

Arkansas Post National Memorial

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Edquist Davis Exhibits

Under contract with National Park Service
Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Planning

2009–2018
Long-Range Interpretive Plan



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Executive Summary

In 1686, Henri de Tonti established a trading post known as “Poste de Arkensea” at the Quapaw Indian village of Osotouy. It was the first semi-permanent French settlement in the lower Mississippi River Valley. From its establishment through the Civil War, the Post has been strategically important for Quapaw Indians, as well as French, Spanish, American, and Confederate militaries. Located at the northern edge of the Gulf coastal plain, Arkansas Post’s ecosystem ranges from prairie grasses and bottomland hardwood forests to wetland marshes near the bayous and river.

The Memorial Unit consists of 389 acres and includes the park’s visitor center and a 2.5-mile trail system. A paved trail leads visitors through the park’s natural and cultural resources: the historic townsite, the cistern, Post Bend, the Confederate trenches, the Arkansas River overlook, and around Park Lake. An unpaved nature trail leads visitors along the shoreline of Post Bayou and over Alligator Slough. The Osotouy Unit includes 360 acres about five miles by air and 30 miles by paved roads from the Memorial Unit. It protects the Menard Hodges Archeological Site, a Quapaw burial ground, where Quapaw remains were recently re-interred. It is located on the southeastern edge of an elevated prairie ecosystem. Currently, the Osotouy Unit is not developed for visitor use.

Arkansas Post National Memorial is also a designated part of the Trail of Tears National Trail and the Mississippi River Trail, a certified National Park Service Centennial Project.

Challenges

Arkansas Post faces many challenges to building a more robust interpretive operation and stronger visitation. It is a small remote park in an economically depressed area that has suffered the devastating affects of repeated tornados in recent years. Attracting destination visitors is a challenge, particularly during the current economic recession. The park staff is extremely small with only two FTE dedicated to interpretation and education, and a limited budget. Currently, the park enjoys a good relationship with its neighboring communities and partners. However, it is especially important for the park to engage ethnically and racially diverse community members, because they have traditionally not benefited from the park, and their stories are an important part of the history of the Arkansas Post region. In addition, there is little to no historic fabric left of any of the Arkansas Posts. Lack of tangible resources presents a serious challenge to interpreting the stories of Arkansas Post in meaningful and relevant ways. The park's interpretive program, therefore, must be creative and innovative in finding tangible ways for people to connect to





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the park's stories. Creative landscape design, interpretive media, and interactive programming are critically important. Also, in the next five to ten years, ARPO must develop the Osotouy Unit for visitors and create programs and media to interpret the site's resources and meanings, while protecting and preserving the archeological and culturally sensitive resources of the Osotouy Tribe. The challenges of global climate change will also affect the park's natural and cultural resources, and must be addressed in its interpretive and resource management approaches.

Long Range Interpretive Plan

Taking these challenges into consideration, this Long-Range Interpretive Plan (the first for Arkansas Post National Memorial) describes a vision for the park's interpretation and education program over the next ten years. It defines the foundational information that will guide the development of the future interpretation and education programs and media, and the actions needed to achieve it. Park staff developed the plan with the assistance of stakeholders and interpretive planning contractor, Edquist Davis Exhibits.

Primary Interpretive Theme

A Gathering Place

Located near the confluences of three rivers, Arkansas Post has served as a gathering place for many cultures throughout human history—it represents cultural cooperation, conflict, synthesis, and diversity.

Supporting Interpretive Themes

- 1 American Indian Heritage
Arkansas Post tells the story of the Quapaw Tribe specifically, and American Indians generally, and their importance in the history of North America, including critical alliances with European colonists, followed by Indian removal as Arkansas became an American territory.
- 2 Colonial to Civil War History
Human habitation and events at Arkansas Post played an important role in over 300 years of American History in the Lower Mississippi River Valley from the Colonial Period through the Revolutionary War, Louisiana Purchase, Indian Removal and Trail of Tears, Civil War and Reconstruction.
- 3 Humans and the Environment
The landscapes preserved at the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit represent the dynamic interaction between the natural environment and human cultures, still relevant today.



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- 4 Africa & African American Experience
Africans and African Americans played a significant role in the history and culture of Arkansas Post, and the survival and economics of communities there from the Colonial Period to present day.
- 5 Significance of the Three Rivers
The Mississippi River and its tributaries provided a link for trade and transportation, and prompted the construction of Arkansas Post Road. These natural and human-made trade routes were critical to human survival and prosperity in the region.
- 6 Personal Connections
Stories of the every day lives of women, children, and men inhabiting Arkansas Post—through both hardship and prosperity—provide opportunities to make personal connections to our shared heritage.
- 7 Environmental Issues & Climate Change
As environmental challenges continue to have a global impact, understanding and stewardship of the ecosystem at Arkansas Post National Memorial—its natural resources, wildlife populations, and migratory routes—are of the utmost importance.

Ten-Year Goals for Interpretation and Education

By 2018 Arkansas Post National Memorial will:

- 1 Implement an evaluation program that accurately assesses visitation statistics.
 - a. Increase real and virtual visitation.
 - b. Increase local community repeat visitation.
 - c. Increase the number of park visitors using interpretive services and programs with a significant increase in participation by ethnic and racial minority groups.
- 2 Increase local and regional community engagement, stewardship, and education by:
 - a. Increasing and expanding the volunteer program.
 - b. Developing curriculum-based education programs and expanding school participation.
- 3 Expand support for tourism and economic development in Arkansas and Desha Counties and the surrounding region.
 - a. Conduct an economic impact study.
 - b. Implement a system to measure baseline economic benefit and increased benefit—money spent, jobs created, personal income generated—of Arkansas Post in the region.



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Major Recommendations

To accomplish the above goals and address the park's immediate and near-term challenges, this long range interpretive plan recommends the following major changes:

- Renovate the Memorial Unit visitor center with an emphasis on celebrating the multicultural heritage of Arkansas Post, while serving as a hub for outdoor recreation and appreciation of the park's natural beauty.
- Replace museum exhibits and expand museum store.
- Make the town site at the Memorial Unit more tangible for park visitors, create consistent sign and outdoor exhibit style.
- Provide visitor access to and from the river.
- Increase the number and diversity of community engagement events and programs offered annually.
- Develop a menu of on site, off site, and distance learning education programs based on National and Arkansas State standards of learning.

- Develop the Osotouy Unit for visitation, interpretation, and education with a visitor contact station and trails with waysides.
- Upgrade programs and media to meet universal accessibility standards.
- Expand website and include new technology in the menu of interpretive media offerings.
- Invest in education and volunteer coordination.
- Support the development of a Friends Group.
- Develop and implement a public relations and marketing plan.

Specific recommendations and an implementation plan are outlined in the Recommendations sections of this plan. With the Civil War Sesquicentennial and National Park Service Centennial fast approaching, the time is right to address these challenges and build a strong and vibrant interpretive operation at Arkansas Post National Memorial.





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Introduction

Arkansas Post National Memorial would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the participants, who gave freely of their time and expertise to develop the future vision for the park's interpretation and education program. The CIP will be a much more effective and inclusive document due to their contributions.

