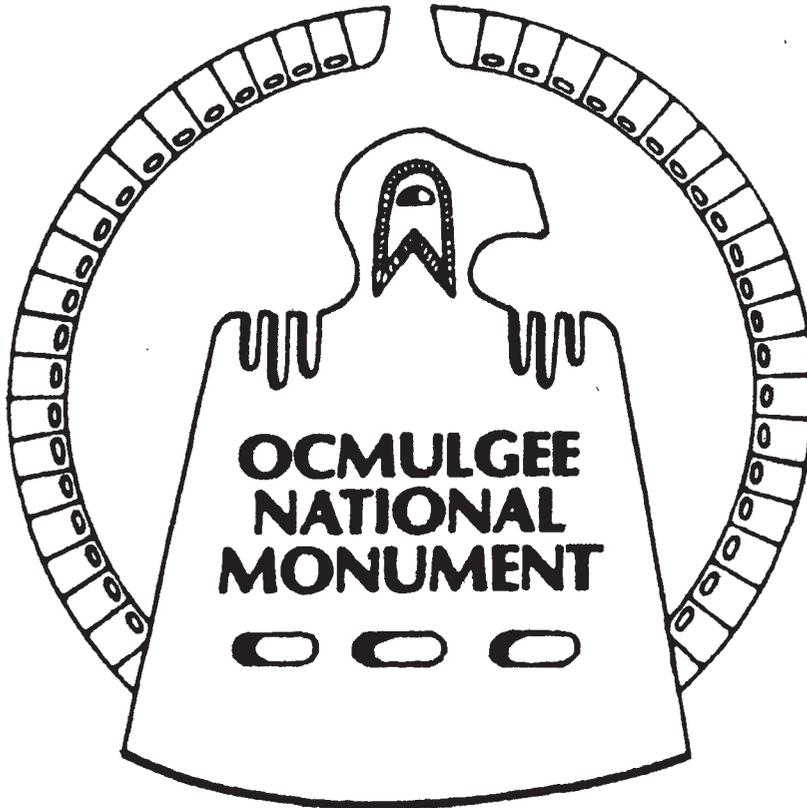


Superintendent's Annual Narrative

FY 2001



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**SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT
FY 01**

Ocmulgee National Monument saw several improvements in its facilities in FY 01. The steps leading to the top of the Great Temple Mound were replaced and relocated. The Visitor Center and the Dunlap house were painted and sidewalks were replaced. There were some personnel changes and many of the issues from last year continued to challenge the staff.

The park's major event, the Ocmulgee Indian Celebration, continued to grow with the ongoing assistance of John Shoemaker and Riverside Ford. This year's Celebration was challenged by its timing, coming just three days after the September 11 terrorist attacks. There was damage caused by a flood in the Visitor Center and by vandalism at the maintenance compound. Feral hogs continued to present a problem by rutting on the mounds and other cultural sites.

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

The Fall Line Freeway

The Georgia Department of Transportation issued a draft EIS for the Eisenhower Parkway Extension that went out only to the federal cooperating agencies. There was some confusion as to whether the Eisenhower Extension is part of the Fall Line Freeway or not. The park reviewed the EIS and found numerous inaccuracies and provided over 60 pages of comments on the document. Georgia DOT has not come out with any revisions so the status of that document is not known this time. A local group developed a new alternative route. The park and representatives of the Muscogee (Creek) people were invited to look at this alternative. It was the general consensus that it did have some very strong points and might develop into a workable alternative. However, the supporters of the route through the Traditional Cultural Property were not willing to consider that alternative.

The Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway

The first site related to the Greenway opened, the Riverside Park at the corner of Riverside and MLK. It was dedicated and named the Charles Jones Park in recognition of the substantial donation he made for the Greenway. Due to continued problems with the railroad and the placement of the trail on the west side of the river, it was decided to build

trail on the park's side of the river. Trail work between MLK and Spring Street was slated to begin in early 2002. The move to this side of the river should make it easier to connect into the park's trail system. Plans to run the trail along the river on the park's boundary were discussed. This would then connect up with, and involve the reconstruction of, the river trail.

