



African American Heritage and Culture Summit, April 18-20, 2008
at Geechee Kunda, in Riceboro, Georgia

PURPOSE of the SUMMIT: During SRDI's 2007 Southern Organization Development Initiative partner gathering in Atlanta, GA a proposal for a gathering of African American leaders working on culture and heritage tourism was generated.

Community partners from Coastal Georgia, the Black Belt of Alabama, East Tennessee and Eastern North Carolina expressed the desire for on-site peer learning exchanges. To that end, the idea was formulated for an African American Heritage and Cultural Summit that would gather rural grassroots leaders working on issues related to African American heritage and culture such as tourism as a vehicle for economic development, leadership and intellectual and cultural property rights.

OBJECTIVES of the SUMMIT:

The objectives for the summit are as follows:

- **Leadership**-The African American Culture and Heritage Summit will be driven by the vision and desire of community members who are doing the work on the ground in local communities
- **Voice**-The predominant voice speaking and facilitating at the summit will be the voices of the people actually doing the work in local communities (leading the conversation)
- **Respect**-All summit organizers and participants will respect the expertise of the folks doing the work
- **Relationship Building**-The summit will foster authentic relationship building that was initiated at the SODI gathering August of 07, as well foster new relationships with community members not in attendance at that gathering
- **Connections and Learning**-The summit will act as the catalyst for peer learning and the development of a stronger system of support of African American culture heritage and tourism

LEARNING Questions for the SUMMIT:

- **Cultural Traditions**-How do we share our cultural traditions from a historical perspective while reflecting what is happening in our communities currently?
- **Learning Exchange**-How can we share what we all do and how we do it in an experiential way?
- **Relationship Building**-How do we get to know each other better and develop stronger relationships?
- **Resources and Assets**-What are the resources folks use to get their work done (people, community assets and grants)?
- **The Diaspora**-What is our collective history as African Americans from different parts of the South (the Diaspora¹)-what connects us and makes us unique?

Partnering for INCOME, ASSETS, AND RACIAL EQUITY in the rural South

DESIRED OUTCOMES of the SUMMIT:

- **Stronger relationships** among grassroots African American heritage and cultural workers in the rural South
- **Increased skills, knowledge, and tools** to identify and mobilize community assets to support heritage and culture work
- **A deeper understanding** of the uniqueness and diversity of African American heritage and culture in the rural South and its Diasporic nature
- **Clarity on the future** direction and activities related to African American heritage and culture and questions of ownership, self-direction and economic vitality

A G E N D A | What's Going to Happen?

F R I D A Y, APRIL 18 (Thomas)

- 12-3 pm **Planning Committee Arrives in Georgia**
- 3:30 pm Planning Committee Check-in at Geechee Kunda (Review Friday Schedule-Omisade and Thomas)
- 1-4 pm ARRIVING in Georgia: arrivals, lunch on your own, checking in to hotel
- 5:00 pm **Musical Celebration: Sharing our Cultural Traditions (Pat)**
- 6:30 pm BREAKING BREAD: Crab/Lowcountry Boil (John)
- 7:30 pm **Welcome/Making Connections: Storytelling/reflections of coastal georgia (Omisade and Jamilla)**
- 9:30 pm GOOD NIGHT!

S A T U R D A Y, April 19 (Omisade)

- 7:30 am **B R E A K F A S T** (hotel will have continental breakfast options)
- 8:15 am Planning Committee Check-in (Review Saturday Schedule-John, Jim and Pat)
- 8:45 am Volunteers Arrive at GEECHEE KUNDA (Jim and/or Pat)
- 9:00 am **Arrive at GEECHEE KUNDA: Set-up State Presentation Booths (Jim and/or Pat)**

- 10:00 am **GEECHEE KUNDA GATHERING: Honoring, Teaching and Remembering (Jim and Pat)**
- 5:00 pm **B R E A K**
- 6:30 pm **BREAK BREAD and The African American Heritage and Culture Summit: Sharing, Taking Stock and Giving Thanks (Omisade and Thomas)**
- 7:15 pm **Community Conversations, Part I (North Carolina and Georgia) (Omisade and John)**

Each Group will focus on the following themes:

Heritage: What is the history of African Americans in your community? What has been the experience of your ancestor in your state or region?