About Arkansas Post National Memorial

In 1686, Henri de Tonti established a trading post known as "Poste de Arkansa" at the Quapaw village of Osotouy. It was the first semi-permanent French settlement in the lower Mississippi River Valley. The establishment of the Post was the first step in a long struggle between France, Spain, and England for dominance of the Mississippi River Valley.

Over the years, the Post relocated as necessary due to flooding from the Arkansas River, but its position always held strategic importance for the French, Spanish, American, and Confederate military.

Spanish soldiers and British partisans along with their American Indian allies clashed here in the 1783 Colbert Raid, the only Revolutionary War action in Arkansas.

Arkansas Post became part of the United States following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. By 1819, the post was a thriving river port and the largest city in the region and selected as the first capital of the Arkansas Territory.

Steamboats sustained Arkansas Post after the Territorial Capital was moved to Little Rock. Throughout the 1830s, the post was a waystop for steamboats on the Arkansas River Route of the Trail of Tears. Choctaw, Creek and Cherokee peoples all had contact with the Post during removal. Two thousand Choctaw endured a blizzard at the Post in 1832 while awaiting transport to take them on to Little Rock. Arkansas Post National Memorial is a significant site on the Trail of Tears National Trail.

During the Civil War, Confederate troops tried to maintain tactical control of the Arkansas, White, and Mississippi Rivers. In 1862 they constructed a massive earthen fortification known as Fort Hindman at the Post. In January 1863 Union troops destroyed the fort, ensuring control of the Arkansas and White Rivers.

Located at the northern edge of the Gulf coastal plain, Arkansas Post's ecosystem ranges from prairie grasses and bottomland hardwood forests, to wetland marshes near the bayous and river. Over the three centuries of history at Arkansas Post, the area has been

greatly changed by both natural forces and human intervention. Flooding, erosion, and a natural change in the river's course have altered the site of the historic town and forts, as have attempts to improve navigation and control of the river with dams and levees.

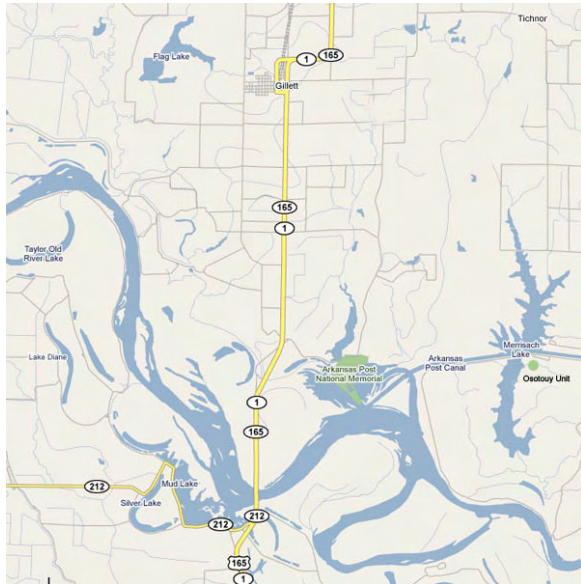
It remains a place of great beauty, with deer, turkey, alligator, raccoon, and migratory and resident birds, particularly bald eagles and waterfowl in the winter months.

The Memorial Unit consists of 389 acres and includes the park's visitor center and a 3-mile trail system. Paved trails lead visitors through the park's natural and cultural resources: the historic town site, the cistern, Post Bend, the Confederate trenches, the Arkansas River overlook, and a nature trail around Park Lake. The unpaved nature trail leads visitors along the shoreline of Post Bayou and over Alligator Slough to the Rifle Pits.

The Osotouy Unit includes 360 acres about five miles by air and 30 miles by paved roads from the Memorial Unit. It protects the Menard Hodges Archeological Site, a Quapaw burial ground, where Quapaw remains were recently re-interred. The unit may also preserve the remains of the first Quapaw Indian village and the original Arkansas Post, although this is unconfirmed. The Osotouy Unit is the largest known civic-ceremonial site of the Mississippian culture along the lower Arkansas river, and also contains a

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19th Century French vernacular house and evidence of 17th and 18th century European settlement. It is located on the southeastern edge of an elevated prairie ecosystem. Currently, the Osotouy Unit is not developed for visitor use.



Location of Arkansas Post in the region (above) and Park Map (right)



About the Long-Range Interpretive Plan

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) is the first component of the CIP. This component, along with the park's other two CIP components (Annual Implementation Plan and Interpretive Database), constitute the park's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan.

The LRIP describes the long-range vision for the park's interpretation & education program. It defines the foundational information that will guide the development of the future interpretation & education program (the long-range vision of the program) and the actions needed to achieve it. It was developed by park staff with the assistance of stakeholders, and is composed of several essential elements:

- Foundational information
- Future interpretation & education program
- LRIP Implementation Plan

Foundational Information

Foundational information is used to guide the development of the future interpretation & education program. It includes a wide range of subject matter: management goals for interpretation, a description of the significance ascribed to the place and

its resources, primary interpretive themes (overarching stories), a description of those aspects of visitor experience affected by the program, an exploration of support for the interpretation & education program provided by other park functions, stakeholder suggestions for improving the program, and more. Through the course of the process, all of these elements are discussed and described, issues are raised, and solutions are voiced so that the development and implementation of the future interpretation & education program will be successful. Stakeholders play a vital role in shaping the future program by collaboratively establishing this foundation.

Recommendations for Future Interpretation & Education Program

The major and specific recommendations sections embody the long-range vision of the program. They describe the interpretive and informational services that most effectively provide opportunities for visitors to explore the meanings of the place and explore connections to park resources.

Implementation Plan

The LRIP action list is a list of "to do" tasks that need to be accomplished to successfully implement the future interpretation & education program. These actions develop and support the interpretive and

informational services the park intends to offer, as described in its future interpretation & education program.

Updating the LRIP

The CIP core team updates the LRIP component as changing conditions warrant. If major modifications to the LRIP are determined to be necessary, thought should be given to the cycle of the current CIP and at what time external stakeholder participation should again be invited to fully review and update the plan.

Planning Workshops

Four interpretive planning workshops—in February and June of 2008—were conducted to gather consensus foundational information on the significance of Arkansas Post National Memorial's heritage resources and build on that information to develop the park's future interpretation & education program. These were the key meetings that led to development of the park's CIP. The CIP core team developed this plan based on the foundational work generated in the workshops.



Foundation

Park Mission

The Arkansas Post National Memorial mission is to:

Commemorate human settlement near the confluences of the Arkansas and White Rivers with the Mississippi River and the events associated with the first European settlement in the Lower Mississippi River Valley, by interpreting and fostering an appreciation of the interaction of the cultural groups, their histories, and their significance to the region; preserving the cultural and natural resources; and promoting resource stewardship through education.

Park Purpose

The following statements describe the primary reasons for which the park was created. They influence management priorities and are central to decisions about how the park should be developed and managed.

- Provide for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States and historical use of the park while preserving and protecting the cultural and natural resources in an unimpaired state.
- Preserve the evidence of early contact and continued interaction among the French, Spanish, and British and the American Indians and U.S. settlers in the Lower Mississippi River Valley for scientific study, public appreciation and benefit, and access by traditionally associated groups.
- Commemorate and interpret the peoples and cultures that inhabited the successive Arkansas Posts.
- Interpret and commemorate the American Indian communities and European and American interaction with American Indians at Arkansas Post.