Lighting along I-16

A public hearing on the lighting issue was held in March. Park supporters passed out information sheets on the issue. NPCA continues to list Light Pollution as one of the threats to the National Park experience. The GADOT did change the need for the lights from one of safety to one of connectivity. When asked what that means they were not able to provide much of an answer. Other solutions to the perceived safety issue were presented, such as call boxes and a "highway heroes" program. While the GADOT said that there were plans for the heroes program they were still going forward with the lighting plans. Additional studies were to be made with findings presented in 2002.

I-16 - I-75 Intersection reconstruction

Discussions and planning for the major reworking of the I-16 – I 75 interchange continued. The changes will begin within the park boundary. The plans still show the work inside the Monument being within the present footprint of the interstate. The planned widening will take place using the current median. New Town Macon developed a plan, which was less intrusive on the site and also involved the relocation of the railroad to this side of the river to run along side of the interstate. The future of that concept is not known at this time.

General Administration

FY 00 Budget

ONPS	\$657,000
ONPS No Year	1,000
VIP	1,000
Cyclic	
Repaint exterior Dunlap house	10,200
Rehab Hazardous Storage	9,000
Repaint exterior of Visitor Center/Repair Sidewalks	130,100
A&E and Air quality Study for new HVAC	50,300
Rehab Fire and Security	40,000

Equipment Replacement

Hustler Excel Mower	27,939
Computers	14,940
Challenge Cost Share	
Assist in funding Indian Celebration	20,000
Public Land Corps	
SCA Trail Crew and Materials	20,000
Feral Hog Program	
Miscellaneous Equipment	700

Personnel

There was one transfer among the permanent employees. Pam Darty, Park Ranger Interpretation, transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The STEP program was used to hire two seasonal employees for maintenance. There were three seasonal rangers who had their appointments converted for another period. Two employees, the Administrative Support Assistant and the Park Ranger LE, received promotions. The park continued with an excellent diversity profile. The permanent staff was 80% minority and/or female. The seasonal staff was 50% 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, or their representative, and the superintendent attended their respective division chiefs superintendents' conferences. The Park Ranger LE also attended ARPA training.

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

A draft of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) agreement with the associated tribes was prepared. It was sent to them for comment. The comments are being addressed on and we hope to have signed agreements in 2002.

The Speaker of the National Council of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation visited the park. We worked with him on issues related to NAGPRA and preservation of the park's resources. Meetings were also arranged with between the Speaker local political leaders

in hopes of reaching compromise on issues such as the Fall Line Freeway, and to open communications between those leaders and the Muscogee Nation.

We continued to work with the Macon Water Authority, (MWA) on insuring that another spill does not occur within the park. Their right-of-way/easement rights had expired and we are in the process of getting those reinstated. MWA has agreed to re-sleeve the lines in the park to reduce the chance of spills. They also need to get access to cut trees etc. whose roots may be interfering with the lines. Meetings were held with MWA, EPD, and the city of Macon, NPS regional public health and resource management staff, and private citizens to discuss the sewage and trash problems. This resulted in additional water testing being done in the park. In addition the park installed warning signs along the trails where they come close to the streams, to caution visitors from coming in contact with the water do to its source as urban runoff.

The problem with trash from the neighborhood flowing into the park during rain events continues. The Superintendent met with the city engineer and the director of the Housing Authority in hopes of finding a solution. The city engineer is working on a design to catch the trash before it gets into the heavily visited areas. The director of the Housing Authority agreed to have his maintenance crew clean the traps and the park agreed to install gates to make access by the maintenance crew easier.

Feral hogs continued to be a major problem. They damaged portions of the Great Temple Mound and other cultural sites with their rutting. The Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) was called in to examine a couple of the heaviest damaged sites. Funding from SERO was acquired to assist in the building of traps etc. to initiate steps to control the number of hogs. There was some success but the effort will go on for several years.

SEAC was also called in to assist with examination of the holes for the footings for the new steps to the top of the Great Temple Mound, and the footings for the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks.

