

Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area

Alabama and Georgia

Initiation of a Feasibility Study

July 2010

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Dear Friends,

The National Park Service is pleased to announce the initiation of a feasibility study for the potential Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area in the states of Alabama and Georgia as directed by Congress in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Sec. 8101).

The National Park Service is conducting this study in consultation with Alabama and Georgia historic preservation officers, historical societies, tourism offices, and other state and local organizations or agencies. To evaluate the overall feasibility of establishing the Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area, the study will identify key elements of national significance in the area, assess local support, and recommend a potential coordinating entity.

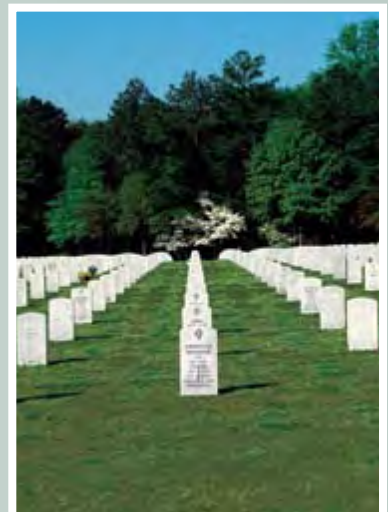
Please join us for one of four meetings in July to learn more about this project. We will be hosting open houses in Eufaula and Dothan, Alabama, on July 21, and in LaGrange and Columbus, Georgia, on July 22 (see the inset on public meetings on page 7). At these meetings, study team members will provide general information about national heritage areas and feasibility studies, answer your questions, and gather your ideas for the study. The meetings will include a short presentation that will be given at the beginning of each meeting.

After the study is completed, the findings will be reported to the Secretary of the Interior. Should the Secretary of the Interior recommend designation of a Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area, congressional legislation would be required.

We would like to hear from you about the proposed national heritage area. You may provide your input and feedback at one of the public meetings, on the enclosed comment form, or online at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CHTR>. We look forward to hearing from you about this exciting project!

Sincerely,

Chris Abbett
Assistant Regional Director, Partnerships
Southeast Region,
National Park Service



What Is a National Heritage Area?

Definition of a National Heritage Area

A national heritage area is a locally coordinated area designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape. Heritage areas recognize, preserve, and celebrate many of America’s defining landscapes. The federal government does not own or administer national heritage areas, but designated areas may draw on technical and financial assistance from the National Park Service for a limited time.

The designation of a national heritage area encourages residents, government agencies, nonprofit groups, and private partners to collaboratively plan and implement projects that promote stewardship, tourism, and local economic development. Typically, a local entity initiates a strong grassroots effort to organize communities, lobby for designation, and then manage the national heritage area if it is designated. A nearby example of a national heritage area is the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. This corridor focuses on the important contributions made to the American culture and history by African Americans known as Gullah/Geechee who settled in coastal communities between Florida and North Carolina.

How Is a National Heritage Area Different from a National Park?

A national heritage area is a conservation strategy that requires congressional designation. National heritage area designation does not affect property ownership rights in any way, but designation does support local residents in the preservation of their own natural and cultural heritage. A national heritage area is not a unit of the national park system; however, separately managed national park system units may exist within a designated national heritage area boundary. Although the role of the National Park Service varies with each national heritage area, usually their role includes technical and planning assistance and limited financial assistance.

A national heritage area is coordinated by a local entity in partnership with various stakeholders who work collaboratively on projects that meet the area’s goals.



How Is a National Heritage Area Established?

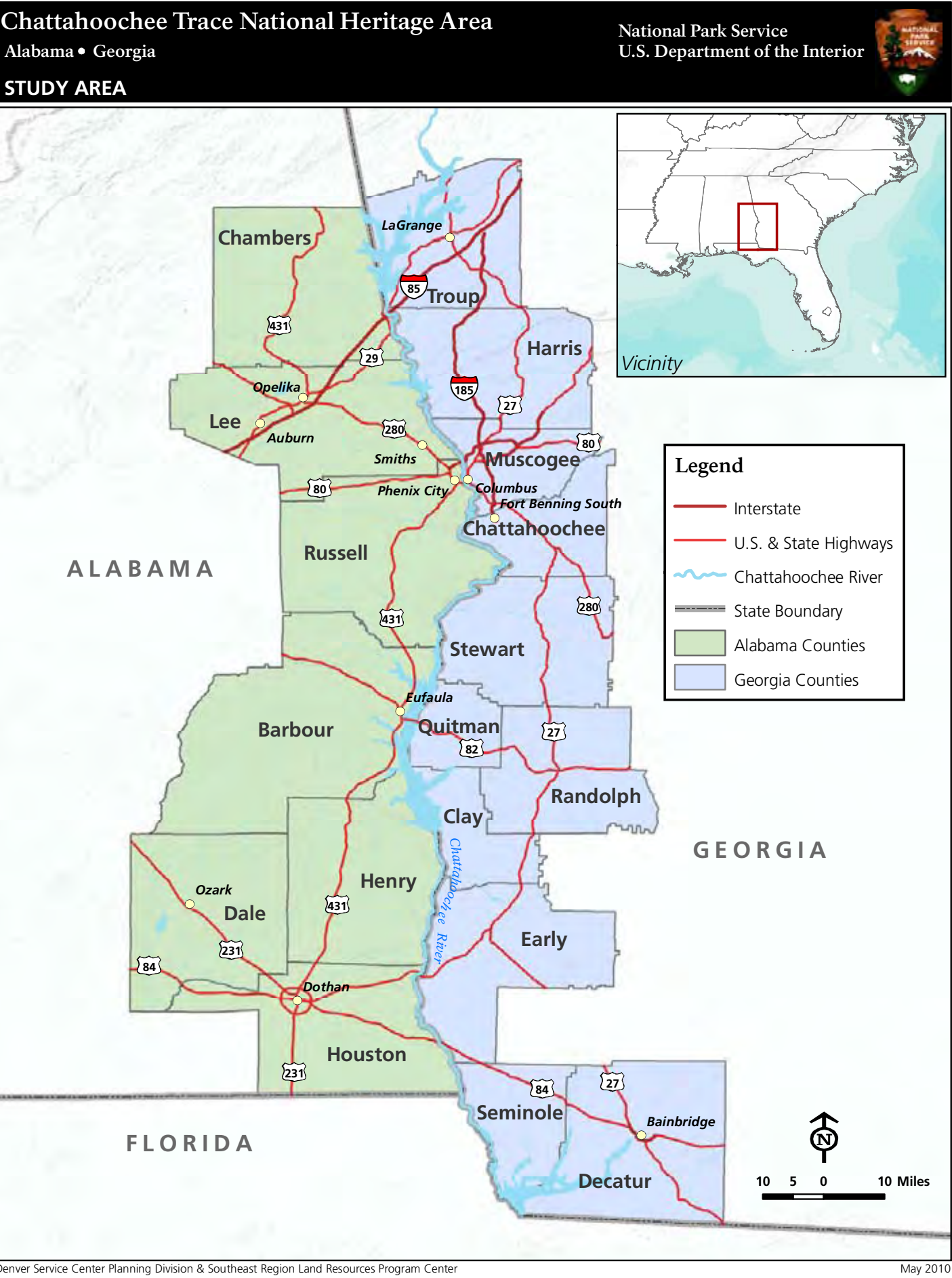
What Are the Steps in Developing a Feasibility Study for a Potential National Heritage Area?

