

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Michigan Freedom Trail Commission  
2022 Report to the Governor and the Legislature  
1998 Public Act 409, Section 5**

The Michigan Freedom Trail Commission (FTC or Commission) was established by Public Act 409 of 1998. Its first appointments were made in 2002. Since that time, it has worked to preserve, protect, and promote the legacy of the Underground Railroad in Michigan.

The FTC met quarterly in 2022. Regional collaboration continued with commissioners recruiting interested individuals to join four sub-committees. These sub-committees include:

- Site Identification, Facilities and Programs
- Cultural and Heritage Tourism
- Preservation and Support
- Education

Volunteers participated in the work of the sub-committees under the leadership of the commissioners.

In September, the Commission hosted its sixth annual Heritage Gathering conference. To reach the maximum number of people, the Commission hosted a month-long conference that consisted of one virtual session a week for four weeks and one day-long, in-person forum. The weekly virtual sessions focused on the theme of descendants of enslaved people and abolitionists. The day-long, in-person conference was held at the Michigan History Center. Sessions included:

- Treasures at the Archives of Michigan
- 1862: The Year the Underground Railroad Changed
- Designating September as International Underground Railroad Month: The Ohio Example
- Black Farming Settlements and the Underground Railroad

With assistance from Michigan History Center staff, the Commission completed a grant from The Association for the Study of African American Life and History to create signs marking Michigan Network to Freedom sites. The signs have a QR code to link to online information about the sites and people who were part of Michigan's involvement in opposing slavery (<https://www.michigan.gov/mhc/michigan-history/michiganfreedomtrail>). The signs were distributed and installed in late 2022.

Commissioner activities included writing and reviewing articles for publication, lectures to community organizations, and participation in panel discussions and other activities promoting the work of the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission.