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# Ocmulgee National Monument

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## Long Range Interpretive Plan

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# Table of Contents

## Part 1

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Park Environment</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Purpose &amp; Significance</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Primary Stories</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Audiences</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Audience Experiences</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Issues</b>	<b>22</b>

## Part 2

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Actions Related to Targeted Audiences</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Actions Related to Desired Experiences</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Actions Related to Partner Roles</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Actions Related to Research</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Actions Related to Collections</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Actions Related to Staffing/Training</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Implementation Charts</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Participants</b>	<b>44</b>

## Appendix 1

<b>Tangibles and Intangibles</b>	<b>46</b>
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## Appendix 2

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>48</b>
-----------------	-----------

## Appendix 3

<b>Centennial Goals</b>	<b>49</b>
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# **Part 1**

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## **The Foundation**

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# Introduction

## **The Long Range Interpretive Plan**

A Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) provides a 5-10 year vision for a park's interpretive program.

A facilitator, skilled in interpretive planning, works with park staff, partners, and outside consultants to prepare a plan that is consistent with other current planning documents.

Part 1 of the LRIP establishes a foundation on which proposed personal services and interpretive media can be built. It identifies themes, audiences, desired audience experiences, and issues that interpretation should be designed to address. It offers a brief history of planning relevant to interpretation and a summary of existing interpretive media.

Part 2 recommends a mix of services and facilities that will achieve the interpretive goals and mission described in Part 1. It includes implementation charts that assign responsibilities and offer a schedule for progress.

When appropriate, appendices provide more detailed discussions of specific topics.

The completed LRIP forms a critical part of the more inclusive Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP).

## **The Planning Process**

The process used to produce an LRIP proceeds step-by-step with a series of workshops that build on the results of previous discussions.

The first workshop focuses on Part 1: the Foundation—basic ideas that provide a firm footing for park management decisions. Discussions blend the past with the present, focusing on the

immediate challenge of designing a compelling interpretive program that reflects current and likely conditions and appeals to targeted audiences.

The second workshop selects the best interpretive tools and techniques—everything from publications, exhibits, and ranger-led programs to media releases and interpretive sales items—to complete the Foundation, recommending specific actions linked to focused goals.

A final workshop decides who will take the lead in accomplishing each action item and when it will become a priority for action.

Park staff then assume responsibility for reviewing and updating the plan annually.

# The Park in 2008

## Existing Conditions

During planning, and before recommending new projects and programs, it is important to review an inventory of existing interpretive programs, facilities, and media; have some sense of media condition; and suggest additional resources that might be needed to preserve the status quo.

Park staff prepared the following summary:

**Visitor Center:** The visitor center is located in the upper level of a historic structure and is maintained in good condition with new exhibits and information desk scheduled for installation in 2008. The public rest rooms need rehabilitation.

The movie “Mysteries of the Mounds” needs minor revision. It needs to be upgraded to high definition with a new television for HD viewing. Estimated cost is \$2,500.

**Discovery Lab:** The Charles Fairbanks Discovery Lab (hands on learning center) was rehabbed about six years ago. It is presently in good condition. Current educational practices preclude use as intended, and the lab is virtually unused.

**Gift Shop:** The Ocmulgee National Monument Association Gift Shop is located just off the rotunda of the visitor center. Park staff provide sales assistance to the public. The association business manager stocks the shop. Gift shop shelves are more than 20 years old.

**Wayside Exhibits:** The park has six modern wayside exhibits and six older (1970s) interpretive signs. All waysides are past time for rehabilitation. The park presently has a project to rehab the four principal waysides.

**Trails:** Park trails are maintained by staff and by the Student Conservation Association. They consist of a mixture of surfaces

from concrete sidewalks to mowed grass pathways. Several trail bridges are past due for replacement. Several trails have the new NPS Visitor Information Signs; the others have a mixture of past types.

Road: The park road has no interpretive media (i.e., signs, literature). The road is nearing time for resurfacing.

Park Brochure: The brochure will be reprinted in the near future. The park map will be revised.

Park “Slim Jim”: This handout was funded by a park friend who is no longer in the area. The existing supply is virtually exhausted.

Site Bulletins: The park has 38 site bulletins. All are locally produced by staff and most conform, to some degree, with the NPS format. Subject matter is widespread, from basic information regarding the park themes to subjects which interested the staff writing the material. The length of the bulletins also varies greatly from one page to multi-page. It has been suggested that many of our bulletins would not be acceptable as original documents by current U.S. college standards. Site bulletins are used primarily to supplement information presented orally by staff. Students doing projects are big users.

