

Services would be expanded under Alternative C, while maintaining green space throughout the 10,000-acre park. This would be accomplished by coordinating public/private partnerships at carefully selected centers (hubs) of park development and management. The centers would be selected to better provide access at designated areas along the north, central, and southern portions of the park. These centralized areas would provide: (1) park services; (2) National Park Service staff as required; (3) developed, multi-modal facilities where shuttles and automobiles could be parked; and (4) visitor access to trail heads to remote zones. The centralized access points would provide put-in or rental boating facilities for water access, visitor participation opportunities at the more active park recreation facilities, and on-site informational materials on cultural and natural resources throughout the park.

A centralized access strategy would also enhance the opportunity for instituting National Park Service education programs at key regional locations to better reach a growing population and service area. This alternative would allow the National Park Service to concentrate its limited resources in heavily populated core areas of the corridor rather than distributing staff and resources uniformly. The centralized access concept envisions higher minimum standards for transportation connectivity, and places greater emphasis on public-private partnerships with educational non-profits, cities, counties, and regional agencies. This alternative would discourage expanded new entrances to the park and would encourage National Park Service supervision, education, monitoring, and enforcement where park use is greatest.

The visitor experience in this alternative would be more participatory, with more opportunity for socializing and involvement in group activities and less opportunity for solitude near the hubs. However, opportunities for solitude would still exist at various locations in the park. In particular, a nine-mile river solitude zone would be established between McGinnis Ferry Road and Highway 20, with the exception of a limited access point for visitors and non-motorized vessels at Settles Bridge.

A survey of this area by the National Park Service during the preparation of the general management plan and environmental impact statement determined that it was characterized by a high degree of natural qualities, despite the fact that development has occurred in some areas on either side of the river. This feature would provide visitors with the opportunity to experience the river in a relatively natural condition. When viewing from the river, a boater would see a forested buffer of large trees for the majority of the nine-mile stretch of river. Inclusion of this extensive river solitude zone in this alternative is one of its major features. No trails would be allowed on the river bank in this zone, and no fuel-powered vessels would be allowed; vessels with electric motors would, however, be allowed.

A special feature of this alternative is that it would define the use of motorized vessels (gasoline-driven motors) as an appropriate use in the upper portion of Bull Sluice Lake, located in the vicinity of the City of Roswell. Under this alternative, use of motorized vessels would be allowed from Highway 9, just north of River mile 317, to River mile 315 within the lake. Appropriate uses would include cruising in gas-powered vessels. Bull Sluice Lake is the only lake within the 48-mile park and provides a unique recreation opportunity for use of motorized vessels. The lake is located within heavily developed Roswell, and is conveniently situated for this purpose.

The use of motorized vessels would not be permitted in Bull Sluice Lake below River Mile 315, which demarcates the northern end of the area currently defined as the Gold Branch Unit. This is a several-hundred acre area that remains in a relatively naturally forested state. The lake in this area is also characterized by extensive freshwater emergent wetlands that provide an unusual non-motorized boating opportunity for visitors in non-motorized vessels. This alternative would allow continued use of the upper part of the lake for motorized vessels, while the lower part of the lake in the vicinity of the

Gold Branch Unit would be zoned natural zone where motorized vessels would not be appropriate. The distribution of zones in Alternative C is shown in Figure 6. The zones applied to Alternative C include the natural area recreation zone, cultural resource zone, natural zone, river solitude zone, and developed zone.

