

CHAPTER 5
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS



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CHAPTER 5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS

Upon completion of this General Management Plan, other more detailed studies and plans would be needed for implementation of specific actions. These more detailed implementation plans will describe how the National Park Service will achieve the desired conditions outlined in the General Management Plan. As required, additional environmental compliance (National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act), and other relevant laws and policies would be conducted. Opportunities for public input would be provided during the development of these implementation plans. Those additional studies include, but would not be limited to these listed in this chapter.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Unmanaged visitor use at archeological or historic sites may impact the integrity and scientific and cultural value of these sites. The nature and extent of these impacts is difficult to assess because baseline data on site conditions in the park are some times unavailable or incomplete. Long-term protective strategies are needed for significant sites to avoid impact by visitors and/or park management activities. Park managers must maintain historic buildings on an ongoing basis (i.e., periodic maintenance and rehabilitation) to ensure that conditions are suitable for National Register eligibility. A resource stewardship strategy outlined in a planning document would address these issues.

A Cultural Landscape Inventory is needed that would include such areas as Sope Creek Ruins, Roswell Mills, and Hyde Farm landscapes. Cultural Landscape Reports are needed to address treatment and use of the landscape and Historic Structure Reports are needed to determine treatment and use of historic buildings. The resource management strategy described below, under *Natural Resources*, will also describe the natural resource related activities needed to achieve desired future conditions for the historic landscapes in the park.

The ownership of historic steel-truss bridges within the park boundary requires further evaluation. Coordination with local governments, partners and stakeholders will be necessary to support preservation of these historic resources. Without protective coatings, the steel structure of these bridges will eventually deteriorate to the point of collapse (NPS 2006h).

The park's museum collections are maintained at the Southeast Archeological Center. In addition, some collections are held at the park. A regional Museum Storage Plan, approved by the Regional director in May 2006, recommends that all long-term collections be moved from the park. A Collections Management Plan would address collections for the park in a comprehensive manner.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Impacts on water quality and terrestrial resources have occurred in certain areas of the park due in part to recreational use, pipeline crossings, and development activities and use outside the park. Changes in water quality and water flows may have major effects on park resources and visitors, as documented in the existing water resources management plan and summarized in Chapter 3. The park is currently implementing recommendations from this plan. Sensitive habitats and species have not been thoroughly identified throughout the park. Long-term protective strategies are needed for these

species and habitats to avoid impact by visitors and/or park management activities. Protection, study, and management of the park's natural resources and processes are essential for achieving the park's purposes and mission. A park-wide resource stewardship strategy planning document will address these issues and other scientific and legal requirements to promote understanding and management of park resources. This planning document would provide details on the strategies and actions necessary to address the park's most important resource management problems and research needs. Integral to this strategy would be the need to address invasive plants in the park, including a strategy for control and long-term management goals with measurable results. Included in the resource stewardship strategy would be watershed management recommendations for improving water quality and habitat for aquatic resources in the park. This long-range strategy will integrate the best available science and prescribe activities including inventories, research, monitoring, restoration, mitigation, protection, education and management of resource uses.

Future planning efforts also would include incorporating Geographic Information Systems analysis. This technology allows for in-depth spatial analysis and landscape modeling and helps park managers analyze land-use trends in areas surrounding the park, track invasive species growth, and help predict the effects of urbanization of surrounding landscapes on the park's ecosystems.

The park monitors and reports pest control measures in accordance with National Park Services policies and guidelines. An Integrated Pest Management Plan is needed to address the growing numbers and types of pests within the park. Integrated pest management practices would reduce risks to the public, resources, and the environment from pests and pest-related management strategies.

FLOW STUDIES

There are ever-increasing demands on the Chattahoochee River as a water source. Additional studies are needed to address flow requirements within the park boundaries. Water flow studies are necessary to provide the information to address flow needs for recreation and resource protection in the park. The National Park Service will coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other Federal, state, and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations to address flow requirements within the park.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

The Chattahoochee River is a popular fishing destination. The State of Georgia has an active stocking program within the river that has been in operation since the 1960s.

National Park Service Management Policies provide guidance in fisheries management, and these policies, in concert with cooperative efforts with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division should be outlined and defined in a fisheries management plan that would tier to the General Management Plan. Additional data is needed to develop a predictive model for the effects of variable instream flows on fish and their habitats.