Culture: Please share some things that are unique to your area and culture (food, language, religious practice, song, etc.)

Current Work: What are you currently engaged in to preserve the heritage and culture of your community? What makes this work happen (best practices/resources)? What makes this work hard (challenges/opportunities for innovation and learning)?

9:30 pm **GOOD NIGHT!**

S U N D A Y, April 20

- 7:30 am **Planning Committee Arrives at Geechee Kunda (Review Sunday Schedule-Jamilla and Anna)**
- 8:00 am **EARLY MORNING PRAISE: Rejoicing in the tradition of our ancestors (Anna and Wanda)**
- 9:00 am **Community Conversations, Part II (Alabama and Tennessee-Florence, Whitney and Anna)**

Each Group will focus on the following themes:

Heritage: What is the history of African Americans in your community? What has been the experience of your ancestor in your state or region?

Culture: Please share some things that are unique to your area and culture (food, language, religious practice, song, etc.)

Current Work: What are you currently engaged in to preserve the heritage and culture of your community? What makes this work happen (best practices/resources)? What makes this work hard (challenges/opportunities for innovation and learning)?

11:00 am **B R E A K**

11:15 am **THE POWER of DIGITAL STORYTELLING: A tool for owning our narrative (Jamilla and Jane)**

12:15 pm **L U N C H and VISIONING (Thomas and Omisade)**

The next story we want to tell: Looking at the threads of our heritage, culture, and history, how do we continue to learn from each other and how do we stay connected?

Guiding questions: How do you imagine a network or community of African American heritage and cultural practitioners working? What would you most like to see happen in the coming 3 to 5 years? How do we nurture a “diverse” collective while maintaining a clear core of common practice?

1:15 pm **Evaluation/Closing (Omisade)**

1:30 pm **DEPARTURE**

1:45 pm **Clean Up (John and Georgia Volunteers)**

GUIDELINES | Planning Committee

- Each Planning Committee member should be well versed in the schedule for the **SUMMIT** and the **gathering at Geechee Kunda** (please make sure to familiarize yourself with the agenda)
- **SRDI** will provide an LCD projector, laptops, flip chart paper, markers and tape (possibly access to a CD player). If you or any of your state’s participants have specific AV needs, please contact Jamilla Hawkins at Jamilla@srdi.org to let her know by April 5th
- Each planning committee member is expected to volunteer to help **set-up or breakdown/clean-up** at Geechee Kunda (Friday, Saturday and Sunday)
- If you are responsible for a particular segment, please keep in mind the following:
 - **What the segment is focusing on**
 - **The amount of time allocated**
 - **If you are partnered on the segment (make sure to meet or talk with your partners prior to the SUMMIT)**

- What materials or equipment are needed for your segment (get that info to Jamilla by April 5th)
- Remember you are the **point person for your state**, so please check-in with participants coming from your state to make sure they are clear on logistics and the agenda (especially the community conversations and the state booths)

LOGISTICS | How do I get there?

Hotels

The Planning team has identified a two affordable hotel options.

Option 1:

Quality Inn - Darien - *Group Room Rate \$52.99 (Use the name McSEED)*

GA Hwy 251 & I-95, Exit 49

Darien, GA 31305

Phone: 912-437-5373

Fax: 912-437-5374

Vick Patel, General Manager

www.choicehotels.com/hotels/ga529

For more information, contact John Littles at 912-437-7821

Option 2:

Fairfield Inn-Hinesville-*Group Rate \$ 70.00 (Use the name Geechee Kunda)*

1494 E. Oglethorpe

Hinesville, Georgia 31313

Phone: 912-867-2003

Fax: 912-876-2026

For more information, contact Jim Bacote at 912-884-4440

Community Conversations

Each state will have an hour to respond to the question listed above. There will be **45 minutes** for the state presentation and **15 minutes for questions and answers**. We encourage teams to be creative with their time. Some things to consider include:

- It is a short period of time to share your story; a one-pager that answers the questions might help facilitate the dialogue
- Is there a creative way to engage the group in an experience of your state (how do you share your story with visitors to your state)?
- What materials or artifacts can you bring to share with the group?
- Don't worry if you run out of time, the entire weekend is geared towards relationship building and connections

If you have additional questions regarding your community presentation, contact Omisade Burney-Scott at Omisade@srdi.org or 919-829-5900, ext. 205.