Maintenance

The steps to the Great Temple Mound were replaced. The old steps were rickety and in need of replacing. We consulted with several Native American Groups as to the best solution. We came to the consensus that putting the steps on the backside of the mound would be less visibly intrusive. The new steps give a very nice view of the clayhole pond. Work was also started on repainting the Visitor Center, and the Dunlap house. In addition, a contract was issued to replace sections of broken sidewalk and to construct new sidewalk from the Earthlodge to the planned new pedestrian bridge. A combination of a broken shutoff valve and clogged drains caused a major flood of the mechanics room at the Visitor Center. The water was over two feet deep causing damage to the HVAC system and to the file storage area adjacent to the mechanics room. There was damage to the maintenance building and numerous pieces of equipment by an individual who broke

into the maintenance compound started a truck and rammed it into the shop and other equipment.

A Student Conservation Association trail crew was hired using Public Land Corps funding. The crew was able to make improvements to much of the trail system and to build new trail to avoid the second crossing of the railroad tracks.

Public Use

Visitation for FY 01 was 127,705. This was an 8% increase over FY 00. There was a large increase in the fall and smaller increases in the summer. September, despite a very good Indian Celebration, saw a sizeable, 19%, drop. This was due to the terrorist attacks and the general drop nation wide in travel. Our public satisfaction rate made a great leap, from 85% in 2000 to 98% in 2001. Much of this is believed to be the improvements made to the Visitor Center. The interior had been receiving numerous negative comments. The repainting, replastering and new ceilings greatly improved the appearance of the building.

Interpretation

The long-term project of preparing the teachers guide, "Georgia's Heartland Heritage Activity Guide" was completed. This guide gives teachers an excellent set of activities for the students to do, to help learn about the cultural and natural resources of the park and the surrounding area.

The Ocmulgee Indian Celebration was held just three days following the terrorist attacks. It was decided on the day of the attacks not to call off the event. We felt that if we called it off the terrorist would win and that an event celebrating the culture of the Native People was even more important at that time. The visitation was excellent, with numerous comments from visitors that they appreciated that we did not cancel. The visitors appreciated a reason to get out and away from the continued news coverage of the tragedy. 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. The Creek Elder Council also visited us, approximately 45 people, who besides visiting the celebration also helped with storytelling and crafts. Again this year the continued support by John Shoemaker and Riverside Ford made the event successful. The excellent publicity they provided and the other financial support enabled us to bring in more dance groups and other demonstrators. Food Max, due to Shoemaker's contacts, again provided the food and drinks for the participants. Their sponsorship the last three years has added greatly to the ease of the event and to its enjoyment by the staff and participants.

Participation in the Lantern Light tours was down greatly due to weather and poor publicity. After the event we met with Cherry Blossom people and stated we needed better listing for next year. The Earth Day celebration was the best ever. The KMBB

offered composting bins at a greatly reduced rate and those proved to be extremely popular, with people lining up at 6:30 a.m. to get their bins.

Law Enforcement

The park did have two commissioned officers for the full year. This was the first full year with two commissions since 1996. There were 149 incidents reported including 4 Part I and 41 Part II Offenses. The major part I offence was the break in and destruction of park property at the maintenance compound. Due to the mental capacity of the person involved neither the state or federal prosecutors wanted to pursue any charges. Other part I offences involved theft from the park's gift shop.

All law enforcement personnel and all maintenance personnel were inoculated against hepatitis B. The park provided law enforcement assistance to JICA, CHAT and KEMO and assisted with the grand opening of Bond Swamp National Refuge.

Funds were secured to improve the park's fire and security systems. Outside lighting was developed for the Visitor Center, surveillance cameras were added, repairs were made to the security fencing and outdated detection systems were updated. These corrected deficiencies identified after the Oklahoma City bombings and made more important following September 11.

Community Relations

Community relations remained mainly positive. The Indian Celebration is the single most popular program that brings large numbers of people to the park and city. Discussions were started to develop a support foundation to aid in raising funds for park needs. It is hoped to have that group functioning in 2002. Ocmulgee along with the Atlanta area parks continued with a community partners group to work toward bringing more underserved communities to the parks. The Superintendent 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, Chairman of the Tourism Advisory Council, and the Kiwanis Club of Macon (President Elect). Other organizations include the Macon Arts Alliance, the Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway Committee, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Cooperating Association

The Ocmulgee National Monument Association had \$63,863 in revenue in FY 01. This was an 8% decrease over FY 00. This decrease is thought to be related to a decrease in school group visitation. The schools are being limited to the number off trips they can take and the park has to compete more with the newer local attractions. The Association

continued with its excellent support of the park programs with \$17,361 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.