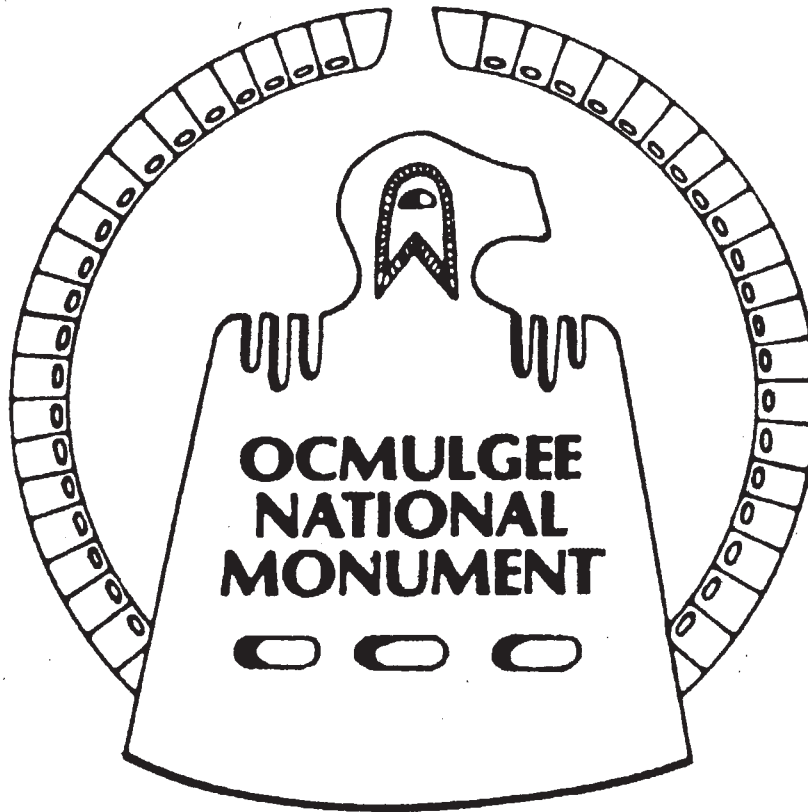


Superintendent's Annual Narrative

FY 2003



Submitted by:

James S. David
James S. David

**SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT
FY 03**

Ocmulgee National Monument corrected two major health and safety issues and in the process was challenged to keep visitor services operating. Mold and mildew in the Visitor Center was eradicated and a footbridge was built over the railroad tracks on the main trail. Progress was made in correcting sewage problems. The park was again listed on the National Parks Conservation Association's "ten most endangered parks" list. The Ocmulgee Indian Celebration was very successful. Feral hogs continued to present a problem by rutting on the mounds and other cultural sites. External issues consumed a large part of the superintendent's time. The Fall Line Freeway, the Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway, and the possibility of lighting I-16 continued as the major external issues. Two local organizations adopted resolutions relating to the Monument and its future.

The Fall Line Freeway

The Macon Chamber of Commerce went on record as opposing putting the Fall Line Freeway through the Ocmulgee Old Fields. They do want to extend the Eisenhower Parkway to I-16, which would impact a small portion of the Traditional Cultural Property. The anticipated EIS from the Georgia Department of Transportation did not come out in 2003. It is now rumored to be scheduled sometime in 2004. The Park Service continued its neutral stance on the route. Again in 2003 the National Park Conservation Association placed Ocmulgee on its "Ten Most Endangered Parks" list due to the Fall Line Freeway and also due to lack of funding. The National Trust for Historic Preservation placed the park on its 11 Most Endangered Places list due to the freeway. Both of these lists drew media attention including a History Channel story on the National Trust listing.

The Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway

The section going north from Spring Street opened and the use of the trail continues to grow. Plans continue to link up with the Monument. The current plan is to bring the trail to the Clinton Street gate; it would then run through Drakes Field to connect with the Monument's present trail system. Security and preservation concerns continue to lead the discussions. Some type of gate that will only allow people to get out and not in after hours will need to be part of the design.

Lighting along I-16

There was only a little movement on this issue. GADOT held a meeting to discuss the effect of the road and to gain information on animal species and how they might be affected. It was discovered that there was very little material available on the effects of

such lighting on animals. The park continues to express its concern on the loss of night sky, and affects on animal populations.

