



Selleck, Randy <randy.selleck@drpt.virginia.gov>

Fwd: Endangered in the Virginia State Capitol - the largest African Burial Ground in the nation / the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground, Richmond's 2nd African Burial Ground

Mitchell, Jennifer <j.mitchell@drpt.virginia.gov>

Tue, Mar 8, 2022 at 11:29 AM

To: DJ Stadtler <dj.stadtler@vpra.virginia.gov>, Jeremy Latimer <jeremy.latimer@vpra.virginia.gov>, Fyad Constantine <fyad.constantine@vpra.virginia.gov>, Michael McLaughlin <michael.mclaughlin@vpra.virginia.gov>, Jennifer Debruhl <jennifer.debruhl@drpt.virginia.gov>

Cc: Randy Selleck <randy.selleck@drpt.virginia.gov>, Katherine Youngbluth <kate.youngbluth@vpra.virginia.gov>, Emily Stock <emily.stock@drpt.virginia.gov>

All - I'm just sending this correspondence from Ms. McQueen to you for your situational awareness. We also received a separate email from Ms. McQueen yesterday about some utility work that is being conducted at the site. Randy and Kate are following up and developing a response.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **LENORA MCQUEEN** <lenora.m@prodigy.net>

Date: Mon, Mar 7, 2022 at 5:17 PM

Subject: Endangered in the Virginia State Capitol - the largest African Burial Ground in the nation / the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground, Richmond's 2nd African Burial Ground

To: district39@senate.virginia.gov <district39@senate.virginia.gov>, district13@senate.virginia.gov <district13@senate.virginia.gov>, district33@senate.virginia.gov <district33@senate.virginia.gov>, district11@senate.virginia.gov <district11@senate.virginia.gov>, district14@senate.virginia.gov <district14@senate.virginia.gov>, district25@senate.virginia.gov <district25@senate.virginia.gov>, district08@senate.virginia.gov <district08@senate.virginia.gov>, district12@senate.virginia.gov <district12@senate.virginia.gov>, district30@senate.virginia.gov <district30@senate.virginia.gov>, district21@senate.virginia.gov <district21@senate.virginia.gov>, district31@senate.virginia.gov <district31@senate.virginia.gov>, district38@senate.virginia.gov <district38@senate.virginia.gov>, district24@senate.virginia.gov <district24@senate.virginia.gov>, district10@senate.virginia.gov <district10@senate.virginia.gov>, district32@senate.virginia.gov <district32@senate.virginia.gov>, district07@senate.virginia.gov <district07@senate.virginia.gov>, district06@senate.virginia.gov <district06@senate.virginia.gov>, district02@senate.virginia.gov <district02@senate.virginia.gov>, district18@senate.virginia.gov <district18@senate.virginia.gov>, district37@senate.virginia.gov <district37@senate.virginia.gov>, district01@senate.virginia.gov <district01@senate.virginia.gov>, district09@senate.virginia.gov <district09@senate.virginia.gov>, district04@senate.virginia.gov <district04@senate.virginia.gov>, district29@senate.virginia.gov <district29@senate.virginia.gov>, district16@senate.virginia.gov <district16@senate.virginia.gov>, district23@senate.virginia.gov <district23@senate.virginia.gov>, district03@senate.virginia.gov <district03@senate.virginia.gov>, district26@senate.virginia.gov <district26@senate.virginia.gov>, district22@senate.virginia.gov <district22@senate.virginia.gov>, district34@senate.virginia.gov <district34@senate.virginia.gov>, district40@senate.virginia.gov <district40@senate.virginia.gov>, district17@senate.virginia.gov <district17@senate.virginia.gov>, district15@senate.virginia.gov <district15@senate.virginia.gov>, district35@senate.virginia.gov <district35@senate.virginia.gov>, district05@senate.virginia.gov <district05@senate.virginia.gov>, district20@senate.virginia.gov <district20@senate.virginia.gov>, district28@senate.virginia.gov <district28@senate.virginia.gov>, district19@senate.virginia.gov <district19@senate.virginia.gov>, district36@senate.virginia.gov <district36@senate.virginia.gov>, district27@senate.virginia.gov <district27@senate.virginia.gov>, DelDAdams@house.virginia.gov <deldadams@house.virginia.gov>, DelLAdams@house.virginia.gov <delladams@house.virginia.gov>, DelTAnderson@house.virginia.gov <deltanderson@house.virginia.gov>, DelTAustin@house.virginia.gov <deltaustin@house.virginia.gov>, DelJAvoli@house.virginia.gov <deljavoli@house.virginia.gov>, DelLBagby@house.virginia.gov <dellbagby@house.virginia.gov>, DelJBallard@house.virginia.gov <deljballard@house.virginia.gov>, DelABatten@house.virginia.gov <delabatten@house.virginia.gov>, DelRBell@house.virginia.gov <delrbell@house.virginia.gov>, DelEBennett-Parker@house.virginia.gov <delebennett-parker@house.virginia.gov>, DelRBloxom@house.virginia.gov <delrbloxom@house.virginia.gov>, DelJBourne@house.virginia.gov <deljbourn@house.virginia.gov>, DelEBrewer@house.virginia.gov <delebrewer@house.virginia.gov>, DelDBulova@house.virginia.gov <deldbulova@house.virginia.gov>,

