



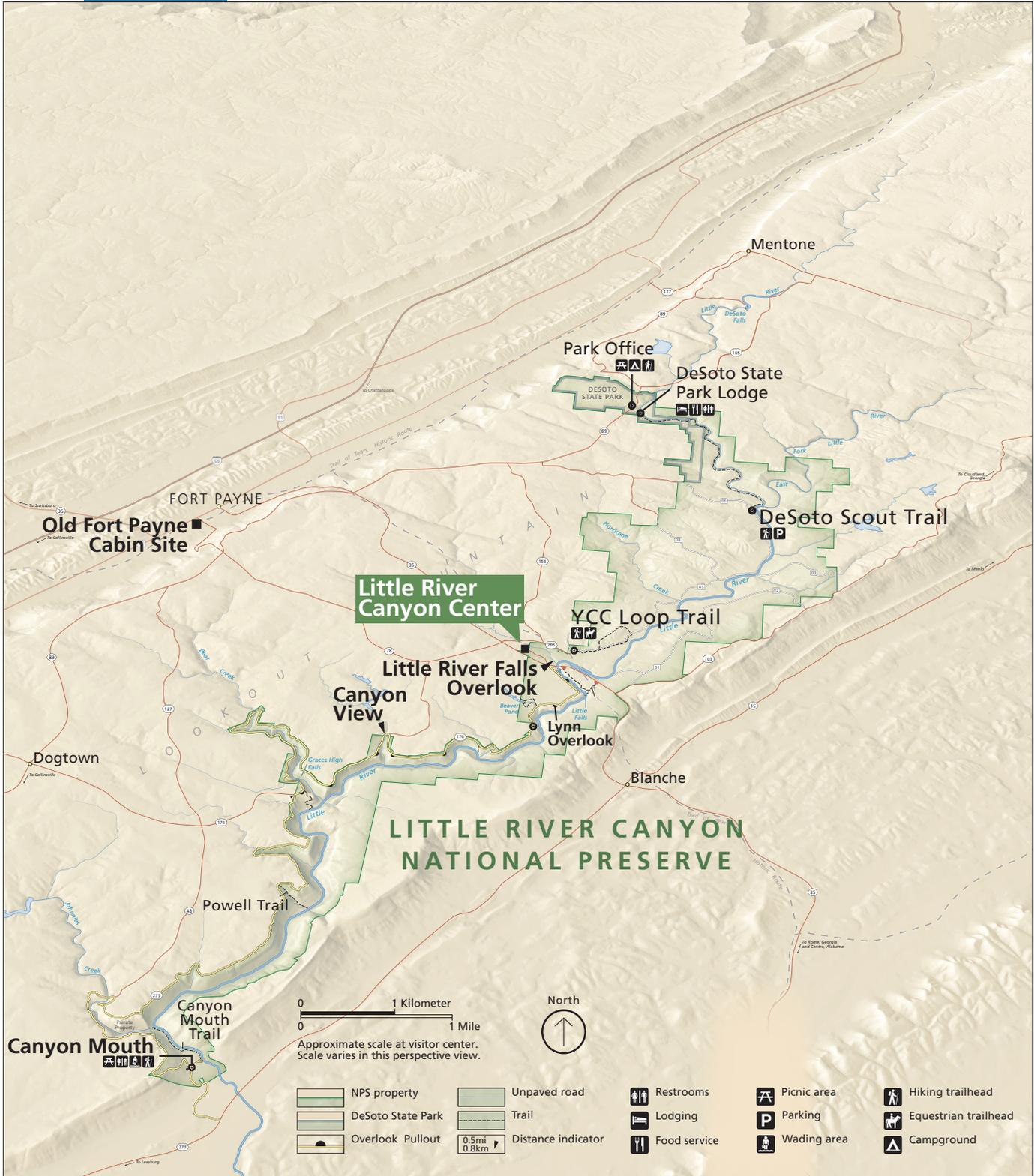
Foundation Document

Little River Canyon National Preserve

Alabama

August 2016





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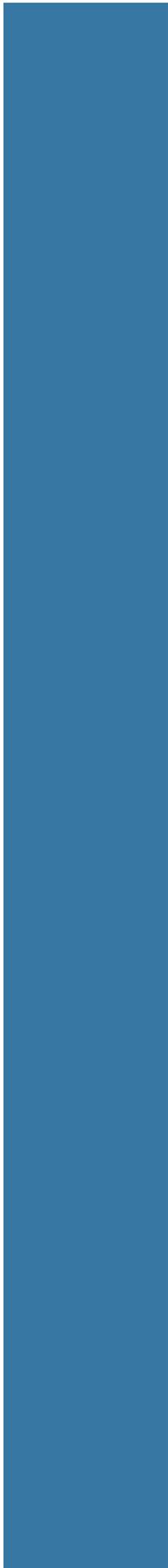
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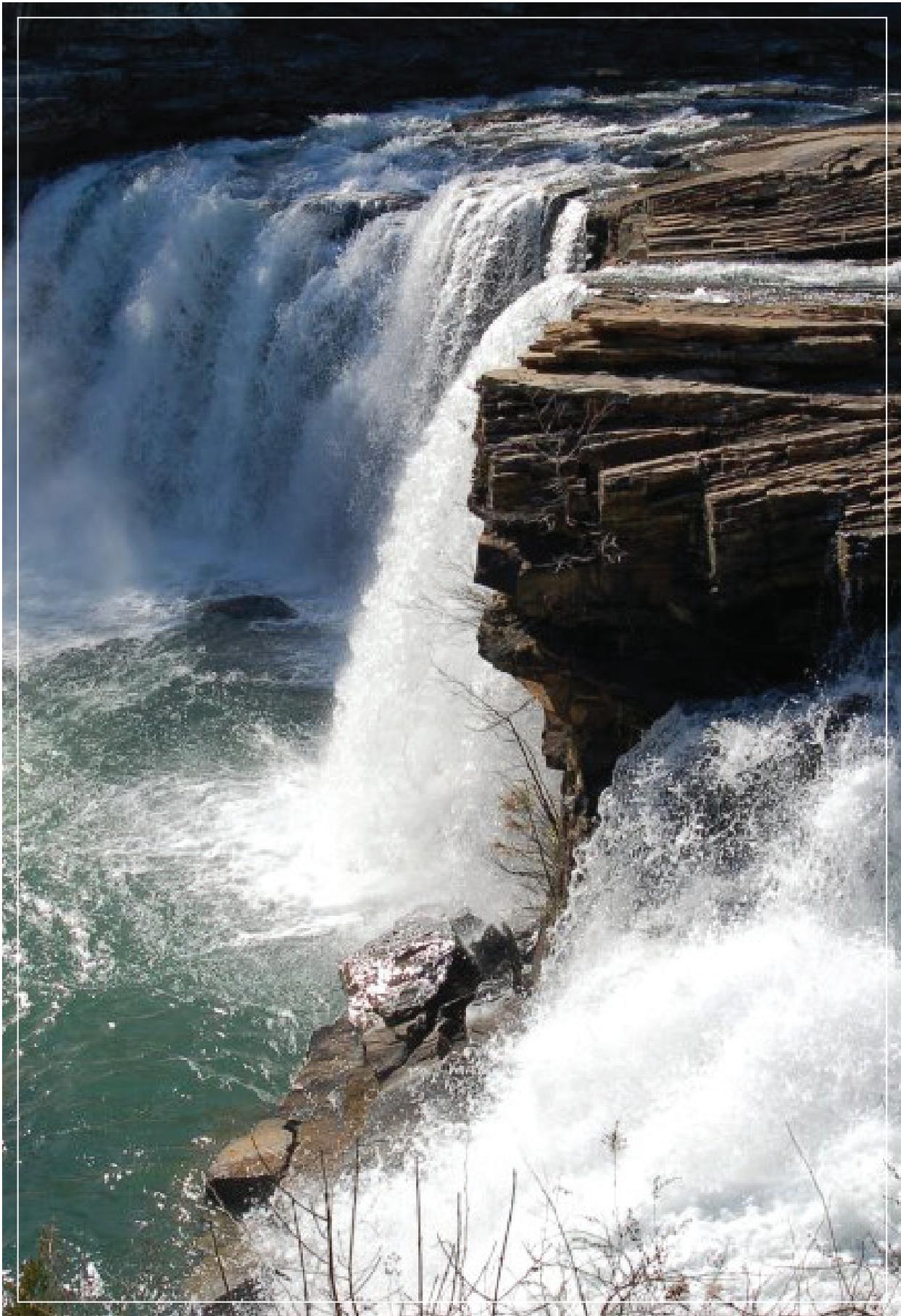
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Mission of the National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The NPS core values are a framework in which the National Park Service accomplishes its mission. They express the manner in which, both individually and collectively, the National Park Service pursues its mission. The NPS core values are:

- **Shared stewardship:** We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.
- **Excellence:** We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.
- **Integrity:** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Tradition:** We are proud of it; we learn from it; we are not bound by it.
- **Respect:** We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. While numerous national park system units were created prior to 1916, it was not until August 25, 1916, that President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act formally establishing the National Park Service.

The national park system continues to grow and comprises more than 400 park units covering more than 84 million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These units include, but are not limited to, national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House. The variety and diversity of park units throughout the nation require a strong commitment to resource stewardship and management to ensure both the protection and enjoyment of these resources for future generations.



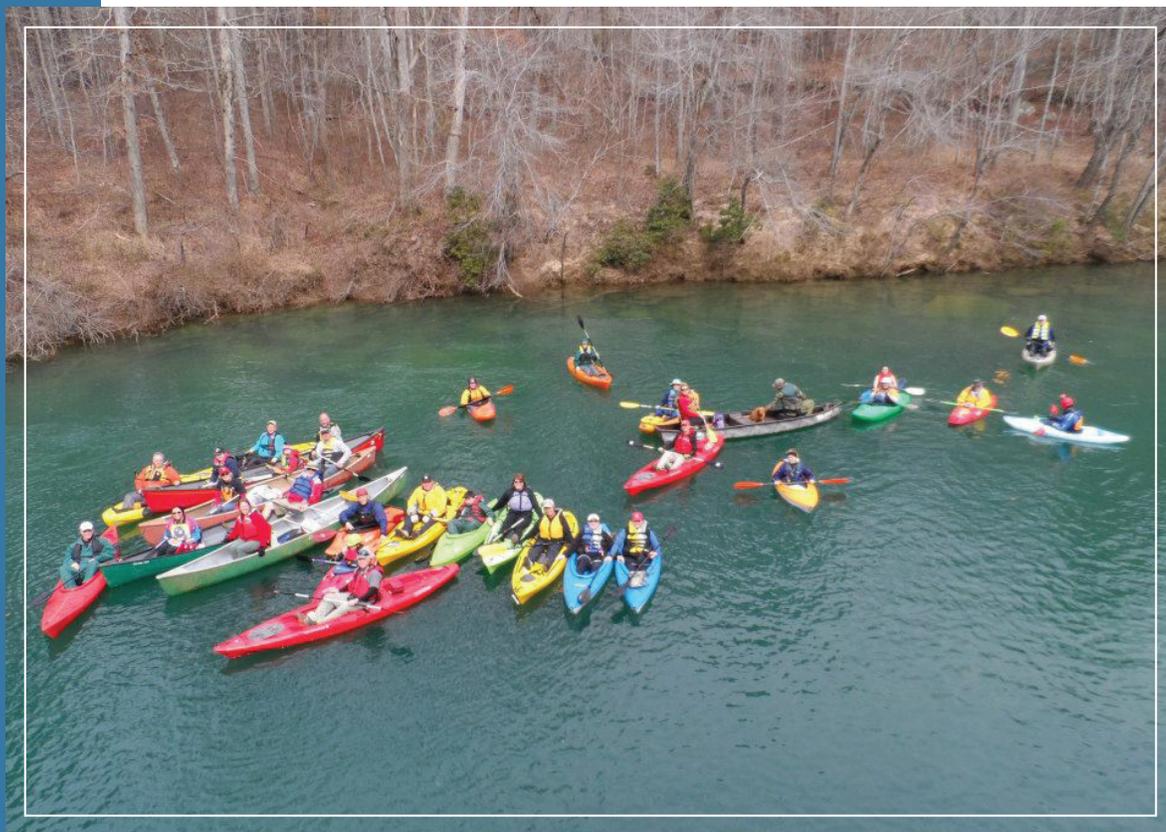
The arrowhead was authorized as the official National Park Service emblem by the Secretary of the Interior on July 20, 1951. The sequoia tree and bison represent vegetation and wildlife, the mountains and water represent scenic and recreational values, and the arrowhead represents historical and archeological values.