General Administration

FY 03 Budget

ONPS	\$784,100
VIP	1,000
Cyclic Maintenance	
Replace HVAC in VC	550,200
Replace flooring in VC	100,000
Temporary trailers (office and VC)	107,500
Remove infested trees	40,000
Replace flooring in Maintenance Shop	5,000
Replace directional signs	5,656
Fee Demonstration	
Pedestrian bridge over railroad	478,099
Traveling Exhibit	5,000
Equipment Replacement	
Administration Van	30,000
Copier	4,800
Housing Rehabilitation	
Rehab Floors at Dunlap House	9,000
Rehab Cabinets at Dunlap House	13,800
Challenge Cost Share	
Assist in funding Indian Celebration	20,000

Personnel

The new Law Enforcement/Natural Resource Management specialist, Don Starkey, transferred in from Cumberland Island. Long term employee Sylvia Flowers retired the end of September. The Chief Ranger position was promoted. The park continued with an excellent diversity profile. The permanent staff was 63% minority and/or female. The seasonal staff was 75% minority and/or female.

Travel and Training

The whole Service was under a mandate to reduce travel costs. Park staff training was limited mainly to courses to maintain certifications and get updates for law enforcement. The only Division to hold a Division chiefs meeting was the Ranger Division.

Property

Property was properly maintained. Inventories were made and all equipment was properly accounted for. Records were updated.

Resource Management

Discussions continued with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation on repatriation of the human remains currently being housed at the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC). Discussions also continued on the best location within the park for reburial.

The right-of-way/easement rights were completed with the Macon Water Authority, (MWA). MWA completed their maintenance of their lines within the park by clearing off vegetation growing over the lines and all the pipes were relined. This should reduce the chance of sewage overflows.

Further discussions were held with the city of Macon to try and find a solution to the trash flowing into the park via the storm water runoff. The city continued efforts to design a system to catch the trash and the funds to construct it. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division has directed the city to find a solution to the trash problem.

Efforts to control feral hogs continued with 26 hogs, 13 male and 13 female, being destroyed during the year. With funding from Region we were able to begin a multi-year hazardous tree and fuel reduction program. Fuels were removed from approximately 50 acres and nearly 200 dead trees were cut down. An Environmental Assessment was prepared for the Fire Management Plan; the goal is to be able to do prescribed fire on the sides of the mounds for vegetation control.

Maintenance

This was a major year for construction projects. Two major long-standing safety and health issues were corrected. The Visitor Center had a mold and mildew problem that was a threat to the health of both staff and visitors. A new HVAC system was installed to correct the problem. All parts of the old system were removed and were shown to be heavily covered by mold and mildew. The new system is a heat pump system that should reduce energy costs. Fresh conditioned air was also ducted to each room. The carpet in the building was removed due to its infestation with mold. Tile was placed throughout

much of the building. To accomplish this work the Visitor Center was closed from April 1 through the end of the fiscal year. Six temporary trailers were placed next to the Visitor Center to serve as both offices and public contact area.

The other major project was the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks. The foundations and piers were constructed during the summer and the area below the bridge was cleared to make room for the cranes that would be used to install the bridge. The bridge was to be completed in late 2003. This was funded from fee demonstration money. This bridge removes the hazard of sending visitors across an active railroad track.

Contracts were issued to rehab the floors and replace the kitchen cabinets in the Dunlap house. The work to be completed in late 2003. The tile floor was replaced at the maintenance building. Funds were received to replace and upgrade directional signing throughout the park.

John Shoemaker and Riverside Ford provided the funding to irrigate and sod the island in front of the Visitor Center. That area, which is used as the dance area for the Indian Celebration, was unsightly with very little grass growing. Since it was the area that visitors saw as they came to the Center, it did not give a good impression. Without irrigation the sandy soil would not grow much grass. Now with the sodding, irrigation and landscaping, the area looks very good.

We had an eight-person crew, six workers and two supervisors, from SCA working on trails. The major part of their work was resurfacing the Batram and Funeral Mound Loop trails. Their campsite was set up on the forest edge next to the Civil War Earthworks.

