

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
Superintendent's Annual Report FY 1995

This past fiscal year, 1995, was exciting and challenging for park personnel in all areas of park operation. Numerous improvements were initiated and completed by the park management team.

The major issues facing the park are: (1) rapid, inappropriate urban development; (2) limited public access to the river; (3) mitigating measures to protect the watershed; (4) budget crisis; (5) conflicting recreational uses of the park resources.

Due to reengineering and restructuring of fiscal and personnel resources, the park's priorities will need to be shifted to facilitate stronger partnerships with federal, state, local agencies, and private organizations. Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) will take the lead in promoting and protecting the scenic, historical, recreational and natural values of the CRNRA and its corridor.

Changes in CRNRA's organization has resulted in improvement of overall park operations and the staff responded professionally in meeting all new challenges.

Water quality continued to be the number one priority at CRNRA during FY 95. The park has worked and met with state of Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta Regional Commission, and other federal and local agencies in developing a GIS system which will address all environmental issues in the river corridor.

Plan for the expected budget reduction in FY 96

In the face of budget crisis (dwindling personnel and fiscal resources), it became essential for the park to focus on projects/tasks that were essential to our mission.

Parkwide operations were reengineered to seek effective and efficient means to reduce park programs without compromising quality. A reengineering strategy plan for the park was submitted to the Field Director on March 23, 1995, at an estimated reduction cost of \$237,000 for the park. The plan identified areas for reengineering for all divisions in the three parks to work cooperatively to enhance budget strategies, consolidation of human resources, sharing of equipment and facilities. Currently a reengineering team of regional and park personnel are working together toward a shared program to enhance budget strategies and human resource efficiencies.

Planned future goals enhancement efforts were also listed in the plan. Substantial personnel savings for all three parks would exceed \$150,000 (elimination of three GS-11/12 positions).

Land exchange programs were initiated in FY 1995. Currently the park is involved in land exchanges that equal to nearly two (2) million dollars in savings to the federal government. The Trust for Public Land assisted the NPS in all the land transactions. (\$2 million savings)

Management is presently working with the park's concessioner to develop innovative strategies for increasing revenues. The concessioner is considering charging fees for areas under their management responsibilities that will include fee collection and donating funds back to the park = \$15,000 savings.

Donation boxes have been purchased and will be installed at parking lots throughout all the units. Projected revenue for the park could exceed \$85,000.

Past accomplishments of 112 park volunteers to assist CRNRA parkwide programs, contributed 1,600 hours to the interpretive services, 320 hours to maintenance activities, 142 hours to resource management and 66 hours to historical research, computer, electronics, and mechanical assistance. \$15,000 savings.

Fulton County youth program which covered summer work program helped the overall operation of the maintenance program by completing planned activities that would have otherwise been completed with ONPS funds. Savings of \$4,000.

We are working with ongoing resource projects with the park's partnerships on joint trail projects within the park. (Friends of Roswell Trails, Hands on Atlanta, SORBA, Telephone Pioneers, Cobb Clean and Beautiful, and scout groups) = \$11,000 savings.

Resource Preservation, Visitor Use and other Park Management Issues (Park Operations)

Working with NBS to write water quality proposal scoping report. Updated resource management plan project requests and issues. Developing a water monitoring funding proposal through the NPS Water Management Division to support EPA's and the state's EPD Chattahoochee Watershed study partnership.

Continue monitoring sedimentation load in tributaries, investigating source problems and working with agencies and communities to resolve issues.

Implementation of new sand and gravel mining operation guidelines went into effect this year requiring all operations to apply for a special use permit. Conducted environmental assessment reviews on three sand and gravel operations through the partnership of the Fish and Wildlife, Corps of Engineers, NPS Mining and Minerals Branch, State Surface Mining Division. Ongoing to bring all operators into compliance with guidelines.

Continuing to work with Corps of Engineers on common concerns, i.e. MOU's on warning sirens locations, wetland studies, sand and gravel mining operations within the corridor. Working with local, city and county governments on common interests on encroachment issues and inappropriate use of park resources and facilities. Active committee member with the city of Roswell for the widening of State Highway 9. Continuing to work with ARC on numerous resource issues affecting the Chattahoochee. Continue working with The Georgia Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, GA Department of Natural Resources, Audubon Society, Chattahoochee Nature Center, Trout Unlimited, The Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeepers, etc.