Park Significance

This LRIP section describes the significance of places and things — as embedded in their enduring tangible and intangible resource characteristics. Significance statements, taken together as a whole, serve to describe the distinctiveness of the combined resources of the park, including natural, cultural, inspirational, scientific, historic, recreational, and other aspects. They include tangible and intangible characteristics and the context in which these characteristics are embedded. In most organizations, the mission of the organization and the set of significance statements combine to focus management actions and operations on the preservation and enjoyment of those attributes that most directly contribute to the importance of the place.

- Geography and natural resources combine with the forces of global economy, politics, and society at Arkansas Post to create a rich heritage and lasting living legacy for the nation.
- Human habitation at the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit represents dynamic interaction of diverse cultures with each other and the landscape over time.
- Arkansas Post was the first permanent European settlement in the Lower Mississippi River Valley, and represents in a tangible way the struggle by European powers for dominance in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.
- Arkansas Post reflects where the United States gained control of the Arkansas River Basin by establishing Fort Madison.
- Arkansas Post served as a major temporary internment point along the water route of the Trail of Tears.
- The Civil War battle at Arkansas Post helped the United States to reestablish control of the Lower Arkansas, White and Mississippi River systems.
- The Osotouy Unit represents the spiritual center of the Quapaw tribal homeland and the culture of these American Indians as it existed in the late 17th century.
- The Osotouy Unit preserves an archeological area consisting of Woodland, Mississippian, Quapaw, and European cultural resources that have retained a high degree of integrity over a long period of time. As the first high ground west of the Mississippi River and located between the White and the Arkansas Rivers, the location was particularly favored as a habitation site.
- Arkansas Post National Memorial preserves an ecotone between prairie, river, riparian, wetland, and forest ecosystems, rich in plant and wildlife species diversity.

Primary Interpretive Themes

This LRIP section describes the set of overarching stories that organize the largest-scale ideas and meanings related to the park's resources. Story is the communication tool most effective for facilitating an exploration of resource meanings. Societies depend on the power of story to explore, clarify, and share ideas, meanings, beliefs, and values that collectively constitute culture. Story is at the heart of human interaction and at the heart of heritage interpretation. These stories are called primary interpretive themes. The set of themes is developed to fully capture, and express in story format, the content of the park's entire set of significance statements. The set is complete when it provides opportunities for people to explore and relate to all of the significance statements.

Primary Interpretive Theme

A Gathering Place

Located at the confluence of two rivers, Arkansas Post has served as a gathering place for many cultures throughout human history—it represents cultural cooperation, conflict, synthesis, and diversity.

Supporting Interpretive Themes and Associated Stories

1 American Indian Heritage

Arkansas Post tells the story of the Quapaw Tribe specifically, and American Indians generally, and their importance in the history of North America, including critical alliances with European colonists, followed by Indian removal as Arkansas became an American territory.

- The archeological resources in the Arkansas Post area provide a tangible link to wave after wave of cultures of past centuries.
- European and African immigration into the homeland of the Quapaw Indians served as a catalyst for a blending of cultures and created dramatic changes for the Quapaw way of life. The colonists' partnership with the Quapaw was critical to their survival at Arkansas Post.
- Osotouy preserves the tribal homeland for the Quapaw, protecting archeological artifacts and lands that are historically and spiritually important.
- The struggle for survival and a sense of place is represented in the relocation of the Quapaw from their Tribal homeland, not once, but twice.
- As a stop on the water route of the Trail of Tears, Arkansas Post was the

location of tremendous human suffering and major change for American Indians relocated due to the United States westward expansion.

2 Colonial to Civil War History

Human habitation and events at Arkansas Post played an important role in over 300 years of American History in the Lower Mississippi River Valley from the Colonial Period through the Revolutionary War, Louisiana Purchase, Indian Removal and Trail of Tears, Civil War and Reconstruction.

- The interaction among the American Indians, French, Spanish, British, and Americans (of European and African descent) in the Lower Mississippi River Valley has influenced the present culture and economy of the Arkansas Post region.
- Historical events at Arkansas Post National Memorial vividly illustrate the changing relationships among the American Indians, Europeans, Africans, U.S. settlers, and African Americans in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.
- The Civil War battle at Arkansas Post reflected the national government's determination to regain control of the Lower Mississippi Valley by using overwhelming force and the superior technology of its weapons.

- The sequence of history at Arkansas Post represents, in a tangible way, the clash of European powers to dominate the Lower Mississippi River Valley. The intent of the U. S. to establish its authority over the Arkansas Territory is reflected in the designation of Arkansas Post as the first territorial capital.

- For many different cultures, including American Indians, Europeans, and U.S. settlers, the Lower Mississippi River Valley represented an opportunity to start a new life.

3 Humans and the Environment

The landscapes preserved at the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit represent the dynamic interaction between the natural environment and human cultures, still relevant today.

- For centuries the abundance of natural resources at the confluence of the Mississippi, Arkansas, and White Rivers has attracted a variety of cultures.
- Humans have influenced natural processes in the Arkansas Post region for thousands of years, resulting in drastic ecological changes, including alterations in species' characteristics and numbers.
- Different perspectives of the importance, purpose, and appropriate use of natural resources reflect inherent

conflicts between economic, recreational, cultural, and spiritual values.

- Humans continue to be dependant on the environment for survival, and human choices and behaviors within and outside the park boundaries continue to impact the health and vitality of Arkansas Post National Memorial's natural resources.
- The National Park Service stewards Arkansas Post with the partnership of citizens and local groups who care about, and help care for the park.

4 Africa & African American Experience

Africans and African Americans played a significant role in the history and culture of Arkansas Post, and the survival and economics of communities there from the Colonial Period to present day.

- Both free and enslaved Africans inhabited Arkansas Post and contributed to the economic and social fabric of the community.
- The institution of slavery and the implementation of emancipation have left indelible imprints on all aspects of life in the Arkansas Post area.
- Enslaved African Americans from local plantations built the Civil War fort at Arkansas Post.
- The African American experience in the Arkansas Post region during

Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights movement is representative of the struggle between and blending of cultures, racism, and our ever changing society.

5 Significance of the Three Rivers

The Mississippi River and its tributaries provided a link for trade and transportation, and prompted the construction of Arkansas Post Road. These natural and human-made trade routes were critical to human survival and prosperity in the region.

- Arkansas Post was located strategically on the first high ground above the White River Cut-off connecting the Arkansas and White Rivers just before their confluences with the Mississippi River. It was a major stop along trade routes leading to and from the Lower Mississippi Valley and the West.
- The rivers provided access to some of the first and most important export goods from the Colonies to Europe; similarly, it provided access to supplies and European goods through the port at New Orleans.
- Flooding along the river enhanced the quality of soil for agriculture and also caused hardship, loss of life and goods.
- Ever-changing river dynamics have influenced human cultures, politics, and

communities in the Arkansas Post region over thousands of years, and up to the present day.

- The Arkansas Post Road was one of the first major transportation routes in the region. It has evolved into modern roads and highways.

