



General Management Plan  
Newsletter #1  
Fall 2002

## Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Friends:

You are invited to participate in the planning and preservation of Chickasaw National Recreation Area in Oklahoma. Chickasaw NRA is one of the oldest units in the national park system. Its history reflects both the development of the National Park Service and the care that Americans have taken to preserve and protect places that have much meaning for the public. Chickasaw National Recreation Area protects unique resources, springs, streams, lakes and other natural features, safeguards and interprets the area's cultural history, and provides for public education, appreciation, and the recreational use and enjoyment of these resources.

The current *General Management Plan* for Chickasaw National Recreation Area was completed in 1979, then revised in 1984 and again in 1994 because of significant changes that occurred during that time. Those changes have continued, including new visitor facilities, increases in resource challenges, expanded recognition of the historic value of the safe recreation area's cultural resources, and changing visitor needs.

This year we will begin to develop a new general management plan to set long-term directions for the overall management and development of the national recreation area for the next 15 to 20 years. The new plan will help us to make decisions on the direction of resource management, visitor use and interpretation, and facilities development. The plan should be completed in the next three years.

We are looking forward to working with you to craft a general management plan that will capture the connections that visitors have had with Chickasaw NRA over the past 100 years and that will continue to protect and enhance the national recreation area's resources and visitor experiences. We hope that you will join us to express your thoughts, ideas, and vision so that together we can make Chickasaw National Recreation Area a wonderful resource for the future.

John F. (Rick) Shireman  
Chickasaw National Recreation Area

### ***You're invited...***

We welcome your comments and suggestions. We hope to see you at one of the meetings listed below:

**October 5:**

Travertine Nature Center  
Chickasaw National Recreation Area  
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

**October 7:**

Post Office/Courthouse  
215 Dean A. McGee Ave, Oklahoma City  
4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

**October 9:**

Travertine Nature Center  
Chickasaw National Recreation Area  
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

**October 10:**

Ramada Inn  
Ft. Worth Convention Center  
1701 Commerce  
Ft. Worth, TX 76102  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

## GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLANS – WHAT ARE THEY?

General management plans identify the overall direction for the future management of units of the National Park Service (NPS) and other agencies, including national recreation areas. Such plans take a long-range, broad, conceptual view, answering the question “what kind of place do we want this area to be?” General management plans provide a framework for managers to use in making decisions about such issues as how best to protect resources, what levels and types of uses are appropriate, what facilities should be developed, and how people should gain access to the recreation area. All concepts, strategies, and actions in a general management plan must be consistent with the reasons for the area’s establishment — its purpose, significance, and mission. Federal legislation, such as the National Park Service Organic Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and NPS policies also direct what the plan can and cannot consider.



The *Chickasaw NRA General Management Plan* will **not** resolve all the issues facing the national recreation area, provide detailed facility designs and management actions, or guarantee funding for the national recreation area. Rather, this plan will describe the general path the National Park Service intends to follow in managing Chickasaw National Recreation Area over the next 15 to 20 years. The plan will identify desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that would be appropriate for each part of the national recreation area and the strategies for achieving those conditions. It also will identify general locations where certain types of development would be appropriate. Specific questions regarding how these desired conditions will be achieved will be answered in new or revised implementation plans, such as resource management plans and interpretive plans that will be prepared after the *General Management Plan* is completed and approved.

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and NPS policy, the *General Management Plan* will be combined with an environmental impact statement. The *Chickasaw NRA General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* will identify significant issues and concerns, present a reasonable range

of management alternatives, and analyze the environmental consequences of each of the alternatives.

### A general management plan:

- ✍ provides general direction and basic management philosophy
- ✍ identifies resource and visitor use management strategies and actions
- ✍ can identify national recreation area infrastructure requirements, functions, and locations
- ✍ satisfies statutory and policy requirements
- ✍ identifies funding and staffing requirements
- ✍ does not guarantee funding
- ✍ will not solve all problems

## WHY DOES CHICKASAW NATIONAL RECREATION AREA NEED TO REVISE ITS *GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN*?

The National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (PL 95-625) requires the preparation and timely revision of general management plans for each unit of the national park system. The last general management plan for Chickasaw National Recreation Area was completed in 1979. It was amended in 1984 because of the addition of Veterans Lake to the national recreation area and again in 1994 to address the need for a visitor center, headquarters, a maintenance facility, and a cultural center. The original document is outdated, and information is spread throughout the three documents, which makes determining a cohesive course of management difficult. A new plan for the national recreation area will solve these issues.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS — HOW WILL THE PLAN BE PREPARED?

