme family) continue to own and operate Oakland Plantation property, including the remaining 144 acres within the authorized boundary. The park property contains the plantation house of Jean Pierre Emanuel Prud'homme, built in 1821. It has been occupied by eight generations of the Prud'homme family. Many of the outbuildings remain and are evidence of the evolution of plantation life. Other important features include classic Creole architecture, the quarters occupied by share croppers and tenant farmers, a historic bottle garden, cultural landscapes, and an extensive collection

Opposite: Outbuildings at Oakland Plantation

of furnishings and historic objects and documents.

The Magnolia Plantation unit (see Magnolia Plantation map in Appendix A) is the federally owned portion of the larger Magnolia Plantation, the remainder of which is privately owned and operated by descendants of the original owners, the LeComte family. The plantation's cotton gin with a wooden screw-type press in the gin barn is the last of its kind still standing at its original location.

Two regimented rows of brick slave quarters on the property provide a mere glimpse into the lives of the hundreds of enslaved workers of Magnolia Plantation.

In addition to the gin barn, the NPS unit contains a number of other outbuildings and dependencies which date to the early 19th century and are invaluable in understanding southern antebellum agricultural practices.

As stated earlier, the NPS units are a part of the larger Cane River National Heritage Area (see National Heritage Area map in Appendix A). The national heritage area is a largely rural, agricultural landscape known for its historic plantations, its distinctive Creole architecture, and its multi-cultural legacy. Historically this region lay at the boundary of French and Spanish realms in the New World. It is a place where many cultures came together to create a way of life dependent on the land, the river, and each other. Today it is home to a unique blend of cultures, including French, Spanish, African, American, American Indian, and Creole.

The perimeter of the national heritage area extends from I-49 at the west to the Red River at the east, and from Waterwell Road at the north to the Rapides Parish Line at the south. The heritage area includes the national historical park, seven National Historic Landmarks, three State Historic Sites, and many other historic plantations, homes, and churches. While much of the roughly 116,000-acre heritage area is privately owned, many sites are open to the public.

Planning Background

The park, which is to serve as the focus of interpretive and educational programs on the history of the Cane River region, does not have a Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP). A Cane River National Heritage Area Master Interpretive Plan was finalized in 2003. This plan made recommendations for all of the heritage area sites, including Oakland and Magnolia Plantations; however, due to the scope of the document, most of the recommendations are fairly general.

The Cane River Creole National Historical Park General Management Plan (GMP) and Environmental Impact Statement was completed in January 2001. A Cane River National Heritage Area Management Plan was completed in 2003.

The GMP states that the physical treatment of the historic landscapes and structures will generally reflect the appearance of the plantations "…up to about 1960." The GMP makes a number of interpretive media and program proposals for the Oakland and Magnolia plantations. The GMP and National Heritage Area Management Plan also call for improving wayfinding for the park and heritage area sites, as well as the development of a joint visitor center. A major signage/wayfinding project and the site selection process for the shared visitor center are now underway.

The park also desires to: improve and expand education and outreach opportunities, continue working in partnership with the Cane River National Heritage Area, and present a stronger identity to visitors and area residents.

The tenth anniversary of the park and national heritage area was held in November 2004. As a relatively new unit of the National Park System, the park has been involved in an intensive program of research and historic preservation, and has used these activities as the focus of the interpretive and educational programs. Now that much of the research is nearing completion, the park wants to increase the interpretive and educational focus toward the development of media and programs that will better address the primary interpretive themes and visitor experience goals while incorporating research results.

This long-range interpretive plan (LRIP) will be a component of the park's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) as called for by National Park Service Director's Orders-6. This plan will provide long-term guidance for the interpretive program for the Cane River Creole National Historical Park. Together with the park-produced annual interpretive plan and the interpretive database, it will form a comprehensive interpretive plan. The LRIP will describe the park's primary interpretive themes and visitor experiences, and recommend ways to facilitate those experiences through facility design, interpretive/informational media, personal services programs, and partnership endeavors.

Cane River at Oakland Plantation

PLANNING FOUNDATION

Planning begins by understanding why a park was established.

Park Mission

Cane River Creole National Historical Park preserves the resources and cultural landscapes of the Cane River region and enhances the understanding of its peoples and traditions through research, interpretation, education and technical assistance.

National Heritage Area Mission

The purposes of Cane River National Heritage Area are to assist in the preservation and enhancement of the cultural landscape and traditions of the Cane River region, to complement Cane River Creole National Historical Park, and to improve the overall quality of life of the current residents by increasing economic benefits through promotion of the heritage area to local, regional, and national audiences.

Park Purpose

The purposes of Cane River Creole National Historical Park are to:

- Assist in, and serve as the focus for the preservation and interpretation of, and education concerning the diverse cultures and histories of the Cane River region.
- Provide technical assistance to a broad range of public and private landowners and organizations.

Significance statements describe the importance or distinctiveness of the resources of an area.

Park Significance

Cane River Creole National Historical Park is significant because:

- It illustrates the process of Creolization through the convergence of French Colonial, Spanish Colonial, African, American, and American Indian cultures and the adaptations of those cultures to each other in the New World.
- It represents a relationship between cultures and a landscape, which is unique to this region.
- It illustrates a succession of agricultural and labor systems, changing technologies, and evolving social practices over three centuries.
- The French Creole cotton plantations reflect completeness in their historic settings, including landscapes, outbuildings, structures, furnishings, and artifacts; and they are the most intact French Creole cotton plantations in the U.S.

Primary Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas/concepts that are critical for achieving visitor understanding and appreciation of the significance of Cane River Creole National Historical Park. Primary themes do not include everything that may be interpreted, but they do provide the foundation from which programs and media can be developed. All interpretive efforts, through both personal and non-personal services, should relate to one or more of the primary themes. Effective interpretation results when visitors are able to connect concepts (intangibles) with resources (tangibles) and derive something meaningful from the experience.

The following theme statements provide the basis for interpretation at Cane River Creole National Historical Park.

- Creole culture evolved out of this region's colonial roots as people adapted to each other in the New World environment. Manifestations of this culture are evident in language, food, music, architecture, and religion. The term's meanings have evolved over time.

- The landscapes and structures of Cane River Creole National Historical Park are affected by the river and its changing course. The river has effected a continuum of change in the area's agricultural practices and cultural heritage as well as in the natural environment.
- The lives of the diverse people associated with Oakland and Magnolia Plantations reflect the resilience, resourcefulness, dedication, and continuous interaction of families and communities along Cane River.
- The institution of slavery and the act of emancipation have left indelible imprints on many aspects of Cane River life.
- Changing labor arrangements, such as tenancy and sharecropping, at Oakland and Magnolia Plantations created additional challenges and opportunities in the aftermath of emancipation. With mechanization came the exodus of many people traditionally associated with these plantations.
- The complexity, integrity, and completeness of the park's extant vernacular architecture illustrate Creole resilience, resourcefulness, and adaptations to the environment and influences contemporary regional architecture.
- Religious systems are integral to the development and dynamics of the region's cultures.
- Agriculture is an integral part of the lives of the people who have lived along Cane River.

Visitor Experience Goals

At Cane River Creole National Historical Park visitors will have opportunities to:

- Visit a conveniently located visitor center that facilitates the orientation of visitors to the park and heritage area through a diversity of exhibits, audiovisual programs, publications, sales items, and personal assistance.
- Understand the importance of context, the value of cultural resources, and the information that is lost when context is altered.
- Appreciate the relationships between the sites' natural and built environments, as well as past and ongoing efforts to preserve and maintain them.
- Participate in a diversity of on-site and off-site educational and interpretive programs that will result in a greater appreciation for the tangible and intangible resources associated with the park and an understanding of the primary interpretive themes.
- Gain greater appreciation and understanding about the park through appropriate, effective, and diverse interpretive media ranging from exhibits, publications, and audiovisual programs to personal services, cultural demonstrations, and experiential learning.
- Interact with people who can provide an understanding of the unique cultural aspects and heritage of the area.
- Engage in open dialogue about sensitive issues and topics associated with the history and culture of the region (particularly topics dealing with race and cultural diversity).
- Hear the different voices that offer multiple perspectives of life at Oakland and Magnolia Plantations and throughout the heritage area that are drawn from historical and contemporary sources.
- Experience the plantations in a manner that instills an honest and realistic understanding of their working and human dimensions.
- Understand the relationship of various plantation features to each other and within the continuum of the site's history.
- Understand that there exists in

Primary themes should be few enough in number to provide focus for the interpretive program, but numerous enough to represent the full range of park significance. There are many ways to prepare interpretive themes, and there is little evidence that favors one technique over another.

"Visitor experience" is what people do, sense, feel, think, and learn; it includes knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and values; it is affected by experiences prior to the visit and affects behavior after the visit.

the heritage area and the region surviving, evolving, and distinctive cultures that are a part of a continuum that spans three centuries.
- Easily find their way around the park and heritage area.
- Understand the interpretive and working relationship between the Cane River Creole National Historical Park and other state, parish, and private organizations that share in telling the cultural stories and in preserving the historic resources of the Cane River National Heritage Area.
- Know where to go for more information, and continue learning more about the park after their visit through a diversity of outreach programs, publications, and other media.

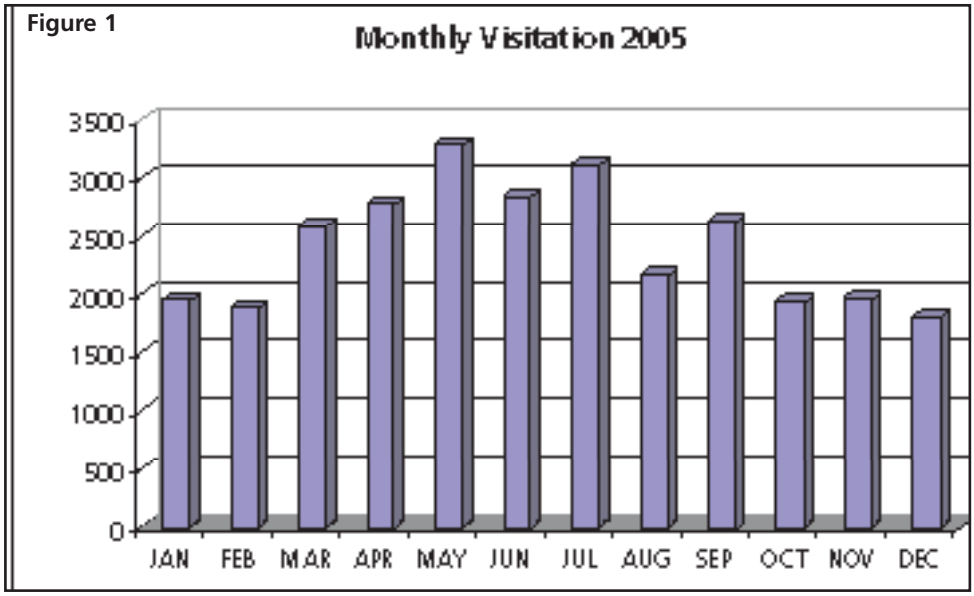
Visitation and Visitor Use

The following information regarding park visitors and visitor use is derived from data maintained by the NPS Socio-Economic Services Division (WASO) in Denver, and from discussions with park staff. As a relatively new unit of the National Park System, Cane River Creole National Historical Park has only been reporting visitation data since 2002. Except for annual surveys to assess general visitor satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation, no in-depth visitor surveys have been conducted.

As the park becomes better known and as more facilities and programs are developed, visitation has increased from 7,449 in 2002 to 28,937 in 2005. Most of the visitation currently occurs at Oakland. At Magnolia, tours of the main house are given by the private owners. Visitors have been allowed to tour the park-owned grounds of Magnolia on their own since November 2004. Prior to that tours were offered by reservation only, based on staff availability. The unit is staffed by interpreters, and formal tours are conducted on weekends. On weekdays, the rest room facilities and grounds are open, and self-guiding maps are available.

Figure 1 illustrates the total monthly visitation for 2004. Visitation remains consistently high through the spring and summer months. The peak in October may be linked to the annual Natchitoches Fall Pilgrimage event, and the spike in December may be connected to the Christmas Festival of Lights and other holiday events in Natchitoches. The extreme temperatures in summer probably influence visitation numbers.

Figure 1



The GMP projects that as the national historical park and the national heritage area develop and become more well known, NPS visitation may reach about 26,000 per unit (52,000 total) by 2014.

Attendance at various formal and informal personal services interpretive and educational programs for 2005 is shown in Table 1. Visitation figures have been reported for some of the national heritage area sites. Table 2 shows annual visitation for these sites for 2005.
The GMP also states that Natchitoches Parish has an active tourism industry which hosts a number of annual festivals and special events. These include the annual Natchitoches Pilgrimage of Historic Homes and Plantations, the Melrose Arts and Crafts Festival, the Natchitoches Folk Festival, and the Christmas Festival of Lights.
For 2004, the Natchitoches Parish Tourist Commission a total of 733,067 visitors to the parish, of which 749,681 attended special events.

Signatures in the Natchitoches Parish Tourism guest book show visitors from all 50 states and over 30 foreign countries. About one-third of the visitors came from Louisiana, one-third from Texas, and one-third from all other states.

Existing Conditions

The following is a summary description of the visitor experiences and conditions as they existed at the onset of this long-range interpretive planning process. This section is intended to identify baseline conditions and highlight key issues to help justify many of the plan's recommendations. The purpose is not to describe all existing conditions, activities, and programs.