Conducted river rescue training program that was attended by 25 different agencies (local, federal, and state). How to enforce existing river protection measures. The park's wayside exhibit project is 50 percent completed. (This is to help provide visitor information and orientation and to offer site specific interpretation.)

Developed and conducted partnerships with school systems and the private sector to incorporate NPS and park values--outreach opportunities, adopt-a-school, environmental education in a culturally diverse elementary school in the local community. Conducted two 40-hour teacher environmental education training programs. Continue to provide all employees "opportunities" for job enrichment opportunities that were appropriate for the individual and organization.

Park Cluster Management Accomplishments

Coordinated radio dispatch operation between three Atlanta Metro Parks. Worked with Denver Service Center in establishing an upgraded system and planning for the future that included Olympic needs. Secured outside funding to update the radio system and make projected improvements at MLK and Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.

Met with Chief Rangers from the Atlanta Metro Parks and continue to share resources as needed. Assist with emergency needs for law enforcement, resource management and interpretation activities.

Maintains an active "brokering" profile in dealing with partners, interest groups and local agencies. This has resulted in donations of funds from the Chattahoochee Road Runners organization and assistance in some investigations.

Interpretation cooperation and assistance from local agencies include the Chattahoochee Nature Center, Dunwoody Nature Center, Environmental Protection Agency and Wildlife Federation.

Administration Division

The park's overall expenditures for FY 95 was in line with funds allocated to the park. Meetings were held with administrative

personnel metro-wide on team coordination future working together on joint projects.

Upgrade telephone system to improve efficiency of telephone call managing.

Reengineered one position and continued to process obligations and payments on time.

Maintenance Operations

Attended work shop training for park management and assessment of the river corridor.

Participated in the Department of Natural Resources Division meeting on special funding for Georgia Recreational Trails Program.

Attended Fulton County Youth Program that is still taking place in the park each year. This takes place over an eight week period during the summer. This helped the overall operation of maintenance by completing planned activities that would have otherwise been completed with ONPS funds.

Conducted and participated in walk through inspection which also included inspection of trails. Photo of trail deficiencies were taken and cataloged showing location and work to be performed. This has been used by volunteer groups which also includes the Southeastern Biking Association in helping to maintain park trails with minimum park participation. Approximately one hundred deficiencies have been completed which were noted from FY 94 inspection.

Maintenance staff have been working with Telephone Pioneers of America to complete an accessibility boardwalk in the Cochran Shoals Unit. This boardwalk is approximately 600 feet long and goes through the wetlands. This project will give the park visitor a closer look of the natural habitat that exist next to this busy activity trail. This project is 98 percent complete.

Maintenance is participating in a partnership program with Lever Brothers. This project consists of constructing a boardwalk and overlook in the Jones Bridge Unit. Project will begin January 1, 1996. Southeast Field Area personnel will be used to complete this project during Olympic shoulder months.

Outward Bound, an environmental service corps, will be working with Maintenance to reconstruct seasonal quarters at the Island Ford Unit. Project involves sheet rocking and insulating the sleeping and living areas of the 3,300 square foot building.

Maintenance worked with Boy Scouts to construct two bridges in the Jones Bridge Unit. This bridge span crosses the larger creeks which feed into the Chattahoochee River.

Cyclic projects completed: rehab restrooms (parkwide); new visitor contact center; reroof Headquarters building; rehab trail bridge (Cochran Trail); install sprinkler system (HQ/OP); cleared mill ruins of vegetation.

Cyclic projects submitted: wayside exhibits; accessible overlook at units throughout the park; replace inadequate security system; rehab activity trail; rehab boundary line; radio system rehab; historical ruin stabilization; pave access and parking; rehab informational signs; rehab trails.

Special projects (not funded): rehab seasonal quarters; construct boardwalk and overlook (Jones Bridge); complete boardwalk (Cochran Shoals).

Special project (funded): dam rehab (Sope Creek/Island Ford).

Completed inventory and condition assessment on all park buildings (ICAP).