



# CANE RIVER

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

# 2017

Annual Report



# About us

## **Authorization**

Cane River National Heritage Area was established on November 2, 1994 by Public Law 103-449; 16 U.S.C. 410. Cane River National Heritage Area, Inc. succeeded Cane River National Heritage Area Commission as the federally-approved management entity on August 6, 2010.

## **Mission**

Cane River National Heritage Area, Inc., is a not for profit organization that manages the congressionally designated Cane River National Heritage Area. Its mission is to preserve and promote the cultural and natural resources of Cane River and encourage economic development by strengthening heritage tourism in the region.

## **Vision**

Cane River National Heritage Area, Inc. works to implement programs that engage community partnerships and provide leadership in heritage tourism, cultural resource management, and planning.

## **National Heritage Areas**

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. Through their resources, NHAs tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nation's diverse heritage. NHAs are lived-in landscapes. Consequently, NHA entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

NHAs are a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. Through public-private partnerships, NHA entities support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects. Leveraging funds and long-term support for projects, NHA partnerships foster pride of place and an enduring stewardship ethic.

## **CRNHA, Inc. Board of Directors**

J. Payne Williams, *Chair*  
David Dollar, *Vice-Chair*  
James Durham, *Treasurer*  
Vanner Erikson, *Secretary*  
Kathleen Byrd, Ph.D., *Past Chair*  
Anastasia Lynn Christophe  
Randy LaCaze

## **CRNHA, Inc. Staff**

Cynthia Sutton, *President*  
CSutton@CaneRiverNHA.org

Rebecca Blankenbaker, *Director of Communications*  
RBlankenbaker@CaneRiverNHA.org

Michael Mumaugh, *Heritage Ranger II*  
MMumaugh@CaneRiverNHA.org

Logan Schlatre, *Heritage Ranger*  
Intern@CaneRiverNHA.org

Wanda Wynder, *Receptionist*  
Admin@CaneRiverNHA.org

## **United States Legislators**

U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy  
U.S. Senator John Kennedy  
U.S. Congressman Mike Johnson, 4th District

## **Louisiana State Legislators**

Governor John Bel Edwards  
Senator Gerald Long  
Representative Kenny Cox, District 23  
Representative Terry Brown, District 22

## **City of Natchitoches Officials**

Mayor Lee Posey  
Lawrence Batiste, Councilman  
Eddie Harrington, Councilman  
Don Mims, Councilman-at-Large  
Sylvia Morrow, Councilwoman  
Dale Nielsen, Councilman

## **Natchitoches Parish Officials**

President Rick Nowlin  
Rodney Bedgood, District 4  
Doug de Graffenreid, District 3  
Chris Paige, District 1  
Russel Rachal, District 5  
Patsy Ward-Hoover, District 2

A Message from the Chairman of the Board

*Dear Friends,*

I am both honored and excited to have the opportunity to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors for Cane River National Heritage Area, Inc. (CRNHA, Inc.). As I reflect on my first year of service, I am reminded of the old adage “rising tides float all boats.” I find that the core concept of this still rings true - working together to advance your cause benefits all involved. It is one of the many reasons I am proud to serve this organization and believe passionately in our mission and goals.

During the creation of the heritage area, Congress knew that partnerships would be the key to preserving and enhancing our region. After 24 years, CRNHA, Inc. has worked to develop a network of over 200 partners, including individuals, community organizations, local, state, and federal entities. The talent of our staff and their ability to forge tightly-woven relationships, ensures that our initiatives to preserve and promote the cultural resources of our region are successful.

In 2017, our efforts to cultivate strategic partnerships led us to embark on a new relationship with the State of Louisiana, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, and the Louisiana Office of State Parks at the Los Adaes State Historic Site, a National Historic Landmark. This new partnership holds great potential and we are looking forward to furthering our mission to enhance the lives of Cane River residents both, through our heritage tourism endeavors and the investments we make in our local communities and organizations.

It is with great pleasure that we report to you on the accomplishments of the past year.



*J. Payne Williams, Chair*

# Heritage Development

**Cultural Conservation Initiatives** are focused on the protection and care of the tangible and intangible cultural resources located in the Cane River region. Projects like documentation, research, education and interpretation are designed to link the diverse cultural history of Cane River with local, regional, and national audiences. Projects supported by CRNHA, Inc. in fiscal year 2017 included:



## Williamson Museum Collections

The Williamson Museum Collections located at Northwestern State University of Louisiana received a grant to conduct an inventory and assessment of its significant collections. Project manager, Jeffery Girard consolidated all site collections into standardized boxes so that materials pertaining to the same sites or projects were stored together. Girard then conducted an inventory and created a data base identifying where artifacts were stored. An inventory of notes, reports, maps, and other documentation pertaining to projects using the collections was also created.