Table 1

Visitation Summary	Total
Number of formal guided tours	305
Number of visitors on formal guided tours	3,110
Number of informal guided tours	6,794
Number of visitors on informal guided tours	15,746
Number of special events	37
Number of visitors attending special events	2,922
Number of education programs	0
Number of visitors attending education programs	0
Total Recreation Visitors	28,936

Table 2

Site	Visitation
Fort St. Jean Baptiste State Historic Site	11,225
Fort Jesup State Historic Site	4,221
Los Adaes State Historic Site	2,502
Kate Chopin House	2,153
Melrose Plantation	8,365
Courthouse Museum	10,070
Grand Ecore Welcome Center	14,919

Parkwide

A directional signage, wayfinding, and organizational "branding" project is currently being conducted by the national heritage area, community partners, and the national historical park. This project will help visitors easily find their way around the national heritage area,

locate key information and orientation facilities, and identify the various sites. This project is closely associated with the creation of a heritage trail within the national heritage area.

The planning process for a shared park/heritage area visitor center also is well underway. Since the site will be selected before the completion of this long-range interpretive plan, the location of the visitor center will not be considered in this document; however, the functions and media proposals for the visitor center will be addressed.

Decisions to develop historic furnishings exhibits in a number of structures have been made. These include portions of the main house, store, overseer's house and a tenant house at Oakland Plantation; and a portion of the store, two slave/tenant quarters, and blacksmith shop at Magnolia.

An official park brochure is being developed by Harpers Ferry Center (HFC). The HFC publications specialist assigned to this project participated in this planning process and is using information and recommendations from the various discussions to revise the approach and scope of the draft brochure.
A side room at the Prud'homme Store has been adaptively restored for use as a cooperating association sales outlet. The bookstore opened in November, 2004. This currently is the only sales outlet in the park.

The park web site, which is currently being re-designed, provides basic and some in-depth information about the park. When completed there will be active 2-way links with the national heritage area web site. Since most of the interpretive and educational programs are still in the planning and early developmental stages, there is much potential for expanding the web site.

Parkwide, the interpretive staff consists of one permanent position (the chief of interpretation), several part-time seasonal and student positions, and a number of volunteers. The national heritage area employs several part-time heritage rangers who work alongside the park rangers.

Oakland

Since the park's establishment, historic structure restoration and stabilization has constituted much of the work at Oakland Plantation. While much has been accomplished, this work will remain a continuous effort. Sometimes the work requires rerouting visitor circulation patterns. When workers are present, interpretive opportunities may be created when visitors are encouraged ask questions and engage in conversation.

Park-produced exhibits are displayed in the store; however, there are currently no permanent interpretive media at the site.

Each of the historic structures has been marked with a small slate sign identifying its function and year of construction. The slate signs, which are temporarily attached to the structures, can interfere with photo opportunities.

Mowed grass trails lead visitors to various plantation structures. However, during wet weather, which is not infrequent in Louisiana, the trail becomes very muddy with much standing water. During these times it is virtually impossible (unless they bring boots) for people to keep their feet dry.
It also would be very difficult for someone in a wheelchair to utilize the trail in its current condition. The

Main house and outbuildings at Oakland Plantation

park has experimented with some ways to mitigate this problem with minimal adverse impact to the historic landscape, but there has been little success to date.

The Oakland Plantation GMP Preferred Alternative map in Appendix A shows the site layout and the proposed actions from the GMP.

Visitors to Oakland Plantation are directed to the parking lot at the rear of the property. This determination was made during the GMP process, and was based on decisions to avoid archeological sites, to de-emphasize the main house in favor of a more balanced representation of the entire working plantation, and to minimize disturbance to the historic landscape. The park has invested in an entrance road, parking lot, and an entrance pavilion. From their vehicles, visitors walk to the covered open-air pavilion which contains rest rooms, picnic tables, and a dispenser for park and site literature. One of the handouts serves as a self-guiding tour map.

Entering the property from the rear is confusing to many visitors. Currently, they see an array of structures with no central focus. Many people are not sure where they should go first. The rear entry also does not show visitors the historic link of the plantation to the river.

As stated above, the cooperating association sales outlet was relocated to a side room of the store in November, 2004.

The Doctor's house has been adaptively restored and is being used for site offices.

Park employees and volunteers provide guided walking tours of the site. This currently is the only means of offering in-depth interpretation which can address all of the primary themes.

Magnolia

The Magnolia Plantation GMP Preferred Alternative map in Appendix A shows the site layout and the proposed actions from the GMP.

At the onset of this long-range interpretive plan Magnolia Plantation was not yet open to the public, except for occasional special tours; however, in November, 2004 the site officially opened. Currently it is staffed on weekends, with formal tours available. On weekdays, only the grounds and the rest room facil-

ities are open, and self-guiding tour maps are available.

The GMP recommends that visitors begin their walking tour of the site at the store. This building is to serve as the site's primary visitor contact and orientation center. Here visitors also would learn that the main house is still privately owned, but that separate tours are available.

A mowed grass trail leads visitors to the various plantation structures. However, like the trail at Oakland, during wet weather the trail becomes very muddy with much standing water. During these times it is virtually impossible (unless they bring boots) for people to keep their feet dry. It also would be very difficult for someone in a wheelchair to utilize the trail in its current condition.

Since the park's establishment, historic structure restoration and stabilization has constituted much of the work at Oakland Plantation. While much has been accomplished, this work will remain a continuous effort. Sometimes the work requires rerouting visitor circulation patterns. When workers are present, interpretive opportunities may be created when visitors are encouraged ask questions and engage in conversation.

Slave cabins at Magnolia Plantation

The following is a description of program and media recommendations designed to further define, support, and communicate the park's mission, purpose, resource significance, interpretive themes, and visitor experience goals. Implementation of these recommendations will help ensure that visitors are well prepared and informed, and that they will have opportunities to develop meaningful intellectual and emotional connections with tangible and intangible resources.

The discussion of each program or media proposal identifies its purpose, special considerations, and sometimes suggests specific means of presentation. It is important to remember that the latter are only suggestions and should not in any way limit the creativity essential during the media and program planning and design processes. On the other hand, proposals will be specific enough to provide meaningful guidance, develop Class C cost estimates, prepare PMIS submissions, and define the parameters within which these creative energies can flow.

Parkwide Proposals

Information and Orientation

Providing appropriate, accurate, and up-to-date information about the park and heritage area is important even before people leave home or while they are still considering their travel or vacation plans. As relatively new units, the park and heritage area do not yet appear in many well known tourism publications and other promotional media.

Some basic steps for the park and heritage area to take include:

- inclusion in the NPS Passport book. The park will be listed in the next printing; however, at this time, national heritage areas are not included. Both the park and the heritage area currently have passport stamps.
- inclusion in various regional, national, and international tourism publications and web sites.
- linkage to other NPS areas in the region and to various theme-related sites throughout the system.
- prominently displaying the NPS arrowhead and the heritage area logo in signage, publications, press releases, and other promotional materials.
- positive promotion of restoration and preservation projects as unique opportunities to come and see how the park is developing, rather than marketing them as inconveniences (i.e. "Pardon Our Dust").

The Internet offers a variety of methods for reaching future visitors, potential visitors, and virtual visitors before they leave home. NPS web sites are becoming an increasingly popular pre-visit tool, and continuous updates are essential. In addition to material on the park's current web site, the following actions are proposed:

- Provide downloadable maps with directions that can be used to travel to the park and to the various heritage area sites. The maps should be consistent with those found in national heritage area sources.
- Include a list of materials to bring (i.e. rain gear-including boots, insect repellant, etc.).
- Offer Spanish and French versions of the web site.

Recommendations should constitute the most effective means of achieving desired outcomes.

- Develop virtual tours of the plantations, including aerial views, the river and its changes, and the evolution of the sites over time.
- Show images of various people associated with the plantations over time. This would include many of the historic photos in the park and other public collections.
- Utilize clips of existing videos of former residents describing aspects of life on the plantations.
- Display images (possibly on a changeable basis) of objects in the park museum collection.
- In addition to the existing link to the heritage area web site, create links to other partner and theme-related sites, especially those mentioned in the park's enabling legislation.
- Establish a link to the Eastern National web site to enable people to purchase theme-related items on-line.
- Provide information about the park's education program, including curriculum guides that can be used by visiting school groups as well as by groups that may never be able to come to the park.
- Create excerpts/summaries of various research reports so web users can determine if they want to download an entire file.
- Develop a bibliography of materials to help people learn more about specific resources and themes. One could be aimed at general visitors, another geared to researchers.
- Offer trip planning information for various audiences, including tour groups, many of which come from the region.
- Show what types of restoration, preservation, and conservation projects are currently in progress; market these as unique opportunities to see the park develop; and encourage people to come and learn more about these activities.

The park's first official brochure is being developed by Harpers Ferry Center. Since the park is still in a developmental stage, there will be many new programs, media, and facilities in the coming years. NPS visitor surveys frequently list the park brochure as the most used interpretive media; however, some speculate that it is the maps that are most useful, and that many visitors do not read all the other material until later, if at all. The official park brochure, which should be designed as a self-guiding tour map/guide of the plantations, will need to change as new facilities open to the public.

Park/Heritage Area Visitor Center

Site selection and development of the overall building program for the shared park/heritage area visitor center was underway prior to the onset of this long-range interpretive plan.

Visitors to the Cane River area will be directed to this visitor center for general orientation, information, and trip planning. The facility will contain:

- A staffed information desk.
- A display of park and heritage area literature, including the proposed heritage trail.
- Orientation exhibits, including a map or model of the heritage area showing the alignment of the sites, the relationship to the river/lake, and the main access roads. Visitors should be able to plan their visit according to their interests and time available. The exhibits also should serve to spark interest and curiosity.
- One series of computer stations/kiosks that are being developed by the heritage area for each of the park/heritage area sites. An informational wayside exhibit (see Wayside Exhibits

section below) could provide after-hours orientation and trip planning information.
- A short audiovisual program highlighting the historic sites and integrating appropriate interpretive themes. The film might run in loop fashion in a mini-theater that would allow visitors to easily enter or exit without being committed to watching the entire program.
- Interpretive exhibits that introduce the history of the Cane River region and elements of the primary interpretive themes, including an explanation of the term Creole.
- Rest rooms.
- A sales area for theme-related items.
- An NPS Passport stamping station.
- Office and storage space for staff.

The overall goal of the facility is to introduce people to the Cane River area and entice them to visit a number of sites. One thought is to pattern the design concept of the visitor center after the multi-agency center in Natchez, MS. In Natchez, visitors can get information about the many attractions in the area, view a film and exhibits that provide a general introduction, and make reservations for various tours and activities.

It is recommended that before funding commitments are finalized that the building program needs be reassessed and that the facility planning model be re-evaluated to ensure that the visitor center will meet the current and future needs of visitors. It also is important that visitor and area resident perceptions and expectations for the visitor center be considered.

Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits tell the park story on location. They "caption the landscape" and help visitors make direct connections with resources and their meanings. Wayside exhibits provide round-the-clock information and interpretation, and with appealing high quality design, writing, and graphics, they can serve to instill and reinforce respect for important resources.

In association with good graphics, waysides can show what a site looked like at different points in time. In addition, temporary waysides can be developed inexpensively to interpret construction and restoration/preservation projects.

A parkwide wayside exhibit proposal is recommended to ensure the development of a complete, high-quality, and unified system of waysides with an NPS identity. The proposal will provide an in-depth assessment of all potential wayside exhibit sites. It includes both informational and interpretive exhibits. The document also can set priorities to guide wayside development in phases as funding allows.

The proposal will describe the purpose of each wayside exhibit, identify graphics available for use, show thumbnail design concept drawings, and determine exact exhibit sizes, base styles, and locations. A detailed budget estimate also would be part of the document.

The proposal would include recommendations for upright orientation wayside exhibits at the shared visitor center and at or near the entrances to Oakland and Magnolia Plantations. Because of the need to preserve the historic landscapes, the feeling of visiting operating plantations, and the sense of discovery at both plantations, all interpretive wayside exhibits will be located to minimize their impact on the historic scene, but also to retain their visibility for visitors. In some cases the wayside may be located inside or under the eaves of a structure, in

which case the panels would likely be mounted on moveable bases.

Other wayside exhibits would interpret various restoration and preservation projects. These waysides would be of a temporary nature, utilizing moveable bases, and produced via an inexpensive digital process. Some of these exhibits could be reused for similar projects; others could be put in storage or simply discarded.

The interpretive wayside exhibits at both plantations could stand alone, or they could supplement the information provided by self-guiding walking tour publications or audio tours.

Publications

The official park brochure is currently being developed, and most major design and content decisions will likely be finalized before the completion of this LRIP. With the completion of the shared visitor center, and as more buildings are opened to the public at both plantations, changes to the brochure will be required. These changes will need to be programmed far enough in advance so that the brochure remains consistent with what visitors find at the sites.

Maps are probably the most used features in park brochures. The maps of Oakland and Magnolia Plantations will have a self-guiding tour function that may be supplemented with wayside exhibits and perhaps a future audio tour.

In November, 2004 Cane River Creole National Historical Park relocated its sales outlet at Oakland from the main house to the store. A Scope of Sales, which evaluates publications in light of price, intended audiences, and interpretive themes addressed, is used to guide the selection of sales items. The Scope of Sales currently being used may need to be revisited to reflect any changes in the interpretive themes as presented in this LRIP. Periodic reviews of all publications, including those sold through the cooperating association, are recommended. The reviews can identify strengths as well as areas where a publications program needs to concentrate its efforts. The evaluation could be modified slightly for free publications.

Most parks eventually develop a series of site bulletins that focus on specific theme-related topics or visitor experience goals. Using a standard design, these items are developed and copied in-house. The quality of the writing and graphics, along with the overall usefulness of each publication should be evaluated periodically. All site bulletins should be prominently displayed (perhaps in a dispenser or in a changeable case) so that visitors will know what is available.

To ensure that visitors see the connections between the park and the heritage area, the publications program should strive for some uniform design elements between the park and the heritage area.