6 Personal Connections

Stories of the every day lives of women, children, and men inhabiting Arkansas Post—through both hardship and prosperity—provide opportunities to make personal connections to our shared heritage.

- Women and children of many ethnicities lived and worked at Arkansas Post and the Osotouy Unit, and made significant contributions to the economic and social fabric of the communities there throughout history.
- Both enslaved peoples and indentured servants of various cultural backgrounds lived and worked at Arkansas Post.
- The local culture—religion, music, art, stories and legends—of Arkansas Post paints a vivid picture of the individuals that passed through and made their lives here over its long history.

7 Environmental Issues & Climate Change

As environmental challenges continue to have a global impact, understanding and stewardship of the ecosystem at Arkansas Post National Memorial—its natural resources, wildlife populations, and migratory routes—are of the utmost importance.

- Arkansas Post boasts easy access to its natural features, making it a special place where all people are welcome to recreate, reflect, and connect with nature.
- Arkansas Post lies on the Mississippi Flyway, enabling visitors to view a great variety of migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and resident birds of prey.
- Because of the abundance of water in and around the park, a very large population of reptiles and amphibians exists at Arkansas Post.
- The interplay between global climate change and farming, which provides Arkansas' largest economic base, may have profound effects on the water quality of the Arkansas River, its flow rate, and its plant and wildlife populations.

Management Goals: Interpretation and Education

This LRIP section serves to establish important guidelines and sideboards for the future operation of the interpretation & education program.

National Park Service Interpretation and Education Program Impact

The overall impact of the National Park Servicewide interpretation and education program is to help ensure that the public:

- Finds personal meaning and shared heritage in the National Park System;
- Understands and participates in civil democratic society;
- Practices healthy lifestyles through recreation;
- Demonstrates a long-term commitment to stewardship of national park resources; and
- Enjoys motivating, lifelong learning opportunities.

Ultimately, these things, along with the activities of other individuals and organizations, will lead to a National Park System that is preserved for future generations.

Interpretation and Education Program Outcomes

Arkansas Post National Memorial's interpretation and education program should accomplish the following outcomes:

- Audiences will make personal, intellectual and emotional connections to the meanings inherent in the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit;
- Audiences will have satisfying and memorable experiences at the park and on the park's website;
- Audiences will learn new information and concepts about Arkansas Post and the National Park System;
- Audiences will learn civic engagement skills and take action on behalf of the park, (e.g. volunteer, make a donation, comment, etc.);
- Teachers will improve professional education practices related to history, social studies, and science;
- Students will have enhanced learning and motivation for learning about history, social studies, and science;
- Park neighbors and community decision makers will understand the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit's resources and issues,

and will engage in park and community preservation.

(Note: See appendix for National Park Service Interpretation and Education Logic Model.)

Specific Management Goals for Interpretation and Education

What does management expect Arkansas Post National Memorial's interpretation & education program to accomplish for the park?

- Establish a sense of ownership and stewardship for Arkansas Post National Memorial.
- Help park audiences relate Arkansas Post National Memorial to the National Park System as a whole, and other public lands.
- Provide meaningful and memorable experiences for park audiences.
- Provide educational opportunities for park audiences using the rich cultural and natural resources and stories associated with Arkansas Post National Memorial.
- Interpret multiple points of view about the many stories and meanings associated with Arkansas Post National Memorial in a balanced and culturally competent manner, fostering cross-cultural appreciation for heritage.

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- Engage local community members of all cultural and racial backgrounds to enjoy, benefit from, and care for park resources; and insure that Arkansas Post National Memorial is an active and engaged part of surrounding local communities.
- Place the history of the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit in context, helping audiences find relevant, contemporary meanings in park stories.
- Relate present day park preservation concerns to broader issues such as climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and other critical issues; and help audiences understand that resource preservation reaches beyond the park boundaries.
- Provide opportunities to reengage children and youth in outdoor recreational experiences, encouraging physical activity, a sense of place and love of nature.

Visitor Experience Goals

This LRIP section describes desired visitor experiences that stakeholders think the managers of the program should pay special attention to as the park's interpretation & education program is planned and implemented.

Visitors to Arkansas Post National Memorial should have opportunities to:

- Feel welcome and receive orientation and information about the park's significance and the various ways to explore its resources.
- Learn about the history and dynamic interaction of people and nature over time at the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit.
- Examine and/or purchase a wide range of interpretive materials.
- Experience an authentic and personally relevant connection with the people, events, and landscape of the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit.
- Participate in a wide variety of accessible and personally relevant interpretive and educational programs and media.
- Find out about future interpretive and educational programs and opportunities.

- Be involved in stewardship and preservation activities.
- Relate Arkansas Post National Memorial to the larger National Park System.
- Find out about other tourism opportunities with collaborating partners.
- Understand the mission of the National Park Service.
- Enjoy their visit.
- Have opportunities for personal experiences of choice such as solace, solitude, togetherness, and reflection.
- Find something new and different from their previous visit.
- Experience a sense of authentic place.
- Enjoy access to recreational opportunities such as fishing, picnicking, biking, paddling, wildlife watching and hiking.
- View wildlife and form personal connections to nature.



Significant Issues and Influences: Interpretation and Education

This LRIP section describes the forces that have a bearing on the program. Since no program operates in a vacuum, this information provides context for understanding, planning, and implementing the park's interpretation & education program. Issues often include topics such as long-range Servicewide initiatives, critical resource issues, issues related to staffing and funding, employee development, use of technologies, dynamics of neighboring communities, and concerns of stakeholders not voiced previously.

1 NPS Interpretation and Education Renaissance

The National Park Service National Education Council recently began a nationwide movement to enhance and equip its interpretation and education programs to meet the needs of 21st century audiences. The Renaissance has five areas of focus, all of which are relevant to the Interpretation and education at Arkansas Post National Memorial (ARPO). The five areas of focus include:

- a. Establishment of National Standards for Interpretation and Education. These are currently underdevelopment. When they are complete, it will be essential for ARPO to evaluate its program and adjust it to meet the national standards.
- b. Engaging new and diverse audiences. The demographics of the American population are changing drastically. It is critically important that national park audiences reflect the face of a richly diverse nation. Everyone must feel welcome at national parks, and everyone must see their own heritage reflecting the stories and meanings interpreted at national parks. ARPO must work to engage traditionally underserved audiences such as African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, new immigrants, and low-income urban and rural audiences.

c. **New Technology.** Changing technology is profoundly impacting the way people communicate, learn, find community, express themselves, find and process information. To fully embrace 21st Century audiences, national parks must use new media and current technologies to interpret park resources, without abandoning traditional methods and techniques. ARPO must insure that its menu of interpretive media includes new and currently used technologies.

d. **Embrace Partners.** It is clear that with ever growing audiences, and ever dwindling budgets and personnel, the only way to meet the demand and need for fully serving park audiences is to work closely with partners. To meet the needs of park audiences both on site and at a distance, ARPO must engage with and facilitate interpretive and educational activity by and through partners.

e. **Evaluation.** Traditionally in the NPS, the interpretation and education program has not made decisions on what program to offer, how to allocate funding, personnel and other critical resources based on solid research and evaluative data. In this time of scarce resources, it is critical to make decisions based on what works, and what audiences want. To accomplish this, parks must start to conduct evaluations and learn from evaluative and research data

produced throughout the system and the interpretive field in general. ARPO should consider the outcomes of their program and create a plan for collecting and using evaluation information on a regular basis for making decisions and for ongoing program improvement.

