Pea Ridge Celebrates Re-opening of Historic Road

by Kitty Sloan

In the winter of 1838-39, an estimated 10,000 Cherokees traveled along the Springfield to Fayetteville Road from Missouri into Arkansas, stopping overnight at William Reddick’s farm for their last rations before heading west to their new homeland. The site of Reddick’s farm is now Pea Ridge National Military Park, a federal protection component of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The park entrance is on the Auto Tour Route along U.S. Highway 62.

Three miles of the historic Northern Route are within the 4,300-acre park, two along its paved driving tour. The third was only recently rediscovered, restored, and re-opened for foot-traffic. A 1930s county road had been misidentified as the route of the 1830s road. But modern satellite mapping technology helped locate the true trail beneath 70 years of overgrowth. In 2005, the one-mile natural segment was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. On March 11, TOTA members from Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, plus hundreds of other visitors, gathered at the park to commemorate the Trail of Tears. Principal Chief Chad Smith of the Cherokee Nation led a memorial walk along the restored road. As park superintendent John C. Scott noted, Cherokees were truly walking in the footsteps of their ancestors. Even the weather echoed the “hail, rain, wind and thunder” that Dr. W.I.I. Morrow, physician with the Richard Taylor detachment, reported in his diary on March 18, 1839. Stormy weather stranded most of that detachment at Reddick’s farm for an extra day. At the commemoration, walkers merely got soaking wet, although pellet-size hail covered the ground and a tornado the next day damaged some park facilities.

An estimated 500 people attended the dedication ceremony sponsored by the Cherokee Nation, the National Park Service, and the Trail of Tears Association. Chief Smith was the featured speaker. TOTA President Jack Baker served as master of ceremonies and Vice President Troy Wayne Potete delivered the keynote address, Why Cherokees Remember; both Baker and Potete are citizens of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee Adult Choir performed four hymns that had been sung during Removal, including one written along the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee Color Guard and Miss Cherokee LaShawna Fields also participated. The National Park Service was represented by Ernie Quintana, director of the Midwest Region at Omaha, as well as Jere Krakow and Aaron Maehr of the National Trails System-Santa Fe.

The dedication ceremony included the unveiling of the first of six sets of site-specific and context wayside panels funded by the restored road. The Cherokee Adult Choir performed four hymns that had been sung during Removal, including one written along the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee Color Guard and Miss Cherokee LaShawna Fields also participated. The National Park Service was represented by Ernie Quintana, director of the Midwest Region at Omaha, as well as Jere Krakow and Aaron Maehr of the National Trails System-Santa Fe.

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See PEA RIDGE, page 6
The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) is continuing work with the NPS National Trails System Office—Santa Fe (NTSO) and the Arkansas State Parks to place Trail of Tears interpretive wayside exhibits at six Arkansas locations. These exhibits, funded through NPS Challenge Cost-Share, will provide site-specific interpretive materials at a number of locations. The exhibits are being developed by Jere Krakow, Superintendent of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail at Pea Ridge National Military Park on March 11, 2006, was a very significant event. For the first time, a portion (about two miles) of the Trail as it existed in 1838–39 is available at a public facility so that the general public may walk along the same pathway that thousands of Cherokees tread 167 years ago. I would like to thank Park Superintendent John Scott and all of his staff for making this possible, and especially Kevin Eads, Chief of Resource Management, for all of his work in restoring the Trail and in planning and organizing the ceremony dedicating the Trail. I urge you to visit this site and walk along this portion of the Trail.

All along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail more sites are being identified and more interpretation is being placed on already identified sites. One of the latest sites to be certified is property owned by Bill and Sheryl Habbs in southwest Missouri. A portion of the Trail crossed their property. The Hermitage, home of Andrew Jackson, just outside Nashville, Tennessee, has also been certified. We appreciate all of the individuals and organizations that are having their sites certified and helping to tell the story of Indian removal.

Other events are happening to raise the awareness of the Trail. One such event is the publication of Stone Songs on the Trail of Tears by Pat Musick with Jerry Carr and Bill Woodiel. This book tells the story of the Trail of Tears in a unique fashion is bringing the story of Indian removal to many people that were not aware of this event in American history.

The legislation to expand the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail is moving forward. There was a Senate hearing on February 16, 2006, on this legislation where Principal Chief Chad Smith of the Cherokee Nation spoke eloquently in favor of the bill (S. 364). There will likely be another hearing scheduled soon in the House on their version of the bill (H. R. 3085). It is hoped that this legislation will be passed later this year. A significant feature of this legislation is that it would expand the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail into Georgia and North Carolina. At the time of removal 54% of the Cherokees lived in Georgia and 22% in North Carolina, and yet the Trail does not extend into those states where over three-fourths of the Cherokees resided.

