

Viva Mose! Fort Mose Historic State Park To Celebrate First Anniversary of Fort Reconstruction

Full-scale fort has led to increased visitation, enhanced experiences while sharing inspiring history

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL, UNITED STATES, May 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- America's First Site of Freedom, Fort Mose Historic State Park in St. Augustine, this week will celebrate one year of living history, dropped jaws and "Wow, I didn't know that!" on the first anniversary of the historic 1738 fort reconstruction.

The life-sized, full-scale fort structure officially opened to the public on May 9, 2025, and has since hosted visitors from around the world to learn about Fort Mose's inspiring story of freedom, courage and resilience.



The reconstructed 1738 Fort Mose at Fort Mose Historic State Park will celebrate its first full year of operation on May 9, 2026.

"I remember the breathtaking feeling I had when I first saw the finished fort, and it's the same feeling I have today, a year later," said Julia Gill Woodward, CEO of the Florida State Parks Foundation. "Whether as a historic and cultural resource, an educational center or a treasured gathering spot for park visitors and the surrounding community, the reconstructed Fort Mose has far exceeded all our hopes and expectations.

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For years, we've dreamed of what it would be like to have a fort here. It turns out that the reality is even better than the dream"

Charles Ellis, President of the Fort Mose Historical Society

"Most importantly, it stands as a monument to the brave, formerly enslaved men, women and children who risked their lives to create and take part in a free community here

in Florida. This fort will ensure their stories are told forever."

Developed in partnership with the Florida State Parks Foundation, the Fort Mose Historical Society and the Florida Park Service, the reconstructed fort stands 39 feet tall, features historically-accurate landscaping and vegetation, and is outfitted with period-appropriate furnishings, battlements and other historical elements.

Historians Dr. Kathleen Deagan and Dr. Jane Landers, who led the original discovery of the Fort Mose site in the 1980s, guided the design and construction of the fort to ensure historical accuracy.

“It has been amazing to see the impact that the new fort has made in just one year,” Florida State Parks Director Chuck Hatcher said. “The fort has generated thousands of new visitors for the park, created new opportunities for community engagement and helped restore and preserve a one-of-a-kind historical resource for future generations.”

Since opening, the fort has transformed several park experiences, including militia musters, battle reenactments, regional history festivals and living history demonstrations.

Earlier this year, the fort also provided a stunning backdrop for the Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series. Originally conceived by the St. Augustine Amphitheatre as a fundraiser for the Fort Mose Historical Society, the Jazz & Blues Series each year attracts world-renowned musicians for an evening of music at the park and under the stars.

Recent headliners included Grammy winners Gary Clark Jr. and Samara Joy.

“Fort Mose Historic State Park has always been a special place to host live music, but having the reconstructed fort on-site adds a new dimension to the experience,” said Ryan Hall, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer for SJC Cultural Events, which operates The St. Augustine Amphitheatre. “It creates an even stronger connection between the music, the artists, and the history of the site—and you can feel that both on stage and in the audience.”

The park offers several ways to experience the reconstructed Fort Mose, including guided tours of the structure and self-guided tours through a nearby interpretive trail.

The Fort Mose Historical Society’s signature event, a reenactment of the Battle of Bloody Mose, is set for June 27.

“For years, we’ve dreamed of what it would be like to have a fort here. It turns out that the reality is even better than the dream,” said Charles Ellis, president of the Fort Mose Historical Society. “You can see it on the faces of every school group that visits for a field trip. Everyone is amazed when they see the fort for the first time.”

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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 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. All projects are completed by the Florida State Parks Foundation Services LLC, which is a limited liability company affiliate of the Foundation. The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

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