Introduction

Every unit of the national park system will have a foundational document to provide basic guidance for planning and management decisions—a foundation for planning and management. The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the park as well as the park’s purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, other important resources and values, and interpretive themes. The foundation document also includes special mandates and administrative commitments, an assessment of planning and data needs that identifies planning issues, planning products to be developed, and the associated studies and data required for park planning. Along with the core components, the assessment provides a focus for park planning activities and establishes a baseline from which planning documents are developed.

A primary benefit of developing a foundation document is the opportunity to integrate and coordinate all kinds and levels of planning from a single, shared understanding of what is most important about the park. The process of developing a foundation document begins with gathering and integrating information about the park. Next, this information is refined and focused to determine what the most important attributes of the park are. The process of preparing a foundation document aids park managers, staff, and the public in identifying and clearly stating in one document the essential information that is necessary for park management to consider when determining future planning efforts, outlining key planning issues, and protecting resources and values that are integral to park purpose and identity.

While not included in this document, a park atlas is also part of a foundation project. The atlas is a series of maps compiled from available geographic information system (GIS) data on natural and cultural resources, visitor use patterns, facilities, and other topics. It serves as a GIS-based support tool for planning and park operations. The atlas is published as a (hard copy) paper product and as geospatial data for use in a web mapping environment. The park atlas for Little River Canyon National Preserve can be accessed online at: <http://insideparkatlas.nps.gov/>.



Part 1: Core Components

The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the park, park purpose, significance statements, fundamental resources and values, other important resources and values, and interpretive themes. These components are core because they typically do not change over time. Core components are expected to be used in future planning and management efforts.

Brief Description of the Park

Located on the boundary of De Kalb and Cherokee Counties, in the rugged yet verdant landscape of northeast Alabama, Little River Canyon National Preserve (the preserve) was established in 1992 by Public Law 102-427 to protect the landscapes of the Little River Canyon. The authorized boundary of the preserve currently contains 15,288 acres, 11,042 acres of which are federally owned and managed. Protected within the preserve boundary are the spectacular Little River Canyon, the pristine Little River, and a number of rare and threatened plant and animal species. Together with the adjacent DeSoto State Park, Little River Canyon National Preserve provides abundant scenic views and varied recreational opportunities for locals and visitors alike.

The preserve sits at the southern edge of the Cumberland Plateau, a distinct physiographic region just to the west of the main Appalachian Mountain uplift. Composed of sandstone and other sedimentary rocks, this area has been eroded by water over millions of years to create a landscape of ridges, outcroppings, and gorges known as a 'dissected' plateau. Little River Canyon is one of the most spectacular landforms in this region, carved into the flat top of Lookout Mountain and reaching depths in excess of 600 feet in some sections. It is one of the deepest canyon systems east of the Mississippi River and the deepest in the state of Alabama.

The sculptor of this canyon is the Little River, which is notable for flowing for most of its length atop a mountain as well as for possessing very high water quality. The river flows from its headwaters in northwestern Georgia to Weiss Lake in a mostly unimpaired manner. To protect this water quality, scenic, recreational, and fish and wildlife values over time, the Little River and its tributaries receive the protections afforded under section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and are also designated as Outstanding National Resource Waters by the state of Alabama.

Little River Canyon is home to an unusually diverse set of plant and animal species, owing to its location at the confluence of the Cumberland Plateau and Gulf Coastal Plain physiographic regions, as well as a number of different microhabitats created by the rugged physical features of the canyon. Some species found in the preserve are notable for their limited geographic distribution, such as the Kral's water-plantain (*Sagittaria secundifolia*), while others such as the green pitcher plant (*Sarracenia oreophila*) are listed as federally endangered.

The preserve offers a diverse range of recreational opportunities, including swimming, fishing, climbing, and world-class whitewater paddling, with the latter reaching peak season in winter and spring. Canyon Rim Drive (Alabama State Road 176) hugs the west rim of Little River Canyon, offering scenic drives and connecting a series of overlooks that offer views into the canyon, and Cherokee County Road 275 continues along the west rim down to the canyon mouth. Hunting and trapping are permitted by legislation within the preserve, and these activities are managed by the National Park Service in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Park Purpose

The purpose statement identifies the specific reason(s) for establishment of a particular park. The purpose statement for Little River Canyon National Preserve was drafted through a careful analysis of its enabling legislation and the legislative history that influenced its development. The park was established when the enabling legislation adopted by Congress was signed into law on October 21, 1992 (see appendix A for enabling legislation). The purpose statement lays the foundation for understanding what is most important about the park.

LITTLE RIVER CANYON NATIONAL PRESERVE protects and provides for the enjoyment of the scenery, ecology, and history surrounding one of the Southeast's deepest canyons carved by the nation's longest mountain-top river.



Park Significance

Significance statements express why a park's resources and values are important enough to merit designation as a unit of the national park system. These statements are linked to the purpose of Little River Canyon National Preserve, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Statements of significance describe the distinctive nature of the park and why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. They focus on the most important resources and values that will assist in park planning and management.

The following significance statements have been identified for Little River Canyon National Preserve. (Please note that the sequence of the statements does not reflect the level of significance.)

1. Little River Canyon is the deepest canyon in Alabama, and it is one of the deepest in the southeast United States. It contains the highest waterfall in the state, and is resplendent with sheer rock walls, cascading waters, and ever-changing seasonal views.
2. With exceptional recreational opportunities, Little River Canyon provides world-class whitewater paddling, internationally renowned climbing, and more than 8,000 acres of public lands open to hunting, fishing, and trapping.
3. The Little River is the only river in the United States that forms on and flows almost its entire length along a mountain top. Little River's high water quality supports biological diversity, exceptional aquatic riparian communities, and rare and endemic species. This mountain-top river is designated as an Alabama Outstanding National Resource Water.
4. The location of the preserve along the southern limits of the Cumberland Plateau contributes to a rare assemblage of plants and animals, including the endangered green pitcher plant.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values (FRVs) are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. Fundamental resources and values are closely related to a park's legislative purpose and are more specific than significance statements.

Fundamental resources and values help focus planning and management efforts on what is truly significant about the park. One of the most important responsibilities of NPS managers is to ensure the conservation and public enjoyment of those qualities that are essential (fundamental) to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. If fundamental resources and values are allowed to deteriorate, the park purpose and/or significance could be jeopardized.

The following fundamental resources and values have been identified for Little River Canyon National Preserve:

- **The Little River.** The high water quality along the 27 miles of the river's course supports a wide diversity of aquatic communities that include insects, fish, and vegetation, as well as a variety of recreational opportunities.
- **The Canyon.** The Little River Canyon is one of the deepest and most extensive canyon systems in the southeastern United States, the largest in Alabama, and contains many waterfalls including Grace's High Falls, the state's tallest. This canyon system, carved out by the Little River, has created extraordinary and exceptional views of rugged rock outcroppings and the opportunity to look into the "belly" of Lookout Mountain. These views are enjoyed year-round by visitors and are exemplified at Wolf Creek, Canyon View, Crow Point, Eberhart Point, and Little River Falls overlooks.
- **Canyon Recreation.** The river and canyon have formed a wild and rugged landscape that allows for a range of peaceful and challenging recreational opportunities. The river supports world-class whitewater paddling and the canyon supports exceptional climbing opportunities. The opportunity for hiking, swimming, and fishing in natural areas away from city life are exemplified at Martha's Falls and Canyon Mouth.
- **Native Plants and Wildlife Communities.** The preserve supports three globally rare and unique plant communities, one of which includes the largest number of federally protected populations of green pitcher plants. Another community includes Kral's water plantain, which only exists in two other watersheds in the world. The preserve also supports habitat for many federal and state listed species including bats, bears, and salamanders, as well as a number of endemic species, which are species found only in this localized area.
- **Backcountry Experience and Landscape.** The backcountry area of the preserve is the largest public land area in northern Alabama available for hunting, fishing, and trapping. This quiet area of the preserve also provides opportunities for solitude as well as multiple types of recreation including horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, flatwater paddling, and jogging. The backcountry area of the preserve also protects important habitats and a watershed for wildlife, flora, and humans alike.

Other Important Resources and Values

Little River Canyon National Preserve contains other resources and values that are not fundamental to the purpose of the park and may be unrelated to its significance, but are important to consider in planning processes. These are referred to as “other important resources and values” (OIRV). These resources and values have been selected because they are important in the operation and management of the park and warrant special consideration in park planning.

The following other important resources and values have been identified for Little River Canyon National Preserve:

- **Cultural Resources.** The cultural resources located within Little River Canyon National Preserve represent more than 10,000 years of human habitation and history in the region. There are more than 150 archeological sites within the preserve, including rock shelters with archeological materials. A portion of a roundup route for the Trail of Tears passes through the preserve and into Fort Payne. Remnants of historic structures, such as bridge abutments and homestead locations, are also found within the boundaries of the preserve.



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all park significance statements and fundamental and other important resources and values.

Interpretive themes are an organizational tool that reveal and clarify meaning, concepts, contexts, and values represented by park resources. Sound themes are accurate and reflect current scholarship and science. They encourage exploration of the context in which events or natural processes occurred and the effects of those events and processes. Interpretive themes go beyond a mere description of the event or process to foster multiple opportunities to experience and consider the park and its resources. These themes help explain why a park story is relevant to people who may otherwise be unaware of connections they have to an event, time, or place associated with the park.

