

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Natchez Trace Parkway
Tupelo, Mississippi 38801

CURRENT INFORMATION

GENERAL: The Natchez Trace Parkway is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A condensed history of the Natchez Trace, general parkway information, and a location map are contained in the Parkway's informational leaflet, free copy of which may be obtained from Post Office Box 948, Tupelo, Mississippi 38801.

PARKWAY LANDS: The lands or rights-of-way for the Parkway are acquired and conveyed to the United States by the three States through which it passes, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. The estimated length of the completed parkway motor road is 445 miles, 311 being in Mississippi, 33 in Alabama, and 101 in Tennessee. Parkway construction and development cannot be undertaken until title for lands has been accepted by the Federal Government. At the present time, title has been accepted for 285 miles of parkway land in Mississippi, 33 miles in Alabama, and 58 miles in Tennessee. Land acquisition for right-of-way is complete in Alabama, nearly complete in Mississippi, and the Tennessee Highway Department is actively engaged in acquiring the remaining lands necessary for parkway construction.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN FEATURES: The American Association of State Highway Officials defines a Parkway as: "An arterial highway for noncommercial traffic, with full or partial control of access, and usually located within a park or a ribbon of park-like development." The Natchez Trace Parkway is an elongated park which includes a high-standard motor road. Right-of-way averages 100 acres for each mile of construction, and would have an overall width of 825 feet if uniformly applied. However, the width varies from 400 to 700 feet, with a wider right-of-way at areas of historical, scientific, or recreational value. The Parkway commemorated the Natchez Trace, a frontier road prominent in the development of the Old Southwest, and makes available to the leisurely traveler many points of interest relating to the history of the Old Trace, nearby Indian sites, and nature areas.

Commercial vehicles are excluded from the parkway motor road. However, pickup trucks and other vehicles not exceeding 3/4-ton rated capacity are permitted to travel on the Parkway when used solely for transportation of persons or for recreational purposes. Access to the Parkway is limited in keeping with its character as a route for interregional passenger car traffic and recreational use. The principles of limited access, grade separations for cross roads, long curves and easy grades, adequate sight distances, and no commercial traffic all serve to protect the motorist by increasing the safety features of the parkway motor road. The safety features inherent in grade separations and limited access are emphasized in various reports of the Committee on Engineering of the President's Highway Safety Conference.