Traveling Trunks: The park has an inventory of trunks with educational materials that are loaned to schools. At this time the trunks require up-dating before they can be used.

Website: The park website conforms to NPS standards, but is not as helpful as the older site that it replaced. The cooperating association does not have a website. If it did, the park could link to that site and monitor content.

Earth Lodge: The Historic Structures Report for the Earth Lodge suggested remodeling the viewing platform and the park concurs. The audio program needs to be replaced. A wayside exhibit also would be useful. Earth Lodge is the park’s major feature and it is poorly interpreted at the present.

Park Handbook: The park does not have a handbook. Two or three versions of such a book exist, not counting the original book (G.D. Pope, Jr., GPO, 1956), but none ever made it to a publisher.

Other Published Works: For many years the park shop carried the Funeral Mound Report by Charles Fairbanks (Mercer University Press, 1981). At one time the cooperating association published it. The shop also regularly carried a title called Ocmulgee Archeology edited by David J. Hally (University of Georgia Press, 1994) as well as a classic The Southeastern Indians by Charles Hudson (University of Tennessee Press, 1976). The cooperating association can't seem to keep these books in stock.

“All Things are Connected”: This much we know, virtually all references to this poem have been removed from the site, except for the sign near the entrance, one little seen wayside, and in the minds of the staff. Formerly it was heard in the Earth Lodge and in our film. This might need some thought. The poem itself is on a wayside, one of the so-called Girl Scout waysides (because they paid for and did the layout). If this sign were relocated to a more prominent location, more visitors would see it and therefore the connection could be remade.

# Purpose & Significance

## Park Creation

Ocmulgee National Monument illustrates the dual path to entry into the National Park System; the park has both legislation and an executive order in its creation history.

On June 14, 1934, Congress authorized establishment of Ocmulgee National Monument but provided no funds to purchase land. All lands had to be donated.

In 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Proclamation #2212 establishing Ocmulgee National Monument, followed by Proclamation #2493 (in 1941) adjusting the park's boundaries.

In 1991, Public Law 102-67 enlarged the park by accepting an 18.6 acre parcel known as Drake Field.

## Park Purpose and Mission

Although the actions taken to create Ocmulgee National Monument specifically mention preservation of the "Old Ocmulgee Fields," they provide minimal additional guidance to contemporary managers looking for either congressional or presidential intent.

So, in addition to the language contained in the legislation that created the park, staff have written a mission statement that also embraces the dual conservation and use mission associated with any unit of the National Park System and the education mission included in the Historic Sites Act of 1935.

"... to promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purposes of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." *The National Park Service Organic Act, Aug. 25 1916*

“Develop an educational program and service for the purpose of making available to the public facts and information pertaining to American historic and archeologic sites, buildings, and properties of national significance. “ *Historic Sites Act of 1935*

The current park Mission Statement reads:

The mission of the National Park Service at Ocmulgee National Monument is to protect and preserve lands known as the “Old Ocmulgee Fields,” and promote understanding of and an appreciation for the 12,000-year continuum of Native American-related cultural and natural resources.

Recognizing the contemplative and sacred character of Ocmulgee, some LRIP workshop participants also suggested that park resources serve an inspirational purpose.

Finally, given the large-scale archeological effort associated with the park, and the huge collection of artifacts (over 2 million), Ocmulgee has and continues to serve as fertile ground for research and scholarship.

## **Park Significance**

Park significance identifies those aspects of an NPS unit that make it nationally significant.

Workshop participants suggested that Ocmulgee National Monument is nationally significance because . . .

- The site’s story spans perhaps the longest chronology of any NPS unit—more than 12,000 continuous years of human history. Within that continuum are periods of cultural sophistication and population density associated with 10 mounds including the only known existing spiral mound, the restored ceremonial Earth Lodge with original clay floor,

prehistoric trenches, an early colonial trading post, and Civil War-era earthworks.

- Arguably, Ocmulgee is the most significant archeological find east of the Mississippi River—a sustained effort over two decades that changed the way field archeology is practiced. Certainly it is the site of one of the largest archeological digs in North America, one of the largest digs associated with the Works Progress Administration (WPA employed over 800 including an all-female African American crew), and one of the larger collections of recovered artifacts (over 2 million) possessing tremendous research potential.
- Ocmulgee illustrates extensive and complicated connections to other sites from several perspectives—architecture, cultural practices, ancestry, and trade.
- Ocmulgee is considered sacred by contemporary Creek Indians who believe it is their place of origin and the site of their first permanent settlement.