The following interpretive themes have been identified for Little River Canyon National Preserve:

- **The Canyon.** With its rugged towering rock bluffs and the roaring river below, the Little River Canyon offers a place of solitude, beauty, and awe, showcasing the power of water and its ability to dramatically change the landscape forever.
- **Recreation.** The preserve is a place where visitors seek the invigoration of whitewater boating, the challenge of sheer wall climbing, and the solitude of hiking into the depths of the canyon; visitors seek a type of recreation and discover rejuvenation that only nature can provide.
- **Little River.** Little River is a source of life and renewal, providing habitat for a high diversity of benthic invertebrates, and good water quality for flora and fauna thriving in the corridor.
- **Plant and Animal Communities.** The preserve provides niche habitats for ecological communities such as Appalachian bogs and Cumberland sandstone glades, and is a home for rare plants and animals to survive.
- **Cultural Resources.** Visitors are inspired by stories of survival and great adversity as they discover and explore the artifacts and history of native peoples and early settlers who have lived on the lands, sourced life from Little River, and enjoyed the beauty of the canyon.
- **Backcountry.** The wildness of the backcountry area allows visitors to interact with the landscape and develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the natural scenery, forests, and habitats of northeastern Alabama.



Part 2: Dynamic Components

The dynamic components of a foundation document include special mandates and administrative commitments and an assessment of planning and data needs. These components are dynamic because they will change over time. New special mandates can be established and new administrative commitments made. As conditions and trends of fundamental and other important resources and values change over time, the analysis of planning and data needs will need to be revisited and revised, along with key issues. Therefore, this part of the foundation document will be updated accordingly.

Special Mandates and Administrative Commitments

Many management decisions for a park unit are directed or influenced by special mandates and administrative commitments with other federal agencies, state and local governments, utility companies, partnering organizations, and other entities. Special mandates are requirements specific to a park that must be fulfilled. Mandates can be expressed in enabling legislation, in separate legislation following the establishment of the park, or through a judicial process. They may expand on park purpose or introduce elements unrelated to the purpose of the park. Administrative commitments are, in general, agreements that have been reached through formal, documented processes, often through memorandums of agreement. Examples include easements, rights-of-way, arrangements for emergency service responses, etc. Special mandates and administrative commitments can support, in many cases, a network of partnerships that help fulfill the objectives of the park and facilitate working relationships with other organizations. They are an essential component of managing and planning for Little River Canyon National Preserve.

Special Mandates

Little River Canyon National Preserve’s authorizing legislation states that the preserve will be administered in accordance with laws generally applicable to units of the national park system. Besides general direction in these laws that resources be protected and appropriate visitor uses be accommodated, Congress requires that “The Authorization of activities shall be construed and the protection, management, and administration of these areas shall be conducted in light of the high public value and integrity of the national park system and shall not be exercised in derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established, except as may have been or shall be directly and specifically provided by Congress” (92 Stat. 163, 16 USC 1a-1).

- **Hunting and Fishing Regulations.** Little River Canyon National Preserve’s enabling legislation allows for hunting and trapping within the unit in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. The legislation provides that the times and places for hunting within the preserve will be established by the National Park Service in consultation with the State of Alabama and adjacent landowners. Public safety and resource protection are the primary considerations of such consultation. Little River Canyon National Preserve shall permit hunting, trapping, and fishing on lands and waters under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior within the preserve. The preserve may designate zones where, and establish periods when, the activities described above will not be permitted within the preserve for reasons of public safety, administration, fish and wildlife habitat, or public use and enjoyment. And they may restrict hunting in areas within the preserve that are adjacent to the boundaries of the preserve where the restriction is necessary or appropriate to protect public safety.

- **Little River as a National Wild and Scenic River Section 7(a).** This designation was considered in the special resource study prepared for Congress prior to designation of the preserve. Even though eligible and suitable to be designated a wild and scenic river, Congress chose the national preserve option, which set aside a larger area than normally allowed by wild and scenic river legislation. Congress specifically included reference to section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to afford the segment of Little River in the preserve the same protection afforded rivers in the national wild and scenic river system. By virtue of it being a unit of the national park system and the application of section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Little River within the preserve has the protection of a wild and scenic river. This section protects Little River from federal or federally assisted water resource projects that would adversely affect the river's qualities.
- **Land Acquisition.** The preserve's legislation also establishes a boundary and prohibits expansion of that boundary without the approval of Congress. No lands may be acquired without the consent of the owner. During congressional hearings concerning the establishment of the national preserve, testimony indicated that acquisition of lands owned by Alabama Power Company and by the State of Alabama were integrally tied together in the formation of the national preserve. It was determined that both these properties must be acquired in order for the preserve to become a viable unit of the national park system.

The enabling legislation (the Little River Canyon National Preserve Act of 1992, Public Law 102-427) contains several references to land protection and land acquisition issues.

Section 2(a), (b): The preserve is established to protect and preserve the natural, scenic, recreational and cultural resources of the area in DeKalb and Cherokee Counties, Alabama, and to provide for the public enjoyment of the resources.

Section 3(a) (1), (2): The preserve shall be administered in accordance with this Act as well as the Organic Act approved August 25, 1916, and the Historic Sites Act approved August 21, 1935.

Section 3(c): Section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act shall apply to that portion of Little River that flows through the preserve. The determination of value of the lands, waters, and interests in lands shall not be affected by this application.

Section 3(e): If lands within DeSoto State Park are acquired by the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary), at the request of the State, the Secretary shall enter into a cooperative agreement for the State to continue management of the lodge and other facilities within DeSoto State Park. The cooperative agreement shall provide for the management of these facilities by the state in a manner consistent with similar operations elsewhere in the national park system.

Section 3(g): Upon acquisition of the Alabama Power Company lands within the boundaries of the preserve by the United States, the agreement between the Department of the Interior and the company to protect the green pitcher plant will be extinguished.

Section 4(a) (1), (2), (3), (b) (1): The Secretary has the authority to acquire lands, waters, and interests in lands and waters within the preserve by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange. The Secretary may not acquire lands without the consent of the owner.

All State or political subdivisions of the State lands must be acquired by donation or exchange. Negotiations are to begin immediately after publication in the *Federal Register* of the boundaries of the preserve.

Section 4(b) (3): Land acquisition shall be completed not later than two years after the Act, subject to the availability of funds.

Section 4(c) (1), (2): The Secretary shall make an environmental audit performed on any property proposed to be acquired available to the property owner. Any such audit shall become part of the title transfer of the property.

Section 4(d): No future boundary increases are authorized without Congressional authorization or the consent of the property owner.

Administrative Commitments

Name	Stakeholders	Purpose
Administration of the Little River Wildlife Management Area	Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Administering the Little River Wildlife Management Area, a portion of which is inside the boundaries of the preserve.
Law enforcement	DeSoto State Park, City of Fort Payne Police Department, DeKalb County Sheriff's Department, Cherokee County Sheriff's Department, Jacksonville State University Police Department	Working in harmony for the common purpose of protecting life and property of the public they serve.
Search and rescue	Fischer Rescue Squad, Fort Payne, Adamsburg and Broomtown FD, Cherokee County Rescue Squad	Providing personnel services and equipment required for search and rescue incidents.
Fire fighting	Broomtown Volunteer Fire Department, DeSoto State Park, Adamsburg Volunteer Fire Department, Dogtown Volunteer Fire Department, Tuckers Chapel Volunteer Fire Department, Fort Payne	Providing personnel services and equipment required for firefighting incidents and the protection of life and property on lands administered by the preserve.
Medical services	DeKalb Ambulance Service, DeKalb Medical Center, Dr. Robert Theakston, Fischer Rescue Squad and Cherokee Emergency Medical Services, Inc.	A mutually agreed upon rescue, recovery, treatment, and transport of injured and ill visitors within the preserve.



Assessment of Planning and Data Needs

Once the core components of part 1 of the foundation document have been identified, it is important to gather and evaluate existing information about the park's fundamental and other important resources and values, and develop a full assessment of the park's planning and data needs. The assessment of planning and data needs section presents planning issues, the planning projects that will address these issues, and the associated information requirements for planning, such as resource inventories and data collection, including GIS data.

There are three sections in the assessment of planning and data needs:

1. analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values
2. identification of key issues and associated planning and data needs
3. identification of planning and data needs (including spatial mapping activities or GIS maps)

The analysis of fundamental and other important resources and values and identification of key issues leads up to and supports the identification of planning and data collection needs.

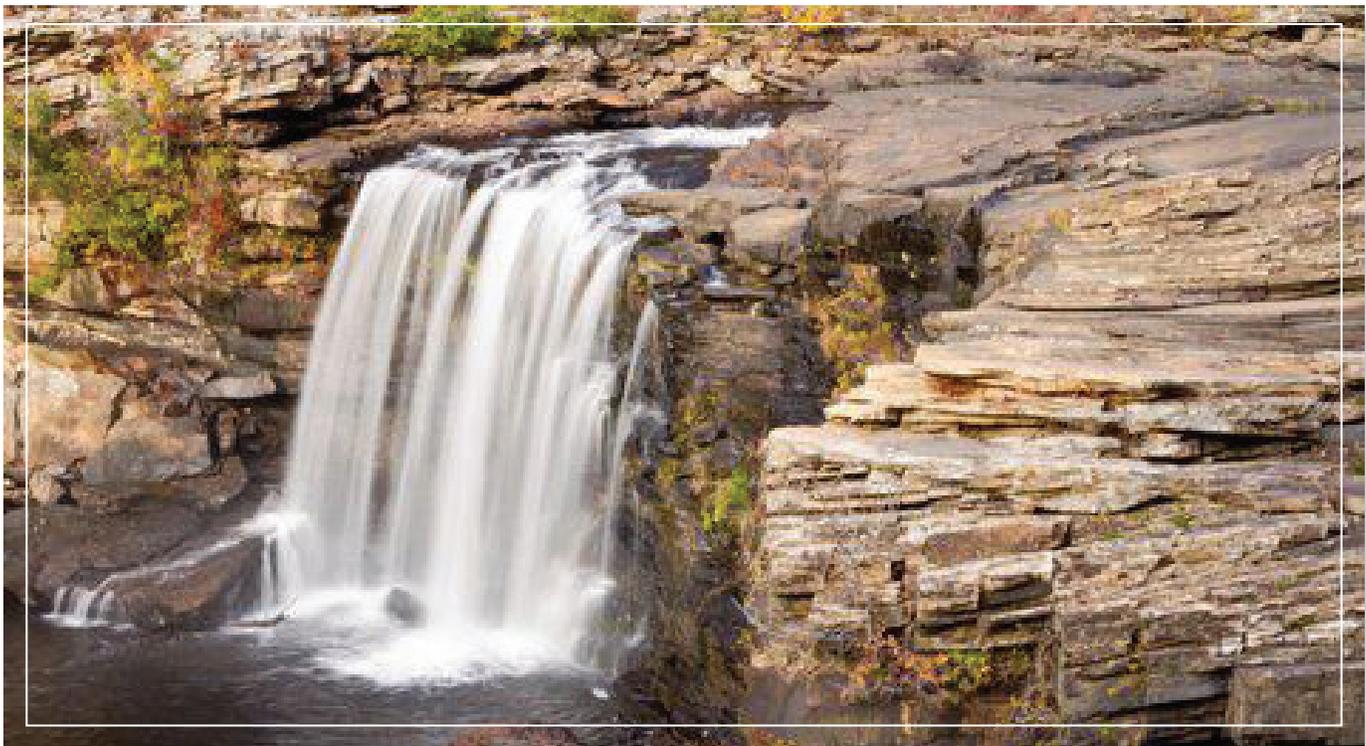
Analysis of Fundamental Resources and Values

