

NPCATRAVEL



The Travel Program of the National Parks Conservation Association

NOVEMBER 13-18, 2024

On the Road to Freedom

UNDERSTANDING CIVIL RIGHTS
THROUGH OUR NATIONAL PARKS
AND HERITAGE AREAS

LISTEN

TO REMARKABLE FIRSTHAND STORIES
FROM CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

EXPERIENCE

DECADES OF CIVIL RIGHTS
HISTORY ACROSS THREE STATES

LEARN

ABOUT NPCA'S FUTURE PARKS
WORK IN THE DEEP SOUTH

NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE
Montgomery, AL



TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Tour the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute with Charles Woods**, the institute's education director and trainer
- Immerse yourself in the history of civil rights with **Dr. R. Lockett**, director of the Margaret Walker Center and an associate professor in the Department of History at Jackson State University
- Consider the impact of blues on the Civil Rights Movement as you tour the **Stax Museum of American Soul Music** and meet privately with **Jeff Kollath**, executive director of the museum

NPCA EXCLUSIVES

- Take part in a **one-of-a-kind trip**, custom designed with NPCA's mission, work and partners at its heart
- Spend time with **Carolyn McKinstry**, a 16th Street Baptist Church bombing survivor, and **Joanne Bland**, the youngest person to have been jailed during any civil rights demonstration during the 1950s and '60s
- Engage with **NPCA experts and partners** to learn about the successful efforts to establish a new national park site honoring the legacies of Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley
- Embark on a journey through the **Mississippi Delta** and see first-hand why NPCA is prioritizing necessary protections for the region's abundance of civil rights history
- Enjoy a special meeting with **Keena Graham, superintendent of Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument** in Jackson, Mississippi



FEATURED BIO: ALAN SPEARS

Alan serves as NPCA's senior director of Cultural Resources. He joined NPCA in 1999 and has led, co-led or supported five successful national monument campaigns including Fort Monroe, Harriet Tubman, Charles Young and Pullman. Alan also gained introduction and passage of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Funding Re-authorization Act of 2008.

On the Road to Freedom

Understanding Civil Rights Through our National Parks and Heritage Areas

AVAILABLE DATES: November 13-18, 2024 | Min/Max: 10/16

Length of Tour: 6 days/5 nights

NPCA Member Price: \$5,590 per person double occupancy; \$6,910 single occupancy

Deposit: \$1,000 per person due at registration

Arrive/Depart: Birmingham, Alabama; Memphis, Tennessee

Reservations: Please contact NPCA's National Parks Experiences Program at **1.800.628.7275** or email travel@npca.org.

Activity Level: *Please note this tour will cover emotionally charged events in American history.* Travelers should be prepared to stand, walk and sit for multiple hours at one time. This tour includes sightseeing in cities, museums and listening to speakers. Travelers will walk on even terrain with some stairs and hills.

Inclusions: Lodging, meals as noted in the itinerary (B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner), ground transportation throughout the itinerary, all activities, tips and entry fees.

Exclusions: Airfare to arrival location and from departure location, luggage charges, alcoholic drinks, travel insurance, items of a purely personal nature and any items not listed in Inclusions.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Easy



Join NPCA experts on this remarkable journey through some of the most significant sites associated with American civil rights. Along the way, we will have special opportunities to meet with NPCA partners, local historians and even some of the faithful activists known as foot soldiers who actively played a role in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Throughout this transformative small-group tour, we'll make our way from Birmingham to Memphis, immersing ourselves in the extraordinary stories and culture of this defining period in American history. You'll leave this exceptional journey with a deeper understanding of the lesser-known stories of the fight for civil rights and NPCA's crucial role in expanding cultural resource protections to help preserve these significant stories and places.