# Primary Stories

All national parks have a variety of stories to tell. Primary stories, however, are closely linked to a park's national significance. They merge the park's tangible and intangible resources into statements that express meaning and relevance to contemporary audiences (see Appendix 1 for workshop-generated lists of tangibles and intangibles).

Bottom line, when interpretation focuses on these primary stories, audiences better understand why the park is a national treasure included in the National Park System.

During an earlier workshop, park staff and partners worked with a facilitator from the NPS's regional office to develop a set of theme statements. Those themes were discussed again in order to ensure that they matched the purpose and significance statements being developed for this LRIP.

Those combined discussions led to the following:

## **Lessons of Long and Varied History**

*The many stories associated with Ocmulgee National Monument –the daily lives and interrelationships of those who lived along the fall line of the Ocmulgee River as well as the cultural and architectural imprint of 12,000 years of occupation—all help us to understand how societies develop, evolve, gain, and relinquish ascendancy.*

This storyline focuses on the continuum of history that makes Ocmulgee distinctive. Unlike some parks that emphasize a specific time, date, or lifetime, Ocmulgee spans more than 12,000 years, several societies, and countless individuals including connections to contemporary Indians. Ocmulgee's ethnologic evolution serves as a time capsule of native occupation as well as Georgia history.

This storyline also poses questions, often without simplistic answers, about how societies develop, evolve, progress, and decline. These are universal questions that apply across time. Sites like Ocmulgee can function like case studies, suggesting a variety of answers, from multiple perspectives, subjective as well as objective. They help us understand what is important to individuals and groups in other times as well as our own. Ocmulgee offers insights in most aspects of life—patterns of trade, religion, family structure, recreation, acquisition of basic necessities, and many others.

On a more individual basis, this storyline explores daily routine and helps bring alive the park’s earthen structures and the many objects contained in the park’s large collection. It interprets daily activity by discussing the use and function of places and artifacts.

“It occurred to me that a measure of a civilization should not be how well it stands, but how well it falls.”

Craig Childs, *The Secret Knowledge of Water*

### **Revelations from the Earth**

*The pioneering archeology undertaken at Ocmulgee not only linked the site’s material culture to its rich human history but also enriched our understanding of the complexity of life in the past and suggested ways that our lives connect to both historic and contemporary Indian societies.*

This storyline focuses on the size, scope, and importance of the archeology that revealed so much about Ocmulgee’s inhabitants. As the first designated Traditional Cultural Property east of the Mississippi River, Ocmulgee provided archeologists with opportunities to develop and apply new investigative techniques. This storyline opens the door to interpretation of how we know what we know about the past, and specifically invites scrutiny of the huge collection of artifacts found on site.

The results of decades of scholarship on the structures, landscapes, artifacts, and cultures associated with Ocmulgee, shared via interpretive media and programs, help contemporary audiences not only uncover meaning and relevance in the past but also see connections to more recent events and modern Indian cultures.

### **Multiple Meanings—Sacred and Set Apart**

*Ocmulgee has multiple meanings—modern day Indians view the site as sacred, scholars consider it a valuable window to the past, and contemporary visitors find quiet and solitude, a place for contemplation set apart from many urban influences.*

This storyline invites audiences to think about Ocmulgee from more than a single point of view. Different groups value Ocmulgee in different ways. It is sacred to Creeks who consider it the birthplace of their culture. Scholars recognize the spiritual nature of the site but also understand its research and educational potential. Many visitors to the site, including a large number of Macon-area residents appreciate the site’s pleasant, peaceful surroundings and find it an inviting, natural place to walk.

This storyline encourages audiences to recognize why Ocmulgee is important to them and respect the perspectives, perhaps quite different, that others bring to the site.

As with all interpretation, but particularly with this storyline, enlisting audiences in the preservation of a site, through appreciation of value, is a primary objective

### **A National Treasure**

*As a unit of the National Park System, Ocmulgee National Monument helps protect the nation’s natural and cultural heritage, models the best stewardship practices, encourages pride in place, and seeks emotional and intellectual connections across time.*

This storyline places Ocmulgee into context as a unit of the National Park System. It explores what designation means and how it influences the park, park development, and park

management. By interpreting Ocmulgee as national park, this storyline illustrates not only the importance of preservation but also specific strategies of protection. In the process, it reminds audiences that national parks are not only sources of local pride but national treasures.