Plans are moving forward for an annual conference and symposium to be held this fall in Springfield, Missouri. I hope to see all of you there.

Jack D. Baker, President of the Trail of Tears Association

The sculpture is now part of the corporate art collection at Tyson Foods, Inc., and is permanently installed in front of company headquarters in Springdale, Arkansas, not far off the Auto Tour Route of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

Stone Songs also includes an introduction by art professor-novelist Donald Harrington and an essay by Jack Baker, president of the Trail of Tears Association. The hardcover book for $28.95 and, if not stacked at a local bookstore, can be ordered at www.uapress.com, or by calling 800-626-0090.

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In March 2002, an artist, her astronaut-photographer husband, and a revolving crew of helpers traveled the backroads of Arkansas, hauling heavy oak posts, steel rods, and tear-shaped stones to assemble, photograph, and disassemble at remote locations.

The result, as published by the University of Arkansas Press, is Stone Songs on the Trail of Tears: The Journey of an Installation, by artist and TOTA member Pat Musick with photography by Carr and researcher Bill Woodiel. The book features color photographs of her sculpture at 23 sites along the Benge Route across northern Arkansas and into Oklahoma, from Pitman Ferry Road to the Woodall Place.
Missouri

In August, Aaron Mahr, NPS historian, was out on the Northern and Hildrebrand Routes looking at trail segments and trail sites for future NPS certifications in and around Springfield. Ted & Eva Rogers led the way in documentation and showing where possible trail site and trail segments were located. Missouri State University archologists Dr. Neal Lopinot and Holly Jones showed a Delaware Town site dug up and the White River Road that is associated with the Hildrebrand Detachment. TOTA President Jack Baker and Michael Mosher led a site certification at the Star City Ranch in Purdy, Missouri, on March 8, 2006.

On January 30th, several chapter members attended the 2006 TOTA conference planning session in Springfield. Lunch took place at the University Plaza Hotel, which is located on the old Wire Road.

In February, NPS and the Missouri chapter assisted the cities of Waynesville and Saint Robert with maps and research for grants. Finding trails is best when the leaves are off the trees and the snakes and ticks are resting for the winter. The chapter continues to have teams out working on all 600 miles of the Trail in the state.

Saturday, March 11, 2006, the Missouri chapter board met at Roaring River at Missouri State Park before a combined Missouri and Arkansas chapter meeting took place at Pea Ridge National Military Park. A one-mile Trail of Tears segment was dedicated by the NPS that afternoon.

The next chapter meeting will be held April 13, 2006, at 10 a.m. at the Arlington River Resort in Newburg. For more information, contact Deloris Wood at 573-729-2545.

Arkansas

In early March, the Arkansas chapter participated in the re-opening of a segment of the Springfield to Fayetteville Road traveled by Northern Route detachments through what is now Pea Ridge National Military Park. A chapter meeting focused on possible routes west from Pea Ridge, with a report from Dan Littlefield. Neighboring chapter presidents, Dr. Norman Wood of Missouri and Curtis Rohr of Oklahoma, provided research updates, too. Also, the chapter got a sneak preview of the Arkansas Archeological Survey’s (AAS) atlas, Footsteps Across Arkansas: Trail of Tears Removal Corridors for the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole, which was funded by the Department of Arkansas Heritage. The Heritage Trail Partnership of Northwest Arkansas also reported on signs which will be placed along roads and trails that were traveled by Removal detachments, Butterfield Overland stagecoaches, and Civil War troops.

In April, Trail of Tears documentation by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) will be spotlighted at a national conference in Boston. Mark Christ and Tony Feaster will demonstrate how they have created road segments using historical maps, GIS, and photographic imagery. Details of the Preserving the Historic Road are at www.historicroads.org.

Upcoming chapter events include:

- May 6 – The Sequoyah Research Center will host the Arkansas Heritage Month event, a workshop on its Indian Removal collection, beginning at 10 a.m. on the University of Arkansas at Little Rock campus. For more information call 501-371-7385.
- July 22 – The chapter’s annual membership meeting will be in Little Rock at the Historic Arkansas Museum. The program is expected to focus on regional heritage trails and election of officers.