Personal Services

The park's very limited interpretive and volunteer staff provided guided walking tours to roughly 25% of the visitors in 2004. However, as the park continues to become more well-known and visitation grows, the percentage of visitors who will benefit from personal services interpretive programs will diminish unless staffing levels increase.

A variety of personal services programs and activities will be an essential component of the overall interpretive program at Cane River Creole National Historical Park. In order for visitors to understand,

appreciate, and make personal connections with the resources, historical sites generally require a high level of personal services and interpretive media.

Personal services interpretive programs have the unparalleled advantage of being versatile, alive, and tailored to the needs of individuals and groups. An interpretive staff presence helps with the protection of fragile resources. Interpreters, whether behind an information desk, roving, leading a tour, giving a talk, or conducting a demonstration, are the best of all interactive tools in enabling visitors to make intellectual and emotional connections with the resources and their values.

The diversity of the park's resources and themes presents almost limitless opportunities for both standard and innovative interpretive activities. As staffing levels permit and in keeping within the parameters of the interpretive themes and visitor experience goals, park staff should be given a high degree of creative freedom to explore and experiment with new programs. This will help to maintain a creative edge and attract new and returning audiences.

There is great potential to experiment with the development of programs that deal with the growing and processing of cotton and indigo, or the making and application of bousillage-things that are unfamiliar to many visitors.

Since personal services interpretive programs are relatively easy to change, the activities should be evaluated on a regular basis to discontinue those that are not effective, modify or improve those that require it, and validate those that are successful.

Education Program

As with the personal services interpretive program, an effective park education program requires adequate staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. The resources and themes of Cane River Creole National Historical Park offer great potential for the development of a dynamic and popular education program in partnership with many units of the national heritage area. In fact, the themes and resources of the park and heritage area have the potential to intersect with education curricula and standards far beyond the immediate area, including many other NPS and partner sites and programs.

A well designed and run park education program generally depends on establishing an education specialist position. This can begin as a collateral duty for a qualified person, but to be truly effective the education specialist needs to be a full-time position. The primary role of the education specialist is to secure resources to facilitate the development and growth of a curriculum-based program based on national and state education standards. Other duties would include:

- Setting up workshops with staff, partners, and professional educators to develop specific curriculum-based programs and lesson plans for pre-, on-, and post-site activities.
- Setting up teacher training workshops.
- Coordinating the use and expansion of the park web site to include educational materials for groups planning a visit, for homeschooled students, and for those who may never be able to travel to the park.
- Establishing and maintaining ongoing and active partnerships with the education programs

offered by other theme-related sites.

One method to initiate an education program is to train teachers to use park resources and conduct activities on their own with their students. This minimizes the amount of park staff time required perhaps to meeting groups when they arrive and providing a closeout session just before they depart. However, if an activity should involve sensitive or fragile resources, such as a tour of the main house at Oakland, then park staff would need to be present and probably to conduct the tour.

By working with area schools and school district offices, teacher training sessions can be scheduled to coincide with some scheduled work days or with required in-service training. Incentives for participation might include free admission to the park for the school year and/or donations of theme-related publications.

While it is important for the park to establish its own education program, as the park and heritage area continue to develop, there also will be a need to develop an integrated education program. This could be accomplished through the establishment of an education committee that would assess the strengths of individual sites and propose education programs that would match site assets with various grade level curricula. In this way the park and the heritage area could become a vital component of the area's total education program, engaging students at key points along the way.

As with most ambitious endeavors, the park's education program needs to start small and grow gradually. Small successes sometimes can generate support and funding for additional staff and expanded programs. Eventually a multi-faceted and dynamic education program can evolve and become a vital part of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park and Cane River National Heritage Area experience.

Special Populations

Provisions will be made to accommodate the needs of special populations who visit Cane River Creole National Historical Park. Special populations are identified as those with sight, hearing, learning, and mobility impairments; visitors who do not speak English; and the elderly and young children. A large number of park visitors are elderly and/or disabled.

Public Law 90-480, the Architectural Barriers Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 establish standards for physical access. Other regulations, laws, and standards include Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Director's Orders No. 42, and the Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in National Park Service Programs, Facilities, and Services. All newly constructed facilities, as a matter of course, will be designed for accessibility for physically disabled visitors and employees. For this plan it would include providing access to buildings, pathways, and wayside exhibits.

Every effort will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities, as well as people who do not speak or understand English, have access to the same information necessary for a safe and meaningful visit to Cane River Creole National Historical Park. All new interpretive media will follow the standards for accessibility as described in the NPS, June 1999 Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media. These guidelines (see Appendix B)

will be consulted by park staff and media developers during the planning and design of new interpretive media.

Research Needs

The interpretive staff needs to work closely with the resource management staff to keep up-to-date on research activities and results. Scientists and resource management specialists should be encouraged to present regular briefings to the entire park staff, especially interpreters. Agency and contract researchers also should be encouraged to produce executive summaries and programs that translate research results for park staff and the public.

Archeology research at both Oakland and Magnolia needs to continue. There is much yet to learn about the historic structures and the people over time, and many of the interpretive proposals will depend on what is discovered. Likewise, much remains to be learned through the continuation of the park/heritage area oral history program. People directly associated with the history of the sites and the culture need to be encouraged to come forward with their stories-stories that in the not too distant future may be lost forever. Analysis of past and current research findings is also needed.

Cane River Creole National Historical Park needs to learn more about its actual and potential audiences: Who visits? What are their motivations, expectations, and satisfaction levels? Who doesn't visit and why? How do the answers to these and other questions vary with summer and winter visitors?

While various types of visitor surveys can help answer some of these questions, other methods may be employed. For example, front-end evaluations would query potential users of programs, facilities, and media before the products are developed. This type of research is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results. Formative evaluations would be conducted during conceptual design, and would test inexpensive mockups of interpretive media before fully investing in final products. Summative evaluations are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facility, and programs-i.e. whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people actually make use of the information, or if visitor behavior is affected.

Oakland Plantation

A suggested framework for organizing and presenting many of the interpretive themes at Oakland and Magnolia is the concept of three worlds (the social structure of workers, overseers, and owners) interacting over three significant agricultural time periods (slavery, tenancy, and mechanization). How these social systems remained separate but also interacted and evolved through the three agricultural eras will help visitors make sense of the layout, organization, and operation of the plantations over time.

Entrance

Since visitors will continue to enter Oakland Plantation from the rear, it is critical that they receive adequate site orientation at the pavilion and understand why they are entering from the back. Introducing the concept that a plantation is much more than the "big house" might be a way to accomplish this.

On leaving their vehicles, visitors will be directed to the pavilion. It is proposed that the wall space and possibly some of the adjacent floor area be used for orientation exhibits. This would still allow the building to be used for various

group functions and for people to find shelter from the rain and heat. In the long-term, however, it is recommended that the pavilion be expanded and that a large portion of it be enclosed to serve as the site's staffed visitor contact center.

Directional signing will alert visitors that the pavilion is where they need to go for site orientation and that the walking tour begins there. The overall design of this entry experience should help visitors feel that this is a gateway to the past and the start of a special experience. Elements of the orientation media at the pavilion would include:

- Graphics/maps showing the current and historic size and layout of the plantation and its close association to the river. A shaded relief map format could illustrate and differentiate between extant and missing historic structures. The map should also show the walking tour route and clearly show that the tour begins here and ends at the store.
- Exhibits introducing the interactions of the three groups of people at Oakland (workers, overseers, and owners) and the three major agricultural eras (slavery, tenancy, and mechanization). These exhibits will set up the visitor experience and show visitors how they can use these concepts to explore the property. This also might be an opportunity to introduce some of the actual people who were/are part of Oakland's history.
- An exhibit that presents the site as a unit of the NPS and as a unit of the Cane River National Heritage Area. This might include one of the series of trip planning computer stations that are being developed for each of the park/heritage area sites.
- A brochure/map dispenser. This would include the official park brochure (which would have the walking tour map inside), the heritage area brochure, and appropriate site bulletins.
- An exhibit introducing Cane River Creole culture and explaining what Creole means. Although these topics will be addressed at the joint visitor center, some visitors (and most school groups) may come to Oakland or Magnolia first. Having some understanding of what Creole means will be critical to the visitor experience at both sites.
- An exhibit letting visitors know that this is a relatively new NPS unit and that there is a lot of ongoing restoration/preservation work underway. The message should indicate that this is a great opportunity to see and learn about restoring and maintaining historic properties, and that visitors are encouraged to ask questions of the staff.

Initially, most of the exhibits in the pavilion will need to be made of materials that can withstand an open-air environment. Materials commonly used for wayside exhibits might be appropriate. Some artifacts, models, or tactile elements may also be included in the pavilion exhibits if they contribute to the message being delivered; however, they, too, would need to be able to safely withstand the climatic conditions. The objects also would need to be durable, perhaps even touchable, and not be things that would tempt theft.

In addition to the exhibits inside the pavilion, it is recommended that some interpretive landscaping be explored. One recommendation is to landscape the area around the pavilion to focus visitor attention on the historic scene and the size of the plantation. The use of plantings, fences, and farming implements, if appropriate and feasible, might help

accomplish a portion of this goal. There also is an opportunity to create some demonstration areas to grow cotton and/or indigo. The area around the pavilion was once planted in cotton. Many visitors are not familiar with these plants, let alone how they have been cultivated and processed over time. These demonstration plots (at least during certain times of the year) would create a direct visual impression of what the business of a plantation was all about. The plots could be used for a variety of engaging and interactive personal services interpretive programs. Wayside exhibits also could interpret the demonstration crops and supplement the personal services programs.

Walking Tour

The existing walking tour route follows mowed swaths through fields and portions of current and former plantation roads. The current route is temporary and sometimes changes when a restoration/preservation project is underway. The route also changes (or becomes rather unpleasant) during rainy weather when some sections become more or less submerged.

This LRIP recommends the establishment of a permanent accessible walking tour route through the Oakland property. The trail surface should blend with the historic scene, but it also should be well drained and remain free of standing water. A person in a wheelchair should be able to navigate the route without assistance. If certain buildings are to be accessible to all visitors, so must the approaches to them.

In addition to experiencing the core plantation complex first hand, one of the primary goals of the walking tour will be to help visitors learn about those who lived here, when they lived here, and what they did here. Visitors will be able to enter many buildings. Some structures will be interpreted with interior wayside exhibits, others will contain more elaborate media, and still others will be furnished to the 1960 period. Other buildings will only be viewed and interpreted from the outside.

The tour would begin at the pavilion and end at the store. Most of the stops would be at various historic buildings including the following (listed alphabetically):

Carriage House
Cook's Cabin
Cotton Picker Shed
Doctor's House (exterior only)
Main House
Mule Barn
Overseer's House
Pigeonnier (2)
Row of out buildings (wash house, fattening pen, chicken coops, etc.)
Seed House (from a distance)
Slave/Tenant Quarters
Store
Tractor Shed
Wagon Shed

Directional signing and a self-guiding map/brochure will enable visitors to navigate the tour route. The messages contained in the brochure, wayside exhibits, and other media inside some buildings will provide coordinated and layered interpretation of Oakland Plantation and its people. A variety of personal services programs will offer visitors still more in-depth tours and insights to plantation life and operations.

Wayside Exhibits

The wayside exhibit proposal (discussed in the Parkwide section of this plan) will determine the number, design, general content, and location of each wayside exhibit. Some exhibits, such as those for the mule barn or wagon

shed could be located on moveable bases inside the structures. Others, such as those for the Doctor's Office and Seed House would need to be placed in visible but unobtrusive locations outside the buildings. Yet other structures, because they will contain exhibit panels and cases or historic furnishings, may not require a wayside exhibit at all.

Temporary wayside exhibits are proposed to interpret various restoration and preservation projects at Oakland. These exhibits would be developed in an inexpensive digital format and probably mounted on moveable bases. The waysides would be part of the philosophy to interpret the restoration and preservation work in a positive light and help visitors appreciate the amount and type of work required to manage and protect historic resources.

Overseer's house, tenant house, and view from main house window, Oakland Plantation

Historic Furnishings

Overseer's House

The front porch and the main room in the center of the house will be historically furnished ca. 1960 to fit in with the interpretive period selected for the rest of Oakland. The front porch will be furnished with reproductions to allow for visitor use.

Fortunately, a number of historic photographs of the main room exist from the 1960 period. This room will have glass barriers installed in the three access doors so the building (and not the room) may be entered by visitors on self-guiding tours. The rooms surrounding the main room (the kitchen, the enclosed back porch, and Mr. and Mrs. Metoyer's bedroom) will contain exhibits exploring, among other topics, the "middle ground" that the occupants of this house held both before and after the Civil War. Visitors will discover that the overseer of enslaved people and the tenant farmers acted as the interface between the laborers and the owners. As such, they occupied a place in the middle, geographically, economically, culturally, and psychologically.

Tenant House

The north tenant house will be furnished with reproductions to the 1950s based on evidence from the interview of Ivory Williams, who lived in this house at that time. The two main rooms and the porch will be fully accessible to self-guided tours. Visitors will be welcome to sit on the furniture, touch and pick up objects, and otherwise experience the space. The kitchen should either be left unfurnished, or furnished and fitted with a glass barrier in the doorway to minimize risk of theft or damage to the many small items displayed there.

Main House

The front hall will be the dividing point between historically furnished rooms and other exhibit spaces, with the exception of Pete and Don's Room, also known as the Stranger's Room. The gallery around the house, the parlor, the dining room, Lucie and Vivian Prud'homme's bedroom, Alphonse and Lucile Prud'homme's bedroom, and the kitchen will be furnished to ca.1960. Glass barriers will be placed in the following doors:

Between the hall and the parlor
Between the hall and the dining room
Between the parlor and Lucie and Vivian's bedroom
Between the dining room and Alphonse and Lucile's bedroom

These barriers will swing on hinges so that guided tours may enter the rooms. Self-guided visitors will look into the parlor and dining room from the hall and they will look into

the bedrooms through the windows and doors that open into the gallery. Pete and Don's room also will be furnished and will be viewed through a barrier from the porch.

