

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute was recently designated by Former President Barack Obama as part of a new Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. Along with BCRI, other sites designated as the monument include the A. G. Gaston Motel, 16th Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park, and Bethel Baptist Church.

On the same day, BCRI was awarded a \$47,000 history grant from the National Park Service to support the “Preserving History, Building Community” project. BCRI will partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to sponsor the 2017 NTHP Preservation Leadership Training. This project will focus on the A.G. Gaston Motel as a case study for preservationists and the community to work in partnership to preserve and revitalize a historic civil rights site.

“BCRI is proud to be among these sacred sites designated as the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument by President Obama,” stated Andrea L. Taylor, BCRI President and CEO. “Especially since this is our 25th Anniversary year,” she continued. “With this designation, the President is ensuring that these iconic sites are preserved in perpetuity.”

How the designation came about

On March 21, 2016, Congresswoman Terri A. Sewell (D-AL District) introduced legislation (H.R. 4 817), supported by the entire Alabama Congressional delegation, to establish the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. Building on Congresswoman Sewell’s legislation and the advocacy of Mayor Bell, the City of Birmingham, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Parks Conservation Association, President Obama was urged to designate this Civil Rights National Monument.

What it means

- By ensuring these iconic sites are preserved in perpetuity, all Americans are reminded about the progress made towards a just and equitable society, and how much work remains to correct injustices faced by diverse communities at home and around the world.
- For every dollar invested in the National Park Service, about \$5 is generated for local economies. On a national level, national parks support nearly \$30 billion in economic activity every year and more than a quarter million private-sector jobs
- Increased visibility regionally, nationally and globally;
- Increased visitors. Visitation could rise by 100% over the first three years.
- Enhanced prestige and credibility resulting from National Monument status