2 NPS Centennial

In 2016, the NPS will celebrate its 100 anniversary. The administration under Director Mary Bomar established a Centennial Initiative focusing on stewardship, environmental leadership, recreational experience, education, and professional excellence. The present plan must take these major themes into consideration when making recommendations for future programs and media.

3 Civil War Sesquicentennial

The 150th anniversary of the Civil War will occur during the period of the present plan's implementation. ARPO must consider the following NPS Civil War Sesquicentennial goals when making recommendations for future programs and media:

a. Every visitor to the Memorial Unit will understand how Fort Hindman, the Battle of Arkansas Post, and the associated prominent persons fit into and affected the evolution of the Civil War—its change

from a war to restore the Union to a war that transformed a nation.

b. Every visitor will have the opportunity to perceive the relevance of the Memorial Unit and the Civil War at large to America and Americans of today.

c. Every visitor will understand that the Battle of Arkansas Post was historically perceived and valued differently by different people—often depending on rank, race, gender, geographic origin, age, or socioeconomic status.

d. Each visitor will be given the opportunity to engage the Memorial Unit's story from multiple perspectives.

e. Every visitor will engage the story of the Battle of Arkansas post dominantly by interaction with the Memorial Unit's historic and natural resources—viewing larger thematic issues through the lens provided by the historic people, places, and events that comprise the park.

f. Each visitor shall encounter a resource that is intact, well maintained, and unencumbered by incompatible uses.

g. Every visitor will have access to up-to-date, accurate, effective interpretive media and high-quality personal services that helps them understand the park's story and derive the significance of the place.

4 Global Climate Change

Scientific evidence is clear that climate change is a reality and has the potential to profoundly affect the Earth's ecosystems in the next 10 to 50 years. These changes will affect the natural and cultural resources in the Arkansas Post region. The NPS has recently established a Global Climate Change Office in the Division of Natural Resources and Science. Soon the NPS will develop a Global Climate Change Plan which will likely include a significant public education component. ARPO's future interpretation and education program should address Global Climate Change as it relates to local and national environmental resource protection.

5 Development of the Osotouy Unit

In the next five to ten years, ARPO must develop the Osotouy Unit for visitors and create facilities, programs and media to interpret the site's resources and meanings. The present plan must consider incorporating interpretation of this site into the overall ARPO interpretive program.

6 Protection of Archeological Sites and Artifacts

With the opening of the Osotouy Unit, the public will have access to significant archeological resources. Protection of these resources from looters and vandalism will

be of primary importance. There is a role for public education in the overall strategy for archeological resource protection. The present plan must address education-related solutions to protection of archeological resources at the new site.

7 Engaging the Local Community and Ethnically Diverse Community Members

ARPO currently enjoys a good relationship with its neighboring communities and partners. The present plan must capitalize on these relationships and continue to enhance them becoming an even more integrated part of the local community. It is especially important for the park to engage ethnically and racially diverse community members, because they have traditionally not been reached by the Park's interpretive programs, and their stories are an important part of the history of the Arkansas Post region. Relationships with gateway communities to national parks are critical to park preservation, tourism, and enhanced visitor experiences. National parks should be a source of local pride for everyone, and park neighbors should want to help steward park resources. These issues must be addressed in the present plan.

8 Lack of Tangible Historical Resources

There is little to no historic fabric left of any of the Arkansas Posts. Lack of tangible

resources presents a serious challenge to interpreting the stories of Arkansas Post in meaningful and relevant ways. The park's interpretive program, therefore, must be creative and innovative in finding tangible ways for people to connect to the park's stories. Interpretive media and interactive programming are critically important. The present plan must address this issue.

9 Staff/Funding Shortage

All NPS parks have experienced severe budget cuts over the past ten years. Currently the interpretive staff at ARPO is extremely limited with two permanent full-time positions. Creative use of volunteers, seasonal staff, interns, and partners must be considered in fulfilling the goals and objectives of this plan.

10 Remote/Rural Location

ARPO is a remote park in an economically depressed area that has suffered the devastating affects of repeated tornados in recent years. Attracting destination visitors is a challenge. The present plan must consider tourism initiatives and partnerships with heritage areas, state and local parks, and other groups to market the site and encourage visitation. The plan should also consider opportunities for virtual visits to the park and the use of distance learning technology to reach audiences that may never visit the park or the region.

Profile Summary of Park Visitation: Visitors, Neighbors, Underrepresented Populations

This LRIP section describes the set of audiences that must be defined so that the park's interpretive and informational services can most effectively enhance the experiences of visitors. When comprehensively planning an interpretation & education program, the basis for categorizing audiences (for the interpretation & education program) lies in whether or not a particular audience requires communication in a way distinct from that of the general park audience. A subjective balance must be struck between communicating effectively with a greater number of specific audiences, and the limited resources available to the park's program.

Visitation Trends

Since 1996, park visitation has remained relatively stable, averaging about 47,500 visitors annually. Visitation remains rather consistent throughout the year with greatest visitation in the spring.

- Fifty-five percent of park visitors are from the surrounding local communities, with 25% from the region (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Missouri). Only 19% of park visitors are from other parts of the US, and only 1% are international.
- Sixty-five percent of park visitors are adults between the ages of 18 and 61. Children represent 20%, and seniors 15% of park visitation. Visitors primarily come to the park in groups with 30% families, 25% peer groups, and 10% organized groups.
- While the local population is about 24% African American in Arkansas County and 46% in Desha County, the percentage of African Americans visiting Arkansas Post is significantly lower.
- Fifty percent of park visitors use information/ orientation, and/or non-personal service interpretation only, with 10% participating in tours and programs, and 40% using no park programs or services, this reflects the frequent use of the park for recreation—fishing, picnicking, walking,

hiking, exercising, nature viewing, and attending family reunions.

(This section was drawn from the park's 2002 General Management Plan)

Demographics of Arkansas and Desha Counties

Arkansas Post National Memorial is located in southeast Arkansas near the town of Gillett in Arkansas County, and 20 miles north of Dumas, Arkansas in Desha County.

Arkansas County

According to the 2006 Census, Arkansas County has a population of 19,884. The median household income in 2004 was \$33,764 with, 16.8% of the population living below the poverty level. Children under five years constitute 6.6% of the population, with 24.2% between the ages of 5 and 18, and 15.9% over the age of 65 years. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the population is white, with 24.6% African American, 0.2% American Indian, 0.4% Asian, and 1.2% Hispanic.

Desha County

According to the 2006 Census, Desha County has a population of 14,181. The median household income in 2004 was \$25,470 with, 23% of the population living below the poverty level. Children under five years

constitute 7.6% of the population, with 26% between the ages of 5 and 18, and 14% over the age of 65 years. Fifty-one point five percent (51.5%) of the population is white, with 46.8% African American, 0.4% American Indian, 0.5% Asian, and 4% Hispanic.