The rooms on the right side of the hall (Lulu's document room, the boy's bedroom, and the breakfast room) will contain exhibits on the Prud'homme family, including Lucile Prud'homme's collection of historic documents and objects.

Prud'homme Store

Since most visitors will be encouraged to enter through the rear of the store, the office (which is the first room entered) should be partially furnished with reproductions. Large objects and smaller "disposable" objects like papers, and anything that can be fastened down are appropriate furnishings for this room.

The main storeroom will be fully furnished with reproductions. Barriers, probably wooden, will prevent visitors from getting behind the counters. The kerosene room will be kept open and minimally furnished.

Visitors will have access to the bookstore through the mailroom; therefore, like the office, furnishings should be limited to reproductions, and these items should be large or items not prone to theft.

The front porch will be furnished with reproduction chairs and benches for visitors to sit in and use. Hopefully, the park will be able to sell drinks, candy, ice cream, and other snacks so that visitors can buy some food and enjoy it on the front porch like many previous generations of local people. Visitors also will see that the store was one place where people from all social groups interacted.

Exhibits

Recommendations for the entry pavilion were presented earlier. This section addresses exhibits that would be developed in association with historic furnishing and indoor wayside exhibit proposals.

As with media proposed for the pavilion, exhibit development at Oakland will need to be flexible in the coming years to accommodate changing conditions as structures are restored or expanded and as other media proposals evolve. One suggestion is to consider the use of a stand-alone exhibit design like that used for HFC's Discovery Stations.

Exhibits will take advantage of the power of objects, using them effectively to make connections and to reveal compelling stories about the buildings, rooms, and their occupants. Proper lighting will be critical for the effectiveness of exhibits, including historic furnishings.

Climate conditions in many of the buildings may not be ideal for exhibits and artifacts. Exhibits will need to be designed to accommodate these factors. Barring full climatic regulation, some air quality controls should be considered for baseline protection of artifacts and comfort of visitors. Poor environmental conditions for visitors will limit the effectiveness of any exhibits.

Initially, exhibit elements are proposed for the Overseer's House and the Main House. Additional exhibits may eventually be developed for other structures in coordination with future historic furnishings and with recommendations in the park-wide wayside exhibit proposal.

Overseer's House

Some or all of the rooms surrounding the furnished main room (i.e. the kitchen, the enclosed back

Prud'homme Store exterior and interior

porch, and Mr. and Mrs. Metoyer's bedroom) will contain exhibits exploring, among other topics, the "middle ground" that the occupants of this house held both before and after the Civil War. Visitors will discover that the overseer of enslaved people and the tenant farmers acted as the interface between the laborers and the owners. As such, they occupied a place in the middle, geographically, economically, culturally, and psychologically.

With the furnished room as a literal centerpiece, the surrounding exhibits might utilize photos and excerpts from interviews of former occupants of the house. Visitors also should gain an understanding of the size and diversity of the plantation's workforce and of the duties of the overseer during the different time periods. Other exhibit concepts could include aspects of Cane River Creole culture and religion.

Main House

The rooms on the right side of the hall (Lulu's document room, the boy's bedroom, and the breakfast room will contain exhibits on the Prud'homme family, including Lucile Prud'homme's collection of historic documents and objects.

The exhibits will provide additional insights into the family that would be difficult to convey through the 1960 furnished rooms. The establishment and growth of the plantation might be illustrated. A reproduction of the Louisiana Purchase document could be displayed and interpreted, emphasizing the fact that a Prud'homme ancestor signed it. Excerpts of oral history interviews of family members who actually lived in the furnished rooms would help bring the rooms to life. Family objects that are not part of the 1960 furnishings could be displayed (perhaps in a partially furnished vignette, if they add to the visitor experience and relate to appropriate interpretive themes). However, park staff, and media planners and designers should not feel obligated to "fill" the rooms with media. Empty spaces can be used to assemble groups, or to interpret elements of the structure itself. People often enjoy being invited to use their imaginations to "furnish" spaces in their minds.

Magnolia Plantation

A suggested framework for organizing and presenting many of the interpretive themes at Oakland and Magnolia is the concept of three worlds (the social structure of workers, overseers, and owners) interacting over three significant agricultural time periods (slavery, tenancy, and mechanization). How these social systems remained separate but also interacted and evolved through the three agricultural eras will help visitors make sense of the layout, organization, and operation of the plantations over time.

Entrance

From the parking lot, visitors will be directed to the store for a site introduction and orientation. Many visitors to Magnolia will be traveling from Oakland or Melrose and will pass the store before reaching the parking lot. Directional signing along the road and in the parking lot will alert people that they should begin their visit at the store.

Using the historic counters and display shelving, the Magnolia Store will serve multiple functions.

1. As an entry facility, the store will contain site, park, and heritage area information/orientation media. This could include:
   - Graphics/maps showing the current and historic size and layout of the plantation and its close association to the river. A shaded relief map format

could illustrate and differentiate between extant and missing historic structures. The map should also show the walking tour route and clearly show that the tour begins at the store.
• Exhibits introducing the three social groups (workers, overseers, and owners) and the three major agricultural eras (slavery, tenancy, and mechanization). The exhibits will set up the visitor experience and show visitors how they can use these concepts to explore the property.

In drawing together elements of these three worlds at Magnolia, the LeComte/Hertzog family will need to be introduced, and visitors will be encouraged to take a tour of the main house. Visitors will learn that the main house is still privately owned and has remained in the family since its construction. While the exhibit in the store will interpret enough about the owners to provide context and relevance, a primary goal will be to motivate people to learn more by taking the tour. Presentation of information about the Hertzog family will be balanced by a similar genealogy of an African-American family associated with Magnolia.
• An exhibit that presents the site as part of the NPS and as a unit of the Cane River National Heritage Area. This might include one of the series of trip planning computer stations that are being developed for each of the park/heritage area sites.

• A brochure/map dispenser. This would include the official park brochure (which would have the walking tour map inside), the heritage area brochure, and appropriate site bulletins.
• A schedule of any personal services interpretive programs. This and other changeable information could be displayed in a standard bulletin case often used in association with informational wayside exhibits.
• An exhibit introducing Cane River Creole culture and explaining what Creole means. Although these topics will be addressed at the shared visitor center, some visitors (and most school groups) may come to Oakland or Magnolia without having been to another site first. Having some understanding of what Creole means will be critical to the visitor experience at both sites.
• An exhibit letting visitors know that this is a relatively new NPS unit and that there is a lot of ongoing restoration/preservation work underway. Visitors also would learn that some of what is depicted about the African-American experience at Magnolia is generalized, because research and research analysis are ongoing.

2. A cooperating association sales outlet might be established when staffing permits. Theme-related publications would be offered for sale. Like the store at Oakland, the front porch of the Magnolia store could contain period style seating for visitors to use. The park may be able to sell drinks, candy, ice cream, and other snacks so that visitors can buy some food and enjoy it on the front porch like many previous generations of local people. Visitors will see that the store was one place where people from all social elements of the plantation interacted.

3. An exhibit utilizing some of the many historic photos and film clips of Magnolia would be developed. This would include images of musicians, various social functions, games, etc. Excerpts of some of the oral histories also could be used to add to or highlight elements of this exhibit.

4. A portion or one side of the store might be furnished as an 1860s commissary. This would give visitors a vignette of how the store would have appeared during the slavery era, and would offer a contrast to the 1960 store at Oakland.

Walking Tour

This LRIP recommends the establishment of a permanent accessible walking tour route through the Magnolia property. The trail and the walking surface should blend with the historic scene, but it also should be well drained and remain free of standing water. A person in a wheelchair should be able to navigate the route without assistance. If certain buildings are to be accessible to all visitors, so must the approaches to them.

In addition to experiencing the core plantation complex first hand, one of the primary goals of the walking tour will be to help visitors learn about those who lived here, when they lived here, and what they did here. Visitors will be able to enter many buildings. Some structures will be interpreted with interior wayside exhibits, others will contain more elaborate media, and still others will be furnished to a historic period. Other buildings will only be viewed and interpreted from the outside.

The tour would begin at the store and end at the parking lot. Most of the stops would be at various historic buildings including the following (listed alphebetically):

Blacksmith Shop
Cotton Picker Shed
Gin Barn
Overseer's House/Slave Hospital
Pigeonnier
Slave/Tenant Quarters

Directional signing and a self-guiding map/brochure will enable visitors to navigate the tour route. The messages contained in the brochure, wayside exhibits, and other media inside some buildings will provide coordinated and layered interpretation of Magnolia Plantation and its people. A variety of personal services programs will offer visitors still more in-depth tours and insights to plantation life and operations.

Wayside Exhibits

The wayside exhibit proposal (discussed in the Parkwide section of this plan) will determine the number, design, general content, and location of each wayside exhibit. Some exhibits, such as those for the blacksmith shop or cotton picker shed could be located on moveable bases inside or under the eaves of structures. Others, such as those for the pigeonnier and the slave/tenant quarters area might need to be placed in a visible but unobtrusive location outside the building.

A wayside exhibit interpreting the slave/tenant buildings should illustrate the original extent of this complex. Another wayside might draw attention to the connection with the river. Other structures, because they will contain exhibit panels and cases or historic furnishings, may not require a wayside exhibit at all.

Temporary wayside exhibits are proposed to interpret various restoration and preservation projects at Magnolia. These exhibits would be developed in an inexpensive digital format and probably mounted on moveable bases. The waysides would be part of the philosophy to interpret the restoration and preservation work in a positive light and help visitors appreciate the amount and type of work required to manage and protect historic resources.

Historic Furnishings

Store

A portion of the store, perhaps as much as half, could be furnished as an 1860 commissary. This would give visitors a vignette of how the store would have appeared during the slavery era, and would offer a contrast to the 1960 store at Oakland.

Slave/Tenant Houses

One of the duplex structures would be furnished as a slave quarters and one as a tenant house. To avoid creating typical furnishings, more research is needed. This would include archeology and oral histories.

The furnishings might also include the restoration of the porches and yards of the selected buildings. It is important to have the interiors and exteriors look as though people actually live there.

Exhibits

Entry exhibit recommendations for the store were presented earlier. This section addresses exhibits that would be developed in association with other historic furnishing and wayside exhibit proposals.

Exhibits will take advantage of the power of objects, using them effectively to make connections and to reveal compelling stories about the buildings, rooms, and their occupants. Proper lighting will be critical for the effectiveness of exhibits, including historic furnishings.

Climate conditions in many of the buildings may not be ideal for exhibits and artifacts. Exhibits will need to be designed to accommodate these factors. Barring full climatic regulation, some air quality controls should be considered for baseline protection of artifacts and comfort of visitors. Poor environmental conditions for visitors will limit the effectiveness of any exhibits despite providing historically accurate atmospheric conditions.

Overseer's House/Slave Hospital

One or more of the rooms might contain exhibits exploring, among other topics, the "middle ground" that the occupants of this house held both before and after the Civil War. Visitors will discover that the overseer of enslaved people and the tenant farmers acted as the interface between the laborers and the owners. As such, they occupied a place in the middle, geographically, economically, culturally, and psychologically.

Other exhibits might utilize photos and, if available, excerpts from interviews of former occupants of the house. Visitors also would gain an understanding of the size and diversity of the plantation's workforce and of the duties of the overseer during the different time periods. Additional exhibit concepts could include aspects of Cane River Creole culture and religion. However, park staff, and media planners and designers should not feel obligated to "fill" the rooms with media. Empty spaces can be used to assemble groups, or to interpret elements of the structure itself. People often enjoy being invited to use their imaginations to "furnish" spaces in their minds.

Blacksmith Shop

Due to the fragile nature of the bousillage walls, visitors may not be permitted to enter the blacksmith shop, except perhaps on ranger guided tours. A barrier may be possible to allow people to look inside the structure, and a wayside exhibit under the eaves would provide interpretation of the role of the blacksmith shop in plantation life.

Store, slave cabin, and overseer's house/slave hospital at Magnolia Plantation

Outdoor exhibit elements, in association with the wayside exhibit and possibly with a personal services interpretive demonstration, could show the materials and process of making bousillage. A casting of the hand print on the original interior wall would convey a personal and historic connection with the people who constructed the building.

Gin Barn

Although not proposed as a furnished exhibit, the gin barn will display (on their original sites) the rare mule-powered wooden screw cotton press and the later 1850s steam ginning and pressing machinery. Parts of the machinery need to be set up so that visitors can better understand how it all worked. This also may require the addition of limited "furnishings" to fully appreciate the processes.

Due to the large size of these objects, ways for people to move around for better views should be explored. Something like a catwalk with proper barriers would protect the objects and the people while providing different viewing angles.

In addition, this limited entry to the press area would provide a view of the recently discovered brick rubble path that encircles the screw press. The two sections of the path that have been unearthed by archeological investigations may provide an opportunity for discussion of the value of research and context in the field of preservation.

The central corridor provides the main visitor access and the space could contain various exhibits to interpret the operation. This might include a model of the screw press and possibly the later steam driven machinery. It also may be possible to locate an operating historic press and film it in operation.

The inclusion of a soundscape of "calling the press" songs would add an important human/social element to this exhibit and highlight the dangers associated with the operation.