**Historic Preservation Initiatives** focus on educating the general public and establishing partnerships among public and private entities in Cane River to appreciate and value historic resources within the community, providing assistance and encouragement to achieve appropriate preservation and reuse. Major Projects supported by CRNHA, Inc. in fiscal year 2017 included:

## Pierson Mallet Revitalization & Reading Trail

In partnership with the Natchitoches Parish Library and the City of Natchitoches, CRNHA, Inc. created the Pierson and Mallet Children's Park Reading Trail. Located on the walking path of the park, the trail is designed to feature a children's story book that focuses on Louisiana/local history or a Louisiana author. Each sign depicts pages from the selected story, along with a physical activity/movement exercise for readers.

## Pierre Masonry Training Workshop

CRNHA, Inc. partnered with Pierre Masonry, LLC, Cane River Creole National Historical Park, and the Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches to support a traditional masonry trade workshop. The attendants were selected through the Probation Support Group sponsored by First Baptist Church (Amulet Street, Natchitoches, LA). Eight individuals were selected and employed as apprentices on the African House Masonry Restoration Project. Each individual learned basic masonry skills and techniques that will aide in them in future projects.

## Natchitoches Catholic Cemetery Project

The Catholic Cemetery is the second oldest cemetery in Natchitoches, with many prominent citizens having been buried there from the early 1800s to the present. The project was led by Joann St. Clair and composed of three parts: (1) survey the signed stones and record all inscriptions, photograph, write a condition assessment, and organize all data into a database, which could then be used as a template to record the rest of the stones in the cemetery; (2) Acquire D/2 gravestone restoration cleanser and spray the stones to mitigate biological and environmental damage to the stones; and (3) travel to New Orleans to access several repositories that have material relating to Monsseaux, and other marble carvers and produce a report on the connections between the stones here and the New Orleans carvers.





**Heritage Events and Programs:** Each year CRNHA, Inc. sponsors heritage events and programs that contribute to the interpretation, education and public awareness of the Cane River culture. 2017 sponsored events included:

- 8th Annual Cane River Music Festival – Cane River Creole National Historical Park
- 38th Annual NSU-Natchitoches Folklife Festival – Northwestern State University & Louisiana Folklife Center
- 22nd Annual Children’s Tour of Historic Natchitoches – Association for Preservation of Historic Natchitoches
- Cane River Plantation Ride - Bike Natchitoches
- Natchitoches Meat Pie Festival

**Public Outreach and Capacity Building Initiatives** focus on fostering appreciation and public support for the heritage resources located within the region. In addition, CRNHA, Inc. assists the community and its public and private institutions to act cooperatively to preserve and use the community’s heritage to advance revitalization and reinvestment initiatives. Capacity building and technical assistance were provided in fiscal year 2017 to:

- NSU Creole Heritage Center
- LA Office of State Parks: Ft. St. Jean Baptiste SHS & Los Adaes SHS
- City of Natchitoches Riverbank Redevelopment
- City of Natchitoches City Park Improvements
- City of Natchitoches Church Street Bridge Taskforce
- St. Augustine Riverbank Stabilization
- Cane River Creole National Historical Park
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Grand Ecore Visitor Center
- Natchitoches Historic District Development Commission
- Louisiana Archaeological and Antiquities Commission

**Heritage Tourism Initiatives** focus on developing tourism products that authentically represent the people, places and stories of the Cane River region. Projects supported by CRNHA, Inc. in 2017 included:

### NHLD Walking Tour Program

In partnership with the Natchitoches Historic District Development Commission and the Natchitoches Convention and Visitors Bureau, CRNHA, Inc. continued its third year of managing a complimentary walking tour program of the Natchitoches National Historic Landmark District. Tours were offered Tuesday through Saturday and provided visitors with an overview of the historical and cultural significance of the Cane River region.

### Find Your Park Festival

A collaboration between CRNHA, Inc. and Cane River Creole NHP to create public awareness and appreciation for the National Park Service, the Cane River National Heritage Area, and other Federal and State entities located within the region. The Find Your Park Festival included the following partner organizations: Red River National Wildlife Refuge, Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery, Fort St. Jean Baptiste SHS, St. Augustine Catholic Church, Creole Heritage Center, Local Folk Artists and Folk Demonstrators. The event was attended by nearly 400 visitors and was recorded as Cane River Creole NHP's highest single-day attendance in 5 years. CRNHA served as lead project manager, lead fiscal administrator and lead marketing and promotions manager.



# Sustainable Tourism Development

CRNHA, Inc. has embarked on new and creative ways to maintain two heritage sites located within the Cane River National Heritage Area. In 2017, CRNHA, Inc. entered into a cooperative agreement with the State of Louisiana, Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, Office of State Parks to re-open and manage Los Adaes State Historic Site, a National Historic Landmark. In addition, CRNHA, Inc. continued its partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to operate the Grand Ecore Visitor Center (GEVC) in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Under both agreements, CRNHA has assisted in daily operations and staffing of both heritage sites, created community outreach and educational programs, improved interpretive services, and enhanced the marketing and heritage tourism initiatives of the sites. These innovative partnerships have inspired the creation of programs that educate the public about regional assets once overlooked and underappreciated.



