



African Burial Ground National Monument

Long-Range Interpretive Plan



For all those who were lost
For all those who were s
For all those who were left be
For all those who were



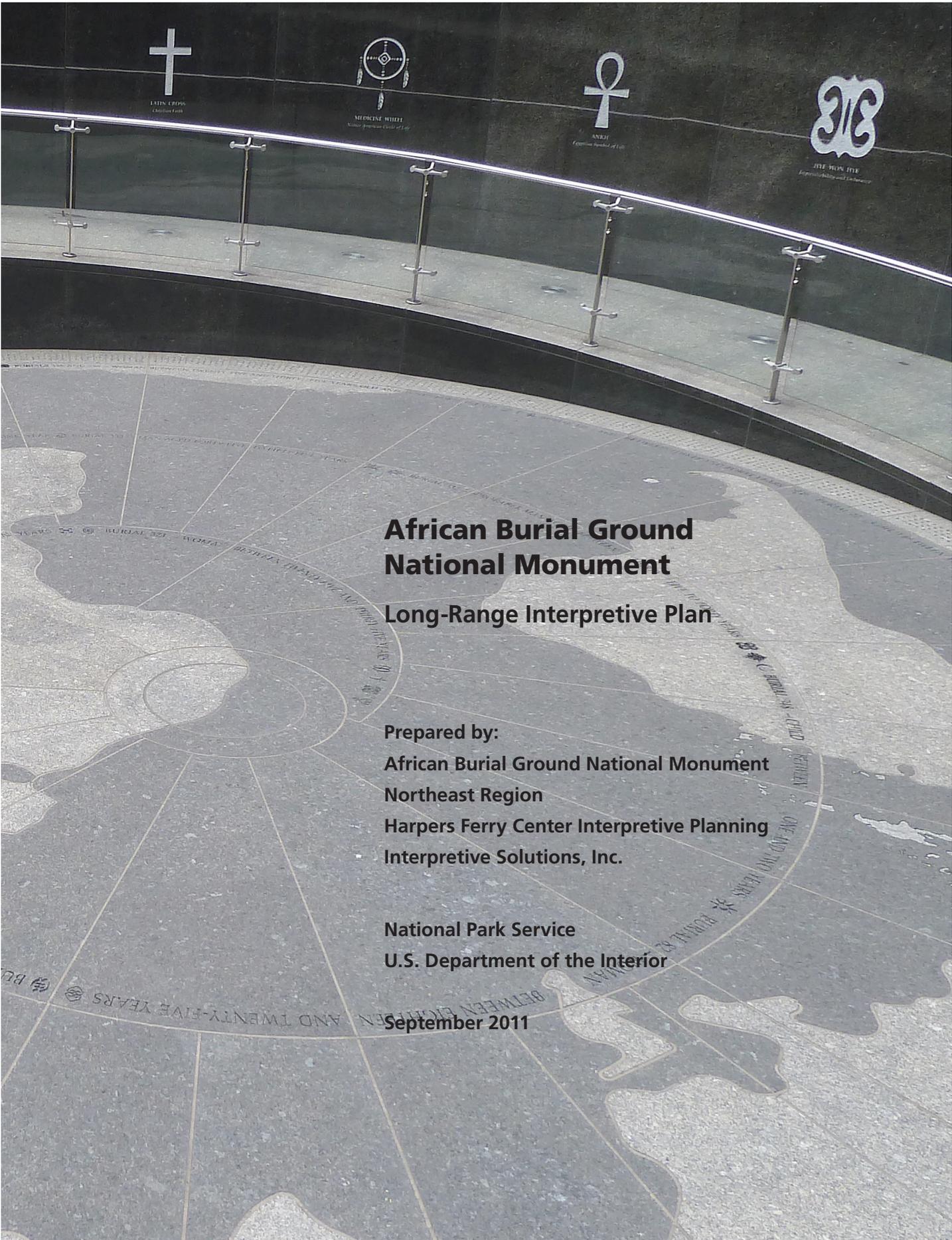
SEPTEMBER, 2011





COVER: Visitors explore the memorial at African Burial Ground National Monument.

All photos by NPS



**African Burial Ground
National Monument
Long-Range Interpretive Plan**

**Prepared by:
African Burial Ground National Monument
Northeast Region
Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Planning
Interpretive Solutions, Inc.**

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

September 2011



For all those
who were lost

For all those
who were stolen

For all those
who were left behind

For all those
who were not forgotten

-- INSCRIPTION, AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND MEMORIAL SCULPTURE





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The memorial incorporates spiritual symbols from many different cultures.

Introduction

In 1991, a startling discovery changed forever the way Americans would understand their history. During excavation prior to the construction of a federal office building at Broadway and Duane Streets in New York, NY, workers began to unearth dozens, and then hundreds, of sets of human remains, buried more than thirty feet below the surface of the street. With construction halted, researchers and scholars began a ten-year process of uncovering the stories behind those forgotten graves. They learned that the remains were those of an estimated 15,000 Africans and Americans of African descent, both enslaved and free, whose burial had been forbidden within New York City limits during the 17th- and 18th-centuries. Their research uncovered the long-neglected history of slavery in the city and in the North, and brought to light the critical contributions of Africans in New York to the building of early America.

A remarkable—and controversial—campaign by advocates on behalf of African Burial Ground resulted in the site's designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1993. In 2006, African Burial Ground National Monument (AFBG) became a unit of the National Park System by Presidential Proclamation. The Proclamation required that a General Management Plan (GMP) be prepared for the monument, and the GMP in turn called for creation of a Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP).



Comprehensive Interpretive Planning

The National Park Service (NPS) has a unified planning approach for interpretation and education. This approach combines planning for interpretive media, personal interpretive services, and education programs. The Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) is the basic planning document for interpretation and was adopted as part of NPS guidelines in 1995. Responsibility for creating the CIP lies with each park's superintendent. It builds on the foundations established through development of the General Management Plan.

What is a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan?

The interpretive planning process helps parks consider ideas, make choices, and set priorities about interpretation and education programming. It provides guidance to staff by clarifying objectives, identifying audiences, and recommending the best mix of media and personal services to use to convey park themes.

Although the CIP as defined in Director's Order No. 6 is composed of specific elements, good planning is customized to meet each park's needs and situation. The CIP is a guide to effective, goal-driven planning. It is primarily a forward-looking document that concentrates on actions needed to create or sustain a vigorous and effective interpretive program for the future. CIPs include a Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) and Annual

Implementation Plans (AIP). AIPs are annual or multi-year plans that lay out achievable steps to reach desired conditions, and are based on policy, reports, and reference materials that inform the interpretive program.

What is a Long-Range Interpretive Plan?

The heart of the CIP is the Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP). The LRIP defines the overall vision and long-term (5-7 year) interpretive goals of a park. The process to develop the LRIP defines realistic strategies and actions that work toward achievement of the interpretive goals. The Long-Range Interpretive Plan features two phases. The Foundation phase articulates significance, themes, and target audiences, and includes a brief review of existing conditions.

The second phase of the LRIP builds upon that foundation with recommendations about interpretive services, media, and strategic partnerships for the site, looking ahead to the next five to seven years. A full text draft articulates those elements, and, after review, the Long-Range Interpretive Plan is finalized.

The Annual Implementation Plan

An LRIP is a critical component of the CIP, but it does not stand alone. Actions in the LRIP are divided into annual, achievable steps described in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). The AIP simplifies annual planning by basing implementation on the actions recommended in the LRIP.

Purpose of the African Burial Ground National Monument

Purpose statements summarize the reasons a park is included in the National Park System. They are derived from the legislation or Presidential Proclamation that created the park and the legislation that created the National Park Service.

The following purpose statements for African Burial Ground NM were created during general management planning that began in the spring of 2009.

The purpose of African Burial Ground National Monument is to:

- *Preserve and protect the nearly 15,000 square feet of land and its associated resources—including those interred and re-interred, the memorial, collections, and archives—on the corner of Duane and Elk Streets in Lower Manhattan. This parcel is part of the larger seven-acre National Historic Landmark commemorating the area which—from approximately 1690 to 1790—served as the final resting place for free and enslaved Africans.*
- *Encourage and foster opportunities for research, public understanding and appreciation, dialogue, education, and interpretation of:*
 - ♦ *The culture, heritage, legacy, and contributions of Africans and Americans of African descent to New York City and our Nation;*
 - ♦ *Africans and Americans of African descent as integral and fundamental to American History;*

- ♦ *The way in which science and scientific exploration can help to rediscover lost and hidden history.*
- ♦ *Related resources and sites in New York City, including the National Historic Landmark.*
- *Provide a place for quiet contemplation, commemoration, and ceremony to honor the spirit and legacy of Africans and Americans of African descent, both free and enslaved, to our nation and the greater global community.*

Significance

Statements of significance describe a park's distinctive natural, cultural, or recreational resources and values that are the factual rationale for national recognition and preservation of the site. A significance statement is based on establishing legislation—the Presidential Proclamation in the case of African Burial Ground—and subsequent scholarship and provides a measure for priorities and decision-making based on the reasons that the park was established. Significance statements identify the resources and values fundamental to a park and help to shape interpretive themes and identify appropriate visitor experiences.

The following statements of significance for African Burial Ground were developed as part of the general management planning effort.

African Burial Ground National Monument is significant because:

- *It is among the oldest, and is the largest known urban burial site of*

enslaved and free Africans in the United States. The site is one of the most significant archeological discoveries in the 20th century—with an estimated 15,000 burials—and challenges the public perception that there was very little or no chattel slavery in the north. (The word chattel implies ownership, as of an object or a piece of property.)

