

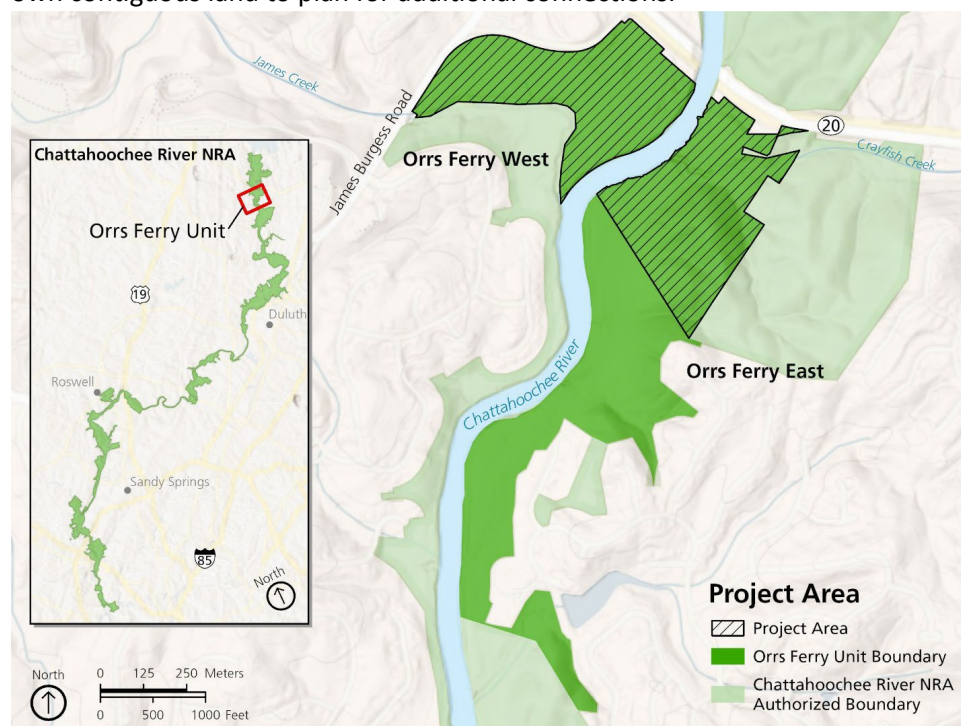
CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

ORRS FERRY SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS JANUARY 2026

Does this plan address connectivity to the Bowmans Island Unit?

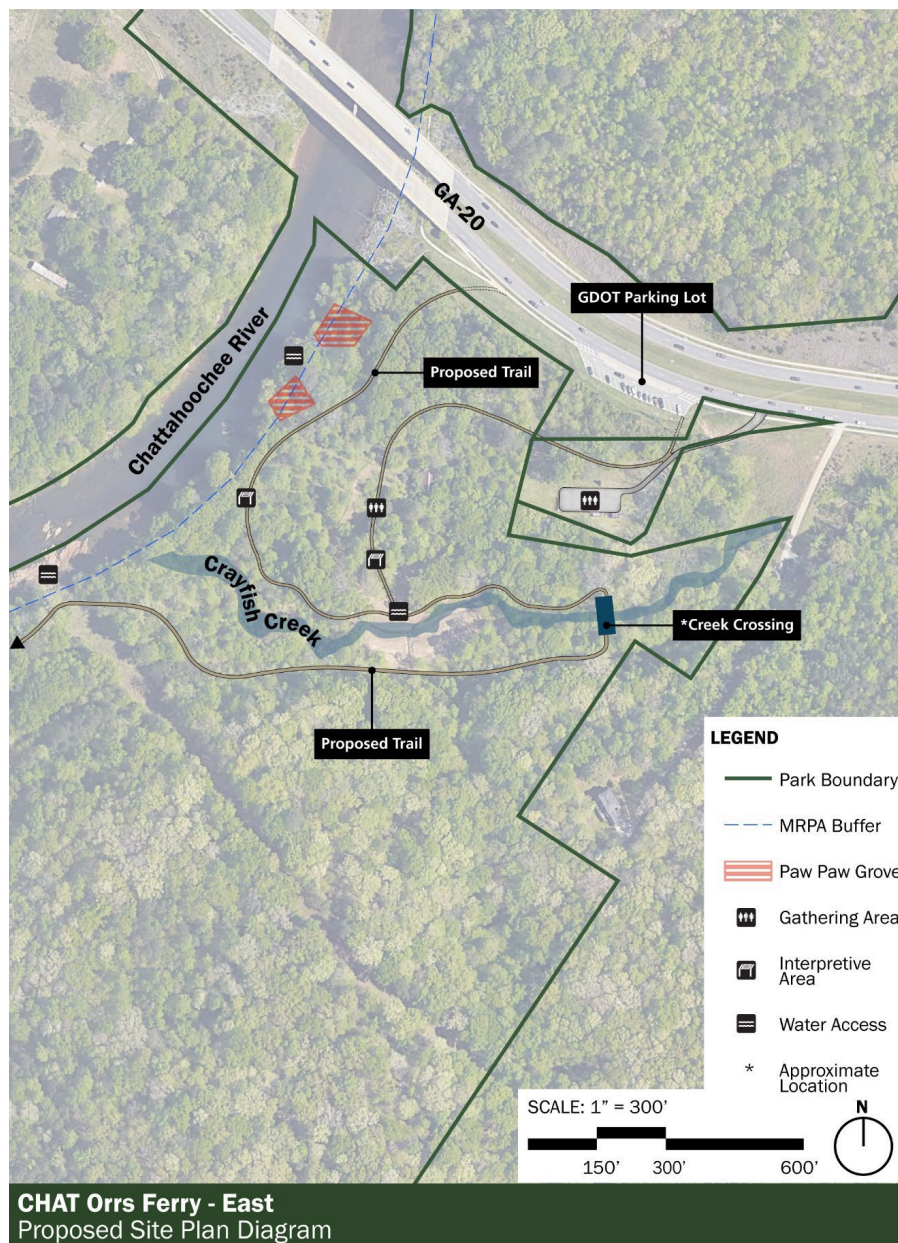
No. The Orrs Ferry Site Management Plan project area includes four parcels in Orrs Ferry on the east and west sides of the Chattahoochee River. Please refer to figure 1 from the plan, shown below. However, the Comprehensive Trail Management Plan published in 2022