Gin Barn (right)
Screw Cotton Press (below)
Magnolia Plantation

Summary of Products and Actions

The following is a summation of the action items and products proposed in this long-range interpretive plan. Each of these items is described in greater detail in the narrative sections of the document. This list is designed to help develop the implementation schedule, annual and long-term priorities, assign responsibilities, and develop cost estimates.

It must be emphasized that the following list deals specifically with actions and products for media and programs related directly to information, orientation, interpretation, and education. Although new or restored facilities are proposed or referenced, actions related to these structures will need to be developed in greater detail during specific planning, design, and construction processes. Staffing requirements to implement the following actions are identified separately in the Staffing section.

Parkwide

Information and Orientation

- Include the park and national heritage area in the NPS Passport book.
- Include park in regional, national, and international tourism publications and web sites (ongoing).
- Link to regional and theme-related NPS sites (ongoing).
- Include NPS arrowhead & national heritage area logo on signs, publications, & other promotional materials (ongoing).
- Create positive messages relating to park restoration/preservation projects (ongoing).
- Evaluate directional sign program at park sites and approaches (ongoing).

Internet

- Provide downloadable maps with directions that can be used to travel to the park and to the various heritage area sites.
- Include a list of materials to bring (i.e. rain gear-including boots, insect repellant, etc.).
- Offer Spanish and French versions of the web site.
- Develop virtual tours of the plantations, including aerial views, the river and its changes, and the evolution of the sites over time.
- Show images of various people associated with the plantations over time. This would include many of the photos in the park and other collections.
- Utilize clips of existing videos of former residents describing aspects of life on the plantations.
- Display images (possibly on a changeable basis) of objects in the park museum collection.
- In addition to linking to the national heritage area web sites, create links to other partner and theme-related sites, especially those mentioned in the park's enabling legislation.
- Establish a link to the Eastern National web site to enable people to purchase theme-related items on-line.
- Provide information about the park's education program, including curriculum guides that can be used by visiting school groups as well as by groups that may never be able to come to the park.
- Create excerpts/summaries of various research reports so web users can determine if they want to download an entire file.
- Develop a bibliography of materials to help people learn more about specific resources and themes. One could be aimed at general visitors, another geared to researchers.

- Offer trip planning information for various audiences, including tour groups, many of which come from the region.
- Show what types of restoration and preservation projects are currently in progress; market these as unique opportunities to see the park develop; and encourage people to come and learn more about these activities.

Park/Heritage Area Visitor Center
- Reassess facility planning model.
- Develop new orientation exhibits.
- Develop new interpretive exhibits.
- Develop new audiovisual program.
- Install interactive computer station.
- Develop cooperating association sales area.

Wayside Exhibits
- Develop & implement parkwide wayside exhibit proposal (including temporary wayside exhibits for restoration, preservation, & research projects).

Publications
- Produce & regularly update official park brochure (ongoing).
- Conduct Scope of Sales Study.
- Develop site bulletin program.
- Develop audio tour(s).

Personal Services
- Develop & offer a variety of personal services interpretive programs at both sites (ongoing).
- Continue & develop new theme-related special events (ongoing).
- Provide opportunities for interpretation staff, volunteers, and park partners to engage in the Interpretive Development Program (ongoing).
- Develop site specific interpretive demonstration programs (ongoing).
- Evaluate effectiveness of all interpretive programs & activities (ongoing).

Education Program
- Develop/enhance curriculum-based education programs (ongoing).
- Initiate teacher training workshops (ongoing).
- Establish education partnerships and programs (ongoing).
- Add education materials to web site(s) (ongoing).

Research Needs
- Develop ways to keep interpretive staff and volunteers informed of resource management developments, issues, & research (ongoing).
- Learn more about park visitors (ongoing).
- Continue archeological investigations (ongoing).
- Continue oral history program (ongoing).

Oakland Plantation

Entrance Pavilion
- Develop orientation & introductory exhibits.
- Expand & enclose a portion of the pavilion to serve as the site's staffed visitor contact center.
- Develop interpretive landscapes and demonstration area(s).

Walking Tour
- Establish permanent & accessible walking tour route.
- Develop audio tour.

Historic Furnishings
- Develop & implement historic furnishings plan for overseer's house (ongoing).
- Develop & implement historic furnishings plan for tenant house (ongoing).
- Develop & implement historic furnishings plan for main house (ongoing).
- Develop & implement historic furnishings plan for Bermuda Store (ongoing).

Exhibits
- Develop exhibits for overseer's house.
- Develop exhibits for main house.
- Develop exhibit elements for selected outbuildings.

Wayside Exhibits
- Implement Oakland portion of parkwide wayside exhibit plan.

Magnolia Plantation

Entrance (Store)
- Develop orientation & introductory exhibits (some possibly with AV components).
- Establish cooperating association outlet, if feasible.
- Develop historic commissary exhibit (see Historic Furnishings).

Walking Tour
- Establish permanent & accessible walking tour route.
- Develop audio tour.

Historic Furnishings
- Develop & implement historic furnishings plan for slave/tenant houses (ongoing).
- Develop & implement historic furnishings plan for portion of store (ongoing).

Exhibits
- Develop exhibits for overseer's house/slave hospital.
- Develop exhibits for gin barn (possibly including a AV elements).
- Develop & implement historic furnishings plan for the blacksmith shop.

Wayside Exhibits
- Implement Magnolia portion of parkwide wayside exhibit plan.

Staffing

Staffing Needs currently met:
- 1 GS-11 Chief of Interpretation: administrative, planning, and division management duties, and oversight of interpretive operations at Oakland, Magnolia, and shared visitor center (40 hours per week)
- 1 GS-7 part time seasonal employee to assist with ENPMA, media, and special event operations
- 3 part time GS-4 seasonal or volunteer employees to staff Magnolia Plantation (total 56 hours per week)
- 3 part time GS-4 seasonal or volunteer employees to staff Oakland Plantation (total 56 hours per week)

Unmet staffing needs:
- 1 full time permanent GS-9 Education Specialist to develop, manage and deliver educational and outreach programs (40 hours per week)
- 1 full time permanent GS-9 Park Ranger to develop and manage publications, webpages, and to evaluate programs and supervise other staff (40 hours per week)
- 1 full time permanent GS-9 Interpretive Specialist or Historian to continue oral history program, and to analyze and disseminate past and current research findings (40 hours per week)
- 3 part time GS-4 seasonal, volunteers, or Heritage Area employees to staff shared visitor center and ENPMA sales area (total 56 hours per week)

Implementation Plan

Short-Term Goals:
- Review ENPMA Scope of Sales
- Develop series of site bulletins that focus on specific theme-related topics
- Inclusion in NPS Passport book
- Develop and produce site map for Oakland
- Develop and produce site map for Magnolia
- Continue to offer site specific interpretive demonstration programs

- Continue to evaluate effectiveness of all interpretive programs and activities
- Continue to develop and offer a variety of personal services interpretive programs at both sites
- Continue to present theme-related special events at both sites
- Continue to provide opportunities for interpretation staff, volunteers, and park partners to engage in the Interpretive Development Plan
- Continue to learn about park visitors
- Continue oral history program
- Keep interpretive staff and volunteers informed of resource management developments, issues, and research
- Develop park website, including downloadable maps, multi-language text, historic images, video clips, etc.
- Add CARI to various regional, national, and international tourism publications and websites
- Complete design for park unigrid brochure
- Complete LRIP
- Begin to staff Magnolia 7 days per week and to offer several formal tours every day
- Begin to staff Oakland 7 days per week and to offer several formal tours every day

Mid-Term Goals:

- Develop exhibit plan for pavilion
- Develop plan to expand pavilion to serve as staffed visitor contact station
- Develop exhibit plan for Gin Barn at Magnolia
- Develop wayside exhibit plan for shared visitor center
- Propose audio tour script for Magnolia
- Continue to offer interpretive demonstration programs
- Continue to present theme-related special events at both sites
- Continue to evaluate effectiveness of all interpretive programs and activities
- Continue to develop and offer a variety of personal services interpretive programs at both sites
- Continue to provide opportunities for interpretation staff, volunteers, and park partners to engage in the IDP
- Develop wayside exhibit plan for Oakland
- Develop wayside exhibit plan for Magnolia
- Continue to learn about park visitors
- Continue oral history program
- Propose audio tour of Oakland
- Keep interpretive staff and volunteers informed of resource management developments, issues, and research
- Produce park unigrid brochure
- Finalize Historic Furnishings Plan
- Work with curation to develop historic furnishings exhibits for main house at Oakland
- Create interpretive exhibit plan for portions of main house at Oakland
- Create interpretive exhibit plan for portions of overseer's house at Oakland
- Create interpretive exhibit plan for areas at overseer's house at Magnolia
- Develop proposal for interpretive landscaping near Oakland pavilion
- Develop proposal for creating agricultural landscape boundaries and demonstration areas around the park
- Work with curation to develop historic furnishings exhibits for overseer's house at Oakland
- Work with curation to develop reproduction furnishings exhibits for portion of store at Oakland
- Develop interpretive exhibit plan for Oakland store
- Work with curation to develop historic furnishings exhibits for tenant house at Oakland
- Work with curation to develop historic furnishings exhibits for portion of store at Magnolia

- Develop interpretive exhibit plan for Magnolia store
- Propose, construct, and continually re-assess temporary waysides
- Develop historic furnishings exhibits for two slave/tenant quarters at Magnolia
- Work with curation to develop historic furnishings exhibits for blacksmith shop at Magnolia
- Develop a vending/concession proposal for Oakland and Magnolia stores

Long-Term Goals:

- Implement shared visitor exhibit proposal
- Implement pavilion exhibit plan
- Implement plan to expand pavilion to serve as staffed visitor contact station
- Develop and implement education program for CARI
- Develop and produce park film
- Develop film for shared visitor center
- Implement exhibit plan for Gin Barn at Magnolia
- Implement wayside exhibit plan for shared visitor center
- Implement audio tour programs at Magnolia
- Continue to offer site specific interpretive demonstration programs
- Continue to evaluate effectiveness of all interpretive programs and activities
- Initiate teacher training workshops
- Establish education partnerships and programs
- Continue to develop and offer a variety of personal services interpretive programs at both sites
- Continue to present theme-related special events at both sites
- Continue to provide opportunities for interpretation staff, volunteers, and park partners to engage in the IDP
- Implement wayside exhibit plan for Oakland
- Implement wayside exhibit plan for Magnolia
- Continue to learn about park visitors
- Continue oral history program
- Produce audio tour of Oakland
- Keep interpretive staff and volunteers informed of resource management developments, issues, and research
- Implement historic furnishing exhibits for main house at Oakland
- Implement interpretive exhibit plan for portions of main house at Oakland
- Implement interpretive exhibit plan for portions of overseer's house at Oakland
- Implement interpretive exhibit plan for areas at overseer's house at Magnolia
- Implement interpretive landscape proposal near Oakland pavilion
- Implement proposal for creating agricultural landscape boundaries and demonstration areas
- Implement interpretive exhibit plan for Oakland store
- Implement interpretive exhibit plan for Magnolia store
- Implement vending/concession proposal for Oakland and Magnolia stores

Slave cabin foundation, Oakland Plantation

PLANNING TEAM AND CONSULTANTS

Cane River Creole National Historical Park

Laura Gates, Superintendent
Peggy Scherbaum, Chief of Interpretation
Eric Ford, Facility Manager
Rolanda Teal, Park Ranger/Historian
Nicolas Laracuente, Archeologist
Dusty Fuqua, Museum Technician
Catherine Caldwell, Park Guide
Alicia Fernbaugh, Park Guide
Greg Duggan, Exhibit Specialist
Ron Bolton, Maintenance Mechanic
John Brewer, Volunteer
Donna Brewer, Volunteer
Barbara Bailey, Volunteer

Cane River National Heritage Area

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Katherine Johnson, Program Manager
Robert B. DeBlieux, Co-Chair
Doyle Bailey, Heritage Ranger