- *It attests to the extent of slavery in New York City, one of the most important northern cities—geopolitically, culturally, and financially—in the eventual formation of the Nation. In the 1700s, the city’s population included more enslaved Africans than any other English colonial settlement except Charleston, South Carolina. The site highlights and explores the considerable contributions—physically and culturally—of Africans and Americans of African descent in this influential city during the 17th and 18th centuries.*
- *Skeletal remains and associated archeological artifacts demonstrate the extent to which Africans struggled to maintain and adapt traditional African cultural and ceremonial practices even under threat of physical and other forms of harm. These adapted practices continue in African American communities today. Bio-skeletal studies reveal the harsh labor regime and environmental conditions that Africans endured, and the high rates of infant and child mortality, as demonstrated by the preponderance of graves of persons under age sixteen.*

- *It is a site where the history and implications of the African Diaspora can be studied, contemplated, and discussed; it is a site that redefines and makes accessible to all the history and contributions of Africans in the building of the Americas. The national monument is an active place of commemoration, contemplation, ceremony, and celebration of the defiance, courage, endurance, and flourishing of an oppressed people beyond all odds. As a final resting place for thousands of free and enslaved Africans, the national monument is a place for the continued reclamation of both lost individual stories and the rich and compelling history of a people.*
- *It is the place where a national movement to rediscover, reclaim, and teach the story of hidden African Burial Grounds began. This is a movement that is ongoing nationwide and it is reshaping our understanding of the past.*

Fundamental Resources and Values

The National Park Service works to ensure that the resources and values that are fundamental to maintaining a site’s significance are preserved for public enjoyment. Fundamental resources and values that support significance statements provide park managers and staff with a measure for what is critical to maintain the integrity of a park. If the fundamental resources and values become degraded, then the significance of what is most important about that place may be jeopardized.



The following resources and values for African Burial Ground were identified during general management planning. They are fundamental to maintaining the site’s significance.

- The memorial and its associated cultural landscape;
- The buried human remains and archaeological resources, and the human remains and archaeological resources that are part of the collections excavated from the site;
- The archives documenting the archaeological excavation and subsequent research;
- The archives documenting the public efforts to protect the site, including the journey of the human remains from Howard University in Washington, DC, to New York and the re-interment ceremony at the memorial in 2003;
- The Memorial and its associated cultural landscape;
- The buried human remains and archeological resources, and the human remains and archeological resources that are part of the collections excavated from the site;
- The archives documenting the archeological excavation and subsequent research;
- The archives documenting the public efforts to protect the site, including the journey of the human remains from Howard University in Washington, DC, to New York and the reinterment ceremony in 2003;
- Collections and archives not directly from the excavation of the site, such as reproductions;
- The National Historic Landmark.

The Fundamental Values are:

- The possibility and opportunity to experience and contemplate the sacredness and solemnity of the African Burial Ground as well as to discover, celebrate, and honor those whose remains rest there.

Visitor center exhibit displays photos of the skeletal remains of those interred at the burial ground

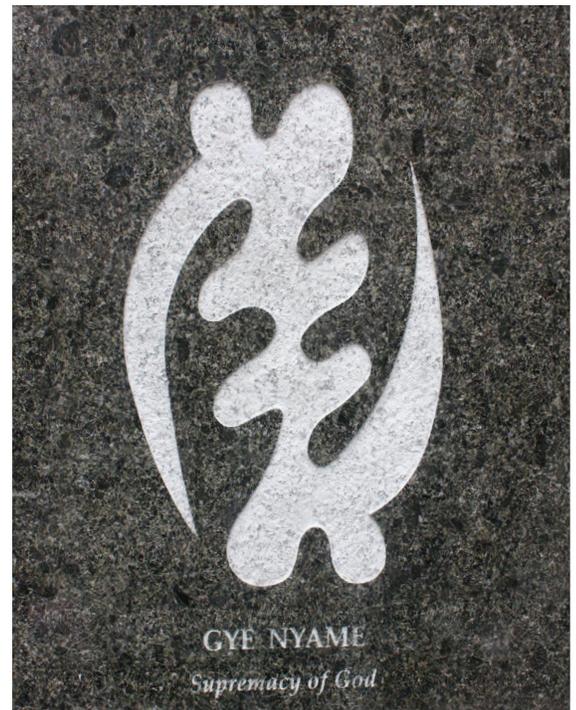
Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes provide the framework for all aspects of park interpretive programming. They are derived from the Presidential Proclamation that established the park, as well as park purposes, and they capture the essence of park significance. Interpretive themes are specifically linked to a site and its stories and explain why that place was set aside as a unit of the National Park System.

While themes are important as the conceptual framework to guide park and interpretation management decisions, they are not intended for public consumption. The themes represent an internal infrastructure and a measure for interpretation, but what matters to the public is how themes are fulfilled and presented through a comprehensive mix of media, technology, and personal services programming.

Development of African Burial Ground's interpretive themes brought together a wide range of participants in planning, including scholars, historians, and many interested citizens. The following themes are intended to inspire connections to the tangible and intangible resources of the site, and to link universal human experiences that transcend time and culture.

REDISCOVERY OF THE BURIALS RESHAPES HISTORY. Rediscovery of African Burial Ground demands that history be retold and forever altered by a more complete understanding of the African Diaspora, the scope of efforts to enslave Africans, the nature of resistance to dehumanization, and the



roles played by Africans and Americans of African descent in building New York City and the nation, and shaping their respective cultures.

THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. African Burial Ground demonstrates how individuals, singly and collectively, can create lives that transcend the inhumanity of forced immigration and enslavement, the burdens of the harshest labor, and the repression of cherished cultural and societal practices.

TREATMENT OF SACRED SITES—SANKOFA AND SCHOLARSHIP. Guided by the spirit of Sankofa, a West African Akan concept and symbol that exhorts us to “learn from the past to prepare the future,” efforts to preserve, study, and commemorate African Burial Ground have triggered a vigorous activism and dialogue on the treatment of sacred sites, ancestral remains, and sites of conscience in New York City and around the globe.

Topics and Stories, Concepts and Ideas

Each of the themes supports interpretation of a great variety of topics and stories. The following matrix includes a representative, partial list of some of these (column three). The list is not all-inclusive, nor is it intended to exclude any topic. The middle column of the matrix describes some of the concepts, ideas, and interpretive approaches that build on the topics and stories, and that will help to convey the themes. The list of concepts and ideas can also serve as a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the interpretive program, by defining objectives for interpretation: what visitors should be able to describe, explain, or explore as a result of their AFBG experience.

Interpretive Theme Matrix

Theme Title and Interpretive Theme Statement	Concepts and Ideas Examples of the concepts and ideas that may be explored within each theme. Concepts and ideas are written as objectives.	Topics and Stories Examples of topics and stories that could be included in this theme
<p>Rediscovery of the Burials Reshapes History</p> <p>Rediscovery of African Burial Ground demands that history be retold and forever altered by a more complete understanding of the African Diaspora, the scope of efforts to enslave Africans, the nature of resistance to dehumanization, and the roles played by Africans and Americans of African descent in building New York City and the nation, and shaping their respective cultures.</p>	<p>Reframe the picture of colonial history to include African contributions to New York and the nation.</p> <p>Describe how rediscovery of the burial ground fundamentally shifted the story of early America to include recognition of widespread slavery in the north, urban slavery, and how physical evidence made it impossible to consider slavery as anything other than a brutal institution.</p> <p>Describe the everyday struggles of the enslaved.</p> <p>Explain the symbolism of the burial ground—what it meant then; what it means now.</p> <p>Describe the critical roles played by the enslaved in building New York City and the United States.</p> <p>Illustrate and explain the contributions of Africans and Americans of African descent to the wealth and development of the city and country</p> <p>Explain the scope and impact of slavery in New York (2nd only to Charleston, SC, in population of enslaved) and the role of NYC as the capital of illegal slave trade (40-50% of that trade).</p> <p>Explain the competition for labor and how the skills of Africans (skills gained in Africa, ex: woodworking, iron manufacture, textiles, etc.) were highly valued in New York.</p> <p>Explore how repression and inequality in society created a nation that struggles to realize its ideals.</p> <p>Show the irony that a nation founded on the concept that “all men are created equal” was built—literally and figuratively--by enslaved laborers—including the very structures that housed institutions of representative government, built upon graves of the enslaved.</p> <p>Explain the differences between various forms of slavery (ex: race-based chattel).</p> <p>Compare and contrast various national models for slavery, their time periods, and context (for example, Dutch, British, and American).</p>	<p>Slavery in early New York and America</p> <p>Characteristics of various African cultures; differences between cultures</p> <p>Statistics on slavery in different parts of the country (north/south, urban/ rural, in different 18th-century American cities, etc.)</p> <p>Scope and scale of slavery in NYC</p> <p>Illegal slave trade in NYC</p> <p>Irony of government buildings built on graves of enslaved (City Hall built 15 yrs after ABG closed)</p> <p>ABG on old maps</p> <p>Rediscovery & recognition of the burial ground</p> <p>Resistance</p> <p>African American culture as distinct but evolved from African traditions and culture</p> <p>Influences of African Americans and African American culture in the U.S.</p> <p>Faith, spirituality</p> <p>Spiritual significance</p> <p>Cultural awareness and identity</p> <p>What the burial ground meant then (during the burial period)</p> <p>What the burial ground means now</p>