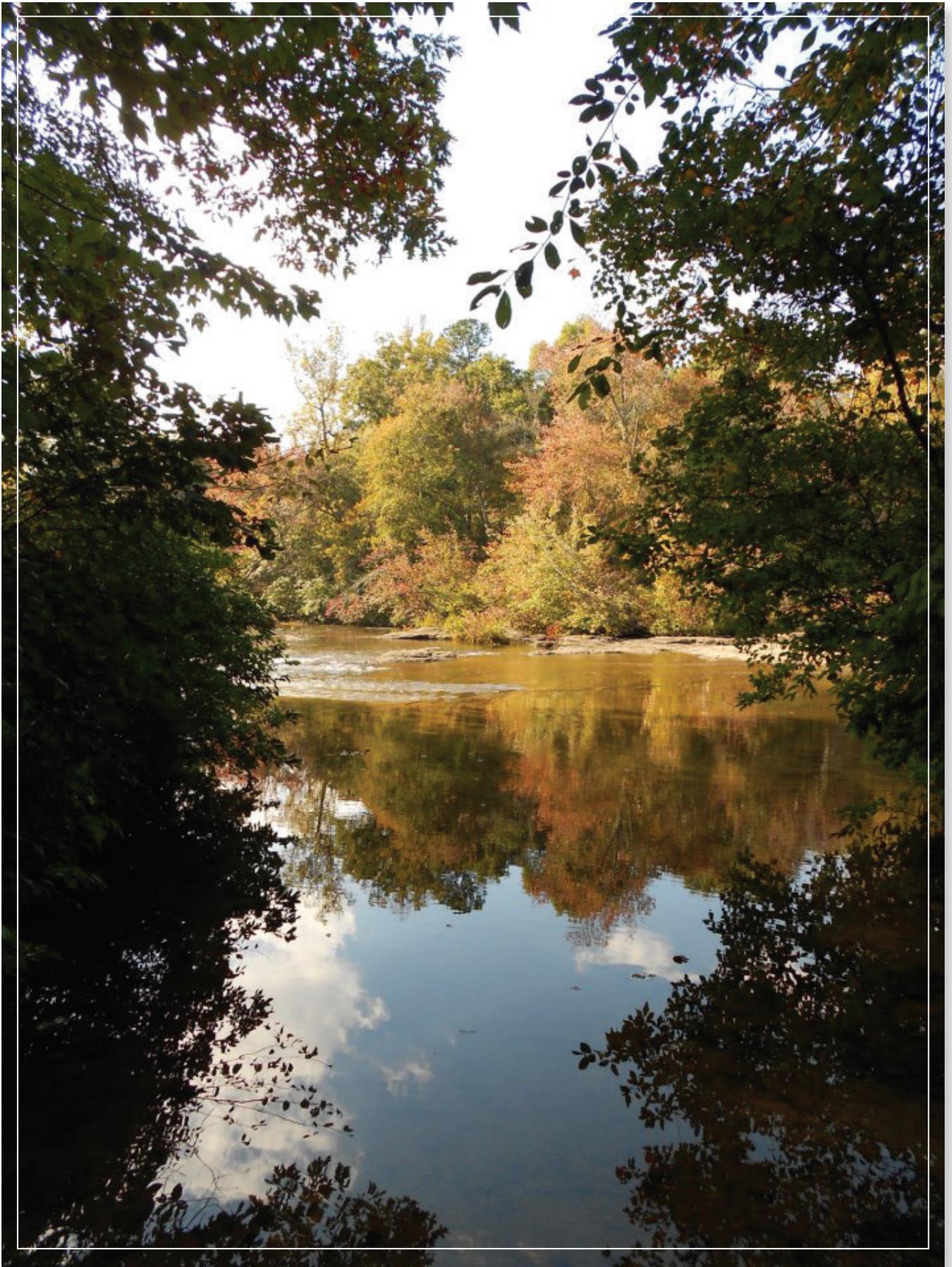
The fundamental resource or value analysis table includes current conditions, potential threats and opportunities, planning and data needs, and selected laws and NPS policies related to management of the identified resource or value.



Fundamental Resource or Value	The Little River
Importance of FRV	The Little River is the only river in the United States that forms on and flows almost its entire length along a mountain top. The high water quality along the 27 miles of the river’s course supports a wide diversity of aquatic communities that include insects, fish, and vegetation, as well as a variety of recreational opportunities.
Related Significance Statements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Little River Canyon is the deepest canyon in Alabama, and it is one of the deepest in the southeast United States. It contains the highest waterfall in the state, and is resplendent with sheer rock walls, cascading waters, and ever-changing seasonal views. 2. With exceptional recreational opportunities, Little River Canyon provides world-class whitewater paddling, internationally renowned climbing, and more than 8,000 acres of public lands open to hunting, fishing, and trapping. 3. The Little River is the only river in the United States that forms on and flows almost its entire length along a mountain top. Little River’s high water quality supports biological diversity, exceptional aquatic riparian communities, and rare and endemic species. This mountain-top river is designated as an Alabama Outstanding National Resource Water.
Current Conditions and Trends	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The water quality of the Little River is good. • The biological component of the water is exceptional. For example, there is a great diversity of aquatic fauna that is indicative of good water quality. • Sometimes streams within and outside preserve boundaries have light state impairment due to upstream activities (farm runoff, etc.). <p>Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor use is increasing along the river. • The Little River is experiencing more spikes in water flow.
Threats and Opportunities	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding regimes could change as a result of climate change and subsequently an increased number and severity of storms. • Preserve staff have observed an increase in trash from visitors (e.g., diapers, litter). • Human waste is a threat to biological diversity and overall health of the Little River. • Upstream development, road runoff, and other activities affect watershed quality and sedimentation. • Temperature increases under climate change projections could shift ecosystems northward and upslope, and increase incidence of invasive species. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase safety awareness among visitors and promote safer activities. • Partner with state and private entities to reduce runoff. • Improve the trail at key visitor areas to decrease the amount of dirt runoff. • Improved parking areas would help to limit the number of visitors in certain areas and decrease human impact on the river.
Existing Data and Plans Related to the FRV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Geological Survey flow data (gauging station at canyon mouth). • Baseline studies for fish, mussels, and aquatic invertebrates.
Data and/or GIS Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archeological surveys for remainder of the preserve.

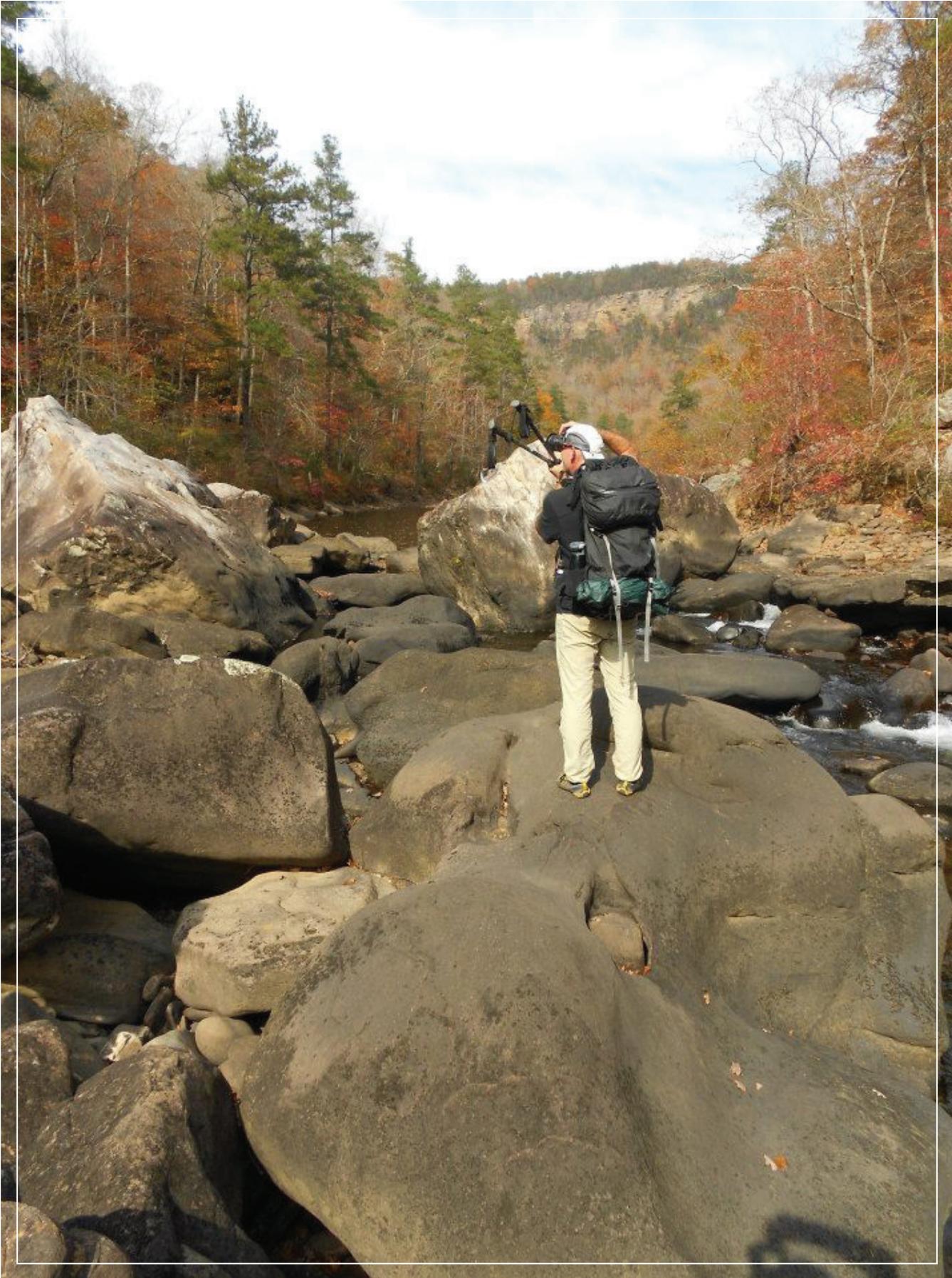
Fundamental Resource or Value	The Little River
<p>Planning Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor use management plan. • Resource stewardship strategy. • Trail management plan. • Planning for adaptation to climate change.
<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance</p>	<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968 16 USC §1271 et seq., section 7) • Clean Water Act (33 USC §1251-1387, 33 USC §1151) • Executive Order 11514, “Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality” • Executive Order 11988, “Floodplain Management” • Executive Order 12088, “Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards” • Secretarial Order 3289, “Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America’s Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources” • National Historic and Preservation Act of 1966, sections 106 and 110 <p>NPS Policy-level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director’s Orders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.3.4) “National Wild and Scenic Rivers System” • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.6.1) “Protection of Surface Waters and Groundwaters” • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.6.2) “Water Rights” • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 7) “Interpretation and Education” • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 8) “Use of the Parks” • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 9) “Park Facilities” • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 9) “Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries” • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 10) “Commercial Visitor Services” • Director’s Order 6: <i>Interpretation and Education</i>