State Booths at the GEECHEE KUNDA Gathering-A Homecoming Fa Hunnah!

Each state has been invited to set-up a booth during the **Gathering at GEECHEE KUNDA** on Saturday, April 19th. The **Gathering at GEECHEE KUNDA** will help participants “experience the accurate, complete story of the Gola-Kissi in America. The Gathering will be presented by world-class native and returning Gullah-Geechee historians, truth-tellers, shouters, artists, singers, dancers, musicians and more on the sacred soil in Riceboro.”

Your booth should highlight historical and cultural information about the experiences of African Americans in your state. Jim and Pat Bacote of **GEECHEE KUNDA** are encouraging folks to bring artifacts, food, pictures, flyers, handouts, etc. to share gathering participants who will not be participating in the larger Summit.

For more information about the booths and what you need to bring, **contact Jim and Pat Bacote at jim@bacote.com , 912-884-4440.**

Digital Storytelling

Digital Storytelling is a tool that allows for the documenting of community assets and challenges and gives communities an opportunity to share their stories with others.

Digital storytelling revolves around the idea of combining the longstanding art of telling stories and the use of digital media. This combination of media and storytelling allows storytellers the ability to craft, record, share, and value the individual stories that come from their communities.

Digital Storytelling is a tool that can be used by African American rural leaders working to preserve their heritage and culture. It can be used to create a digital story to share with others. Digital storytelling can also be used by African American artists, storytellers, folklorists, historians, and documentaries who would like to learn this new form of media to show their stories with others as well.

We are lucky to have Jane Sapp of the Bert and Mary Meyer Foundation as our special guest who will help participants understand the power of Digital Storytelling. Any questions regarding Digital Storytelling, **contact Jamilla Hawkins at Jamilla@srdi.org or 919-829-5900, ext. 202.**

Jane Sapp is a powerful, highly-regarded performer, song-writer, recording artist, and educator. As an educator, Jane Sapp has developed techniques to help the silenced find their voices through the arts. Her vast experiences, knowledge and wisdom in cultural heritage and documentation will allow you to connect how you can use digital storytelling as an effective tool in the community you live in.

*A portion of the summary was taken about Jane Sapp from this website:
http://www.womenarts.org/network/profile_153.html*

Summit Cost

In an effort to make this Summit accessible to practitioners, the planning committee has made a commitment to raise funds to offset cost for lodging, food and travel. To that end, a small pool of matching funds has been raised to assist with the cost of participating in the Summit for each state. Contact Thomas Watson at Thomas@srdi.org or at 828-285-2946 about how to access these funds.

Committee Members and State Contacts

Listed below are the names and contact information for the planning committee. They are also your state contacts for any information regarding the Summit. North Carolina Participants should contact Omisade at SRDI.

Alabama:

Whitney Greene, Black Belt Community Foundation, whgbbcf@bellsouth.net , 334-874-1126

Florence Williams, Black Belt Community Foundation, fowbbcf@bellsouth.net , 334-874-1126

East Tennessee:

Anna Maddox, Rural Resources, anna@ruralresources.net, 423-636-8171 or 423-972-9712 (c)

Wanda Ripley, Negro Women's Civic Center, Mylovelywife@embarqmail.com , 423-798-9592

Georgia:

John Littles, McIntosh Seed, johlit@dariotel.net , 912-437-7821 (o) 912-399-0698 (cell)

Griffon Lotson, McIntosh Seed, griffinlotson@mindspring.com

Jim and Pat Bacote, Geechee Kunda, jim@bacote.com , 912-884-4440

SUMMIT Support:

Omisade Burney-Scott, SRDI, Omisade@srdi.org, 919-829-5900, ext. 205

Jamilla Hawkins, SRDI, Jamilla@srdi.org, 919-829-5900, ext. 202

Thomas Watson, SRDI, Thomas@srdi.org, 828-285-2946

SEE YOU AT GEECHEE KUNDA!

The SUMMIT is being supported in partnership with the Southern Rural Development Initiative. SRDI works with local partners to increase income, assets and racial equity in low-wealth regions of the South. We support rural leaders to grow sustainable economies rooted in local culture, a healthy environment, and inclusive values.

Matching Funds have been made available by the EMSA Fund.

