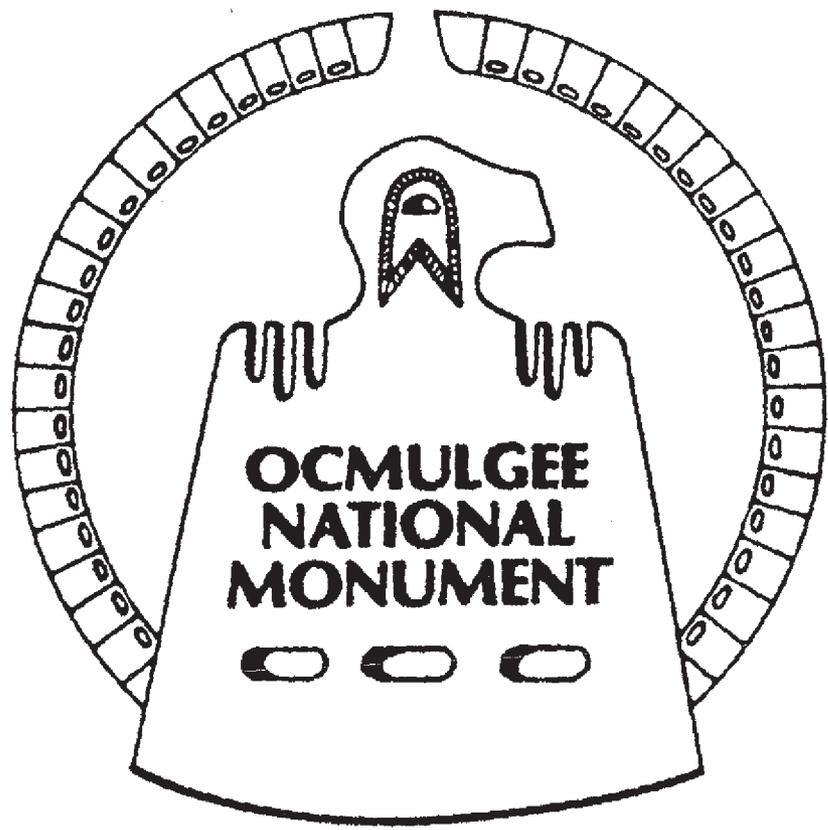


Superintendent's Annual Narrative



Submitted by: James S. David
James S. David

SCANNED
9/26/01

**SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT
FY 2000**

Ocmulgee National Monument experienced a busy Fiscal year 00. The staff was challenged with many disruptions related to work being done to the Visitor Center. The interior appearance of the Visitor Center was greatly improved. There was progress made on several projects. The park received a lot of media attention when it was the site of a large sewage spill.

The park's major event, the Ocmulgee Indian Celebration, continued to grow this year with the assistance of John Shoemaker and Riverside Ford. The park made progress on developing agreements with the various affiliated Native American tribes. One of our employees received well-deserved recognition by two outside groups for her fine work in preserving and interpreting native cultures.

External issues continued to consume a large part of the superintendent's time. The Fall Line Freeway and the Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway and the possibility of lighting I-16 continued as major issues. Redesigning the I-16 – I-17 interchange starting within the park was a new issue this year.

The Fall Line Freeway

A couple of major items related to the Fall Line Freeway took place this year. The Keeper of the National Register made a visit to Macon to look over the area to assist her in making the final determination of the boundaries of the Traditional Cultural Property. The final boundary did not match either the DOT or the Muscogee (Creek) proposals, but was a combination of both. A draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was issued by the Georgia DOT and sent to Federal Highways Administration. Federal Highways had numerous problems with the document and decided not to send it out to the other agencies for review, but sent it back to GADOT for major revision. A revised draft is anticipated in the first half of 2001.

The Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway

Construction of the first Greenway Park started this year along the river at the corner of Riverside and MLK. It will be open sometime in early 2001. Still attempting to work with the Railroad to see about the possibility of using their bridge to access the Monument. The superintendent continues to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Greenway. With other Greenway items underway the committee in 2001 will be working a great deal on the Ocmulgee connector.

Lighting along I-16

The National Park's and Conservation Association (NPCA) sent out an issue paper to their local members related to the proposal to light I-16 from exit 2 to exit 6 which includes that section through the park. The loss of night sky has become a major issue for NPCA. A meeting was held at the park with the Georgia DOT, Federal Highways Administration and a consulting firm under contract with GADOT. The parks again expressed concerns about light pollution and possible affects on wildlife. A plan to install over 200 lights along that section was shown. The park asked for alternatives related to fewer lights and other alternatives to accomplish the task. A City Council meeting was held where this issue came up. Several people spoke up in opposition to the plan including the Superintendent. The Council voted to support the concept of lighting the section. The County Commissioners also voted to support the concept. A public hearing will take place sometime in 2001.

