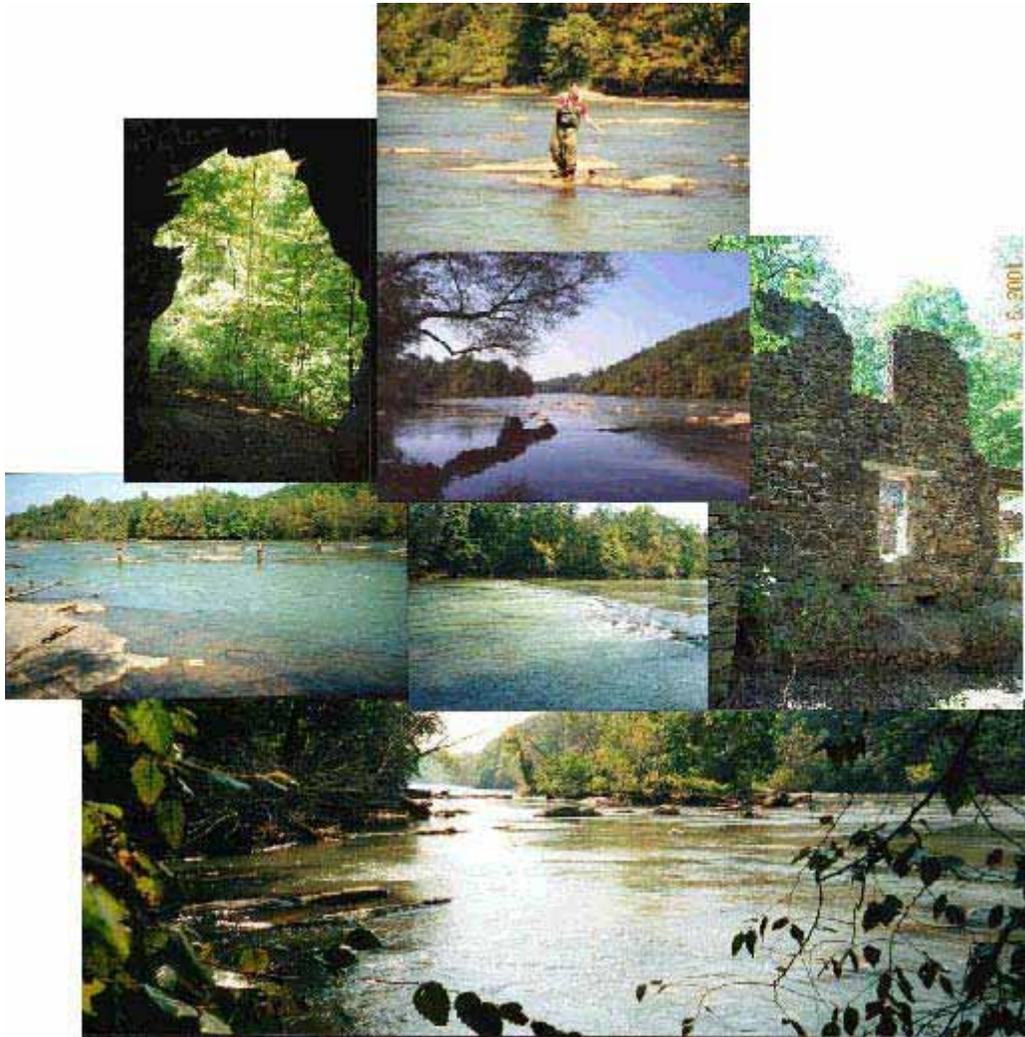


PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION



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PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of this general management plan and environmental impact statement is to present a plan for managing the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area for the next 15 to 20 years. The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is a 48-mile-long park located in the rapidly developing area between Atlanta, Georgia, and Lake Lanier, Georgia. The current park boundaries include 10,000 acres of land situated in a narrow corridor along the Chattahoochee River. The Region map and Vicinity map show the location of the current park boundaries in relationship to the state of Georgia and the Atlanta region. The Previous Conditions map shows the location and extent of the boundaries as defined in the previous general management plan for the park, which was prepared in 1989. The Water Features map highlights the Chattahoochee River and its main tributaries.

General management plans represent the broadest level of planning conducted by the National Park Service and are intended to provide overall guidance for making informed decisions about future conditions in national parks. General plans are updated by the National Park Service every 10 to 15 years and are required to be in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. According to policy, the environmental impact statement is prepared simultaneously with the general management plan under the guidelines established in Management Policies 2001 (NPS 2000c) and *Director's Order #12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making* (NPS 2001b).

The general management plan does not address site-specific projects such as visitor centers or other structures. These types of detailed proposals are addressed in the future implementation phase of park service planning by preparing National Environmental Policy Act environmental assessments that “tier” directly to the general management plan. The general management plan provides the basis for making decisions about site-specific proposals in the future, and can be used by the park supervisor to decide what activities are appropriate for different areas of the park.

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is visited by more than 2.6 million people every year and is ranked 27th in the nation in number of visitors (NPS 2000d). This high degree of use and associated demands on facilities and resources are expected to increase in the future, as the park is located in one of the most rapidly developing parts of the United States. For example, Forsyth County, located along a several-mile length of the northern portion of the park, is currently the fastest growing county in the nation. The area between Lake Lanier and Atlanta is projected to be fully developed in the next 20 years. These levels of growth and the associated population and land use changes have the potential to significantly affect park resources. The updated general management plan is intended to help the National Park Service plan for the future under these conditions.

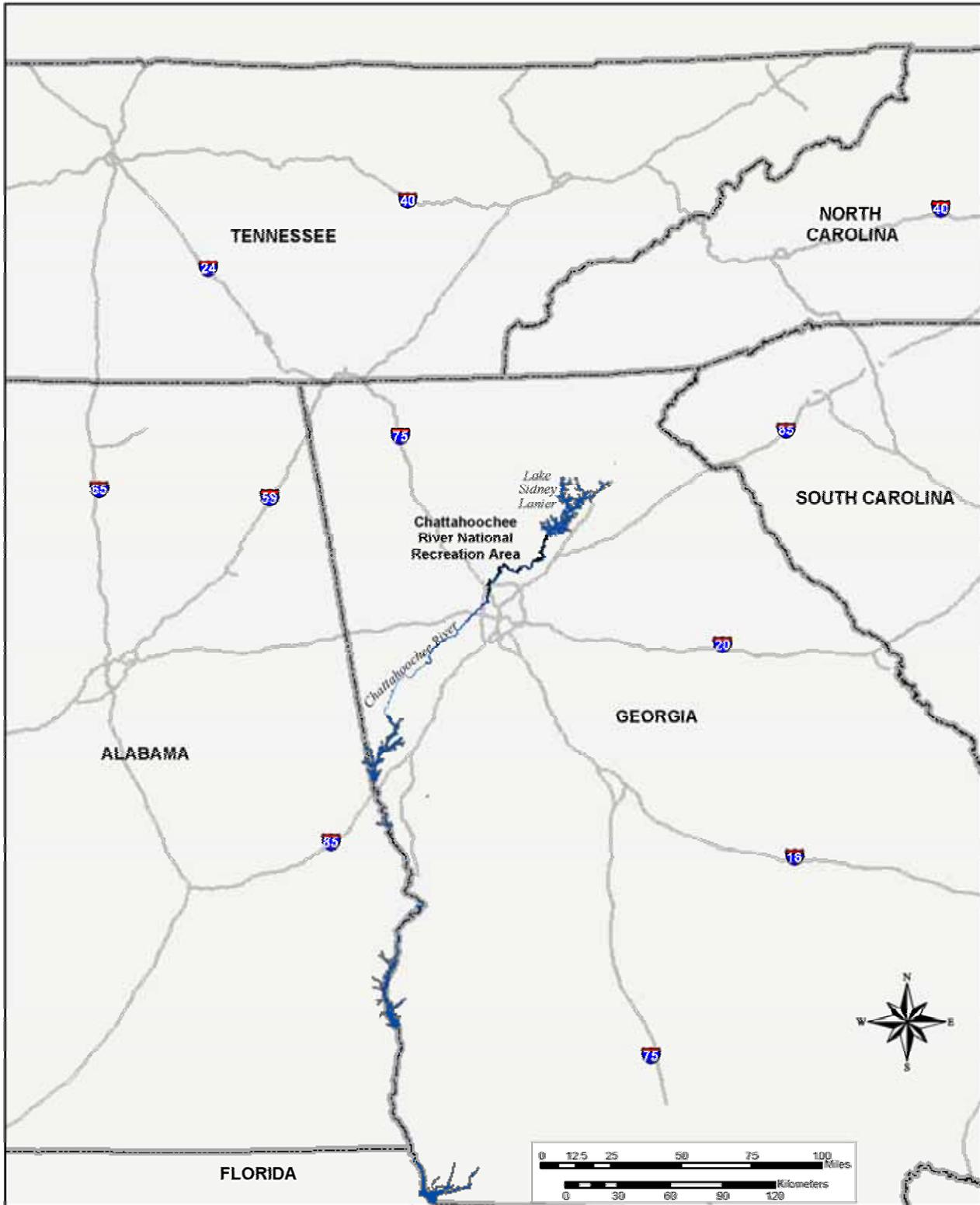
This plan is the basic tool for managing the park for the next 10 to 15 years. The specific purposes of this general management plan are to:

