



# CULTURAL CENTER AND INTERPRETIVE AREA

CONCEPT PLAN





# Cultural Center And Park Headquarters:

A multi-purpose park facility at McIntosh Reserve is greatly needed. The historic nature of the site offers several opportunities for interpretive activities and classroom space within the Cultural Center. The Cultural Center should be developed as an interpretive center focusing on the Native American heritage in west Georgia with a concentration on the Creek Nation and Chief William McIntosh. There are only a few existing interpretive facilities relating to the history of the Creek Nation, notably the National Park Service sites at Horseshoe Bend National Battlefield in Alabama and Ocmulgee National Monument near Macon. Partnership with the National Park Service may offer opportunities for funding and educational resources. The proposed Cultural Center will have areas for interpretive displays, a museum, an archaeological workroom, a library and other features that will make the center a destination for academics and researchers in the archaeological and anthropology fields, as well as be an excellent field trip location for local schools. Exhibits on nature and native flora and fauna will be appropriate as well. The facility will also require offices for park management, storage areas and visitor facilities such as restrooms and vending machines.



Typical Cultural Center

## PARKING AREA AND ROUNDABOUT:

The Cultural Center is intended to be the visitor’s first stop when visiting McIntosh Reserve. In order to encourage visitors to make this their destination, the Cultural Center requires a large parking area designed to blend into the natural environment through careful selective clearing and grading so that the gravel parking spaces and paved access drives will not require clear cutting the woodlands. The site proposed for the parking area is known to not have significant archaeological resources and is relatively level with young pines and hardwoods. The parking area will be accessed by a new road system that will involve the development of a traffic circle or “roundabout”. The roundabout directs traffic to the Cultural Center while allowing access to other park roads for staff and frequent visitors. The roundabout will also direct traffic around the current one way road system.



Typical Cultural Center

## FISHING POND IMPROVEMENTS:

The facilities around the Fishing Pond are generally in good shape. However, certain elements will require improvements. The Spray and Splash pavilion, although popular, is not compatible with the rustic and historic nature of the park. County residents will be better served with the development of an expanded water feature play facility or sprayground in Whitesburg in order to

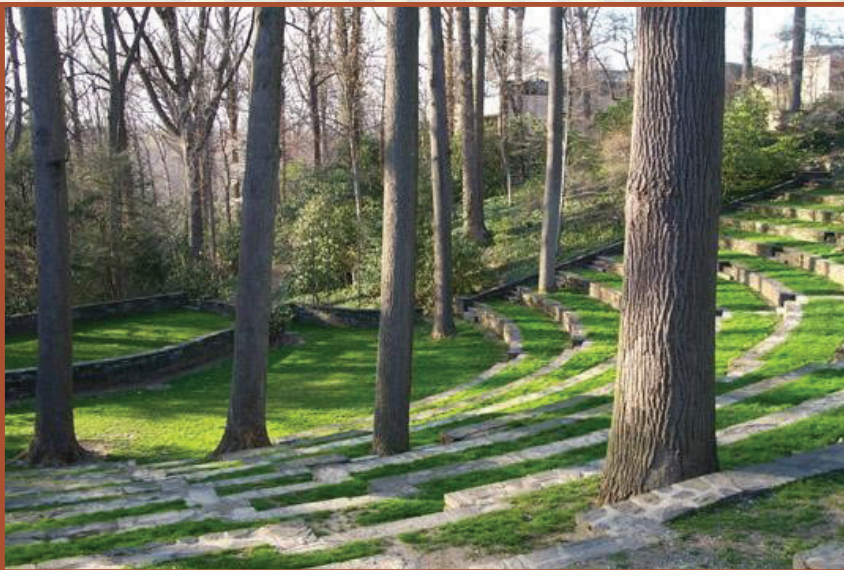


keep McIntosh Reserve as a more natural and historical interpretation park. The pavilion is in need of major renovations, and the County should consider its removal before expending more funds on its maintenance. The existing pavilions are suitable and the existing restroom is an acceptable location although renovations are needed. The existing playground should be replaced with a better quality play structure and play surface.

