

ICOMOS-USA

International Council on Monuments and Sites

President Biden Designates 1908 Springfield Race Riot Site a National Monument

Washington, D.C., August 16, 2024 – On the 116th anniversary of one of the most notorious acts of violence against the African American community in Springfield, Illinois, President Joseph R. Biden has signed a proclamation establishing the 1908 Springfield Race Riot Site as a National Monument. This designation recognizes the historical significance of the riots, which served as the impetus for the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the most revered civil rights organization in the United States. The designation of the Springfield 1908 Race Riot Site as a National Monument will help to share a more complete narrative of American history. This monument addresses a crucial gap in the National Park System by shedding light on the harsh realities of racial hatred, while also highlighting the resilience of the Black community in rebuilding their lives. Furthermore, it will commemorate the site's pivotal role in the formation of the NAACP.

The work to commemorate this site aligns with broader efforts to confront painful histories and foster cohesive communities. Since 1964, ICOMOS-USA has promoted the conservation of world heritage and stronger connections to the global heritage community through advocacy, education, and the international exchange of ideas. As an international organization working closely with the principles of the United Nations and UNESCO, ICOMOS-USA is committed to fostering conversations that address these challenging aspects of our past.

For the past three years, ICOMOS- USA through the Mellon Foundation-funded Monuments Toolkit Project has engaged with community leaders, politicians, academics, government employees, and everyday citizens to learn how communities handle controversial monuments. Through the framework of removal, recontextualization, reinterpretation, and co-location, the team has explored how monuments can both oppress and foster healing. The creation of new monuments, such as the 1908 Springfield Race Riot National Monument, represents a step toward healing and reconciliation.

About ICOMOS-USA

The United States National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS-USA) is part of the worldwide ICOMOS network of people, institutions, government agencies, and private corporations who support the conservation of the world's heritage. For over 50 years, ICOMOS-USA has worked to deliver the best of international historic preservation and heritage conservation work to the U.S. domestic preservation dialogue, while sharing and interpreting for the world the unique American historic preservation system.

As the only U.S. professional preservation organization with a global focus, ICOMOS-USA is the gateway for U.S. professionals to participate in worldwide heritage conservation. ICOMOS-USA guides and promotes activities through an extensive membership network of preservation professionals, institutions, and organizations, including specialized scientific committees. ICOMOS-USA also organizes an annual international scientific symposium, an international intern exchange program, and occasional special training courses and workshops.

ICOMOS-USA is a private, non-profit, non-governmental organization with 501(c)(3) status. ICOMOS-USA is supported by World Heritage USA.

For more information, please contact monumentstoolkit [at] icomos-usa.org or call ICOMOS-USA at (202) 463-1291.