- Specify resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved in the park
- Provide the basic foundation for decision-making regarding the management of the park

When completed, the general management plan will represent a commitment to the public by the National Park Service on how the park will be used and managed. As such, it is intended to

- Confirm the significance of the park
- Establish the direction and values that should be considered in planning to achieve the purposes defined in the establishing legislation of the park
- Define management prescriptions (desired future conditions) that establish the goals of the National Park Service and the public with regard to visitor experience, natural resources, and cultural resources, including the types and locations of resource management activities, visitor activities, and development that are appropriate within each management prescription





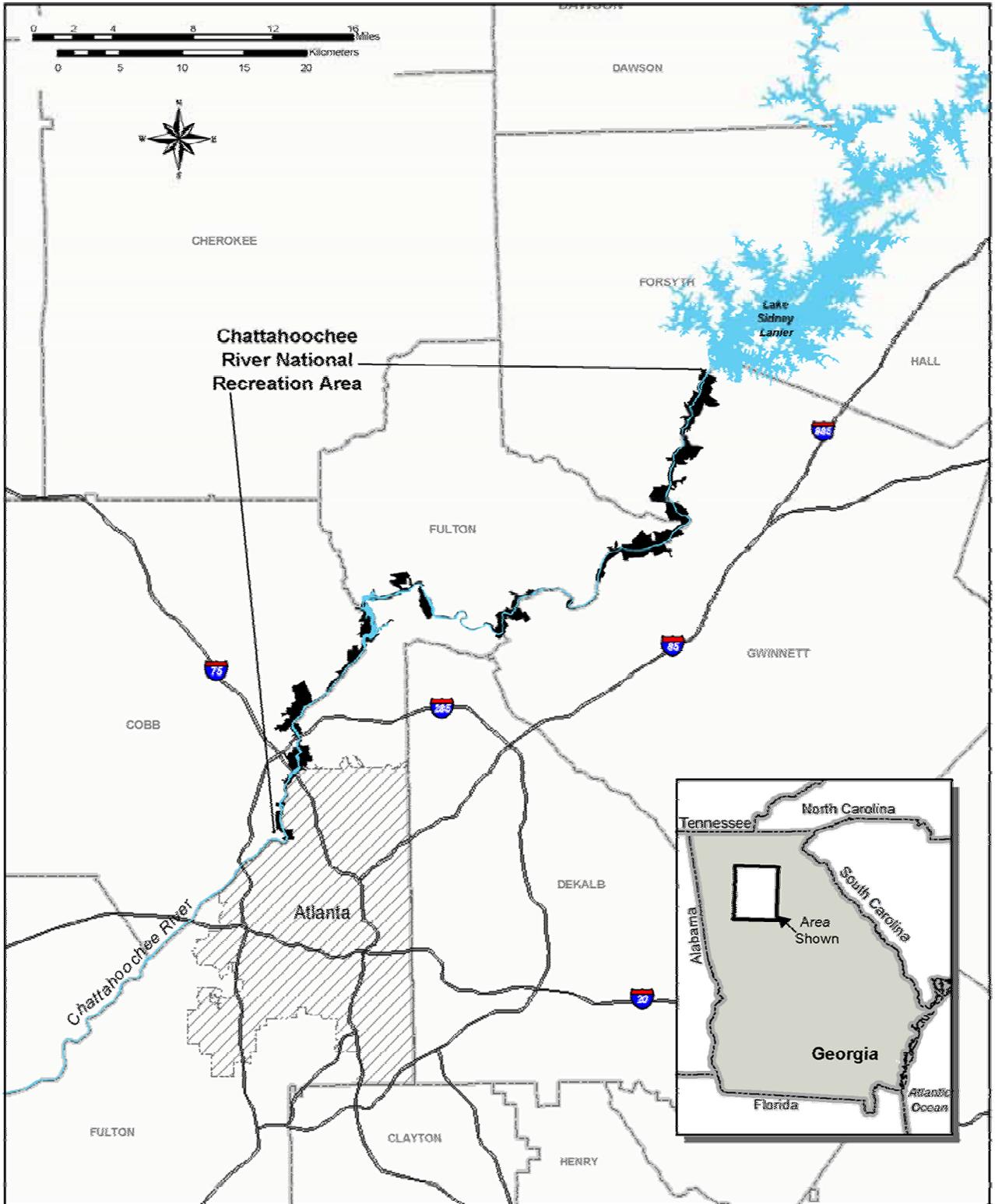
Regional Map

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

U.S. Department of the Interior - National Park Service

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Vicinity Map

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

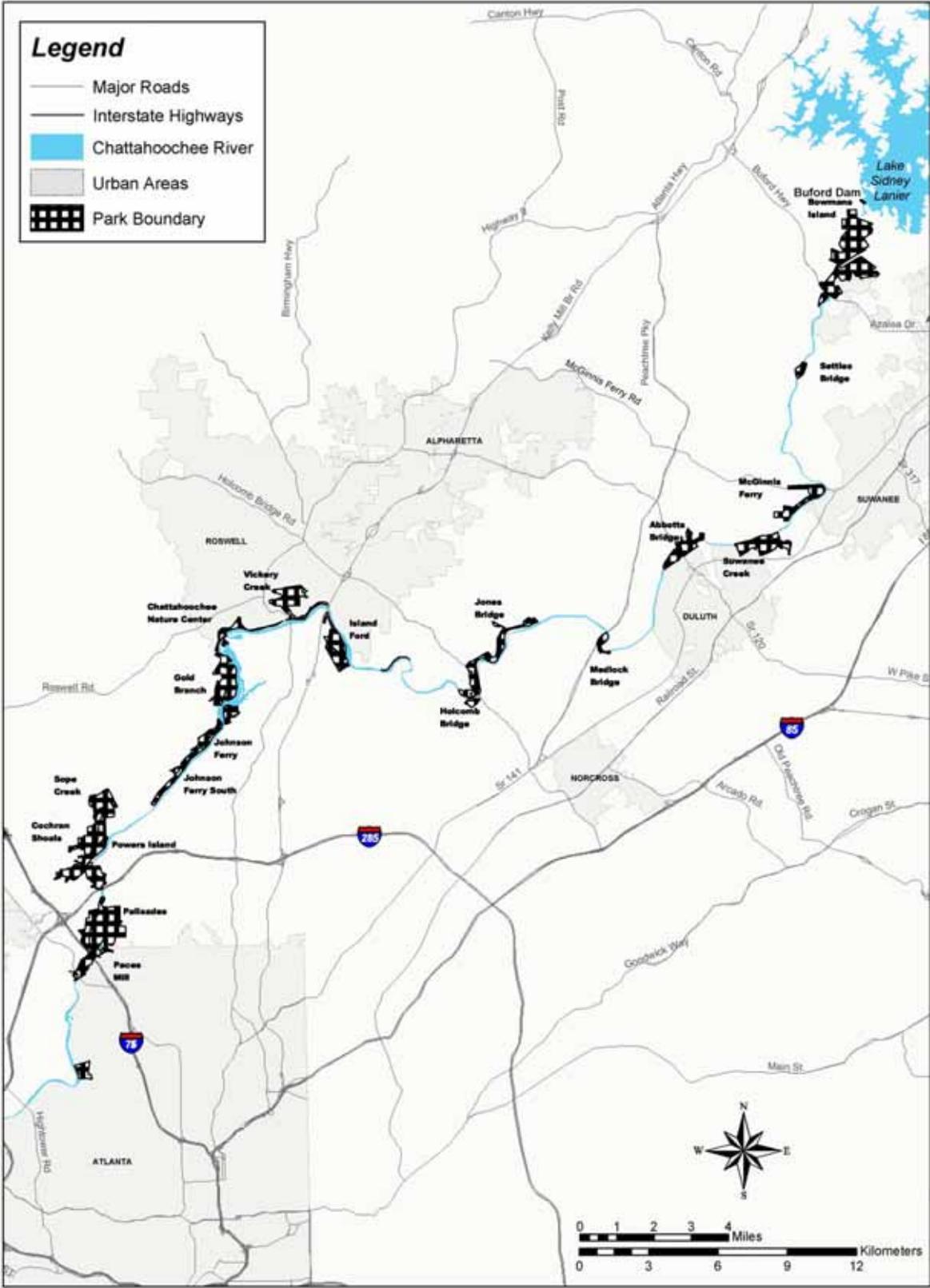
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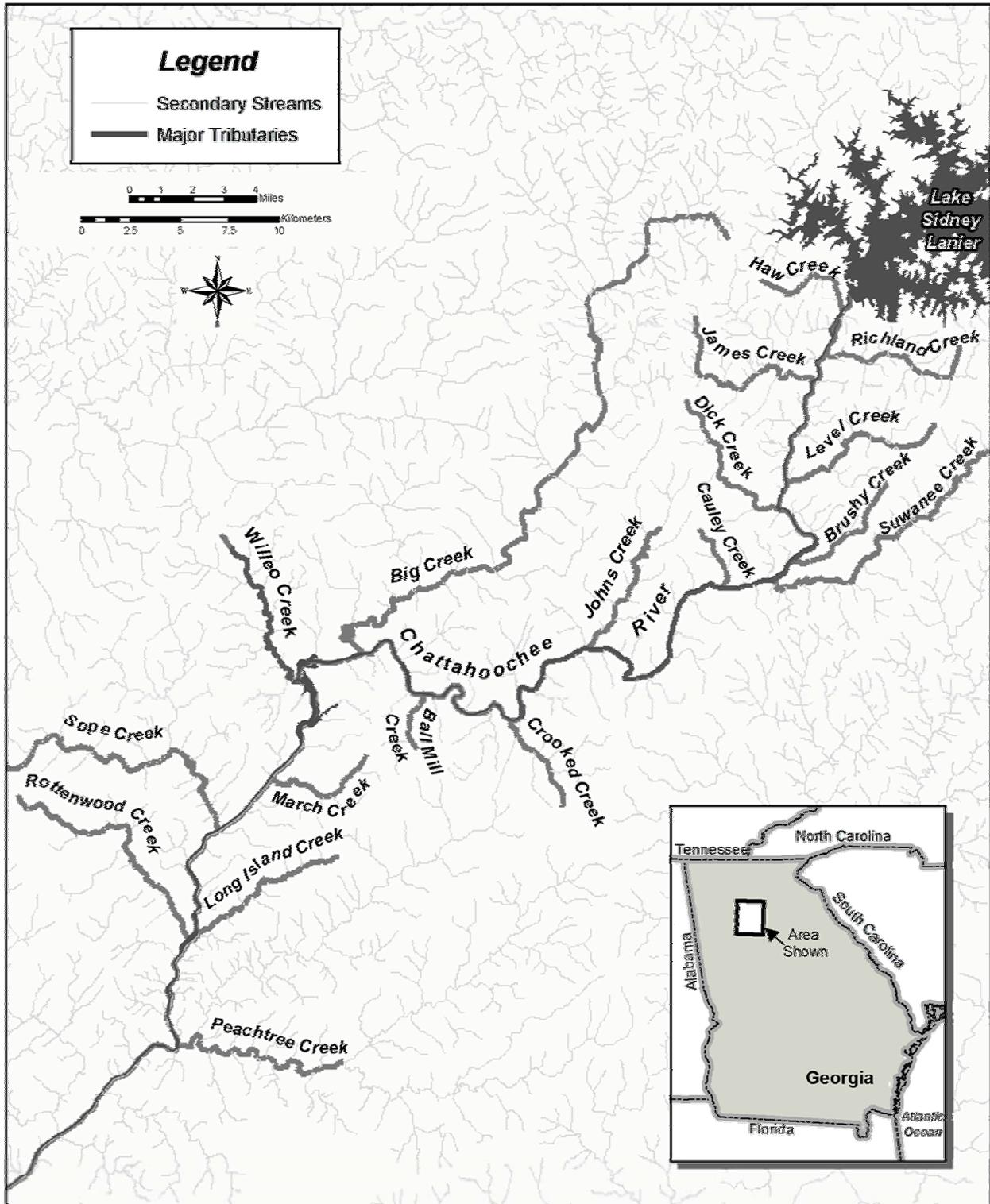