### **OUTDOOR CLASSROOM:**

Adjacent the Cultural Center will be a small rustic outdoor amphitheater for use by small groups of up to 30 people. This can serve as an assembly spot, an outdoor classroom, performance area, and rest stop. School groups will be encouraged to use this facility. The amphitheater will be carefully built into the natural site without removing the tree canopy or disturbing the root systems. The Cultural Center Outdoor Classroom is intended to compliment the larger riverside amphitheater.

*Typical Outdoor Classroom*



views into the pasture land. The trail loop is completed at the Cultural Center. The trail will be lined with interpretive markers, park furniture, and other items deemed appropriate.

### **AGRICULTURAL INTERPRETIVE AREA:**

The existing pasture is an excellent location to showcase historical farming methods, Native American crops, and heirloom plants. Extending the interpretation to provide “living history” demonstrations such as historic firearm presentations, livestock and animal husbandry, Native American dances, and educational presentations would all be appropriate in the Home Site area.

### **OBSERVATION TOWER:**

A wood deck tower structure a short distance from the Cultural Center is recommended for visitors to use to orient themselves to the park. The proposed location of the tower is at the edge of a bluff that drops off sharply to the river bottomland. In winter, guests will be able to see to the bottoms and have a vantage point to see the entire Cultural Center area.



*Typical Observation Tower*



# McIntosh Reserve Master Plan

## OUTDOOR FIREPLACES:

McIntosh Reserve is in need of a large outdoor event space, and a large outdoor fireplace or barbecue



*Typical Outdoor Fireplace*

pit near the fishing pond area would serve large groups such as reunions, company gatherings, or other events. The fireplace should be designed to have a structure over the cooking area and a large formal lawn for picnicking with a brick seatwall around the edge. The fireplace will be located on the site of the spray and splash pavilion.

## WHOOPING CREEK BRIDGE RELOCATION:

Whooping Creek Bridge is a historic iron truss bridge located between Roopville and Whitesburg that has been slated for replacement by GDOT. As part of the historic and environmental mitigation of the project, the bridge has been slated to be relocated to McIntosh Reserve. The area on the creek near the fishing ponds is the selected location, and although this creek is not named on maps, a suggested name is McIntosh Creek. As the project moves forward the bridge will be moved to this site (currently under engineering review for placement), and the bridge will be incorporated into the trail system.



*Existing Whooping Creek Bridge*

## PROPOSED LAKE:

A major program element to enhance passive recreational uses will be a seven acre lake on the stream that passes through the park. The lake will encompass the existing fish ponds and will accommodate fishing, non-motorized boating and other activities. The creation of the lake in conjunction with the relocation of the historic Whooping Creek Bridge at the narrow end of the lake would make the bridge a unique feature and destination on the trail system. Construction of a lake impoundment will require a feasibility study to determine the regulatory requirements, costs, and whether the watershed will be able to sustain such a change.

