

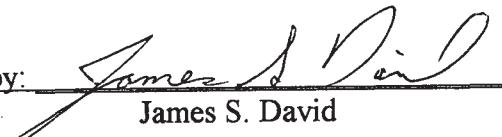
363/D-39

Superintendent's Annual Narrative

FY 2002



Submitted by:


James S. David

PLEASE RETURN TO:

TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTER
DENVER SERVICE CENTER
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



**SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT
FY 02**

Ocmulgee National Monument improved its award winning Discovery Lab in FY 02. Plans were made for two major renovations were worked on and the park received awards and recognition for its accomplishments. The Ocmulgee Indian Celebration continued its success and added a new aspect. There were some personnel changes and many of the issues from last year continued to challenge the staff.

The park played host to a group of young people from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation who camped out in the park for two weeks and assisted with restoration projects. Through some additional funding the park was able to work on some natural resource problems. We were able to assist with the nationwide "Homeland Security" efforts. Progress was also made on trash and sewage problems. Feral hogs continued to present a problem by rutting on the mounds and other cultural sites. The park was listed on the National Parks Conservation Association's "ten most endangered parks" list.

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-75 interchange starting within the park, continued as the major external issues.

The Fall Line Freeway

The Georgia Department of Transportation contacted the park for clarification of some of our comments on the draft EIS. A meeting was held in Atlanta to discuss issues, look at alternative routes and further explain our comments of last year. Over the year discussions were held with several groups on possible compromise routes. The next version of the EIS from Georgia DOT is due out in early 2003. The National Parks Conservation Association placed Ocmulgee on its "Ten Most Endangered Parks" list in March due to the threat posed by the Freeway. This action resulted in numerous media contacts with the park from not only the Macon outlets but also the Atlanta area media. The park was contacted by the GADOT for clearance to do archeological study on one of the alternative routes (route F). This route runs through the "Drakes Field" portion of the Monument. Since the study was only going to consist of some shallow posthole testing, it was decided not to issue the permit since it was unlikely any new information would be gained. A more in depth study would be required if that route did become the preferred route.

The Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway

The first trail section was opened between MLK and Spring Street. This trail quickly became a very popular walking path. Work on the next section, north of the original was planned, with opening of that section scheduled for 2003. The next sections to follow after that one is completed involve going to Central City Park and also to the Monument. The current plan is to bring the trail to the Clinton Street gate; it would then run though Drakes Field to connect with the Monument's present trail system. Security and preservation concerns continue to lead the discussions. Some type of gate that will only allow people to get out and not in after hours will need to be part of the design.

Lighting along I-16

There was only a little movement on this issue. GADOT produced a study on the effects of the lighting on cultural resources. Since the Interstate is built on berm no adverse effect was found. The park continues to express its concern on the loss of night sky, affects on animal populations and the true need of the project.

I-16 - I-75 Intersection reconstruction

Numerous groups have expressed concerns on the design of the I-16 - I 75 interchange. 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. There were no public hearings on the issue in 2002 nor were there any meetings of the advisory council. There have been discussions related to the combining the Fall Line Freeway with the redesign of the intersection that would result in the removal of I-16 from within the boundary of the monument.

General Administration

FY 02 Budget

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| ONPS | \$660,900 |
| VIP | 1,000 |
| Cyclic | |
| Repair walkways | 7,898 |
| A&E and misc. for new HVAC | 22,946 |
| Small Park NRPP | |
| Fire/Safety Remove Hazardous Trees | 10,000 |
| Control Exotic Flora and Fauna | 15,000 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------|
| Fee Demonstration | | |
| Renovate Discovery Lab | | 25,000 |
| Hazmat Funding | | |
| Replace storage/recycling units | | 5,000 |
| Equipment Replacement | | |
| No funds received this year. | | |
| Challenge Cost Share | | |
| Assist in funding Indian Celebration | | 20,000 |
| Feral Hog Program | | |
| Miscellaneous Equipment | | 700 |

Personnel

The Law Enforcement/Natural Resource Management specialist, Cindy Heyd resigned from the Service in early FY 2002. Various methods of filling that position were pursued. The selection was made for a directed transfer of an employee who did not enter on duty until FY 2003. A new Interpretive Ranger was hired, Stephen Rudolph started in January. Administrative Officer position was promoted. Three seasonal positions were re-described from park ranger/guide to information receptionist series. The park continued with an excellent diversity profile. The permanent staff was 70% minority and/or female. The seasonal staff was 60% minority and/or female.

Travel and Training

Park staff attended training courses to maintain certifications and get updates for law enforcement. Division chiefs, or their representative, and the superintendent attended their respective division chief's superintendents' conferences.

Property

Property was properly maintained. Inventories were made and all equipment was properly accounted for. Records were updated. Were able to acquire several pieces of surplus office furniture from the Navy.

Resource Management

A final Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) agreement was sent to the tribes for their signature. We hope to get a most of those signed in 2003.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has requested the repatriation of the human remains currently being housed at the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC). We are working with both the tribe and SEAC to get that accomplished. Discussions have been held on the best location within the park for reburial.

Through a partnership with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation we hosted seven of their youth to camp in the park and assist with various maintenance and restoration projects. This was set up by the Creeks in an attempt to help the students reconnect with their homeland. They assisted with restoring the old path to the top of the Great Temple Mound. We hope to make this an annual event.