Previous Conditions Map (1989 GMP)
Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

U.S. Department of the Interior - National Park Service
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Water Features

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

U.S. Department of the Interior - National Park Service

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Determine areas to which the management prescriptions should be applied to achieve the overall management goals of the park

Illustrate ranges and types of appropriate management actions suitable to maintain and improve conditions

Assist National Park Service staff in determining whether actions proposed by the National Park Service or others are consistent with the goals embodied in the management prescription where the action would occur

Serve as the basis for shorter-term management documents such as five-year strategic plans, annual performance plans, and implementation plans

Some future visitor experience, natural resource, and cultural resource conditions of the park are specified in law and policy. Others are open to debate and must be determined through planning. The alternatives in this general management plan address the resource and experience conditions that ultimately are consistent with federal laws and regulations and National Park Service policies.

The National Park Service views the public as integral team members in establishing the desired resource and experience conditions that will guide the management of the park. Measures taken by the National Park Service to include the public as a partner in general management planning for the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area include:

Soliciting public participation in the planning process and incorporating suggestions from the public into the proposed park management alternatives

Performing public scoping to identify important impact topics and evaluating the effects of the alternatives to those impact topics in the draft environmental impact statement

Inviting the public to comment on this draft general management plan and using that input in the preparation of the final general management plan

Because the general management plan does not propose site-specific actions or describe how particular programs or projects should be ranked

or implemented, those decisions will be addressed during the more detailed planning associated with strategic plans, annual performance plans, and implementation plans. Such plans will be derived from the goals, future conditions, and appropriate types of activities established in this general management plan. The general management plan provides a broad-scale set of prescriptions and zones within the park that serve as a decision-making tool for the future, when site-specific proposals for various park facilities or programs are made. These future proposed activities will be evaluated in separate National Environmental Policy Act documents that will be tiered to the general management plan, allowing the National Park Service to make informed decisions that conform to the National Environmental Policy Act.

NEED FOR THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

A general management plan is needed to meet the requirements of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 and National Park Service policy, which mandate development of a general management plan for each park. The last general management plan for Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was prepared in 1989. Because National Park Service policy requires that general management plans be updated approximately every 10 to 15 years, the park plan must be revised during 2004.

The Act of October 30, 1984 (Public Law 98-568) increased the park size from 6,300 acres to 6,800 acres to protect the 48-mile segment of the Chattahoochee River and adjoining lands. President Jimmy Carter, a native of Georgia, was instrumental in initiating this expansion. In 1999, the authorized boundary of the park was expanded from 6,800 acres to 10,000 acres. The general management plan must be updated to consider these new parcels of land. Moreover, the park is located in one of the most rapidly growing parts of the nation, making it potentially subject to adverse impacts caused by overuse and environmental degradation. The plan will help protect the park from these potentially adverse impacts through development of an appropriate management program.

This general management plan provides broad direction for the park's future. It is needed to assist



park managers in making purposeful decisions based on a deliberate vision of the park. In view of the rapidly developing nature of the Chattahoochee River corridor and the intense use of the park, the general management plan is a critical element in protecting the park's resources while at the same time providing for quality visitor experiences.

General management planning is needed to:

Clarify the levels of resource protection and public use that must be achieved for the park, based on the park-specific purpose and significance, plus the body of laws and policies directing park management

Determine the best mix of resource protection and visitor experiences beyond what is prescribed by law and policy based on the

Purposes of the park

Range of public expectations and concerns

Resources occurring within the park

Effects of alternative management plans on existing natural, cultural, and social conditions

Long-term economic costs

Establish the degree to which the park should be managed to

Preserve and enhance its natural and cultural resources

Provide recreation

Accommodate urban transportation and connectivity

PARK HISTORY AND USE RELATIVE TO MANAGEMENT PLANNING

In 1916, Congress passed the Organic Act, which created the National Park Service to “preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.” Thus, any management actions in the park must recognize that preserving the natural and cultural resources and values of the park is paramount, and that any visitor activities associated with “enjoyment, education, and inspiration”

can occur only to the extent that they do not impair the natural and cultural resources and values for future generations.

Congress established the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in 1978, and determined that the “natural, scenic, recreation, historic, and other values of a forty- eight- mile segment of the Chattahoochee River and certain adjoining lands in the State of Georgia from Buford Dam downstream to Peachtree Creek are of special national significance, and that such values should be preserved and protected from developments and uses which would substantially impair or destroy them.”

Legislation passed on December 9, 1999 (Pub. L. 106- 154, Sec. 1, 106 Stat. 1736) expanded the park to 10,000 acres (Appendix D). This law specified:

“The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the State of Georgia is a nationally significant resource;

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area has been adversely affected by land use changes occurring inside and outside the recreation area;

The population of the metropolitan Atlanta area continues to expand northward, leaving dwindling opportunities to protect the scenic, recreational, natural, and historical values of the 2,000- foot- wide corridor adjacent to each bank of the Chattahoochee River and its impoundments in the 48- mile segment known as the 'area of national concern';

The State of Georgia has enacted the Metropolitan River Protection Act to ensure protection of the corridor located within 2,000 feet of each bank of the Chattahoochee River, or the corridor located within the 100- year floodplain, whichever is larger;

The corridor located within the 100- year floodplain includes the area of national concern;

Since establishment of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, visitor use of the recreation area has shifted dramatically from waterborne to water- related and land-based activities;



The State of Georgia and political subdivisions of the state along the Chattahoochee River have indicated willingness to join in a cooperative effort with the federal government to link existing units of the recreation area through a series of linear corridors to be established within the area of national concern and elsewhere on the river; and

If Congress appropriates funds in support of the cooperative effort described in paragraph (7), funding from the State, political subdivisions of the State, private foundations, corporate entities, private individuals, and other sources will be available to fund more than half the estimated cost of the cooperative effort.”

