

## State of the Park Reporting



NPS State of the Park (SotP) reports are a communication and education tool. They convey complex park condition information to the general public in a clear and simple manner. This promotes greater awareness of park conditions and needs, strengthening public support for NPS actions that maintain or improve conditions for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.

SotP reports are also a strategic management tool. They help track condition changes over time, assist priority setting as part of routine work planning, and provide information needed to develop a park's Resource Stewardship Strategy.

### Description

SotP reports summarize overall conditions for natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, and visitor experience at individual national park units (parks). Recent park activities and accomplishments and existing/emerging management issues and challenges are also highlighted. In the future, findings across all parks or logical groups of parks can be aggregated to portray a bigger picture of conditions and needs across the national park system.

The reports rely on inventories, surveys, monitoring data, condition assessments, and other forms of data compilations and resource eval-

uations. They also rely on institutional knowledge and professional judgment as provided by park staff and other NPS subject matter experts during SotP workshops and reviews.

A servicewide database enhances transparency and credibility for SotP reporting. It documents key data and information sources relied on for each park's report. This allows online readers to use "drill down" links to learn more about the supporting data and information. It also facilitates future updates to reports while preserving legacy (prior year) reporting information.

## Status

SotP reporting was formally launched as part of the NPS Call to Action (Action Item #28), which established a startup goal of 50 completed reports by 2016. The NPS is on track to meet or exceed this goal. As of May 2014, 11 reports were completed, 21 were in-process, and 31 parks were on a list to develop one by 2016. Regional offices work with the field to determine which parks are interested and ready to be added to the list.

A screenshot of the State of the Park report for Ocmulgee National Monument (Georgia) shows the format for reporting on resources at the park, including a short resource brief at the bottom about archeology.

The longer term goal is for most if not all parks to develop an initial SotP report followed by periodic updates: at least once every five years, more frequently as warranted by new data and information or rapidly changing park conditions.

| History                 |  |                        |   |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|---|
| Indicators of Condition | Specific Measures  | Condition Status/Trend | Rationale   |
| Knowledge               | Sufficient research is conducted to understand significance of site.   |                        | The Administrative History (1985) needs to be updated. All the National Register documentation needs to be updated. A Historic Resources Plan was completed in 1977. List of Classified Structure (LCS) data is current.  |
|                         | Sufficient research is conducted to establish the reasons for park creation and site history.                          |                        | The park still requires a Historic Resource Study and an updated Administrative History.  |
|                         | Research at the appropriate level precedes planning decisions involving cultural resources.                            |                        | The appropriate level of research does not precede planning decisions involving cultural resources.   |
| Inventory               | Percentage of cultural resources listed in appropriate Servicewide inventories, including the National Register.       |                        | 60%—Of the 18 structures entered on the List of Classified Structures for OCMU, 12 are in "Good" condition and 6 are in "Fair" condition. All contributing structures listed in the National Register for the historic district are listed and tracked in the List of Classified Structures (LCS).  |
| Documentation           | Percentage of historic properties with adequate National Register documentation or with Determinations of Eligibility. |                        | 60%—Each of the park's 18 historic structures was documented for the National Register and contributes to the Ocmulgee National Monument Historic District. The district was originally listed in 1976. In 1996 an amendment was submitted to and accepted by the Keeper. Of the 18 structure listed in the LCS, 14 have national significance, 2 have state significance, 1 has local significance, 1 is contributing. |

### Resource Brief: Significance of the OCMU Archeological Collection

Ocmulgee National Monument and related sites are the stewards of one of the largest and most complete archeological collections in the United States, which is very significant to the study of Georgia prehistory and history and to the histories of the Indian tribes who lived in the Southeast. The large workforces involved in the archeological work during the 1930s work relief project excavated huge areas within the two units of the park, as well as major excavations at other prehistoric archeological sites in Georgia. The integrity and research value of these collections has suffered somewhat in the 70 years since the vast majority of excavation was done at the park, but the core of the collections has remained intact, and can be researched both at OCMU and at outside institutions. The NPS Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) has findings aids for all OCMU collections stored at SEAC.

The vast majority of the original project documentation for the excavations is intact and is currently managed at SEAC. Not the least of this documentation is the original catalog cards created by the archeological laboratory in Macon during the 1930s and early 1940s. The cards are the original attempt at collection management by the directors of the early projects. The large workforce assigned to the project through the work relief agencies was not only excavating, but was also put to work analyzing and documenting the resulting collections, and reconstructing ceramic vessels. The WPA Catalog and the field notes and other



## Key Steps

The first step is a targeted review of likely data and information sources to develop draft input for condition reporting. Draft input from park staff and NPS subject matter experts is also solicited and entered into preliminary condition reporting tables.

The next and critical step is a one- to two-day workshop to review, modify, and update the preliminary condition information. Participants include park staff (representing all management divisions) and park-invited

subject matter experts from NPS regional and national offices. The report is often 80-90 percent completed by the end of the workshop and can usually be finalized within one to two months.

After final review and approval by the park, Region, and Washington offices, data and documentation is entered into the database, and the SotP report is posted to a public web site.

## Value and Benefits

Park partners and stakeholders are engaged and interested in park management issues. They want to know "what's going on" with resources and facilities and "what we're doing" to maintain or improve conditions and protect resource values. SotP reports contribute to effective and timely communication of this information to park partners and the public.

For park managers, SotP reports provide a quick synthesis and snapshot of current conditions across multiple program areas: resource stewardship, maintenance and operations, and interpretation and education. The effort draws on data, information, and expertise from many NPS sources and results in a consolidated report-out that helps managers allocate their limited staff and funding to priority park needs.

## More Information

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