Five major steps will be taken to produce a general management plan:

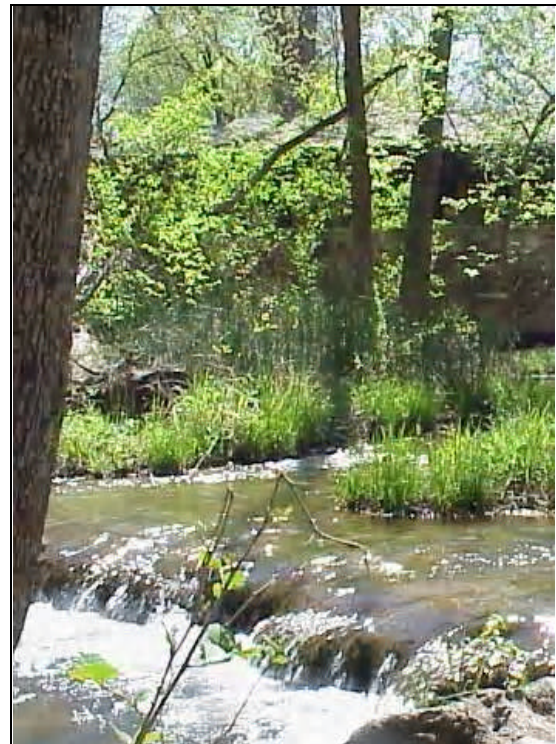
- ✍ In the first step, the planning team will reaffirm the national recreation area's purpose, significance, and mission; identify issues and concerns for the national recreation area; and collect information necessary for the planning process. This will establish the context for the plan.
- ✍ Efforts during the second step will focus on determining alternative approaches to achieving desired future conditions and resolving issues. Typically, three to five management alternatives will be identified. One alternative will be chosen as the National Park Service's preferred alternative, which is the alternative the National Park Service believes best fulfills its statutory mission and responsibilities.
- ✍ In the third step, the planning team will compile the management alternatives and an analysis of the effects of implementing each alternative into a draft general management plan / environmental impact statement. This document then will be distributed to the public for review and comments.
- ✍ In step four the team will consider public comments, make appropriate changes to the

draft document, then prepare and distribute a final general management plan / environmental impact statement.

- ✍ The final step of the planning process will be to issue a record of decision, which is the official approval of one of the alternatives as the plan for managing the national recreation area. The National Park Service then can begin implementing the general management plan as funding permits.

## THE PLANNING TEAM — WHO IS WRITING THE PLAN?

A multidisciplinary team has been assembled to prepare the *General Management Plan* for the Chickasaw National Recreation Area. The team includes the staff of the national recreation area, as well as natural resource specialists, cultural resource specialists, planners, and landscape architects from the Denver Service Center of the National Park Service (the NPS planning, design, and construction management office) and Harpers Ferry Center (interpretive planning office). Geographic information system specialists, editors, visual information specialists, and others will support the planning team. In addition, the planning team will consult with other knowledgeable people inside and



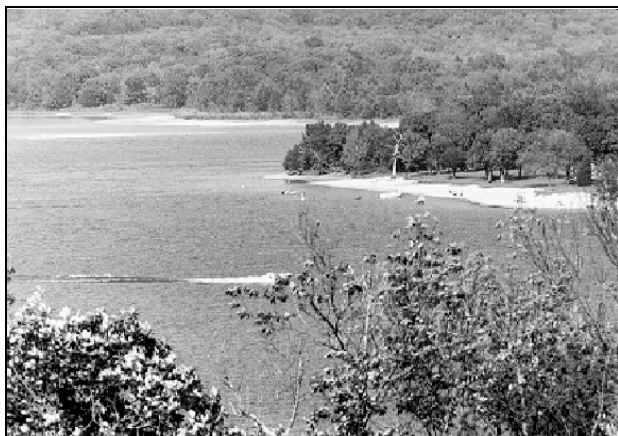
outside the National Park Service and with the general public. In reaching decisions concerning the future management of the national recreation area, the planning team will seek to reach agreement among national recreation area staff, NPS leaders, federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, and interested groups and citizens.

