



Gullah Geechee Cultural Community Trust

Gullah Geechee Cultural Community Trust, Inc.
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May 2, 2023

Board of County Commissioners for Nassau County, Florida
96135 Nassau Place, Suite 1
Yulee, FL 32097

Re: Support for Rayonier's Proposed Cultural Protections in its DSAP 2 Application

Board of County Commissioners for Nassau County of the State of Florida:

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Community Trust, Inc. (GGCCT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that educates the public about and creates solutions for cultural issues affecting the Gullah/Geechee community. We are committed to advocating for the identification, honor, and protection of all ancestral burial grounds in this area.

Gullah/Geechee history in northeast Florida spans more than 230 years. For more than two centuries, Gullah labor substantially built the local economy into one of Florida's most competitive regional economies, and our traditions continue to enliven this region's distinct culture and heritage. Rayonier Inc. has been a source of valuable employment for Gullah/Geechee people since the corporation's arrival to Fernandina Beach, Florida in 1939. Therefore, Rayonier's land and history encompasses countless narratives of the thousands of Gullah/Geechee laborers who have harvested timber for the last 84 years. In recognition of almost a century of shared history, GGCCT implores Rayonier to incorporate past and ongoing Gullah/Geechee contributions into its corporate narratives and development plans.

Last year, members of our community approached Rayonier about the Gullah/Geechee cemeteries on its properties. Since that time, Rayonier has made noteworthy steps in pledging to protect these cemeteries as outlined in Section 18 of the corporation's DSAP 2 Development Order application as furnished to our counsel on Wednesday, April 19, 2023. Based on our organization's review of Section 18 and the protections for Crandall Cemetery, also known as Henderson Cemetery¹, provided in Exhibit G-Public Facilities Map, we support these cultural protections including Rayonier's (1) commitments to not disturb known burials; (2) to provide prompt notice of newly discovered burials

¹ Site #8NA01007 on the 'Florida Master Site File' maintained by the FLA. DEP'T. OF STATE, DIVISION OF HIST. RESOURCES, <https://dos.myflorida.com/historical/about/division-faqs/master-site-file/#209>.

to Nassau County government; (3) to make accurate, timely reporting of all burial grounds to the Florida Master Site File²; (4) to provide access to Crandall Cemetery and any other newly discovered cemeteries in accordance with Florida law³; and (5) to protect the area surrounding Crandall Cemetery as public parkland, as we continue to have dialogue about ways to honor Crandall Cemetery⁴ and other burial sites.

We hope the aforementioned protections for which we have advocated will serve as the foundation for further collaboration between Rayonier and GGCCT and inspire more cultural recognition in Rayonier's forthcoming development. We intend to continue working with Rayonier to co-develop cemetery maintenance plans; to expand the protective stewardship to other cemeteries outside of the DSAP 2 footprint; and to co-create a public narrative to celebrate the region's Gullah/Geechee heritage.

In summary, we support Rayonier's proposed cemetery protections as outlined in Section 18 and the protections for Crandall Cemetery provided in Exhibit G-Public Facilities Map of its DSAP 2 application. We pray that our collective work around issues of cultural importance matures into a broad, fruitful collaboration between the Gullah Geechee Cultural Community Trust, Inc., Nassau County government, and Rayonier Inc.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Prince Albert III', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

A. Prince Albert III, Chairman
On behalf of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Community Trust, Inc.

CC: John R. Campbell, Esq., Associate General Counsel
Rayonier Inc.
1 Rayonier Way
Wildlight FL 32097

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² Office maintaining the 'Florida Master Site File' reachable at +1 (850) 245-6440 or sitefile@dos.myflorida.com.

³ e.g., FLA. STAT. § 704.08, etc.

⁴ Site NA01007, updated on October 12, 2022