



NEWS RELEASE

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McLeod Plantation Historic Site Awarded for Wayside Exhibits



[JAMES ISLAND] – The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC)'s **McLeod Plantation Historic Site** was recently recognized by the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) for having the nation's best wayside exhibits.

Located on James Island, McLeod Plantation Historic Site is a former sea island cotton plantation that has borne witness to some of the most significant periods of history. Today McLeod Plantation is an important 37-acre Gullah/Geechee heritage site carefully preserved in recognition of its cultural and historical significance. The site's buildings include homes that make up Transition Row, where enslaved families and their free descendants lived and transitioned from slavery to freedom during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Wayside exhibits (outdoor interpretive signs located along walkways) throughout McLeod Plantation focus on a variety of topics related to the park's theme, Transition to Freedom. Topics range from life in the homes of Transition Row to working conditions in the site's cotton gin house, to longstanding controversial issues like racial discrimination. Comments from NAI judges included that the exhibits

"help the audience to discover meanings, relate to personal experiences, and provoke further exploration of the stories after they have left the site," and one judge "loved the... highlighting of universal concepts to make visitors fully connect to the story."

"This award is great confirmation from our peers nationally that the innovative approach we took with our planning partners, The Design Minds, is appreciated," said Mark Madden, interpretation and stewardship manager for the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission. "Visitors also tell us they love reading on the waysides the complex and meaningful stories of all people who lived at the site."



The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) is a not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the profession of heritage interpretation, currently serving about 5,000 members in the United States, Canada, and other nations. Individual members include those who work at parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, historical and cultural sites,

commercial tour companies, and theme parks. The NAI's Interpretive Media Awards promote excellence in the delivery of natural, cultural, and historical nonpersonal interpretive services. For a full list of winners or more information on the NAI, visit interpret.net.



In 1851, William Wallace McLeod purchased the plantation property, and for ten years the enslaved grew sea island cotton there before the Civil War broke out and the plantation was evacuated. During the war it was headquarters for Confederate then Union troops. Following the war it became the James Island field office for the Freedmen's Bureau and the land was divided among freedmen. By the 1870s the McLeod family recovered the plantation and remained its owners until 1990 when 104-year-old William E. McLeod died and left the property to the Historic Charleston Foundation, which sold it to CCPRC in 2011. After a stabilization project, CCPRC opened the site to the public in April 2015.

McLeod Plantation Historic Site is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$10 or \$6 for children ages 3-12. Ages 2 and under and Gold Pass holders are free (up to four people per pass). Visitors have the opportunity to explore the historic site via scheduled guided tours, as well as through self-guided tours. The grounds include a riverside outdoor pavilion, a sweeping oak allée, and the McLeod Oak, which is thought to be more than 600 years old.

For more information on the site, its history, and to hear the stories of the people who lived there, download the McLeod Plantation Historic Site app for free at the Apple App Store, or visit CharlestonCountyParks.com/McLeod.

McLeod Plantation Historic Site is located at 325 Country Club Drive on James Island, near the intersection of Maybank and Folly Roads. 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 four 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, download CCPRC's mobile app or visit www.charlestoncountyparks.com.

Visit the MCLEOD MEDIA ROOM – www.CharlestonCountyParks.com/McLeodMedia for high-resolution photos or email sreynolds@ccprc.com
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