

NPCA TRAVEL



THE TRAVEL PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 12-17, 2025

On the **Road to Freedom**

Understanding Civil Rights Through Our National Parks and Heritage Areas

LISTEN

TO REMARKABLE STORIES
FROM CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

EXPERIENCE

DECADES OF CIVIL RIGHTS
HISTORY ACROSS THREE STATES

LEARN

ABOUT THE NEW PARKS NPCA HELPED
ESTABLISH IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

KELLY INGRAM PARK
Birmingham, 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
- Explore the newly opened **Freedom Monument Sculpture Park** in Montgomery. Set on a 17-acre site by the river where tens of thousands of enslaved people were trafficked, this powerful memorial features stunning art and original artifacts, offering an immersive and interactive experience

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 designation of a new national park site honoring the lives and 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 STAFF HOST BIO: ALAN SPEARS



Alan serves as NPCA's senior director of Cultural Resources and advocates for the preservation within the National Park System of historic and cultural resources, stories, people, and places that have shaped our shared heritage. His most recent successes include leading NPCA's National Heritage Area defense campaign and helping to establish a new national park commemorating the life and legacy of Emmett Till and his mother Mamie Till-Mobley. Alan is currently working to secure a new national park commemorating Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools and leading a cultural resource challenge campaign.



On the Road to Freedom

Understanding Civil Rights Through Our National Parks and Heritage Areas

AVAILABLE DATES: November 12-17, 2025 | **Min/Max:** 10/16

Length of Tour: 6 days/5 nights

NPCA Member Price: \$5,680 per person double occupancy; \$7,070 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, all activities, entrance fees and all gratuities.

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.



ITINERARY

DAY NOV 12: 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)**

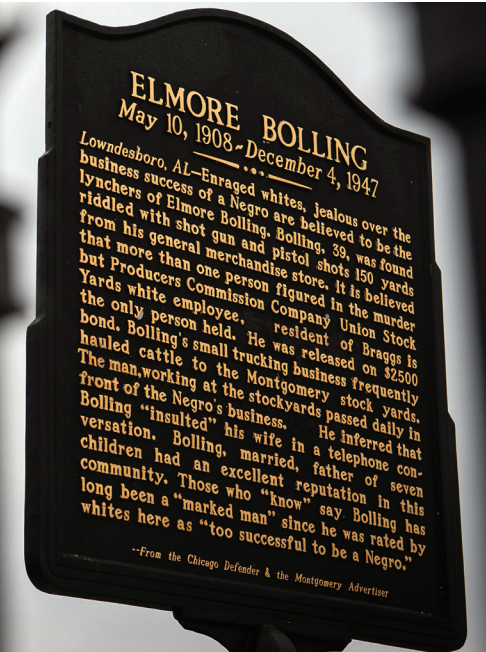
DAY NOV 13: Birmingham to Montgomery

2 We will begin with a visit to four of the seven sites affiliated with the **Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument**, a national park site that NPCA helped establish in 2017. 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 on September 15, 1963. Kelly Ingram Park was the site of civil rights rallies, demonstrations and confrontations in the 1960s. A series of statues pay tribute to what happened here. We will then cross the street to visit the interior of the **16th Street Baptist Church**. Afterward, we will explore **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute** with Charles Woods, the institute's education director and trainer. This interactive museum tells the story of the Civil Rights Movement with a focus on Birmingham. 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 becoming the new Freedom Center, an educational hub that will focus on the Civil Rights Movement and other cultural topics.

CAROLYN MCKINSTRY
16th Street Baptist Church, AL



HISTORIC MARKER IN HONOR
OF ELMORE BOLLING
Lowndesboro, AL



Lunch will be at **Ashley Macs** located in the **Pizitz Food Hall**. After lunch, we will drive to Selma to meet **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 into the hotel, enjoy an evening at leisure. **Renaissance Montgomery Hotel (B, L, D)**

DAY NOV 14: Montgomery

3 We will visit educational sites in Montgomery, Alabama and learn about NPCA's successful efforts to establish the **Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area**. This key heritage area helps connect people to the unforgettable 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 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. Next, we will continue to the newly opened **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.

After lunch at a local restaurant, 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.

End the day at **Equal Justice Initiative's Freedom Monument Sculpture Park**, a 17-acre plot of land filled with sculptures, historic slave dwellings and other artifacts, to honor the millions of Black people who were enslaved in America. Located on a bluff above the Alabama River, the park looks out over the exact areas where the slave trade brought thousands of Black people into the city by boat and train. The centerpiece of the site is the **National Monument to Freedom**, which stands 43 feet tall and 150 feet long.

