



The Journey

Newsletter Three - November 2005

General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Update: New Alternatives Developed

News from the Superintendent

Dear Friends:

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area issued a Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) during summer 2004. The purpose of the GMP/EIS is to present a plan for managing Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area for the next 20 years. During the public comment period, boaters, anglers, and other recreators expressed major concerns about limitations that were placed on fishing and power boating in certain reaches of the Chattahoochee River, as well as the type of access for fishing, hiking and mountain biking experiences in the park.

We reviewed all the comments that were sent to us, and recognized the need to provide additional alternatives to address the public's concerns. We developed a partnership with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and together we created two new alternatives based upon input from the public, and agency and community representatives. The results of this coordination are presented in this newsletter and will be detailed in upcoming public meetings. The new alternatives are identified as "E" and "F". These new alternatives are described in this newsletter.

Public meetings will be conducted to provide an opportunity for us to meet with you and gather your comments on the new alternatives. You are invited and strongly urged to attend any of the public meetings scheduled for December 12, 13 and 20, 2005. Meeting locations and timeframes are listed at the end of this newsletter. Your involvement in this planning process is critical, and we thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Kevin G. Cheri
Superintendent, Chattahoochee River
National Recreation Area

Update

A draft version of the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement was made available for review during the summer of 2004. The document is accessible on the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area park website: <http://www.nps.gov/chat/gmp.htm>. Public meetings on the draft plan were held and comments were received last year. Major concerns were voiced over boating use and access and angling access along the Chattahoochee River. In addition, the issue of increased access for such recreational opportunities as fishing, hiking, and mountain biking was raised. As a result of this public input, the National Park Service, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, developed two new alternatives: E and F, which are described in this newsletter.

Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement - Summary

General Management Plans represent the broadest level of planning conducted by the National Park Service, and are intended to provide guidance for making informed decisions about the future of the park and specify resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved. More specific site locations, design and resource management plans for fishing, trails, etc. come later with ample opportunity for public review and comment. A summary of the general management planning process can be

found in Newsletter One dated April 2002 which is located on the park's website <http://www.nps.gov/chat/gmp.htm>.

The Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement described four alternatives for the future management of Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. It defined the strategies that would allow for diverse visitor use, protection of park resources, and enjoyment of the park.



The four alternatives analyzed in the Draft GMP/EIS were the Continue Current Management or No Action Alternative (A), Focus on Solitude Alternative (B), Centralized Access Alternative (C), and Expanded Use Alternative (D).

These alternatives were mapped using different configurations of management zones. The management zones included: Cultural Resource Zone, Pristine River Zone, Developed Zone, Urban Primitive Zone, and Natural Area Recreation Zone. Management prescriptions, or activities and levels of development that were considered appropriate in each of the zones were also identified.

Based upon public input regarding the use of the Chattahoochee River and other recreational opportunities in the park, two additional alternatives: E and F were created specifically to respond to public concerns by making the following changes to management zones and prescriptions.

- Eliminate the Pristine River Zone, which prohibited fishing and power boating.
- Create a new zone, the River Zone, in which boating and fishing are allowed throughout the park in all waterways.
- Retain the Urban Primitive Zone as defined in the May 2004 public review Draft of the GMP/EIS, but rename it the Natural Zone in response to comments from the public that these areas could never be truly “primitive”.
- Create two new land zones: the Rustic Zone and the Historic Resource Zone, to avoid the limitations on boating and fishing that were features of the previous zoning approach. In that approach, allowable visitor activities on the river were determined by the most accommodating (or least restrictive) adjacent land based zone. The revised zoning approach eliminates this feature completely and allows boating and fishing throughout the river and all associated tributaries.

These revised management prescriptions are summarized and listed on the enclosed Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Management Prescriptions table.

Comparison of New Alternatives

Detailed descriptions of the four alternatives previously analyzed are included in the May, 2004 Draft GMP/EIS which is available on-line at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Under the “Choose a Park” drop-down window, find Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area and then click “Go”. The two newly created alternatives are summarized in the paragraphs that follow.