# Audiences

In order to design the most effective interpretive programming and select the best interpretive techniques, it is critical to identify intended audiences, both existing audiences who actively use site interpretive programs AND potential audiences that well-planned interpretation might encourage.

The term audience is used purposefully in this document. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, all parks communicate with both on-site visitors as well as others who have not or cannot “visit” a park’s sites. Increasingly, for example, the Internet is a source of both information and interpretation. While many who use their computer as a gateway to a site or region will eventually visit, that is not universally true. In addition, for reasons of time and budget, outreach and school programs might be conducted off-site. News and magazine articles as well as television and radio programs reach millions who fall outside the technical definition of “visitor.” In addition, any park associated with an urban setting has a significant number of neighbors who live within the region and should be the recipients of interpretive information and programming.

## **Snapshot of Existing Audiences**

Participants at the LRIP Foundation workshop provided a snapshot of Ocmulgee’s existing audiences.

- Currently, annual on-site visitation averages around 130,000 including many repeat visitors. This total is well below park capacity.
- Visitation is spread over the calendar—the park has no significant peak or off seasons.
- There are, however, spikes in visitation associated with the park’s three primary special events (Earth Day, Macon’s Cherry Blossom Festival, and the park’s Indian celebration).

- Many repeat visitors bypass the visitor center, using the park for a casual outing, particularly on weekends when visitation is higher.
- Family groups frequently visit Ocmulgee.
- Recreation use, mostly walkers and hikers, is increasing and extension of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail to the park will reinforce this trend.
- School groups, primarily 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, take advantage of the park’s educational programs and often visit the site along with more limited numbers of college classes and home school students/parents. School visitation is in decline for a variety of reasons including costs, classroom demands on teacher time, changing learning standards, testing requirements, and visit logistics.
- As a national park, Ocmulgee attracts some visitors who want to have their “passport” stamped.
- International visitors are mostly European.
- Some organized bus groups, announced and unannounced, come to the park.
- Seniors—alone, in families, and on bus tours—are evident in the park, and some have mobility challenges that restrict the areas they can visit.

“Individuals understand places differently depending on how they have experienced them, and this experience in turn is shaped by their social characteristics such as age, gender, race, class, and physical condition.” David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*

## **Potential Audiences**

Given the fact that the park is currently underutilized, workshop participants felt that a well-designed interpretive program could reach out successfully to other audiences including: metro Atlanta audiences; the Macon community including church groups; more casual, weekend users; minorities; audiences reached via Convention and Visitors Bureau promotions; audiences courted by the local Chamber of Commerce; and cyber audiences reached via the Internet and virtual media.

## **Target Audiences**

Workshop participants then considered both existing and potential audiences and selected those groups who might benefit most from additional interpretive attention over 5-10 years. In priority order, those targeted audience include:

- Atlanta metro audiences
- Families
- School/educational groups
- Macon community residents
- International, minority, and cyber audiences

## **Accessibility and Audiences**

The NPS is committed to developing a comprehensive strategy to provide people with disabilities equal access to all programs, activities, services, and facilities. As part of that effort, Harpers Ferry Center developed “Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media” and made them and other resources available via their website ([www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/index.htm)).

As the park revises or rehabilitates existing interpretive programming, or develops new interpretive media, staff should consult these guidelines.

# Audience Experiences

While primary stories focus on what audiences will learn as a result of interpretive programs and media, audience experiences explore what audience will do. What types of activities will reinforce site significance? How might the design of interpretive programs and media invite audience involvement and, as a result, reinforce certain key elements of the park's stories?

John Falk and Lynn Dierking, in *The Museum Experience*, argue that visitors are strongly influenced by the physical aspects of museums, including architecture, ambience, smell, sound, and the feel of the place.

## Workshop Discussions

As is the case at all units of the National Park System, the staff at Ocmulgee National Monument are committed to providing accurate and high quality interpretive programs.

In addition, workshop participants identified several other types of audience experiences that would enhance interpretive effectiveness and help all on-site audiences feel welcome.

Specifically, over the next 5-10 years, the park will focus on providing opportunities for audiences to . . .

- Explore more of the park, getting beyond the visitor center to the Earth Lodge, mounds, and perhaps even the river.
- Grasp the complexity of 12,000 years of history and the differences represented by different eras of occupation. Understand the unevenness of change. Understand the role played by technology in change.
- Visualize Ocmulgee, alive with activity, at different historical time periods and, as possible, participate in

historical activities. Connect with the people and societies of the past by experiencing not just what made them different from today but how they were similar. See how lives changed from era to era, and how no single description is adequate for all time periods. See artifacts discovered on site and place them into the context of everyday life.