(<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/showFile.cfm?sfid=573750&projectID=76722>) identified a connection under Highway 20 between the Orrs Ferry unit (east side) and Bowmans Island (east). This trail is extant and included in the TMP. The TMP also identified a multi-loop trail network on the east side of Bowmans, made up of new and existing trails. Between the network of trails on Bowmans Island (east), and the new and existing trails proposed under this Site Management Plan, visitors would have opportunities for longer hiking and walking experiences. On the west side of the river, the NPS does not own contiguous land to plan for additional connections.



How does this plan address parking on the east side of Orrs Ferry?

As shown on figure 6 of the plan (pg 15) and copied below, the GDOT Parking Lot is outside of the NPS Park Boundary. As described on pg 14 of the plan, “If additional parcels are acquired in the future and if visitor demand increases, the park would consider adding bus parking, turnaround, and a seasonal restroom in this area, as topographic limitations allow. Separate compliance would occur for any development on future parcels.” At the time of writing this plan, expanding the GDOT Parking Lot was considered but dismissed “due to several safety concerns, incomplete land ownership, and conflicts with the desired conditions for the eastern part of the Orrs Ferry unit,” as described on pg 18 of the plan. The Park included a commitment in this plan to work with the City of Sugar Hill to explore connections to adjacent RiverLands development, including a trail network and potential parking.



How is this plan related to the Chattahoochee Riverlands Project?

The Trust for Public Land (TPL), Atlanta Regional Commission, and Cobb County championed the Chattahoochee Riverlands Master Plan which envisions and proposes a 100-mile multi-use greenway along the Chattahoochee River corridor from Buford Dam to Chattahoochee Bend State Park. The Riverlands Master Greenway Study was finalized and published in late April 2020 and is available online at https://www.chattahoocheeriverlands.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Task8_Report-Only_Web-2.pdf. While NPS staff were involved in this effort and provided feedback on greenway routes for both the preferred alignment and practical alternative, the Riverlands plan is a broad vision for public and private lands beyond CRNRA and does not entirely meet the NPS mission.

The NPS stated its commitment to incorporate the Riverlands trails in select units where it would not deter from the NPS mission in the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area TMP (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/showFile.cfm?sfid=573750&projectID=76722>, pg 21). The compliance on this commitment was documented in the Trail Plan's Finding of No Significant Impact (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/showFile.cfm?sfid=630923&projectID=76722>, pg 33). Any potential changes in the Orrs Ferry Plan would require revisiting and revising decisions made in the Trails Plan. Therefore, Riverlands is out of scope for the Orrs Ferry Site Management Plan.

How were trail surface types determined?

Trail surface types within the Orrs Ferry Unit were first determined in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area TMP (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/showFile.cfm?sfid=573750&projectID=76722>, pg B-30). The decision to construct natural surface trails was based on the Desired Conditions and Zoning for the Orrs Ferry Unit, where the *"natural-surface trails would reflect the unit's primary function as an ecological buffer zone"* and *"visitors would be able to experience a closeness with nature with a low level of encounters with other visitors and park staff"* (Trails Plan, pg 26).

How does this plan address river access?

This plan provides water access locations on both the east and west side of Orrs Ferry. The water access points *"would be constructed with natural material to provide easier access to the river"* (Orrs Ferry Plan, pg 16). These step-down water access points would be utilized primarily by hikers and anglers. The park considered but dismissed the idea of a boat launch at Orrs Ferry because of steep terrain constraints and sensitive natural and cultural resources in the project area. The release schedule from Buford Dam creates exaggerated differences in river conditions and *"swimming and tubing is not encouraged at Orrs Ferry,"* as described on pg 19 of the plan. The park considered safety, topography, and sustainability/feasible infrastructure during planning efforts. The Riverlands report identified a boat northwest of the Highway 20 bridge on property owned by GDOT.

How is pedestrian safety on the GA-20 bridge addressed in this plan?

The NPS does not own or manage the GA-20 highway bridge that provides a connection between Orrs Ferry east and Orrs Ferry west. The NPS supports pedestrian safety and is committed to working with the state of Georgia to support pedestrian safety on this bridge, as feasible.