Local Economy

Farming is the largest source of employment in the area with Arkansas County being the state’s top producer of rice, soybeans, and wheat. However, the percentage of people living below the poverty level is significantly higher than the national average of 12.7 %. The park is an important source of jobs, and expenditures for goods and services, drawing heritage tourists to the area. According to the Preservation Alliance of Virginia, historic preservation (“heritage”) tourists stay longer, visit twice as many places, and spend an average of over 2.5 times more money in an area than other tourists. With the development of the Osotouy Unit, and further development and marketing of the Memorial Unit’s programs and resources, Arkansas Post has the potential of helping to significantly boost the local economy.

This potential will be magnified if the development and marketing of Arkansas Post is connected with other heritage tourism development in the region—duck lodges, birding services, state parks—particularly

Delta Heritage Trail, and Mississippi River Trail.

Specific Audience Segments for Special Attention

Stakeholders at the planning workshops identified the following audience segments for special attention at Arkansas Post National Memorial

- School groups
- Individual students at home on the internet
- Heritage tourists, history buffs
- Fishermen, neighboring hunters, sportsmen
- African-Americans in the community and nationally
- Native Americans in the community and nationally such as the Quapaw and Choctaw.
- Other American Indians who were part of Trail of Tears.
- Local family groups, picnickers
- Latinos in the community and nationally
- Civic organizations
- Birders/wildlife watchers
- Senior Citizens/retirees
- Visitors passing through region.
- Youth Groups (e.g., Boy and Girl

Scouts, church youth)

- Other groups (church, home school, teachers, etc.)
- Recreationists (dog walkers, hikers, anglers)
- Descendent organizations
- International visitors as tourists or students and researchers
- Researchers
- Genealogists/Family History
- Artists/Photographers
- Other land management agencies (Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife, State Parks)
- Re-enactors, living historians, black powder enthusiasts

Based on staff interaction with visitors, the top reasons that first-time visitors specifically targeted Arkansas Post as a destination are:

- 1 Civil War Enthusiast
- 2 Want to see an Alligator
- 3 National Park Passport Stamp Collector
- 4 Educator or student looking for Arkansas history material or research (as an individual and not part of an organized group)



Exterior of main visitor center (above, top) and an exhibit inside the center (above)

Summary Assessment of Existing Conditions: Interpretive and Educational Programs and Media

It is useful to obtain a snapshot of the park's current interpretive operation, programs and media to gain a sense of what might be improved to make the interpretation & education program more efficient and effective over the next five to ten years.

Memorial Unit Visitor Center and Bookstore

The visitor center at the Memorial Unit is spacious and in good condition. Its location is appropriate and convenient for visitors to the site. It contains an exhibit space and a 50 seat theater. However, there is little delineation between the visitor area and staff offices. The staff does not have a space for meetings, or a workshop area for preparing interpretive program materials and props. There is no space for break out sessions for teacher workshops or to use as secondary program areas for large school groups. In addition, storage is limited. The bookstore is appropriate and the scope of sales contains a good mix for books, objects, and educational souvenirs designed to extend learning opportunities beyond a visit to the site. The scope of sales could be expanded

to better meet the needs of newer audiences, and take into consideration challenges and opportunities listed above.

Film

The park's orientation film is only four years old. It tells the park's stories from multiple points of view and incorporates American Indian and African American stories, yet does not mention of the Trail of Tears (ARPO is part of the Trail of Tears National Trail). There is also no mention of the Underground Railroad, though a history of the Arkansas Underground Railroad commissioned by NPS indicates Arkansas Post was involved through a river route and steamboats. Very little content is dedicated to the lives of women of any ethnicity at Arkansas Post. While the film has won several awards, it is a little too long for a basic orientation film, and depicts a child on a boat without a life jacket and a family camping at the site—both prohibited activities. Overall, the film is acceptable and will serve the park well for the next five years.

Exhibits

Visitor center exhibits are approximately 25 years old. Some exhibit rooms are in partial development. Exhibit rooms have some redundancy (two models of the fort in different rooms), and portions of exhibits clearly have not been professionally made. Exhibits are marginally interactive and not

designed to tell diverse stories, engage children or be accessible to people with visual or hearing impairments. The site needs new exhibits in its visitor center to interpret park themes and address modern concerns and challenges in a highly accessible manner.



Wayside Exhibits

The Memorial Unit has a variety of waysides from different time periods, and many are over 25 years old. An integrated wayside exhibit plan is needed to interpret current park themes, and address the concern of lack of historic fabric for interpretation. An emphasis needs to be made on interpreting the historic landscape, instead of interpreting historic structures.

Trails and Recreational Resources

The Memorial Unit has an excellent set of accessible trails, and a picnic areas.

Print Materials

The park folder is well done and current. It interprets the main stories of the site well and provides basic orientation materials. It will have to be modified when the Osotouy Unit is opened to visitors. The document serving as the park handbook however, is out dated and contains cultural and gender biases.

Curriculum-based Education Programs

ARPO needs comprehensive curriculum-based programs designed in collaboration with Arkansas Department of Education and based on National and State History and Social Study Standards. Curriculum-based programs should be designed for local and distant audiences, using a wide menu of methods and techniques such as traveling trunks, on site interactive programs, distance learning and web-based programs and activities.

Junior Ranger Program

ARPO’s junior ranger booklet is current and very nicely done, but requires professional printing and will need to be updated when exhibits and film are replaced. No Web Ranger Program currently exists at ARPO.

Website

ARPO’s expanded website is comprehensive, but could use expansion to better meet the needs of specific audiences such as children, teachers and students, ethnically and racially diverse audiences, and technologically savvy audiences especially youth.

Interpretive Technology

The park has no pod casts, audio tours, cell phone tours, hand-held technology, or other state of the art interpretive media.

Public Events

The Memorial Unit hosts several popular events, such as “Ghosts of the Past,” a living history evening walk through the park. There is great potential to expand these and other events—but it is important to consider similar offerings by the State Park and the capacity of the local market.

Manipulatives, Props, and Demonstrations

The Memorial Unit has very few props, manipulative materials, and demonstrations that could enhance opportunities for visitors to connect with park meanings. These are essential given the fact that they have very little tangible historic fabric left.

Volunteer Program

Arkansas Post National Memorial has a small volunteer program consisting of 71 volunteers generating 635 hours of volunteer service annually. (Taken from the FY 2007 Annual VIP Program Activity and Expense Report.)

Marketing

The park engages in very little marketing, but does promote programs and events in local newspapers and maintains a park mailing list. School programs are marketed directly to teachers and school principals, as well as through educational workshops, list serves and conferences.

Osotouy Unit

Currently, there are no facilities for visitors at the Osotouy Unit.

Recommendations: Future Interpretive and Educational Programs, Media, and Facilities 2009-2018



The following goals and recommendations are based on the foundational information detailed in this document, and the ideas generated at the second stakeholder workshop. Together, they outline a vision for Arkansas Post National Memorial's future Interpretation and Education Program, and the steps necessary to achieve that vision.