- See and understand the connections among park resources, specifically the spatial relationships of the mounds, open fields, trenches, etc. and the size, complexity, and effort required to produce the societies represented by different periods of occupation.
- Connect with the natural world and the role that nature historically played in the lives of Ocmulgee's native peoples and Macon's current residents.
- Use technology to learn about the park's stories.
- Experience solitude, discover places for reflection as well as for celebration.
- Share discoveries with others.
- Take something home that will serve as a reminder of the visit and represent site significance.
- Connect this site with the National Park System and the mission of the NPS.

# Issues

In order to develop the most effective interpretive programs and interpretive media, park staff must address the realities of the real world, including issues that are closely linked to providing desired audience experiences.

During a scoping trip designed to lay the groundwork for this LRIP, park staff identified several issues that the planning process should address. During the initial LRIP workshop, a larger group of park staff and partners revisited that list and suggested several additions as well as priorities.

## Priority Issues

Specifically, the LRIP will attempt to help the park with the following:

- Underutilization of the park and park resources by a variety of audiences (see above) including local/regional residents and educational groups, and visitation patterns that tend to bypass the visitor center
- Name recognition and reintroduction of the park to the local and metro Atlanta communities via the installation of already planned new exhibits in the visitor center and the extension of local trail networks
- Perceived lack of relevance of the park's long continuum of history to contemporary audiences including some educational groups and local populations
- Partner opportunities that will help ease staffing and funding limitations, as well as multiple visions of how the park fits into local quality of life and tourism

## Other Issues

Several other issues deserve attention and, as feasible, should be addressed via interpretive programming. They include:

- The diversity inherent in the long continuum of the park’s story— 12,000 years of history including contemporary Indian societies.
- The sacred, contemplative nature of the site.
- The current appearance of the site, largely devoid of the human activities that would have enlivened Ocmulgee during occupation by native peoples.
- Development around the park and preservation/interpretation of resources spread over thousands of acres including the Lamar Unit of the park.

## Service-wide Initiatives

In addition to local issues, the National Park Service has announced several service-wide initiatives that individual parks should monitor.

- The Future of America’s National Parks: Summary of Park Centennial Strategies (see Appendix 3 for a list of goals)

“National Park Service leaders . . . will review and update their centennial strategies each year in support of a second century of preservation, conservation, and enjoyment” “The Future of America’s National Parks”

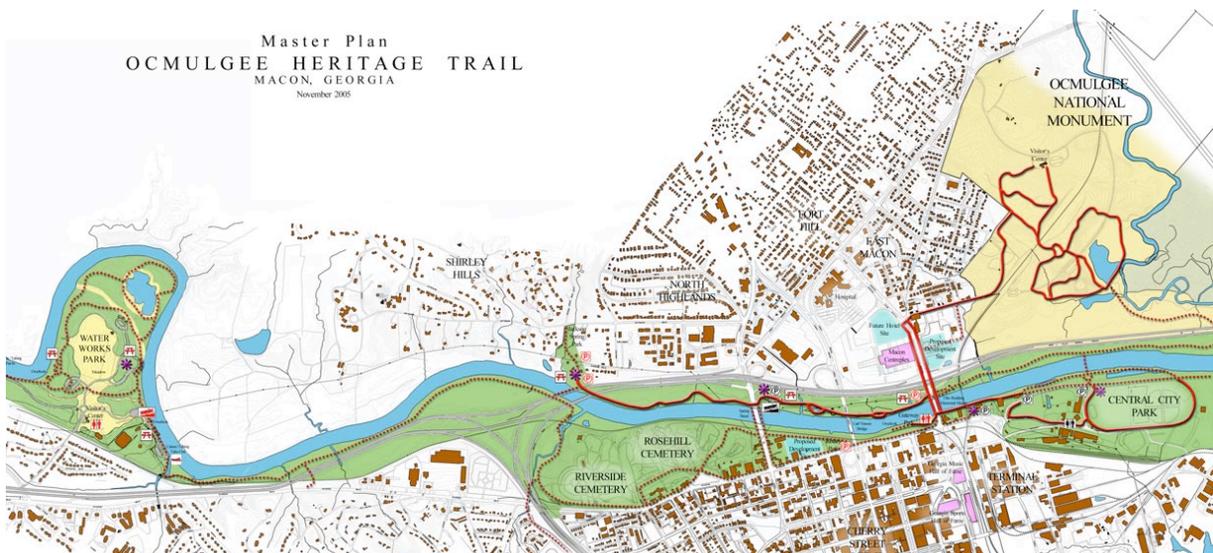
- Interpretation and Education Program Business Plan
- Interpretation and Education Renaissance Action Plan

In each case, these initiatives contain goals that often mesh with local objectives. As calls for servicewide projects are announced, this LRIP will provide fertile ground for initiative ideas.

