

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.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM: Construction of the parkway road by private contract, under supervision of the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads, was begun in the summer of 1937, and grading of 105 miles was accomplished in the four years before World War II. At present 311 miles are paved and in public use, and 6 miles are under contract in Mississippi. Paved units include: 12 miles in Adams and Jefferson Counties, Mississippi, extending northward from U. S. 61 at Selma, between Natchez and Fayette; 54 miles in Claiborne and Hinds Counties, Mississippi, extending from 5 miles south of U. S. 61 (just south of Port Gibson) northeasterly to the Raymond County road, 3 miles south of U. S. 80 at Clinton, Mississippi; 166 continuous miles running northeasterly from Interstate 55 (just north of Jackson) to U. S. Highway 45, 5 miles north of Tupelo; 79 continuous miles in Alabama and Tennessee, from U. S. 72 in Alabama (11 miles east of Iuka, Mississippi) to the Lewis-Maury County line, 7 miles north of Tennessee Highway 99. The northernmost access to the Parkway is 27 miles west of Columbia, Tennessee by Tennessee Highway 99, and about 5 miles north of Meriwether Lewis Park. This section crosses the Tennessee River (Pickwick Lake) via a mile-long bridge at the Colbert Park area.

As paving of the parkway road sections is completed, the related park facilities are also being developed, including historic sites, wayside signs and exhibits, nature trails, and picnic and campground areas. Construction and maintenance costs are borne by the Federal Government. Usually, grading, drainage, construction of bridge structures and surface treatment type paving require about 1-1/2 years, or two construction seasons. The programming of construction depends on the availability of rights-of-way and construction funds.

SUMMARY

	<u>Miss.</u>	<u>Mileages</u>		<u>Total</u>
		<u>Ala.</u>	<u>Tenn.</u>	
Construction completed	232.19	21.33	57.22	310.74
Under construction	6.07	-	-	6.07
ROW acquired and held by States. . .	24.32	-	8.05	32.37
ROW accepted by N.P.S. and ready for construction	47.67	12.1	-	59.77
ROW yet to be acquired by States . .	1.10	-	35.72	36.82
TOTALS	311.35	33.43	100.99	445.77