

**SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT
FY 1997**

Fiscal year 97 saw a change in Superintendents for Ocmulgee. John Bundy transferred in December 96 to Lake Clark National Preserve, Alaska, and Jim David entered on duty the end of January 97. David transferred from Horseshoe Bend National Military Park where he had been Superintendent since 93.

There were two major issues that continued to consume a major part of the superintendent's time, the Fall Line Freeway and the Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway. Both of these issues were very active with major activities related to them taking place.

The Fall Line Freeway

The Fall Line Freeway issue heated up with a debate over the boundaries of the Traditional Cultural Property. The GADOT sent in a nomination for the TCP that included boundaries of an old 1800's treaty. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the park and others commented that the boundary should not go north of the north boundary of OCMU, since that area was very developed. Due to political pressure the Georgia SHPO passed the decision to the Keeper of the National Register. The Keeper agreed with the Nation and drew the boundary at the north boundary of OCMU and the south boundary of Bond Swamp National Refuge. This was the first TCP designation east of the Mississippi River. The east and west boundaries had not been set as of January 98. This was critical in the placement of the road since many of the proposed alternative routes passed through north of the park. Therefore, that area would not be affected by the TCP designation. GADOT decided to hire a consulting firm to do the EIS and the 4(f) studies. They are to have a final product in approximately 18 months. The park continues to take a neutral stance on the issue.

Superintendent David received a lot of pressure, upon his arrival, from the business people in town not to oppose the road. He was told the previous superintendent was removed due to his opposition. Those charges were not true, except in the minds of certain business people. Dialogue between the park and certain civic and business leaders was reestablished.

The Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway

The Greenway issue received additional attention with the city receiving \$1,000,000 grant from a fund managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service for land acquisition. The park participated in numerous planning sessions for the Greenway. The city was also attempting to gain additional funding through the

Governor's River Care 2000 program. The park assisted with showing members of that board the various areas being considered for acquisition. One of the main areas being considered for acquisition is the land between the main unit and the Lamar mounds unit. It is the intention of the Greenway effort to purchase that land and donate it to become part of OCMU. As part of the Greenway, there was discussion on creating a new entrance to OCMU. The talk centered around the area across the road from the Centreplex/Coliseum. It was felt by the Greenway supporters that a pedestrian entrance in that area, linked to new shopping and hotel facilities, would help with the downtown revitalization efforts. The park, along with the Regional Directorate, stated that there were some concerns related to security, visitor flow, and interpretation, that would need to be addressed before complete support of that entrance could be given. It is anticipated that pressure to approve this second entrance will continue.

A major new event was added in 97. Earth Day in Middle Georgia was held in April along with a March for Parks. There were 72 local, state and federal agencies, organizations, and schools participating. Over 3,000 people attended. The Friends of Ocmulgee Old Fields were instrumental in organizing the March for Parks program. The event was well received and will be continued in the future.

The park continued as a test park for GPRA. Provided input for the program. Chief Ranger LaChine served as a cluster trainer for GPRA

Master Ranger Flower's served on the national team developing interpretation/archeology shared competencies.

Administrative Officer Boyd served on the regional AO concerns committee.

Superintendent David served on the national team rewriting NPS 7, the VIP guidelines.

General Administration

FY 97 Budget

ONPS	\$483,400
ONPS No Year	25,000
ONPS No Year Carryover	11,300
VIP	1,000
Cyclic	
Heavy Brush Clearing	28,000

Rehab Exhibits	20,000
Roof study	2,000
Equipment Replacement	
Mower	21,000
Tractor	17,000
ATV	4,000
Storm Damage (94)	15,213
Storm Damage (97)	8,000

All accounts were kept within budget. The 94 storm damage fund was fully expended. Due to the lapse LE position, an ONPS no year fund of approximately \$15,000 was carried over. The park continues to struggle to operate within budget with most employees having to put in long days without the full measure of recognition they are due. The public comments continue to praise the programs given and the appearance of the park which is due to the dedication and determination of the park staff. However, the "do more with less" method of operating is wearing down the staff. Efforts to gain additional funding continues. Figures from SERO show that in the last fifteen years OCMU has been one of the slowest growing parks, in terms of budget, in the whole region. Affects of that are beginning to show, both in facilities and in wear and tear on employees.

Personnel

There were two transfers out, the superintendent and law enforcement officer. There was only one transfer in, the superintendent. There were six new hires, three seasonal maintenance and three seasonal rangers. A seasonal law enforcement officer was hired for the first time. This was necessitated by the vacant permanent LE position. There were three seasonal and one term employee who had their appointments converted for another period. The Chief Ranger was promoted from a GS-9 to a GS-11. The custodial worker was promoted from a WG-1 to a WG-2.

Travel and Training

Park staff attended six training courses or seminars. In addition, the management team of LaChine, Boyd, Leslie and David, attended the NPS leadership seminar at Andersonville.

AO Boyd traveled to Fort Pulaski to assist in training their AO and setting up a budget.

Property

Using lapse money, a computer to serve as a router for a network was ordered. The actual network will be installed in FY98.

Property was properly maintained. Inventories were made and all equipment was properly accounted for. Records were updated. Several items were listed as excess for sale. Excess property was transferred to other parks: a pickup truck to MLK and a water tank to FOSU.