I-16 - I-75 Intersection reconstruction

The Superintendent served on the community commission looking at the reconstruction of the I-16 – I 75 interchange. This roadwork will begin within the boundaries of the Monument and extend through the merging of the two interstates. Although the interstate within the Monument will expand with an additional lane in both directions by working with DOT this expansion will take pace using the current median and not expanding the road current "foot print" inside the park. The need for improvements to this whole section of road was evident to all involved. It was fortunate that it could be accomplished with minimal affect on the park. Further work related to noise pollution along the road will be needed and will be part of the final concept.

General Administration

FY 00 Budget

ONPS	\$632,200
ONPS No Year	4,000
VIP	1,000
Cyclic	
Repaint/Replaster VC	98,600
Replace unsafe ceiling	15,000
Replace Great Temple Mound Steps	169,900
Additional for Terrace project	20,000
Equipment Replacement	
Carry-all Club Car	5,500

Fee Enhancement
Construct bridge over railroad 350,000

Challenge Cost Share
Assist in funding Indian Celebration 10,000

All accounts were within budget. The remaining money from the Fee Demo received to rehabilitate the AV room was expended. New chairs for the auditorium and lobby were acquired along with ceiling fans for the auditorium. Those items along with ones acquired last year will now give a more professional look to the auditorium to go along with the new program.

Very little of the \$350,000 fee demo funds to construct a bridge over the tracks were expended. The Federal Highways Administration was contracted to draw up the plans. Several meetings were held with Federal Highways and the Railroad. Construction should begin sometime in 2001.

Personnel

There was one resignation and one transfer among the permanent employees. The long time occupant of the Administrative Support Assistant transferred to the Department of Defense. That position was filled by a transfer of an employee from Immigration. The resignation was by a maintenance worker. That position was filled by a part time seasonal. There were two seasonals who had their appointments converted for another period. The term appointment of the park's archeologist ran out and we were not able to extend the appointment and had to terminate that employee. The park continued with an excellent diversity profile. Both the permanent and seasonal staff were 80% minority and/or female.

Travel and Training

Park staff attended training courses to maintain certifications and get updates for law enforcement, and fixed assets. Division chiefs and the superintendent attended their respective division chief's superintendents' conferences. The full management team attended training in safety.

Property

Property was properly maintained. Inventories were made and all equipment was properly accounted for. Records were updated. A large backlog of items were surveyed and sold.

Resource Management

The park worked with Regional Ethnographer and a local contractor to set up NAGPRA consultations with the various affiliated tribes. Tribal representatives from the 13 affiliated tribes were invited to Macon to meet with the Ocmulgee and Horseshoe Bend representatives to begin to come to an agreement on how to handle various NAGPRA issues. A draft agreement will be out for review in early 2001.

The park had been requesting assistance for several years with its water and wetlands issues. This year a hydrologist from Mammoth Cave came down to look at the changes to the water flow through the park that had occurred since the 94 flood. He found that Walnut Creek had changed course and this was affecting the other creeks that flow through the park. He made several recommendations, which will be evaluated and used.

On June 19 the park was the site of a sewage spill by the Macon Water Authority, (MWA). The spill occurred along the creek that runs between the Great Temple Mound and the Funeral Mound. Rangers on duty discovered the spill and MWA responded. The trail that runs between the Trading Post site and the Funeral Mound and its associated footbridge was closed for public safety due to the high fecal coliform readings in the stream. MWA took weekly water samples and once they reached a safe level the trail was reopened. The spill generated much media attention. The fecal coliform levels came up again a month later, but the park was not notified. The MWA contributed that high reading to ground pollutants from rain water runoff from the local neighborhood. The Superintendent has been working with MWA to insure that such spills do not occur in the future and to insure that the park is informed when the water inside the park is a public health hazard.

The problem with trash from the neighborhood flowing into the park during rain events continues. The Superintendent has initiated contacts with the city and county engineers to find possible solutions. The trash creates a very unsightly appearance in the area of the GTM and the Funeral Mound.

In September of 2000, feral hogs were found in the main unit of the park for the first time. They had been a problem at Lamar but had not shown up in the main unit. Signs of their rutting were found on the GTM and the Southeast Mound as well and other areas along the roads and trails. The park has initiated steps to try and control the hog population in order to reduce the damage to the cultural resources.

Drought conditions caused some of the ponds in the park to dry up and others were drastically reduced. A major fish kill occurred in the "Clayhole" pond. It is believed that every fish over the size of eight inches, except for those species that can breath atmospheric oxygen, were killed off. Due to its proximity to the area of the sewage spill, tests were run to determine the reason for the fish kill. It was determined that a lack of dissolved oxygen due to low water was the cause. This did result in an impressive display of various birds that came in to feed off the dead and dying fish.

Cultural Resource Management Specialist (Master Ranger) Flowers received well-deserved recognition from two sources this year. The State of Georgia recognized her as one of Georgia's Women who had a positive affect on Historic Preservation. The Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation presented her an award for her work in the preservation of and education about Creek Culture.

