

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN E. WHITESELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, CONCERNING H.R. 3785, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF EXPANDING THE BOUNDARY OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.**

**JUNE 10, 2010**

---

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 3785, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of expanding the boundary of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 3785. However, we believe that priority should be given to the 45 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic River System that have not yet been transmitted to the Congress.

H.R. 3785 would authorize a study to determine whether any or all of the lands along 45 miles of the Chattahoochee River corridor, from the existing southern boundary of the recreation area to the junction of Coweta, Heard, and Carroll Counties, would be appropriate for inclusion in the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area. Adding these lands to the national recreation area, which would require an act of Congress, would provide communities along the river corridor to the southwest of Atlanta the same kinds of resource protection and outdoor recreational opportunities that communities along the river north of Atlanta currently enjoy.

In establishing the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in 1978, Congress determined that the "natural, scenic, recreation, historic, and other values of a forty-eight-mile segment of the Chattahoochee River and certain adjoining lands in the State of Georgia from Buford Dam downstream to Peachtree Creek are of special national significance, and that such values should be preserved and protected from developments and uses which would substantially impair or destroy them." Boundary expansions enacted in 1984 and 1999 increased the authorized boundary of the park from its original limit of 6,300 to 10,000 acres. The park consists of a series of 15 land units, totaling 6,500 acres, along the 48-mile stretch of river. People use the park to hike along the river banks, float down the river, relax, picnic, and enjoy nature. Visitation at the national recreation area in 2009 was more than 2.8 million, making it the most heavily visited national park unit in the State of Georgia.

There is strong local interest in protecting open space along the river south of the recreation area's current boundary. A coalition of stakeholders in the counties along the river southwest of Atlanta has launched several initiatives to protect the undeveloped countryside in this region. The City of Chattahoochee Hills has approximately 20 miles of river corridor within its boundary and 40,000 acres of land that it plans to develop according to sustainable design guidelines, saving at least 60 percent of the land as undeveloped green space. Economic values of the land will be maintained through use of state law allowing for transfer of development rights. The

four counties adjacent to the City of Chattahoochee Hills (Carroll, Coweta, Douglas and Fulton) have joined in an initiative proposing to protect an additional 25,000 acres of land and to implement a trail and greenway system that links the city to all four counties, connecting to villages, hamlets, and towns as well as private, state and county parks and sites.

The study authorized by H.R. 3785 would be conducted using the National Park Service's boundary adjustment criteria, which are similar to criteria used for special resource studies except that national significance does not need to be determined. A boundary study of this size would require the same type of public process used for special resource studies, and would cost an estimated \$250,000 to \$300,000.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN E. WHITESELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 5110, TO MODIFY THE BOUNDARY OF THE CASA GRANDE RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**JUNE 10, 2010**

---

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 5110, to modify the boundary of the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 5110 with an amendment to address the length of time to complete the boundary study proposed in the bill.

H.R. 5110 would expand the boundary of Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (Monument) in Arizona to include 417 acres of culturally connected land. The Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) would be authorized to transfer or acquire from willing sellers private or State lands, or interests in lands, by donation, exchange, or purchase with donated or appropriated funds. The bill would also authorize the transfer of administrative jurisdiction of federal lands from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to the National Park Service (NPS), and from the NPS to the BIA, and the Secretary would be authorized to enter into an agreement with the State to provide for cooperative management of approximately 200 acres of State trust lands. Finally, the bill authorizes the Secretary to conduct a study to identify additional lands that could be included in future boundary adjustments to the Monument.

The Casa Grande Ruins were set aside by President Benjamin Harrison on June 22, 1892, as the nation's first archeological reservation and the site was redesignated as Casa Grande Ruins National Monument on August 3, 1918. The Monument is named for the Casa Grande (Great House), a four-story prehistoric structure constructed by the ancient people of the Hohokam culture, who inhabited the area from 500 to 1400 A.D. Protecting the finest architectural example of 13<sup>th</sup> Century Hohokam culture and archeology in the American Southwest, the monument is the only unit in the National Park System that preserves and interprets the Hohokam culture for public education and enjoyment.

In 2003, the NPS completed a Resource Protection Study which determined that some of the lands included in H.R. 5110 and proposed for acquisition by the park are suitable and feasible for inclusion into the Monument's boundary. These lands and associated archeological sites emerged as especially important because of their relationship to the Casa Grande Ruins and their potential for acquisition on a willing seller basis. At the time of the study, some of the private and state lands included in H.R. 5110 were considered but not identified for inclusion due to cost of acquisition, including lack of a willing seller. However, since 2003, the state and private

landowners have indicated a willingness allow the lands to be included as contemplated in H.R. 5110.