A new chapter partner, the Southwest Trail Research Group (www.southwesttrail.org), held a new trashing session in Springfield. Lunch took place at the University Plaza Hotel, which is located on the old Wire Road. The last day of the NPS staff’s visit was spent at Bill and Sheryl Hubbs’ Star City Ranch. The NPS held a site certification at the Star City Ranch in Purdy, Missouri, on March 8, 2006.

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The plan to enhance the experience for visitors and rehabilitate the house in Rome, Georgia, once the home of Major Ridge, a prominent but controversial Cherokee leader at the time of their forced removal from Georgia to Oklahoma was approved by the board of directors.

The decision comes after a two-year planning process that documented the history of the Major Ridge home and farm and proposed preservation options and visitor interpretations and alternatives. The plan is the result of cooperation between the Chieftains Museum, National Park Service, Trail of Tears Association, Cherokee Tribal representatives and other stakeholders.

“The decision by the Chieftains Museum...”

The decision by the Board of Directors of Chieftains Museum provides vision for a future that will help all Americans better understand and appreciate the lessons of our past.

Anyone who owns or manages sites, visitor centers, museums, or trail segments has a direct association with the Trail of Tears that request that their properties be designates as officially certified National Historic Trails. The process entails a voluntary partnership with the National Park Service to help preserve, interpret, and make the property available for public access.

Arkansas Waysides
Continued from page 3

ARKANSAS WAYSIDES

Four properties on the Trail of Tears in Tennessee have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Thomason and Associates, a Nashville consulting firm well known to Trail of Tears Association members, completed the registration forms under contract with the NPS National Trails System-Santa Fe office. The four sites, which include remains of the Reynoldsburg to Paris Road, the Hatchie River Ferry, the Bolivar to Somerville Stage Road, and the Hill Road over the Cumberland Plateau, encompass over five miles of the historic trail route.

Nearly two miles of an abandoned remnant of the Reynoldsburg to Paris Road near Camden in Benton County lies within the Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park. Visitors can hike over a mile of this segment, which has been incorporated into the park’s trail system. This segment is particularly significant because it represents a portion of the Benge Detachment Route, which the U.S. Congress is now considering for creation as a possible addition to the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. John Benge’s 1,200-person detachment crossed the Tennessee River to traveled over this segment of road on November 3 and 4, 1838.

Two of the newly-listed properties are on the Bolivar to Somerville Stage Route, also currently under congressional consideration. The first, the Hatchie River Ferry near Bolivar in Hardeman County, includes 1,400 feet of roadbed leading to the Hatchie River, and the ferry landing sites on the east and west banks. The roadbed is dirt and gravel and bounded by steep embankments. This segment of trail is on private property. The 660 people who comprised the detachment led by John Bell traversed this road on November 16, 1838. The Hatchie River and its adjacent swamps were significant obstacles, but the Cherokee were ferried over it by the ferry owner and operator, Austin Miller. Two days later the Bell detachment passed over the Bolivar to Somerville Stage Road. Over four miles of this trail segment near Bolivar in Fayette County are now listed on the National Register. Known today as Stewart Road and Herron Drive, visitors can hike or drive over most of this segment which is unpaved and has embankments consistent with nineteenth century road construction. At some points, the historic road diverges from the modern dirt road. These parallel abandoned road segments are on private property, but generally can be viewed easily from the modern road.

The fourth property represents a portion of Northern Route of the Trail of Tears. National Historic Trail. Nearly a mile in length, this listed segment of the Hill Road begins at the Dunlap Coke Ovens in Dunlap, Sequatchie County, at the base of the Cumberland Plateau’s eastern face, and climbs towards the crest of the mountain. The abandoned roadbed and its embankments are striking, and they offer a revealing opportunity to contemplate the difficulties of travel in the mid-nineteenth century over a forbidding mountainous terrain.

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Arkansas Waysides
Continued from page 3

AROUNDAS WAYSIDES

We had no idea how many of our state parks were touched by the Trail of Tears, or of the important role Arkansas played in the removal of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole peoples. We also had been impressed by the volume and content of records related to removal that have been uncovered by Dan Littlefield and the American Native Press Archives. Four Arkansas state parks – Lake Dardanelle, Pinnacle Mountain, Petit Jean and Mount Nebo – have become certified sites on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trails, and we hope to do the same with the Old Washington, Village Creek, Lake Chicot and Prairie Grove.

–Joy Miller, Chief of Interpretation, Arkansas State Parks

petent to them, and will help in heritage tourism efforts that will help ensure these resources’ long-term survival.”

