

# Fort Mose Historic State Park celebrates Black History Month with launch of Flight to Freedom Trail initiative

*Interactive, educational signage will bring trail to life*

TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, February 25, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In celebration of Black History Month, Fort Mose Historic State Park has partnered with Florida Power & Light



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*Shawn Hamilton, DEP Deputy Secretary*

Company (FPL) and The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida to launch a self-guided educational tour experience along the Flight to Freedom Trail, bringing to life the rich history of the park year-round.

The initiative was announced today at Fort Mose by Gil Ziffer, President of the Florida State Parks Foundation. “It is very fitting that this new self-guided tour in this historic park is being announced during Black History Month,” he

said. “The Foundation is proud to be a part of this important initiative – bringing to life the story of Fort Mose.”

“We thank Florida Power and Light and The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida who are proud supporters of the Flight to Freedom trail initiative and the significance it will have for generations to come,” he added.

“We are delighted to invest in making the Flight to Freedom Trail even more compelling with these enhancements,” noted Nina Waters, president, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. “By building on the work already done by Fort Mose’s leadership and volunteers, we can further educate our community about the rich history of African American individuals in St. Augustine.”

“FPL joins The Community Foundation as a proud supporter of the Flight to Freedom trail initiative and the significance it will have for generations to come,” said Jim Bush, area external affairs manager at Florida Power & Light Company (FPL). “We’re passionate about supporting the initiatives our communities care about the most- and this historic park is a shining example of that. This is one of the many ways that FPL works with the communities it serves to help make Florida an even better place to live, work and raise a family.”

Fort Mose Historic State Park is the site of the first free black community in what is now the United States and can date its roots back to 1687. It is a National Historic Landmark and a UNESCO Slave Route Project and is on the National Register for Historic Places and the Florida African American History Trail.

“Fort Mose is an incredible example of the history that lives in Florida’s state parks,” said Shawn Hamilton, DEP Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation. “More than 300 years ago, Fort Mose served as a beacon of hope for enslaved people in what would become the United States. We’re excited and honored to have a new tour experience that will help visitors make meaningful connections with the people who traveled to, settled and lived there.”

Fort Mose hosts an annual three-day Flight to Freedom event for over 2,000 students and the public, where reenactors set up stations along the trail. They tell the story of what it was like for the escaped slaves to make the treacherous journey from the Carolinas to this free settlement. New, interactive educational signage along the ¾-mile trail will allow this reenactment and history to be experienced all year long. The signs will include QR codes for visitors to scan, launching videos of the reenactors telling their story.

“We launched the Flight to Freedom reenactment in 2009,” said Charles Ellis, President of Fort Mose Historical Society. “Since that time, thousands of park visitors of all ages have stepped onto the Trail, encountering freedom seekers, slave catchers, a Yamasee chief, and helpful friars and guides. Now, thanks to this generous donation, we will be able to offer this unique 'living history' experience to park visitors at all times.”

The Florida State Parks Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy. The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

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