



Public Scoping Newsletter

Dear Friends and Visitors,

The Natchez Trace Parkway and the Chickasaw Nation have established a partnership to design and develop a cultural center and museum to interpret the rich history of the area as it relates to the Chickasaw, the Old Southwest United States, and the Old Natchez Trace. As part of this effort, the National Park Service is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate alternatives for the project.

This project will enhance the visitor services, visitor information and visitor understanding of the Natchez Trace Parkway and the Chickasaw culture. The north Mississippi portion of the Parkway passes through the traditional homeland of the Chickasaw, and no other park in the National Park System has such an abundant concentration of resources associated with their culture. The National Park Service is pleased to partner with the Chickasaw Nation in this effort to enhance the interpretive experience for our visitors.

The proposed action involves physical changes to the Chickasaw Village site, located on the Parkway at milepost 262, and this newsletter initiates the public scoping process as part of the EA to evaluate the proposed changes to the site. We invite the public, government agencies and other interested persons and organizations to become involved by providing comments.

You are welcome to comment by visiting the park's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/natr_ea_newsletter, or by sending us a letter. Please see the "Public Scoping Period and How to Comment" section of this newsletter for more details. Additional information will also be made available at www.nps.gov/natr.

Thank you for your continued interest and involvement with the Natchez Trace Parkway. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dale Wilkerson, Acting Superintendent
Natchez Trace Parkway

Chukma!

The Natchez Trace Parkway lies within a part of the United States that is special to the Chickasaw people. This is where our ancestors lived for countless generations. We call this area our "homeland," and revere it deeply.

We are devoted to this area, and have made a long-term commitment to help further develop it. We have long been interested in creating a new Chickasaw heritage and cultural center at the Chickasaw Village site along the Natchez Trace Parkway at Tupelo, Mississippi. The Chickasaw Nation is pleased to unite in partnership with the National Park Service in conducting this invitation for comments. The input received will be important to the development of the parkway and the planning for a heritage and cultural center.

The Chickasaw Nation is excited about this opportunity!

Sincerely,

Governor Bill Anoatubby,
The Chickasaw Nation



Photo credit: NPS/(c)Marc Muench



(Photo credit: AECOM)

Proposed site for the Chickasaw Museum and Cultural Center

Chickasaw Nation Cultural Heritage

Chickasaw people know of the significance of the Chickasaw village where they once lived. There is much to share and learn about how the Chickasaw’s legacy is important to the early formation of our country. Much is being learned through modern research, science and studies from ancient times through historic times that should be used in educating the public how the Chickasaw and the Old Trace were significant. Through many generations Chickasaw women, warriors and leaders survived the challenges of other tribes and Europeans including the Spanish, French, British and the Americans.

Following federal Indian Removal in the 1830s, the Chickasaw people moved west. Today, the Chickasaw Nation is thriving! A new interpretive center on the Natchez Trace would be an exciting place to learn and experience the Chickasaw culture for generations to come.

Design Program

The broad vision for this project is to develop a Cultural Center, a Chickasaw Village, Interpretive Trails and associated parking areas. The new facility would be utilized by multiple user groups for various purposes and should accommodate each of these groups in a “shared” manner. Multi-purpose and multi-use spaces, both interior and exterior, will be incorporated to allow the development to accommodate varying needs.

Key audiences and their desired experiences for the planned facility include:

Students - Gathering areas for group lessons and activities. Interactive interpretive exhibits. Immersion and experiential activities and exhibits.

Chickasaw Elders - Walking trails with native plantings. Areas for reflection and introspection. Natural areas to reconnect with historic homeland experience.

Families - Interactive interpretive exhibits. Immersion and experiential activities.

Day Users - Access to local and national trails. Picnic areas, open play areas.

Purpose and Need

A museum and cultural center is proposed at the Chickasaw Village site along the Parkway near Tupelo, Mississippi - near the Parkway Headquarters and Visitor Center. The purpose and need for this project describes what the NPS intends to accomplish by undertaking this action and why it is taking action at this time.

The primary purpose for developing a Museum and Cultural Center is to educate, interpret and preserve this unique piece of historic Chickasaw homeland through a partnership between Nations. In addition, the proposed center will provide a place for the Chickasaw people to connect with their homeland

The Natchez Trace Parkway traverses lands that were the historic traditional homeland of the Chickasaw Nation and is rich in archeological resources attributed to the Chickasaw Nation’s ancestors.

The archeological resources associated with the Chickasaw are one of the major features of the Natchez Trace Parkway. No other park in the National Park System has the concentration of archeological resources associated with the Chickasaw Nation.

Natchez Trace Parkway is presently very limited in interpretation of the rich Native American heritage of the Chickasaw Nation.

Objectives

Objectives are more specific statements of purpose that provide additional basis for comparing the effectiveness of alternatives in achieving a desired outcome. Project objectives for the design and construction of the Cultural Center include:

- Preserve Natural and Cultural Resources
- Interpret Site Culture and History from the Chickasaw Perspective.
- Create a “Hub” for Regional Interpretation of Chickasaw History
- Preserve the National Scenic Trail
- Provide Educational and Meaningful Visitor Experience for Multiple User Groups
- Protect Visitor Safety and Security
- Provide a Complete Educational Experience

Impact Topics

The NPS will assess the effects of this project on the parkway's resources. Impact topics in the EA are used to evaluate the impacts of proposed design alternatives to the parkway's existing resources. This list can change as the NPS gets more information during scoping.