Fundamental Resource or Value	The Canyon
<p>Importance of FRV</p>	<p>The Little River Canyon is one of the deepest and most extensive canyon systems in the eastern United States, the largest in Alabama, and contains many waterfalls including Grace's High Falls, the state's tallest. This canyon system, carved out by the Little River, has created extraordinary and exceptional views of rugged rock outcroppings and the opportunity to look into the "belly" of Lookout Mountain. These views are enjoyed year-round by scenic drivers and are exemplified at Wolf Creek, Canyon View, Crow Point, Eberhart Point, and Little River Falls overlooks.</p>
<p>Related Significance Statements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Little River Canyon is the deepest canyon in Alabama, and it is one of the deepest in the southeast United States. It contains the highest waterfall in the state, and is resplendent with sheer rock walls, cascading waters, and ever-changing seasonal views. 2. With exceptional recreational opportunities, Little River Canyon provides world-class whitewater paddling, internationally renowned climbing, and more than 8,000 acres of public lands open to hunting, fishing, and trapping. 4. The location of the preserve along the southern limits of the Cumberland Plateau contributes to a rare assemblage of plants and animals, including the endangered green pitcher plant.
<p>Current Conditions and Trends</p>	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The canyon has been and continues to be shaped predominantly by natural processes of water and wind erosion. • Pull-offs and railings are not in good condition. • High vegetation growth is preventing visitors from experiencing views of the canyon at some of the viewing areas. • The pull-offs are not safe in some locations because of the challenge of pulling back onto the road into oncoming traffic. There are also drop-offs from the edge of the road into the parking lots. In addition, the vegetation is impeding and preventing visitors from seeing oncoming traffic. • Many of the pull-offs have a poor line of sight for drivers pulling back onto the road and would need to be redesigned to improve sight lines. • Some pull-offs do not accommodate large vehicles. • The grade and hardness/substrate of the pull-offs can be a challenge for parking motorcycles. <p>Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During busy times, there is crowding at some of the pull-offs. • Mushroom Rock attracts visitors, but creates a hazard for vehicles because people walk in the road to see the rock and there is a poor line of sight. • Increased visitation at the viewpoints.
<p>Threats and Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade and hardness/substrate is a challenge for motorcycles, which may interfere with these users' abilities to view the canyon landscapes. • Development along each side of the canyon is a threat to canyon viewsheds. • An increase in trash is a threat to the health of the Little River ecosystem. • Vegetation blocking viewsheds is having a negative impact on the visitors' experience. • Scenic views are can sometimes be obscured by pollution-caused haze. Coal-fired power plants and vehicle exhausts are believed to be major contributors to air quality impacts regionally. Both source categories have reduced emissions significantly in the past decade to reduce ozone and fine particles, and these reductions should also improve air quality in the preserve. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to acquire land from willing sellers. • Partner with adjacent landowners about design standards to improve the viewsheds. • Improve the working agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation for maintaining Little River Canyon Parkway and the parking areas along the road.

Fundamental Resource or Value	The Canyon
Existing Data and Plans Related to the FRV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPS Geologic Resources Inventory program has initiated new geologic mapping of the preserve with Auburn University and Geological Survey of Alabama, proposed product delivery in FY2017.
Data and/or GIS Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LiDAR for the preserve, including old road traces and American Indian trails. • Visitor use data. • Cultural landscape inventory. • Location of sensitive resources, cultural, and natural. • Visual resource inventory.
Planning Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual resource management plan (landscaping or vegetation management plan). • NPS identity and signage plan.
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended • National Invasive Species Act • Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, as amended • Secretarial Order 3289, "Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources" • National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, sections as amended • Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2009 <p>NPS Policy-level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§1.6) "Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§2.3.1.4) "Science and Scholarship" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.1) "General Management Concepts" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.1.4) "Partnerships" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.4.1) "General Principles for Managing Biological Resources" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§4.7.2) "Weather and Climate" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (§5.1) "Research" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 7) "Interpretation and Education" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 8) "Use of the Parks" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 9) "Park Facilities" • NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (chapter 10) "Commercial Visitor Services" • <i>NPS-75 Natural Resources Inventory and Monitoring Guideline</i> • <i>NPS Natural Resource Management Reference Manual 77</i>



Fundamental Resource or Value	Canyon Recreation
<p>Importance of FRV</p>	<p>The river and canyon have formed a wild and rugged landscape that allows for a range of peaceful and challenging recreational opportunities. The river supports world-class whitewater paddling and exceptional climbing. The opportunity for hiking, swimming, and fishing in natural areas away from city life are exemplified at Martha’s Falls and Canyon Mouth.</p>
<p>Related Significance Statements</p>	<p>2. With exceptional recreational opportunities, Little River Canyon provides world-class whitewater paddling, internationally renowned climbing, and more than 8,000 acres of public lands open to hunting, fishing, and trapping.</p>
<p>Current Conditions and Trends</p>	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is currently a lack of data for number of hunters, fishers, and trappers who come to the preserve. • There is a lack of information on the number of visitors to Little River Canyon National Preserve. • There is a social trail for kayakers. • The sites for boaters to put in or take out are not adequately sized. • There are a variety of social or visitor-created trails. • Some of the visitor-created trails are maintained by climbers. • There is no record of who is using the area and permits are not required. • With only one interpreter available to provide interpretive programming, visitors have few opportunities to experience interpretive programs. • There has been an increase in injuries and rescues out of the canyon because people are not physically fit or they are not prepared. <p>Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of people visiting the falls and visitor center is increasing. • Vehicular traffic is increasing. • Visitation at Canyon Mouth is increasing. • The number of visitor-created social trails is increasing. • The Martha’s Falls area is regularly overcrowded. • Park infrastructure has to shut down Martha’s Falls and Little River Falls regularly during the busy season because of the overcrowding occurring at these sites.
<p>Threats and Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution and trash negatively impact the visitor experience. • The lack of facilities can lead to increased human waste in natural areas. • Crowding creates conflicts and threatens resources and visitor experiences. • Parking lot conflicts arise in many locations when parking lots are full. • Blue Hole fills up with cars in the parking area very fast. • The roadways in the management area are in poor condition, creating challenges for recreation access. • Higher precipitation and increased frequency of large storms projected due to climate change could lead to flooding and erosion, increasing visitor safety and road maintenance issues. • An increase in annual temperature and extreme heat events due to climate change may shift the timing and number of visitors to the park. • Ground-level ozone sometimes reach levels that can make breathing difficult for sensitive groups including children, the elderly, people with existing health problems, and active adults. • Wet mercury deposition level from coal-fired power plant pollution is very high and predicted levels of methylmercury in park surface waters are moderate.

Fundamental Resource or Value	Canyon Recreation
<p>Threats and Opportunities</p>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create design solutions for sustainable hiking trails in the future. For example, there are opportunities to create hiking trails in the backcountry and along the canyon. • Swimming areas could be expanded beyond popular areas to disperse use to a variety of areas. • Create better access to locations that would be appropriate for activities such as swimming. • Improve park sustainability and environmental leadership through the Climate Friendly Park certification including an Environmental Management System (Director’s Order 13A). • Expand interpretative and educational tools to communicate the connections between natural communities, air quality, water quality, scenic views, night sky, human health, recreation, climate change, and other associated resources.
<p>Existing Data and Plans Related to the FRV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search and rescue plan. • Emergency medical services plan. • Memorandum of understanding for law enforcement and search and rescue. • 2010 University of Idaho study of visitor use (visitation has changed a lot since that time).
<p>Data and/or GIS Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor use data for hunting, trapping, and fishing. • Visitor use data – methodology update.
<p>Planning Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail management plan. • Climbing management plan. • Long-range interpretive plan. • Backcountry management plan. • Visitor use management plan. • Watershed management plan. • Commercial services management plan. • Canyon management plan. • Planning for adaptation to climate change.
<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance</p>	<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC §12101 et seq.) • Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (42 USC §4151 et seq.) • “Accessibility Guidelines” (36 CFR §1191.1) • Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC §701 et seq.) • NPS Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 (54 USC §101912) • Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 USC §1271 et seq.) • National Historic Preservation Act 1966 sections, as amended • Clean Air Act of 1977 (42 USC 7401 et seq.) • Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2009 • Secretarial Order 3289 “Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America’s Water, Land, and Natural and Cultural Resources”

Fundamental Resource or Value	Canyon Recreation
<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance</p>	<p>NPS Policy-level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§1.4.6) "Park Resources and Values" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.3.4) "National Wild and Scenic Rivers System" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.7) "Air Resource Management" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 7) "Interpretation and Education" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 8) "Use of the Parks" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 9) "Park Facilities" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 10) "Commercial Visitor Services" • Director's Order 6: <i>Interpretation and Education</i> • Director's Order 42: <i>Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in National Park Service Programs and Services</i> • NPS Transportation Planning Guidebook





Fundamental Resource or Value	Native Plants and Wildlife Communities
Importance of FRV	<p>The preserve supports three globally rare and unique plant communities, one of which includes the largest number of federally protected populations of green pitcher plants. Another community includes Kral’s water plantain, which only exists in two other watersheds in the world. The preserve also supports habitat for many federal- and state-listed species including bats, bears, and salamanders, as well as a number of endemic species, which are species found only in this localized area.</p>
Related Significance Statements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The Little River is the only river in the United States that forms on and flows almost its entire length along a mountain top. Little River’s high water quality supports biological diversity, exceptional aquatic riparian communities, and rare and endemic species. This mountain-top river is designated as an Alabama Outstanding National Resource Water. 4. The location of the preserve along the southern limits of the Cumberland Plateau contributes to a rare assemblage of plants and animals, including the endangered green pitcher plant.
Current Conditions and Trends	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preserve cannot conduct prescribed burns as often as needed, and because of this, pitcher plants are not in optimal condition. In addition, bog and sandstone glade (which contain rare habitats) conditions range from good to poor condition, they are fire dependent and the lack of prescribed burns has encouraged woody encroachment. • Long-term vegetation monitoring has begun. • The Northern long-eared bat is a newly listed species and present in the park; however, the numbers and locations have not been identified. • Salamanders are present in the preserve, proposed for listing, and are sensitive to climate change. • The preserve’s acoustic environment is primarily influenced by natural sounds and has very little noise. • While the preserve is somewhat influenced by artificial light, it has the best night sky resources in the region and offers visitors a unique opportunity to view night skies and celestial objects. <p>Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green pitcher plant populations are stable. • Threatened and endangered species are not monitored as routinely necessary. • Kral’s water plantain seems to be stable, but not quantifiably monitored. • Over the last 10 years, bear populations have increased, but the preserve does not have concrete numbers to know by how much. The increase in the bear population is positive; however, an increase in bears increases the potential for bear-human interactions.
Threats and Opportunities	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salamanders are sensitive to climate change; an increase in temperature and dry patterns can affect salamander breeding. • Kral’s water plantain and harperella are sensitive to climate change due to increases in humidity, water level rise, and increased flooding from more frequent and stronger storms. • Off-highway vehicle use, user-created trails, poaching, and improper visitor use are damaging sensitive habitats. • Trampling, littering, and other evidence of improper visitor use are also a threat to sensitive habitats. • Nonnative plants are a threat to the unique plant and animal habitats. • Climate change projections indicate higher precipitation and more frequent extreme weather events that affect native plants and wildlife, and an increase in invasive species. • Natural communities are at risk for harmful effects of nutrient enrichment and acidification from excess deposition of nitrogen and sulfur air pollutants. • Coal-fired power plants and vehicle exhaust are believed to be major contributors to air quality impacts regionally.