Public Use

Visitation for FY 03 was 160,664. This was a 44% increase from FY 02. There was a good rebound as a whole in many areas from the affects of 9/11. The 2003 Indian Celebration was one of the best ever. A new traffic counter was installed since the old one did not work properly. Our public satisfaction rate was a fantastic 99%. We issued a news release on that accomplishment and received an award from the local Fox 24 network as recognition of the accomplishment.

Interpretation

The Division was challenged on how to provide a good interpretive experience with the Visitor Center closed. They successfully transferred many of the exhibits to the trailers and were able to provide good interpretation from that location.

Funds were received to replace the traveling exhibit. Those funds were combined with funds from the Ocmulgee National Monument Foundation and a grant from the Georgia Department of Industry Trade and Travel to produce several traveling exhibits and other promotional material on both the park and the Indian Celebration.

With the combination of the extra promotional material, and a story in Southern Living Magazine the Ocmulgee Indian Celebration had one of its best visitation. There were approximately 26,000 people for the three days. Several new demonstrators and vendors were added with approximately 280 Native People participating. Once again the event was chosen as one of the "Top Twenty Events of the Southeast" by the Southeast Tourism Society. Again working with John Shoemaker and Ocmulgee National Monument Foundation we were able to hold another concert by two of the top Native American performers, R. Carlos Nakai and Joanne Shenandoah. The concert was at the Grand Opera House. Comments from those in attendance were very positive. Once again the park received a Challenge Cost Share grant from the NPS that helped cover the cost of bringing the dance groups and other demonstrators to the event. Bruno's corporation, through the local Food Max stores, again furnished the food for the participants and volunteers.

Along with several other NPS sites and state historic sites we were successful in getting a "Teaching American History" grant. This three-year program will result in teachers' guides for elementary, middle and high school students. In the summer of 2003 the guide for middle schools was produced. Through this funding we will also hold teacher-training programs similar to "Ocmulgee University".

Participation in the Lantern Light tours was good. There were 794 people on the tours, a 12% increase over last year. Coverage and publicity of the event in the material prepared the Cherry Blossom Commission was good.

The Earth Day celebration was lightly attended. The "official" Earth Day event by the Keep Macon/Bibb County Beautiful Commission was tied to the new Tour de Georgia bike race. Therefore, the park was completely on its own this year. However, once again we were able to get trees donated by the Georgia Forestry Division so we were able to provide every visitor who wanted one, a tree to take home.

Law Enforcement

Both law enforcement positions were filled for the whole year. There were five Part I Offenses and 29 Part II Offenses. One of the major Part 1 offences was a knife assault involving two contractors working in the Visitor Center. We brought in extra law enforcement rangers for two events, the Indian Celebration and a gathering of Nuwabians. The Nuwabians, who claim to be descendants of the mound builders, had requested a special use permit to hold a ceremony on top of the Great Temple Mound, and had been told that such an event would not be permitted. They had indicated they were going to

hold the ceremony anyway. When they did arrive we were informed they had decided they were going to keep the ceremony to the permitted area in front of the Visitor Center. Therefore, no incidents were related to the event. There were no major incidents at the Indian Celebration. There were several missing children reports, with most being located in a very short period of time. The rangers also assisted with parking cars and other traffic control.

A board of review was convened to review an incident where a ranger was injured by a bullet that ricocheted off the fence around a hog trap while dispatching a wild hog. Fortunately the injury was very minor and the ranger was found to be operating within guidelines. A change to using only long guns for that activity was made to avoid the chance of this occurring again.

Community Relations

Community relations remained positive. The Indian Celebration is the single most popular program that brings large numbers of people to the park and city. The Superintendent continued to represent the park on numerous organizations including serving on the Board of Directors for the Keep Macon-Bibb County Beautiful Commission, the Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the Tourism Advisory Council, and the Kiwanis Club of Macon. Other organizations include the Macon Arts Alliance, the Ocmulgee Heritage Greenway Committee, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Cooperating Association

The Ocmulgee National Monument Association had \$73,542 in revenue in FY 03. This was almost a 20% increase over FY 02. While sales were not that heavy there were several large donations to the Association for the Indian Celebration and other promotions. As usual, the Association continued with its excellent support of the park programs with \$33,582 being donated for park programs and other assistance. The Monument is fortunate to have such good support from the Association. Many programs such as the Indian Celebration could not be held without their assistance. Patty Ellis continues as the business manager and is a very strong supporter of park activities.