



Harriet Tubman

Special Resource Study

PROGRESS REPORT March 2006

- **Comments from the Public**
- **Management Concepts**

The National Park Service study of Harriet Tubman-associated sites is in its final year. Since 2002 the study team has reached out to the public, investigated many sites thought to be related to Tubman, analyzed Tubman research, and consulted with relevant agencies, organizations, and experts. With this progress report the study team asks the public to give us feedback on three possible management ideas for Harriet Tubman sites.

What we heard

From South Carolina to Ontario, Canada, people have expressed their regard for Harriet Tubman at public meetings. Overwhelmingly, they wish to see her commemorated broadly in this country and abroad.

The study team held public meetings in Beaufort, South Carolina; Wilmington, Delaware; Cambridge, Maryland; New York City, Auburn, and Buffalo, New York; and St. Catharines, Ontario.



Giving Harriet Tubman recognition nationally was foremost in the comments at these meetings. People take inspiration from her life and her work. And they wish to link up with others to extend the lessons to be gained from her story. So

large is her mythic stature that some people believe she could not have been a real person.

As an enslaved black woman in the 19th century -- who emancipated herself and returned time and again to lead others from slavery -- Tubman overcame obstacles beyond the comprehension of many today.

Other points expressed repeatedly at these meetings include:

- the Tubman legacy must be preserved and understood by the general public;
- citizens of 21st century America have something to learn from this 19th century hero whose values are still relevant;
- there should be links or networks among places, organizations, and people with common dedication to Tubman;
- local communities should be involved in a future Tubman commemorative site;
- there needs to be a physical expression of Tubman in an important place or places;
- there needs to be a repository where scholarly information and artifacts can be placed for future generations to draw on.

(Over)

- artistic expressions are powerful and appropriate ways to honor Tubman;

Management Ideas

Using these ideas and others, drawing on current Tubman scholarship, and doing site research, the study team has developed three general concepts for a possible future Tubman site. The concepts focus on two locations: the home that Tubman owned and the church where she worshipped in Auburn, NY; and the area where she was born and spent her childhood, the Choptank Region of Maryland. Please let us know what you think



1. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK at Auburn.

A **park** would be created at the Tubman Home and the Thompson Memorial Church, managed by the NPS in cooperation with the AME Zion Church, the property owner. NPS rangers would guide visitors. A management plan would then identify nearby property to be acquired by the federal government for park administration and visitor services.

In Maryland, the NPS would give technical assistance to county, local, and state agencies for education, interpretation, and preservation of resources. Through an interagency agreement, the NPS would work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Blackwater Wildlife Refuge to provide visitor services, education, and support of Tubman research. A **national organization** would be created with the help of the Tubman Historical Park to share information and advance the full story of Harriet Tubman's life.

2. NATIONAL MEMORIAL in Maryland.

A unit of the National Park System would be created at or near the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge, where a suitable physical commemoration would be constructed. Nonfederal funds would be needed for construction, but its maintenance and operation would be done by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through interagency agreements.

In Auburn, the Tubman National Memorial would provide technical assistance to the Tubman Home for preservation and interpretation. The AME Zion Church would continue to operate the Tubman Home and Thompson Memorial Church. To link Tubman sites and organizations, the National Memorial would establish a loose **confederation of entities** in the Auburn area and the Choptank Region to commemorate and interpret sites in both regions.

3. NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE in Auburn..

An **affiliated area** of the NPS would be designated at the Tubman Home. It would remain independently operated and funded, although NPS could give technical and financial assistance for preservation and interpretation as funds were available. The Home would follow the regulations and policies of all national historic sites.

In Maryland, the NPS would be authorized to provide technical assistance under authorities that already exist, such as national historic landmarks and Chesapeake Bay gateways programs. Local and state entities would be relied on to lead the effort to commemorate Tubman, and some technical assistance may be available from the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge as funds allow.

The NPS National Network to Freedom would help start a **"Tubman coalition,"** which could link organizations, sites, and programs nationally.

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions. Please send your comments through this website, www.HarrietTubmanStudy.org, or to: Tubman Study, National Park Service, 15 State Street, Boston MA 02109. Or contact the project managers:

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