## Local Initiatives

At least two local initiatives could have an impact on the park during the life of this LRIP.

Certainly, development of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail will bring additional visitors to and through the park and could help connect park visitors with the Ocmulgee River.



In addition, park staff are involved with discussions spearheaded by the Macon Chamber of Commerce that have the potential to reposition the park within the local tourism community. However, many of the ideas associated with this vision (facilities and access) are more appropriately addressed via general management planning and are not specifically interpretive decisions.

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## **Part 2**

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# **Taking Action**

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# Introduction

Part 2 of the LRIP describes the actions that park staff and partners will take, over the next 5-10 years, to build on the Foundation described in Part 1.

This plan is intended to be a dynamic document that responds to changing conditions. Assuming that the staff revisit the plan's contents on a regular basis, they can make adjustments, remove accomplished tasks, and elevate new projects in priority.

Each action item included in Part 2 is bulleted in the plan narrative and listed in an implementation chart near the end of this document. Next to each action included in the chart is the title of the person(s) responsible for making sure the item moves forward, and the fiscal year or years when progress is expected.

It is critical to note that staff also can and should take advantage of new opportunities as they surface. No plan can foresee every eventuality. As structured, this LRIP provides a framework for considering interpretive proposals as they emerge. The consensus developed in Part 1 can function as a yardstick against which new ideas are measured. The overall architecture of the plan, based on Foundation discussions, provides priorities that can help move interpretive programming in a consistent direction despite changing times and the emergence of new ideas.

## Organization of Part 2

Part 2 is organized to reflect priorities identified by park staff. Specifically, this part of the plan focuses on actions related to the park's desire to:

- Reach out to targeted audiences, specifically Macon and Atlanta metro residents. Within those audiences, new interpretive programming will consider the needs and appeal to families and educators/students.

In addition, park staff will consider ways to sharpen park identity among these targeted audiences and, as new programming is put in place, consider new ways to market the park connecting it to the National Park System in the minds of potential visitors (particularly those from the Atlanta metro area).

Finally, park staff will look for ways to demonstrate the relevance of the park and park stories to local residents.

- Provide additional experiences that make full use of the park, particularly those resources outside the visitor center. Additional new interpretive programming and media will help audiences visualize the site when it was occupied by native peoples, connect individual park features in ways that portray the size and complexity of society as it evolved over time, and explore the nuances of the archeological legacy of the site.

To help accomplish these experiential goals, workshop participants encouraged greater use of personal services (paid, partner, and volunteer) and wayside exhibits.

- Expand and refine the roles played by existing and new park partners.

# Actions Related to Targeted Audiences

Park staff identified several actions that will help attract metro Atlanta and Macon residents and families. Specifically staff will:

- Work to develop depth in staffing, either paid or volunteer, that will ensure that one interpreter is on duty when the park is open. Given the difficulty inherent in recruiting and sustaining a substantial volunteer base in the Macon area, this staffing goal is dependent on sustained funding for staff.
- Continue to create an annual calendar of events with targeted audiences in mind, carefully linking the events to the primary stories included in Part 1. Staff will prepare the calendar well in advance by committing to a basic program that can be delivered even in austere times. In order to publicize the calendar widely, staff will develop a version that can be posted, and easily updated, on the park's website.
- Create a marketing strategy to promote this calendar of events. That strategy will include preparing marketing packets of information, developing personal rapport with local/regional tourism and media professionals, tracking deadlines for submission of publicity, and monitoring criteria for publication and distribution of information via media outlets.

Marketing for local residents will communicate the variety of interpretive programs offered—particularly for families.

Marketing for metro Atlanta audiences will highlight the park's primary features—extensive Indian mounds and artifact collection, escape to natural solitude, availability of short trails, and proximity to a full day of activities.

- Develop a park tour, either led by a ranger/volunteer or delivered via a form of non-personal service. Ensure that the tour is available whenever the park is open to the public.