A.G. GASTON MOTEL
Birmingham, AL

ITINERARY

DAY 1 NOV 13: Arrivals to Birmingham

1 Arrive in **Birmingham, Alabama** and make your way to the **Elyton Hotel**, built in 1906 during Birmingham's golden era when it was one of the country's great industrial and manufacturing centers. We will have a welcome reception, dinner and special program with speakers at the hotel to kick off the trip. [Elyton Hotel \(D\)](#)

DAY 2 NOV 14: Birmingham to Montgomery

2 We will begin with a visit to **Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument**, a national park site that NPCA helped establish in 2017. An NPCA expert will guide you through the process of what it

took to preserve the monumental histories of the people and places during this chapter of the Civil Rights Movement. We will visit four of the seven sites affiliated with the monument. Our first stop is **Kelly Ingram Park**, where we will meet with **Carolyn McKinstry**. At age 14, Carolyn was inside the 16th Street Baptist Church when a bomb killed four young girls as they prepared to sing in their choir on September 15, 1963. More than 8,000 mourners, including 800 clergymen of both races, attended the funeral. No city officials attended. Kelly Ingram Park was the site of civil rights rallies, demonstrations and confrontations in the 1960s. Sculptures throughout the park vividly depict police dogs and fire hose assaults on demonstrators, many of them children. A series of statues pay tribute to what happened here. We will cross the street to visit the interior of the 16th Street Baptist Church. Afterward, we will explore **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute**, an interactive museum that tells the story of the Civil Rights Movement with a focus on Birmingham, with **Charles Woods**, the institute's education director and trainer.

Our last stop as part of the monument tour is the **A.G. Gaston Motel**, which stood at the center of several significant chapters of the Civil Rights Movement. This run-down motel will soon be repaired and annexed by the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, with funds from the City of Birmingham and the National Park Service. The motel and institute will become the new Freedom Center, an educational hub that will focus on the Civil Rights Movement and other cultural topics.



CAROLYN MCKINSTRY

Lunch will be at **Ashley Macs** located in the Pizitz Food Hall. After lunch, we will drive to **Selma** to meet with **Joanne Bland**. Beginning in her childhood, Bland was a highly active participant in the Civil Rights Movement and at 8 years old was the youngest person to have been jailed during any civil rights demonstration during the 1950s and '60s. We'll then head to the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel in Montgomery to check in.

After we check in to the hotel, we'll walk to **Central Restaurant** for dinner in a private room. Joining us will be **Josephine Bolling McCall**, a retired nationally certified school psychologist. She was the first Black president of the Alabama Association of School Psychologists. After retirement, she served as director of the Alabama League for the Advancement of Education where she worked with six historically Black colleges to provide tutorial and other educational services to public school children. She currently serves as the president of The Elmore Bolling Foundation, which she founded to preserve the legacy of her father, a successful Black entrepreneur and philanthropist who defied all odds to create an integrated array of transportation and farming businesses in the Jim Crow South. His success led to his death at the hands of white people who routinely lynched Black competitors to maintain systems of white supremacy. [Renaissance Montgomery Hotel \(B, L, D\)](#)



JOSEPHINE BOLLING MCCALL

DAY 3 NOV 15: Montgomery

3 Today we'll visit educational sites in Montgomery, Alabama and learn about NPCA's efforts to establish the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area. This key heritage area will help connect people to the unforgetta-

ble stories of individuals in the Alabama Black Belt who risked and lost their lives during the civil rights era. We'll depart the hotel for a special visit of the Centennial Hill area with **Dr. Valda Harris Montgomery**, whose parents, Richard and Vera Harris, were both closely connected to the leaders and activists of the movement. During the Civil Rights Movement their home, just four houses down from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s parsonage, was a haven for Freedom Riders and many others. We will continue on to the newly open **Legacy Museum**, situated on a site where enslaved people were once warehoused — a block from one of the most prominent slave auction spaces in America. The Legacy Museum, created by the **Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)**, tells the history of racial inequality and economic injustice in the United States.

Lunch will be at **Pannie George's** cafeteria-style restaurant. Following our meal, we'll visit the **National Memorial for Peace and Justice**. Created by the Equal Justice Initiative, the Memorial for Peace and Justice was conceived with the hope of creating a site where people can gather and reflect on America's history of racial inequality. In the evening, you'll have free time and dinner on your own. [Renaissance Montgomery Hotel \(B, L\)](#)

DAY 4 NOV 16: Montgomery to Jackson

4 We will drive to Jackson, Mississippi, with a rest stop en route. Upon arrival in Jackson, we'll have lunch at the **Council of Federated Organizations (COFO)**. In 1961, COFO was established as an umbrella organization to unify and meet the needs of a host of local organizations and an increasing presence of civil rights organizations in Mississippi, including the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). COFO's office at 1017 John R. Lynch Street opened in 1963, and it served as the state headquarters for the modern Mississippi Civil Rights Movement. Civil rights historian **Dr. R. Luckett**, director of the Margaret Walker Center and an associate professor in the Department of History at Jackson State University, will join the group here. His expertise focuses on the modern Civil Rights Movement and the African American experience.