*Proposed Lake*





### *Typical Asphalt Trails*



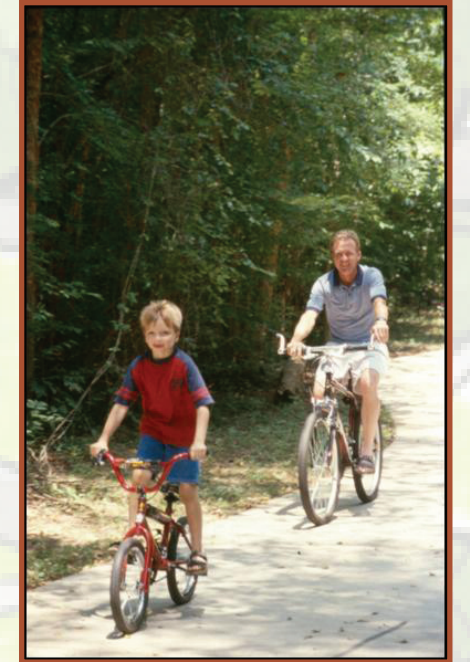
### **TRAIL SYSTEM AND BOARDWALKS:**

It is recommended that the current system of multiple use trails in the park should remain. The existing trails were located in the field for this study by utilizing Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and were added to the GIS database for the County. Some of the trails actually appear to extend across the park boundary. A detailed topographic and boundary survey is needed to verify any encroachments by these trails onto private property. However, these encroachments do not appear to be a problem,

presently, so relocation of any “off property” trails is not recommended. Additional trails could be added to the system to better interconnect the park. The trails are currently used for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. According to park and recreation staff, and visitor reports, there have been few conflicts between the various users. However, it should be noted that these uses are typically not compatible on trails. Horses can react to sudden

noises and movements caused by mountain bikers and joggers. In many passive parks where these conflicts are an issue, there are restrictions on trails regarding what kind of uses are allowed. Keeping uses separate by not crossing trails is important to enforcing these restrictions. At McIntosh Reserve, conflicts with trail use have not become serious enough to necessitate the separation of trail uses. However, in the future, the County may need to revisit this issue should conflicts increase. To encourage a broad base of park users to utilize the trail

system and to provide a safe place for families to ride together, an asphalt multiple use loop trail between 8 and 10 feet wide is recommended. An off-road trail will need to be designed to “lay lightly on the land” and be routed through woodland areas with minimal disturbance. Selective clearing, small equipment construction, and careful routing of the trail in the field will create a unique and pleasant facility that does not impact the natural landscape of the park. The paved trail will be used for walking, jogging, biking, strollers and roller blading. Horseback riding could be allowed along the trail shoulders, but this is not recommended as the trail is meant for casual riding and walking. Park furniture



*Typical Asphalt Trail*

and interpretive signs should be placed along this trail loop. The hiking trails also extend out from the Cultural Center to a large wetland area located at the base of the bluff. This trail link will allow visitors a chance to bird watch and observe wetland plants and wildlife, a boardwalk across the wetland and the loop trail is proposed to make this isolated section of the park more of an attractive feature. The hiking trails extend from the wetland boardwalk area to the trails along the open field river bottoms.



*Typical Boardwalks*





Wayfinding And Interpretive Signage



CANOE LANDINGS:

Canoe launches should be located on edges of the riverbank where there is ease of access and where site disturbance is minimal. These may need to be relocated periodically depending on the fluctuations in the river. Appropriate signage should be utilized to identify potential launch locations.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AND UTILITY DEVELOPMENT:

McIntosh Reserve depends on a deep well for its water source. Recently the well nearly ran dry and had to be refractured. This condition may hinder or even prevent expansion of park facilities. The County should consider extending County water to the park, thereby ensuring a stable water source for park facilities. New facilities should utilize environmentally “Green” building standards to minimize water usage in the design of the Cultural Center and all other new facilities. Roadways in the park are generally in good condition, but as a part of any improvement plan, roadways should be improved to minimize steep shoulders and improve drainage. Grass swales should be utilized for road shoulders while curb and gutter improvements should be kept at a minimum. To prevent off shoulder parking, large boulders or steel backed timber guardrail could be placed along the roadside.

WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE SYSTEM:

McIntosh Reserve lacks a cohesive signage system. The existing signage consists of highway signs that have a utilitarian appearance and detract from the historic and scenic nature of the park. As with all Carroll County Parks, an effort to unify the look and appearance of the park system signs and graphics should be considered. A comprehensive signage and

wayfinding master plan, developed by environmental graphic designers, can be developed to create a plan for directional, interpretive and informational signage in all of the parks. The first park to utilize this new “look” should be McIntosh Reserve.