Maintenance

The Visitor Center received a new roof and terrace. A new roofing system was used in both of those areas consisting of a sealed plastic liner. The interior drains, which had been a source of leaking problems, were avoided and exterior drains added. The terrace replacement allowed us to put down colored tile that recreated the original look of the building that had initially been accomplished with dyed cement. The interior was completely repainted and it was replastered where needed. New ceiling tiles and frames were installed where needed. Working with the contractors on these projects consumed much of maintenance's time. There were numerous times that the Visitor Center was flooded during these projects. Portions of the employee offices were closed due to flooding and safety issues. Employees in the Ranger Division had their offices moved several times. The carpet in the visitor center had to be dried out and cleaned several times. During the plastering and painting the VC had to be partly, then completely, closed to visitors. There were several days that employees had to be sent home due to the paint fumes and plaster dust. Although this was a major challenge for all the employees the end result is that the VC appears to not leak for the first time in its 50 plus year history. The paint, plaster and ceiling work has restored the Visitor Center to a professionally appearing building. The falling plaster and rusted, missing ceiling was the source of numerous negative visitor comments.

The mounds were cleared in the fall this year instead of the summer. It was found to be less taxing on the employees and the job was accomplished in a shorter period of time. We continue to explore options on ways to get the mounds cleared.

Public Use

Visitation for FY 00 was 117,830. This was a 4% increase over FY 99. There was a slight increase most months. The Indian Celebration had an excellent year. The increase may have been due to the drought, with fewer raining days to keep people home. We also have been experimenting with new events to help appeal to new user groups. Our public satisfaction rate was down slightly. Most negative comments have been related to the VC appearance. The work on the VC was not completed until early September. We anticipate a better reaction next year with the improved appearance.

Interpretation

We were able to increase our interpretive programs and make them more curriculum based. Worked with local teachers to find their needs and gain their cooperation. The temporary display room was converted for use as a classroom for interpretive programs.

The Ocmulgee Indian Celebration continued to expand. Several new individuals and groups were added. Included in that group was a woman who brought in her horse to demonstrate the traditional paintings found on Indian horses. The continued support from Riverside Ford allowed us to have improved publicity and to bring in these new groups. The result was one of the best-attended celebrations ever. This continues to be our major event of the year. There were over 150 Native Peoples brought in to interact with and teach the visiting public about the cultures of the Native Peoples of the southeast. As part of the Indian Celebration we cosponsored a presentation by Theater Macon of the play "Indians". The play was a very moving piece about the plight of Native Peoples and how they were treated around the turn of the Century.

The AV area was further improved using fee demo funds. Ceiling fans were installed new seats were ordered, and new controls for the video programs were added. This improves the look and functionality of the auditorium.

Lantern Light tours continued as a popular program. Earth Day visitation was down due to weather and poor publicity. Over 3,000 students used the Discovery Lab. We continue to seek funding to upgrade that facility.

As part of the Cherry Blossom Festival, the Keep Macon Bibb Beautiful Commission sponsored a traveling exhibit entitled "Moving the Flame". This was an exhibit of historic photographs taken of Native Americans around the turn of the Century. It did a very good job of documenting the affects on Native culture. There were several Native People who were brought in to give programs on their culture. The response to the display and programs was very positive.

Law Enforcement

The park was able to get the new law enforcement ranger into FLETC in early FY00. This did involve her being gone for a good portion of the year, but when she returned patrols etc. were held on a more regular basis. There were 130 incidents reported including 2 Part I and 55 Part II Offenses. One of the Part I offences was closed by arrest. The Chief Ranger continues as a firearms instructor. He provided numerous courses for other parks in the region.

Community Relations

Community relations remained mainly positive. The Indian Celebration continued to be a very positive and popular program that brings many people to the park and city. The Superintendent worked with the Regional Office and the other Atlanta area parks to form a partners group that is developing methods to bring more diverse populations to the parks and to gain assistance with various projects. The Superintendent presented programs about the park to numerous civic and other organizations. He also continued to represent the park on numerous organizations including serving on the Board of Directors for the Keep Macon-Bibb County Beautiful Commission, the Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau and the Kiwanis Club of Macon. Other organizations include the Tourism Development Committee, Macon Arts Alliance, the Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway Committee, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Cooperating Association

The Ocmulgee National Monument Association had \$69,636 in revenue in FY 00. This was a 9% decrease over FY 99. This decrease was due to a reduction in donations. However, an improved Indian Celebration and a good Lantern Light Tour kept most of the figures up. The Association continued with its excellent support of the park programs with \$29,276 being donated to the park. The Association continues to be a major asset to the park. Many programs such as the Indian Celebration could not be held without their assistance. Patty Ellis continues as the business manager and is a very strong supporter of park activities.