



Storms and the flow of the Tennessee River have weakened the park's shoreline. Stabilizing it is a needed park repair.

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

Tennessee and Georgia

Overview

The battle fought on this land marked a turning point for the Union Army in the Civil War because it opened the path to Atlanta and the rest of the Deep South. Union and Confederate soldiers faced off in northern Georgia and southern Tennessee in fall 1863 near the Chickamauga Creek, which some translate from the Cherokee language as "the River of Death."¹ Confederate forces seeking to retake the important railway city of Chattanooga, Tennessee, launched a fierce attack on the Union Army. But General George "the Rock of Chickamauga" Thomas rallied his soldiers and prevented the Army's collapse before retreating to Chattanooga.² Over 34,000 people were killed, captured or wounded in the fighting, second only to the Battle of Gettysburg.³ Congress dedicated Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park 32 years later, and it served as a model for other battlefield parks.⁴ Unfortunately, this sacred ground has an estimated \$50 million in deferred maintenance.

Maintenance challenges

The park's repair backlog is nearly split evenly between infrastructure—such as roads and trails—and memorials and landscaping. About 700 plaques, markers, and monuments are scattered across the 9,000-acre Chickamauga Battlefield⁵ and many need refurbishment. The landscape is in need of more than \$2 million in repairs. This includes Signal Point, at the park's northernmost edge. For centuries, Native Americans used this high ground to send smoke signals across the Tennessee Valley. During the Revolutionary War, Union lookouts used it to monitor Confederate troop movements below.

Another section of the park unique for its earlier history is also in need of repair to protect its archaeological integrity. Paleo-Indians can be traced back to Moccasin Bend National Archeological District as early as 10,000 B.C. In the early 1830s,⁶ Cherokees were displaced from here in one of the "Trail of Tears" forced relocations of American Indians to western lands. The National Park Service (NPS) lists \$7.2 million in deferred maintenance to shore up the Tennessee River waterfront near the site to make it safe and accessible to visitors.



Moccasin Bend is home to Civil War battles and Native American archeological treasures, but mounting overdue repairs are jeopardizing our ability to protect these resources and allow visitors to access the area."

Michael Wurzel, executive director of Friends of Moccasin Bend

Recommendations

To address the deferred maintenance at Chickamauga and Chattanooga and other NPS sites in Tennessee, Georgia, and across the country, Congress should:

- Ensure that infrastructure initiatives include provisions to address park maintenance.
- Provide dedicated annual federal funding for national park repairs.
- Enact innovative policy reforms to ensure that deferred maintenance does not escalate.
- Provide more highway funding for NPS maintenance needs.
- Create more opportunities for public-private collaboration and donations to help restore park infrastructure.

Table 1

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Facts 2016

Visitor spending	\$66.2 million
Jobs created by visitor spending	1,000
Economic output	\$81.6 million
Labor income	\$26.1 million
Visits	1,027,738
Deferred maintenance (fiscal year 2015)	\$49.5 million

Sources: National Park Service, "Annual Visitation Report by Years: 2006 to 2016," accessed July 13, 2017, [https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/National%20Reports/Annual%20Visitation%20By%20Park%20\(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year\)](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/National%20Reports/Annual%20Visitation%20By%20Park%20(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)); National Park Service, "Visitor Spending Effects," accessed July 13, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>; National Park Service, "NPS Deferred Maintenance Reports," accessed Aug. 19, 2016, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/plandesignconstruct/defermain.htm>

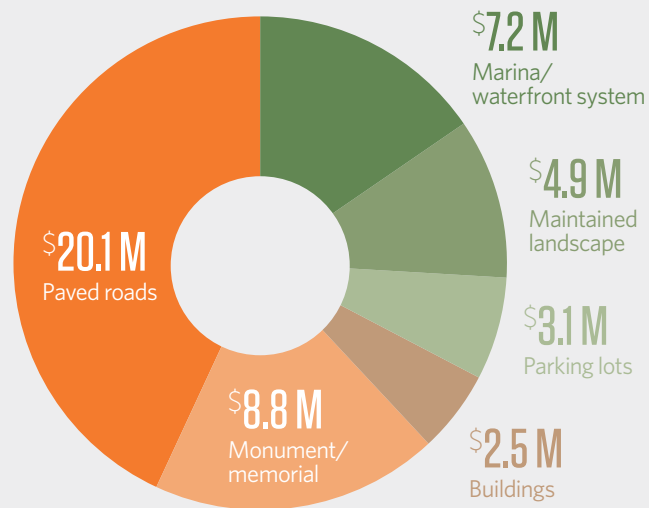
© 2017 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Figure 1
Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Needs Millions for Infrastructure Repairs
 Key deferred maintenance

Note: This chart depicts the largest maintenance categories.

Source: Pew analysis of National Park Service data

© 2017 The Pew Charitable Trusts



The Pew Charitable Trusts works alongside the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and other national and local groups to ensure that our national park resources are maintained and protected for future generations to enjoy.

Endnotes

- 1 Troy Taylor, "The River of Death," accessed Sept. 21, 2016, <http://www.prairieghosts.com/chick.html>.
- 2 World History Group, "Battle of Chickamauga," accessed Sept. 21, 2016, <http://www.historynet.com/battle-of-chickamauga>.
- 3 New Georgia Encyclopedia, "Battle of Chickamauga," accessed Sept. 21, 2016, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/battle-chickamauga>.
- 4 National Park Service, "Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park: Places," accessed Sept. 21, 2016, <https://www.nps.gov/chch/learn/historyculture/places.htm>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 National Park Service, "Moccasin Bend National Archeological District," accessed Sept. 21, 2016, <https://www.nps.gov/chch/learn/historyculture/moccasin-bend-national-archeological-district.htm>.

This case study was updated on July 31, 2017, to reflect newly released 2016 data and to correct references to calendar and fiscal year.

For further information, please visit:

pewtrusts.org/nationalparks

Contact: Monique O'Grady, communications officer
Email: mogrady@pewtrusts.org

Contact: Marcia Argust, director
Email: margust@pewtrusts.org

The Pew Charitable Trusts is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life.