



## Prince William Conservation Alliance

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For Immediate Release:

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# Call to Address Threats to Historic Black Cemeteries on Juneteenth Press Conference

### **Date and Time:**

June 19, 2024, at 11:00 AM

### **Location:**

Gaskin Cemetery ([estimated pin location](#)), use 7749 Wellington Rd to navigate. Enter the site from Wellington Rd.

Before entering the construction site, follow the blue fence to the pin location approx. 100 ft from the construction entrance.

### **Parking:**

Park along Wellington Rd but not blocking the construction site at 7749 Wellington Rd.

**Prince William County, VA — June 19, 2024:** On this significant day of Juneteenth, Coalition to Save Historic Thoroughfare, the Prince William Conservation Alliance and Jermantown Cemetery, will address the recent reports of damage to two historic Black cemeteries due to data center expansion. This incident, reported in May, has raised serious concerns about the ongoing neglect and disregard for historic and sacred sites within Prince William County.

Frank Washington, spokesperson from Coalition for Save Historic Thoroughfare, stated “On Juneteenth, we need to reflect on the sacrifices made by our ancestors. Slavery was a brutal, painful, dehumanizing institution that stripped a people of their dignity, value, freedom and humanity. What is currently happening in our county to the Cemeteries and resting places of these very people is no less of an assault.”

The press conference will emphasize the county's responsibility to protect these historic sites. "Rather than proactively adding fences, signs, and memorials, the county is shirking their duty by relying on developers and landowners to self-regulate and it's not working," Ashley Studholme with the Prince William Conservation Alliance added.

This Juneteenth, as we commemorate the end of slavery in the United States, we also call upon the county to protect these historic Black cemeteries. It's a state law and an opportunity to honor those in our past who endured so much. Resting in the Gaskin Cemetery are freed individuals from before the Civil War. These sites and their stories should be elevated and celebrated, not hidden amidst industrial development. "We as descendants of many great people have a moral responsibility with preserving our ancestors' resting places, truths, and history. It is an act of remembrance and respect, a way to honor their legacies for generations to come." Linneall Naylor

**Speakers at the event include:**

- **Ashley Studholme**, Executive Director of the Prince William Conservation Alliance
- **Linneall Naylor**, President of Jermantown Cemetery Preservation Society, President-Naylor Family Historical Society, Co-author of *Black Communities of Fairfax (A History)*, and President of Restoring Roots: Genealogy Research
- **Frank Washington**, Spokesperson for the Coalition to Save Historic Thoroughfare

The speakers will provide insights into the significance of these historic cemeteries and the urgent need for preservation efforts.

Join us in advocating for the protection and recognition of these vital historical sites.

For more information, please contact the Prince William Conservation Alliance at [alliance@pwconserve.org](mailto:alliance@pwconserve.org) or (703) 490-5200.

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