Fundamental Resource or Value	Native Plants and Wildlife Communities
Threats and Opportunities	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase monitoring of threatened and endangered species. • New species may be discovered as a result of climate change increasing their livable range. • Increase/enhance partnerships with universities and other entities for inventory, monitoring, and data collection efforts. • Partner with other agencies to increase fire programs and prescribed burns.
Existing Data and Plans Related to the FRV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation maps. • Baseline studies for fish, birds, mammals, herps, and vascular plants. • Natural resource condition assessment (2010).
Data and/or GIS Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonvascular plant studies. • Terrestrial invertebrate study. • Distribution data on each of the rare species groups. • Location of sensitive resources specifically natural and cultural. • Air pollution study. Investigate air pollution impacts on sensitive park ecosystems, including the potential impact of mercury and other toxics on biota in the park such as bird, bat, insect, and fish species.
Planning Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource stewardship strategy. • Visitor use management plan. • Threatened and endangered species conservation plan. • Integrated pest management plan. • Planning for adaptation to climate change.
Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance	<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 • Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended • Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 • National Invasive Species Act • Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, as amended • Executive Order 13112, "Invasive Species" • Secretarial Order 3289, "Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources" • National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended • Clean Air Act of 1977 (42 USC 7401 et seq.) <p>NPS Policy-level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§1.6) "Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.1) "General Management Concepts" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.4.1) "General Principles for Managing Biological Resources" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.7.2) "Weather and Climate" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.7) "Air Resource Management" • Director's Order 77: Natural Resource Protection • NPS Natural Resource Management Reference Manual 77



Fundamental Resource or Value	Backcountry Experience and Landscape
<p>Importance of FRV</p>	<p>The backcountry area of the preserve is the largest public land area in northern Alabama available for hunting, fishing, and trapping. This quiet area of the preserve also provides opportunities for solitude as well as multiple types of recreation including horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, flatwater paddling, and jogging. The backcountry area of the preserve also protects important habitats and a watershed for wildlife, flora, and humans alike.</p>
<p>Related Significance Statements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Little River Canyon is the deepest canyon in Alabama, and it is one of the deepest in the southeast United States. It contains the highest waterfall in the state, and is resplendent with sheer rock walls, cascading waters, and ever-changing seasonal views. 2. With exceptional recreational opportunities, Little River Canyon provides world-class whitewater paddling, internationally renowned climbing, and more than 8,000 acres of public lands open to hunting, fishing, and trapping.
<p>Current Conditions and Trends</p>	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads in the backcountry are primarily dirt and conditions range from poor to fair. • Currently, annual maintenance is performed on the roads. • The preserve enforces hunting based on the state’s regulations. • The preserve does not have accurate hunting information, including target species and locations. • Sediment loads in the river are heavy from the use of the roads and the fords. <p>Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle use is increasing in backcountry areas. • Parking spaces at High Rock are often full and vehicles park in the bushes.
<p>Threats and Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petroleum products are washed off vehicles as they cross the river at the fords. • Vehicles driving up and down the river from the fords cause habitat damage and erosion problems. • Vehicles also bring noise to the backcountry area. • Nonnative plants can encroach on native areas, which is likely to be exacerbated by climate change. • Noise and artificial light from neighboring land uses disrupt the quiet backcountry of the park unit. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore converting or restoring some of the backcountry roads into new trails and or areas restricted to foot traffic only. These areas would provide new opportunities for solitary and/or primitive experiences. • Enhance partnerships with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. • Convert or plant wildlife clearings with native vegetation instead of nonnative species. • Consider other opportunities to develop indicators and standards for acoustic and night skies in related park plans and strategies.
<p>Existing Data and Plans Related to the FRV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified.
<p>Data and/or GIS Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor use data for hunting, trapping, and fishing. • Archeological surveys for remainder of the preserve.

Fundamental Resource or Value	Backcountry Experience and Landscape
<p>Planning Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor use management plan. • Resource stewardship strategy. • Update fire management plan. • Integrated pest management plan. • Planning for adaptation to climate change.
<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance</p>	<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the FRV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 • Endangered Species Act of 1973 • National Invasive Species Act of 1966 • Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 • Clean Water Act of 1972 • Clean Air Act of 1977 (42 USC §7401 et seq.) • Executive Order 13112, "Invasive Species" • Secretarial Order 3289, "Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources" <p>NPS Policy-level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§1.6) "Cooperative Conservation Beyond Park Boundaries" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.1) "General Management Concepts" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.9) "Soundscape Management" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.10) "Lightscape Management" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.1.4) "Partnerships" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.4.1) "General Principles for Managing Biological Resources" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§4.7.2) "Weather and Climate" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§5.3.1.7) "Cultural Soundscape Management" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§8.2.2) "Recreational Activities" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§8.2.3) "Use of Motorized Equipment" • NPS Management Policies 2006 (§8.4) "Overflights and Aviation Uses" • NPS Natural Resource Management Reference Manual 77 • Director's Order 77: Natural Resource Protection • NPS Wildland Fire Management Reference Manual 18 • Director's Order 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making • Director's Order 47: Soundscape Preservation and Noise Management

Analysis of Other Important Resources and Values

Other Important Resource or Value	Cultural Resources
Importance of OIRV	<p>The cultural resources located within Little River Canyon National Preserve represent more than 10,000 years of human habitation and history in the region. There are more than 150 archeological sites within the preserve, including rock shelters with archeological materials. A portion of the roundup route for the Trail of Tears passes through the preserve and into Fort Payne. Remnants of historic structures, such as bridge abutments and homestead locations, are also found within the boundaries of the preserve.</p>
Current Conditions and Trends	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eighty-four percent of the known archeological sites are in good condition. • Eleven of the known archeological sites are in fair condition. • Nine of the known archeological sites are in poor condition. • Fourteen percent of preserve lands have been surveyed. • The preserve has no cultural landscape information. <p>Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metal detecting and looting activities are increasing. • The preserve is actively finding and documenting cultural and archeological sites.
Threats and Opportunities	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looters and metal detecting. • Erosion uncovers, disturbs, and washes away resources. • Climate change – increases in heating/cooling trends and storm activities can uproot trees, which increases flooding and erosion. • As knowledgeable populations are aging, Little River Canyon National Reserve is losing access to important local stories and histories, which guides the need for recorded oral histories of the preserve. • Development along Alabama State Road 35 is a threat to the Trail of Tears route. <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey the remainder of the preserve for archeological and other sites in accordance with section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. • Enhance interpretation of cultural resources. • Increase partnerships with universities and other entities to aid with interpretation programs and expand these opportunities.
Existing Data and Plans Related to the OIRV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum collection management plan. • Historic resource study (1994).
Data and/or GIS Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural landscape inventory. • Update historic resource study. • Ethnographic resource study. • Oral history study. • Location of sensitive resources, specifically cultural and natural.
Planning Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural landscape report. • Planning for adaptation to climate change. • Visual resource management plan.

Other Important Resource or Value	Cultural Resources
<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the OIRV, and NPS Policy-level Guidance</p>	<p>Laws, Executive Orders, and Regulations That Apply to the OIRV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 • Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 • Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 • Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 • Management of Museum Properties Act of 1955 (16 USC 18f through 18f-3) • National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 • Executive Order 11593, "Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment" • "Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections" (36 CFR 79) • "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR 800) • Secretarial Order 3289, "Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources" <p>NPS Policy-level Guidance (NPS Management Policies 2006 and Director's Orders)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director's Order 28: <i>Cultural Resource Management</i> • Director's Order 28A: <i>Archeology</i> • Director's Order 24: <i>NPS Museum Collections Management</i> • NPS Management Policies 2006 (chapter 5) "Cultural Resource Management" • NPS Museum Handbook, parts I, II, and III • <i>The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation</i>



Identification of Key Issues and Associated Planning and Data Needs

This section considers key issues to be addressed in planning and management and therefore takes a broader view over the primary focus of part 1. A key issue focuses on a question that is important for a park. Key issues often raise questions regarding park purpose and significance and fundamental and other important resources and values. For example, a key issue may pertain to the potential for a fundamental or other important resource or value in a park to be detrimentally affected by discretionary management decisions. A key issue may also address crucial questions that are not directly related to purpose and significance, but that still affect them indirectly. Usually, a key issue is one that a future planning effort or data collection needs to address and requires a decision by NPS managers.

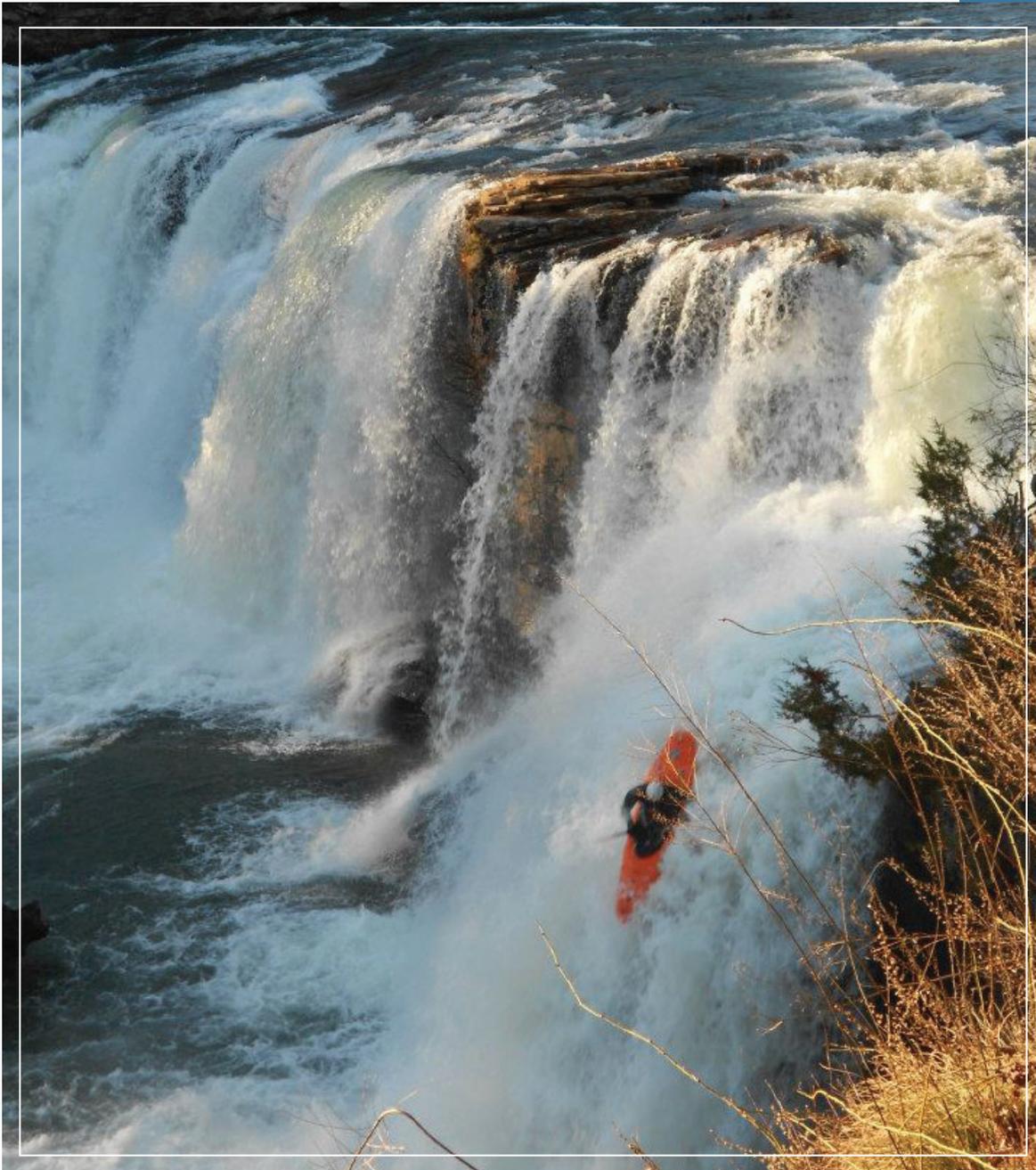
The following are key issues for Little River Canyon National Preserve and the associated planning and data needs to address them:

