



## NHL Executive Summary

<b>Name of Property:</b>	Fort Armistead
<b>City, State:</b>	Cherokee National Forest, Coker Creek, Tennessee
<b>Period of Significance:</b>	1832-1838
<b>NHL Criteria:</b>	1, 6
<b>NHL Theme:</b>	I. Peopling Places <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. family and life cycle</li><li>2. health, nutrition, and disease</li><li>3. migration from outside and within</li><li>4. community and neighborhood</li><li>5. ethnic homelands</li><li>6. encounters, conflicts, and colonization</li></ol>
<b>Previous Recognition:</b>	N/A
<b>National Historic Context:</b>	Manifest Destiny and Westward Expansion, Jacksonian Democracy, and Indian Removal

### NHL Significance:

- Fort Armistead is a rare example of an archeologically intact Removal Period fort encountered by imprisoned Cherokees from the Valley Towns of North Carolina as they were escorted under military guard along the Cherokee Trail of Tears to the federal Indian Agency in present-day Charleston, Tennessee.
- The remains of Fort Armistead uniquely convey aspects of the nationally significant context of Indian Removal and Westward Expansion. Recently discovered documents connect the fort to Removal-period deportation events, including documentation of more than 3,000 emigrants/deportees from the North Carolina mountains either passing by or spending a few days at Fort Armistead in June and July of 1838. The Cherokee Trail of Tears was only a single instance of forced Indian Removal initiated under the auspices of Jacksonian democracy, yet this period of Cherokee history is an integral part of American history for it highlights the brutal consequences of settler nationalism, countering the prevalent myth of benign, intrepid westward expansion.
- Fort Armistead is also nationally significant under Criterion 6 for its capacity to yield nationally significant information about the fort and its inhabitants throughout the period of significance, and more broadly, on the logistics and communication network that played a large role in affecting the character of the Removal process. To date, Fort Armistead is among the few federal military installations associated with Cherokee Removal to be identified archeologically, and its integrity is unmatched in comparison to other Removal Period forts in the southeastern United States.



- The Fort Armistead site is located on lands held, occupied, and traversed by indigenous peoples for millennia and is a place particularly significant to the present-day Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The Fort played a role in the forced removal of thousands of Cherokee people on the Trail of Tears via the Unicoy Turnpike, but also figured in the removal experiences of ancestors of peoples of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, the Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town, and other indigenous tribes of the Creek Confederacy.

### Integrity:

- The setting of Fort Armistead retains considerable integrity, from its undeveloped character to its position on the Unicoy Turnpike, a contributing element of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail designated in 2009.
- The historical functions of Fort Armistead are conveyed through the isolated wooded character of its setting and the landscape of visible road traces which crisscross the site. The setting conveys its geographic and social context as an isolated waystation along the Unicoy Turnpike and the Cherokee Trail of Tears.
- Although no above-ground remains of the fort survive (other than as subtle ruins), subsurface elements of Fort Armistead's architecture such as foundations and sub-floor storage areas retain exceptional archeological integrity. Through archeological methods the layout of the fort complex and the character of its buildings and structures can be ascertained. In addition, intact artifact deposits present the potential to provide information about the activities of the fort's occupants and visitors.

**Owner of Property:** USDA Forest Service

**Acreage of Property:** 36.36 ac

**Origins of Nomination:** Cherokee National Forest, and was authored by Brett H. Riggs, Ph.D. and Mary Elizabeth Fitts, Ph.D. (Western Carolina University) with contributions from Michael Roller, NPS-WASO and support from Quentin Bass (Heritage Program Manager, Cherokee National Forest [retired]) who championed the U.S. Forest Service's purchase of the site in 2007. Drafts of the nomination were inspired, reviewed, and revised over a period of several years with input from Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), Tribal Directors of Cultural Offices, and Tribal citizens and elders from Cherokee Nation, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, and Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. In addition, the Cherokee National Forest has hosted numerous Tribal officials, Tribal citizens, and elected officials of the National Trail of Tears Association to site visits over the past fifteen years. Mr. JaSal Morris, Forest Supervisor for the Cherokee National Forest, was steadfast in his leader's intent for the preservation and recognition of this site and the collaborative approach to its nomination.

**Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:** This nomination, produced collaboratively, and with the support of Indigenous stakeholders, fulfills Director Sam's fifth priority for the National Park Service in strengthening Indigenous connections and enhancing our nation-to-nation relationships. As the first NHL nomination with a focus on the Cherokee Trail of Tears, the designation will



bring attention to this dark chapter in our country's history and create a place for its acknowledgement and memory for Indigenous descendent communities who continue to live in its legacy.

**Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:** None

**Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of August 21, 2023):**

- Kendrick Arney, Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service, Southern Region
- Jack D. Baker, President, Trail of Tears Association
- Phillip R. Hodge, State Archeologist and Director, Division of Archeology, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
- Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Principal Chief, Cherokee Nation
- Mitch Ingram, Mayor, Monroe County, Tennessee
- Adrian Lambert, Executive Director, Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association
- Linda Langley, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Pam Hall Mathews, President, Board of Directors, Charles Hall Museum and Heritage Center
- E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr., Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer
- D. Jasal Morris, Forest Supervisor, Cherokee National Forest
- Mary Jane Reece, Treasurer, Coker Creek Heritage Group
- Anne F. Rogers, President, North Carolina Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association
- Vicki Rozema, President, Tennessee Trail of Tears Association and Director, National Trail of Tears Association
- Richard Sneed, Principal Chief, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Acee Watt, Office of Historic Preservation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma

**Landmarks Committee Comments:**

- Committee had no substantial comments.

**Landmarks Committee Recommendation:**

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of Fort Armistead in Cherokee National Forest, Monroe County, Tennessee, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

**Advisory Board Recommendation:** The National Park System Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of Fort Armistead in Cherokee National Forest, Monroe County, Tennessee, as a National Historic Landmark.