



National Park Service News Release

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National Park Service invites public input on Ocmulgee River Corridor Special Resource Study

ATLANTA — Today, the National Park Service (NPS) launched public commenting on a study of the Ocmulgee River corridor between Macon and Hawkinsville, Georgia to evaluate its potential for designation as a national park unit.

The John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (Public Law 116-9) of 2019 directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study and assess historical, cultural and environmental information about the corridor gathered through research and public input. The NPS study area covers an expanse of roughly 50 river miles in Bibb, Bleckley, Houston, Pulaski and Twiggs counties.

The NPS will host virtual public meetings on the Ocmulgee River Corridor Special Resource Study Feb. 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Feb. 17, 1-3 p.m. ET. Links to join the virtual meetings may be accessed on the project website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/OcmulgeeRiver>. During the virtual meetings, the NPS will share information about the special resource study process, including the criteria used to evaluate a site for inclusion in the national park system, and answer participants' questions. The meeting presentations will be identical and interested parties are encouraged to attend the time most convenient.

Comments and questions about the special resource study may also be submitted online via the project website <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/OcmulgeeRiver> or by postal mail to:

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National Park Service
Denver Service Center
Attn: Ocmulgee River Corridor SRS
12795 West Alameda Parkway
PO Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Public comments will be accepted through March 26, 2021.

“Public and stakeholder input are critical to the National Park Service special resource study process,” said Ben West, regional chief of planning and compliance, National Park Service. “The information, interest and inquiries we receive from the public help inform our work as we assess an area's potential to be included in the national park system.”

The study findings – which will be reported to Congress, along with any recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior – will center on the area’s national significance, suitability, feasibility and need for direct NPS management. The study is expected to run through 2023.

The Ocmulgee River corridor includes a rich human history with archaeological resources dating from the Paleoindian Period through World War II. Particularly significant are extensive American Indian resources, including Mississippian mound sites and sites associated with Muscogee Creek heritage and history. The river corridor is comprised mostly of bottomland hardwood forest and swamp with some upland forest in the terraces above the floodplain. Diverse wildlife in the area include black bears, white-tailed deer, wood ducks, alligators, wild turkeys and many species of waterfowl. Major public land holdings in the area include Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park; the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge; Robins Air Force Base; and the Echeconnee Creek, Oaky Woods, and Ocmulgee State Wildlife Management Areas. There are also several public river landings. Much of the property in the study area is undeveloped, whether in private or public ownership.

More information about the study is available at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/OcmulgeeRiver>.

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