Preliminary impact topics identified for assessment in the EA include:

Cultural Resources

- Archeological Resources
- Cultural Landscapes
- Ethnographic Resources

Park Operations and Management

- Resource Management
- Maintenance
- Operations and Partnerships

Natural Resources

- Rare and unusual vegetation/ species of special concern
- Floodplains
- Wetlands

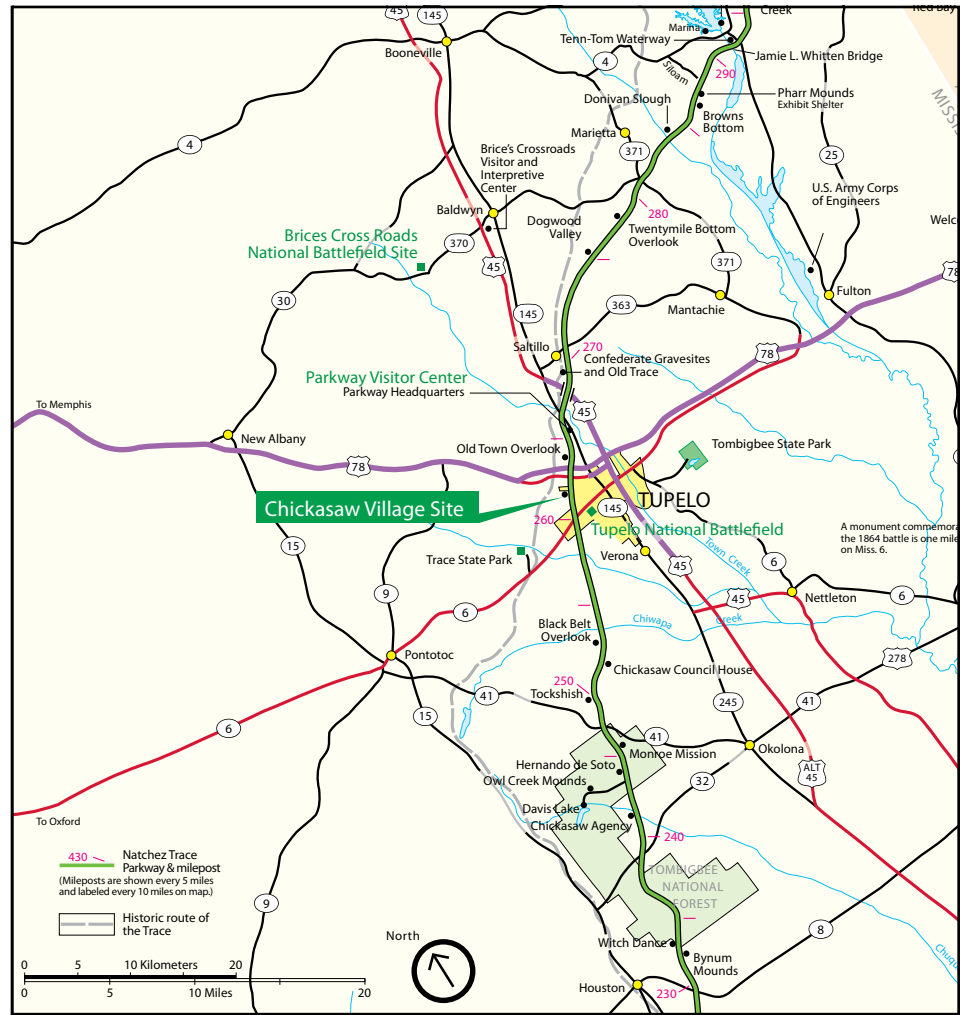
Visitor Use and Experience

- Recreation
- Transportation

In addition, the scope of the EA includes consultation with state and tribal Historic Preservation Officers under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.



Photo credit: AECOM



Natchez Trace Parkway through Tupelo, Mississippi, with location of Chickasaw Village site, proposed location for the new Chickasaw Museum and Cultural Center

Project Milestones

Milestone	Date
Public Scoping Period Begins	January 2013
Public Scoping Meetings	January/February 2013
End of Public Scoping Period	February 2013
Begin Preparation of EA	Winter 2013
EA Available for Public Review	Spring/Summer 2013
Preparation of Decision Document	Summer 2013

Existing Chickasaw Village site



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Natchez Trace Parkway
2680 Natchez Trace Parkway
Tupelo, MS 38804

First Class Mail
Postage and Fees PAID
National Park Service
Permit Number G-83

Public Scoping Meetings

The NPS and the Chickasaw Nation will hold two open house public meetings during the public scoping period:

January 30, 2013
4:00 to 7:00 PM
Natchez Trace Parkway Visitor Center
2680 Natchez Trace Parkway
Tupelo, MS 38804

February 5, 2013
4:00 to 7:00 PM
Chickasaw Nation Headquarters
520 E. Arlington
Ada, OK 74820

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Public Scoping Period and How to Comment

The Superintendent has announced a public scoping period to solicit comments on the scope of the project. During this scoping period, the public and all interested parties are invited to comment on the project, concerns or issues related to the project's impact on natural resources, cultural resources, and visitor experience. Let us know what you think about the project's effect on the Natchez Trace Parkway and the Chickasaw Village site.

Questions to consider:

Do the purpose, need and objectives reflect what you think the NPS needs to accomplish with this project?

If not, what else do you think needs to be accomplished?

What concerns or questions do you have about the potential impacts of the project to construct the Chickasaw Museum and Cultural Center?

How do you think these concerns could be addressed?

Submitting Comments

Comments can be submitted electronically at the National Park Service's PEPC website: http://park-planning.nps.gov/natr_ea_newsletter. Written comments may be mailed or hand-delivered to:

Natchez Trace Parkway
Superintendent
2680 Natchez Trace Parkway
Tupelo, Mississippi 38804

To be most helpful to the planning process, NPS requests that you submit your comments within 30 days of receiving this letter.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.