Interpretive Theme Matrix

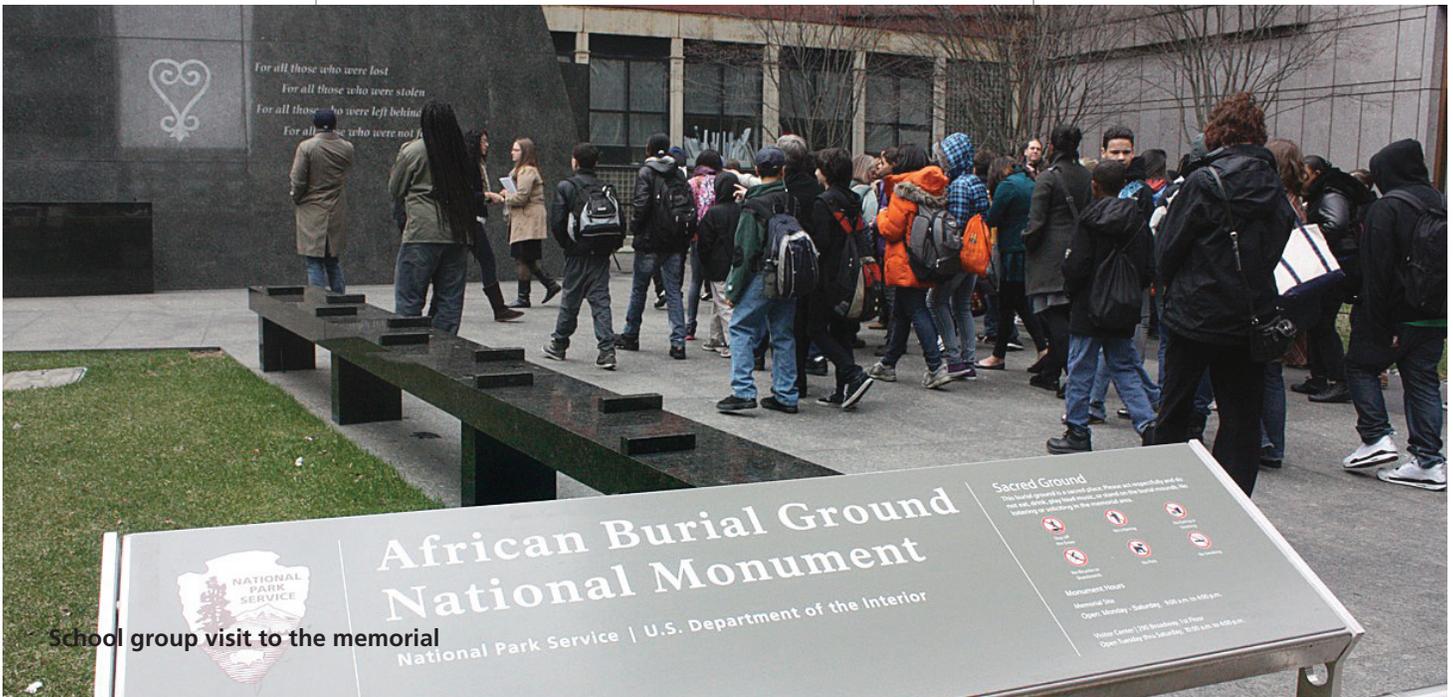
Theme Title and Interpretive Theme Statement	Concepts and Ideas Examples of the concepts and ideas that may be explored within each theme. Concepts and ideas are written as objectives.	Topics and Stories Examples of topics and stories that could be included in this theme
<p>Rediscovery of the Burials Reshapes History</p> <p><i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Tell stories of oppression and the oppressors: who were the oppressors? What did they gain from oppression?</p> <p>Characterize the nature and effect of the African Diaspora.</p> <p>Describe the rich cultures and traditions of diverse African societies (various West Indian groups, West African, etc.).</p> <p>Illustrate how African cultural practices persisted, were retained, were adapted, and spread in NY and the early US.</p> <p>Tell stories of the ways Africans adapted to society in America.</p> <p>Describe the African origins (religious, artistic, oral traditions, etc.) of elements of American culture, their scope and scale, and their impact on American life.</p> <p>Trace the creation of a new culture—African-American—based on blended African traditions, and its impact on the nation and the world.</p> <p>Provide examples of African-American influence on contemporary Africa.</p> <p>Tell stories of continual resistance and dedication to seeking freedom.</p> <p>Explain how the spiritual integrity and continuing faith of Africans and African-Americans helped them overcome hardship, oppression, and inequality.</p> <p>Describe how the strength of the ancestors is present in Americans of African descent today, helping to fortify them against adversity.</p> <p>Describe how the burial ground became a focal point for expression of African culture, religion, society.</p>	
Theme Title and Interpretive Theme Statement	Concepts and Ideas Examples of the concepts and ideas that may be explored within each theme. Concepts and ideas are written as objectives.	Topics and Stories Examples of topics and stories that could be included in this theme
<p>The Struggle for Human Rights</p> <p>African Burial Ground demonstrates how individuals, singly and collectively, can create lives that transcend the inhumanity of forced immigration and enslavement, the burdens of the harshest labor, and the repression of cherished cultural and societal practices.</p>	<p>Describe how Africans in New York created lives that transcended inhumanity and forced migration.</p> <p>Describe the physical manifestations of harsh labor—what their bones tell us about the lives of Africans in early New York.</p> <p>Explore the meanings and ramifications that children comprise 40% of African Burial Ground burials—that children were loved by parents, but born enslaved, suffered, and endured hard work from early ages.</p> <p>Describe how African symbols, language, spiritual, and cultural African traditions were retained.</p> <p>Describe how Africans resisted and maintained dignity even within the harsh confines of enslavement.</p>	<p>Human rights</p> <p>Every day struggles</p> <p>Physical evidence of the brutality of slavery</p> <p>Resistance</p> <p>Slave revolts (1712 revolt)</p> <p>Maroonage</p> <p>Sources/forms of resistance</p> <p>Cultural symbols</p>

Interpretive Theme Matrix

Theme Title and Interpretive Theme Statement	Concepts and Ideas Examples of the concepts and ideas that may be explored within each theme. Concepts and ideas are written as objectives.	Topics and Stories Examples of topics and stories that could be included in this theme
<p>The Struggle for Human Rights</p> <p><i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Compare and contrast the growth and influence of African American spiritual traditions; the Africanization of Christianity and the Christianization of African religions.</p> <p>Describe 18th-century burial practices. Compare and contrast burial practices then and now.</p> <p>Discuss funeral practices as a connection to human universals: death, loss, and mourning.</p> <p>Show how traditions blended and integrated to create a cultural duality and how melded customs created traditional African American burial practices that continue today. (Ex: pouring of libations, honoring of ancestors before an event begins: "We haven't forgotten.")</p> <p>Describe parallel development of African American institutions that value racial solidarity and identity, self-reliance, education, self-confidence, and leadership.</p> <p>Provide context and background to connect to slave uprisings throughout the Atlantic World (Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Stono Rebellion); explain how they are based in West African ideals. Describe the ramifications of the slave revolt of 1712, the 1st example of armed resistance in North America (early freedom fighters probably executed and interred at the burial ground).</p> <p>Explain maroonage, a method of resettlement and resistance employed by African Americans, especially the formerly enslaved.</p> <p>Describe the context and the laws enacted to prevent and counter resistance.</p> <p>Discuss the role of humor and proverbs in overcoming oppression, a form of resistance that continues today.</p> <p>Describe daily/family/community life for enslaved Africans and Americans of African descent.</p> <p>Link African Burial Ground to other burial grounds and the understanding of the ongoing struggle for human rights.</p> <p>Trace African American activism at the burial ground over the centuries (ex: defending against 18th-c. grave robbers; medical, anatomy, and law students; and preceding a 1788 New York City riot against grave robbing medical students).</p>	<p>Social stratification</p> <p>Rites of passage</p> <p>Beliefs about afterlife and rebirth</p> <p>Burial rites and practices, then and now</p> <p>Stress of enslavement</p> <p>Diversity of African cultures</p> <p>First African Atlantic Creoles</p> <p>Free Africans in NYC</p> <p>Role of African sailors in NY's seaport</p> <p>Humor and proverbs</p> <p>Funerary practices</p> <p>Cultural artifacts</p> <p>Religion</p> <p>Economic, social, and political life</p> <p>Colonial life, 17th- and 18th-centuries</p> <p>New York History</p> <p>Family life</p> <p>Infanticide</p> <p>Music and sound</p>

Interpretive Theme Matrix

Theme Title and Interpretive Theme Statement	Concepts and Ideas	Topics and Stories
<p>Treatment of Sacred Sites—Sankofa and Scholarship</p> <p>Guided by the spirit of Sankofa, a West African Akan concept and symbol that exhorts us to “learn from the past to prepare the future,” efforts to preserve, study, and commemorate African Burial Ground have triggered a vigorous activism and dialogue on the treatment of sacred sites, ancestral remains, and sites of conscience in New York City and around the globe.</p>	<p>Describe what the rediscovery of African Burial Ground reveals about the people interred there and ourselves.</p> <p>Discuss the meaning, response, and implications of the rediscovery of the burial ground.</p> <p>Explain what the methodologies, history, science, ethnography, archaeology, anthropology, historiography, and oral histories tell us about African Burial Ground.</p> <p>Explore the science and the scholarship behind the research on African Burial Ground.</p> <p>Describe the roles of the General Services Administration (GSA), Howard University, scholars, activists, and others in researching and preserving the burial ground.</p> <p>Describe how archaeology—and especially archaeology and science done by African Americans at African Burial Ground—pioneered and influenced the fields of archaeology and forensic study. Describe the barriers and struggles to involve African American archaeologists in the burial ground’s research contracted by GSA.</p> <p>Tell the story of preservation of the site and the community activism that made it possible.</p> <p>Inventory similar African burial sites located elsewhere in the U.S. and the world.</p> <p>Draw connections between African Burial Ground in New York and compare and contrast circumstances, community involvement, and activism with other burials grounds, analyzing their success at commemoration.</p>	<p>Connection and relevance today</p> <p>Symbolism and ownership of the stories</p> <p>Commemoration</p> <p>Sankofa</p> <p>Rediscovery of the burial ground</p> <p>Archaeology, archaeologists, and scientists who worked on the burial ground</p> <p>Connection to other African burial grounds and cemeteries around the world</p> <p>Stories of activists—individually and collectively—who preserved the burial ground.</p> <p>Scientists and scholars who worked on African Burial Ground and their work and methods</p> <p>Group identity</p> <p>Communities</p> <p>National and international responses to the rediscovery</p>



School group visit to the memorial

Management Goals

These goals describe management's intent in offering interpretive and educational programs and services.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 1916 ORGANIC ACT:

"...promote and regulate the use of the...national parks...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Goals for African Burial Ground National Monument's Long-Range Interpretive Plan

The following goals for the LRIP were developed by the team as part of the planning process:

- **The story of African Burial Ground National Monument will be interpreted for diverse audiences in ways that engage attention and emotion, provoke thought and reflection, and relate to contemporary issues.**
- **Educational programming will incorporate park themes and school curricula to serve both on-site and off-site audiences. The educational programming will function in conjunction with partners from various educational institutions.**
- **Historical interpretation and education will be based on accurate**

and contemporary scholarship, and represent legitimate differences in perspective.

- **The use of media/technology will be used to build constituencies and extend outreach services to the public locally, nationally, and internationally.**

Audiences at African Burial Ground National Monument

Because different audiences have varied needs and expectations, current and potential audience segments are identified so that specific strategies and methods can be developed to target the needs of each.