## **ALTERNATIVE D: EXPANDED USE**

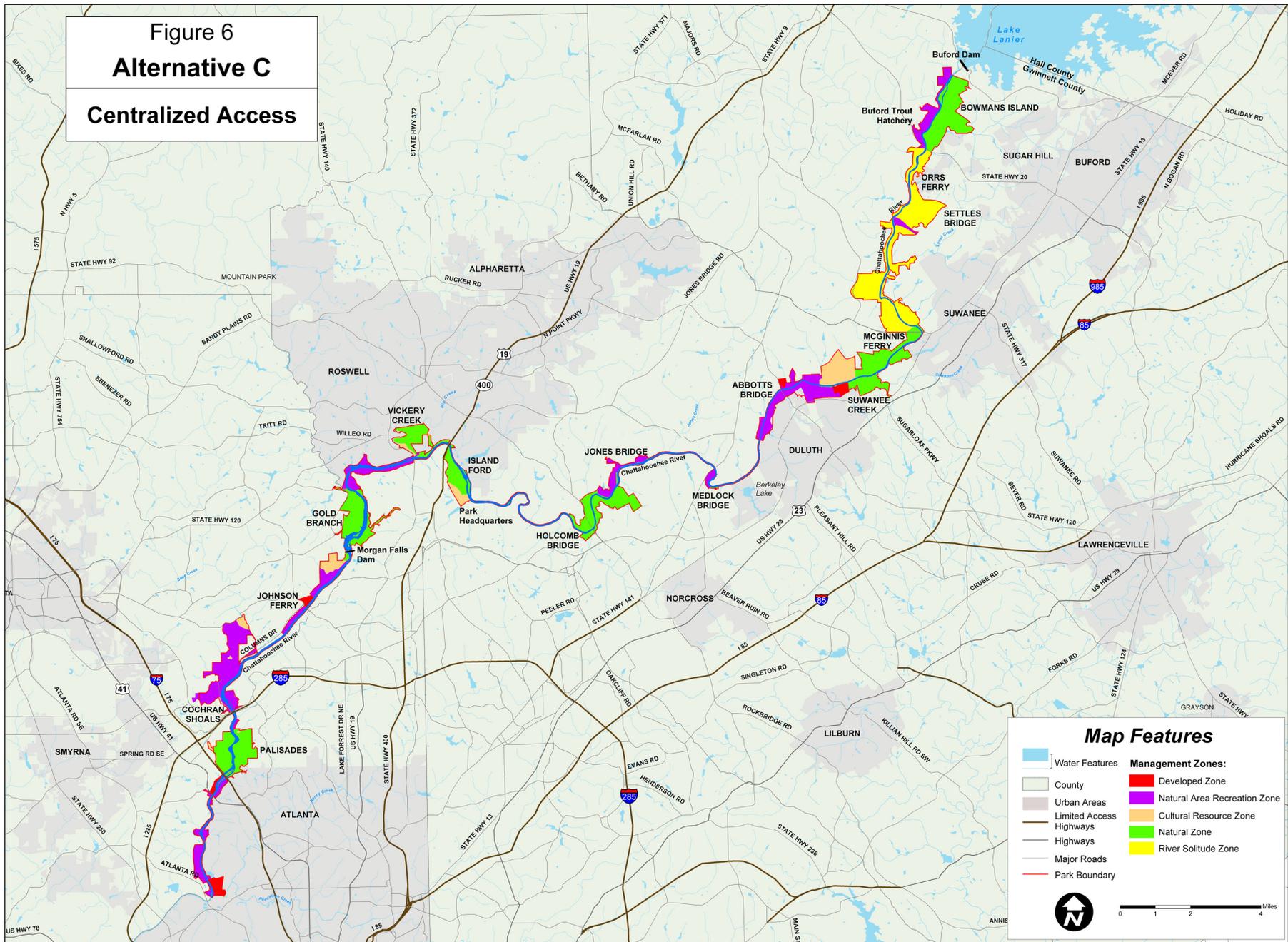
In this alternative, expanding and distributing access throughout the park, including newly acquired parcels, would provide a variety of visitor experiences. New facilities would be developed or existing facilities would be refurbished. Connectivity to existing neighborhoods would be optimized, providing similar visitor experiences throughout the park.

In the metropolitan Atlanta region, parks are at a premium. Expanding use of the park to meet the resultant demand is a viable alternate that could be achieved within the limits imposed by the various laws, regulations, policies, and mandates of the National Park Service. According to National Park Service-sponsored surveys, typical visitors to the park are young, single males, business-oriented, generally white, and suburban. Access to the park could be expanded in the future for all visitors, including families, and visitors from business parks and neighborhoods as this linear park is located adjacent to the most densely developed neighborhoods and business communities of the metropolitan area. Alternative D would also provide trail linkages to city- and county-funded and supervised parks.

