



THE ARKANSAS POST GAZETTE

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Park Gets Funding for Much-Needed Repairs

Just in the past year Arkansas Post received \$227,000 of much-needed funding for improvements thanks to an initiative that was introduced by the Bush Administration in the Fiscal Year 2002 budget to address the maintenance and resource protection backlog of the National Park Service.

This initiative began by using service-wide databases and condition assessments to fully account for the cost of maintaining all park facilities such as roads, trails, visitor centers, and comfort stations. Once the deficiencies were outlined and a sound business plan was developed, funding was made available and work began throughout the Park Service to reduce the maintenance backlog.

As part of the President's commitment to provide the necessary funds to reduce the drastic maintenance backlog throughout the National Park Service, \$1.1 billion in funding requests were provided nationwide in Fiscal Year 2006. These funds were used for cyclic maintenance, repair and rehabilitation projects, a condition assessment program, construction, and park roads.

The last systematic effort to address facilities and resource management program deficiencies was the Mission 66 program, a 10-year effort designed to achieve its objectives in time for the Service's 50th anniversary in 1966.

At the park level, many milestones have been reached. First, all park assets were recorded using a state-of-the-art software system. Key questions were addressed: What is the condition of each asset? What is the current replacement value? What is required to properly sustain the assets over time? What are the highest priority assets?

Using these tools, the park was able to target specific maintenance needs to request funding. The repair and rehabilitation projects that were approved for funding at Arkansas Post in FY2006 included the replacement of the Visitor Center roof and the installation of a new retaining wall at the Picnic Area.

Both projects were important undertakings to the betterment of the park

and for the improvement of visitor services.

This system has given management better understanding of both the quantity and condition of park assets. Arkansas Post National Memorial will continue to request funding for projects and will be able to assure that today's investments are protected and maintained for the future.

Park Receives \$168,000 for Visitor Center

As part of the NPS maintenance backlog initiative to restore America's parks, the park received \$168,000 for much-needed improvements to the Visitor Center. The roof was replaced and a drop ceiling, track lighting and carpet were installed.

The Visitor Center roof had been plagued with leaks since it was first built in the early 1980s. The problem originated with the four skylights that gave the visitor center its distinct look and whose glass walls let in natural light. Though they enhanced the appearance of the Visitor Center – they proved to be a problematic architectural detail.

The constant leaking during Southeast Arkansas' frequent rain showers lead to serious staining and discoloration of the ceiling, carpet and walls.

(Continued "Visitor Center Repairs" on page 2)



The last of the four skylights – concrete saws and jackhammers were used in the removal.



It took four full-size dumpsters to remove the foam and membrane debris from the worksite.



A new drop ceiling and track lighting were installed.

From the Superintendent...



As you can see from the articles in this issue of our *Gazette*, the park is making great progress

on things that have been quiet for years. We hope that most of our facilities will be back to their appearance and function that they had when they were first constructed. Maintenance of the parks throughout the NPS system has received a good deal of attention and most importantly the necessary funding to bring them up to a sustainable condition. The park's focus has and will continue to be assuring that our visitors and guests both enjoy their stay with us and learn about the contributions of the previous Arkansas Post residents. The history we commemorate and memorialize represents many significant contributions to the development of the attitudes and social systems that we enjoy today. It certainly helps improve the experience when our facilities and grounds enhance the character of the park.

We are currently working to upgrade our exhibits in the visitor center and throughout the park. There are also several projects that will improve our infrastructure (e.g. waste water and air-conditioning) that will not be physically apparent but the systems will work better. While our operating budget has not been increased this year, there is a real expectation that even that aspect of our operations will improve. I do not expect to be bringing on a lot of new staff members, but new programs are in development and activities in the park will become more varied.

The future at Arkansas Post is bright with new facilities, exhibits and partnerships. As an organization, the Memorial has joined with other organizations (federal, state and private) to pool our efforts to tackle issues and condi-

tions that are too big for any one of us to do alone. As proud members of the SEA-IT (Southeast Arkansas Interpretive Team) our staff members work together with eight other agencies to provide educational opportunities for teacher training and class field trips throughout Southeast Arkansas. The park is also a member of the American Colonial Experiences Network which sponsors a cooperative network of Colonial historians (from Universities, agencies, and public and private museums), park managers (National, State and local), and public and private school educators that provide a cooperative arena to interconnect the Colonial historic resources of our nation.

