

106 SUCCESS STORY



“While the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina meant the loss of hundreds of historic resources and permanently altered the cultural landscape of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the aftermath of the storm also created new opportunities for communities and public agencies to work together as preservation partners. Years later, the relationships built in the wake of Hurricane Katrina remain strong, and the lessons we learned continue to play a positive role in protecting Mississippi’s historic places.”

—JIM WOODRICK
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

Photos: Above, Gulfport-Harrison County Public Library pending renovation (photo courtesy FEMA); Right, before and after work done at the Schaeffer Residence in Pass Christian (photos courtesy MS SHPO)

Big Picture Approach Benefits Hard Hit Communities, Restores Historic Sites

Counties of Forrest, George, Harrison, Hancock, Hinds, Jackson, Lauderdale, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Stone, Walthall, Mississippi



THE STORY

The Mississippi Gulf Coast was home to the Biloxi and Choctaw Indians when French explorer Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville established a colony in 1699 in the name of King Louis XIV. Over the centuries, five countries claimed the area, including the United States of America and Confederate States of America in the 19th century. Even though regularly ravaged by hurricanes, beginning in the 19th century, summer resorts and the seafood industry became major economic forces that continue today. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast with a storm surge of up to 35 feet and sustained 140 mile per hour winds. In Mississippi, more than 1,000 historic structures, including 300 National Register of Historic Places-listed properties, were either destroyed or heavily damaged, significantly altering the cultural landscape along 70 miles of Mississippi’s coastline and impacting resources more than 100 miles inland.

THE PROJECT

To provide relief for historic and cultural resources, on June 15, 2006, Congress passed Public Law 109-234 authorizing \$43 million for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to be distributed to State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana for relief from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Of this, \$3 million was earmarked for SHPOs to complete Section 106 reviews for the grant projects, and the remaining \$40 million was designated to preserve, stabilize, and repair historic properties listed on or eligible for the National Register. Based on the amount of damage to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Mississippi received \$26 million, more than half of the allotted total. The Mississippi SHPO worked with the Mississippi Heritage Trust, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Heritage Emergency National Task Force, Association for Preservation Technology, National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the World Monuments Fund to recruit volunteer architects, engineers, and preservation specialists to assess damaged historic properties to see if rehabilitation was feasible.

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Photos: Clockwise from left, Jefferson Davis' Beauvoir estate in Biloxi after Hurricane Katrina hit; Biloxi neighborhood before and after the storm and clean up (photos courtesy FEMA)

THE 106 PROCESS

The National Park Service (NPS) was responsible for conducting the Section 106 process under the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that federal agencies identify historic properties and assess the effects on those properties of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit. Federal agencies also are required to consult with parties that have an interest in historic properties when adverse effects are likely to occur.

NPS consulted with the Mississippi SHPO, Mississippi Development Authority, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to address the preservation issues. Recognizing that specific projects receiving grant money would be highly variable, a Programmatic Agreement (PA) signed on March 12, 2007, was written to provide the basic parameters for projects to be eligible for grant funds. As a result, 268 sub-grants were awarded. Grant projects were scattered across the southern half of the state with most along the Mississippi coastline. After submitting an application, eligible grant recipients worked with a field office established by the Mississippi SHPO to ensure all work met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards so that a finding of no adverse effect to historic properties would result. Among the most notable historic properties that received grant money were Beauvoir, the retirement home of Jefferson Davis; the Charnley-Norwood House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan; three Rosenwald schools; the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson; the Walter Anderson cottage, home of the noted painter and writer; and the Ocean Springs Community Center, where Anderson's murals adorn the interior walls.

Consulting Parties:

National Park Service
 ACHP
 Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office
 Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

THE SUCCESS

Mississippi's approach provides an excellent example of the flexibility of the Section 106 process to adapt to the needs of the many communities involved. The consulting parties successfully worked through the Section 106 process quickly but thoroughly, thereby benefiting the hard hit communities along the Mississippi coast. A total of 286 properties were repaired, rehabilitated, and/or restored in Mississippi under the PA using best practices and following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. In addition, the SHPO has worked closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal partners to resurvey 15 National Register district boundaries in six coastal communities. The projects funded by the grants have been so successful that this approach is being used as a model for the HPF grants covering recent Hurricanes Maria, Irma, and Harvey across six states and two territories.

For more about Section 106 and the ACHP go to www.achp.gov

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