

# Foundation Awarded Major Grant To Construct Historic Fort Mose near St. Augustine

*One of the most significant cultural and historical sites in the United States*

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The Florida State Parks Foundation announced today that it has been awarded a \$933,500 grant from the Florida African American Cultural and Historical Grants Program. Of more than 150 applicants, the Foundation's grant proposal was ranked 16th. The grant funds will be used to construct a representation of the historic 1738 Fort Mose, just north of St. Augustine.

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This landmark grant is crucial because it will enable the reconstruction of Fort Mose, one of the most culturally significant sites in both African American history and the history of the U.S.”

*Julia Gill Woodward*

The site of the fort, now Fort Mose Historic State Park, is designated as a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Fort Mose was the site of the first legally sanctioned free African settlement in what is now the United States. In 1738, the Spanish governor of Florida chartered the settlement of

Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, or Fort Mose for short, as a place for formerly enslaved people fleeing from the English colonies in the Carolinas.

Over the next 25 years, Fort Mose and Spanish St. Augustine became a sanctuary for Africans seeking liberation from slavery amid a large-scale power struggle between European nations in the New World.

The only stipulation for gaining their freedom was that they had to declare their allegiance to the king of Spain and become members of the Catholic Church.

“This landmark grant opportunity is crucial because it will enable the construction of a representation of Fort Mose, one of the most culturally significant sites in both African American history and the history of the United States itself,” said Foundation CEO Julia Gill Woodward.

In addition to the grant, the Foundation has secured \$250,000 in matching funds thanks to the generous support of the Florida Park Service, the Jacksonville Jaguar Foundation, Florida Blue,

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, St. Johns County, and Mr. Mark Bailey.

The purpose of the grant program is to provide funding for construction projects at facilities in Florida that highlight the contributions, culture, or history of African Americans.

Priority is given to projects that encourage the design or construction of a new facility or the renovation of an existing facility in an area with great cultural significance in which no facility exists; enhance the beauty or aesthetic value of facilities named for significant African-Americans, or restore facilities on the National Register of Historic Places.

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.

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