Probably the most exciting of the recent developments at the national level of the NPS is the implementation of the Centennial Challenge. Through this initiative projects will be developed and funded with matching federal funds. The objective of this program is to help parks establish partnerships with non-federal entities to ensure that the parks will be at their best in 2016 (the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the NPS.) There are literally millions of dollars being made available during the next nine years to complete projects that receive financial support from partners – thereby leveraging their donations and making ambitious projects possible. Arkansas Post has some twenty such projects and if and when we find partners to support us, we will request the matching funds.

Of course, all the improvements mean little if you do not come to the park and enjoy them, so I urge you to make plans to spend some time at your park. Whether you come to picnic, fish, hike or study wildlife or history, the park and the staff welcome you. If you have any suggestions for things you would like to see us offer, please let me know and I'll see what we can do to enhance your visit.

Edward E. Wood, Jr.

Visitor Center Repairs

(continued from page 1)

Throughout the years, many temporary fixes had been tried without lasting success.

When the park received the funding, Facility Management Specialist David Evans worked closely with Midwest Region Architect Gary Krysl who formulated a plan and designed the project.

The project called for the removal of the four 10' X 10' X 8' concrete, steel, and glass skylights. This was a challenging task, and after weighing several options, it was decided that the best method of removal would be to use a jack hammer and a concrete saw to cut the skylights into smaller, more manageable pieces. It is estimated that each of the skylights weighed in excess of 30,000 lbs. It took two 40 ft. dump trucks to remove the fragments of concrete, steel and glass.

The next big task was to install a rubber and foam EPDM roofing system and to replace the drainage system. The existing roof was removed – approximately four full-size dumpsters were used to collect the debris of membrane and foam which ranged in thickness from two to 11 inches. Crews worked early in the mornings and in the evenings, sometimes even during the night in order to avoid the extreme heat of the day.

The inside of the Visitor Center also saw many improvements. A drop ceiling and acoustical tiles were installed in the entire exhibit area. The lighting scheme was significantly improved with the installation of a new lighting system. And approximately 5,000 sq. feet of water-stained carpet was replaced. These elements have given the inside of the Visitor Center a fresh and updated look.

This winter's rainfall has put our new roof to the test and it has performed as expected. All artifacts and staff are still dry! We invite you to come see and enjoy the improvements that have been made.

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Retaining Wall at Picnic Area Replaced

Thanks to the NPS maintenance backlog initiative, Arkansas Post National Memorial was able to secure \$59,000 to completely replace the crumbling retaining wall at the Picnic Area.

The Picnic Area is quite popular. Families, civic organizations and school groups use the space to gather, picnic and enjoy the wildlife and natural landscape of Post Bayou. The retaining wall stabilizes the bank, prevents erosion, and provides a sturdy area where visitors can safely approach the water.

The old retaining wall was constructed in 1982 of treated pine planks and supports. Although it was structurally sound, over time it began to deteriorate. Compounding the damage was the natural burrowing behavior of nutria, beaver and muskrat. The wall started showing signs of deterioration as early as 1987. The many attempts at repairing the wall were not long lasting. A more permanent solution was imperative.

Midwest Region Architect Gary Krysl designed a new 270 ft. retaining wall that incorporates more durable materials - plastic and aluminum.

In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, the project was reviewed to ensure that cultural resources such as Civil War or prehistoric artifacts would not be impacted. And since the work would involve changing the shoreline along the bayou, a permit was obtained from the Army Corps of Engineers.



Recycled materials were used to construct the new retaining wall at the Picnic Area.

As soon as the permitting process was completed and a contract awarded, a crew began work. Using a pile driver, sections of recycled plastic sheet pilings were driven four to six feet into the

...investing in infrastructure with quality materials and sound construction will save money in the long run.

ground a foot in front of the old wooden wall. Soil was used to backfill between the new and old walls. An aluminum cap was installed giving the shoreline a uniform edge. The crews finished the job by contouring the landscape, planting grass and spreading straw in order to restore the worksite

to pre-construction conditions.