- **Visitor Use and Crowding.** Increased visitation to Little River Canyon National Preserve has resulted in greater impacts on natural areas in the preserve. These impacts include trampling, visitor-created trails, river bank erosion, as well as increased trash and human waste. Overly crowded areas and/or improper behavior pose safety risks to visitors and staff and too many visitors in a particular location can detract from the visitor's experience. These areas include, but are not limited to Martha's Falls, Canyon Mouth, and backcountry areas (Slant Rock, High Rock, etc.). Unsafe visitor behavior and illegal activity are also occurring and are not deterred due to the lack of preserve presence (staff) on site at popular areas. Additionally, climate change is likely to shift visitation patterns and increase visitation during shoulder seasons, further straining current staff capacity to address these issues. Planning needs associated with this issue include a visitor use management plan and the visitor use data to support this planning effort.
- **Baseline Data for Natural and Cultural Resource Protection.** Many of the natural and cultural resources within the preserve do not have baseline data or monitoring plans, which makes monitoring for trends or changing conditions of these resources increasingly difficult. Additionally, the resources to do the ongoing monitoring of some of these critical species are very limited. As the introduction of nonnative species continues to pose a threat to native communities (by altering natural compositions and distributions of these plant and animal components therefore changing the functionality of those systems) monitoring of these resources will be vital to ensuring their protection. Planning needs associated with this issue include a resource stewardship strategy and a cultural landscape report. Data needs to support these plans and inform this key issue include a cultural landscape inventory, terrestrial invertebrate animal and nonvascular plants studies, Trail of Tears condition assessment, and archeological surveys for the remainder of the preserve. Climate change considerations are to be incorporated into these existing planning processes, where applicable.
- **Identification as a National Park Service Unit and Appropriate Visitor Services.** Currently the identification of Little River Canyon as a unit of the national park system is not clear to many of the visiting public. The preserve does not have its own visitor center, so preserve visitors visit a non-NPS visitor center, and one that is almost totally served by volunteer staff or university partner staff. The public has limited access to programs presented by the one interpreter and preserve partners (Jacksonville State University, DeSoto State Park). Of the facilities (trails, roads, parking lots, restrooms, etc.) that are owned by the National Park Service, many do not meet the needs of visitors, are outdated, and do not meet current safety and accessibility codes. Planning needs associated with this key issue include a backcountry management plan, road maintenance plan, NPS communication strategy, and NPS identity and signage plan. Data to support these plans would include visitor use data on the number of visitors at key areas of the preserve and types of visitor activities that are currently occurring.

Planning and Data Needs

To maintain connection to the core elements of the foundation and the importance of these core foundation elements, the planning and data needs listed here are directly related to protecting fundamental resources and values, park significance, and park purpose, as well as addressing key issues. To successfully undertake a planning effort, information from sources such as inventories, studies, research activities, and analyses may be required to provide adequate knowledge of park resources and visitor information. Such information sources have been identified as data needs. Geospatial mapping tasks and products are included in data needs.

Items considered of the utmost importance were identified as high priority, and other items identified, but not rising to the level of high priority, were listed as either medium- or low-priority needs. These priorities inform park management efforts to secure funding and support for planning projects.



Planning Needs – Where A Decision-making Process Is Needed			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Planning Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes
Canyon Recreation and Key Issue	Backcountry management plan	H	The backcountry area of the preserve has limited current guidance on management of this area. This plan would create desired conditions for this area of the preserve.
The Little River, Canyon Recreation, Native Plants and Wildlife Communities, Backcountry Experience and Landscape, and Key Issue	Visitor use management plan	H	A visitor use management plan would provide direction for how to manage use throughout the preserve. Conducting this type of plan would require data collection prior to initiation. This type of plan would address parking lot capacity and define the kinds and amounts of use that should occur at key areas throughout the preserve.
Canyon Recreation	Long-range interpretive plan	H	A long-range interpretive plan would be beneficial to the preserve to provide general guidance for interpretive programs. It would provide focus and direction for interpretive program. The preserve has one interpreter, and does not have an interpretive planning document. This plan would identify the interpretive needs of the preserve and define the appropriate staffing level to meet those needs. It would identify personal and nonpersonal interpretive services for the preserve, which would guide hiring decisions.
The Little River, Native Plants and Wildlife Communities, Backcountry Experience and Landscape, and Key Issue	Resource stewardship strategy	H	This plan would develop strategies to achieve desired conditions for natural and cultural resources, including a landscape report to satisfy the mandates of the Government Performance and Results Act. The preserve has difficulty filling out forms indicating if desired conditions have been met because there is no a planning document that clearly defines what those desired conditions should be.
Backcountry Experience and Landscape and Native Plants and Wildlife Communities	Integrated pest management plan	H	This plan would identify the pest plants and animals, and would identify a removal strategy for those pests. This document would provide specific guidance on pest management.
Canyon Recreation	Watershed management plan	H	This plan would help deal with human waste and water quality, runoff from the neighbors, visitors using trails and sediment going into the river, farm waste, watershed issues, etc. Recreation and use would be rolled into this type of plan. This would require collaboration with farmers and neighbors.
Canyon Recreation	Canyon management plan	M	The canyon management plan would provide guidance for a multitude of uses, including paddling, climbing, swimming, visitor capacity of swimming areas, overlook access points, canoe and paddling access points, facilities, and search and rescue, and would identify helicopter spots for rescue.
Key Issue	NPS communication strategy	M	This plan would identify strategies for increasing visitor awareness of Little River Canyon National Preserve’s national park designation. Strategies identified in this plan would promote the visitor’s understanding of the National Park Service as a whole, the Little River Canyon National Preserve as a park unit, and also appropriate uses within the preserve.

Planning Needs – Where A Decision-making Process Is Needed			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Planning Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes
Native Plants and Wildlife Communities	Threatened and endangered species conservation plan	M	The conservation management plan would be all-encompassing for threatened and endangered species and would address preserve management and its impacts on these species. This would be a compliance document that the preserve could reference as needed. It would identify the species that the preserve needs to manage for. This document would include the green pitcher plant management plan.
Backcountry Experience and Landscape	Update fire management plan	M	The current fire management plan is out of date (expired). The format has changed, and there are new lands and threatened and endangered species.
Key Issue	NPS identity and signage plan	M	An identify and signage plan would help with the NPS identity and would allow visitors to understand that they are visiting a national park and understand the values of the National Park Service.
The Canyon	Visual resource management plan (landscaping or vegetation management plan [how to trim overlooks])	M	The visual resource management plan would help the preserve collaborate with neighbors on guidance for viewsheds (paint colors, building guidelines, etc.). It would also help with vegetation management (overlook maintenance, i.e., tree trimming).
The Little River and Canyon Recreation	Trail management plan	M	It is important to design trails in a sustainable way to ensure the trails are built so they last for a very long time. If trails are not planned well, more work may be required to maintain them over time.
Canyon Recreation	Climbing management plan	L	This plan would provide guidance on climbing areas, routes, number of people per area, capacity for the cliffs, bolt management and mapping, permitting process, etc.
Canyon Recreation	Commercial services management plan	L	A commercial services management plan would provide direction on commercial services for 10 to 20 years.
Cultural Resources and Key Issue	Cultural landscape report	L	The cultural landscape report would guide preserve management and preservation treatment decisions for cultural landscapes and landscape features.
Key Issue	Road maintenance plan	L	This plan would outline the road maintenance work such as brushing, acceptable material, road prescriptions and maintenance schedules, etc.
The Little River, Canyon Recreation, Native Plants and Wildlife Communities, Backcountry Experience and Landscape, and Cultural Resources	Planning for adaptation to climate change	L	Secretarial Order 3289 calls for parks to consider climate change in all levels of park planning. Climate change adaptation does not require a stand-alone plan, but instead is most effective when integrated into existing planning processes.

Data Needs – Where Information Is Needed Before Decisions Can Be Made			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Data and GIS Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes, Including Which Planning Need This Data Need Relates To
Key Issue	Archeological surveys for remainder of the preserve	H	Fourteen percent of archeological surveys are complete. This is needed to meet the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act. Cultural resource surveys need to be done in order to build visitor facilities in the future (campsites, trails, etc.). An archeological survey should include river resources, mill, dam in canyon, and rock at canyon mouth with rod.
The Canyon and Key Issue	Visitor use data	H	This data collection effort would include demographic data, the number of visitors at key locations, the kinds of use and amounts of use during various seasons, and the activities that are occurring. This would also include an update to the methodology for collecting visitation data.
Native Plants and Wildlife Communities	Distribution data on each of the rare species groups	H	These data would focus on information related to several of the top S1 and S2 rare plant number and distributions to advance potential compliance strategies. This would also apply to rare animal species in the preserve. Having this information documented would allow the management team to make informed decisions about placement of facilities or management activities occurring in the preserve.
Canyon Recreation	Visitor use data to inform visitor capacity (social and resource)	H	These data would help inform visitor capacity, i.e., information on the number of people as it correlates to impacts on the natural resources, cultural resources, and visitor experience.
Cultural Resources	Oral history study	H	This would include interviews with people who are 60–100 years old. It is essential to interview people soon so these stories are not lost over time.
Backcountry Experience and Landscape	Visitor use data for hunting, trapping, and fishing	H	This would include data on who is hunting, where, when, how many species they are taking, the health of the species taken, the number of hunters per season, and the health of the individual animals they are taking.
Native Plants and Wildlife Communities and Key Issue	Nonvascular plant studies	M	Information on nonvascular plants is a data gap. Mosses, liverworts, and lichens need to be inventoried.
The Canyon, Cultural Resources, and Key Issue	Cultural landscape inventory	M	The cultural landscape inventory would be used to document historic sites and determine if they are eligible for the national register. This would include the Trail of Tears, old home sites, etc. This plan could also include an inventory of the scenic and historic views.
Native Plants and Wildlife Communities and Key Issue	Terrestrial invertebrate study	M	This would fill a data gap on a wide variety of invertebrates including insects, crustaceans, and arachnids.
The Canyon	LiDAR for the preserve, including old road traces and American Indian trails	M	LiDAR will be useful for updating topographic maps, for locating road traces and trails, and other data that are there but cannot be seen (cultural sites). Erosion, deposition, and comparative imagery over the years.