CURRENT AUDIENCES for interpretive programming and community outreach are:

Destination visitors. These are the people who seek out the site and visit it in person. They include people who come individually and in groups such as African American tourists; international tourists of African heritage (ex: West Indian, African, etc.) paying homage to ancestors; intergenerational African American families and extended family groups coming as part of a family reunion; groups from Afro-centric educational settings; white Americans; non-curriculum-centered groups, such as senior citizens of all races, African American church groups, tour groups, National Park Service enthusiasts, etc.

School groups, especially grades 4-6 (New York State history curriculum), but also others, including college

classes. Students fourth through sixth grade constitute an estimated 70% of park visitation.

Researchers, writers, and scholars (estimated to be about 5% of the total onsite audience).

Non-English speakers (mainly French, Spanish, and German).

Neighbors from the nearby Chinese community.

Virtual visitors. AFBG received 14,564 visits to its website in FY2010. It boasts the NPS' most-followed individual park Twitter site, currently more than 35,000 followers with approximately 200 new followers per day, and an estimated 20 re-tweets and 30 mentions by other followers on a daily basis.

TARGETED AUDIENCES. Parks seek to appeal to a wide range of visitors of varied backgrounds and ages with different motivations for visiting. African Burial Ground National Monument will continue to provide services to existing and general audiences, but some audiences will receive focused attention as “targeted audiences” in the short-term because they are either inadequately served by existing interpretation, need different strategies for engagement, or require specific methods to open or sustain communications and relationships.

Targeted audiences are identified so that programming, media, and facilities can be shaped to address particular needs and to determine the most effective interpretive methods to communicate with those audiences.

Identifying targeted audiences also helps to evaluate the effectiveness of interpretive experience programming.

Targeted Audiences for African Burial Ground are:

- ***Students and teachers, grades 4-6.*** While school groups of various grade levels have been constant visitors to AFBG, a focus on grades 4-6 will provide the best match with New York City and other area curriculum standards.
- ***Black New Yorkers who do not visit the site.*** They may not visit for any number of reasons, but the park will address this audience with the approach that some people either do not know enough about the struggle to reclaim ownership of the African Burial Ground story; or that they may they feel disconnected, uninterested, or even ashamed of any story that touches upon the nation's history of slavery and disrespect of African-descended citizens.
- ***New York's media outlets,*** especially those that reach the African American community.
- ***At-risk individuals.*** Among others, this population may include incarcerated adults, persons undergoing rehabilitation, and at-risk youth.
- ***Jurors on lunch break.*** Many jurors happen upon the AFBG during their lunch break, one of the neighborhood's few tourist attractions. In many cases, jurors become repeat visitors, bringing family and friends during follow up visits.



The descendent community came together to save the African Burial Ground.

- *Tenants of the federal office building.* In the past, when other tenants have been informed about AFBG programs and activities, they have attended in droves, making them a key target for programming.
- *Advocates and activists responsible for saving the burial ground* who were disappointed with decisions about the memorial and became disaffected as a result. Some disagreed with General Services Administration (GSA) decisions

about the footprint of the federal building and sought a larger area of the original burial ground to be protected; others disagreed with the design of the memorial that was selected via a GSA-sponsored design contest. Note that these decisions were made by GSA long before the agency consulted the NPS, and predate the establishment of African Burial Ground National Monument and NPS administration by several years.

Desired Visitor Experiences

These are the important experiences that should be available to audiences. They describe the nature of the experience, which can be interpretive, recreational, or self-directed. They describe the “visit” itself—things that people may be able to see, do, learn, think, feel, or experience at or through a national park. The experiences may involve recreational opportunities, information or intellectual pursuits, emotions, impressions, relationships, or other elements. They consider how people will experience and access a park and its stories no matter where they are located, whether physically in a park or by accessing information from another location through technology.

Visitor experience opportunities relate to park purpose, significance, themes, and desired outcomes. The mix of services and facilities necessary to achieve these goals over time will shift and evolve depending on changes in audience and their needs, available delivery methods, and the array of resources available in a park

Visitors want active experiences, like:

- Walking the burial ground.
- Participating in a ring shout and appreciating its significance.
- Participating in cultural events and special events.

Visitors want to engage their senses, by:

- Participating in African art and cultural experiences.

- Listening to and creating traditional African music.

Visitors want to engage with the site intellectually. They want to:

- Learn why African Burial Ground National Monument is here.
- Learn information about AFBG themes: black presence in NY, civic movement, slavery, etc.
- Document and have access to the “good” and “bad” of the site’s history.
- Appreciate the history of enslavement and gain a better understanding of today—the problems, the racial divide, the need for serious healing.
- Experience an informative, compelling, and emotional tour.
- Learn about African American history as an integral part of our nation’s story—not as a side note.
- Gain an understanding of who New York’s African Founding Fathers and Mothers were and how they lived.
- Experience the site and draw their own conclusions.
- Understand that there is more to the burial ground than just what they see.

Visitors want to engage spiritually, emotionally, and become inspired. They want:

- To empathize and respect the sacredness of the ground they walk on.
- To honor ancestors.
- To inspire their children.



Interior security measures can create a long wait for entry into the visitor center.

- To be inspired by the resilience and spirit of New York’s first Africans.
- To dispel commonly propagated myths that omit or distort the history of African Burial Ground.
- To help visitors make a personal connection by discovering the stories of the people whose remains have been rediscovered.
- A memento—something to carry away with them as a remembrance of their visits.
- Time alone to reflect, honor, and contemplate a sacred place.
- To feel spiritually connected to the people buried here.
- To feel welcome and have opportunities to understand and experience African Burial Ground, no matter their race, ethnicity, or background.

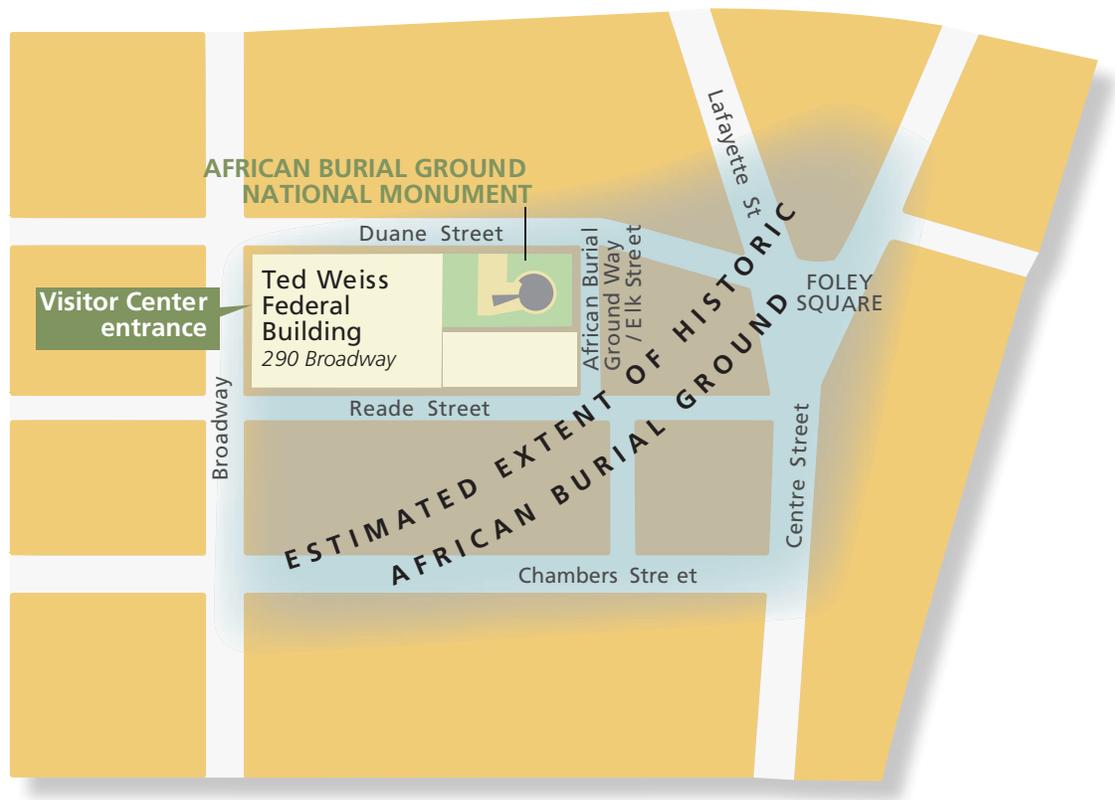
Issues and Influences

This section describes internal or external issues, influences, pressures, trends, initiatives, relationships, or goals that may affect interpretation. They are the things that may make developing the desired future challenging or that need to be considered when developing implementation strategies and actions. By identifying and understanding these struggles, strategies can be developed to overcome them and build on strengths.

Challenges of the Level Four (Security) GSA Federal Office Building.

- **Decision-making:** As a tenant in a Level Four (security) federal office building (the highest rating for a public access federal office building), many decisions about operations for the visitor center and the memorial

Map showing the setting of AFBG in Lower Manhattan



are GSA decisions, and not up to or within control of NPS management.

- **Interior security:** Issues associated with the building include security requirements that do not provide a welcoming experience and can feel hostile, slow down entry, and create a barrier to potential audience members attempting to enter the facilities. Even photography of the building and building interiors requires permission that may take up to a week to obtain.
- **External security:** Duane and Elk Streets adjacent to the memorial site are closed to vehicular traffic in order to increase and maintain security around the federal building.
- **Hours:** Because the visitor center is in an office building, AFBG has business hours (Tuesday-Saturday,

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) that are not conducive to public visitation—such as being open on Sundays or evenings. Decisions about site hours are made based on GSA building policy.

- **Mixed use:** The lobby of the busy federal office building in which African Burial Ground artwork is displayed is not conducive to contemplation or spiritual reflection. Employees and visitors engaged in their daily routine in the building generate noise and distraction that is incompatible with the spirit of the memorial.
- **Space, Facilities, and Amenities:** On-site facilities for orienting, gathering, and interpreting to groups, particularly bus or educational groups, is limited or not conducive to on-site programming.

- **Atmosphere:** The six pieces of art connected to African Burial Ground stories are located on or in the building in busy, noisy visitor circulation areas, making them difficult to interpret. For example, the “New Ring Shout,” a piece that requires contemplation to understand, is in the middle of the building’s busy lobby floor.