# President's Message

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on this year's accomplishments and challenges, I am proud to report that we are embarking on a time of great opportunity for our organization and it is with a sense of optimism that I write this message. There is no doubt that consistent funding on federal and state levels for preservation, cultural resource development and the heritage area program is needed. However, our ability to meet these funding challenges with innovative and sustainable public-private partnerships, like our new endeavor with the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism at Los Adaes SHS are essential to a great heritage tourism strategy.

The most important piece of this puzzle is maintaining strong relationships and a clear understanding of different yet related objectives. Our team has been successful in these partnerships, leveraging financial and technical expertise, promotional benefits from private and government partners in exchange for improvement in stakeholder relations, marketing, improved visitor experiences, decreased levels of conservation threats, and overall improvement of sustainability of our heritage area.

As we look to the future, our team will continue to engage the community by providing technical assistance to organizations, institutions and individuals in pursuit of heritage development, preservation and education. I will continue to work with our state and federal legislators, local and regional partners and community members to build a level of support that understands the value of the National Heritage Area approach to conservation of resources while promoting economic development.

Thank you on behalf of all the staff for another year, and for the continued support of your heritage area!

*Cynthia Sutton*  
President/CEO

# Financials

Cane River National Heritage Area receives funding through a grant from the Heritage Partnership Program of the National Park Service for operational support.

Through partnerships and strategic cooperative agreements, CRNHA, Inc. leveraged its **\$591,000** of federal funding to **\$5,701,605** in fiscal year 2017. This is a roughly **9:1** return on the federal investment.

## FISCAL YEAR 2017 LEVERAGE BREAKDOWN

Local	\$4,512,587
State	\$404,012
Private	\$591,006
Other Federal	\$194,000

## Other Federal

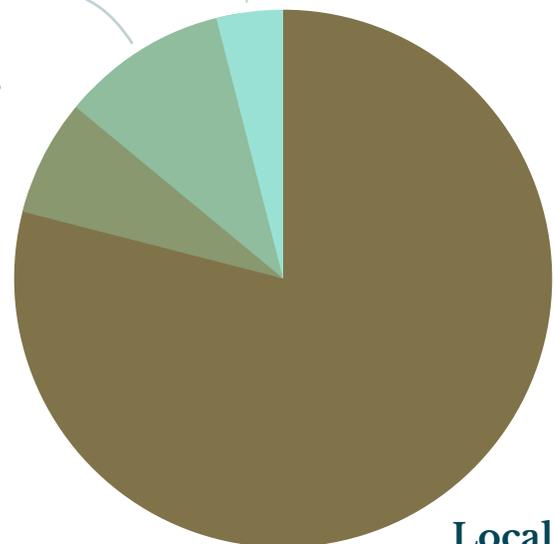
4%

## Private

10%

## State

7%



Local  
79%

# Partnerships

Partnerships are a critical ingredient to the success of the CRNHA, Inc. initiatives. The City of Natchitoches and Cane River Creole National Historical Park are the premiere partners of the organization, but the Board of Directors regularly works with a diverse network of like-minded community, state, and federal organizations. In fiscal year 2017, CRNHA, Inc. partnered with the following entities:

Alliance of National Heritage Areas  
American Cemetery Association  
Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches  
Bike Natchitoches  
Caddo Adais Indians, Inc.  
Cane River Art Corporation  
Cane River Waterway Commission  
Creole Heritage Center at Northwestern State University  
Cultural Lore, Inc.  
El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT Association  
Friends in Support of the National Fish Hatchery  
Louisiana Association of Museums  
Louisiana Regional Folklife Program  
Louisiana School for Math, Science & the Arts  
Louisiana State Museum  
Louisiana State Parks  
Louisiana State University Agricultural and Mechanical College  
Louisiana Travel and Promotion Association  
Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation  
Natchitoches Historic District Business Association  
Natchitoches Historic District Development Commission  
Natchitoches Historic Foundation  
Natchitoches Main Street Program  
Natchitoches Parish Chamber of Commerce  
Natchitoches Parish Government  
Natchitoches Parish Tourism Commission  
National Center for Preservation, Technology and Training  
National Park Service, Heritage Partnership Program  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Northwestern State University of Louisiana  
Red River National Wildlife Refuge  
Red River Waterway Commission  
St. Augustine Catholic Church  
St. Augustine Historical Society  
State of Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
State of Louisiana Department of Historic Preservation  
State of Louisiana Department of Transportation & Design  
The Graham-Group  
The Rapides Foundation  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services  
Weyerhaeuser  
Williams Creative Group