

Harris Neck Land Trust

- Preserving a unique culture • Re-creating a green community
- Protecting our natural and cultural resources

“I think the equities are with the community.” ~ Secretary of the Interior 1983

Progress on Harris Neck Justice Movement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Washington, DC: Significant progress was made yesterday on the decades-long struggle for justice by former members of the Harris Neck community and their descendants, represented by the Harris Neck Land Trust. A hearing before the House of Representatives’ Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs was held on December 15th.

Testifying before the Subcommittee were the Southeast Regional Director of the US Fish & Wildlife Service, a representative of Friends of Savannah Coastal Wildlife Refuges, four Board members of the Harris Neck Land Trust and the Trust’s Project Coordinator. Many issues relating to the reclamation of Harris Neck by the Trust were considered, including the legality, or lack thereof, of the original taking from the community via Eminent Domain in 1942, the transfer of the land by the Federal government to McIntosh County in 1947, the transfer of title to the Department of Interior in 1961, and the Trust’s plans for its proposed new community.

As a result of this historic hearing, the Fish & Wildlife Service was directed by members of the Subcommittee to carefully examine how the Federal government obtained this property, whether all landowners were fully and justly compensated, and what remedies are now available to provide justice to those from Harris Neck. The next step in the process would be the introduction, and then Committee consideration, of a legislative solution.

The Harris Neck Land Trust is the organization at the center of the Harris Neck Justice Movement. It represents the surviving families (Black and White) of the original Harris Neck community, which was destroyed in 1942 when the Federal government acquired Harris Neck via an Eminent Domain condemnation of the 2,687-acre community. Harris Neck, a National Wildlife Refuge since 1962, is located in northeast McIntosh County, GA, about 40 miles south of Savannah.

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