

Committee on Natural Resources
Rob Bishop, Chairman
Markup Memorandum

January 29, 2016

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff, Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Markup: Markup on H.R. 482 (Rep. Sanford Bishop Jr., D-GA), To redesignate Ocmulgee National Monument in the State of Georgia and revise its boundary, and for other purposes.
February 2-3, 2016 1324 Longworth HOB

H.R. 482 (Rep. Sanford Bishop Jr., D-GA), “Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park Boundary Revision Act of 2015”

Bill Summary

H.R. 482, introduced by Representative Sanford Bishop (D-GA-2), re-designates the Ocmulgee National Monument in Georgia as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park and adjusts the boundary of the Historical Park to include approximately 2,100 new acres.

Additionally, H.R. 482 directs the Department of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Ocmulgee River corridor between the cities of Macon, Georgia and Hawkinsville, Georgia, to determine: (1) the national significance of the study area; (2) the suitability and feasibility of adding lands in the study area to the National Park System; and (3) the methods and means for the protection and interpretation of the study area by the National Park Service, other federal, state, local government entities, affiliated federally recognized Indian tribes, or private or nonprofit organizations.

Bill Co-sponsors

Rep. Earl L. “Buddy” Carter (R-GA-1), Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA-8), Rep. Jody B. Hice (R-GA-10), Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK-4)

Background

Ocmulgee National Monument was originally authorized in 1934 to protect “lands commonly known as the ‘Old Ocmulgee Fields,’ upon which certain Indian mounds of great historical importance are located.”¹ The monument’s enabling legislation authorized acquisition

¹ Ocmulgee National Monument; establishment; acquisition of property, 16 U.S.C. § 447A

of land for Ocmulgee National Monument by public or private donation only.² Although the enabling legislation stated that the ‘Old Ocmulgee Fields’ were comprised of “approximately two thousand acres,” local residents living during the Great Depression could only raise enough funds to procure 678 acres by the time the monument was created in 1936.³ At present, Ocmulgee National Monument consists of 702 acres.⁴

In January 2014, the National Park Service published the findings of a boundary study and environmental assessment that examined the appropriateness of expanding the boundary of Ocmulgee National Monument. The National Park Service’s preferred alternative would authorize acquisition of land within the study area by willing donors and sellers up to approximately 2,100 acres, thus expanding the monument to approximately 2,800 acres.⁵

The Archeological Conservancy wishes to donate approximately 300 of the 2,100 acres studied by the National Park Service.⁶ Other proponents of the expansion, such as the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative, expressed support for the monument to be further expanded between Macon, Georgia, and Hawkinsville, Georgia, to eventually include more than 40,000 acres, or enough to create Georgia’s first National Park.

Representative Sanford Bishop (D-GA-2) introduced a nearly identical version of this legislation in the 113th Congress as H.R. 4991, and Senator Jonny Isakson (R-GA) introduced a Senate companion as S. 2580. Senator Isakson is sponsoring the Senate companion as S. 1696 in this Congress.

Major Provisions

- Redesignates the Ocmulgee National Monument as “Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park.”
- Revises the boundary of the Historical Park to included approximately 2,100 acres.
- Authorizes lands within the boundary to be acquired by donation, purchase from a willing seller with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.
- Authorizes a special resource study of the Ocmulgee River corridor between the cities of Macon, Georgia, and Hawkinsville, Georgia to determine: (1) national significance of the study area (2) suitability and feasibility of adding lands in the study area to the National Park System; and (3) the methods and means for protection and interpretation of the study area by the National Park Service, other Federal, State, local government entities, affiliated federally recognized Indian tribes, or private or nonprofit organizations.

Administration Position

² *Id.*

³ [U.S. Department of Interior: National Park Service, “Ocmulgee Old Fields Boundary Study & Environmental Assessment,” \(Macon, Georgia, 2014\), 1-1](#) (accessed June 8, 2015).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* at ii.

⁶ *Id.* at 1-5.

The Administration supports the bill.

Cost

The Congressional Budget Office has not completed a cost estimate of this bill.

Amendments

Federal Lands Subcommittee Chairman, Tom McClintock (R-CA-4), is expected to offer an amendment to allow for land acquisition within the revised boundary by donation or exchange only. The amendment will also add references to a map created by the National Park Service that were not included in the bill at introduction.