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To the Honorable Virginia State Legislature

Dear Lt. Governor Sears, Senator McClellan, Speaker Gilbert, Delegates Bagby, Bourne and McQuinn, et al;

I would like to bring to your attention one of Virginia's most endangered historic places. The Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground is likely the largest burial ground for free people of color and the enslaved in the United States. To be clear, this is not the African Burial Ground in Shockoe

Bottom. The Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground is located just a little over a mile north of the Virginia State Capitol. Over 22,000 people of African descent were buried within its grounds. Most of you have likely driven over this burial ground without ever knowing it was there, as I-64 was constructed right through it.

The Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground was purposely made to disappear from the visible landscape, and almost completely erased from memory. Its long history is tragic, and it has been desecrated time and time again, largely by and for transportation projects. It also suffered at the hands of officials who deemed it unimportant, divided it up and disposed of it, and caused it to disappear even from the map. But it still exists. Current threats to this burial ground are the DC2RVA high-speed rail project, and the proposed widening of I-64. Both of those projects will be run right through it. Neither project adequately researched the burial ground, and both projects minimized it. The most recently carried out threat to the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground is the one that just occurred while the Virginia legislature was working to implement some form of protection for African American Cemeteries. At the same time, legislation was being introduced to the Senate and Congress, also intended to protect African American Burial Grounds. Unfortunately, while this was all happening, nothing protected the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground from having utility lines run quietly through its grounds on its eastern side in the area of Hospital St. and 7th St.

The city of Richmond recently re-acquired 1.3 acres of this 31 acre burial ground, for which I greatly thank Mayor Stoney and his administration, and the Richmond City Council, and all involved. Though the parcel at 1305 N 5th St. should now be protected by the city, the remaining 30 acres of the burial ground which has various owners (including the state of Virginia) is not. As a person with ancestors buried in the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground, I can not condone construction or activities of any kind that would desecrate their final resting place. But knowing that destructive activities have and will continue there unless and until something is done to change that from happening there should be protocols in place. An agreement should be put in place among property-holders that lays out steps for notification of interested parties when work is planned and when it is scheduled, evaluation and avoidance of threat, as well as remediation. The emphasis should however be on avoidance - after all it is a burial ground. Also, Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) should always be notified, and their archaeologists present on site.

The Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground desperately needs your help and attention, your intervention, and your protection. It is not only a place of local importance, but of state and national significance as well. I ask that you take the time to read and learn something about it. I hope that

you will visit its grounds and experience it, as it is located so close to where you are. Though most importantly, I ask that you will take up its cause, and stop the desecration to this sacred place. Grant the many thousands who rest within it grounds the peace and the protection from harm that they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Lenora McQueen

Member of the descendant community of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground

[It's Not OK to Put High Speed Rail Lines Through the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground | The Cultural Landscape Foundation](#)

**It's Not OK to Put High Speed Rail Lines
Through the Shockoe Hill Africa...**

https://richmond.com/news/local/history/williams-at-shockoe-hill-african-burying-ground-and-elsewhere-the-erasure-of-black-history-must/article_c2cd700e-2e9c-59bf-81ee-8b89c53a0a54.html

[Kaine, McEachin endorse nomination of Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground to National Register of Historic Places | Richmond Local News - Afro 360 News](#)

Kaine, McEachin endorse nomination of Shockoe Hill African Burying Groun...

A Richmond cemetery where an estimated 22,000 freed and enslaved black people were buried two centuries ago may ...



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Jennifer Mitchell | Director

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