The park has historically been comprised of 16 “units” encompassing approximately 6,800 acres of land. The units, shown on the Previous Conditions map, were assigned names that reflected the local community features and historical resources. The 16 units, from north to south, are:

Bowman’s Island	Settles Bridge
McGinnis Ferry	Suwanee Creek
Abbotts Bridge	Medlock Bridge
Jones Bridge	Holcomb Bridge
Island Ford	Vickery Creek
Gold Branch	Cochran Shoals
Johnsons Ferry (South)	Johnsons Ferry (Main)
Palisades (East)	Palisades (West)

The expansion to 10,000 acres was the result of more than 15 years of coordination by the National Park Service in cooperation with the Trust for Public Land and other organizations. The non-federal land holdings within the expanded park boundary can be acquired by the National Park Service only if the owners are “willing sellers.” The National Park Service is currently negotiating with multiple landowners regarding acquiring the additional parcels.

The 1989 general management plan included the management of a proposed U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water re-regulation dam, which was to

be built a short distance below the existing Buford Dam. However, that project was never constructed and is no longer being considered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Therefore, the alternatives in this general management plan have eliminated consideration of the dam in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.

Since the 1989 plan was prepared, the Atlanta area has grown rapidly. The counties that surround the 48-mile Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (Cobb, Fulton, Forsyth, Gwinnett, and Dekalb) are among the fastest growing in the nation. This rapid development has resulted in construction of industrial, commercial, and housing developments close to the narrow, linear park. The number of visitors and the variety of visitor uses have fluctuated over the years. As a result, the updated general management plan addresses problems associated with physical encroachment and increased levels and types of visitor use. The following is a summary of three key management issues that have been identified for the park.

The first key management issue is how to determine the most appropriate levels of service for visitor interpretation and education in the park, in view of the increasing numbers of people and types of uses. Key questions are:

How can the park accommodate increasing numbers of visitors and still provide effective infrastructure such as water and wastewater facilities, roads, and parking areas?

How can the park provide effective educational and interpretive programs for increasing numbers of visitors?

A second key management issue is to determine suitable locations for administration and visitor facilities. Key questions include:

What are the most appropriate locations to support administration and operations functions, with a focus on minimizing resource disturbance?

Should these facilities be concentrated in a few locations or spread out over a larger geographical area?



What is the basis for deciding where facilities should be located and what types should be constructed?

The third key management issue is how to manage the park to protect natural and cultural resources and to allow for quality visitor experience. The park is located in a long, narrow river corridor surrounded by rapidly developing communities and is therefore highly sensitive to potential effects of encroachment and overuse. Key issues include the following:

Physical disturbance of soils on construction sites in developing areas immediately around the park can lead to soil erosion in streams within the park and the Chattahoochee River, with resulting adverse impacts on aquatic life and water quality.

Water quality in streams within the park, including the Chattahoochee River, can be adversely impacted by nonpoint runoff from impervious surfaces in adjoining developed areas. Pollutants such as fecal coliform bacteria, trace metals, and organic compounds can be introduced via this mechanism.

Encroachment by development can lead to creation of numerous informal, unmaintained (social) trails in the park created by people in adjoining residential areas. Social trails disturb native vegetation and can lead to soil erosion, especially in steeper sloped areas.

Increased numbers of visitors require water and wastewater infrastructure as well as education and interpretation services. Construction and operation of appropriate facilities, along with associated roads and parking areas, can affect the park's natural habitats and cultural resources.

The potential solutions to these issues are reflected in the management alternatives analyzed in this general management plan and environmental impact statement. The alternatives address the adequacy and appropriateness of park services and facilities and the challenges posed by managing a large, linear park area in the center of a major, rapidly developing metropolitan area.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA COVERED BY THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area includes a maximum of 10,000 acres of land distributed along a 48-mile, linear corridor between Peachtree Creek, Atlanta, and Buford Dam. The Vicinity and Regional maps show the area covered by this general management plan. The park includes the 16 original units as well as the newly acquired land. As can be seen in the figures, the park is a linear corridor surrounded by rapidly developing urban and suburban areas.

PLANNING DIRECTION OR GUIDANCE

Park Mission

The primary purpose of the original Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was to recognize the unique geological features associated with the Palisades area south of Johnson's Ferry. The cliffs in the area were formed geological processes (continental drift) associated with the Brevard Fault. The original park, established in 1978, included an area primarily in the vicinity of these cliffs, which form an imposing rampart overlooking the Chattahoochee River. The cliffs, together with the surrounding native forested uplands and river bottom areas along the 48-mile river corridor, were determined to be a unique resource worthy of national park status. Certain cultural resources, including a major Native American rock shelter and industrial mill sites, were also present in this area.

The park has been expanded twice and now encompass 10,000 acres. The purposes of the park as defined by the most recent legislation are as follows:

“To increase the level of protection of the open spaces within the area of national concern along the Chattahoochee River and to enhance visitor enjoyment of the open spaces by adding land-based linear corridors to link existing units of the recreation area;

To ensure that the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is managed to standardize acquisition, planning, design, con-



struction, and operation of the linear corridor; and

To authorize the appropriation of Federal funds to cover a portion of the costs of the Federal, State, local, and private cooperative effort to add additional areas to the recreation area so as to establish a series of linear corridors linking existing units of the recreation area and to protect other open spaces of the Chattahoochee River corridor.”

In addition, the House Report states, “the National Recreation Area is ‘not’ intended to provide playing fields, highly developed recreation centers or many other worthwhile programs offered by these agencies. Rather, the river and the associated lands are to be the resource base upon which the National Park Service can function to provide opportunities consistent with national park operations.”

As part of this general management plan, the following formal statement of the purpose of the park was developed:

“The purpose of Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is to lead the preservation and protection of the 48- mile Chattahoochee River corridor from Buford Dam to Peachtree Creek, and its associated natural and cultural resources, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”

This purpose statement, required as part of the formal National Park Service planning procedures, was the first step in the development of this general management plan. The statement forms the basis for all subsequent steps in the planning process.

Park Significance. The significance of the natural and cultural resources in Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is summarized in the statements that follow. This information was used in the planning process to ensure that the park’s natural and cultural resources are protected in accordance with the governing laws, regulations, policies, and mandates.

Geological Significance. The park’s entire 48-mile- long corridor runs along the Brevard Fault Zone, which forms the Chattahoochee River channel. Typically, rivers meander and change course over time. Because it is essentially “locked” in place

by the fault, the Chattahoochee River is one of the oldest and most stable river channels within the United States.

The Brevard Fault is a major geological feature extending for more than 320 miles. It forms, in part, the dividing line between two physiographic provinces: the Appalachian Mountains and the Piedmont Plateau. The steep and rocky Palisades section of the park is generally considered to be the best location along the entire Brevard Fault Zone to view and study this major geologic feature.

Biological Significance. The park contains a diverse assemblage of relatively undisturbed mesic hardwood floodplain, bluff, and ravine forests; seasonally and temporarily flooded bottomland forested wetlands; and emergent and scrub- shrub wetlands.

The mixed habitat types within the old and stable Chattahoochee River channel form a biological link with the Appalachian Mountains. This has resulted in high biodiversity within the park. For example, more than 850 species of vascular plants exist within the park, including species associated with both the southern piedmont and mountain habitats. This number of vascular plants is one of the highest within the national park system. It is especially noteworthy that this unusually high level of biodiversity is located in an area accessible to a large metropolitan population.

The diverse habitats in the park support numerous rare plants and animals, including both aquatic and terrestrial species. This includes several species defined as special status by the Georgia Natural Heritage Program, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These species warrant special regulations to assist their long- term survival and protection.

Significance of Cultural Resources. The park vicinity has been occupied by humans since the Archaic period, approximately 8,000 years ago. Remaining Native American cultural features include rock- shelters, fish weirs, and occupied Native American sites. In addition, the park contains numerous Woodland Period sites along the river corridor (1000 B.C. –1000 A.D.), as reported in the previous General Management Plan (NPS 1989) Woodland period (1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.) is one of



the least investigated periods of Georgia prehistory and represents an area of potentially high archeological significance and research potential for the park. There are no similar counterparts in the region. At least six of these archeological sites are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The park contains more than 200 archeological sites. These sites, and the more than 7,000 associated archeological artifacts, document the historical and prehistoric use and cultural adaptation of the early cultures, up to and including the Creek and Cherokee Nations. The Chattahoochee River is considered to have been the transitory border between these two great cultures.

