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The U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Park Service today announced \$12.6 million in grants for 51 projects in 24 states that preserve sites and highlight stories related to the African American struggle for equality in the 20th century. Among the recipients was **Georgia State University**, which received \$50,000 for **Nominating U.S. Civil Rights Sites to the World Heritage List**.

The **GSU World Heritage Initiative** is preparing a Serial Nomination of U.S. Civil Rights Sites for potential inscription on the World Heritage List. The Initiative oversees the work of scholars preparing a statement of Outstanding Universal Value and justification for inscription under World Heritage Criteria, historic preservationists determining the authenticity and integrity of the sites, and property owners and stakeholders charged with stewardship of the properties.

The NPS African American Civil Rights grant will fund a critical component of the project, the first round of community outreach sessions where property owners and stakeholders will discuss with the GSU Team the World Heritage Program, the nomination process, and the crafting of site management plans and buffer zones to protect the properties in perpetuity.

“The GSU World Heritage Initiative is grateful for the grant funding from the US Department of the Interior,” Project Director and GSU History Professor Glenn T. Eskew said, adding that “the award signifies an NPS endorsement of our efforts to prepare a Serial Nomination of U. S. Civil Rights Sites that through inscription on the World Heritage List will enhance the recognition, understanding and preservation of iconic movement sites associated with the American struggle for racial equality and will share that story with an international audience.”

“An integral part of the Interior and National Park Service mission is to help preserve and tell America’s story,” said **U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke**. “These grants will benefit places across the nation that help tell an essential piece of that story through the African American struggle for civil rights and equality.”

“Through the work and engagement of public and private partners, these grants will preserve a defining part of our nation’s diverse history,” **National Park Service Deputy Director Dan Smith** said. “By working with local communities to preserve these historic places and stories, we will help tell a more complete narrative of the African American experience in the pursuit of civil rights.”

About the GSU World Heritage Initiative

Led by faculty members from the GSU Department of History, its Heritage Preservation Program, African American Studies, and the GSU Center for Neighborhood and Metropolitan Studies, the multiyear project began in October 2016. Eskew heads the effort and secured the initial nearly \$650,000 from the State of Alabama Department of Tourism that enabled the hiring

of Project Manager and historic preservationist Anne H. Farrisee who coordinates the everyday work of faculty and graduate research assistants.

The U.S. Civil Rights Sites Serial Nomination for World Heritage is complex, as over 150 sites have been identified for consideration although the final nomination will consist of only a dozen places associated with the Modern Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. And while the NPS will make the final determination, the sites selected must demonstrate an international impact on the global struggle for human rights.

In 1972 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) created the World Heritage Committee to oversee a List of sites that are of such Outstanding Universal Value that their conservation is important for current and future generations of humanity. To date, 1,073 cultural and natural sites have completed the lengthy documentation process and secured inscription on the World Heritage List. In the United States, such cultural sites as the Statue of Liberty, Independence Hall, Mesa Verde, and the Missions of San Antonio are on the List while such natural sites as the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and the Everglades have been inscribed.

About the African American Civil Rights Grants Program

Congress appropriated funding for the **African American Civil Rights Grants Program** in 2016 through the **Historic Preservation Fund** (HPF). The HPF uses revenue from federal oil leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, providing assistance for a broad range of preservation projects without expending tax dollars. For the second year of this grant program in 2017, Congress increased funding from \$8 million to \$13 million.

Grant-supported projects include surveys and documentation, interpretation and education, oral histories, architectural services, historic structure reports, planning, and physical preservation. For a full list of grant recipients, go to <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/03-12-2018-aacr-grants.htm>.