According to David Evans, Facility Management Specialist, the new wall should outlast the previous wooden versions. "It will be here long after you or I retire. Our grandkids will be using it." Evans believes that investing in infrastructure with quality materials and sound construction will save money in the long run. Durable and earth friendly materials were chosen and the company that was awarded the contract, Jimmy A. Patton Contracting of Little Rock, is experienced in this type of work, having completed pile driving for numerous bridge projects throughout the state.



Old retaining wall was rapidly deteriorating.



Plastic sheet pilings and an aluminum cap give the new retaining wall a cleaner, more uniform look.

Kayaking the Bayou



Photos by Jessica McFadden

The month of March brought us sunny days, a good dose of Spring fever and a sense of adventure. Ready to get out on the water to enjoy the park from a different perspective, two Arkansas Post National Memorial employees were joined by some friends for a short kayaking tour around the Memorial.

Leo Acosta, Resource Management Specialist and Education Coordinator Karla Sigala were joined by Cane Creek State Park Interpreter Jessica McFadden and Park Ranger Matt Conner from

White River National Wildlife Refuge for a day of kayaking out on the bayou.

The kayak, this strangely shaped craft, can be dated back over 4,000 years to the Arctic native peoples of North America, Asia and Greenland. They primarily used the kayak for hunting sea mammals. It was constructed of driftwood frames and lashed together with sinew and covered in seal skins. The word kayak, or “qajaq” appropriately means “hunter’s boat.”

We witnessed first hand why this type of vessel would have been so beneficial for hunting – it quietly and smoothly glides over the water. One can easily approach wildlife without much disruption. We spotted the nesting Bald Eagles, several alligators, turtles and nutria and an array of birds. “I was so excited to see the alligator, though I never expected to see one that large. I was able to get a great picture. Now I have proof,” McFadden said.

Historically, the Post’s strategic location right on the Arkansas River is what made it attractive to the American Indians, trappers and traders, military personnel and entrepreneurs.

Today, kayaking, canoeing, or boating is another way visitors can enjoy the natural beauty of Arkansas Post National Memorial.

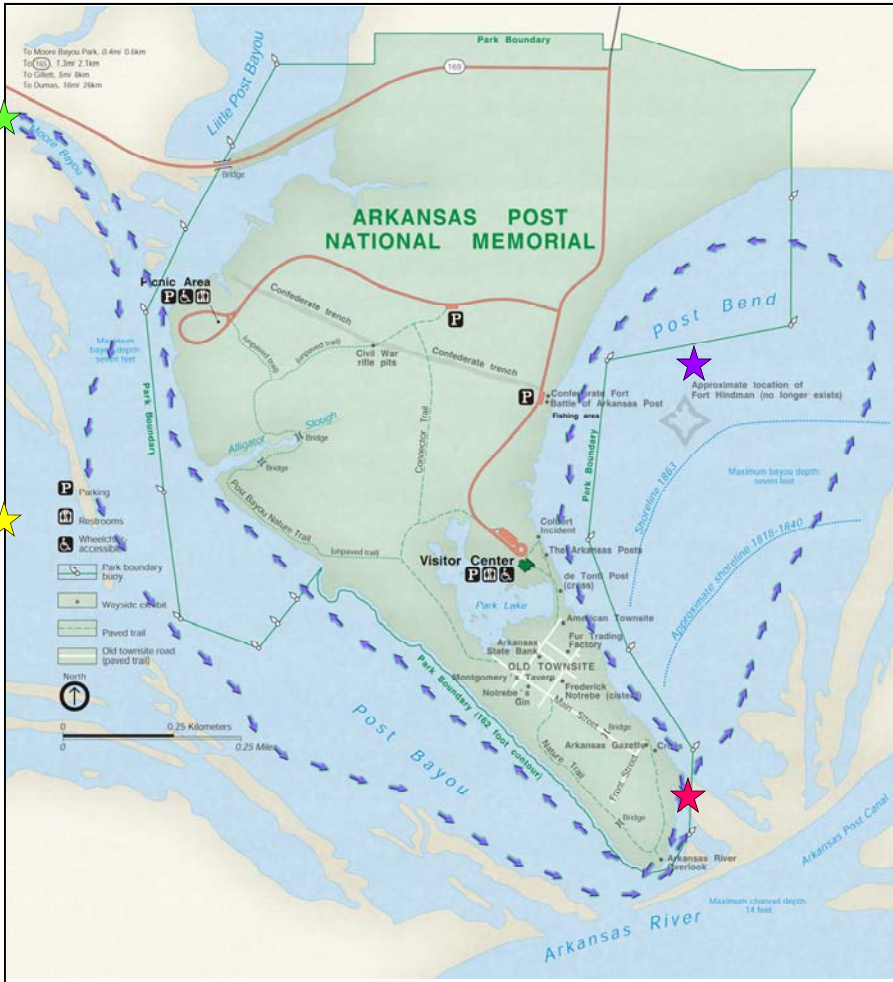
Though the launching or beaching of any vessel is prohibited on park grounds, visitors can easily launch from Moore Bayou, located just before the park entrance.