The park also contains numerous historical features from the early American culture. This includes Civil War sites, pre-Civil War home sites and farmhouses, at least 10 early ferry crossings, and pre-Civil War paper mill and woolen mill sites. These mills are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The park maintains museum collections as well as with the National Park Service Southeast Archeological Center, which supports the park with research, collections, and information management.

Coordination was conducted with American Indian Tribes (Creek and Cherokee Nations) to identify any concerns and issues regarding places of traditional cultural importance (ethnographic resources) in the park. The existing literature and park records were also investigated to determine whether these resources exist in the park. No ethnographic resources have yet been identified to date. However, no formal study to identify such areas has been carried out at the park. Therefore it is not possible to assess impacts to ethnographic resources by any of the management alternatives at this time.

Recreation Significance. The park constitutes an important outdoor recreation resource to several million people located in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The park's green space and the river improve the quality of life by serving as a sanctuary and by providing a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, nature viewing, paddling, boating, and fishing. The Chattahoochee River is inhabited by 22 species of game fish.

The park provides a scenic river corridor with opportunities for natural solitude and seclusion within relatively undisturbed forests, wetlands, bluffs, ravines, and open water areas. The opportunity is enhanced by the close proximity to a major metropolitan area.

Mission Goals

This section defines in broad terms the ideals that the National Park Service is striving to attain, as they apply to Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.

Special Mandates and Administrative Commitments

Special mandates and administrative commitments refer to park-specific requirements. These formal agreements often are established concurrently with the creation of a park. The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area does not have any special mandates that would affect this general management plan and future planning activities.

Servicewide Mandates and Policies

As with all National Park Service units, management of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is guided by numerous congressional acts and executive orders in addition to the enabling legislation. Many of the laws and executive orders that guide park management, with their legal citations, are listed in Appendix A. These include the 1916 Organic Act creating the National Park Service, the General Authorities Act of 1970, and the Act of March 27, 1978, relating to the management of the national park system. Others have much broader application, such as the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, Executive Order 11988 addressing flood plain protection, and Executive Order 11990 addressing the protection of wetlands. An overview of these and other laws and regulations is provided in Appendix B.

The National Park Service has established policies for all units under its stewardship. These are identified and explained in the National Park Service guidance manual *Management Policies 2001* (NPS 2000c).



These servicewide legal mandates and policies can be categorized as:

- Natural resource management requirements
- Cultural resource management requirements
- Visitor experience and park use requirements
- Special use management requirements

The alternatives considered in this document incorporate and comply with the provisions of these mandates and policies. Desired conditions prescribed by servicewide mandates and policies, and the corresponding regulatory and legal sources of each, are summarized in the sections that follow. Detailed inventories or steps to be taken to implement management policies will be developed in individual management plans. These are identified in the “Recommendations for Future Planning Efforts” section.

The National Park Service is required to comply with these established laws and mandates. Consequently, this general management plan does not consider whether it is appropriate to protect endangered species, control exotics species, improve water quality, protect archeological sites, provide for handicapped access, or conserve artifacts.

Natural Resource Management Requirements. Categories included under natural resource management requirements include air quality, water resources, geologic resources, native species, and wildfire.

Air Quality – Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved in the park.

Desired Conditions	Sources
Air quality in the park meets national ambient air quality standards for specified pollutants.	Clean Air Act <i>National Park Service Management Policies</i>
Park activities do not contribute to deterioration in air quality.	Clean Air Act <i>National Park Service Management Policies</i>

The National Park Service cannot control air quality within the metropolitan Atlanta area regional airshed, which encompasses the park. Therefore, the park must cooperate with regional agencies and

the United States Environmental Protection Agency to monitor air quality and to work toward air quality improvements. The National Park Service will take the following kinds of actions to meet legal and policy requirements related to air quality in the park.

Conduct air quality monitoring in conjunction with regional air quality agencies. This could include enhanced monitoring of localized air quality, either by establishing long-term monitoring stations in the Chattahoochee River valley or by conducting sampling during pollution high- risk periods.

Participate in regional air pollution control planning efforts.

Review permit applications for major new air pollution sources that could affect the park.

Conduct park operations in compliance with federal, state, and local air quality regulations.

Water Resources – Current laws and policies require that the following condition be achieved in the park.

Desired Condition	Source
Surface waters and groundwater are protected or restored such that water quality as a minimum meets all applicable federal and Georgia water quality standards.	Clean Water Act Executive Order 11514 <i>NPS Management Policies</i> State of Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act (OCGA 12- 7- 1) The Metropolitan River Protection Act (OCGA 12- 5- 440) Georgia Planning Act of 1989 (OCGA 12- 2- 8)
NPS and NPS- permitted programs and facilities are maintained and operated to avoid pollution of surface waters and groundwater.	Clean Water Act Executive Order 12088 <i>NPS Management Policies</i> Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act (OCGA 12- 7- 1) The Metropolitan River Protection Act (OCGA 12- 5- 440)



Desired Condition	Source
Natural floodplain values are preserved or restored.	Georgia Planning Act of 1989 (OCGA 12- 2- 8)
	Executive Order 11988
	Rivers and Harbors Act
	Clean Water Act
The natural and beneficial values of wetlands are preserved and enhanced.	NPS <i>Management Policies</i>
	Georgia Planning Act of 1989 (OCGA 12- 2- 8)
	NPS 77- 1
	Executive Order 11990
	Rivers and Harbors Act
	Clean Water Act
	NPS <i>Management Policies</i>
	NPS 79- 1

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

Support the investigation and mitigation of artificially accelerated streambank erosion and stream bed incision and their effects on natural riparian habitats.

Apply best management practices to all pollution- generating activities and facilities in the park, such as maintenance and storage facilities and parking areas.

Minimize the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals and manage them in conformance with National Park Service policy and federal regulations.

Promote greater public understanding of water resource issues in the park and encourage public support for and participation in improvements in the Chattahoochee River watershed.

The National Park Service will continue to take the following kinds of actions to meet legal and policy requirements related to water resources:

Continue to support the goals of the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District as they relate to the Chattahoochee River watershed and its tributaries and continue to participate in the regional program as a partner.

Continue to work closely with other agencies in assuring proper monitoring, inspection, and repair of sanitary sewers in the park to reduce the impacts of these structures. Coordinating agencies include, but are not limited to, the:

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division

Cobb County, Gwinnett County, Forsyth County, and Fulton County governments

Local city governments

Atlanta Regional Commission

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Geologic Resources –Current laws and policies require that the following condition be achieved in the park.

Desired Condition	Source
Include Brevard Fault and associated cliffs in original park area	Park enabling legislation
Maintain natural soil resources and processes function in as natural a condition as possible, except where special management considerations are allowable under policy. Areas of special management considerations are determined through management zoning decisions in this general management plan.	Park enabling legislation NPS <i>Management Policies</i>
Retain soils classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service as prime or unique farmland soils.	Council on Environmental Quality 1980 memorandum on prime and unique farmlands



Soils in some portions of the park are adversely affected by accelerated erosion, compaction, and deposition caused by human activities. The National Park Service will take the following kinds of actions to comply with legal and policy requirements.

Survey areas of the park with soil resource problems and take actions appropriate to specific management zones to prevent further artificial erosion, compaction, or deposition and to restore original contours, as practical.

Avoid disturbance of prime farmland soils.

Participate in interagency efforts to reduce artificial erosion from accelerated runoff and streamflows, in conformance with “Water Resources,” above.

Apply effective best management practices to problem areas of soil erosion and compaction in a manner that stops or minimizes erosion, restores soil productivity, and re-establishes or sustains a self-perpetuating vegetative cover.

Native Species – Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved in the park.

Desired Condition	Source
Federal- and state- listed threatened and endangered species and their habitats are protected and sustained.	Endangered Species Act Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) 12- 16- 1 Georgia Environmental Policy Act NPS <i>Management Policies</i>
Populations of native plant and animal species function in as natural condition as possible except where special management considerations are warranted. Areas of special management considerations are determined through management zoning decisions in this general management plan.	Park enabling legislation NPS <i>Management Policies</i>

Desired Condition	Source
Native species populations which have been severely reduced in or extirpated from the park are restored where feasible and sustainable.	Park enabling legislation NPS <i>Management Policies</i>
Exotic species are reduced in numbers and area, or are eliminated, from the natural areas of the park. In the park, these include Chinese privet, English ivy, kudzu, Japanese honeysuckle, and other species. In addition, non- native species of brown trout and rainbow trout have been introduced from a state- run hatchery.	NPS <i>Management Policies</i>

The park contains the oldest and most extensive protected areas of native vegetation in the Atlanta metropolitan area. However, because the park is more than 48 miles in length and extremely narrow, the potential for adverse impacts of encroaching development on native animals and vegetation is high. In addition, many of the native fish species within the main stem of the Chattahoochee River have been impacted or extirpated due to the unnaturally cold temperatures resulting from the operation of Buford Dam. The National Park Service will therefore take the following actions to comply with legal and policy requirements related to native terrestrial and aquatic species.