Expectations

- **Unrealistic and unachievable expectations:** There are enormous—and in many cases unrealistic and unachievable expectations—about what the NPS can and should be doing at the site and for the community. As an Executive Branch agency, the NPS works within specific limits of authority and has a limited span of control. There are assumptions and expectations from some stakeholders and members of the community that the NPS is able to take actions that are prohibited (such as advertising or lobbying Congress, the New York City School District, and others).
- **Managing expectation:** The NPS must be clear and consistent in managing realistic expectations for the park. It is imperative that employees at all levels and park volunteers understand themselves, and are able to explain to others why and how the park works within its systems and scope of authority.
- **Prioritize:** The NPS must also prioritize actions and stick to them. This will mean saying “no” to some actions that might be desirable, leaving some categories of work undone, or working through others to accomplish mutual goals. For example, while the park is unable to lobby the school district to include African Burial Ground in the curriculum, the park may be able to work with or partner with the District and should be responsive when approached by others.

Interpretive Challenges

- **Interpreting an “unseen” resource:** There are challenges to interpreting an authentic resource that cannot be seen because it lies below the ground. The original nature of the burial ground is gone—replaced by huge modern buildings in the largest city in the nation. Even the small preserved section is represented by a modern memorial and does not resemble the historic burial ground. For these reasons, interpretation must work harder to convey the feeling of an 18th-century burial ground.
- **Unseen scope of the original burial ground:** African Burial Ground encompasses more than the memorial site and the location of the federal building at 290 Broadway. Interpretation is faced with the challenge of how to address the total size and scope of African Burial Ground, and how to connect the burial ground with those lower Manhattan sites that are thematically and/or historically related.
- **Maintaining the sacred nature of the memorial.** When the burials in African Burial Ground were first rediscovered, there was a strong sense in the African-descended

community that the ancestors had come back to redeem the living. Programming at the site emphasized the sacred nature and spirituality of the site. That sacred nature has been difficult to sustain in the years since the memorial was created.

- ***Story not well known:*** African Burial Ground is a story that is still emerging. Some audiences have little or limited knowledge of the site and its stories. Many in New York City’s tourism market, opinion leaders, and media leaders in the community are unaware of the site and its potential.
- ***Sensitive subject matter:*** The core of interpretation at AFBG is about race. Interpretation must be sensitive and responsive to a range of deep feelings and emotions about race and the issues of slavery.
- ***The story tends to be a “hard sell.”*** This may be due to many factors: negative connotations and feelings of shame about slavery; ignorance about the rich history of African-descended Americans; racism; the fact that black history is not considered “cool,” even by African Americans; and the fact that the site is relatively new and relatively unknown, among others.
- ***Built environment/legacy of GSA:*** Some of the built environment intended to be used for interpretation—such as the lobby art in the Weiss federal building—are the legacy of decisions made by GSA and not what would have been designed as ideal visitor experiences.

Visibility, Orientation, and Wayfinding: New York City Environment Presents Challenges

- ***Competition:*** AFBG operates in one of the world’s most competitive environments, creating challenges for effective marketing, branding, and visibility. On the other hand, few sites as small as African Burial Ground have access to the potential audiences who come to Lower Manhattan. In addition, African Burial Ground as part of the National Parks of the New York Harbor has access to skilled, professional marketing, branding, and visibility advice and guidance.
- ***Wayfinding:*** The site’s Manhattan location requires wayfinding for a variety of modes of transportation—subways and public buses, automobiles and tour buses, pedestrians, etc.—and creates wayfinding challenges on New York’s crowded city streets. When visitors do arrive, the site is not well marked and there is no drop-off area for loading and unloading buses.
- ***Lack of presence:*** The site lacks physical presence; there is little to attract or to guide visitors into the stories.

Legacy of GSA and Distrust of Government

- ***Lack of trust:*** Some members of the community are distrustful of government. Others see no difference between the General Services Administration (GSA) and the National Park Service.

- **Engaging the community:** Because of the history of African Burial Ground, and its preservation by community activists, particular attention should be paid to community dialogue and relationship-building.
- **Disaffected community activists:** Some members of the descendent community campaigned for preservation of the burial ground; however, their visions for preservation of the site did not match how first the GSA, and later the NPS, developed and managed the site. As a result, they feel disaffected. (For example, the GSA decision not to name the federal building after a prominent African American has increased the frustration of some members of the greater community.) There is a need and a desire to build relationships and to reach out and connect with people who actively worked to preserve the burial ground.
- **Position management:** When African Burial Ground was first established and in a start-up phase, it was decided that interpretation positions (including supervisory positions) would be term, temporary, or seasonal, rather than permanent appointments. This was done to meet goals for maximum flexibility and to foster staff turnover that was appropriate for a start-up park operation. However, now that the park is entering a different phase, there is a need to explore options for position management that satisfy current management goals. For example, because relationships are built through continuity, what may be the position management and staffing options to explore to promote long-term relationships?
- **Staffing decisions:** Any proposed changes in positions such as replacing term or temporary positions with permanent positions are not the sole decision of park management. Every position in the NPS Northeast Region is subject to the scrutiny and approval of the region's Position Management Review Board.

Staff Focus, Capacity, and Position Management

- **Capacity and focus:** African Burial Ground has a very small staff and there are big expectations about what the NPS can and should be doing at the site and for the community. It is extremely unlikely in either the short- or long-term that AFBG staffing will change dramatically or be increased in any substantial way; therefore, the challenge is how management and staff will focus efforts, set priorities, determine not to do certain projects or categories of work, work through others to develop capacity, and manage expectations from the public.

Audience

- **Need for cultural sensitivity and foreign language services:** African Burial Ground touches many cultures and language groups. Interpretation that is both effective and sensitive will require attention to cultural differences in meaning and communication as well as possible accommodation and translations for diverse audiences who speak other languages.



Looking down at Foley Square from the Ted Weiss Federal Building





Site History

African Burial Ground has an extraordinary history that spans four centuries: active use during the 17th- and 18th-centuries, a 19th-century period of neglect and abandonment, and then a 20th-century story that addresses how the site came to be designated a unit of the National Park Service. From the 1690s until 1794, enslaved Africans and free Americans of African descent were buried in a 6.6-acre plot that was at the time outside the boundaries of the city. Due to infill, construction, and development, the burial ground became forgotten until 1991, when construction of the federal building led to the discovery of some of the remains of the estimated 15,000 individuals once buried there. A large, grassroots activist movement led eventually to the U.S. Congress putting a temporary halt to construction of the building until research on the remains could be conducted. Archaeologists and forensics scientists from Howard University determined that the remains were those of early African-descended inhabitants, many of whom had been enslaved. The site has been termed one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century. African Burial Ground became a National Historic Landmark in 1993 and a unit of the National Park System in 2006 by Presidential Proclamation.



The Setting

African Burial Ground National Monument represents just a small segment of the full 6.6-acre burial ground that it commemorates. While the burial ground stretches for five blocks beneath the busy, mostly commercial setting of present-day lower Manhattan, the monument itself is located close to Foley Square, just blocks from the U.S. Federal Courthouse. The monument consists of a large granite sculpture, plaza, and burial mounds accessible from Duane Street. The visitor center is located on the first floor of the Ted Weiss Federal Building at 290 Broadway. The block is bordered by Broadway, Duane Street, Elk Street/African Burial Ground Way, and Reade Street.

The AFBG Visitor Center is accessible from Broadway via a separate entrance. The lobby of the Ted Weiss Federal Building holds six works of art related to African Burial Ground. Visitors may view the artwork on their own after passing through 290 Broadway security. Guided tours of the artwork require a reservation.

Information and Orientation

WAYFINDING. The location of African Burial Ground creates unique wayfinding challenges. Although the entrance to the visitor center on Broadway is marked with the NPS logo and signage, it is located mid-block in a building the architecture of which suggests that the main entrance is on the corner, giving the visitor center entrance a “side door” feeling. The entrance also faces a great

Existing Conditions



African Burial Ground National Monument visitor center entrance

deal of visual competition from a busy urban streetscape.

Once within the visitor center, the design of the space makes wayfinding to the auditorium, interpretive center, gift shop, and restrooms straightforward. Volunteers, park rangers, and security guards are also on hand to assist visitors.

Because of its location in the Ted Weiss Federal Building, a Level Four (security) building, and its proximity to other government buildings as well as Ground Zero, there is a strong security presence both within and surrounding the building. The approach to Duane Street from Broadway is not open to vehicular traffic. Although the sidewalk is open for visitors to walk down Duane Street to the mid-block entrance of the outdoor memorial, a series of pylons blocking the street can give visitors the impression that the area is restricted or off-limits.

Visitors who approach from Reade Street or African Burial Ground Way/Elk Street are able to see the memorial and can follow rails around the perimeter of the outdoor memorial to the building's entrance on Duane Street. No prominent signage alerts a visitor approaching from these directions that the visitor center is around the corner on Broadway.

At the time of this writing, plans are in place to install colorful banners perpendicular to the building on Broadway, to help draw attention to the visitor center entrance and

to direct visitors to the outdoor memorial around the corner on Duane Street. It is expected that the banners will significantly improve wayfinding for visitors approaching from the Broadway side.

WEBSITE AND TWITTER. The AFBG website offers standard NPS features, including directions, wayfinding, and public transit instructions. AFBG also manages an extremely active Twitter feed with more than 35,000 followers as of August 2011 (the highest Twitter following of a single park in the National Park Service) at the time of this writing.

The Audience

The most easily-tracked audiences at African Burial Ground are scheduled school groups. The site can accommodate groups of approximately 60 students, teachers, and chaperones at one time by using the auditorium and multi-purpose room. The site's subject matter most closely aligns with New York City's curriculum for 4-6th grades, although the site sees a range of ages and grade levels. Demand for programming and outreach peaks during Black History Month in February.

The AFBG Visitor Center, opened in February 2010, has been open just a little over a year. The site's FY2010 Servicewide Interpretive Report lists nearly 140,000 visitor contacts and 42,000 visitors reached through formal interpretive programs, and presentation of 60 educational programs. More than 3,000 people

participated in workshops and programs that were presented during ten special events. In addition, over 6,000 individuals were reached via 32 off-site interpretive outreach programs and community events presented by park rangers and a volunteer.