For more information, please call (870)548-2207.



Ready to launch at Moore Bayou
From left: Karla Sigala, Leo Acosta, Jessica McFadden and Matt Conner

Suggested Kayak/Canoe Route



- ★ Launch from Moore Bayou Park - just 1/2 mile from park entrance.
- Head South. Chances to view wildlife are plentiful. If you have the time, explore the numerous coves along the western edge of Post Bayou.
- ★ Nesting Bald Eagles. Please keep a safe distance.
- ★ Tight fit. Depending on time of year - may have to push or scoot through. Might be impassable.
- Head North. Explore coves on eastern edge of Post Bed.
- ★ You'll be passing right over the location of the Union naval attack on Confederate Fort Hindman.
- On the return trip hug the shoreline for a different view of Arkansas Post.

Things to be cautious of:

The ride can be rough on windy days, especially on the open water.

There **are** a number of very large alligators. Stay aware and keep your distance.

Excellent Wildlife Viewing Opportunities



Nutria

Your chances to view wildlife at Arkansas Post National Memorial are plentiful!

Birders will be especially pleased with the abundance and diversity of resident and migratory birds.

Two of the most visible and popular animals to observe are the nutria and the alligator.

The nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) is a nonnative species that was introduced into the United States in the late 1800s for the fur-farming industry. The nutria population thrives because their only significant predator is the alligator. Future plans are to conduct a study on their impact on vegetation at the Memorial.

The American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) was nearly hunted to extinction in the early 1900s. In 1967 it was listed as an endangered species and the hunting of alligators was prohibited.

Between 1972 and 1984 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife agencies began an aggressive reintroduction program. In Arkansas alone, 2,800 alligators were released into the wild. The program was very successful, alligators recovered and a healthy population was reestablished in Arkansas.

Be ready to see 'gators of all sizes! The large ones are frequently seen sunning themselves on the banks.



American Alligator



School Group Reservation Form

Thank you for your interest in visiting Arkansas Post National Memorial. We believe that together, we can offer students a valuable educational experience. When classroom studies and hands-on experiences are put together, learning comes to life! The National Park Service believes that students can learn to serve as stewards of our national parks by visiting and learning about the natural and cultural resources that each park has to offer.

Here at Arkansas Post National Memorial we hope that students will be able to discover their heritage and learn about the different periods of history that helped to shape Arkansas and the Southeastern United States as we know it today. Learning about the past helps us to better understand our roots and gives us a sense of our past.

We sincerely look forward to your visit.

Contact Information

School Name

Contact Person

School Address

City

State

Zip Code

Daytime Phone

FAX

E-mail

Age/Grade:

Number of Students

Number of Teachers & Chaperones*

**Please note: We require one teacher or chaperone for every 10 students.*

Dates & Times

1st Choice

2nd Choice

Arrival & Departure Times

Submit Form

Please submit form at least two weeks prior to your requested dates.

Mail or fax to:

Arkansas Post National Memorial
1741 Old Post Road
Gillett, AR 72055
870-548-2207 phone
870-548-2431 fax
karla_sigala@nps.gov

Once this form has been received by our office, we will contact you to discuss program options and finalize the date and time.

How do you prefer to be contacted?

Phone

E-mail

2007 Annual Colonial Encampment a Success

Colonial Arkansas Post was a colorful mixture of French settlers, American colonists, slaves, Spanish soldiers, fur traders, merchants, farmers and Indians.

In March, visitors were able to experience life on this colonial river town at the *Annual Colonial Encampment*. They were treated to cannon and flintlock firing demonstrations and tours of a replica keelboat.