Conduct further inventories of the plants and animals in the park. Use the inventories as a baseline against which to regularly monitor the distribution and condition of selected species, including indicators of ecosystem condition and diversity, rare or protected species, and invasive exotics. Modify management plans based on the results of monitoring.

Encourage and support active and diverse research that contributes to management knowledge of native species in the park.



Implement measures to restore native species and natural habitats. In particular, protect and restore natural aquatic and floodplain habitats in the park where they can be sustained, including freshwater springs and ephemeral wetlands.

Review park fishing regulations and revise them as appropriate to support native fish populations to the extent practicable within the limitations caused by the dam and releases from Lake Lanier.

Continue to participate in regional ecosystem-level undertakings to restore native species, such as the regional Biosphere Program. Support and implement measures to manage fish populations within the park. Conduct research to assess the effects non-native fish may have on native aquatic resources.

Manage exclusively for native plant species in natural zones. In other management zones, limit plantings of nonnative species to noninvasive plants that are appropriate for cultural resource zones or operational needs.

Control or eliminate exotic plants and animals, exotic diseases, and pest species where there is a reasonable expectation of success and sustainability. Base control efforts on the potential threat to

Legally protected or uncommon native species and habitats

Visitor health or safety

Scenic and aesthetic quality

Common native species and habitats

Provide interpretive and educational programs on preservation of native species for visitors. Programs could include such subjects as xeriscaping®, control of domestic animals, and avoidance of boundary encroachments, and could be presented through such forums as workshops and newsletters.

Fire Management – Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved in the park.

Desired Condition	Source
Fire management procedures in the park will be in accordance with the approved Fire Management Plan (currently in draft stage). Fire management procedures could include techniques such as prescribed burns, fuel reduction, and similar methods.	NPS <i>Management Policies</i> Director's Order #18

Large wildfires in the park, if they were to occur, could pose a threat to residences and commercial development adjoining the park and would produce unacceptable levels of air pollution. To prevent such fires, the National Park Service may take the following kinds of actions to comply with fire management legal and policy requirements.

Suppress all wildfires as quickly as possible.

Maintain a cooperative agreement with the various local fire departments for wildfire suppression in the park.

Consider limited controlled burns for natural resources management.

Cultural Resource Management Requirements. Categories included in cultural resource management requirements include archeological resources, historic properties, archives, and collections.

Archeological Resources – Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved in the park.

Desired Condition	Source
Archeological sites are identified and inventoried, and their significance is determined and documented.	National Historic Preservation Act Executive Order 11593 Executive Order 13007
Archeological sites are protected in an undisturbed condition unless it is determined through formal processes that disturbance or natural	Archeological and Historic Preservation Act Archeological Resources Protection Act



Desired Condition	Source
deterioration is unavoidable, or that removal of artifacts or physical disturbance is justified by research or interpretive requirements.	<i>Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation</i> (1983)
In those cases where disturbance or deterioration is unavoidable, anticipated adverse effects to the site are mitigated. Such mitigation commonly consists of recordation and data recovery by archeologists who meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards. Mitigation could also include other measures such as site burial.	Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement among the NPS, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers (1995) NPS <i>Management Policies</i> Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline (June 11, 1998) 36 Code of Federal Regulations 800 National Environmental Policy Act Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act National Parks Act of August 25, 1916 The Antiquities Act of 1906

The archeological sites in the park have not been systematically surveyed or inventoried. Precise information about the location, characteristics, significance, and condition of the majority of archeological resources in the park is lacking, and impacts are difficult to measure. For example, over 180 cultural resource sites have been identified in the park to date through reconnaissance level assessments, but detailed surveys have been conducted on less than 20 percent of these sites. Actions that the National Park Service will take to meet legal and policy requirements related to archeological sites include:

Survey and inventory archeological resources and document their significance.

Treat all archeological resources as eligible for listing on the National Register of His-

toric Places pending the concurrence of the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer or a formal eligibility determination by the Keeper of the National Register if the National Park Service and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer do not agree on a site's eligibility.

Protect all archeological resources determined eligible for listing or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. If disturbance to such resources is unavoidable, conduct formal consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

Review and assess all proposed undertakings that could affect archeological resources to ensure that all feasible measures are taken to avoid disturbing resources, minimize damage to them, or recover data that otherwise would be lost.

Historic Properties – Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved in the park for historic properties, such as buildings, structures, roads, trails, and cultural landscapes.

Desired Condition	Source
Historic properties are inventoried and their significance and integrity are evaluated under National Register criteria.	National Historic Preservation Act Executive Order 11593 Archeological and Historic Preservation Act
The qualities of historic properties that contribute to their actual listing or their eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are protected in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's standards, unless it is determined through a formal process that disturbance or natural deterioration is unavoidable.	<i>Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation</i> (1983) Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement among the NPS, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers (1995) NPS <i>Management Policies</i> Director's Order #28:



Desired Condition	Source
	<i>Cultural Resource Management Guideline (June 11, 1998)</i>

Many of the historic properties in the park exhibit deterioration due to a lack of systematic preservation maintenance. The National Park Service will take the following kinds of actions to meet legal and policy requirements related to historic properties.

Complete a systematic survey, inventory, and evaluation of historic properties under National Register criteria in compliance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Submit the inventory and evaluation results to the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer for concurrence. Complete National Register nomination forms for eligible properties, and submit to the Keeper of the National Register for review and listing on the National Register.

Determine the appropriate level of preservation for each historic property formally determined to be eligible for listing or actually listed on the National Register, subject to the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

Implement and maintain the appropriate level of preservation for such properties.

Analyze the design elements, such as materials, colors, shape, massing, scale, architectural details, and site details, of historic structures and cultural landscapes in the park. These sites could include such features as bridges, trails, roads and intersections, curbing, signs, picnic tables, and embayments. Use this information to guide rehabilitation and maintenance of sites and structures and to ensure that future park structures are compatible with the historic character in design and materials.

Complete cultural landscape inventory(ies) to identify landscapes potentially eligible for listing in the National Register and to assist in future management decisions for landscapes and associated features, both cultural and natural.

Update the National Park Service's List of Classified Structures and the Cultural Landscape Database.

Visitor Experience and Park Use Requirements – Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved in the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area.

Desired Condition	Source
Visitor and employee safety and health are protected.	NPS <i>Management Policies</i>
Visitors understand and appreciate park values and resources and have the information necessary to adapt to the park environments. Visitors have opportunities to enjoy the park in ways that leave park resources unimpaired for future generations.	NPS Organic Act Park enabling legislation NPS <i>Management Policies</i>
Park recreational uses are promoted and regulated. Basic visitor needs are met in keeping with the park purposes.	NPS Organic Act Park enabling legislation Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations NPS <i>Management Policies</i> NPS Ban on Personal Watercraft
To the extent feasible, facilities, programs, and services in the park are accessible to and usable by all people, including those with disabilities.	Americans with Disabilities Act Architectural Barriers Act Rehabilitation Act NPS <i>Management Policies</i>

Regulations governing visitor use and behavior in units of the national park system are contained in Title 36 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations). These regulations have force of law and include a variety of use limitations, such as limits on commercial activities. The following two regulations are especially pertinent to planning for the park because of issues raised by the public during scoping.



Pets must be crated, caged, restrained on a leash (6 feet long or less), or otherwise physically confined at all times (36 Code of Federal Regulations 2.15).

Bicycles are prohibited except on roads, parking areas, and designated routes (36 Code of Federal Regulations 4.30).

The National Park Service will take the following kinds of actions to meet legal and policy requirements related to visitor experience and park use:

Provide opportunities for visitors to understand, appreciate, and enjoy the park.

Ensure that all park programs and facilities are accessible to the extent feasible.

Continue to enforce the regulations in 36 Code of Federal Regulations.

These laws, regulations, and policies leave room for judgment regarding the best mix of types and levels of visitor use activities, programs, and facilities. The alternatives presented and evaluated in this draft general management plan represent three approaches to visitor experience and park use.

Special Use Management Requirements –Special uses refer to the use of park lands for non-park purposes. Current laws and policies require that the following conditions be achieved in the park with regard to the management of special uses.

Desired Condition	Source
Park resources or public enjoyment of the park are not denigrated by non-conforming uses.	Telecommunications Act 16 United States Code 5 16 United States Code 79
Telecommunication structures are permitted in the park to the extent that they do not jeopardize the park's mission and resources.	23 United States Code 317 36 Code of Federal Regulations 14 NPS <i>Management Policies</i>
No new nonconforming use or rights-of-way are permitted through the park without specific statutory authority and approval by the director of	<i>Director's Order 53, Special Park Uses</i> (NPS 2000b)

Desired Condition	Source
the NPS or his/her representative and only if there is no practicable alternative to such use of NPS lands.	

The park has ongoing special use concerns associated with the presence of sanitary sewer lines, natural gas transmission lines, and water supply lines within the park. Combined sanitary and storm water sewers periodically discharge raw sewage into the Chattahoochee River during storm events. The water resource section describes the types of actions that the National Park Service will take to meet legal and policy requirements related to sanitary and combined sewers as well as other types of discharges.