The Interpretive Experience

THE MEMORIAL. Visitors can access the outdoor memorial from Duane Street. It closes at 4:00 p.m. in the winter, and at 5:00 during the remaining months. Four rail-mounted interpretive exhibits ring the memorial, and visitors may encounter park rangers stationed outside who are available for face-to-face interpretation of the site and its significance. Interaction with rangers is the primary way that visitors can learn about the symbolism to be found in the design of the memorial.

A grassy section of the plaza features seven burial mounds, the location of the re-interred remains from the burial ground. A large, 24-foot granite sculpture resembles the prow of a ship and symbolically references the journey from and back home to Africa. On the exterior, there is the Sankofa, a West African symbol signifying learning from the past, an inscription, and a map showing the five-block extent of the original burial grounds. The interior of the "ship" is an open, reflective space, or, if a group tour is present, a space crowded elbow-to-elbow with people. During seasonable weather, water elements on either side of

Existing Conditions



Inside the granite sculpture



Map of the African Diaspora

the “ship” give the impression of moving through water.

After walking through the threshold of the ship visitors step onto a large map depicting the African Diaspora. A spiral ramp provides access back out to street level past carved symbols from many of the world’s religions and African cultural groupings.

VISITOR CENTER. The central focal point of the interpretive center is a large, life-size tableau based on the site film, *Our Time At Last*, that shows an African family grieving near a wooden coffin. The 20-minute film is shown on a regular schedule in the auditorium.

Visitor center exhibits include a number of computer and mechanical interactive exhibits, as well as extensive video segments. The exhibits are divided into four main topics, and can be accessed in any order. The central tableau speaks to the experiences, rituals, and customs of the people who used the burial ground. The figures

in the tableau echo the fictionalized characters presented in the site’s film. Another part of the exhibit addresses the science behind the analysis of the buried remains. It includes backlit photographs from the archaeological excavation of each of the 419 gravesites that were involved in the study, including images of the human remains.

Another part of the exhibit addresses the nature of slavery and the lives of those enslaved. Interpretive signage, photos, videos, interactive touch screens, binders, maps, charts, and graphics all help tell the story. An interactive unit that involves pushing a large, heavy recreated barrel up a plank is especially popular with students.

The fourth part of the exhibit is a detailed, media-heavy, largely first-person account of the activism throughout the New York community that brought the burial ground to the attention of the city, nation, and world, and led to its preservation. Two visitor feedback opportunities include



written and posted index cards, and a video unit through which visitors can comment upon what they have experienced during their visit.

The center is designed with many elements that recall its purpose of memorializing the African ancestors buried beneath the site, including color choice, and a physical layout along the axes of a Congo Cosmogram, the Congo symbol for the continuity of human life.

The visitor center also provides services such as restrooms, and a bookstore that offers books, DVDs, baskets, masks, dolls, and postcards for sale.

PROGRAMS. AFBG offers a variety of regularly scheduled programming, including:

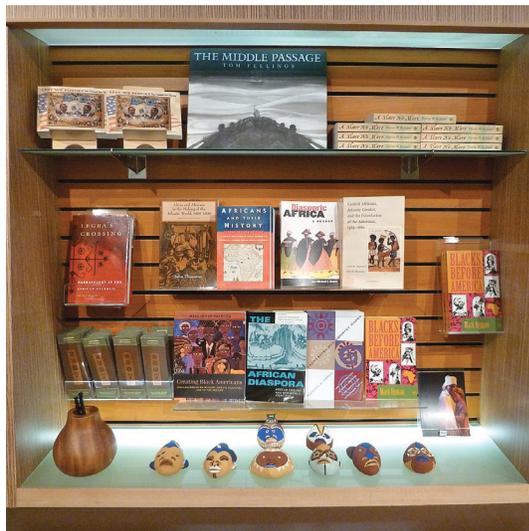
- On-site presentations in the visitor center, consisting of a 60-minute program led by NPS staff. The program includes a 20-minute film, an orientation to the exhibits, and an opportunity for self-led exploration of the center's interactive elements.
- On-site memorial talks, consisting of a 20-minute talk led by NPS staff at the outdoor memorial. The talk highlights the symbolism and significance of the memorial and the efforts to preserve and protect this sacred place.
- Off-site presentations may be scheduled on Tuesday and Thursday from 10:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Off-site presentations last for one hour.
- *A Broader View: Exploring the African Presence in Early New York* walking tour highlights how free and enslaved Africans played an important role in the development of New York City. Social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of African and African American life are discussed at sites located in Lower Manhattan, such as Fort Amsterdam, the Wall Street Slave Market, site of the Slave Revolt of 1712, and much more.
- *Abolitionist Walking Tour* examines how the neighborhood surrounding the African Burial Ground evolved

Tableau in the visitor center

Students engaged in a visitor center activity.

Existing Conditions

African Burial Ground NM bookstore



into the center of African American life known as Little Africa. The tour explores some of the key locations in this neighborhood, including the original homes of the A.M.E. Zion Church, St. Philips Church, and the Abyssinian Baptist Church, several Underground Railroad stops, and the centers of education for African New Yorkers in the antebellum period.

- *Uncovering the Story of the African Burial Ground Through Archeology* is an example of one of the types of educational programs designed to help students learn more about archeology by examining replica

The lobby of the Ted Weiss Federal Building includes original art commissioned for the African Burial Ground.



artifacts from the African Burial Ground. The program lasts 90 minutes, and is intended for students in the 5th through 8th grades.

- *Children's Storytime*, during which the concepts of freedom and enslavement are personified for elementary-age students through a reading of Lorenzo Pace's "Jalani and the Lock." Students are then guided through both the National Park Service's outdoor memorial to the African Burial Ground, as well as Triumph of the Human Spirit, the city's memorial to the site. Also designed by Lorenzo Pace, Triumph is the nation's largest sculpture dedicated to issues of and around enslavement.
- *Our Story Through Dance*, in which students of all ages can learn about the lives and contributions of the AFBG community through a combination of the exhibits, film and rhythmic, bodily-kinesthetic movement. As one of the few locales where colonial Africans could legally practice their cultural traditions (i.e., music), the African Burial Ground is where students explore how this culture has been retained through traditional West African rhythm and dance. The program has received recognition as part of the Let's Move initiative sponsored by First Lady Michelle Obama.

VIDEO. The visitor center includes a 40-person theater where visitors can view *Our Time At Last*, AFBG's 20-minute-long video. The film follows the fictionalized story of a young enslaved girl in 1700s New

York whose family must bury her father. It also uses actual footage from the 1990s to illustrate the complex story of the rediscovery of the remains, the controversy over the fate of the site, the public protests and activism, and the re-interment ceremony of that period.

ARTWORK. Visitors may schedule a tour of the interpretive artwork on display throughout the lobby of the Ted Weiss Federal Building, or view it on their own without an interpreter present. The artwork includes several sculptures, a mosaic, a mural, and a large graphic inlaid in the floor, the New Ring Shout.

SCHOOL GROUPS. After passing through the metal detectors in the lobby of the visitor center, the students are guided to the theater or multi-purpose room, where a ranger prepares them to watch *Our Time At Last*. After the video, the rangers facilitate discussion of the video and the site with students, sometimes linking it to lessons they have encountered in the classroom.

The students are then welcomed into the interpretive center, where they experience the exhibits on their own or in groups. Their visit concludes with a ranger-led tour of the outdoor memorial.

Younger visitors who are not visiting as part of a school trip may also take advantage of the park's Junior Ranger program materials.

SPECIAL EVENT PROGRAMMING. In addition to the regular interpretive



programming already referenced, park and volunteer staff organize special events. In FY2010, highlights included:

- Youth Week, (the first week of October) during which programs and workshops offered to the public included an African puppet-making workshop, musical performances, children's story time, poetry performances, a dance workshop, and lecture series.
- Kwanzaa celebration (December) featuring drumming and dance performances.
- Black History Month (February) celebration that was themed as "Returning to the Roots," featuring two workshops: a craft workshop called the African influence in Puerto Rico and a musical workshop called the "Evolution of the Blues."
- Juneteenth Celebration (June) featuring a lecture by visiting scholar Dr. Joy DeGruy.

Music is a significant component of AFBG special events.

Existing Conditions

- Archaeology Workshop, featuring internationally renowned archaeologists.
- Special reading of the children’s book *Jalani and the Lock* by world-renowned artist Lorenzo Pace.

The staff has provided thirty-seven 90-minute walking tours of Lower Manhattan for 605 visitors. Entitled *A Broader View: Exploring the African Presence in Early New York*, the tour highlights how free and enslaved Africans played an important role in the development of New York City and explores social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of African and African American life.

In addition, the site recently added an additional walking tour offering. The tour, which explores abolitionist sites in 19th-century New York City, has already built an extensive audience.

Lastly, the site has created multimedia presentations that have been added to the website for a more in-depth look at stories related to African Burial Ground.

DIGITAL GALLERY TALKS. The use of audio and images come together to provide an in-depth exploration of an element of the site and its history and also of the memorial and its symbols. The digital talks are accessible via smart phone or computer.

WEBSITE AND TWITTER. The website content includes descriptions of the site’s commemorative art, some background about the memorial, photos and coverage of the re-interment and dedication, access to

archaeological and historical reports, FAQ, some video and photos, lesson plans, junior ranger materials, and “did you know” facts. It includes a link to the site’s Twitter feed, which is a rich source of material related to the site’s themes

The content of Twitter feed is related to African Burial Ground National Monument and its story, and is also focused on expansive information, including but not limited to: other African burial grounds and their rediscovery, African art and culture, African diasporic history, the civil rights movement at home and abroad, abolitionism and the underground railroad, African American archaeology and anthropology, distinguished African American historical figures, and general National Park Service-created content. With its focus on a set of messages and themes, the feed has developed devoted followers who help to spread the content the site creates—the average Tweet receives between ten and fifteen retweets, a serious magnification of the public reach of AFBG’s messaging power—thereby creating interest in the site.

Staffing

Interpretation staff for African Burial Ground National Monument consists of a Chief of Interpretation, a Chief of Operations, a District Ranger, three permanent full-time rangers, three full-time seasonals on six-month appointments, and one term guide.

