

HDI Electronic Newsletter, May 28, 2004

Hello Colleagues,

The May 2004 Heritage Development Institute (HDI) Newsletter includes:

- A wrap-up of the recent HDI forum at Penn Center on St. Helena's Island, SC,
- Information about an upcoming HDI forum in Oxford, MS,
- Details about a July HDI workshop in Reston, VA, and
- A call for papers for ANHA's June 2005 International Heritage Development Conference.

Penn Center Hosts HDI Forum

On May 26, Executive Director Bernie L. Wright of the Penn Center Heritage Center on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, welcomed over forty people to a special HDI Forum on heritage areas and heritage development. Penn Center, which sits at the heart of the coastal Gullah culture, was founded in 1862 as one of the nation's first schools for freed slaves and is a National Historic Landmark. Penn Center hosted the meeting, which was organized by Cynthia Porcher of the Historic Charleston Foundation. Porcher also coordinated a three-year study of the Gullah-Geechee culture for the National Park Service.

The HDI forum coincided with a morning press announcement by the National Trust for Historic Preservation that named the Gullah-Geechee Coast as one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. Rapid development threatens this unique coastal culture. The Gullahs, or Geechees as they are known outside South Carolina, are descendants of African slaves who worked on the coastal cotton and rice plantations before the Civil War. After Emancipation, they remained in isolated communities and kept their distinctive dialect, cuisine and handicrafts, such as sweet grass baskets.

Following the Trust's formal announcement of the area's endangered status, HDI participants met to discuss the benefits of partnerships, building local capacity for heritage development, and the importance of telling nationally significant stories. With a Park Service study unit complete, Gullah-Geechee residents and professionals are seriously weighing heritage area options. Focusing on the benefits of heritage areas, the forum faculty emphasized the need for a strong partnership ethic and extensive grassroots organization. Brenda Barrett, National Coordinator for Heritage Areas, and Program Assistant Suzanne Copping presented to the group the process of becoming a heritage area and agreed to provide participants with examples of other heritage area management plans. Carroll Van West, Director of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area joined MTSU Center for Historic Preservation Assistant Professor Leslie Sharp to discuss resource conservation and the importance of telling the whole story through the landscape's resources. Participants explored ideas of gateways into heritage areas as a way of introducing the region's historic resources. Volunteers agreed to arrange a second meeting to further explore heritage area development and to start the planning process for a heritage area.

June 10th Heritage Area Conference in Oxford, Mississippi

The Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance, Mississippi Tourism, the U.S. Forest Service, and North Central Mississippi Resource Conservation and Development Council are partnering to

host a two-day Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Conference on June 10-11 at the University of Mississippi and at Blue Mountain College. ANHA directors and members will be presenters at the meeting, including remarks from Becky Anderson, Executive Director of Handmade in America, Augie Carlino, President and CEO of Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, Dan Rice, President/CEO of Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition, Carroll Van West, Director of Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, and Curt Cottle, former ANHA executive committee member. Topics discussed will include the benefits and burdens of heritage areas, the process and politics of partnerships, the planning process, resource conservation and interpretation, and marketing the heritage area experience. For more information about the conference, contact Kent Bail at kentbail@yahoo.com.

Reston, Virginia, Workshop Being Planned

Registration will soon be open for the July 23rd HDI workshop at the USGS national headquarters in Reston, Virginia. This specialized course is geared toward federal programs that work with communities and will focus on partnership strategies for heritage development and heritage areas and for more effective partnerships between the national heritage area movement and various federal agencies. The first half of the workshop will include presentations from several NHA directors about the best practices in heritage development and useful case studies. Augie Carlino will speak on defining heritage areas, Dan Rice will discuss the art and value of partnerships, Carroll Van West will talk about resource conservation, and John Cosgrove will speak about telling the stories and creating effective interpretation and education programs. After a working lunch, representatives from different federal agencies/programs will discuss ways where NHAs and federal agencies can partner effectively, building upon the momentum created by the 2003 Partners in Stewardship Conference that was held in Los Angeles. Federal programs already identified as participating include Brenda Barrett of the National Park Service, Nora Mitchell, Director of the Conservation Study Institute, and Bess Gillelan, Director of American Heritage Rivers.

Registration will be open soon at this website: <http://histpres.mtsu.edu/tncivwar/new/>. A follow-up email will be sent with registration and additional workshop information.

International Heritage Development Conference 2005 Call for Papers

Plans for the 2005 International Heritage Development Conference (IHDC) hosted by the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area in Nashville, June 4-8, 2005, are progressing quickly. The conference is the bi-annual meeting of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and will enable attendees to explore new ideas for assisting their communities with heritage concerns and projects. The preliminary program proposes a diversified conference format of tours, workshops, events, sessions, and speakers. Wednesday's closing speaker will be southern writer and environmental activist Janisse Ray, who has earned praise for her 1999 book *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*.

The IHDC planning committee is currently seeking session proposals, which are due by July 30, 2004. The proposal form is available on-line at <http://histpres.mtsu.edu/tncivwar/new/>. If you would like more information about the conference, call 615-494-8916 or e-mail IHDC2005@mtsu.edu.

That's all for May! Thanks for checking in.

The Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA) established the Heritage Development Institute (HDI) as a way of providing leadership to the heritage development field as well as creating training and analysis of the best practices in our heritage areas across the country. The HDI Newsletter is sponsored by the ANHA, Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation, and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. To submit information, and update email addresses, please email us at hdi@mtsu.edu.