Ten-Year Goals

The following are goals for the park's interpretation and education program. With the development of the Osotouy Unit, the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial, and the National Park Service Centennial on the near horizon, the time is right to improve and expand the park's interpretive operation. A relatively small investment in the parks interpretive and educational programs and services could greatly enhance the quality of life in the region and, at the same time, develop a more engaged constituency that cares about park resources, historic preservation, and shared heritage.

By 2018 Arkansas Post National Memorial will:

- 1 Implement an evaluation program that accurately assesses visitation statistics.**
 - a. Increase real and virtual visitation
 - b. Increase local community repeat visitation.
 - c. Increase number of park visitors using interpretive services and programs with a significant increase in visitation by ethnic and racial minority groups.
- 2 Increase local and regional community engagement, stewardship, and education by:**
 - a. Increasing and expanding the volunteer program.
 - b. Developing curriculum-based education programs and expanding school participation.
- 3 Expand support for tourism and economic development in Arkansas and Desha Counties and surrounding region.**
 - a. Conduct an economic impact study.
 - b. Implement a system to measure baseline economic benefit and increased benefit—money spent, jobs created, personal income generated—of Arkansas Post in the region.

Major Recommendations to Accomplish Goals

- Renovate visitor center with an emphasis on celebrating the multicultural heritage of Arkansas Post and as a hub for outdoor recreation and enjoying the park's natural beauty.

Due to its remote location and low visitation outside the region, the Memorial Unit needs a visitor center with more than static exhibits. It also needs a gathering place that will attract ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse local and regional visitors that come to the park because of its naturally beautiful setting. Engaging programs and events should draw in these visitors and interpret the dynamic and diverse heritage of the Post. As a gathering place for many cultures throughout human history, the Post represents cultural cooperation, conflict, synthesis, diversity and the interaction of cultures with the natural environment.

The Memorial Unit center should be renovated to include more office space, a multi-purpose meeting room, a media workshop area for creating and storing interpretive and educational props and materials as well as developing and updating interpretive media and technology, and a classroom/workshop space dedicated to curriculum-based educational programming

and distance learning. This might be accomplished by adding a second floor to the visitor center, as was anticipated in the building's original design.

- Replace museum exhibits and expand museum store.

The museum exhibit space should be renovated, reflecting the role of the center as a gathering place/heritage museum that supports the site's interpretive and educational themes and programming; some exhibit areas should be designed to be flexible allowing for temporary or easily changed exhibits to encourage repeat visitation. Photography and art exhibits based on the site would be one means of creating changing exhibits that engage the public in their creation. The museum bookstore scope of sales should be expanded to include more books for all ages, history, science, and social studies teaching resources, and educational games, as well as regional and Indian-made art, crafts, jewelry, gift items, and historic object replicas of good quality and varied prices that relate to the park's primary themes.

- Make the town site at the Memorial Unit more tangible for park visitors, create consistent sign and outdoor exhibit style.

The lack of tangible historic resources in the town site is a challenge for park interpretive staff. There are a variety of landscape and interpretive media and technology treatments that will help to make the site more accessible to visitors. This should be done very carefully in order to not disturb the natural beauty of the site or to limit interpretation of the site to just one time period.

- Provide visitor access to the river.

The rivers are the reason Arkansas Post has been a gathering place of many cultures throughout the human history of North America. To provide a more complete interpretive and recreation experience for park visitors, the park should build a dock and allow water access for boating, as well as offer a variety of water-based interpretive programs such as canoe tours. This will increase visitation, invite river recreationists to stop at the Post, allow fishing recreationists to go out on the water, and help interpret the history and natural resources of the Memorial Unit from the perspective of the river.

- **Increase the number and diversity of community engagement events and programs offered annually.**

The history of Arkansas Post includes many cultures stories and experiences. The park should capitalize on this diverse cultural history to provide theme-related cultural events, music, museum theater, and mission-related activities celebrating the cultural diversity of the site's heritage. These events should be developed in collaboration with civic and cultural groups, and marketed widely throughout the region. Arkansas Post should become recognized as a place welcoming and celebrating the many cultures that make up the region's heritage.

- **Develop a menu of on site, off site, and distance learning education programs based on National and Arkansas State standards of learning.**

One of the most effective ways to engage the local community is through organized programs for school groups. Supporting Arkansas's school systems through effective history, science, and social studies programs will benefit the educational and economic development of the area and promote stewardship for cultural and natural resources. Further, partnering with Phillips Community College's distance learning technology studio to develop and broadcast

education programs will make the site more accessible to rural Arkansas schools, as well as schools across the country.

- **Develop the Osotouy Unit for visitation, interpretation, and education.**

The Osotouy Unit needs staff, a visitor contact and comfort station, trails, a sign plan, exhibits, and interpretive programming. The park should not develop the site until they obtain funding for staff to insure protection of the archeological resources on the property.

- **Upgrade programs and media to meet universal accessibility standards.**

It is critical that programs and media are adapted to meet universal accessibility standards, not only to comply with federal regulations, but to make the park easier to access and the interpretive operation more accessible to all audiences, particularly visitors with physical or learning disabilities.

- **Expand website and include new technology in menu of interpretive media offerings.**

The park's website must be enhanced to attract and engage virtual visitors to Arkansas Post National Memorial. In addition, due to its remote location, the park should invest in distance learning technology so that students all over the country can benefit from virtual

field trips to the park. Twenty-first Century audiences are also expecting an expanded menu of interpretive media to include new technologies of interest to them such as cell phone tours, PDA tours, podcasts, online games and activities, and multi-media exhibits. The park must consider adding a limited menu of these items to enhance the current array of media available to visitors. Also, new GPS technology is available that can help visitors visualize historic landscapes, structures, and events. This technology could augment the visitor experiences at the Memorial site and the Osotouy site, making them more tangible for park visitors.

- **Invest in education and volunteer coordination.**

The simple act of increasing the full time permanent interpretive staff by one FTE dedicated to coordination of educational programming and volunteer management will reap huge benefits for the park and region. Dedicating time and energy to volunteer recruitment, training, and supervision will allow the park to benefit from significantly increased labor in all areas of park operations. Similarly, dedicating more staff time to the education program will allow it to grow significantly, serving Arkansas school systems, as well as schools across the country through distance learning technology. Investing in two education seasonals or college interns

during the school months will allow a significant increase in school programming and outreach. This will increase visitation, awareness, and understanding of park resources, not just at Arkansas Post but at public lands and protected areas across the country.

- **Establish and support the development of a Friends Group.**

There is sufficient interest from local and regional residents, archeologists, and historians to establish a friends organization to assist the park and promote stewardship. The park should not expect a friends group to raise major funding due to the local economy and lack of corporate park neighbors, but they could help immensely with volunteerism, community engagement, and marketing.

- **Develop and implement a public relations and marketing plan.**

Arkansas Post should develop a public relations and marketing plan in collaboration with local chambers of commerce, surrounding state and county parks, museums, and other land management agencies to cross promote their facilities and programs, stimulate heritage tourism, and re-brand the visitor center as a heritage center and museum primarily serving local and regional areas.

