

President Obama to designate Harriet Tubman park a national monument

Written by Staff Writer

Friday, 22 March 2013 09:36 -



The sequester may have shut down White House tours, but it hasn't stopped the president from opening up a new national park. On Monday, President Barack Obama will designate five new National Monuments, including one for abolitionist Harriet Tubman.

The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument, located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, will receive a designation as a National Park, along with Delaware's First State National Monument, Ohio's Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument, the Río Grande del Norte National Monument in New Mexico, and the San Juan Islands National Monument in Washington State. The designations are made by under the Antiquities Act, and the new monuments will be administered by the Department of the Interior.

The Antiquities Act, which was first used by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, allows presidents to preserve public lands and historic places in the U.S., such as the Statue of Liberty and the Grand Canyon.

A statement from a White House official read:

The monument commemorates the life of the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad who was responsible for helping enslaved people escape from bondage to freedom. □ The new national park, located on Maryland's Eastern Shore, includes large sections of landscapes that are significant to Tubman's early life in Dorchester County and evocative of her life as a slave and conductor of the Underground Railroad. □ The park includes Stewart's Canal, dug by hand by free and enslaved people between 1810 and the 1830s and where Tubman learned important outdoor skills when she worked in the nearby timbering operations with her father. □ Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and Refuge lands, although park of the new

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national park, will continue to be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. □ Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument also includes the home site of Jacob Jackson, a free black man who used coded letters to help Tubman communicate with family and others. □ The monument will also partner with the State of Maryland's Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park Visitor Center when it opens in 2015.