Many thanks to the Early Arkansas Reenactors Association (www.arkie.net/~eara) who were on-hand to give visitors a taste of life during the 1700s.

The cannon used for the demonstrations is a working replica of an 18th-century cannon – a six-pound smoothbore that sits in a carriage and is the type used aboard a ship or in a garrison. It is what the Spanish or the French would have used during this time period.

Ranger Ray Hamel is certified in 18th century historic weapons and is the black powder safety officer for the park. During the Encampment he served as the gun captain, supervised the firings and gave insight to visitors on the life of French and Spanish soldiers stationed at Arkansas Post.



18th Century Cannon Demonstration

Photo by Frank Scott, DeWitt Era-Enterprise



Education Programs

Arkansas Post National Memorial is an ideal place to learn about both American and Arkansas history, as well as the environment of the delta region.

On-site Visit

Many schools make Arkansas Post National Memorial one of their yearly school trips. Recently we've had school groups from all over the area including Dermott, Dumas, Portland, Monticello, Stuttgart, Helena, DeWitt and Lake Village.

We invite you to visit the park with your class. There is no entrance fee. We'd like to work with you on customizing your trip to meet your curriculum needs and to develop interesting pre- and post-trip activities for your classroom.

A typical visit to the Memorial includes watching the 22-minute orientation film, *Arkansas Post: Echoes of the Past*, viewing the exhibits inside the Visitor Center and one or two Ranger-led programs that are targeted to meet your current classroom studies. Many also choose to take a short hike and then have lunch at the Picnic Area.

Just fill out the form on Page 6 and give us at least two weeks notice so we can prepare for your arrival.

Please note that Arkansas Post State Museum, just 2 miles away on Hwy 169, also offers educational programming and tours. They now offer free entrance to all schools. They can be reached at (870)548-2634.

Off-site Visits

We understand that a trip to see us is not possible for all. That is why we also offer education programs that come to you! Please call the Education Coordinator at (870) 548-2207 for more information.

Junior Ranger Program

Just because it's summer doesn't mean that kids can't visit with their families and learn a little while they're here! We offer a Junior Ranger Program where kids 6 to 12 years old can earn a Junior Ranger badge and a certificate. Just ask a Ranger for an activity book, complete the required activities and you'll be on your way to becoming a Junior Ranger! You can also become a WebRanger by visiting www.nps.gov/webrangers.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arkansas Post National Memorial
1741 Old Post Road
Gillett, AR 72055

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Arkansas Post National Memorial commemorates the earliest European settlement in the Lower Mississippi valley. First established in 1686, the Post was an important staging point for Mississippi River trade between New France and the Gulf of Mexico. Situated along the Arkansas River, the small settlement here blossomed into the first capital of the Arkansas Territory.

Arkansas Post National Memorial
1741 Old Post Road
Gillett, AR 72055

Phone
870 548-2207

E-mail
arpo_historian@nps.gov

Internet
www.nps.gov/arpo

Visitor Center Hours
Daily 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Grounds and Picnic Area Hours
Daily 8:00 a.m. to dusk

Upcoming Calendar of Events

Saturday, June 9 Kid's Fishing Derby (8:30 a.m. -12 p.m.)

An Arkansas Post tradition! Try your luck at catching the biggest catfish. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will stock the park lake with channel catfish. The derby is open to kids ages 12 and younger. Adults will be permitted to fish in the afternoon.

Wednesday, July 4 Cannon Demonstration (12 and 2 pm)

Celebrate the fourth with a bang! An opportunity to experience a part of colonial history. Two 30 minute demonstrations will introduce visitors to the type of cannon used in our nation's struggle for independence.

Saturday, August 11 Trappers and Traders (2 - 3 p.m.)

The fur trading business brought the first Europeans to this remote wilderness along the Arkansas River. Learn about the early frontier economy of the Post in this visitor center program.

Saturday, October 27 Ghosts of the Past (6 - 9 p.m.)

As the autumn sun sinks below the horizon, the spirits of Arkansas Post will once again emerge from the shadows. Visitors will stroll along the luminary-lined Park Lake Trail in a guided tour as the stories of Arkansas Post's past come to life. Reservations are strongly recommended: (870) 548-2207.