## **NATIONAL RECREATION AREA PURPOSES, SIGNIFICANCE, AND MISSION**

An act of Congress first established Chickasaw National Recreation Area as Sulphur Springs Reservation in 1902 near Sulphur, Oklahoma. Congress enlarged Sulphur Springs Reservation slightly and established it as Platt National Park in 1906. Later, it was combined with Arbuckle Lake to create the Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Now the national recreation area contains 9,889 acres and preserves natural springs and streams and the park's lakes in perpetuity. This valuable part of America's heritage is available to nearly 3,400,000 total visitors and 1,600,000 recreational visitors each year for their experience, enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation.

At the beginning of the planning process it is important to reaffirm the national recreation area's purposes, significance, and mission. We do this to establish a framework within which we can evaluate proposed actions to ensure that they are consistent with the mandate of this national recreation area.

**PURPOSE:** Purpose statements clarify the reasons Chickasaw National Recreation Area was established as part of the national park system and provide the foundation for the management and use of the national recreation area. Such statements are based on a unit's establishing legislation and



legislative history, other special designations, and NPS policies.

The purpose of Chickasaw National Recreation Area is to protect the springs and waters; preserve areas of archeological or ethnological interest; provide outdoor recreation; protect scenic, scientific, natural, and historic values; memorialize the Chickasaw Indian Nation; and allow hunting and fishing.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Significance statements identify the resources and values that are central to managing the area and express the importance of the area to our natural and cultural heritage. Significance statements do not inventory site resources; rather, they describe the area's distinctiveness and help to place it in regional, national, and international contexts. Understanding the national recreation area's significance will help managers make decisions that will preserve the resources and values necessary to accomplish the area's purposes.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area is significant as a unit of the National Park system because:

- ✧ Chickasaw NRA contains mineral and fresh water, which comes from one of the most complex geological and hydrological features in the United States;
- ✧ The cultural landscape of the Platt Historic District primarily reflects the era of 1933–1940, when the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) implemented NPS “rustic” designs;
- ✧ Recreational opportunities are available to experience a wide range of outdoor experiences —swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, observing nature, hunting, camping, bicycling, horseback riding, family reunions, and picnicking — all of which remind us of the rural character in the history of the American people; and
- ✧ Chickasaw NRA is home to a transition zone where the Eastern deciduous forest meets the Western prairies, which is unique to the central part of the United States.

**MISSION:** The mission of a unit of the national park system is essentially a vision for the future. A mission



statement articulates, in broad terms, the ideals that the National Park Service strives to achieve.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area exists as a part of the national park system to provide for the protection of the national recreation area's unique resources, springs, streams, lakes, and other natural features; to protect and interpret its cultural history, landscapes, and structures; and to provide for public education, appreciation, and recreational use and enjoyment of these resources. We will strive to give each visitor a safe, enjoyable, educational, and memorable experience.

### **CHICKASAW NRA ISSUES THAT MAY BE ADDRESSED IN THE *GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN***

The Chickasaw NRA *General Management Plan* will address a number of problems, issues, and concerns to ensure that the national recreation area's purposes and mission are being achieved and to maintain what is significant about the national recreation area. Among the important issues the plan may address are the following:

- ✧ What should be the future of the 160-acre Environmental Study Area and the associated Travertine Nature Center in the proposed historic landmark district?
- ✧ What actions need to be taken to preserve and maintain the national recreation area's cultural landscape?



- ✧ Overuse of the aquifer that sustains the national recreation area's springs and waters may be responsible for the disappearance of some of the Chickasaw NRA's springs. What should be done to protect the national recreation area's remaining springs and waters?
- ✧ Almost 3.4 million people visit Chickasaw NRA annually. Of these, 1.6 million travel to the park for recreational reasons. Another 1.8 million travel through the park as incidental users on U.S. Highway 177. Increasing numbers of visitors are affecting the national recreation area's resources such as water quality and the quality of the visitor experience. What should the National Park Service do to provide for recreational use while also protecting clean water and the national recreation area's other scientific, natural, and historic values? What is the appropriate range of visitor opportunities that should be provided at Chickasaw NRA?
- ✧ Nonnative plants and animals are severely affecting the national recreation area's native populations. What actions should be taken to control these species and protect Chickasaw NRA's native species?
- ✧ Woodlands are spreading and covering more of Chickasaw NRA. What is the appropriate landscape for the national recreation area? What lands, if any, should be restored to prairie? Would this restoration be compatible with the national recreation area's cultural landscape?
- ✧ During the peak season when facilities are full, parking is not available, and Travertine Creek is overflowing with visitors. Are additional visitor facilities needed to meet visitor needs?
- ✧ Traffic circulation in many parts of the national recreation area is ineffective. What are appropriate road systems and traffic flows in Chickasaw NRA? Is a public transportation system needed?
- ✧ The Chickasaw Nation is interested in exchanging lands in the national recreation area so they can place their headquarters near a traditional use area. Is a national recreation area boundary expansion needed or appropriate, since the national recreation area is approaching its legislated limit for acreage?