Resource Management

A permit was issued to a student from the University of Georgia to do core sampling at the Cornfield mound and Lamar. The goal is to do pollen sampling to try and determine what crops etc. were being grown during the mound building period. It has always been the belief that the field below the cornfield mound was for growing corn. This study will help determine if that was a correct assumption.

Several stands of kudzu were treated. This exotic continues to make inroads into the park.

The issue of raising the Macon levee came up again this summer. The park asked to review the EA that had been prepared. There was such a negative reaction among the local environmentalist that the document was withdrawn before we saw it. There are very great concerns on what effects the raising will have on the water levels in the park.

Maintenance

The Visitor Center roof continued to leak. A roofing expert from DSC examined the roof and was to produce a findings and recommendations document. The plan is to replace the roof in FY98.

Majority of the maintenance staff time is consumed with the day-to-day operation. The annual trimming of the mounds continues to be our most hazardous situation. Other means and methods to maintain the sides, instead of using hand trimmers, have been investigated. The best alternative, burning the sides, has not been permitted.

A severe storm on April 8 caused damage to the Opelofa and loop trails, with several large trees blown down. One of the bridges on the Opelofa trail was severely damaged. Additional funds were requested and received to correct these problems and clean up the area.

Public Use

Visitation for FY 97 was 128,904. This was a 2.6% increase over FY 96. This was mainly due to the strong fall of 1996 visitation which was probably tied to the Olympics. Continued support of our annual events, like the Indian Celebration, and the addition of the Earth Day Celebration, helped account for this visitation.

Interpretation

The discovery lab was used by approximately 3,000 students. The lab is in need of renovation. Funds were requested for this through several sources. Unfortunately, no funds were provided.

Lantern Light tours continued to be very popular. There were 776 people attended the 14 tours. The Chief and Second Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation were in attendance for this years Cherry Blossom Festival and participated in the tours.

The Indian Celebration was attended by over 14,000 people, including almost 4,000 4th graders from Bibb and surrounding counties. This continues to be a very good cooperative effort with numerous civic groups. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation also continued to show support of this event with numerous representatives from Oklahoma attending as both participants and visitors.

Ocmulgee University was held with Ambassadors from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation attending for the full week. Twenty Five teachers attended this year's workshop. The funding for next year's workshop will not come from Robins AFB. The possibility of partnering with a local University is being explored. This will enable us to offer the workshop with college credit.

Law Enforcement

There were no major law enforcement incidents for FY 97. There were eighty nine minor incidents recorded. There was evidence of major pot hunting taking place just off our property near Lamar. New signs informing the public of the sacred nature of the mound area were installed to curtail kite flying, picnicking, etc. to aid in reducing the number of such incidents. Continued involvement by the park staff in the local neighborhood organizations and activities is believed

to aid in keeping vandalism and other problems to a minimum. The Fort Hill Association held their monthly meeting at the park for several months in the summer and fall while their normal meeting place was being renovated.

Land Acquisition

The Archeological Conservancy continues to hold the Scott property in trust for the Service. They are hoping to transfer that property to us in the not too distant future. The position being taken by the Service is to wait to see what properties may come available through the Greenway effort. Since it will take an act of Congress to accept any new additions, it is felt that we should wait on the Scott property and not have to go back in a short period to accept any Greenway lands. The Conservancy did approach the park with the idea of having the President use his Antiquities Act authority to add their tract to the park. We informed them that we did not want them to pursue that method. The Regional office indicated the need for a boundary study to determine land acquisition needs and positions. This has not taken place at this time. The park feels that lands being considered by the Greenway are culturally significant and are part of the original two thousand acres referred to in the act that authorized the park in 1934.

Community Relations

Community relations have been a little strained due to the Fall Line Freeway controversy. The park was viewed by many civic leaders as an obstruction to the freeway. Superintendent David has attempted to place the park in a more neutral position, while still indicating concern for the resources. Relations with the public officials has improved. Superintendent David represents the park on numerous organizations including serving on the Board of Directors for the Keep Macon-Bibb County Beautiful Commission, and the Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Other organization include the Tourism Development Committee, Macon Arts Alliance, the Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway Committee, and the Chamber of Commerce. In addition the Superintendent joined, and was voted to the Board of Directors, of the Kiwanis Club of Macon.

Relations with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation continued very strong. The area is considered sacred by the Creek people. We had several visitors from the Nation including the Chief and Second Chief. Several members of their National Council also visited throughout the year. Interest in the park is such that a bus was rented by them to bring a group to the park during the Indian Celebration. Five members of the Nation, including their Historic Preservation Officer, assisted with the "Ocmulgee University". Their assistance was also requested

for previewing the text for the new film and providing input on the goals of other interpretive activities. Members of several of the independent Tribal Towns also visited the park to confer on the Freeway issue. Since we preserve an important part of their heritage, a continued good relationship with the Creek people is very important. Master Ranger Flowers has developed an excellent relationship with many of Creeks in Oklahoma which has aided in the park being able to gain their assistance and support.

Cooperating Association

The Ocmulgee National Monument Association took in \$65,471 in FY 97. They in turn donated nearly \$20,000 to park programs. Their percentage of return to the Service is one of the highest of all the Cooperating Associations across the country. The largest single expense is the annual Indian Celebration. The event could not be held without the support of the Association. Patty Ellis continues as the business manager and is a very strong supporter of park activities.