



NEWS RELEASE

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Cemetery Study Begins at McLeod Plantation Historic Site ***Charleston County Parks seeking descendants for input***

(CHARLESTON COUNTY) – The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission has initiated a site-specific cemetery study at its McLeod Plantation Historic Site on James Island.

The majority of the cemetery at McLeod Plantation Historic Site contains enslaved African Americans and family descendants associated with the plantation. The cemetery can be traced back to the property's earliest recorded history from the mid-late 18th century, with the last recorded burial occurring in 1965. It's estimated that the cemetery contains approximately 300 known and unmarked burials; however, additional research is needed to fully determine the cemetery's physical boundaries, number of unmarked graves and history.

As this study is being conducted, Charleston County Parks highly encourages and welcomes input from families, friends and members of the community who may have loved ones buried in the McLeod Cemetery or have additional information about the site.

The McLeod Cemetery Project will be completed in several phases. The first phase is currently underway through summer 2022 and includes:

- Visual and instrumental surveying to help identify existing and unmarked graves
- Use of Ground Penetrating Radar
- Use of scent detection dogs to help identify cemetery boundaries
- Digital mapping, inventorying and recording
- Archival/historical research
- Collection of oral histories from family descendants
- Public presentation about Phase One findings

With over 11,000 acres, Charleston County Parks manages and preserves a wide range of natural and cultural resources. Part of this management includes several cemeteries within the parks. In 2021, Charleston County Parks completed a Cemetery Preservation Management Plan. Charleston County Parks believes each cemetery tells an important story and that these sites deserve respect, protection and preservation. With each cemetery project, we will work closely with descendants and the community at large to help honor the lives and legacies of those interred.

For the McLeod cemetery project, a special Advisory Group has been created that includes known family descendants, community members, Charleston County Parks Foundation, Historic Charleston Foundation and the City of Charleston. Charleston County Parks contracted New South Associates, Inc. to provide professional services for the initial phase of cemetery work. New South is a nationally recognized cultural resource management firm, with extensive experience in handling historical cemeteries. To learn more about their expertise and services, please visit newsouthassoc.com.

Become Involved

It is vital for descendants of those interred at the site to have a voice in the cemetery project. **If you are a descendant or have information about the McLeod cemetery, please contact:** Matthew Rosebrock, Charleston County Parks Foundation, mrosebrock@ccprc.com, or Toby Smith, Cultural History Interpretation Coordinator, tsmith@ccprc.com, 843-762-9508.

Learn More

To learn more as the project progresses, please continue to visit this webpage or follow Charleston County Parks' social media. For additional information on project details, please contact Adam Ronan, CCPRC Land Resource Planner, aronan@ccprc.com, 843-996-0621.

CCPRC opened McLeod Plantation as a public county park and historic site in 2015. Located on James Island, McLeod Plantation Historic Site is a former sea island cotton plantation and an important 37-acre Gullah-Geechee heritage site carefully preserved in recognition of its cultural and historical significance. After years of careful research and restoration, the historic site today is a living tribute to the men and women who persevered in their efforts to achieve freedom, equality and justice. Visitors embark upon an in-depth exploration of the lives of those people whose stories are essential to understanding Charleston's complex past and helped shape who we, as a nation, are today. For more information on McLeod Plantation Historic Site, visit CharlestonCountyParks.com/McLeod or call 843-795-4386.

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 land parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, a historic plantation site, three waterparks, 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, volunteer opportunities, and more. For more information on CCPRC, call 843-795-4386, or visit charlestoncountyparks.com.