Alternative E was created in response to public comments on the May 2004 Draft GMP/EIS alternatives. Alternative E provides for expanded recreational opportunities while also providing opportunities for greater quiet and solitude. Under Alternative E, access is strategically located throughout the 48-mile length of the park. Fishing and power boating activities are appropriate throughout the park in accord with State law and private property rights. Management zones retained include the Natural Area Recreation Zone, Natural Zone and Developed Zone. In addition, new zones created include the River Zone,

Rustic Zone, and Historic Resource Zone. A map depicting Alternative E management zones is provided as an insert to this newsletter.

Alternative F was also created as a result of public and agency input. Alternative F provides more opportunities for development of hardened recreational facilities such as paved trails, picnic shelters, etc. than Alternative E. Alternative F provides expanded opportunities for recreational activities and facilities over current conditions, with access strategically placed throughout the length of the park. Like Alternative E, fishing and power boating is appropriate throughout the park in accordance with State law and private property rights. The zones retained from the May, 2004 Draft GMP/EIS include the Natural Area Recreation Zone, Natural Zone, and Developed Zone. New zones and management prescriptions created for Alternative F are the River Zone, Rustic Zone and Historic Resource Zone. A map depicting Alternative F management zones is provided as an insert to this newsletter.

River Zone	Rustic Zone	Historic Zone
Includes the Chattahoochee River within park boundaries.	Primarily natural conditions at most locations.	Stresses protecting sensitive cultural resources. Focus would be on significant archeological and/or historic resources.
Fishing and boating allowed in accord with State law and private property rights.	Visitor access provided (boat ramps, trails, viewing platforms, etc.). Activities include bank fishing, hiking, off-road bicycling, horse riding, etc.	Some natural environment modifications for visitor access.
Personal water craft such as Wave Runners™ and Jet Skis™ continue to be prohibited.	No new restrooms, boat ramps; no new roads provided; existing roads maintained.	Facilities include trails, restrooms, parking areas, picnic facilities, roads, bridges and kiosks that are appropriate within the cultural context. Facilities harmonize with cultural and natural environment where practical.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
1978 Island Ford Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30350-3400
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>



COMMENT FORM

General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement

Please provide us with feedback on the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area General Management Plan Alternatives. If you need more space, feel free to attach additional pages to this form. If you prefer, you may also comment via <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. The National Park Service will not consider anonymous comments. Please submit your comments by **January 31, 2006**.

1. Do you think the new alternatives developed are appropriate? If not, what is missing or inappropriate?

2. Which alternative do you prefer and why? If you are not satisfied with any of the alternatives, please describe your preferences.

3. What else would you like the planning team to know with regard to this project?

4. Would you like to be added to our mailing list? Yes No

Your Name:

Organization:

Address:

City/State or Territory/Zip:

Date:



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
 1978 Island Ford Parkway
 Atlanta, GA 30350-3400.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service appreciates your comments on the proposed new alternatives for the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. We request that you provide your comments at the public meetings, or you are invited to respond in writing or by electronic mail:

**Comments? Write to:
 National Park Service**

Mr. Kevin G. Cheri, Superintendent
 Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
 1978 Island Ford Parkway
 Atlanta, GA 30350-3400.

You may also enter comments directly through the Internet by directing your web browser to the following address: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> Under the "Choose a Park" drop-down window, find Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area and then click "Go".

What to Expect

The next step in the process will be to have public meetings to present the two new alternatives for your consideration and comment. You are invited to attend any of the public meetings to be held December 12th, 13th or 20th, 2005 at the following locations:

Please comment - we request that you give us your feedback by January 31, 2006. Comments will then be incorporated and a revised General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement will be re-issued at which time you will have another opportunity to comment.

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
Monday, December 12, 2005 6:30 -9:30 p.m.	Pickneyville Community Center 4650 Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Norcross, GA 770-417-2200
Tuesday, December 13, 2005 6:30-9:30 p.m.	Chattahoochee Nature Center 9135 Willeo Road Roswell, GA 770-992-2055
Tuesday, December 20 , 2005 6:30-9:30 p.m.	Chattahoochee Technical College Mountain View Campus 2680 Gordy Parkway Marietta, GA 770-528-4465