From here we'll drive to the **Mississippi Civil Rights Museum**. This state-funded museum provides an account of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi through a series of eight galleries with photographs, texts and recordings. The museum

takes visitors through the European slave trade, Civil War, Reconstruction and the birth of Jim Crow, and continues on with the post-World War II era and a room dedicated to Emmett Till. Woven through the galleries is a parallel record of resistance from activists. The day ends with a tour of the home of Medgar and Myrlie Evers with **Keena Graham**, superintendent of the **Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument**. During more than two decades with the Department of the Interior, Graham has successfully built wide-ranging volunteer programs and helped bring more diverse audiences to the monument. After check-in at The Westin Jackson hotel, we'll dine with Luckett and hear from **Hezekiah Watkins**, Mississippi's youngest Freedom Rider who was arrested at age 13. [The Westin Jackson Hotel \(B, L, D\)](#)

DAY NOV 17: Cleveland

5 The day begins with a two-hour drive from Jackson through the flatlands of the Mississippi Delta to Cleveland, passing sites important to the legacy of Emmett Till. These sites include the first marker on the **Mississippi Freedom Trail**, which was placed in **Money** at the remains of the **Bryant's Grocery** where Till allegedly whistled at a white woman, and **Graball Landing**, where Till's body was recovered from the confluence of the Tallahatchie River and the Black Bayou. Our next stop is Sumner and the **Emmett Till Interpretive Center/Sumner Court House**, which tells the story of the Emmett Till tragedy and points a way toward racial healing. We will meet with **Patrick Weens and Benjamin Saulsberry** to learn of the apology resolution written by the community of Sumner. We'll also discuss how NPCA is working with partners such as the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area and the Emmett Till Interpretive Center to commemorate the life and legacy of Emmett Till, Mamie Till-Mobley and the larger civil rights stories throughout the Mississippi Delta.



EMMETT TILL INTERPRETIVE CENTER
Sumner, MS

After lunch, we'll drive 40 minutes to **Mound Bayou**, a town founded in 1887 by former slaves, with a vision that was revolutionary for its time. From the start, Mound Bayou was designed to be a self-reliant, autonomous, all-Black community. For decades, the community prospered, becoming famous for empowering its Black citizens in the cotton industry. Today, there are just a few businesses left and the population is below 1,500, a fraction of what it once was. Here, we will meet **Darryl and Hermon Johnson**, NPCA partners and Mound Bayou natives, for a walking tour of **Mound Bayou historic district**, including **TRM Howard House** and **Taborian Hospital**, built in 1940 by the largest Black construction company in the country — McKissack and McKissack Construction Company of Nashville, Tennessee.

Afterward, we will drive a short distance to **Cleveland** and the **Cotton House**, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel, where we will share a farewell reflection dinner in a private room catered by the **Delta Meat Market**. With internationally influenced dishes rooted in Mississippi Delta culinary traditions, Delta Meat Market serves up the ground-breaking cuisine of James Beard Award nominated Chef Cole Ellis. [Cotton House, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel \(B, L, D\)](#)

DAY NOV 18: Memphis

6 After breakfast, we'll drive two hours to Memphis and the **Lorraine Motel**, now the home of the **National Civil Rights Museum**. Walter and Loree Bailey bought the motel in 1945. Under the Baileys' ownership, it became a modest safe haven for Black travelers and visitors who were welcomed with home-cooked meals. The sight of his eventual death, Martin Luther King Jr. stayed at the motel numerous times. After our moving visit, we'll have lunch at **Four Ways Restaurant**, located in Soulsville. The afternoon will focus on Memphis' music history. A visit to and talk with **Jeff Kollath**, executive director of the **Stax Museum of American Soul Music**, will provide insight into the Civil Rights Movement within the context of the Memphis music scene. The day ends with drop-offs at the airport.

