



Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

Project Updates - Protection, Development, and Promotion

Trail Work Completed



Volunteers helped build 2.5 miles of retracement trail in David Crockett State Park

Design & Development Projects

- Lake Guntersville State Park, Alabama: A site identification sign and a pedestrian sign were installed at Lake Guntersville trailhead/ retracement trail for the 175th anniversary event on September 28.
- New Madrid, Missouri: A site identification sign and two directional signs for the New Madrid Bend Water Route Overlook were installed within the City of New Madrid. NTIR is still working with Missouri DOT on the placement of highway signs also directing to the overlook.
- Reynolds and Iron counties, Missouri: 46 original route signs covering 33 miles were ordered.
- Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Tennessee: Signs that will mark a new Trail of Tears pedestrian retracement trail were ordered.
- Giles and Lawrenceburg counties, Tennessee: 86 original route signs totaling 40 miles have been ordered. The sign unveiling is planned for October 11 in Centerville, Missouri.
- David Crockett State Park, Tennessee: Two and one half miles of pedestrian retracement trail have been constructed following the Trail of Tears. The trail dedication event is planned for November 2nd.

National Register

NTIR staff worked closely with the Trail of Tears Oklahoma Chapter and the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office to identify and nominate significant properties associated with the trail to the National Register of Historic Places. Two properties were recently listed: Ballard Creek Road in the Westville vicinity and the Walker Farmhouse in the Welch vicinity. The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. For more information, go to: www.nps.gov/history/nr/

Study Completed

Dr. Mark Wagner and Kayeleigh Sharp (Center for Archaeological Investigations at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale) completed an NTIR-sponsored study that investigated known and potential locations for trail sites in Illinois. A massive database of businesses that existed along the trail corridor has been compiled and used to suggest the most probable sites for Cherokee camping, purchasing, and similar interactions. Illinois TOTA Chapter members assisted.

UPDATE: Building Survey

Staff at the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) at Middle Tennessee State University have worked for a year with NTIR and TOTA partners to conduct and record a condition assessment for historic structures identified along the trail in nine states. The project will be funded for another year, allowing the CHP staff to expand their inventory and to provide additional information about the structures they have documented thus far.

What's New? — Fall 2013

You can find the large print official map and guide at www.nps.gov/trte/planyourvisit/brochures.htm

Official Map & Guide - Large Print Formatted for ADA standards at 11 x 17 inches print size.

Congratulations!

The Trail of Tears Official Map and Guide won first prize in the site publication category from the National Association of Interpretation. The Cherokee Nation and the National Park Service teamed to produce the brochure.

Cave Spring and the Trail of Tears

CHEROKEE PHOENIX AND INDIANS' ADVOCATE.

"First Blood Shed by the Georgians"

Seventeen white families from Georgia and Alabama illegally took possession of Cherokee homes here in the Beaver Dam settlement in February 1830. Cherokee Chief John Ross responded by sending a mounted police force, the Light Horse Brigade, to evict them. Major Ridge, David Vann, and the brigade went from home to home, forcibly evicting white intruders and burning empty Cherokee structures to discourage future settlement. Retaliation came the following day in the death of one Cherokee and the imprisonment of others.

Beaver Dam marked the most prominent instance of active Cherokee resistance to unauthorized white settlement on Cherokee lands. The log structure across the street stood as witness to the event; it is one of the last remnants of Beaver Dam in today's Cave Spring and Vann's Valley. After this incident, the Cherokee sought only political solutions to intrusions from Georgia and no longer attempted to forcibly evict whites.

"...a Cherokee has...been killed by the intruders, and three more taken bound into Georgia...A company of Cherokees...started the other day, under the authority of the Principal Chief to correct, at least part of the evil...They found...17 families of intruders, living, no believe, in Cherokee houses. These they ordered out and after safely taking out their bedding, chairs, &c. the houses were set on fire. In no instance was the least violence used on the part of the Cherokees."

Cherokee Phoenix and Indians' Advocate, Wednesday, February 10, 1830



Major Ridge David Vann



The Green Hotel, in front of you, contains within it an original log structure that predates Cherokee removal, possibly as early as 1810.



This Cherokee delegation visited Cave Spring in 2011, recognizing its connection to the story of removal. The structure is located on an original site of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

Publications

Both the Tennessee and Georgia state brochures have been printed: 34,000 Tennessee and 3,000 Georgia. The Georgia brochures have been distributed. A second printing is underway.

Exhibit Projects Underway

- Dirt Town, Georgia (1)
- Island Town, Georgia (1)
- Chatooga Town, Georgia (1)
- David Crockett State Park, Tennessee (6)

Exhibits


- Two wayside exhibits were installed at Cave Spring, Georgia on May 10, 2013.
- In Missouri, contextual wayside exhibits were placed at Trail of Tears State Park in Jackson; at Bollinger Mill State Historic Site in Burfordville; and in Belmont.

Jackson and the Trail of Tears

They Passed This Way

Home to thousands of men, women, and children, the Cherokee Nation once spread across parts of Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama. The 1830 Indian Removal Act required that the Cherokee surrender their land and move west.

In 1838, more than 15,000 Cherokee began their trek west from their eastern homeland to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) over the "Trail of Tears." They traveled by roads and rivers, including this stretch of the Mississippi River. More than 1,000 died during the journey westward, and more than 4,000 died as a result of their forced migration.



Federal Indian Removal Policy

Federal Indian removal policy aroused fierce and bitter debate. Supporters of the policy claimed it was a benevolent action to save the tribes east of the Mississippi River from being overwhelmed and lost in the onslaught of an expanding American population. Opponents decried its inhumanity and the tragic consequences it had for the Indian peoples. One thing was certain: removal freed millions of acres of desired Indian lands for use by white settlers.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 resulted in the removal of thousands of American Indians from their ancestral lands for new homes in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). They traveled by existing roads and rivers. Many groups left in the fall, hoping to avoid the disease and heat of summer travel, and instead faced treacherous winter weather. Many died during the ordeal of the Trail of Tears.



In the 1830s, the federal government forcibly removed approximately 16,000 Cherokee, 21,000 Muscogee (Creek), 9,000 Choctaw, 6,000 Chickasaw, and 4,000 Seminole from their ancestral homes in the southeastern United States.

Today

Despite the hardships of the journey, members of the five removed tribes established new lives in the West. They stand as successful sovereign nations, proudly preserving cultural traditions, while adapting to the challenges of the 21st century.

Cherokee who survived the Trail of Tears created a new sovereign nation in present-day Oklahoma. Some Cherokee remained in North Carolina and, due to a special exemption, formed the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Trail of Tears National Historic Trail



By helping to preserve historic sites and trail segments, and developing areas for public use, the story of the forced removal of the Cherokee people and other American Indian tribes is remembered and told by the National Park Service and its partners.

You can visit more sites along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Learn more at www.nps.gov/trte

New Certifications

- Funk Heritage Center, Waleska, Georgia (4/23/13)
- Vann Cherokee Cabin, Cave Spring, Georgia (5/11/13)
- Hiwassee River Heritage Center, Charleston, Tennessee (8/23/13)



National Trails Intermountain Region

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Comments? Write to:

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