

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY NEWS

Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission Seeks Community Input

Throughout mid-July, the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission (GGCHCC) is conducting public engagement meetings to capture comments from Gullah/Geechee community members about how they want the GGCHCC to recognize and manage places, things, and traditions considered important to them.

If you would like to participate, you may submit comments electronically by visiting us online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/guge>. Once there, just click on Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

This information and insight will be compiled in a Management Plan that, together with an environmental assessment, will provide the foundation that will guide program development, protect natural and cultural resources, and the management direction of the corridor for the next 10 to 15 years.

Your attendance at these meetings is encouraged and welcomed.

Several questions have been circulating since the development of this commission and the increased focus on the Gullah/Geechee people and their communities.

These questions are addressed below:

Is the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission the same thing as the Gullah/Geechee Nation?

No, the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission and the Gullah/Geechee Nation are two distinct and separate entities. The only nation represented by the GGCHCC collectively is the United States of America. Along this historic corridor, enslaved Africans and their descendants, including many of our ancestors, worked the rice, cotton, and indigo plantations that made our country, the United States of America, a great nation.

Just where is the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor?

The four-state cultural heritage corridor is a congressionally designated National Heritage Area that encompasses coastal communities from Wilmington, NC, through South Carolina and Georgia, to Jacksonville, FL, and extends about 30 miles inland. These historic lands and communities have been inhabited by Gullah/Geechee people for more than three

centuries. The GGCHCC is grateful for our collaboration with the National Park Service and the Denver Service Center to develop a management plan that will represent a departure from traditional methods and outcomes.

What is the Role of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission?

Legislation, authored by Congressman James E. Clyburn, established the GGCHCC as a commission of 15 members and 10 alternates appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Administered by the National Park Service, the commission is legislated to preserve and interpret the community's pride in its history and traditions and to provide educational and inspirational opportunities that invite the public and residents to visit and learn about an important aspect of American culture.

Is there an official Gullah/Geechee spokesperson?

No. Although I am the Chairman of the commission, each commission member is an authority on aspects of our culture. Each commissioner has expertise in fields ranging from anthropology to education, research, community development, performing arts, and writing. As Chairman, I make official public statements about the GGCHCC; however, no one individual is spokesperson for the commission or the Gullah/Geechee community.

How can we get up-to-date information?

Please contact one of the commissioners representing your state or Michael Allen, National Park Service Gullah/Geechee Coordinator, at 843-297-3836 (Michael_Allen@nps.gov). We want you to know us, and we want to know you. We want you to know how we've organized and what we've set as our Mission and Vision. We look forward to hearing your comments about the development of the GGCHCC during public engagement meetings in or near your community.

How do I find out who the commissioners are and the states they represent?

You can begin by attending the public engagement meetings or by placing your comments at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/guge>. Just click on Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. The list of meeting locations

dates and times as well as the commissioners' names and the states they represent also may be viewed there.

With your input, the success of developing a cultural heritage corridor of the Gullah/Geechee community, for the Gullah/Geechee community, and by and about the Gullah/Geechee community will be well underway!

We all are committed to seeking partners and funding and working to preserve and celebrate our rich culture and heritage.

**By: Emory S. Campbell
Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission (GGCHCC)**

Savannah State Students attend Summer Science Intern Program

Two Savannah State University students are attending the new Woods Hole Partnership Education Program (PEP), a summer science intern program designed to promote diversity in the Woods Hole, Mass., science community while giving students real-world exposure to the issues facing today's scientists.

The students are Sanya Compton of Saint Vincent and Grenadines, West Indies, who graduated with honors in May, and Shamgan Perkins, a senior from Albany, Ga. Both marine science majors, they are among 16 undergraduate students from 11 colleges throughout the United States attending PEP, which includes a four-week course focused on

global climate change followed by six-to-eight weeks on individual research projects.

The program targets juniors and seniors who have had some course work in oceanography or marine and/or environmental sciences.

During PEP, which began June 2 and will continue through August, Compton and Perkins will participate in seminars, workshops, field trips, sea excursions and give oral presentations about their research projects.