A new special use management concern at the park involves locating telecommunications infrastructure inside the park. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 directs all federal agencies to assist in achieving a seamless telecommunications system throughout the nation by accommodating requests from telecommunication companies for the use of property, rights-of-way, and easements to the extent allowable under the agency's mission. Unlike other nonconforming uses, the National Park Service is legally obligated to permit telecommunication infrastructure within the park if such facilities can be structured to avoid interference with the park purposes. The National Park Service anticipates receiving multiple applications under the act for telecommunication installations within the park.

The National Park Service will take the following kinds of actions to meet legal and policy requirements related to the use of park lands for telecommunications infrastructure.

Determine appropriate locations and stipulations before permitting telecommunication infrastructure on park lands. The goal will be to ensure the protection of park resources, visitor and neighbor safety, and the quality of visitor experiences while endeavoring to respond positively to applications. Sites and stipulations will be based in part on the man-



agement zoning established in this general management plan.

PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES

Decision Points

Decision points were generated for the park by soliciting comments at six public meetings held throughout the corridor during the fall of 2000, and through input from various stakeholder groups and the general public. Decision points are statements that specify a range of possible future conditions in the park, based on public input. The decision points are used as the basis for developing the alternatives in the environmental impact statement for the general management plan.

A variety of issues and concerns were identified by the general public, park staff, and other agencies during scoping for this general management plan. Additional information on issues identification is provided in the “Consultation and Coordination” section. Some of the comments were outside the scope of this general management plan. Some concerns identified during scoping are already prescribed by law, regulation, or policy, or would be in violation of such requirements. These types of issues are discussed in the preceding section, “Servicewide Mandates and Policies.” Because they are mandatory requirements, these matters are not subject to the decision making process presented in this general management plan.

Other issues identified during scoping were at an operational or developmental level of detail. Such issues are most appropriately associated with the park’s five- year strategic plan or annual implementation plans. Those plans will be based on the resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved in the park that are established in the final general management plan.

Based on public comments and agency concerns, three decision points were identified. This draft general management plan focuses on addressing these decision points, which are summarized as follows:

Should present practices of management, preservation, and protection of natural and cultural resources be maintained, or should these management, preservation, and protection practices be expanded in volume, type, and scope?

This decision point was developed in response to concerns expressed by the public regarding the potential impacts of projected increased future development and increased visitor use on the park. This decision point was developed in recognition of the rapidly developing nature of the areas surrounding the park, and the park’s mandate to prevent impairment.

Natural and cultural resources within the park, including the Chattahoochee River, are threatened by the effects of encroaching development and increased public use. Encroachment can adversely affect water quality and aquatic life of streams within the park as a result of soil erosion and stormwater runoff from impervious areas outside park boundaries. Social trails created by new developments in areas adjoining the park can eliminate valuable riparian habitat along the Chattahoochee River and cause soil erosion. Sewage spills pose a potential threat to water quality and aquatic resources in the park, including the Chattahoochee River. Encroachment can also lead to physical disturbance of natural habitats and cultural resources within the park. Increased park use can also adversely affect cultural resources; this has already occurred at some locations in the park.

Expanding management activities to increase the level of protection for natural and cultural resources will require funding. Associated cost will depend on the specific level of protection required or proposed. This decision point provides the initial step that recognizes the need for added protection and the associated costs.

Should the park enhance visitor access and use with associated facilities, or should the park restrict use and access to selected areas?

This decision point was developed in response to public comments indicating a desire for increased access to the park, especially trails. Other possible ways of increasing access could include new facilities such as boat ramps, interpretive centers, restrooms, parking areas, and roads. The park is cur-



rently used by nearly 3 million people each year, and is ranked 27th in the nation for visitor use. Although the Organic Act directs the National Park Service to allow visitors the opportunity to enjoy the natural and cultural resources in the park, it also specifies that these same resources cannot be impaired by these types of activities and projects. This decision point was used to develop management alternatives that defined a range of levels of access that would allow the public to enjoy and experience the natural and cultural resources within the park while protecting these same resources.

Should the park widen its circle of influence, or should the park restrict its focus to activities within park boundaries?

This decision point explores the issue of whether the National Park Service should actively seek to partner with surrounding governments and organizations to enhance, protect, or restore park values, or should the National Park Service continue with its current management practices. This decision point was developed because, as a narrow corridor heavily influenced by adjoining development, the park might be more effectively managed if the surrounding local governments and stakeholder organizations were involved. The park is currently managed primarily on an internal basis, with limited input by the surrounding city and county governments or stakeholder organizations. Current management coordination with surrounding governments and other groups primarily involves negotiation of utility easements, property acquisitions, or review of projects that adjoin the park and are collocated along the river corridor and that might impact park resources directly or indirectly.

Increased partnering with surrounding governments and stakeholder organizations implies that the park would receive support from these organizations. This decision point therefore has a cost implication in the management alternatives developed in the plan.

Impact Topics – Resources and Values at Stake in the Planning Process

Specific resources and values, called impact topics, focus the planning process and the assessment of

potential consequences of the alternatives. The following four criteria were used to determine park resources and values:

Resources cited in the establishing legislation for the park. The establishing legislation for the park is included in Appendix D. A summary of relevant elements of the legislation is provided in the sections “Park History and Use Relative to Management Planning” and “Park Purposes.”

Resources critical to maintaining the significance and character of the park. The section “Park Significance” describes the defining features of the park that were used to establish the resources that are critical to maintaining its significance and character.

Resources recognized as important by laws or regulations. Appendix A provides a list of many important congressional acts and executive orders that guide the management of all National Park Service facilities, including the park. A summary of some of the relevant elements of these acts and orders is provided in the section “Servicewide Mandates and Policies.”

Values of concern to the public during scoping for the general management plan. The National Park Service conducted an extensive public information and scoping program to acquire input from the public and from other agencies. This helped the National Park Service develop alternatives and identify resources and values of high interest in the park.

These criteria were applied to a set of impact topics/National Environmental Policy Act resource categories by checking off which were applicable. This approach helped establish each impact topic as a resource or value at stake in the planning process. A more detailed description of each impact topic and the effects of each of the three proposed management alternatives are described in Sections 3 and 4.

Natural Resources. A major reason for establishing the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was to protect its natural resources and its abundant natural scenery, which are particularly valuable because the park lies within a large metropolitan area. The following summarizes each type



of natural resource in the park and the corresponding, relevant regulatory and legal framework.

Air Quality – The Clean Air Act mandates compliance with air quality standards. In addition, during scoping members of the public expressed concerns over threats to air quality from heavy traffic in the Atlanta Region. Poor air quality has the potential to adversely affect biotic resources, cultural resources, and visitor health and experience.

Chattahoochee River and Its Tributaries – The establishing legislation for the park specifies that the Chattahoochee River, including the bed of the river, and its tributaries are essential resources to be protected. In addition, many federal laws and executive orders protecting the nation’s waters apply to the Chattahoochee River watershed.

As the park’s name suggests, the Chattahoochee River is fundamental to the park’s character. The vegetated river corridor and its tributaries represent a unique natural resource in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Even though the rapidly developing urban areas surrounding the park affect water quality and quantity, the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries are inhabited by over 20 species of native fish and other aquatic species, in addition to the non- native stocked trout fisheries maintained by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The importance of the Chattahoochee River as a central scenic and recreational attraction in the park was reaffirmed by numerous scoping comments and by the approximately 3 million visitors to the park each year.

Wetlands and Floodplains – These are included in the discussion of water resources in “Servicewide Mandates and Policies.” Wetlands and floodplains are regulated by legislation and executive orders because of their value as biological resources and their contributions to flood control, respectively.

Wetlands are located along the Chattahoochee River floodplain and at seeps (places where water trickles out of the ground to form pools) along the lower slopes of the valley walls and along tributaries. The floodplains along the Chattahoochee River and major tributaries support mature mesic southern bottomland hardwood forests as well as a variety of forested, scrub/shrub, and emergent wetland types. These sensitive habitats have un-

usually large numbers of plant and animal species and contribute significantly to the biological diversity of the park. For example, over 850 vascular plants have been identified within the park boundaries in a recent survey. The 48- mile corridor is located in an area where the ranges of northern and southern vascular plants overlap, adding to the overall diversity of the area.

Deciduous Forests – The statements of park significance include several references to the forest’s contribution to the park’s character. The rich southern mesic hardwood forests within the boundaries of the park comprise an essential component of the landscape and scenic qualities of the park, buffer the park from the surrounding urbanization, and provide habitat for wildlife and plant species. During scoping, many comments were received about the value of the native forests and the need to maintain them.

Protected and Rare Species – The Endangered Species Act and *Management Policies* (NPS 2000c) requires the protection of rare species and their habitats. The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area provides habitat for several federally endangered species and a large number of species of plants and animals listed by the Georgia Heritage Trust Program.