–Mark Christ, Community Outreach Director, AHTP

“Widening road segments designed to allow wagons to pass one another, parallel tracks that passed eroded segments, and switchbacks that eased the hardship of the steep ascents are included in this trail segment.”

Most of this National Register property is on private property, but several parts can be viewed from Boulder Road or Fredonia Road, or at the historic Dunlap Coke Ovens. The Hill Road is a portion of the route followed by the Taylor and Brown detachments, which together numbered nearly 1,900 people. James Brown’s party climbed the Cumberland Plateau first on about November 1, 1838, and Richard Taylor’s group followed about a week later on November 7.

If you know of a trail segment that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, or would like more information about the program, contact your state historic preservation office or visit www.cr.nps.gov. Or, better still, you can contact the NPS’s Trails System office at 505-988-6276.
2005 Trail of Tears Association Conference Photos

The conference started out with a tour of the new Chattanooga riverfront, which includes a Cherokee memorial titled “The Passage.” After the tour, conferences attend a reception at 212 Market Street Restaurant, where Congressman Zach Wamp welcomes them to Chattanooga and accepts a Donald Vann print as TOTA’s thanks for his dedication to the Trail.

The conference took place at the Chattanooga Marriott Hotel Downtown. Two official tours were offered: one to Red Clay State Park and one on the Southern Belle Riverboat.

In 1987, Congress acknowledged the significance of this tragic event in our Nation’s history by establishing the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The National Park Service administers the Trail in cooperation with federal, state, and local agencies, the Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, interested groups, and private landowners.

The Trail of Tears Association and the National Park Service National Trails System Office Santa Fe have been working with Trail partners to increase visibility for the Trail and to develop it for visitor use. Old traces, historic buildings, and other resources are being preserved. Many sites have been certified and numerous on-the-ground projects have been completed, such as route signing, visitor-use development, interpretive wayside exhibits, and interior museum exhibits at existing facilities.

Newly Certified Sites
Delta Cultural Center, AR
Historic Road from Ross to Ridge’s, GA
James Brown Cherokee Plantation, TN
Junaluska Memorial and Museum, NC
Mount Nebo State Park, AR
Pettit Jean State Park, AR
Pinnacle Mountain State Park, AR
Star City Ranch Trail Segment, MO
Trail of Tears State Forest, IL
The Hermitage, TN

OK chapter members Chris Anderson, Mary Aide, and Bobbie Smith take time to visit in the hotel lobby.

The conference finished up with a luncheon. Troy Poteete acknowledges Marion Hagerstrand, a highly respected Cherokee elder. Doris Trevino and Shirley Lawrence get tickled at Paul’s banter.

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The park's restored historic road segment was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in May 2005 along with two other segments of the Springfield to Fayetteville Road through the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Overland Mail route, and the Civil War showdown, explains Superintendent Scott. In addition to the new exhibits, a planned makeover of the park museum will include Trail of Tears interpretation. The park is also considering restoring the paved portion of the historic road that has been known as Telegraph Road or Wire Road since 1860.

Cross-interpretation of Trail of Tears, Butterfield stagecoach, and Civil War sites in Benton and Washington counties is also a project of the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, www.nwarcpc.com, which will be placing 100 Heritage Trail markers along historic routes throughout the two counties, coordinator John McLarty reports. Additional information about Pea Ridge National Military Park is at www.nps.gov/trte, or 479-451-8122.
Many of the projects accomplished along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail are receiving funding from the National Park Service Challenge Cost-Share Program. Your project might qualify, too. Give us a call and we will send you a project proposal form and instructions. Projects should support the programs and goals of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail as set forth in the Comprehensive Management and Use Plan.

If you have a possible project, contact John Conoboy right away by mail, or by phone at (305) 988-6733.

Remember, Challenge Cost-Share funds are not a grant, but rather are funds for mutually-agreed-upon national historic trail projects.

Although Congress has increased the amount of available funding for the program, they have also added 3 new national historic trails in recent years, so the annual amount available for the Trail of Tears remains at around $36,000.

Site-specific projects can generally only be funded for certified sites. Projects can be related to resource protection, management, visitor use facilities, interpretation, education, or research. Projects require a 50/50 match of federal and nonfederal funding. However, the nonfederal match can include the value of volunteer time and other in-kind services, donated equipment and supplies, and so forth. If you're not sure whether or not your project will qualify, call us anyway, and let's talk.

The deadline for proposals was February 3, 2006. However, we will still discuss proposals with you, and if funding is available, they may be funded this year, or postponed for future year funding.