Partnership Organizations

Partnerships strengthen capacity and promote vigorous communities and strong relationships between people and organizations. Working with others and using their strengths and talents helps to get things done in the park and far beyond its boundaries. Parks can find solutions to challenges such as operations, transportation, programming, and other areas through work with partners and their local communities.

Organizations with formal partnership agreements with African Burial Ground National Monument are:

- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, African Burial Ground Collection. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library has a long history with the site that predates NPS involvement. The Schomburg is a repository for burial ground archives and hosts an excellent web site dedicated to the subject.
- Howard University, African Burial Ground Bioskeletal Sample Collection
- African Burial Ground Foundation (financial support)
- National Park Foundation African American Experience Fund (financial support)
- National Parks of the New York Harbor Conservancy (financial support)
- West Harlem Art Fund (art installation)
- Eastern National (cooperating association; operates the bookstore in the visitor center)
- Department of Homeland Security

(DHS) Federal Protective Service, Law Enforcement services (security)

- Ifetayo (cultural programming)
- Good Shepherd Services (at risk youth; internship opportunities)
- Coalition to Save Harlem (cultural programming, Pinkster ceremony)
- The National Arts Club (archaeology; education initiative)

Other organizations have assisted with research, programming and events including:

- The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and scientists at Howard University—assisted with rediscovery, excavation, research, and re-interment of the remains, beginning in 1991.
- General Services Administration (GSA)—the federal government’s “landlord” for the Ted Weiss Federal Building has been involved with African Burial Ground since the remains were rediscovered during the building’s construction.

There is limited access to exhibits located in the lobby of the federal building







RECOMMENDATIONS for African Burial Ground National Monument center on five categories of interpretive services: 1) programs and services *on site*: in the visitor center, the federal building lobby, and the memorial; 2) programs and services off site, presented *within the footprint of the African Burial Ground National Historic Landmark*; 3) programs and services for the larger, *Tri-State community*; 4) *school programs*; and 5) programs and services targeted to a *global audience, including digital media*.

Visitor Center, Lobby and Memorial

The audience for these initiatives is visitors who come in person to the site (excluding school groups). Recommendations related to this core experience include:

- Offer daily programs in the memorial during lunch hour to target area workers on break. These could be offered in the lobby during the winter.
- Work with partners to offer regularly scheduled libation ceremonies to reinforce the sacred nature of the site.
- Provide a performance venue for continuing African oral traditions, such as music, poetry, theatre, oratory, and storytelling.



Recommendations

- Develop and launch a cross-platform smart phone and web application to interpret the memorial (and the National Historic Landmark). Consider incorporating some of the following features:
 - ◆ A GPS-enabled map of the entire footprint of the burial ground
 - ◆ Symbols in the memorial interpreted via audio (by native speakers of African and other languages)
 - ◆ A map of Africa, integrated with languages, art, music, and technology
 - ◆ A “human geography map” showing places of origin, routes of forced migration, and historical timeline
 - ◆ Video of the ancestral rites of return
 - ◆ Video of a libation ceremony
 - ◆ Upcoming events and visitor center information
 - ◆ African music
 - ◆ African languages
 - ◆ Photos of the collection, including skeletal remains and archaeological materials, along with collection information
- Employ QR codes at the visitor center, memorial, and within the lobby to provide interpretation to visitors when the site is closed and/or to expand current visitor center interpretation.
- Create a National Park Service presence at the entrance to the visitor center, lobby, and at the memorial to raise visibility and improve visitor access and interpretation.

Left: Howard University's Dr. Greg Carr pours a libation in honor of the ancestors at the 20th anniversary of the rediscovery of the African Burial Ground.

Recommendations



Medallion in
Foley Square

- Create and maintain a database of anyone who has worked on projects or conducted research on African Burial Ground topics to provide sources to staff and scholars.

National Historic Landmark

These programs will take place within the footprint of the African Burial Ground National Historic Landmark. The audience is people who live, work, or visit Lower Manhattan. They may not ever access the visitor center, although one goal of interpreting the footprint is to entice them to do so. Recommendations for the National Historic Landmark include:

- Maintain the NPS presence around the footprint by assigning rangers to rove at various times throughout the day.
- Reintroduce the yearly tradition of the “Ring Shout” around the entire National Historic Landmark.
- Use a GIS mapping specialist to

create African Burial Ground National Historic Landmark imagery to be used on the AFBG website and on handouts including postcards and rack cards.

- Place physical identity markers around African Burial Ground NL footprint, similar to Boston’s Freedom Trail.
- Formulate relationships with those who live, work, and worship within the footprint to encourage participation in park planning, increase visitation, and to organize a park neighborhood association. Some possible strategies include:
 - ◆ Encourage City Hall to help orient visitors to the presence of AFBG.
 - ◆ Agencies and government entities within the National Historic Landmark may be able to provide satellite programming or exhibit space in their lobbies/public spaces.
 - ◆ Host a regular event for these entities to build awareness and partnership opportunities.

Tri-State Community

With the population of the Tri-State Region approaching 19 million, AFBG will need to conduct outreach strategically and through partners to reach the maximum number of people. Partnering strategies include outreach through libraries, senior and community centers, religion-based groups, and other institutions in the Tri-State area and beyond. Each of these groups offers certain strategic advantages.

LIBRARIES AS PARTNERS. The three library systems of New York City (New York Public, Brooklyn, and Queens) cover all five boroughs, with branch libraries in nearly every neighborhood. The library audience is education-oriented, varies greatly in age and composition (adults, seniors, families), and is ethnically and linguistically diverse. Library administrations share many AFBG goals, making libraries a prime target for strategic partnering. Close coordination of programming and identification of mutual goals will be essential. Potential library programs include:

- African-centric story hour for young children presented by well-trained NPS volunteers
- Presentations by park rangers about AFBG to promote visitation
- Slide show presentations
- Traveling exhibits on AFBG themes. These should be self-contained, two-dimensional or poster-style exhibits, or—in some venues—could be free-standing exhibit structures.
- Traveling acting troop to dramatize AFBG stories

The Schomburg Center. This branch of the New York Public Library has been an engaged partner since before the NPS became involved with AFBG. This critical relationship should be reinvigorated in order to leverage the Schomburg's institutional knowledge about the burial ground.

SENIOR/COMMUNITY CENTERS AS PARTNERS. Not only would seniors tend to have an interest in stories that touch upon ancestral New York, they may also provide a source for skilled volunteers. The primary message that may connect most effectively with this audience is “respect for elders.” Programs for this audience should emphasize inheritance, generations, connections to the past, enlightenment, passing on pride, and how elders have been treated traditionally. The City Department for the Aging and other governmental entities may be effective partners for reaching this audience.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AS PARTNERS. Groups centered on churches, synagogues, and mosques already emphasize spirituality as part of their mission. They are often willing to travel, and offer the possibility of larger outreach because of communication networks that facilitate recruitment of other congregations, and because of the potential for community leadership that could result in volunteer recruitment. Some ideas for outreach to these groups include:

- Offer special programs that focus particularly on the spiritual aspects of the site.
- Partner with black church groups at the national level (AME, Mother Bethel in Philadelphia, National Baptist convention, etc.) to create an incentive for groups to visit AFBG to honor ancestors.
- Sponsor an annual commemoration of the ancestors.

Recommendations

An archaeologist carefully brushes soil from the remains of one of the ancestors



- Partner with Harlem-based churches, each of which began downtown and later moved uptown.
- Reach out to the Muslim community; many of those interred in the burial ground were undoubtedly of that faith.

Targeting the at-risk populations.

Knowledge leads to empowerment, and AFBG's stories, especially those centered on spiritual matters, can uplift the unempowered, increase pride and understanding, and have therapeutic value. Among others, this population may include incarcerated adults, persons undergoing rehabilitation, and at-risk youth.

Any approach to this population would require expert advice and guidance, as well as considerable market research. Because religion-oriented groups routinely work with at-risk populations, AFBG's best opportunity for reaching this audience may be to partner with and provide support for churches and

other organizations that already share a mission to support those at risk. Such support might include preparing reading lists and other materials that draw on the healing power and ability to uplift and inspire of AFBG's stories.

OTHER POTENTIAL STRATEGIC

PARTNERSHIPS. Other strategic partners for the larger AFBG community (including some beyond the Tri-State area):

- **Harlem Chamber of Commerce.** Develop cross-marketing partnership.
- **Howard University African Burial Ground Bioskeletal Sample Collection.** Create a joint interpretive program.
- **Other universities.** Form an academic committee with university professors and scholars, especially those from African and Archaeology studies, that live and/or work within commuting distance of AFBG.
- **The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.** Partner for the purpose of programming and staff development.
- **Weeksville Heritage Houses.** This local institution addresses African-American life in the 19th century.
- **New-York Historical Society.** The Historical Society has been heavily involved in promoting the story of African American history in New York City.
- **Cool Culture.** Cool Culture helps 50,000 income-eligible families

access and enjoy some of NYC’s world-class cultural institutions for free, providing children with experiences that improve literacy and learning. Though AFBG is already free, working in partnership with the Cool Culture would provide families from underserved areas with access and information that could be useful for their first steps in negotiating new cultural experiences while allowing for more visibility for AFBG’s stories and programming. A partnership with this organization could help bridge this gap for the city’s low-income families.

- **Other relevant sites.** Collaborate with sites that address immigration and migration (e.g., Ellis Island’s “Peopling of America” center; Lower Eastside Tenement Museum, etc.).
- **West Indian Day Parade.** Work with organizers to establish relationships with the various West Indian communities.
- **Media outreach.** Cultivate relations with regional media, African journalists, local and syndicated

publications and radio shows with a large African and African American demographic in order to raise the visibility of the site for this audience.

School Programs

While students at varying grade levels visit AFBG, limited resources necessitate a focus on the grades with compatible curriculum requirements. New York curriculum standards that are most relevant to AFBG’s stories apply in fourth through sixth grades.

While an educator guide is under development, the AFBG school program is not curriculum-linked according to formal NPS guidelines. Recommendations toward enhancement of the school program include:

- Work with teachers to develop a more formal curriculum-based educational offering with pre- and post-visit kits and other curriculum-oriented materials.
- Develop a system for teacher feedback on AFBG curriculum-

Students at the memorial



Recommendations

based programming and other education-related materials.

