



CHARLESTON COUNTY PARK
& RECREATION COMMISSION

NEWS RELEASE

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Caw Caw Interpretive Center selected as a new listing on the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom

(CHARLESTON COUNTY) – Charleston County Parks' Caw Caw Interpretive Center was recently selected as a new listing on the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

Caw Caw was chosen by the [National Park Service](http://www.nps.gov) (NPS) because of its proximity to and relationship with events surrounding the 1739 Stono Slave Rebellion. The application for the listing was prepared by the students of Jon Marcoux last semester in Clemson University's historic preservation graduate program.

Caw Caw was one of 16 new additions to the network, which honors, preserves and promotes the history of resistance to enslavement through escape and flight and features 680 sites across 39 states. The new listings were announced during a virtual event streamed live from the White House.

"The Underground Railroad was pivotal to the ongoing struggle for civil rights, and the stories of freedom seekers, who bravely self-liberated are still humbling to us today," said Dr. Turkiya Lowe, NPS chief historian. "The Network to Freedom Program is dedicated to amplifying diverse histories and providing a platform to convey a more complete history of our country."

Caw Caw was an important site of the Stono Rebellion, when 20 freedom seekers escaped from their slaveholders on September 9, 1739. They armed themselves and marched through the countryside shouting "Liberty!" The number of freedom seekers grew as they approached the Edisto River, where they engaged in armed combat with a group of white militiamen. Some freedom seekers escaped, others were killed alongside white people, while nearby plantations burned. The Stono Rebellion led to heightened fear of slave uprisings amongst white citizens and led to the establishment of strict slave codes.

The Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program is a catalyst for innovation, partnerships, and scholarship that connects and shares the diverse legacy of the Underground Railroad across boundaries and generations. It coordinates preservation and education efforts nationwide and integrates local historical places, museums, and interpretive programs associated with the Underground Railroad into a mosaic of community, regional, and national stories. There are now 680 listings in 39 states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Network. Each one provides insight into the diverse experiences of freedom seekers who bravely escaped slavery, and their allies. For more information, visit NPS.gov.

Rich in natural, cultural and historical resources, Caw Caw Interpretive Center was once part of several rice plantations and home to enslaved Africans who applied their technology and skills in agriculture to carve the series of rice fields out of cypress swamps. The site is operated as a low-impact wildlife preserve, and is managed for waterfowl, songbirds, otters, deer and others. Caw Caw is also known as a coastal South Carolina birding hotspot, and is a favored habitat for American alligators, swallow-tailed kites, bald eagles and others. The site features over six miles of trails with trailside exhibits, and elevated boardwalks through wetlands. Caw Caw Interpretive Center is located at 5200 Savannah Highway in Ravenel and is open to the public every Tuesday through Sunday. For more information on Caw Caw Interpretive Center, visit CharlestonCountyParks.com.

The mission of CCPRC is to improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services. The large park system features over 11,000 acres of property and includes six regional parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, a historic plantation site, a skate park, an aquatic center, 19 boat landings, a climbing wall, a challenge course, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, as well as wedding, meeting and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services - festivals, camps, classes, programs, and more. For more information, call 843-795-4386, visit CharlestonCountyParks.com or download the Charleston County Parks mobile app.

High-resolution photos available

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