This alternate concept would provide an opportunity for a general broadening of park knowledge and interest in the National Park Service through increased use of the park.

People in urban areas such as Atlanta seldom experience relatively undisturbed natural areas or view wildlife in a natural habitat. Under this alternative, social trails from existing and proposed developments would be managed to encourage use by an expanded user group. Alternative D would require a higher level of self-help and individual reliance from a wide range of associations and from parents, business organizations, and local governments. This alternate concept would require a proactive National Park Service outreach program. Alternative D would de-emphasize solitude and emphasize a more social, community-based group experience that envisions the park as an extension of the surrounding communities. Expanding uses and access would require a redefinition of gathering spaces surrounding the national park that would be used for picnics, celebrations, neighborhood meetings, and family walks, and would be characterized as a visitor experience of convenience and personal attachment.

Facilities for the park would be necessarily distributed throughout the 48 miles, based on availability of resources and local community support. The park plan would emphasize expanded citizen involvement and enforcement of access restrictions. A greater and more diverse population of residents would be served. Alternative D would have the potential to strengthen community involvement in environmental protection of the park and its resources. Local self-help education and voluntary public/private partnerships could enhance park stewardship. Increased effort and staffing would engage partners to work cooperatively on park projects that primarily address expanded use and access needs.



The distribution of zones under Alternative D is depicted in Figure 7. The zones applied to Alternative D include the natural area recreation zone, cultural resource zone, natural zone, and developed zone.

## **ALTERNATIVE E**

Alternative E does not have an easily articulated theme. This alternative was developed by extracting some features of both Alternatives C and D and by creating new zone types and management prescriptions (described previously) that responded to public criticism of the May 2004 Draft. Alternative E provides expanded access to the park while at the same time maintains substantial acreage with less hardened forms of access (such as new parking areas and roads, trails and structures you would expect with the built environment), and therefore potentially more opportunities for relative quiet and solitude. Visitor experience would focus around the interpretive activities and other facilities available in the developed zones strategically placed throughout the 48-mile length of the park including Settles Bridge, Suwanee Creek, Abbotts Bridge, Medlock Bridge, Johnson Ferry, and the southern end of the park at the western edge of Palisades and Fort Peachtree. Visitors, in lower numbers, could enjoy the extensive natural habitats and cultural resources in the undeveloped portions of the park, where activities would be focused on achieving solitude in an urban environment.

The majority of the park would be managed in its natural state, with access provided primarily via the developed zones or other existing parking areas. Levels of visitor use within the developed zones would be relatively high, and a wide variety of experiences would be possible. Alternative E would also enhance the opportunity for instituting National Park Service education programs at key regional locations to better reach a growing population and service area. The level of outreach would be increased compared to Alternative A. The focused development of public-private partnerships would increase opportunities to expand visitor knowledge and park stewardship through work with educational non-profit groups, recreation groups, cities, counties, and regional agencies. Organizations would be sought to support the park's mission in terms of project funding. This alternative would allow the National Park Service to concentrate its limited resources rather than distributing staff and resources uniformly as in Alternative D.

The distribution of zones in Alternative E is shown in Figure 8. There are six zones that apply to Alternative E: the developed zone, natural area recreation zone, natural zone and three new zones, the river zone, rustic zone and historic resource zone. Under Alternative E boating and fishing would be limited only by natural conditions on the river. This feature of the alternative has been applied to all waterways in the park so that fishing and boating are permitted wherever they are possible and in accordance with State laws and private property rights.

## **ALTERNATIVE F: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

Alternative F, like Alternative E, was developed by extracting some features of both Alternatives C and D and by creating new zones and management prescriptions (described previously) that responded to public criticisms of the May 2004 Draft. In general, Alternative F provides more opportunities throughout the park for "hardened" types of access and development (such as boat ramps, paved trails, parking areas, restrooms, etc) and increased diversity of experience.