Park Partners and Consultants

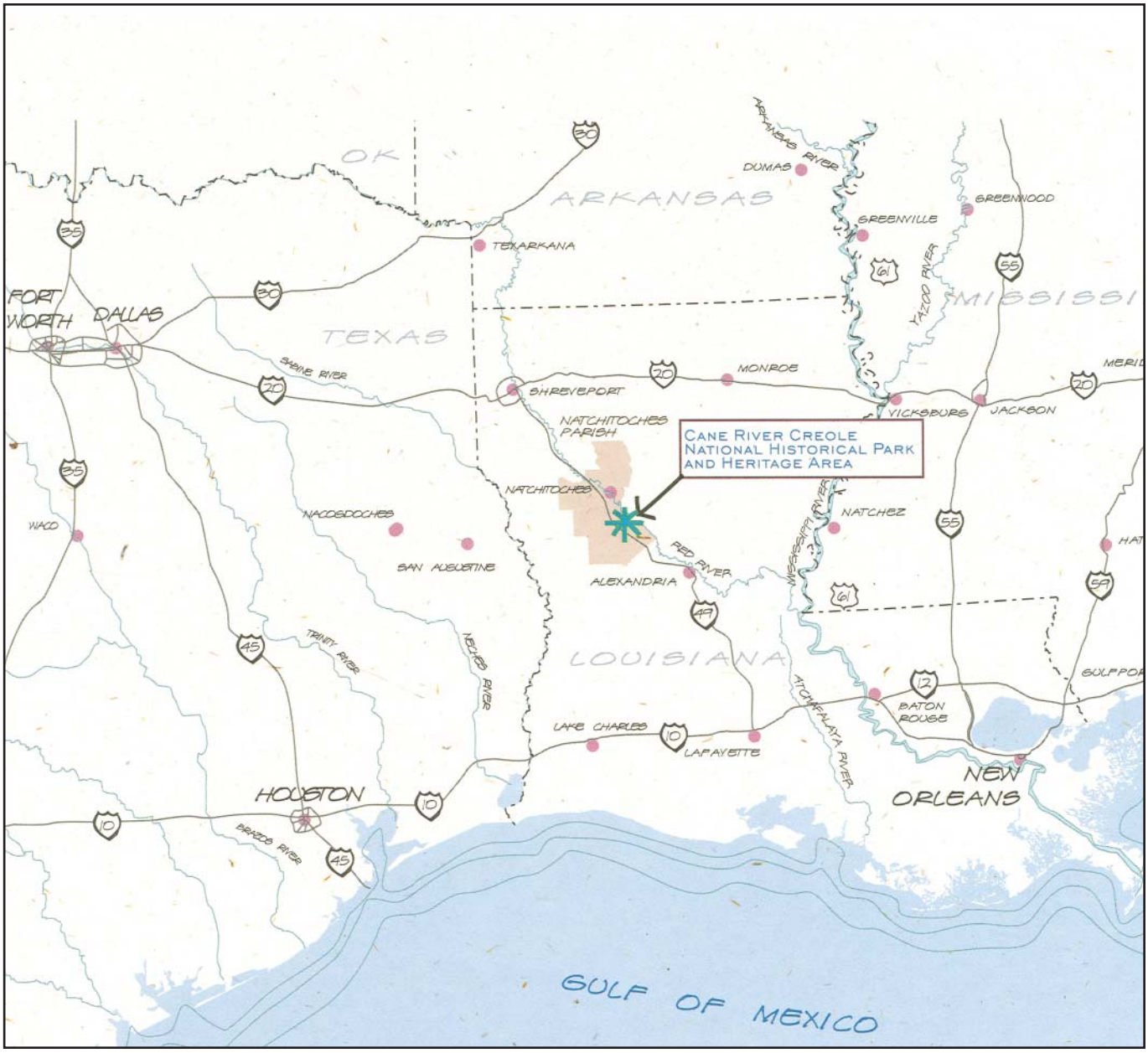
Dayna Bowker Lee, Louisiana Regional Folklife Program
Kenneth L. Brown, Professor of Anthropology, University of Houston
Janet Colson, NSU Creole Heritage Center
Ted Duggan, Family of Oakland Plantation
Vivian Prud'homme Duggan, Family of Oakland Plantation
Mayo Prud'homme, Family of Oakland Plantation

Harpers Ferry Center

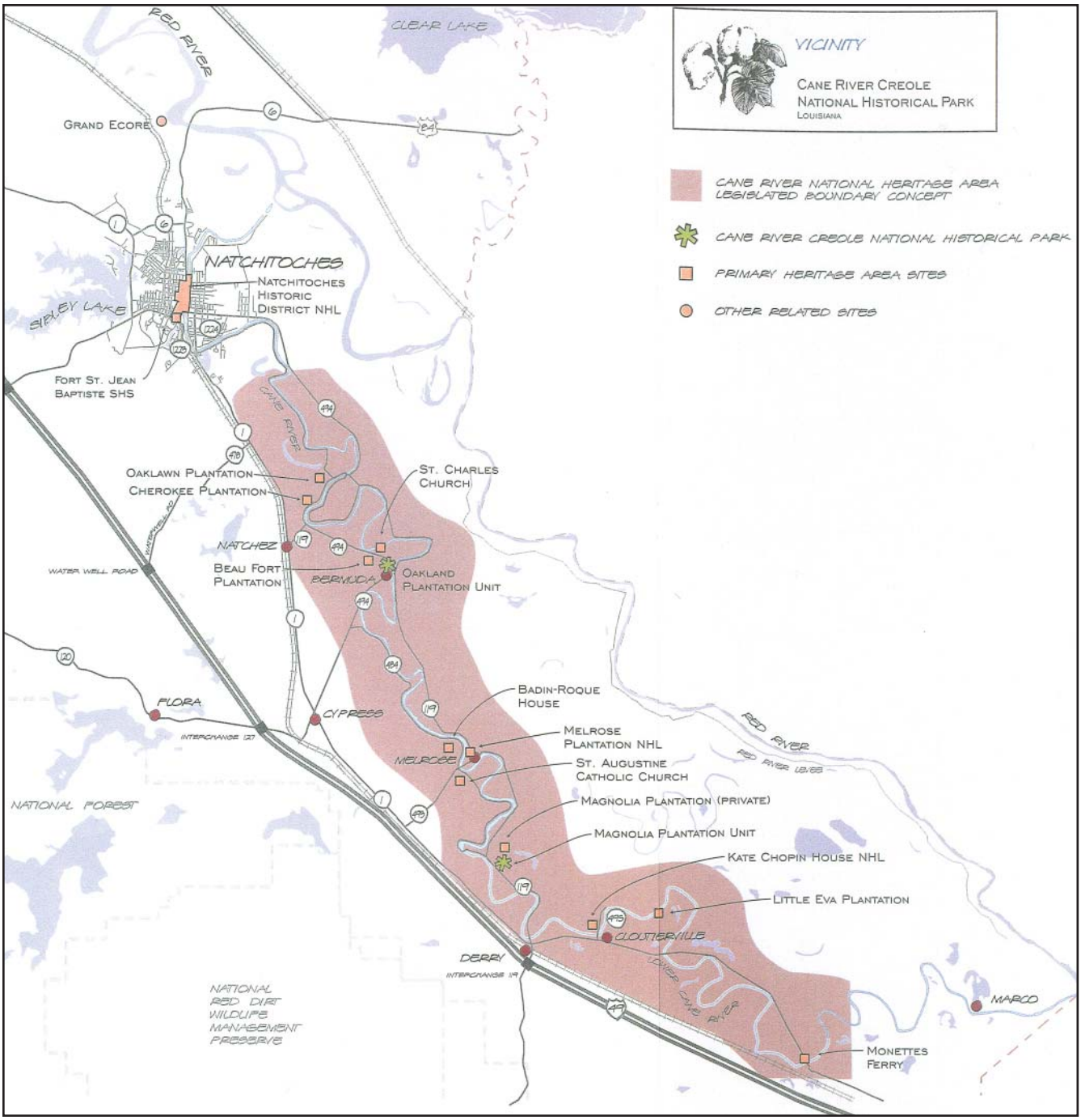
David Guiney, Interpretive Media Institute
Carol Petravage, Historic Furnishings Planner
Elizabeth Kerwin-Nisbet, Wayside Exhibit Planner
William Gorgon, Writer/Editor
Paul Lee, Interpretive Planner