We continued to work with the Macon Water Authority, (MWA) on insuring that another spill does not occur within the park. The right-of-way/easement rights were rewritten and submitted for NPS and MWA signatures. NPS had signed and we were awaiting MWA signatures by the end of the FY. This should be accomplished by early 2003. MWA has committed to relining all the old sewer lines within the park. Also as part of the agreement they will take over maintenance on all the six inch and larger lines inside the park.

Further discussions were held with the city of Macon to try and find a solution to the trash flowing into the park via the storm water runoff. The city continued efforts to design a system to catch the trash and the funds to construct it. Gates were placed at two places in the fence to give access by the Macon Housing Authority who has agreed to assist in cleaning out the catch systems.

Feral hogs continued to be a major problem. Their rutting damaged several cultural sites. Additional funds were acquired from the Regional office to control both exotic fauna and flora. Additional traps were constructed and baited. There were 58 hogs destroyed during the year. Those funds were also used to hire an additional seasonal ranger who assisted in various control measures on the exotic vegetation. This was the first time in several years we were able to do major work on exotic vegetation. This resulted in spraying 100% of the known kudzu, treatment of 100% of the exotics on the cultural features in the main unit, and spot treatment of mature exotics in the rest of the park. Funds were also acquired to remove numerous hazardous trees and to reduce the fuel level in the forest. Approximately 100 trees were removed.

SEAC was called in to complete the mitigation activities for the footing on the pedestrian bridge to be built over the railroad tracks. Construction of that bridge should be accomplished in 2003.

Maintenance

The painting of the Visitor Center and the Dunlap House were completed. The Visitor Center was painted using special sealant paint in hopes to reduce water intrusion through

cracks. Further work was done in reviewing plans for both the VC HVAC and the pedestrian bridge projects. Carpet was replaced in both quarters. Grass was sodded in at the Dunlap House. The carpet in the visitor use area of the Earthlodge was replaced. The steps to the Lesser Temple mound were rebuilt. A new bridge was constructed on the redesigned Bartram trail.

Public Use

Visitation for FY 02 was 111,444. This was almost a 13% decrease from FY 01. The tourist industry as a whole has experienced decreases since 9/11. In addition many of the local schools have cut back on their field trips. Our public satisfaction rate continued high at 97%.

Interpretation

After many years and attempts at various funding sources the Discovery Lab was refurbished and updated. We received funds through the Fee Demonstration Project to purchase the needed supplies and equipment. The lab was divided up into subject areas and activity kits were developed for each section. This was the first major upgrade of that facility since its creation in the mid 1980's.

The Ocmulgee Indian Celebration was another very successful program. There were over 200 Native People participating. We received good publicity and the event was chosen as one of the "Top Twenty Events of the Southeast" by the Southeast Tourism Society. Working with John Shoemaker and Riverside Ford we were able to add a new activity for the celebration, a concert by one of the top Native American performers, Robert Mirabal. The concert was held at the Grand Opera House. The event was close to a sell out and the comments were very positive. The funds raised at the concert went to the newly formed Ocmulgee National Monument Foundation. That foundation was established by John Shoemaker to raise funds for the Celebration and other park activities. For the second year the park received a Challenge Cost Share grant from the NPS that helped cover the cost of bringing the dance groups and other demonstrators to the event. Bruno's corporation, through the local Food Max stores again furnished the food for the participants and volunteers.

Participation in the Lantern Light tours was good. There were 704 people on the tours despite a couple of days with poor weather. Coverage and publicity of the event in the material prepared the Cherry Blossom Commission was good.

The Earth Day celebration was lightly attended. However a new idea was tried that was very popular. Trees were acquired from the Georgia Forestry Department as a free give-away item. We were able to provide every visitor who wanted one a tree to take home.

We did have participation by a group from the Atlanta Community partners group that the superintendent has been involved with for several years.

Through the National Park Foundation the park received a donation from Kodak of a digital camera, film, paper to print photographs on color printers, and media for digital photograph storage. This will enable us to digitally record photographs of events and projects.

Law Enforcement

Once again we were not fully staffed for law enforcement for most of the year. That left the Chief Ranger as the only law enforcement officer. The law enforcement/natural resources ranger resigned her position in December and the position was vacant the remainder of the year. A new ranger was to start in October. There were six Part I Offenses and 27 Part II Offenses. The major part I offences were a series of car break-ins that occurred during the Earth Day celebration. With one less officer there was less patrolling of the parking area.

The Chief Ranger was called out on a "Homeland Security" detail to Boston National Historic Park for three weeks. He also continued to serve as firearms instructor for all the parks in middle Georgia.

Community Relations

Community relations remained positive. The Keep Macon-Bibb County Beautiful Commission awarded the Monument for its work in keeping the park in good condition. The Macon Heritage Foundation gave the Monument an award for the work we have done on the Visitor Center restoration. The Indian Celebration is the single most popular program that brings large numbers of people to the park and city. 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). 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 \$61,345 in revenue in FY 02. This was a 4% decrease over FY 01. Once again, this decrease is thought to be related to a decrease in school group visitation. The schools are reducing field trips due to budget problems. The Association continued with its excellent support of the park programs with \$20,082 being donated to the park. Even though the revenue was down over last fiscal

year, the amount donated was up. 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.