Consider the use of technology, perhaps a cell phone tour or podcasts, and enlist a partner(s) to help fund tour preparation and distribution.

Develop the necessary media to support a park tour—a map or changes to the official park brochure, signs along the route, etc. Begin with an inexpensive brochure insert that can be easily changed based on visitor feedback and staff evaluation. Make sure that all exterior media are coordinated interpretively, i.e., that they focus on telling each of the primary stories and provide the desired audience experiences.

- Plan and present a regular, predictable schedule of family-oriented activities linked to the park’s primary stories. These activities will include hands-on projects with a take-away product whenever possible (a craft item, piece of refrigerator art, toy, gift for a parent, etc.).

Staff might initially adapt activities from the park’s existing lesson plans and couple the activities with a mini-tour of the park that might encourage a return visit.

In order to sustain the program, recruit and train volunteers to assist.

Build on the program’s success by offering more variety—nature-oriented programs, morning and evening programs, etc.

- Restart field trips to Lamar.
- Sponsor park history days and invite local residents to share photos or remembrances of past visits to the site, as well as festivities or commemorations from park history. Use these materials, plus information from park files, to create a temporary or changing exhibit illustrating how local residents viewed the park over time.

- Strengthen contacts with local organizations, or expand contacts with additional organizations. Offer on- and off-site programs to groups like residents of Davis Homes (adjacent public housing) and Boys and Girls clubs. Provide publicity about the park and park events to local churches and extend invitations to visit and use the park.

Funding is needed, perhaps from local grants and organizations, to sustain these programs.

- Reevaluate and revitalize the park's Indian Festival, based on current realities (including costs) and recent experiences with recruiting theme-related participants.
- Actively but strategically participate in festivals and special events sponsored by others. Look for events attended by targeted audiences.
- Review the park's website to ensure easy access to information about special events and regular activities. Consider a page on the website focused on volunteers as well as a page designed for educators.
- Develop specific jobs for volunteers and partners, recruit new volunteers, and provide training/orientation.

Park staff also identified educators as a promising targeted audience. To reach them, staff will pursue a multi-pronged strategy, over the life of this plan, to re-establish contact and develop new contacts in the local educational community: Specifically staff will:

- Review existing lesson plans to see what is needed to meet new Georgia state standards. Recruit local educators to help adjust these lesson plans or to prepare new materials. Discuss how to provide CEUs (continuing education units) to teachers who assist. Determine the scope of educational outreach including whether to be reactive or proactive in approach. Locate funding and staffing to sustain future outreach commitments.

- Actively seek opportunities to work with the several colleges located in the Macon area.

Contact local schools of education and discuss cooperative efforts including changes to lesson plans, development of new hands-on/minds-on activities, student volunteers/interns, etc.

Sustain ties with individual faculty while formalizing institutional links/agreements where appropriate.

- In conjunction with local educators, consider new forms of teacher training, perhaps modeled on the previously-offered Ocmulgee University.
- Re-evaluate use of the park's Discovery Lab, which no longer meets its original goals. Consult a variety of possible constituents, including educators and community groups, about future use of the lab space as well as the significant collection of educational materials housed in the lab.
- Discuss ways for teachers to use the new visitor center exhibits and how to introduce what the exhibits have to offer as an educational tool, perhaps via a scavenger hunt. Locate funding for extended teacher workshops, if recommended.
- Revitalize the park's traveling trunks. Assess contents using primary stories as a yardstick, consider expanding into science topics, acquire new materials, evaluate distribution, and locate sustainable funding. Develop a tool for educators to evaluate the effectiveness of the trunks. And develop a funding strategy that will sustain the cost of continuing the program.
- Review and revise the educational CD developed by the park, based on more extensive feedback from educators.

# Actions Related to Desired Experiences

In order to develop interpretive media that provide the desired audience experiences, workshop participants discussed the essential elements of a basic park visit (what the park is and what it has to offer), those features that need to be “connected” to illustrate the complexity of the Ocmulgee story, and the intangible elements that suggested contemporary relevance.

“Must see” physical elements include the visitor center’s exhibits and audio visual program, the Earth Lodge, and the Great Temple Mound. The Trading Post site, Funeral Mound, and Cornfield Mound add complexity to the story.

Less tangible interpretive threads like the importance of beliefs and religion, the realities of daily life, the development of social organization and social interactions, the rise and decline of civilizations, the role of technology vis a vis “progress,” the importance of geography (including the river) to settlement patterns, and the process of discovery—how we know what we know about the past—all lie at the core of the Ocmulgee story. Because each of these intangible storylines transcends time, race, and gender they can help to establish relevance for targeted audiences.