Enjoy dinner this evening at **Bricklayers Hall**, an historic building and union hall that rose to national significance during the Montgomery Bus Boycott and played a critical role in the development of the Civil Rights Movement. Joining us will be **Josephine Bolling McCall**, a retired nationally certified school psychologist and the first Black president of the Alabama Association of School Psychologists. 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)**

DAY NOV 15: 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 us here. His expertise focuses on the modern Civil Rights Movement and the African American experience. Also joining us here will be **Hezekiah Watkins**, Mississippi's youngest Freedom Rider who was arrested at age 13.

From here we'll drive to the **Mississippi Civil Rights Museum**. The museum takes visitors through the European slave trade, Civil War, Reconstruction and the birth of Jim Crow and continues with the post-World War II era and a room dedicated to Emmett Till. We will end the day with a guided tour of **Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument** with **superintendent Keena Graham**. After check-in at The Westin Jackson hotel, we'll dine with Dr. Luckett. *[The Westin Jackson Hotel](#) (B, L, D)*

DAY NOV 16: 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**, 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 NPCA's work to commemorate the life and legacy of Emmett Till, Mamie Till-Mobley and the larger civil rights stories throughout the Mississippi Delta.

After lunch, we'll drive 40 minutes to **Mound Bayou**, a town founded in 1887 by former slaves. 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 17: 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. We will visit the **Stax Museum of American Soul Music** to gain insights into the Civil Rights Movement within the context of the Memphis music scene. The day ends with drop-offs at the airport. *(B, L)*

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

Travel Insurance: NPCA strongly recommends the purchase of trip cancellation insurance. Information on a recommended comprehensive travel insurance coverage plan will be provided. However, travelers may purchase any travel insurance of their choosing provided it meets any applicable tour operator minimum requirements. NPCA's tour operator partners may require travel insurance for certain trips as a condition of participation; all travelers must adhere to any such requirements. Should you need assistance, NPCA recommends contacting Travel Insurance Services through USI Affinity at 1-800-937-1387 or at <http://my.travelinsure.com/npc>.

Traveler Responsibility: Travelers are responsible for selecting an NPCA trip consistent with their ability, fitness and overall health. Before joining a trip, all travelers must commit to adhering to the tour operator's Terms and Conditions; completing and submitting all required documentation provided by the tour operator; conducting themselves safely and appropriately; following instructions from the tour operator and NPCA staff; and adhering to the laws of the destination(s) visited on the trip. Additionally, travelers are expected to familiarize themselves with all pre-departure materials and ensure appropriate clothing and gear for the journey. Travelers should report any conditions or limitations requiring special attention, diet or treatment to the tour operator when booking to determine what accommodations can be made.

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

60+ days prior to trip departure	August 15, 2025	59-30 days prior	Less than 30 days prior
\$500 per person processing fee	Final payment is due	50% of trip cost is refunded	No refund

TRAVEL SAFELY WITH NPCA

NPCA is committed to ensuring the well-being and safety of our travelers. NPCA's tour operator partners institute emergency policies and procedures and any specific measures, such as health screenings, as necessary and appropriate, for each trip departure.

PHOTO CREDITS

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Trip Photos (Cover & Page 4)



GRABALL LANDING
Tallahatchie River, Glendora, MS



Why Travel with NPCA?

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

NPCA has worked for over 100 years to protect places of unparalleled natural wonder, historical significance and cultural value. Now we want you to experience them firsthand. Our curated itineraries are crafted to showcase the very best of our national parks and NPCA's collaborative endeavors to protect them. Join us for an unforgettable adventure.

EXPERTISE

Embark on extraordinary adventures with our knowledgeable staff who represent a wide and diverse range of backgrounds. With expertise spanning environmental conservation, cultural heritage, wildlife biology and more, NPCA staff bring a wealth of experience to each journey. Delve into engaging discussions and gain unique insight into the issues that shape our parks, including land preservation, wildlife protection, climate change and Indigenous perspectives.

STEWARDSHIP

When you choose to travel with NPCA, you're not just embarking on an incredible journey — you're making a meaningful impact. 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 preserve our national parks for generations to come.

CONNECTIONS

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. Engage with park rangers, NPCA partners and local community members as they share their invaluable insights into the challenges and triumphs of park preservation. Leave with a deeper understanding of the critical role we all play in the future of our parks.

RESPONSIBILITY

Embracing the principles of responsible travel, NPCA prioritizes minimizing our environmental footprint while maximizing our contributions to local communities. Partnering with like-minded tour operators, we source locally whenever possible, abide by Leave No Trace principles, and emphasize wildlife protection, responsible waste management and the respect of local cultures.

SMALL GROUPS

Escape the crowds and embrace the advantages of small-group travel, where personal connections and tailored experiences take center stage. The intimate size of our trips enables you to forge meaningful connections with like-minded travelers and readily engage with trip staff, partners and guides. Recognizing that each traveler is unique, our small group sizes also allow us to provide personalized attention and accommodate individual needs and interests.

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 active 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](https://www.npca.org).