

I - Executive Summary

Timucuan/Kingsley Community Engagement Process

Days of Discovery - The Kingsley Burial Grounds

Background Community Engagement in the National Park Service

The National Park Service's Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Kingsley Plantation (Preserve) embarked on a Community Engagement initiative in June of 2011 related to slave burial grounds discovered recently at Kingsley Plantation.

The discovery is of major scientific, historical and cultural meaning to the National Park Service, to the descendants of Kingsley slaves and family, to the scientific community and to the communities and people of Northeast Florida.

The leadership and staff of the Preserve view the burial grounds discovery as an opportunity to engage the public in programs and processes that will enhance understanding of American slavery while also providing an opportunity to connect that history to contemporary issues of understanding and diversity and inclusion. The initiative seeks to honor, celebrate, protect, preserve and provide quality interpretation regarding the burial grounds. The leadership and staff of the Preserve are committed to this goal.

NPS Values and Community Values

Key to engaging the public in reflection and planning is the intersection between NPS values and community values. It is the clear intent of Superintendent Barbara Goodman and the leadership and staff at Timucuan/Kingsley to be guided by NPS values while engaging in ongoing dialogue with the communities of Northeast Florida regarding community values. To respect community values while adhering to NPS values is a critical dimension of the engagement process.

Each step in the process will involve depth and authenticity in dialogue about the overarching values. In this way both NPS values and community values will be understood and respected.

The process will rely heavily on the power of dialogue to build bridges of understanding and discovery as NPS staff considers management options for appropriate use and protection of Kingsley Plantation. Well-facilitated dialogue all along the way will insure this happens.

NPS Guiding Principles

The Timucuan/Kingsley initiative is part of the National Park Service's ongoing commitment to civic engagement at its facilities across the country.

The Park Service has established Guiding Principles regarding such civic engagement. The five NPS strategies that guide civic engagement initiatives, including the Kingsley initiative, are as follows:

- **Be an effective collaborative leader** by building a leadership approach for successfully collaborating with others and engaging with the public;
- **Build NPS team capacity for engagement and collaboration** through practices that enable successful relationships;
- **Prepare in advance** before launching an engagement process by investing the time in due diligence to understand the local context and history of park-community relationships;
- **Build and maintain relationships** through the application of proven practices of collaboration and civic engagement;
- **Sustain the effort over time** through practices that cultivate successful collaboration and partnerships.

(From the NPS document "Leading in a Collaborative Environment ... Six Case studies involving Collaboration and Civic Engagement.")

The Timucuan / Kingsley Initiative - A Context

The Timucuan leadership team of Kingsley Plantation is acutely aware of the sensitivity surrounding the discovery of slave burial grounds. Community values, cultural values, race relations and other social dynamics are brought to bear in considering how to manage the discovery and its implications. Kingsley leadership is also aware of the potential scientific value of the discovery --- anthropologically, archeologically and historically.

The Kingsley story itself is also central. The burial grounds discovery augments the powerful story of Zephaniah and Anna Kingsley, their interracial marriage as slave-master and slave, and her ultimate inheritance of the slaves and the plantation.

All of these considerations offer a unique opportunity for civic engagement, discovery, interpretation and ongoing dialogue.

The Planning Process for Community Engagement

In response to the discovery, the Preserve has initiated a process to involve the public in a series of interactions that solicit community input leading to a full-scale plan for "Community Engagement, Dialogue and Discovery".

- **Staff training** --- Designed to increase sensitivity, awareness, skills and capacity to understand and interpret to the public the meaning of American slavery, culture, community, and how death and burial fits into staff roles in public interactions.
- **Public Announcement and Stakeholder Engagement** --- This meeting will serve two purposes: 1) As a public announcement of the discovery of burial grounds at Kingsley; 2) As an initial engagement with some key stakeholders from the community to begin the process of soliciting community input.
- **Creation of a Community Engagement Committee** --- A group of community stakeholders gathered to assist in creating a strategy to ripple the dialogue and education process outward into the community.
- **Creation of a Community Engagement Strategy**, with a structure and timeline for engaging the community - a product of the Community Engagement Committee and Preserve staff. That strategy will have at least the following two elements:
 1. **Creation of "Kingsley Burial Grounds Days of Discovery - Honoring, Celebrating, Engaging and Learning"** ---- a program designed for Kingsley Plantation to engage the public in reflection and dialogue as it visits the burial ground sites. The content of this program will incorporate input from the community.
 2. **Community Outreach Plan** - A structure and process to bring the Kingsley Plantation site more deeply into the community, for purposes of ongoing input, and for ongoing dialogue that connects slavery and burials to contemporary issues.

"When plans are...created with input from stakeholders and supporters, they establish a community vision for the future and inspire a spirit of collaboration whereby partners pull together to make the vision a reality." - From the *New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park Partner Education Plan*, p. 4