Other Native Wildlife –Native animals represent an important park resource that captures the public’s imagination. During scoping, many people commented on the value of seeing wildlife in the park, especially in contrast to the surrounding urban environment. The white- tailed deer, the largest and most conspicuous mammal, was the most frequently mentioned. Recreational birding also was identified as a popular park activity during scoping. Birding is especially popular, for example, in the wetlands at the Cochran Shoals unit.

Prime and Unique Farmlands – A number of soil types in the northern portion of the park (north of Holcomb Bridge Road) are classified as prime farmlands. Federal agencies are required to assess the effects of their actions on prime and unique farmlands (Council on Environmental Quality 1980).

Cultural Resources. The park’s cultural resources are recognized as exceptional because they illus-



trate significant aspects of the historic development of the area from prehistoric times to the present. Historic features such as the Sope Creek Mills and the Hyde Farm help define the significance and character of the park and are protected by multiple legislative, executive, and National Park Service policies.

Visitor and Community Values. In reviewing the range of comments received during scoping, the following topics appear to capture the values expressed by the public.

Traditional Park Character and Visitor Experience – The significance statements presented near the beginning of this general management plan reflect the importance of the overall visitor experience in defining the park’s character. Frequent scoping comments were concerned with protecting the park’s natural qualities, not only for the ecological resources, but for its restorative value to people as a place of natural beauty and escape from the nearby urban setting. Scenery, opportunities to learn about the natural world, natural quiet, and the ability to hear natural sounds were often highlighted. There was near unanimity that the natural character should be preserved and protected from disturbance from development.

People also emphasized the traditional, familiar character of the park’s recreational features and their desire to see this character maintained. While many said that park facilities need repair and improved maintenance, the public appeared to be mostly satisfied with the range of recreational opportunities offered by the park. Other comments emphasized:

The lasting value of the park as a gathering place for family and friends

The importance of shared experiences such as walking, picnicking, bicycling, horseback riding, and participating in other activities that have become associated with the park

Individual and physically challenging recreation such as biking, boating, fishing, jogging, and hiking

The historic resources present within the park and their appreciation by the public

Local and Regional Transportation – Local and regional transportation was identified as an impact topic primarily because of concerns expressed during scoping. Many members of the public identified the value of both paved and unpaved trails and expressed a desire to have an expanded trail system. The scoping comments pointed out that trails should be effectively linked to the various local communities located along the 48- mile park.

Other people value the park corridor for the opportunity to promote nonmotorized and less polluting alternatives to automobiles, especially bicycle use. Public comments reflected the desire to increase use of off- road bicycles and other walking trails in the park through development of an interconnected trail system. Other people expressed concern about the effects of increased off- road bicycling on erosion and water quality.

Community Character – Community character also was identified as an impact topic during scoping. Most of those who commented described the park as a major asset to the quality of life in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The scenic and recreational amenities are much appreciated, and many said that proximity and access to the park were important factors in their choice of neighborhoods. A number of people who identified themselves as park neighbors also stressed that their neighborhoods could be affected by changes in park experiences.

Issue Topics Considered but Dismissed

As described in the “Consultation and Coordination” section, the identification of issues and development of alternatives evolved through a series of meetings and other opportunities for public input. However, not all issues raised by the public are included in this general management plan.

As the National Park Service learned more about public concerns, the alternatives were modified to more effectively address the public’s comments. This evolution resulted in the elimination from further consideration of some possible management actions that were proposed early in the process. Other issues raised by the public were not considered because they:

Were not feasible



Are already prescribed by law, regulation, or policy

Would be in violation of laws, regulations, or policies

Appendix C provides a complete list of the issues.

The following is a discussion of the impact topics and a rationale for eliminating them from further consideration. The decisions regarding categorization of the issues were made by an National Park Service planning team following the public scoping meetings:

Groundwater Quantity: Implementation of a particular management alternative would not have any impact on groundwater quantity, either positive or negative. Groundwater quantity is affected by various physical, geological, and hydrologic factors outside the control of park management.

Groundwater Quality: Facilities would be required to comply with appropriate design, build, and operating specifications and procedures. There would be negligible impacts to groundwater quality. Groundwater quality is affected by factors such as transportation- or industrial- related spills of hazardous chemicals or industrial and commercial operations outside of park boundaries.

Special Status Species that Do not Occur in the Park: Management alternatives would have a negligible affect on rare, threatened, or endangered species in areas outside the park or in neighboring states. The park provides temporary habitat for some migratory species of protected animals from other states and from outside the park boundaries, but habitat for these species within the park would be preserved under any alternative selected, even with varying degrees of fragmentation. Therefore, this issue does not merit further analysis.

Physiography/Topography: Alternative park management activities could result in some ground disturbing activities related to construction of parking lots, buildings, and roads. However, these activities would result in negligible impacts to topography or physiography within the park boundaries.

Climate: None of the management alternatives would result in climate modification.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: The Chattahoochee River is not a federally- designated Wild and Scenic River, and therefore no impacts would occur.

Indian Trust Resources: Designated Indian Trust Resources do not exist within the park and therefore would not be impacted by any management alternative.

Sacred Sites: No Native American sacred sites have as yet been identified within the park. Project- specific consultation has been initiated with potentially interested Tribes; however, this has not led to the identification of any sacred sites in the park, and no formal study to identify such sites has been carried out. At this time it is not possible to assess potential impacts to sacred sites by any of the management alternatives.

Ethnographic Resources: Some places of traditional cultural importance may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as traditional cultural properties because of their association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that are rooted in that community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community. Traditional cultural properties have not been identified within the park boundaries; however, no formal study to identify such properties has been carried out at in the park. Therefore it is not possible to assess impacts to ethnographic resources by any of the management alternatives at this time.

Cultural Landscapes: Cultural landscapes reflect the relationship between what is natural and what is man- made. According to the Secretary of the Interior's guidance document (1996), a cultural landscape is "a geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein) associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values."

A cultural landscape inventory documents the qualities and attributes of a cultural landscape that make it significant and worthy of



preservation. The goal of the National Park Service is to locate and evaluate cultural landscapes and provide information on their location, historical development, characteristics and features, and management to assist park managers in planning, programming, and recording treatment and management decisions.

In 2001, the National Park Service initiated a cultural landscape inventory of several areas within the park considered potentially eligible on the National Register. The inventory underway as of the date of this document identified eight potential cultural landscapes within the park: Sope Creek Mill complex, Scribner Cemetery area, Collin's/Yardum homesite area, Hyde Farm/Power's Cabin area, Hewlett Lodge/park headquarters area, Roger's farm area, Allenbrook/Joy Mill Complex, and Aker's Mill complex.

Because cultural landscapes within the park are under evaluation, the potential impacts caused by the proposed alternatives cannot be adequately defined. Any activities proposed in the future would include environmental assessments tiered to this document, and cultural landscapes would be evaluated at that time.

Noise: The largest noise generator in the vicinity of the park is traffic. The alternatives considered would result in negligible impacts to the overall traffic patterns or volumes projected to occur in the areas surrounding the park. Traffic in the area would continue to increase, as described in the transportation section, regardless of whether any of the management plan alternatives are instituted.

Socially or Culturally Disadvantaged

Populations: Executive Order 12898 regarding "Federal Actions to address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low- Income Populations." requires, as of February 11, 1994, that each federal agency make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health effects of its programs, policies, or activities on minority or low- income populations. The order applies to all federal actions that require National Environmental Policy

Act documentation, and has three general objectives: 1) focus the attention of federal agencies on the human health and general environmental conditions in minority and low- income communities with the goal of achieving environmental justice; 2) foster nondiscrimination in federal programs that could substantially affect human health or the environment; and 3) give minority and low- income communities greater opportunities for public participation on matters relating to human health and safety.

An assessment of the alternatives were assessed during the planning process determined that none would result in discernable adverse effects upon any minority or low- income population or community. The following is a summary of the rationale for this conclusion:

Implementation of the plan would not result in any identified effects specific to any minority or low- income population or community. Development of new park facilities that might occur under any of the alternatives would occur in compliance within prescribed zones located throughout the 48- mile park corridor. Adverse human health or socioeconomic effects on minority or low- income populations or communities are not projected anywhere along the park corridor.

Impacts on the socioeconomic environment due to implementation of any of the alternatives would be minor or positive and would occur primarily within the local and regional geographic area or near the park. These impacts would be spread over a broad geographical area at hubs located along the 48- mile park and would occur over a long period of time. Impacts on the socioeconomic environment are expected to be negligible and would not alter the character of any local community in a negative way. Connections or increased access to the park at any location along the 48- mile park will have a beneficial effect on the social and economic resources in these areas.



Energy Resources: Implementation of the alternatives would involve varying use of energy resources, but these impacts would be minor in nature and would result in negligible impacts to regional energy resources.

Public Health and Safety: The National Park Service is charged with providing a safe and healthy environment within the park boundaries. This would be required under any management alternative and does not require additional analysis.

Natural or Depletable Resource Requirements & Conservation Potential: The management alternatives would result in the negligible depletion of natural resources and would not adversely affect potential conservation of natural resources within the park.