Goals would be established in cooperation with the State of Georgia detailing specific projects and activities to be conducted to protect aquatic resources and prevent resource degradation. Specific measures would be identified as appropriate to restore aquatic habitat and water quality to support the reintroduction of native aquatic species where feasible.

INTEGRATED TRAIL SYSTEM STUDY

The park is part of an important corridor that allows for connectivity within the metropolitan Atlanta area and regional trail networks. Multiple trail systems have been proposed by various local governments that would integrate the park's trail network with existing popular trails, or include the park in their respective trail construction master plans. Trail connectivity along the Chattahoochee River corridor would serve multiple purposes, including promoting active recreation within the park and adjacent public land, providing a healthy commuting alternative, and potentially connecting the park with other National Park Service lands such as Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield. The park legislation (16 USC Sec.460.ii) states that the park should manage lands "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." Moreover: "(7) 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 United States 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."

An integrated trail system study is needed to consider design criteria, appropriate use in respective management zones, regulatory requirements, schedule and costs. The plan will integrate local environmental requirements such as the Metropolitan River Protection Act, appropriate buffers, and floodplain, wetland, and sensitive resource avoidance. Existing trails in the park will be mapped and a database will be created using Geographic Information Systems and Global Positioning Systems. Recommendations for linkages to other planned regional trail corridors will be made. Opportunities for public input will be provided.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN

Commercial visitor services planning will identify the appropriate role of commercial operations in the park. This level of planning will assist the park to achieve the desired visitor experiences identified in the General Management Plan, and integrate the results into other plans and planning processes. The concession management plan or commercial services plan will support the park's purpose and significance, resource values, and visitor experience objectives and be consistent with the enabling legislation. The commercial services plan and other implementation plans will also identify whether proposed concession facilities and services are necessary and appropriate, and will consider alternatives.

PARTNERING

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is uniquely tied to the surrounding communities, and as such is part of a greater social, political, ecological, and historical fabric of the area. The National Park Service must consider how its actions in the park affect the surrounding environment and society. Partnering opportunities will be identified within all future planning and implementation projects. The park will be managed in a manner that proactively resolves external issues and concerns to ensure that park values are not compromised. In order to accomplish this, resources and strategies are needed to establish and foster partnerships with public and private organizations to achieve the purposes and mission of the park.

Partnerships will be sought for resource protection, research, education, and visitor enjoyment purposes. Partnerships are necessary with local, state, and federal agencies and organizations in programs that have importance within and beyond park boundaries. Park managers will be able to use these partnerships to better adapt to changing ecological and social conditions within and external to the park and coordinate regional planning and land management as it affects the park. Some partnerships could be facilitated with local governments in the form of specialized overlay zoning, thereby buffering property adjacent to the park. Attending, or bordering area governments could consider changes to their comprehensive plans to address land use, zoning, permitting and regulatory issues within the view shed of the park. The combined effect of a unified strategy would be an effective public private partnership for increasing values and for preserving the park resources. Creating new economic, environmental and educational partnerships are integral to the success of the park.

TRACKING CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Central to the natural and cultural resources management is long-term monitoring of the change in condition of natural and cultural resources and related human influences. A planned monitoring program would document improvement or degradation of resources and visitor experiences. The tracking or monitoring of these changes promotes increased understanding of park resources, natural processes, and human interactions with the environment.

EASEMENT STUDY

Numerous utility and other easements exist within the park and these easements have not been systematically surveyed and logged. An easement study would include an inventory and report on all utility and other easements and easement conditions within the park. In addition, these existing utility corridors and all other existing easements within the park would be mapped and entered into the park's Geographic Information Systems database.

COMPREHENSIVE INTERPRETIVE PLAN

The original Interpretive Prospectus for the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was completed in 1989. The park is on a waiting list to update and revise the prospectus, which is now referred to as the comprehensive interpretive plan. One area of consideration that was not included in the original interpretive plan is the importance of farm operations in the history of the Chattahoochee River corridor. There are several historic farmsteads within the park boundary that provide an opportunity to incorporate historic farm operations as one of the park's interpretive themes. In addition to interpretive themes, opportunities to partner to convey park resource values for recreational, historical, cultural and natural resources will be identified.