Approximately 405 acres proposed for addition by H.R. 5110 are private or State lands that have significant archeological resources, including prehistoric canals, aboveground ruins, and a prehistoric ball court. Additionally, the State lands would provide exceptional opportunities for visitor use and interpretation. The private landowners and the State are either willing sellers or would be willing to accept an equal value land exchange.

H.R. 5110 also would authorize the transfer of administrative jurisdiction for several parcels of federally owned land. Approximately seven acres that are currently administered by the BIA and approximately four acres that are currently administered by the BLM would be transferred to NPS. These federal lands also have significant archeological resources that are directly tied to the Casa Grande Ruins and the land transfers would occur at virtually no cost to the federal government. The costs associated with managing the acquired land would be approximately \$250,000. In addition, administrative jurisdiction for 3.5 acres currently administered by NPS along the Monument's southern boundary would be transferred by H.R. 5110 to BIA as a boundary modification that will correct an unintentional trespass and allow for the improvement of the San Carlos Irrigation Project.

The bill would also authorize the Secretary to enter into an agreement with the State to provide for cooperative management of approximately 200 acres of State trust lands until NPS could acquire these lands. We estimate that the costs to manage the State lands would be included in the \$250,000 needed to manage all lands. Acquisition costs could vary depending on the method of acquisition. We estimate the costs of acquisition for all lands in H.R. 5110 to be between \$7-10 million. Funds would be subject to the availability of appropriations and NPS priorities.

In addition, the Secretary would be authorized to conduct a boundary study to identify additional lands that could be included in future boundary adjustments to the Monument. This study would explore management alternatives that would best ensure public access, preservation, protection, and interpretation of the Casa Grande Ruins. We estimate that this study will cost approximately \$300,000. Due to current funding and staffing capacities, we suggest that section 5(c) of the bill be amended to direct the Secretary to report to Congress on the results and recommendations of the study no later than three years after the funds for the study are made available. This would make the bill consistent with similar study provisions found in other bills.

H.R. 5110 has strong local and national support. The City of Coolidge, the Town of Florence, and the Pinal County Board of Supervisors have passed resolutions to support a boundary expansion. The Archeological Conservancy, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Parks Conservation Association, and the Gila River and Ak Chin Indian Communities have all expressed strong support for potential legislation.

The Casa Grande Ruins site helps individuals step back in time and experience the Monument in a setting similar to its prehistoric timeframe. H.R. 5110 would help to protect not only the unique archeological resources of the area, but also the landscape in which visitors experience the Monument.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I would be happy to respond to any questions that you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN E. WHITESELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 5131, TO ESTABLISH THE COLTSVILLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**JUNE 10, 2010**

---

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior regarding H.R. 5131, a bill to establish the Coltsville National Historical Park in Hartford, Connecticut.

The Department does not support enactment of this legislation due to the uncertainty associated with the ownership and long-term financial sustainability of the Coltsville development project as concluded by the National Park Service (NPS) in a special resource study of the resources associated with the Coltsville Historic District. In concert with this lack of feasibility, the study was also unable to determine the need for NPS management, or specifically which resources the NPS would manage.

The Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) designated Coltsville Historic District a National Historic Landmark on July 22, 2008. The manufacturing complex and associated resources constitute the site of nationally important contributions to manufacturing technology by Samuel Colt and the industrial enterprise he founded in 1855 – Colt’s Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company. It includes, among other resources, the armories where firearms and other products were made, the home of Samuel and Elizabeth Colt, Colt Park, and housing used by factory workers.

Samuel Colt is most renowned for developing a revolver design which revolutionized personal firearms. The Colt Peacemaker, a six-shot revolver, became known as “the gun that won the West.” Colt was a major innovator in the “American System” of precision manufacturing, replacing the practice of individually crafting each component of a product with the use of interchangeable parts. After his death in 1862, his wife Elizabeth owned and directed the manufacturing complex for 39 years, becoming a major entrepreneur in an age when women rarely occupied positions of importance in manufacturing.

During both World War I and World War II, the Colt Firearms Company was one of the nation’s leading small arms producers and made vital contributions to U.S. war efforts. The company applied its interchangeable-parts techniques to a wide variety of consumer products and the Colt complex became an “incubator” facility for other inventors and entrepreneurs. Coltsville is also noteworthy as a fully integrated industrial community that includes manufacturing facilities, employee housing, community buildings, and landscape features that were built largely under the personal direction of Samuel and Elizabeth Colt. Colt, whose labor practices were advanced for their time, attracted highly skilled laborers to his manufacturing enterprise.

H.R. 5131 provides that the Secretary shall not establish a unit of the national park system at Coltsville until donations of land or interests in land within the boundary of the park have been accomplished. It also provides for donations of space within the East Armory, the focal point of the manufacturing complex, for administration and visitor services. The legislation authorizes agreements with other organizations for access to Colt-related artifacts to be displayed at the park and cooperative agreements with owners of properties within the historic district for interpretation, restoration, rehabilitation and technical assistance for preservation. Any federal financial assistance would be matched on a one-to-one basis by non-federal funds.