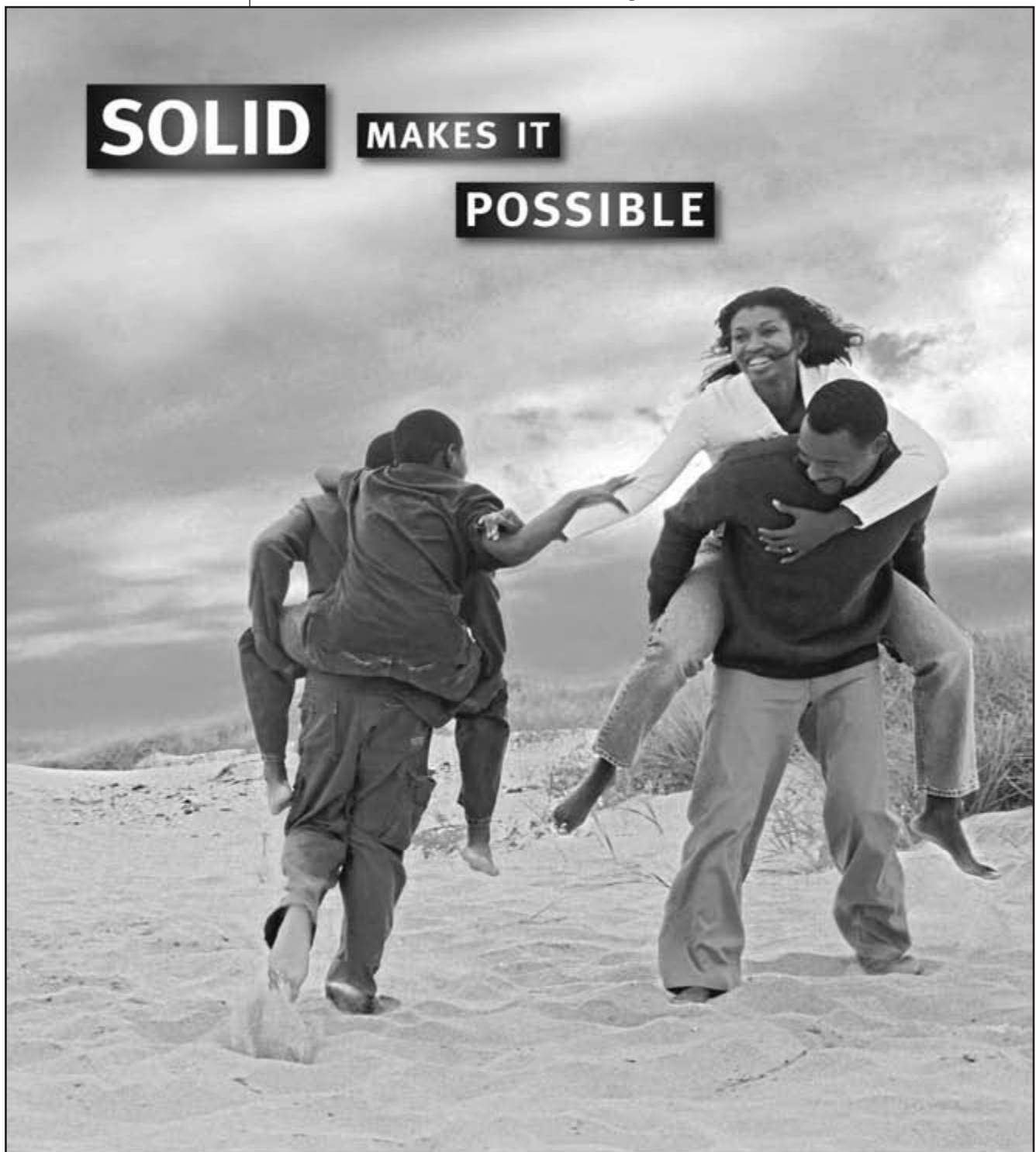
The interns will also engage in career development activities with researchers from all over the world. Each intern will receive a stipend, room and

board, travel allowance and course tuition.

PEP is a project of the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative, a multi-institutional effort that launched in 2004.

Participating institutions and initiative members include the Marine Biological Laboratory, Northeast Fisheries Science Center of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, Sea Education Association, U.S. Geological Survey, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Woods Hole Research Center.

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HUD Receives Record Number of Discrimination Claims

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - More than 10,000 housing discrimination complaints were filed in 2008, according to a report released last week by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The report, which is produced for Congress each year, shows 44 percent of the 10,552 cases were filed by persons with disabilities.

Thirty-five percent, or 3,699, of the complaints alleged discrimination by African Americans and other people

of color based on race.

"Despite progress, housing discrimination continues in America. We must put a stop to it and stand up for anyone who is unlawfully denied a home of their own," said John Trasviña, HUD assistant secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. "Fighting against housing discrimination and affirmatively furthering fair housing are twin priorities of HUD and the Obama administration."

A copy of the report can be found at HUD.Gov.


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