Data Needs – Where Information Is Needed Before Decisions Can Be Made			
Related to an FRV, OIRV, or Key Issue?	Data and GIS Needs	Priority (H, M, L)	Notes, Including Which Planning Need This Data Need Relates To
Cultural Resources	Ethnographic resource study	M	The ethnographic resource study would allow the preserve to understand which groups of people have connections to the land (e.g., Cherokee people, families from the 1900s, etc.). This would allow better interpretation of the stories of people who have lived in this area in years past.
Key Issue	Trail of Tears GIS mapping of locations	M	Currently the preserve has no GIS data included on the Trail of Tears Roundup Route through the preserve. Archeologist Guy Prentice collected some field data in late November 2015. This area contains the most used portions of the preserve and areas with the greatest need for development of plans for resources and visitors' use. A half-mile-wide corridor has previously been considered for protection once it is located.
Canyon Recreation	Visitation data-methodology update	M	This would include inserting new traffic and trail counters in locations where they do not currently exist because the preserve does not have data for all locations, and cannot currently estimate visitor use levels in an accurate or reliable way. It may also be useful to have the social science program update the number of people per car rate for visitor use counts in order to improve the accuracy of data that are being collected.
Key Issue	Trail of Tears condition assessment	L	No studies have determined the integrity of the Trail of Tears Roundup Route through the preserve. Need to determine if it is eligible for the national register as a trail or archeological site.
Cultural Resources	Update historic resource study	L	The historic resource study needs to be updated to improve locations of sites and document uncatalogued locations and items.
The Canyon	Visual resource inventory	L	The inventory would identify scenic quality and NPS values for scenic views that would form the basis of development of a visual resource management plan.
Native Plants and Wildlife Communities	Air pollution study	L	Investigate air pollution impacts on sensitive park ecosystems, including the potential impact of mercury and other toxics on biota in the park such as bird, bat, insect, and fish species.

Part 3: Contributors

Little River Canyon National Preserve

Steve Black, Superintendent

Larry Beane, Park Ranger

Cheri Killam-Bomhard, Facility Manager

Kim Kirk, Administrative Officer

Troy Mueller, Chief Ranger

Mary Shew, Resources Management Specialist

NPS Southeast Region

Guy Prentice, Archeologist, Southeast Archeological Center

Ben West, Chief, Planning and Compliance Division

Amy Wirsching, Planner

Other NPS Staff

Rachel Collins, Project Manager, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Charles Notzon, Economist, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Ericka Pilcher, Visitor Use Management Specialist, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Aleksandra Pitt, Visitor Use Management Specialist, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Melody Bentfield, Foundations Program Librarian, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Pam Holtman, Foundations Quality Assurance Coordinator, WASO Park Planning and Special Studies

Nancy Shock, Foundations Coordinator, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Philip Viray, Publications Chief, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Ken Bingenheimer, Editor, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Angie Wing, Visual Information Specialist, Denver Service Center, Planning Division

Partners

Pete Conroy, Director, Environmental and Policy Information Center, Jacksonville State University

John Dersham, President, DeKalb County Tourism

Thereasa Hulgan, President, Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce

Marsha Merrell, President, Friends of Little River Canyon

Brittney Hughes, Naturalist, DeSoto State Park

Appendixes

Appendix A: Enabling Legislation for Little River Canyon National Preserve

PUBLIC LAW 102-427—OCT. 21, 1992

106 STAT. 2179

Public Law 102-427
102d Congress

An Act

To establish the Little River Canyon National Preserve in the State of Alabama.

Oct. 21, 1992
[H.R. 3665]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Little River Canyon National Preserve Act of 1992.
Conservation.
16 USC 698q note.
16 USC 698q.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Little River Canyon National Preserve Act of 1992”.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In order to protect and preserve the natural, scenic, recreational, and cultural resources of the Little River Canyon area in DeKalb and Cherokee Counties, Alabama, and to provide for the protection and public enjoyment of the resources, there is established the Little River Canyon National Preserve (referred to in this Act as the “Preserve”).

(b) **AREA INCLUDED.**—The Preserve shall consist of the lands, waters, and interests in lands and waters generally depicted on the boundary map entitled “Little River Canyon National Preserve”, numbered NA-LRNP-80,001C, and dated March 1992.

(c) **MAP.**—The map referred to in subsection (b) shall—

(1) be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior in Washington, District of Columbia; and

(2) be filed with the appropriate offices of DeKalb and Cherokee Counties in the State of Alabama.

(d) **PUBLICATION OF DESCRIPTION.**—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall publish in the Federal Register a detailed description of the boundaries of the Preserve.

SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATION.

16 USC 698r.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Preserve shall be administered by the Secretary in accordance with this Act and in accordance with the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—

(1) the Act entitled “An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes”, approved August 25, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.); and

(2) the Act entitled “An Act to provide for the preservation of historic American sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance, and for other purposes”, approved August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(b) **HUNTING AND FISHING.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Secretary shall permit hunting, trapping, and fishing on lands and waters under the jurisdiction of the Secretary within the Preserve in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws.

(2) **TIME AND PLACE RESTRICTIONS.**—Subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary considers necessary in furtherance of this Act, and after consultation with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources of the State of Alabama and owners of lands adjacent to the Preserve, the Secretary may designate zones where, and establish periods when, the activities described in paragraph (1) will not be permitted within the Preserve for reasons of public safety, administration, fish and wildlife habitat, or public use and enjoyment.

(3) **RESTRICTIONS IN BOUNDARY AREAS.**—After consultation with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources of the State of Alabama and with the owners of lands adjacent to the Preserve, the Secretary may restrict hunting in areas within the Preserve that are adjacent to the boundaries of the Preserve where the restriction is necessary or appropriate to protect public safety.

(4) **CONGRESSIONAL INTENT.**—Nothing in this Act is intended to affect the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the State of Alabama with respect to fish and wildlife.

(c) **WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS.**—Subsection (a) of section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1278(a)) shall apply to that portion of the Little River that flows through the Preserve in the same manner and to the same extent as such subsection applies to the rivers referred to in such subsection. The application of such subsection to the Preserve shall not affect any determination of the value of the lands, waters, or interests in lands and waters within the boundaries of the Preserve.

(d) **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH STATE.**—

(1) **LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FIRE PREVENTION.**—In administering the Preserve, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Alabama, or any political subdivision of the State, for the rendering of—

(A) rescue, fire fighting, and law enforcement services;

and

(B) cooperative assistance by law enforcement and fire preventive agencies located in the vicinity of the Preserve.

(2) **PREPARATION OF MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—To facilitate the purposes of this section, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Alabama and directly affected political subdivisions of the State to provide professional assistance in the preparation of the management plan for the Preserve.

Contracts.

(e) **DESOTO STATE PARK.**—If lands within DeSoto State Park are acquired by the Secretary, at the request of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources of the State of Alabama, the Secretary shall enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department for the continued management by the Department of the lodge and other facilities that, as of the date of enactment of this Act, are part of DeSoto State Park. The cooperative agreement shall provide for the management and operation of the lodge and facilities in a manner that, to the maximum extent practicable, is consistent with similar operations elsewhere in the National Park System.

(f) **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.**—

(1) **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION PROGRAM.**—The Secretary shall develop and conduct a program to promote and encourage awareness of and participation in the develop-

ment of the general management plan for the Preserve by persons owning property in the vicinity of the Preserve, other interested groups and individuals, State, county, and municipal agencies, and the general public. Prior to final approval of the plan, the Secretary shall hold public meetings in DeKalb and Cherokee Counties.

(2) **CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC COMMENT.**—In preparing and implementing the plan described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall give full consideration to the views and comments of the individuals, groups, and agencies described in paragraph (1).

(g) **GREEN PITCHER PLANT.**—Upon the transfer by Alabama Power Company to the United States of any lands within the boundaries of the Preserve that contain the Green Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia oreophila*), all rights and obligations of Alabama Power Company under the agreement entered into between the company and the Department of the Interior (including the United States Fish and Wildlife Service) on May 12, 1983, in settlement of the action brought on September 24, 1980, against the Secretary and the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama (Civil Action No. CV 80-C-1242-M), shall be extinguished.

SEC. 4. ACQUISITION.

16 USC 698s.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Secretary is authorized to acquire lands, waters, and interests in lands and waters within the boundaries of the Preserve by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.

(2) **CONSENT OF THE OWNER.**—The Secretary may not acquire lands, waters, or interests in lands and waters for the Preserve without the consent of the owner.

(3) **STATE LANDS.**—Lands, waters, and interests in lands and waters within the boundaries of the Preserve that are owned by the State of Alabama, or any political subdivision of the State, may be acquired only by donation or exchange.

(b) NEGOTIATIONS FOR ACQUISITION.—

(1) **COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS.**—Immediately after publication of a description of the boundaries of the Preserve in accordance with section 2(d), the Secretary shall commence negotiations for the acquisition of the lands, waters, and interests in lands and waters within the boundaries of the Preserve.

(2) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit, in writing, a detailed schedule of actions and a progress report regarding the acquisition to—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(C) the Committees on Appropriations of Congress.

(3) **ACQUISITION DEADLINE.**—The Secretary shall substantially complete the acquisition of the lands, waters, and interests in lands and waters within the Preserve, in accordance with the purposes of this Act, not later than 2 years after

106 STAT. 2182

PUBLIC LAW 102-427—OCT. 21, 1992

the date of enactment of this Act, subject to the availability of funds.

(c) ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITS.—

(1) AVAILABILITY TO OWNER.—Promptly following completion of any environmental audit performed by or on behalf of the Secretary with respect to any property proposed to be acquired for the purposes of this Act, the Secretary shall make available to the owner of the property a copy of the audit.

(2) INCLUSION IN DOCUMENTS TRANSFERRING TITLE.—Any audit described in paragraph (1), and any environmental audit performed by the owner of the property and submitted to the Secretary prior to the date of the acquisition, shall be included as part of the documents transferring title to the property to the United States.

(d) FUTURE ADDITIONS.—No lands or interest in lands may be added to the Preserve after the date of enactment of this Act without specific authorization by Congress and the consent of the owner of the lands or interest.

16 USC 698t.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

Approved October 21, 1992.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 3665:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 102-482 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).
SENATE REPORTS: No. 102-472 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 138 (1992):

- Apr. 7, considered and passed House.
- Oct. 1, considered and passed Senate, amended.
- Oct. 3, House concurred in Senate amendment.

Southeast Region Foundation Document Recommendation
Little River Canyon National Preserve
August 2016

This Foundation Document has been prepared as a collaborative effort between park and regional staff and is recommended for approval by the Southeast Regional Director.



7/11/16

RECOMMENDED

Steve Black, Superintendent, Little River Canyon National Preserve

Date



7/11/16

APPROVED

Stan Austin, Regional Director, Southeast Region

Date



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

LIRI 152/134001
August 2016

Foundation Document • Little River Canyon National Preserve

