

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

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Chickamauga transportation study raises new concerns

The October 2001 opening of the U.S.27 bypass provided hope for traffic relief through the Chickamauga battlefield. Heavy trucks were banned from the park, and the vehicle count was reduced 60-70% in the first few months; but some companies and local residents subsequently applied pressure to raise the speed limit for and reduce the restrictions on vehicles traveling near and through the battlefield, and vehicle counts now reflect a reduction less than 50%. (See October 2001 and May 2002 newsletters.) Commercial vehicles less than 5 tons were permitted again on McFarland Gap and Reed's Bridge Roads, and the speed limit on the Lafayette Road, which bisects the park, was raised from 30 to 35 mph south of the Kelly Cabin. The Lafayette Road was the focus of much of the fighting in September 1863, and the return of a high volume of traffic would affect visitors' safety and their ability to envision the site's wartime appearance.

Using funds provided by the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service is now sponsoring a transportation study to investigate changes in the traffic patterns in and around the battlefield resulting from the opening of the bypass. The \$380,000 study, formally titled a Traffic Impact Analysis (for the areas around the park) and Subarea Transportation Plan (for roads within the park), is scheduled for completion in April 2004. The National Park Service asked the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to manage and administer the study, and Day Wilburn Associates (www.daywilburn.com), an Atlanta-based transportation planning and engineering firm, is leading the consultant team conducting the study. Study details are on the web at www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/plan-prog/planning/studies/chickamaugua_study/index.shtml. (Note that Chickamauga is misspelled in the address.)

Park Superintendent Pat Reed indicates the study will be part of a larger planning effort. He hopes the park transportation study will mesh with the State of Georgia's 25 year transportation master plan and the Chattanooga metropolitan area's 25 year transportation plan. He intends to coordinate the transportation study with the currently in-work Cultural Landscape Report, which will (among other things) evaluate the practicality of restoring Lafayette Road to its 1863 appearance. Another consideration of the Report is the impact of reducing the site's number of vehicle access points (currently 14). Finally, the site's General Management Plan, last revised in 1988, will be updated beginning in 2005. Coordination of all these planning efforts makes sense, but it also presents all the difficulties attendant to reconciliation of multiple projects.

Superintendent Reed acknowledges that any plan must recognize the growth of the surrounding communities. Many people who have relocated to or within the Chattanooga area over the last decade have chosen to live in Georgia because of the HOPE scholarship. If implementation of the study recommendations results in a better traffic flow around the park, these drivers should be less inclined to cut through the battlefield.

The study's first meetings are scheduled for Monday, 14 July, at Constitution Hall, 201 Forrest Road, Ft. Oglethorpe GA. The stakeholder participation panel meeting (by invitation only) is at 1:30 p.m., and the public open house is from 5 to 7 p.m. Since the date, time, and location may change, check the GDOT web site listed above or call 404 657 5411 to confirm.

The preservation community has an obvious interest in the conclusions and recommendations of all the above plans. While we can rely on the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park staff members to emphasize the historical importance of the site, they can use our help in demonstrating the amount of public support for preservation. Points of contact for the study are:

- Pat Reed, Park Superintendent, pat_reed@nps.gov, 706 866 9241 or 423 752 5213.
- Tom McQueen, GDOT, thomas.mcqueen@dot.state.ga.us, 404 657 6697.
- Mary Shavaliere, Day Wilburn Associates, mshavaliere@daywilburn.com, 404 249 7550.

Ocmulgee National Monument on most endangered list

On 29 May, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.nationaltrust.org) released its list of 11 most endangered historic places for 2003. On the list was Ocmulgee National Monument (www.nps.gov/ocmu), which the Trust included because the Old Fields section of the site would be bisected by the Fall Line Highway. Since 1985, the Georgia Department of Transportation (www.dot.state.ga.us) has been planning the road to connect Columbus, Macon, and Augusta.

Ocmulgee was designated a National Monument in 1936, primarily to protect artifacts of the Muscogee Creek culture. Jim David, Ocmulgee superintendent who joined the February 2003 Ed Bearss tour participants for dinner at the Hay House, reports that the site also contains remnants of the Confederate fortifications intended to protect Macon.

Write to the Georgia DOT at No. 2 Capitol Square SW, Atlanta GA 30334, or call 404 656 5267.

Utoy Creek ceremony postponed

We apologize to anyone who showed up on 28 June at the newly saved Civil War site along Utoy Creek expecting a ceremony or guided tours of the trenches. The attempt to reconcile the schedules of various dignitaries was unsuccessful, and the ceremony has been postponed, probably until the Fall. We'll try to give you enough lead time to plan your attendance, but we'll also try to wait until confirmation is more likely.

Valerie Lyons elected as GBA trustee

Culminating a yearlong search, the GBA Board of Trustees unanimously elected Valerie Lyons to join their ranks. Many of our members may know Valerie from the Ed Bearss tours of this year and last or from the Atlanta Civil War Round Table. Originally from western New York, Valerie is a photo librarian for the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. Initially, she'll concentrate on mailing out the printed editions of the *Georgia Battlefields* newsletter.

Greenspace funding deferred for FY2004

On 11 June, Governor Perdue delayed spending on several items in the FY2004 budget because state revenues have continued to be lower than expected. Among the affected items was the entire \$10 million for the Greenspace Program, which has been used to preserve historic sites. Also deferred was spending for several projects sponsored by House Democrats, including \$100,000 for the National Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus (www.portcolumbus.org).

Brochure on Georgia's Civil War sites again available

Presence of the Past is a brochure that provides a brief description, location, and contact information for 39 Civil War-related sites in Georgia. The brochure has again been revised and reprinted. The Department of Industry, Trade & Tourism will supply batches to museums and visitors' centers, but you can get individual copies by contacting the Civil War Commission office at 404 657 7294 or barry_brown@dnr.state.ga.us or rich_elwell@dnr.state.ga.us.

New executive director for Atlanta History Center

James H. Bruns became executive director of the Atlanta History Center in March. Bruns comes to Atlanta from the Smithsonian, where he served as director of development. Bruns was also founding director of the National Postal Museum from 1992 to 2000.

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Address correction requested
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