APPENDIX A: MAPS

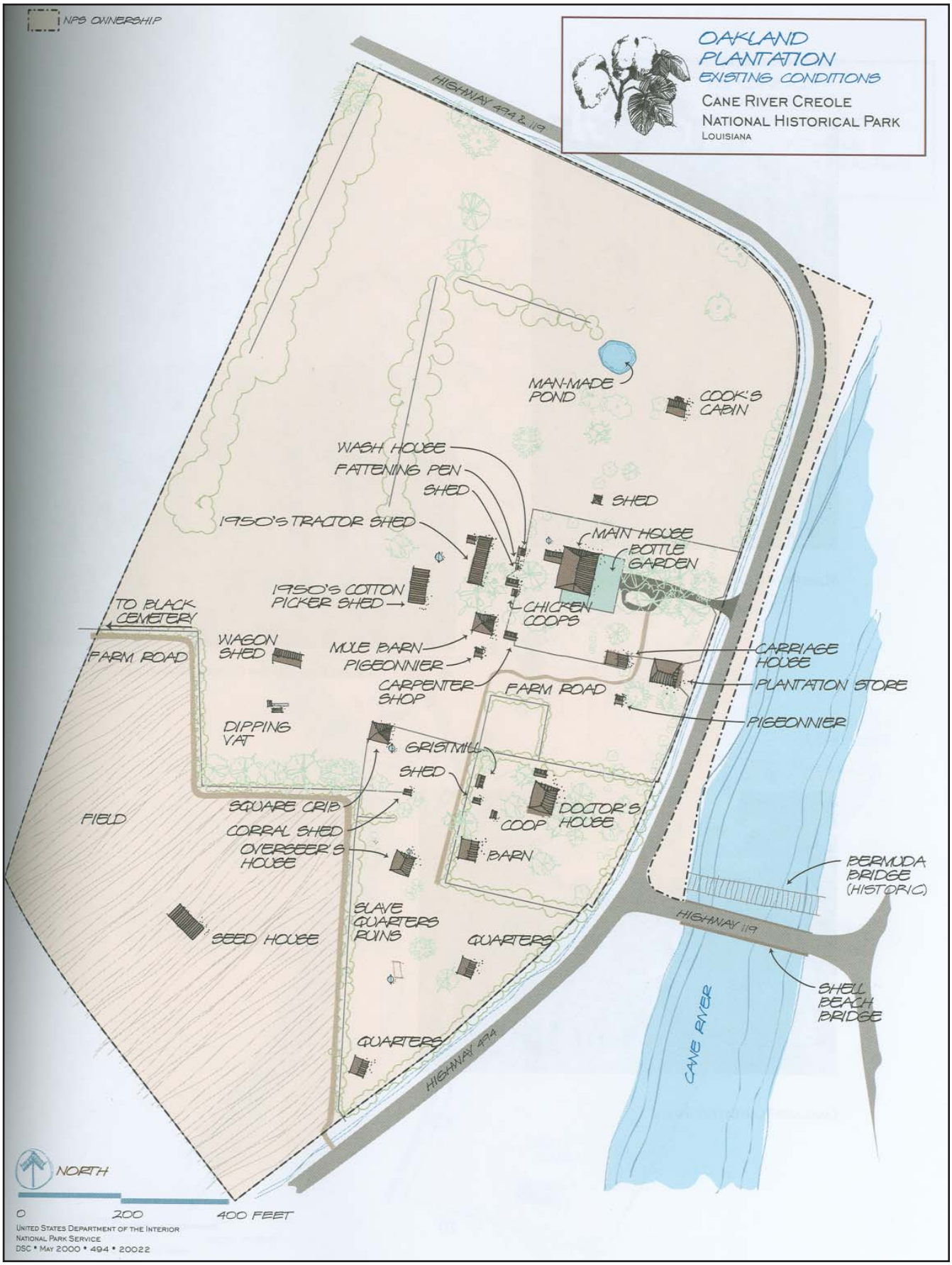
Regional Map



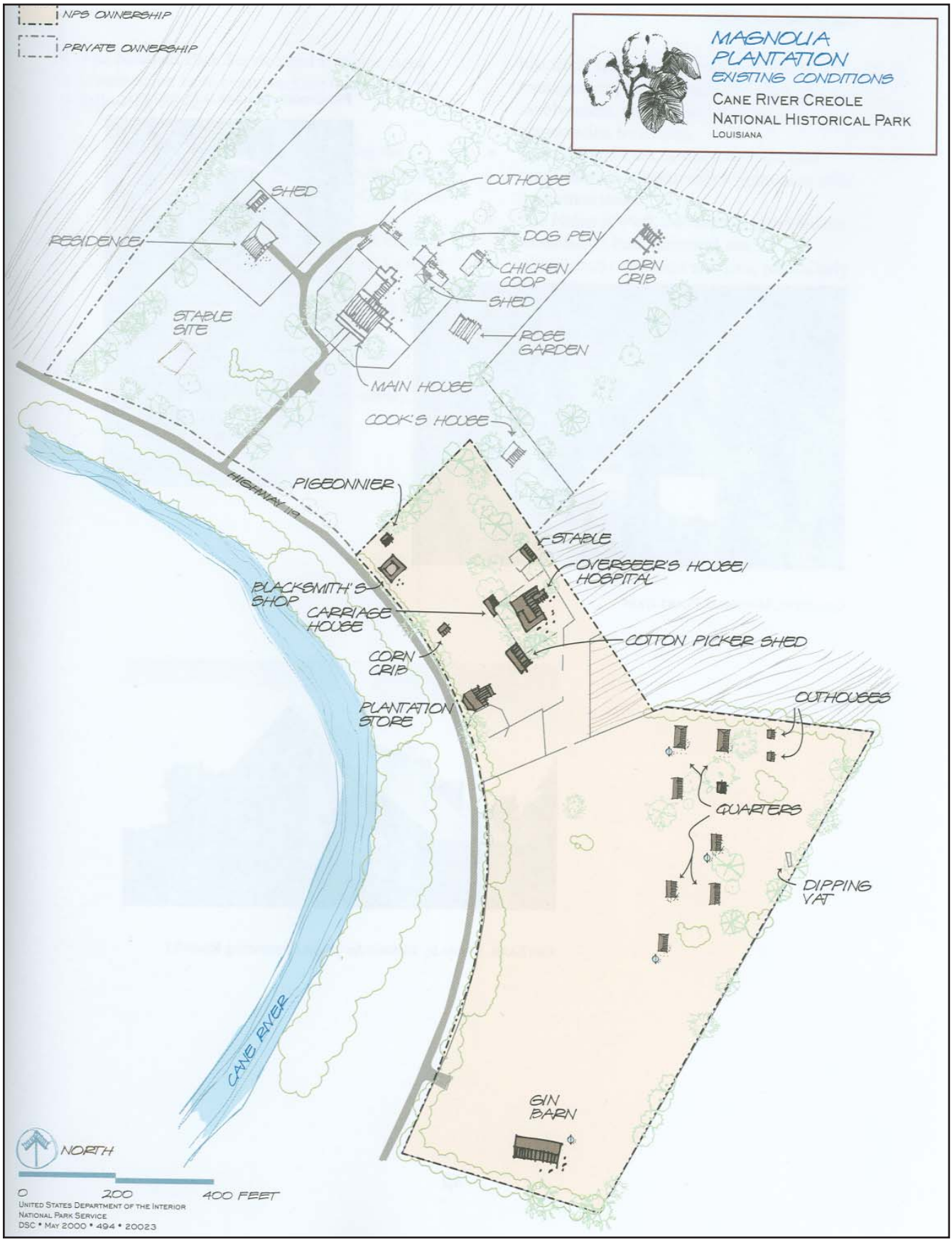
National Heritage Area Map



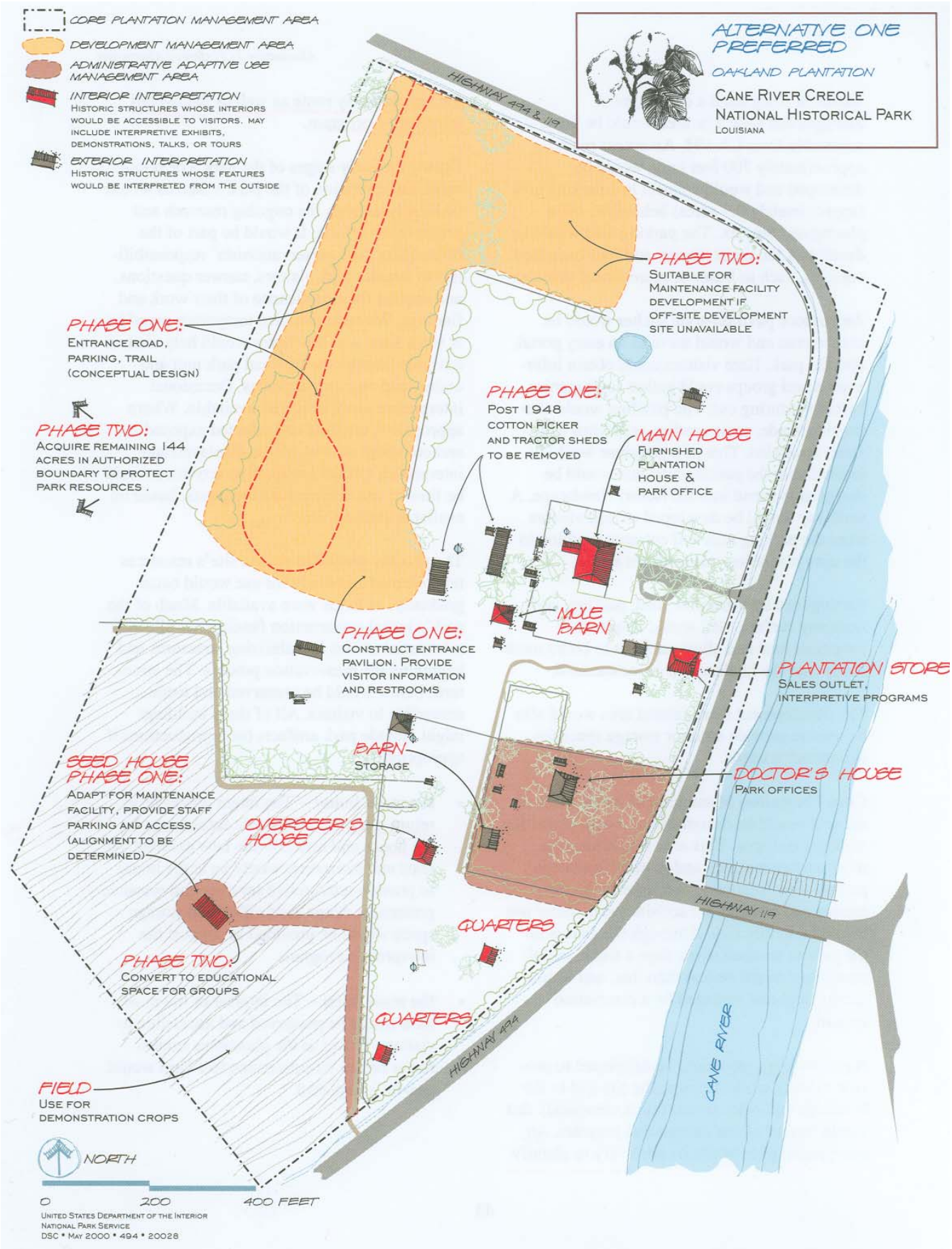
Oakland Plantation, Existing Conditions



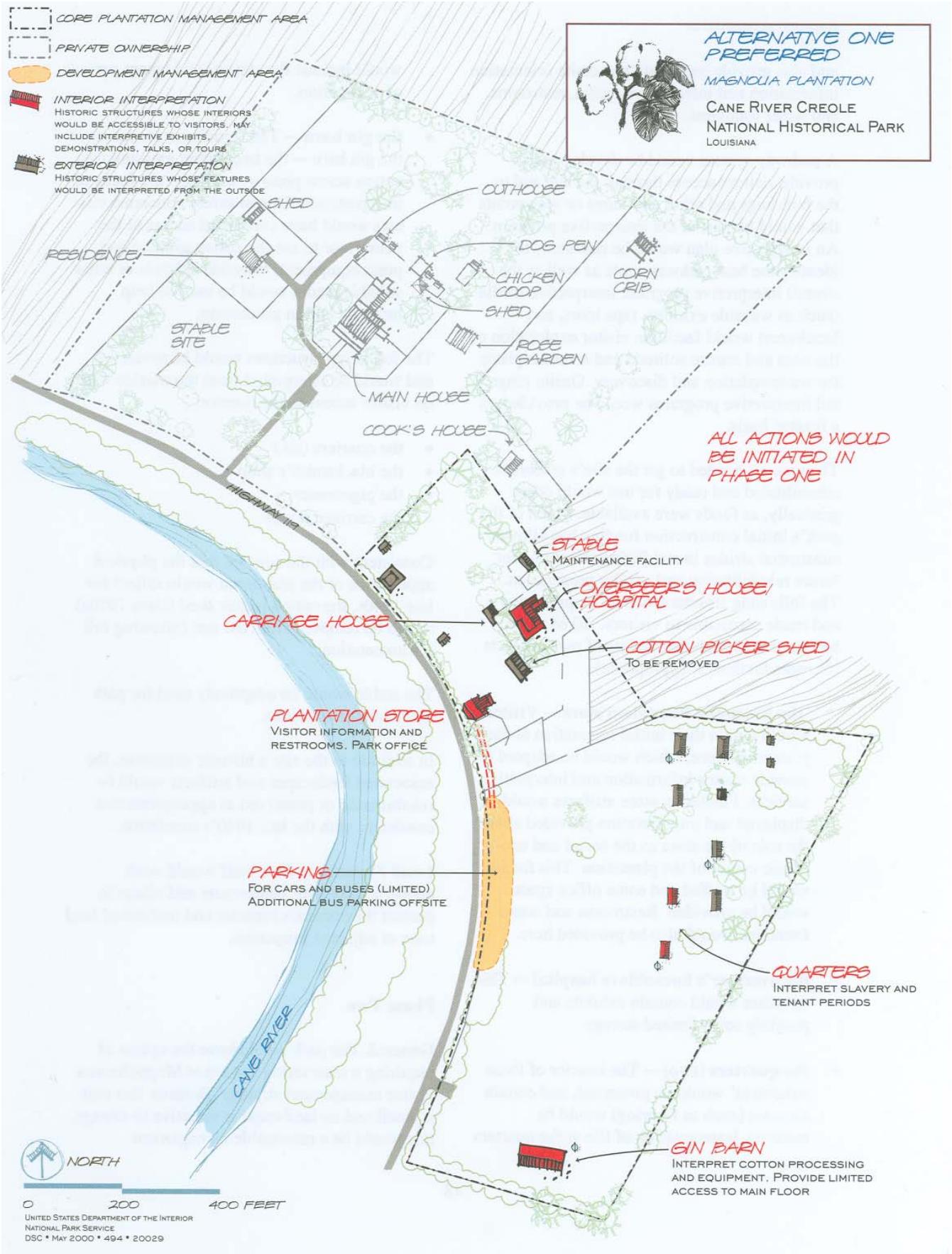
Magnolia Plantation, Existing Conditions



Oakland Plantation, GMP Preferred Action Alternative



Magnolia Plantation, GMP Preferred Alternative



APPENDIX B: PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETIVE MEDIA

Special Populations: Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media

National Park Service
Harpers Ferry Center

June 1999

Prepared by
Harpers Ferry Center
Accessibility Task Force

Contents:

Statement of Purpose
Audiovisual Programs
Exhibits
Historic Furnishings
Publications
Wayside Exhibits

Statement of Purpose

This document is a guide for promoting full access to interpretive media to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to National Parks. Just as the needs and abilities of individuals cannot be reduced to simple statements, it is impossible to construct guidelines for interpretive media that can apply to every situation in the National Park System.

These guidelines define a high level of programmatic access which can be met in most situations. They articulate key areas of concern and note generally accepted solutions. Due to the diversity of park resources and the variety of interpretive situations, flexibility and versatility are important.

Each interpretive medium contributes to the total park program. All media have inherent strengths and weaknesses, and it is our intent to capitalize on their strengths and provide alternatives where they are deficient. It should also be understood that any interpretive medium is just one component of the overall park experience. In some instances, especially with regard to learning disabilities, personal services, that is one-on-one interaction, may be the most appropriate and versatile interpretive approach.

In the final analysis, interpretive design is subjective, and dependent on aesthetic considerations as well as the particular characteristics and resources available for a specific program. Success or failure should be evaluated by examining all interpretive offerings of a park. Due to the unique characteristics of each situation, parks should be evaluated on a case by case basis. Nonetheless, the goal is to fully comply with NOS policy:

"…to provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the quality of the park experience for everyone."
NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

Audiovisual Programs

Audiovisual programs include video programs, and audio and interactive programs. As a matter of policy, all audiovisual programs produced by the Harpers Ferry Center will include some method of captioning. The approach used will vary according to the conditions of the installation area and the format used, and will be selected in consultation with the parks and regions.

The captioning method will be identified as early as possible in the planning process and will be presented in an integrated setting where possible. To the extent possible, visitors will be offered a choice in viewing captioned or uncaptioned versions, but in situations where a choice is not possible or feasible, a captioned version of all programs will be made available. Park management will decide on the most appropriate operational approach for the particular site.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. The theater, auditorium, or viewing area should be accessible and free of architectural barriers, or alternative accommodations will be provided. UFAS 4.1.
2. Wheelchair locations will be provided according to ratios outlined in UFAS 4.1.2(18a).

3. Viewing heights and angles will be favorable for those in designated wheelchair locations.
4. In designing video or interactive components, control mechanisms will be places in accessible locations, usually between 9" and 48" from the ground and no more than 24" deep.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

Simultaneous audio description will be considered for installations where the equipment can be properly installed and maintained.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. All audiovisual programs will be produced with appropriate captions.
2. Copies of scripts will be provided to the parks as a standard procedure.
3. Audio amplification and listening systems will be provided in accordance with UFAS 4.1.2(18b).

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. Unnecessarily complex and confusing concepts will be avoided.
2. Graphic elements will be chosen to communicate without reliance on the verbal component.
3. Narration will be concise and free of unnecessary jargon and technical information.

Exhibits

Numerous factors affect the design of exhibits, reflecting the unique circumstances of the specific space and the nature of the materials to be interpreted. It is clear that thoughtful, sensitive design can go a long way in producing exhibits that can be enjoyed by a broad range of people. Yet, due to the diversity of situations encountered, it is impossible to articulate guidelines that can be applied universally.

In some situations, the exhibit designer has little or no control over the space. Often exhibits are placed in areas ill suited for that purpose; they may incorporate large or unyielding specimens, they may incorporate sensitive artifacts which require special environmental controls; and room décor or architectural features may dictate certain solutions. All in all, exhibit design is an art which defies simple description. However, one central concern is to communicate the message to the largest audience possible. Every reasonable effort will be made to eliminate ant factors limiting communication through physical modification or by providing alternate means of communication.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) is the standard followed by the National Park Service and is therefore the basis for the accessibility standards for exhibits, where applicable.

1. Height/position of labels: Body copy on vertical exhibit walls should be placed between 36" and 60" from the floor.
2. Artifact Cases:
   a. Maximum height of floor of artifact case display shall be no higher than 30" from the floor of the room. This includes vitrines that are recessed into an exhibit wall.
   b. Artifact labels should be placed so as to be visible to a person within a 43" to 51" eye level. This includes mounting labels within the case at an angle to maximize its visibility to all viewers.
3. Touchable Exhibits: Touchable exhibits positioned horizontally should be placed no higher than 30" from the floor. Also, if the exhibit is approachable only on

one side, it should be no deeper than 31".