H.R. 5131 also provides for the establishment of a commission to advise the Secretary on the development and implementation of a general management plan for the unit. The advisory commission would terminate ten years after the date of enactment of the legislation unless extended for another ten years by the Secretary.

The National Park Service (NPS), pursuant to Public Law 108-94, the Coltsville Study Act of 2003, conducted a special resource study of the resources associated with the Coltsville Historic District. Based on Coltsville's National Historic Landmark designation in 2008, the study concluded that Coltsville meets the national significance criterion. An analysis of comparability to other units of the national park system and resources protected by others demonstrated that Coltsville is suitable for designation as a unit of the national park system. The study was unable, however, to conclude that Coltsville is feasible to administer at this time due to the lengthy duration of financial issues surrounding the site. In concert with the lack of feasibility, the study is also unable to determine the need for NPS management, or specifically what the NPS would manage.

The Department is concerned that financial issues and questions involving ownership and financing of the Coltsville properties, especially funding for the adaptive reuse of significant portions of the manufacturing complex that will remain in private ownership, could impede the successful establishment of the proposed park. Until these private-sector financial issues are resolved, the Department does not believe that the donation of land or interest in land or the donation of space for administration and visitor services can be achieved. We are also concerned about the long-term financial sustainability of the development project, given both its history before and during the entire course of the special resource study and the present economic climate. The Department cannot own or manage the entire manufacturing complex, part of which has already been rehabilitated for residential use, due to what we believe would be prohibitive costs and operational issues associated with potential full federal stewardship should the development project prove unviable.

Should the committee desire to proceed with the legislation, the Department requests an opportunity to work with the committee on language to clarify the conditions of establishment of the unit contained in section 3(a).

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions from members of the committee.

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN E. WHITESELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, CONCERNING H.R. 5152, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO ADJUST THE BOUNDARY OF THE KENNESAW MOUNTAIN NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**JUNE 10, 2010**

---

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 5152, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to adjust the boundary of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park in the State of Georgia to include the Wallis House and Harriston Hill, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 5152. This legislation would authorize the acquisition of key resources, the Wallis house and Harriston Hill, that would enable the National Park Service to better interpret the Union strategy at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, the last major battle leading to the fall of Atlanta during the Civil War.

The Wallis house is one of the few original structures remaining from the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain. The house is in its original location, half a mile west of the park on Burnt Hickory Road. Built by Josiah Wallis in 1853 and occupied by his family until the Civil War, this house was used first as a Confederate hospital and then as the headquarters for Union General O.O. Howard during the battle. General Howard is an important historical figure because of his successful leadership on the battlefield and his post-Civil War support of former slaves as head of the Freedmen's Bureau and founder of Howard University. General William T. Sherman was stationed at the Wallis house during the Battle of Kolb's Farm that took place at the south end of the park and immediately preceded the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain.

Adjacent to the Wallis house is Harriston Hill, which offers a sweeping vista of the valley leading to the Confederate line atop Kennesaw Mountain. From this position, it is clear why General Howard picked this site for his headquarters and signaling position. The majority of the park's auto tour and trails interpret Confederate positions. This proposed addition, at less than 8 acres, would be a relatively small addition to the nearly 2,884-acre park, but it would add critical Union-related resources that could significantly enhance visitor understanding of the events that occurred at this site in 1864.

The Wallis house was in imminent danger of being demolished by a developer in 2002. The developer had purchased about 27 acres, including the Wallis house and adjoining Harriston Hill, with plans to construct 43 homes on the property. In cooperation with the National Park Service, the Cobb Land Trust, and the Georgia Civil War Commission, Cobb County agreed to purchase the 1.25-acre Wallis house property and the 5.5 acres encompassing Harriston Hill with the intent of donating the properties to Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. Cobb Land Trust agreed to purchase a 1.13 acre-parcel at the foot of Harriston Hill that is essential for providing visitor access to these properties and to donate this property to the NPS. Neither Cobb County nor Cobb Land Trust has the funds to restore, maintain, or manage the site, and no other entity has indicated the interest or ability to do so.

The Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park's 1983 General Management Plan does not address future potential acquisitions of land. However, the most recent planning document for the park – the 2005 Land Protection Plan – includes the Wallis house and Harriston Hill as a high priority for acquisition. In addition, the National Park Service's Southeast Region conducted a site assessment of the Wallis house in 2003 and confirmed its historical significance and concluded that it retained sufficient historical integrity to warrant its inclusion in the park.

Acquisition costs for these properties would be nominal, since they would be donated. Development costs are estimated at \$607,000, and annual operating costs, \$197,000. All funds would be subject to the availability of appropriations and NPS priorities.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or any members of the subcommittee may have.