In order to sharpen the park’s identity, park staff will:

- Develop a strategy to include “Indian Mounds” as an integral part of the park’s name, officially if possible, but unofficially if necessary. In other words, increasingly the park will be referred to as Ocmulgee Indian Mounds National Monument.
- Implement the NPS messaging strategy whenever appropriate. That will result in increased use of the NPS arrowhead as well as servicewide design guidelines for signs, printed materials, etc.

- Help audiences understand the multiple points of view that influence contemporary opinions about the significance of the park and park use. Native peoples, for example, will see the park through a different lens than some archeologists. Staff will build those multiple voices into interpretive media, particularly into the content of wayside exhibits and park tours.
- Use then and now photos of the park to illustrate how the park's appearance, park use, and perhaps park visitation have evolved over time.

In order to increase interpretation throughout the park, make connections among park features, help audiences understand the complexity of the park's stories, and help illustrate the site as occupied over time, park staff will:

- Develop a comprehensive wayside exhibit plan, and ensure that it complements the park tour recommended above. The existing wayside exhibits will be reviewed as part of the new plan and revised, replaced, or left in place as appropriate. Audio has been used in the past, and should be evaluated again during the wayside planning process. As the plan is implemented, careful, respectful attention needs to be paid to exhibit installation.
- Develop a new trail map for the park. Although specifically for those who use the park for recreation, this map will help connect park features and place them into a thematic, interpretive framework. Experiment with distribution strategies for the map (inside the visitor center, outside throughout the park, online, at special events, etc.).
- Re-stress the "all things are connected" message by re-introducing it into interpretive media and explaining how it relates to the site.
- Consider some form of shuttle system that will move groups beyond the railroad overpass (busses will not fit under the

railroad and some groups cannot or choose not to walk to more distant park features).

In order to help contemporary audiences understand the relevance of Ocmulgee stories, park staff will:

- Ensure that all new employees and volunteers learn to integrate the park's universal messages (see intangibles listed in Appendix 1) into interpretive programs and media.

Although the new exhibits in the visitor center use the latest in contemporary display techniques, park staff still need to:

- Upgrade the park's film to high definition. Begin by getting a firm estimate of the upgrade cost and then find the necessary funding.

# **Actions Related to Partner Roles**

Although limitations on staffing and budget might ease in the future, the park's significant interpretive potential will dictate an on-going need for formal and informal partnerships. In order to maximize the roles that partners will play in providing interpretive programming, park staff will:

- Expand the use of volunteers (both the number and tasks accomplished). With that goal in mind, staff will prepare a list of expanded or new tasks, recruit and train additional volunteers.
- Prepare a Scope of Sales that will guide the inventory of the cooperating association and identify additional sales items (see "Existing Conditions" in Part 1).
- Ask the cooperating association to upgrade both the appearance of their sales area and their inventory of sales items to conform to the visitor center exhibit redesign and reflect the park's primary stories.
- Ask the cooperating association to consider developing a website.
- Develop a fund raising strategy that pairs interpretive projects with potential donors.
- Continue to work with NewTown Macon on area trail development and complementary interpretive and wayfinding materials.
- Strengthen communication with NewTown Macon and the Macon Convention and Visitors Bureau so that all promotional materials, particularly publications, are accurate and reflect park goals. In particular, revise the map provided by others so that it directs visitors to the primary entry of the park.

# **Actions Related to Research**

The park needs additional research or background information in order to accomplish certain action items included in this LRIP.

Specific projects include:

- Gather information on Georgia's standards of learning for school lessons and compare to the park's educational materials and programs.

# **Actions Related to Collections**

While there may be a variety of actions contained in the park's collections management plan, the LRIP planning process specifically identified the need to support interpretation by:

- Continuing the park's photo scanning project.
- Rehabilitating the park's library, including locating funding for new book acquisitions to keep the collection up-to-date.

# **Actions Related to Staffing & Training**

In order to accomplish elements of this plan, park staff need to take the following actions relative to staffing and training:

- Submit staffing requests that ensure an interpreter is available when the park is open.
- Create a list of duties/jobs that can be filled with volunteers. Recruit for those new jobs, and design training for volunteers recruited to provide new services.
- Ensure that all new employees and volunteers learn to integrate the park's universal messages (see intangibles listed in Appendix 1).
- Develop an individual development plan for the park's new interpretive ranger.