✍ Chickasaw NRA is surrounded by a wildland urban interface. The city of Sulphur and other communities in Murray County are interested in comprehensive planning, particularly in tourism planning and development. What needs to be done in the national recreation area to create a safe environment for local residents and to meet other community needs? What should be done if management decisions for the recreation area are in potential conflict with community interests? What actions can be taken to manage increasing developments on the boundary of the national recreation area?

✍ The existing maintenance complex is inadequate — it is too small to meet recreation area needs, it does not meet modern safety and health standards, and it is not energy efficient. Are new facilities needed, or can the current facilities be used more efficiently and effectively?

These issues are only examples of management issues at Chickasaw National Recreation Area, and this list is meant only to stimulate involvement, not to be all-inclusive. Please respond to these issues or any other issues you might see by filling out the attached response form.

## WHAT IS YOUR ROLE — HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Public involvement is critical to the success of the planning effort. Public input will help the planning team and decision-makers learn about the concerns,

issues, expectations, and desires of visitors, interested citizens, people with traditional cultural ties to the national recreation area, interest groups, and others. The planning team will share information and seek public input at key points through the planning process. A variety of methods will be used to encourage public feedback, including publishing newsletters, sending public releases to the media, holding public meetings, and posting information on the Internet.

You can begin providing feedback by completing the enclosed comment form. Please let us know your concerns, issues, and thoughts on what should be addressed in the *General Management Plan*. After you have finished filling out the postage-paid form, just fold, tape, and drop it in a mailbox.

You also can log on to Chickasaw National Recreation Area's home page at <http://www.nps.gov/chic> or the National Park Service planning Web page at <http://www.nps.gov/planning>. All newsletters will be posted on the Web sites, along with an electronic response form if you prefer to participate electronically.

If you live in the Chickasaw NRA area, the planning team intends to arrange four public open houses the week of October 6, 2002. If you attend an open house, you can learn about the planning process, talk to members of the planning team, and tell the team about the issues and concerns you would like to have considered in the plan. The dates and locations of the meetings are listed on the front of this newsletter.



For more information about the planning process and national recreation area issues, contact Rick Shireman, Superintendent, at (580)622-3161 or at Chickasaw National Recreation Area, 1008 West Second Street, Sulphur, OK 73086 or e-mail [chic\\_gmp@nps.gov](mailto:chic_gmp@nps.gov).

The schedule below summarizes the major steps in the planning process and the opportunities for you to get involved. We are currently in the first step of the process.

Please be aware that because of public disclosure requirements, the National Park Service must make

the names and addresses of commenters public if requested. However, individual respondents may request that this information not be released. The National Park Service will then determine whether the information may be withheld under the Freedom of Information Act, and will honor your request to the extent allowed by law. If you want us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will make available for public inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses

### General Management Plan Schedule

Step	Planning Activity	Dates	Public Involvement Opportunities
Where we are now	<b>1 Set the stage for planning:</b> Reaffirm purpose, significance, and mission of the recreation area; determine issues and concerns	Fall 2002 to Winter 2002	Attend public meetings and voice your concerns using a response form.
	<b>2 Develop preliminary management alternatives:</b> Identify a range of reasonable alternatives for the recreation area's future, assess their effects, analyze public reactions, and select a preferred alternative	Winter 2002 to Fall 2003	Provide comments on the initial alternatives using a response form. Attend public meetings and provide comments.
	<b>3 Prepare and publish Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement:</b> Prepare draft describing the planning, alternatives, and impacts; distribute to the public.	Fall 2003 to Fall 2004	Provide written comments on the draft document. Attend public meetings and provide comments.
	<b>4 Revise and publish Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement:</b> Analyze comments, prepare responses to comments, revise draft document, distribute to the public.	Fall 2004 to Summer 2005	
	<b>5 Implement the approved plan:</b> Prepare and issue Record of Decision and implement plan as funding allows.	Summer 2005 and beyond	Stay involved throughout the implementation of the approved plan.

United States Department Of The Interior  
National Park Service  
Chickasaw National Recreation Area  
1008 West Second Street  
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