Study Process	Outcomes
Gather Public Input (WE ARE HERE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify nationally significant stories, traditions, and places that contribute to the potential designation of a national heritage area.• Confirm the national heritage area boundary.
Prepare Draft Study	<p>The draft study will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the history of the study area and its contributions to our national heritage• a description of the environment affected by national heritage area designation• the application of the national heritage area criteria, including the development of a financial feasibility plan• a review of potential environmental, cultural, social, and economic impacts
Gather Public Input on Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present draft study and invite comments.
Finalize Study and Make Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine if the study area meets the national criteria.• Assess public support for the designation and the capacity of the coordinating entity.
Congressional Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congressional action on recommendation.

10 NPS Criteria for Evaluating a National Heritage Area

The *Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area Feasibility Study* will evaluate the feasibility and suitability of congressional designation of the Chattahoochee Trace area as a national heritage area according to the criteria (listed below) established in the National Park Service's "Draft National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines."

1. The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities;
2. The area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the national story;
3. The area provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/or scenic features;
4. The area provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;
5. Resources that are important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;
6. Residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and governments within the proposed area that are involved in the planning have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants, including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area;
7. The proposed coordinating entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area;
8. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area;
9. A conceptual boundary map is supported by the public; and
10. The coordinating entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.



Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The feasibility study for the potential Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which mandates all federal agencies to analyze the impacts of major federal actions that have a significant effect on the environment, including natural, cultural, economic, and social aspects. The National Park Service is currently assessing the level of environmental analysis necessary for this feasibility study to meet NEPA requirements.

What Are the Local Benefits of National Heritage Area Designation?

The designation has both tangible and intangible benefits. Heritage conservation efforts begin with community pride in its history and traditions and local involvement in retaining and interpreting the landscape for future generations. Preserving the integrity of the cultural landscape and local stories means that future generations will be able to better understand their own relationship to the land. Heritage areas provide educational and inspirational opportunities that encourage residents and visitors to stay in a place.

How Can I get Involved?

Invitation to Public Information Meetings

- Learn about the National Heritage Area Program
- Learn about the Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area Feasibility Study
- Discuss your ideas and questions about a potential national heritage area



EUFULA, ALABAMA

Wednesday, July 21 at 1:00 p.m.(CT) James S. Clark Center
Eufaula — Barbour County Chamber of Commerce
333 East Broad Street
Eufaula, AL 36027

DOTHAN, ALABAMA

Wednesday, July 21 at 6:30 p.m. (CT) Harrison Room — Malone Hall
Troy University — Dothan Campus
500 University Drive
Dothan, AL 36303

LAGRANGE, GEORGIA

Thursday, July 22 at 1:00 p.m. (ET) LaGrange — Troup County Chamber of Commerce
111 Bull Street
LaGrange, GA 30240

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

Thursday, July 22 at 6:30 p.m. (ET) Columbus Museum — Patrick Theater
1251 Wynnton Road
Columbus, GA 31906

A sign language interpreter is available upon request. Please email the National Park Service at Aaron_Gagne@nps.gov or call 303-969-2192 by July 12, 2010, to request an interpreter.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DENVER SERVICE CENTER – GAGNE, DSC-P
12795 WEST ALAMEDA PARKWAY
PO Box 25287
DENVER CO 80225-0287

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
PERMIT NO. G-83

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300



Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area

Alabama and Georgia

Initiation of a Feasibility Study

July 2010

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Preliminary Heritage Area Themes

The stories of related resources, ideas, values, histories, customs, and/or traditions are told within the organizing framework of themes. Themes provide the connections that people can use to understand the importance of the area and its resources. The following is a preliminary framework for the development of themes for the potential Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area.

- Native American History
- Colonial History
- U.S. Military History
- Economics and Industry
- Literature, Music, Foodways, and other Folklife
- Architectural Heritage and Town Planning

The National Park Service seeks public input to further develop this theme framework, which will be included in the feasibility study. Your feedback is welcome!

NPS

Thank you for your interest and support in Chattahoochee Trace National Heritage Area!