- Offer teacher workshops for in-service credit that would qualify teachers to conduct AFBG tours on their own, independent of ranger support.

Global and Digital Audiences

AFBG's stories resonate worldwide. Recommendations for the world-wide audience include:

- Research and establish an association of enslavement sites to position AFBG as a premier site for current scholarship and access to relevant research materials for information related to the issue of slavery.
- Work with the NPS Office of International Affairs to create an International Friends of AFBG that could support the development of internships and an international VIP program.
- Launch a Facebook presence to reach new audiences and potentially as a means to promote civic dialogue.
- Add an e-tour of the visitor center and high resolution, 360-degree panoramic images to the park website.

All Audiences

The following recommendations apply to and would benefit all of AFBG's audiences:

- Evaluation. Analysis of targeted audience segments requires market

research. There are needs for formal research to better understand current audience demographics, the nature of school group visitation (where they are from, the predominant grade levels, and whether they are public or private), and which on- and off-site programs would be most effective, and reach and interest the most people.

- Friends Group. Consider establishing a Friends Group to provide volunteer services, raise funds for projects, and assist with marketing.
- Volunteers. Consider establishing a formal program designed to attract and retain volunteers who could expand the site's ability to serve audiences, provide outreach, welcome and greet visitors, develop on-line content, conduct research, and assist with student groups.

SUMMARY

Addressing an audience that ranges from visitors to the site to citizens of the world, the recommendations for this long-range interpretive plan rely on focused programming; tactical use of staff positions; strategic partnerships; an effort to reach people where they are, when they are; and a vision of African Burial Ground NM as a powerful advocate for human rights.

African Burial Ground has the opportunity to speak to audiences well beyond those who come through the doors of the federal building, or visit the memorial. Visitors to Lower Manhattan should be made aware of the larger footprint of the

entire 6.6 acre burial ground: few people realize they are walking upon the graves of ancestors. Through strategically planned outreach initiatives, the Burial Ground’s stories can influence the entire Tri-State region (New York, New Jersey and Connecticut), including school audiences. And finally, African Burial Ground National Monument’s universal themes— challenge, overcoming hardship, grace, respect, and survival—resonate around the globe.

During the LRIP’s Foundation workshop, anecdotal information about the site’s current audience was

gathered. The Recommendations Workshop focused on more carefully defining target audiences for AFBG programs. A goal for defining target audiences was suggested: to connect with the people for whom AFBG’s stories would have the most meaning—if they knew about it. The goal implies a delicate balance: AFBG’s stories are most likely to resonate with African-Americans, yet those stories are universal, and should be framed so as to appeal to a wide variety of audiences, not just African-Americans.

Celebrating the Monument’s 20th anniversary



Recommendations

Action Plan

The following is a summary of the action items and interpretive services proposed as part of this long-range interpretive plan. It recommends personal and non-personal services for five different venues/audiences: the visitor center, federal building lobby, and memorial; the National Historic Landmark; the larger Tri-State community; school groups; and the global audience, including digital visitors. Services are listed within short-term (2012-2014), mid-term (2015-2017), and long-term (2018-2020) planning periods. Action items are described in greater detail in the narrative sections of the document above.

Recommended Interpretive Services

ACTION	SHORT- TERM 2012 - 2014	MID-TERM 2015 - 2017	LONG-TERM 2018 - 2020
NON-PERSONAL INTERPRETIVE SERVICE			
All Audiences			
Conduct survey/market research to learn more about the current audience to better serve their needs			X
Visitor Center, Lobby & Memorial			
Develop and launch a smart phone application for all platforms in order to provide more accessibility to the site and reach younger audiences	X		
Employ QR codes at the visitor center, memorial and within the lobby to provide interpretation to visitors when the site is closed and to expand current VC interpretive content	X		
Create a National Park Service presence at entrance to the visitor center, lobby, and at memorial to raise visibility & improve visitor access and interpretation		X	
School Programs			
Work with teachers to develop a more formal curriculum-based educational offering with pre- and post-visit kits and other curriculum-oriented materials		X	
Develop a system for teacher feedback on AFBG curriculum-based programming and other education related materials			X

ACTION	SHORT- TERM 2012 - 2014	MID-TERM 2015 - 2017	LONG-TERM 2018 - 2020
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NON-PERSONAL INTERPRETIVE SERVICE (CONTINUED)

Global Audience, including Digital

Launch an official park Face Book presence to reach new audiences and encourage civic dialogue	X		
Develop distance learning curriculum as a means to communicate with the national and international community			X
Add an e-tour of the visitor center and high resolution, 360-degree panorama images to the Web site			X

PERSONAL INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

All Audiences

Cultivate the development of a dedicated friends group for AFBG	X		
Develop a formal volunteer program designed to attract and retain volunteers capable of accommodating more visitors		X	

Visitor Center, Lobby & Memorial

Develop monthly evening programs to reach potential additional audiences	X		
Offer daily, short (10-minute) interpretive programs during the noon hour to target workers on their lunch break	X		
Work with partners to offer regularly scheduled libation ceremonies to reinforce sacredness of the site	X		
Provide a performance venue for continuing African oral traditions (music, poetry, theatre, oratory, storytelling)			X
Create and maintain database of anyone who has worked on projects or conducted research on AFBG topics to provide sources to staff and scholars			X

Recommendations

ACTION	SHORT- TERM 2012 - 2014	MID-TERM 2015 - 2017	LONG-TERM 2018 - 2020
PERSONAL INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (CONTINUED)			
National Historic Landmark			
Maintain NPS presence around NL footprint by roving during various times throughout the day (as season and staffing permits)		X	
Formulate relationships with those who live, work, and worship within the NL footprint to encourage participation in park planning, increase visitation, and to organize a park neighborhood association.		X	
Reintroduce the yearly tradition of the "Ring Shout" around the entire NHL		X	
Community			
Develop cross-marketing partnership with Harlem Chamber of Commerce	X		
Establish relationships with senior centers within the Tri-state area for the purpose of outreach to this underserved community		X	
Reinvigorate relationship with the Schomburg Center for the purpose of leveraging their institutional knowledge of the site	X		
Collaborate with sites that address immigration and migration (e.g. Ellis Island's "Peopling of America" center, Lower Eastside Tenement Museum)	X		
Cultivate relations with regional media, African journalists, local and syndicated publications and radio shows with a large African and African American demographic in order to raise the visibility of the site		X	
Develop partnerships with public library systems in all 5 boroughs for the purpose of outreach to underserved communities		X	
Create joint interpretive programming with Howard University		X	

ACTION	SHORT- TERM 2012 - 2014	MID-TERM 2015 - 2017	LONG-TERM 2018 - 2020
PERSONAL INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (CONTINUED)			
Work with organizers of the West Indian Day parade to establish and cultivate relationships with the West Indian communities		X	
Collaborate with the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture for the purpose of programming and staff development		X	
Establish relationships with and provide support for churches and other organizations that work with at risk populations			X
Form academic committee with university professors and scholars, especially those from African and Archaeology studies, that live and/or work within commuting distance of AFBG			X
School Programs			
Offer teacher workshops for in-service credit that would qualify teachers to conduct AFBG tours independent of ranger support			X
Global Audience, including Digital			
Research and establish association of enslavement sites to position AFBG as a leader in scholarship on the issue of slavery			X
Create International Friends of AFBG to develop internship and international VIP program			X



Planning Team and Consultants

Many people have contributed to making African Burial Ground National Monument the significant, compelling place it is today in the years since the rediscovery of the ancestral remains. The members of the planning team (including some who have been involved with the burial ground since its rediscovery) gratefully acknowledge the vision, perseverance, and dedication of those people who helped create the monument, upon whose fine prior work this long-range interpretive plan has been centered.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Butler, Cherie A., NPS, *Chief of Interpretation and Education, Manhattan Sites (LRIP Lead)*

Dufficy, Toni, *NPS, Contracting Officer's Representative, Harpers Ferry Center*

Blacoe, Joanne, *NPS, Interpretive Planner, Northeast Region*

Boch, Darren, *NPS, National Parks of the New York Harbor Public Affairs; Acting Deputy Supt. Manhattan Sites*

Boney, Andrea, *NPS, Supervisory Park Ranger, Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island*

Brown, Daniel T., *NPS, Chief of Interpretation, Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island*

Brown, Terry E., *NPS, Site Manager, Boston African American Historic Site*

Chenu, Lisa, *NPS, Park Ranger, African Burial Ground*

Cleckley, Jimmy, *NPS, South District Ranger, Manhattan Sites*

Forman, Cyrus, *NPS, Park Ranger, African Burial Ground*

Laise, Steve, *NPS, Collections Manager, Manhattan Sites*

Magnuson-Cannady, Melissa, *NPS, Park Ranger, Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island*

Massenberg, Doug, *NPS, Park Ranger, African Burial Ground*

McKinney, Shirley, *NPS, Superintendent, African Burial Ground*

O'Connell, Tom, *NPS, Chief of Operations, Manhattan Sites*

Pardue, Diana, *NPS, Museum Director, Statue of Liberty*

STAKEHOLDERS

Bailey-McClain, Savona, *West Harlem Art Fund*

Carr, Dr. Greg, *Chair, Department of Afro-American Studies, Howard University*

Diouf, Sylviane, *Schomburg Center*

Jones, Doris, *Director of Adult Programming, Queens Library*

Kharem, Haroon, *Associate Professor, Brooklyn College*

Kidwell, Michele, *Chair, The Archaeology Committee, National Arts Club*

Leonard, Dr. Patricia, *African Burial Ground volunteer, former employee, Community representative*

Mack, Mark E, *Department of Sociology-Anthropology, Howard University*

Unthank, Michael, *Executive Director, Harlem Arts Alliance*

Washington, Roberta, *Architect, RWA Architects, Inc.*

Zazo, Jennifer, *Adjunct Professor, Brooklyn College; former employee*

CONSULTANTS

INTERPRETIVE SOLUTIONS, INC.

Clausen, Ann

Dajevskis, Erika

Dajevskis, Peter

Mednis, Vid



Camp group visits AFBG

African Burial Ground National Monument

290 Broadway, 1st Floor
New York, NY 10007
(212) 637-2019
<http://www.nps.gov/afbg/>