4. Railings/barriers: Railings around any horizontal model or exhibit shall have a maximum height of 36" from the floor.
5. Information Desks: Information desks and sales counters shall include a section made to accommodate both a visitor in a wheelchair and an employee in a wheelchair working on the other side. A section of the desk/counter shall have the following dimensions:
   a. Height from the floor to the top: 28" to 34". (ADAAG 4.32.4)
   b. Minimum knee clearance space: 27" high, 30" wide, and 19" deep of clearance underneath the desk is the minimum space required under ADAAG 4.32.3, but a space 30" high, 36" wide, and 24" deep is recommended.
   c. Width of top surface of section: at least 36". Additional space must be provided for any equipment such as a cash register.
   d. Area underneath desk: Since both sides of the desk may have to accommodate a wheelchair, this area should be open all the way through to the other side. In addition, there should be no sharp or abrasive surfaces underneath the desk. The floor space behind the counter shall be free of obstructions.
6. Circulation Space:
   a. Passageways through exhibits shall be at least 36" wide.
   b. If an exhibit passageway reaches a dead-end, and area 60" by 78" should be provided at the end for turning around.
   c. Objects projecting from walls with their leading edges between 27" and 80" above the floor shall protrude no more than 4" in passageways or aisles. Objects projecting from wall with their leading edges at or below 27" above the floor can protrude ant amount.
   d. Freestanding objects mounted on posts or pylons may overhang a maximum of 12" from 27" to 80" above the floor. (ADAAG 4.4.1)
   e. Protruding objects shall not reduce the clear width of an accessible route to less than the minimum required amount. (ADAAG 4.4.1)
   f. Passageways or other circulation spaces shall have a minimum clear head room of 80". For example, signage hanging from the ceiling must allow at least 80" from the floor to the bottom of the sign. (ADAAG 4.4.2)
7. Floors:
   a. Floors and ramps shall be stable, level, firm, and slip-resistant.
   b. Changes in levels between ¼" and ½" shall be beveled with a slope no greater than 1:2. Changes in level greater than ½" shall be accomplished by means of a ramp that complies with ADAAG 4.7 or 4.8. (ADAAG 4.5.2)
   c. Carpet in exhibits shall comply with ADAAG 4.5.3 for pile height, texture, pad thickness, and trim.
8. Seating for Interactive Stations/ Work Areas: The minimum knee space underneath a work desk is 27" high, 30" wide, and 19" deep, with a clear floor space of at least 30" by 30" in front. The top of the desk or work surface shall be between 28" and 34" from the floor. (ADAAG 4.32, Fig. 45)

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Tactile models and other touchable exhibit items should be used whenever possible. Examples of touchable exhibit elements include relief maps, scale models, raised images of simple graphics, reproduction objects, and replaceable objects (such as natural history or geologic specimens, cultural items, etc.).

2. Typography: Readability of exhibit labels by visitors with various degrees of visual impairment shall be maximized by using the following guidelines:
   a. Type Size: No type in the exhibit shall be smaller than 24 point.
   b. Typeface: The most readable typefaces should be used whenever possible, particularly for body copy. They are: Times Roman, Palatine, Century, Helvetica, and Universe. (Note: since the development of these guidelines, typefaces NPS Rawlinson and Frutiger should be added.)
   c. Styles/Spacing: Text set in both caps and lower case is easier to read than all caps. Choose letter spacing and word spacing for maximum readability. Avoid too much italic type.
   d. Line length: Limit the line length for body copy to no more than 45 to 50 characters per line.
   e. Amount of Text: Each unit of body copy should have a maximum of 45-60 words.
   f. Margins: Flush left, ragged right margins are easiest to read.
3. Color:
   a. Type/Background Contrast: Percentage of contrast between the type and the background should be a minimum of 70%.
   b. Red/Green: Do not use red on green or green on red as the type/background color.
   c. Do not place body copy on top of graphic images that impair readability.
4. Samples: During the design process, it is recommended that samples be made for review of all size, typeface, and color combinations for labels in an exhibit.
5. Exhibit Lighting:
   a. All labels shall receive sufficient, even light for good readability. Exhibit text in areas where light levels have been reduced for conservation purposes should have a minimum of 10 footcandles of illumination.
   b. Harsh reflections and glare should be avoided.
   c. The lighting system shall be flexible enough to allow adjustments on-site.
   d. Transitions between the floor and walls, columns or other structures should be made clearly visible. Finishes for vertical surfaces should contrast clearly with the floor finish. Floor circulation routes should have a minimum of 10 footcandles of illumination.
6. Signage: When permanent building signage is required as a part of an exhibit project, the ADAAG guidelines shall be consulted. Signs which designate permanent rooms and spaces shall comply with ADAAG 4.30.1, 4.30.4, 4.30.5, and 4.30.6. Other signs which provide direction to or information about functional spaces of the building shall comply with ADAAG 4.30.1, 4.30.2, 4.30.3, and 4.30.5. Note: When the International Symbol of Accessibility (wheelchair symbol) is used, the word "Handicapped" shall not be used beneath the symbol. Instead, use the word "Accessible".

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. Information presented via audio formats will be duplicated in a visual medium, such as in the exhibit label copy or by captioning. All video programs incorporated into the exhibit, which contain audio, shall be open captioned.
2. Amplification systems and volume controls should be incorporated with audio equipment used individually by the visitor, such as audio handsets.
3. Information desks shall allow for Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) equipment.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. The exhibits will present the main interpretive themes on a variety of levels of complexity, so people with varying abilities and interests can understand them.
2. The exhibits should avoid unnecessarily complex and confusing topics, technical terms, and unfamiliar expressions. Pronunciation aids should be provided where appropriate.
3. Graphic elements shall be used to communicate non-verbally.
4. The exhibits shall be a multisensory experience. Techniques to maximize the number of senses used in the exhibits should be encouraged.
5. Exhibit design shall use color and other creative approaches to facilitate comprehension of maps by visitors with directional impairments.

Historic Furnishings

Historically refurnished rooms offer the public a unique interpretive experience by placing visitors within historic spaces. Surrounded by historic artifacts, visitors can feel the spaces "come alive" and relate more directly to the historic events or personalities commemorated by the park.

Accessibility is problematic in many NPS furnished sites because of the very nature of historic architecture. Buildings were erected with a functional point of view that many times is at odds with our modern views of accessibility.

The approach used to convey the experience of historically furnished spaces will vary from site to site. The goals, however, will remain the same, to give the public as rich an interpretive experience as possible given the nature of the structure.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. The exhibit space should be free of architectural barriers, or a method of alternate accommodation should be provided, such as slide programs, video tours, visual aids, dioramas, etc.
2. All pathways, aisles, and clearances shall (when possible) meet standards set forth in UFAS 4.3 to provide adequate clearance for wheelchair routes.
3. Ramps shall be as gradual as possible and not exceed a 1" rise in a 12" run, and conform to UFAS 4.8.
4. Railings and room barriers will be constructed in such a way as to provide unobstructed viewing by persons in wheelchairs.
5. In the planning and design process, furnishing inaccessible areas, such as upper floors of historic buildings, will be discouraged, unless essential for interpretation.
6. Lighting will be designed to reduce glare or reflections when viewed from a wheelchair.
7. Alternative methods of interpretation, such as audiovisual programs, audio description, photo albums, and personal services will be used in areas which present difficulty for visitors with physical impairments.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Exhibit typefaces will be selected for readability and legibility, and conform to good industry practice.
2. Audio description will be used to describe furnished rooms, where appropriate.
3. Windows will be treated with film to provide balanced light levels and minimize glare.
4. Where appropriate, visitor-controlled rheostat-type lighting will be provided to augment general room lighting.

5. Where appropriate and when proper clearance has been approved, surplus artifacts or reproductions will be utilized as "hands-on" tactile interpretive devices.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. Information about room interiors will be presented in a visual medium such as exhibit copy, text, pamphlets, etc.
2. Captions will be provided for all AV programs relating to historic furnishings.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. Where appropriate, hands-on participatory elements geared to the level of visitor capabilities will be used.
2. Living history activities and demonstrations which utilize the physical space as a method of providing multi-sensory experiences will be encouraged.

Publications

A variety of publications are offered to visitors, ranging from park brochures which provide an overview and orientation to a park, to more comprehensive handbooks. Each park brochure should give a brief description of services available to visitors with disabilities, list significant barriers, and note the existence of TDD phone numbers, if available.

In addition, informal site bulletins are often produced to provide more specialized information about a specific site or topic. It is recommended that each park produce an easily updatable "Accessibility Site Bulletin" which could include detailed information about the specific programs, services, and opportunities available for visitors with disabilities and to describe barriers which are present in a park. A template for this site bulletin will be on the Harpers Ferry Center website for parks to create with ease, a consistent look throughout the park service. These bulletins should be in large type. 16 points minimum and follow the large-print criteria below.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. Park brochures, site bulletins, and sales literature will be distributed from accessible locations and heights.
2. Park brochures and Accessibility Site Bulletins should endeavor to carry information on the accessibility of buildings, trails, and programs by visitors with disabilities.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Publications for the general public:
   a. Text
      i. Size: the largest type size appropriate for the format. (preferred main body of text should be 10 point)
      ii. Leading should be at least 20% greater than the font size used.
      iii. Proportional letterspacing.
      iv. Main body of text set in caps and lower case.
      v. Margins are flush left and ragged right.
      vi. Little or no hyphenation is used at ends of lines.
      vii. Ink coverage is dense.
      viii. Underlining does not connect with the letters being underlined.
      ix. Contrast of typeface and illustrations to background is high (70% contrast is recommended).
      x. Photographs have a wide range of gray scale variation.
      xi. Line drawings or floor plans are clear and bold, with limited detail and minimum 8 point type.

xii. No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
xiii. Reversal type should be a minimum of 11 point medium or bold sans-serif type.

b. Paper:
i. Surface preferred is a matte finish. Dull-coated stock is acceptable.
ii. Has sufficient weight to avoid "shoe through" on pages printed on both sides.

2. Large-print version publications:

a. Text
i. Size: minimum 16 point type.
ii. Leading is 16 on 20 point.
iii. Proportional letterspacing.
iv. Main body if text set in caps and lower case.
v. Margins are flush left and ragged right.
vi. Little or no hyphenation is used at ends of lines.
vii. Ink coverage is dense.
viii. Underlining does not connect with letters being underlined.
ix. Contrast of typeface and illustrations to background is high (70% contrast is recommended).
x. Photographs have a wide range of gray scale variation.
xi. Line drawings or floor plans are clear and bold, with limited detail and minimum 14 point type.
xii. No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
xiii. Sans-serif or simple-serif typefaces.
xiv. No oblique or italic typefaces.
xv. Maximum of 50 characters (average) per line.
xvi. No type is printed over other designs.
xvii. Document has a flexible binding, preferably one that allows the publication to lie flat.
xviii. Gutter margins are a minimum of 22mm; outside margin smaller, but not less than 13mm.

b. Paper:
i. Surface is off-white or natural with matte finish.
ii. Has sufficient weight to avoid "show-through" on pages printed on both sides.

3. Maps

a. The less cluttered the map, the more visitors can use it.
b. The ultimate is a map that has large print and is tactile.
c. Raised line/tactile maps can be developed using digital files and a thermoform machine. Lines are distinguished by lineweight, color, and height. Areas are distinguished by color, height, and texture.
d. Digital maps are located on an accessible website.
e. Same paper guidelines as above.
f. Contrast of typeface background is high (70% contrast is recommended).
g. Proportional letterspacing.
h. Labels set in caps and lower case.
i. Map notes are flush left and ragged right.
j. Little or no hyphenation is used at ends of lines.
k. No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
l. Sans-serif or simple-serif typeface.

4. The text contained in the park brochure should also be available on audiocassette, CD and accessible website. Handbooks, accessibility guides, and other publications should be similarly recorded where possible.

5. The official park brochure is available in a word processing format. This could be translated into Braille as needed.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

Park site bulletins will note the availability of such special services as sign language interpretation and captioned programs.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. The park site bulletin should list ant special services available to these visitors.
2. Publications:
   a. Use language that appropriately describes persons with disabilities.
   b. Topics will be specific and of general interest. Unnecessary complexity will be avoided.
   c. Whenever possible, easy to understand graphics will be used to convey ideas, rather then text alone.
   d. Unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon will be avoided. Pronunciation aids and definitions will be provided where needed.
   e. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.

Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits, which include outdoor interpretive exhibits and signs, orientation shelter exhibits, and bulletin boards, offer special advantages to visitors with disabilities. The liberal use of photographs, artwork, diagrams, and maps, combined with highly readable type, make wayside exhibits an excellent medium for visitors with hearing and learning impairments. For visitors with sight impairments, waysides offer large type and high legibility.

Although a limited number of NPS wayside exhibits will always be inaccessible to visitors with mobility impairments, the great majority are placed at accessible pullouts, viewpoints, parking areas, and trailheads.

The NPS accessibility guidelines for wayside exhibits help insure a standard of quality that will be appreciated by all visitors. Nearly everyone benefits from high quality graphics, readable type, comfortable base designs, accessible locations, hard-surfaced exhibit pads, and well-landscaped exhibit sites.

While waysides are valuable on-site "interpreters," it should be remembered that the park resources themselves are the primary things visitors come to experience. Good waysides focus attention on the features they interpret, and not on themselves. A wayside exhibit is only one of many interpretive tools which visitors can use to enhance their appreciation of a park.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. Wayside exhibits will be installed at accessible locations whenever possible.
2. Wayside exhibits will be installed at heights and angles favorable for viewing by most visitors, including those in wheelchairs. For standard NPS low-profile units, the recommended height is 30" from the bottom of the exhibit panel to the finished grade; for vertical exhibits the height of 6-28".
3. Trailhead exhibits will include information on trail conditions which affect accessibility.
4. Wayside exhibit sites will have level, hard surfaced exhibit pads.
5. Exhibit sites will offer clear, unrestricted views of park features described in the exhibits.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Exhibit type will be as legible and readable as possible.

2. Panel colors will be selected to reduce eyestrain and glare, and to provide excellent readability under field conditions. White should not be used as a background color.
3. Selected wayside exhibits may incorporate audio stations or tactile elements such as models, texture blocks, and relief maps.
4. For all major features interpreted by wayside exhibits, the park should offer non-visual interpretation covering the same subject matter. Examples include audio tours, radio messages, and ranger talks.
5. Appropriate tactile cues should be provided to help visually impaired visitors locate exhibits.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. Wayside exhibits will communicate visually, and will rely on graphics to interpret park resources.
2. Essential information included in audio station messages will be duplicated in written form, either as part of the exhibit text or with printed material.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. Topics for wayside exhibits will be specific and of general interest. Unnecessary complexity will be a voided.
2. Whenever possible, easy to understand graphics will be used to convey ideas, rather than text alone.
3. Unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon will be avoided. Pronunciation aids and definitions will be provided where needed.
4. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.