Accommodations and activities are subject to change at any time due to unforeseen circumstances or circumstances beyond NPCA's control.



LEGACY MUSEUM
Montgomery, AL

Travel Insurance: To protect yourself from the loss of deposit and cancellation fees, you are encouraged to purchase travel insurance. If you need assistance, NPCA recommends contacting Travel Insurance Services through USI Affinity at 1.800.937.1387 or at <http://my.travelinsure.com/npc>; email confirmation packets will include additional details.

Traveler Responsibility: Travelers are responsible for choosing an NPCA trip consistent with their ability, fitness and overall health. All travelers are required to complete and return their registration form, personal information form, flight form and liability waiver to Distant Horizons before being allowed to participate in a trip. Travelers also are responsible for reading and understanding all pre-departure materials and bringing appropriate clothing and gear.

Trip Cancellation Policy: Cancellation notice must be submitted in writing to Distant Horizons and is effective upon date of receipt.

August 15, 2024	60+ days prior to trip departure	59-30 days prior	Less than 30 days prior
Final payment is due	Deposit is 50% refundable	50% of trip cost is refunded	No refund

COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Each of our travel partners have developed robust safety protocols to protect the health of our guests, staff and the communities we visit. Please contact us for details.

PHOTO CREDITS

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Ismael Gama Jr., NPCA (Page 6)



Why Travel with NPCA?

Our goal is to offer premium itineraries in educational travel in the places we know best: America's national parks.

For over 100 years, NPCA has worked to protect places of unparalleled natural wonder, historical significance and cultural value. Now we want you to experience them firsthand. Our curated itineraries offer more than just sightseeing. With NPCA, you'll delve into the cultural and natural history of each destination, guided by passionate experts who bring these stories to life. We believe that true appreciation for our parks goes hand in hand with awareness of the conservation efforts being made to protect them. Engage with park rangers, NPCA partners and local communities as they share their invaluable insights and discuss the challenges and triumphs of safeguarding these natural treasures. Leave with a deeper understanding of the critical role we all play in the future of our parks.

ACCESS NPCA STAFF EXPERTISE

Embark on extraordinary adventures led by our team of knowledgeable staff who represent a wide range of backgrounds. With expertise spanning environmental conservation, cultural heritage, wildlife biology and more, our staff brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to each journey. Delve into engaging discussions and gain unique insights into the issues that shape our parks, including land preservation, climate change and Indigenous perspectives. Together, we'll explore the multifaceted aspects of these remarkable landscapes.

TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE

When you choose to travel with NPCA, you're not just embarking on an incredible journey – you're making a meaningful impact. Our commitment to conservation runs deep, and we are proud to share that a portion of every trip's fees directly supports NPCA's vital work. Your choice to travel with us helps protect and strengthen the National Park System for generations to come.

ENJOY PERSONALIZED AND INTIMATE EXPERIENCES

Escape the crowds and embrace the beauty of small-group travel, where personal connections and tailored experiences take center stage. Our trips offer a more intimate setting, allowing you to forge meaningful connections with fellow travelers who share your passion for adventure and conservation.

CONNECT WITH NPCA PARTNERS AND LOCAL EXPERTS

Collaborate with key NPCA partners and local experts who are deeply connected to the destinations we visit. Engage in dialogue with scientists, community leaders and Tribal members who are at the forefront of conservation and preservation efforts. Their firsthand accounts and valuable perspectives will deepen your understanding of the challenges and successes in protecting our national parks.

TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY

Embrace the spirit of responsible travel as you embark on a journey that leaves a positive footprint on the planet. At NPCA, we prioritize partnering with responsible tour operators who share our commitment to sustainability and conservation. With their expertise and dedication, we ensure that every step of your trip aligns with our shared values.

KELLY INGRAM PARK
Birmingham, AL

NPCA is the only independent, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of the National Park System. Over 70% of our funding comes from donations from individuals like you. NPCA trips are an exclusive NPCA member benefit. One traveler per group must be an NPCA member to participate in an NPCA trip. An annual membership starts at \$15 per person. Please make dues payable to NPCA by check or credit card at npca.org.