Specific Recommendations for Exterior Interpretive Areas

Summary of Goals:

- **Detect archaeologically-sensitive areas of the Memorial Unit and the Osotouy Unit.**
- **Give visitors to the Memorial Unit access to the water that is mission-related, interpretive, and fun**
- **Develop areas that can be used for personal interpretive programs**
- **Create a landscape scheme which helps visitors to visualize historic uses**
- **Link trails and pathways visually and conceptually to the exhibits at the center, and to the theme of “A Gathering Place”**

Laying the Groundwork

Arkansas Post should review existing archeological data about the site. Numerous archeological studies in and around the visitor center have already been completed. The park should determine if an additional remote-sensing survey is necessary before any additional landscape treatments are added to the site. In any case, hardscape materials should be installed above current grade in order to lessen the impact on archeological resources.

Creating Tangible Structures

Just outside the visitor center door, an artist’s visualization of the site be the centerpiece of a series of graphic panels. These could be multi-sided panels that tumble so that visitors can see the site in from 1779 to 1862 in a series of images. This emphasis on telling multiple stories reinforces the concept of a gathering place with layers of time, histories and cultures.

One of the largest challenges at Arkansas Post is its lack of historic structures.

Re-creating these structures is not possible—no accurate information is available regarding the original buildings on the site. Arkansas Post should work with a landscape architect to create a landscaping scheme that approximates the eras of the post, with a theme of “A Gathering Place.” It should include the Old Townsite in the area closest to the visitor center. This scheme would be achieved using low-maintenance native plantings and prairie grasses, topography, brickwork, paths and surface treatments combined with modern technology that might digitally represent the buildings of the Post from different eras.

The treatments on the following page are not solutions, but general suggestions for appropriate techniques to be used in this exterior area.

Suggested Treatments for Exterior Interpretive Areas

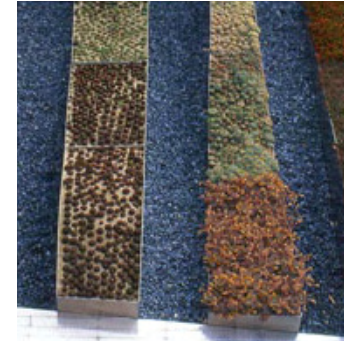
Primary techniques—use to define spaces and create textural landscape

- topography, brickwork, paths
- Low-maintenance native plantings and prairie grasses
- Demonstration gardens to show what crops would have been grown at the town
- Modern technology that simulates structures, people, troops or forts digitally.



Other techniques—use only sparingly to emphasize events, places, or define space—while preserving the feel of a natural landscape

- vertical structures suggestive of buildings or town features
- Sculptural figures
- Raised planters and seating



Considerations for the Exterior Scheme

When planning and designing the exterior treatment, landscape designers and ARPO should not overlook several practical considerations that will affect the choice of techniques used in the area. These include:

- Increased responsibilities for the maintenance crew.

Since staff at the Memorial Unit is limited, the impact of a possible increase in maintenance duties should be a primary concern when developing the outdoor scheme.

- Maintenance of an appealing natural landscape and wildlife sanctuary.

The site's natural beauty is one of its leading attractions for repeat visitors, and the setting should be designed so as not appear too cluttered.

- Historical accuracy and inclusion

Archaeological studies should be used to accurately place the locations of former structures. The Post had multiple settlements over a long time span, so interpretation should not emphasize one era. Additionally, cast statues can be seen by some groups as monuments, and can lead to demands for others—resulting in a forest of visual clutter. Statuary should

be used to aid the visitor's imagination but not to memorialize events.

Bringing the Site to Life

Tangible treatments and structures provide visual cues and pique interest, but it will be a combination of interpretive techniques that bring the Memorial Unit to life for visitors. Recommended strategies:

- Audiovisual Techniques

A handheld GPS audiovisual program should feature voices, images and music. These units could be rented at the visitor center, and they would lead visitors on an interpretive walk to learn about the people of the Post and the uses of the buildings on the town site. This technology would provide a rich variety of interpretive content—inspired by the theme of the exterior scheme, "A Gathering Place," featuring voices and stories by an enslaved African, Quapaw, women, a European settler, or even a bird on the Mississippi Flyway.

- Interpretive Programs & Demonstrations

Park staff could also lead interpretive programs and do roving interpretation with pocket programs combined with table top/program box demonstrations on a variety of themes. These efforts would maximize the potential to reach diverse

audiences and also be the most effective means of interpreting to the shotgun visitation pattern the park experiences. (Most park visitors do not come in organized groups with reservations, but as individuals or small groups with no set schedule. They tend to have a limited time or be en route to another destination.)

Manipulatives, props and demonstrations are also fast and relatively inexpensive to implement. They can serve a vital role in improving interpretation and education programming during the time required for new exhibit planning, design and construction. They work as well for interpretive stations at school day events and large special events as they do for readily available short programs for the random visitor.

- A Civil War Trail

Civil War history is popular and there is an opportunity to interpret it here. One GPS tour would focus on anecdotal stories of the soldiers, generals, and African Americans who built the fort, as well as a description of the fort structure and the battles that took place at Arkansas Post. Keeping the trenches clear of leaf litter would allow visitors to get a better sense of their use.

A Natural History Trail

The existing small waysides that feature information about natural history and human history around the park trails should be replaced with a style consistent throughout the park, and more panels added to increase the interpretive experience. The small size of the current waysides allows them to be unobtrusive while adding an interpretive element to the nature walks available in the park. This benefit should be considered when designing new panels. Panels may be added that feature touchable or interactive elements (that are also weather-resistant) and images showing historical views of the landscape. Topics covered might touch on the uses of plants and animals by former inhabitants of the area as well as species introduced in modern eras. As with the exterior treatments nearer to the visitor center, care should be taken not to clutter the trail with too many interpretive elements.

Key to the Interpretive Themes used in Matrix of Recommendations

- 1 American Indian Heritage
- 2 Colonial-Civil War History
- 3 Human & Environment Interaction
- 4 Africa & African American Experience
- 5 Significance of the Three Rivers
- 6 Personal Connections
- 7 Environmental Issues & Climate Change

Matrix of Recommendations for Exterior Areas and Grounds

Activity	Technique	Theme Supported
Determine areas of archaeological significance	Remote-Sensing Survey	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Create "A Gathering Place" Landscape	Sculptural Elements, Topography/Brickwork, Native Plantings, Demonstration Gardens, Structures or Architectural Elements	applies to all themes
Hold Interpretive Programs in exterior areas.	"Pocket" programs (using a Pocket Program vest) and mobile interpretive carts with props and artifacts.	1,2,4,6
Create Graphic Panel interpreting the Town Site	Illustration of the town site	1,2,4,5,6
Create themed landscape tour scripts of both the Memorial and Osotouy Units that contribute to the overall park theme of "A Gathering Place" and empower visitors to customize their visit.	Handheld GPS, Guidebooks, and scheduled guided tours	1,2,4,6
Create Civil War trail or modify trails to coordinate with themed tours	Install landscaping and/or sculptural elements, interpretive panels, and signage to complement themed tours	2
Provide Audio/Video tours themed to different Eras	Handheld GPS	applies to all themes
Refurbish and add to existing small waysides	Increase the number of panels and add panels with 3-D elements, images, etc. that relate to the style currently used. Incorporate historical information with the natural history topics.	applies to all themes



Specific Recommendations for Inside the Visitor Center

Summary of Goals:

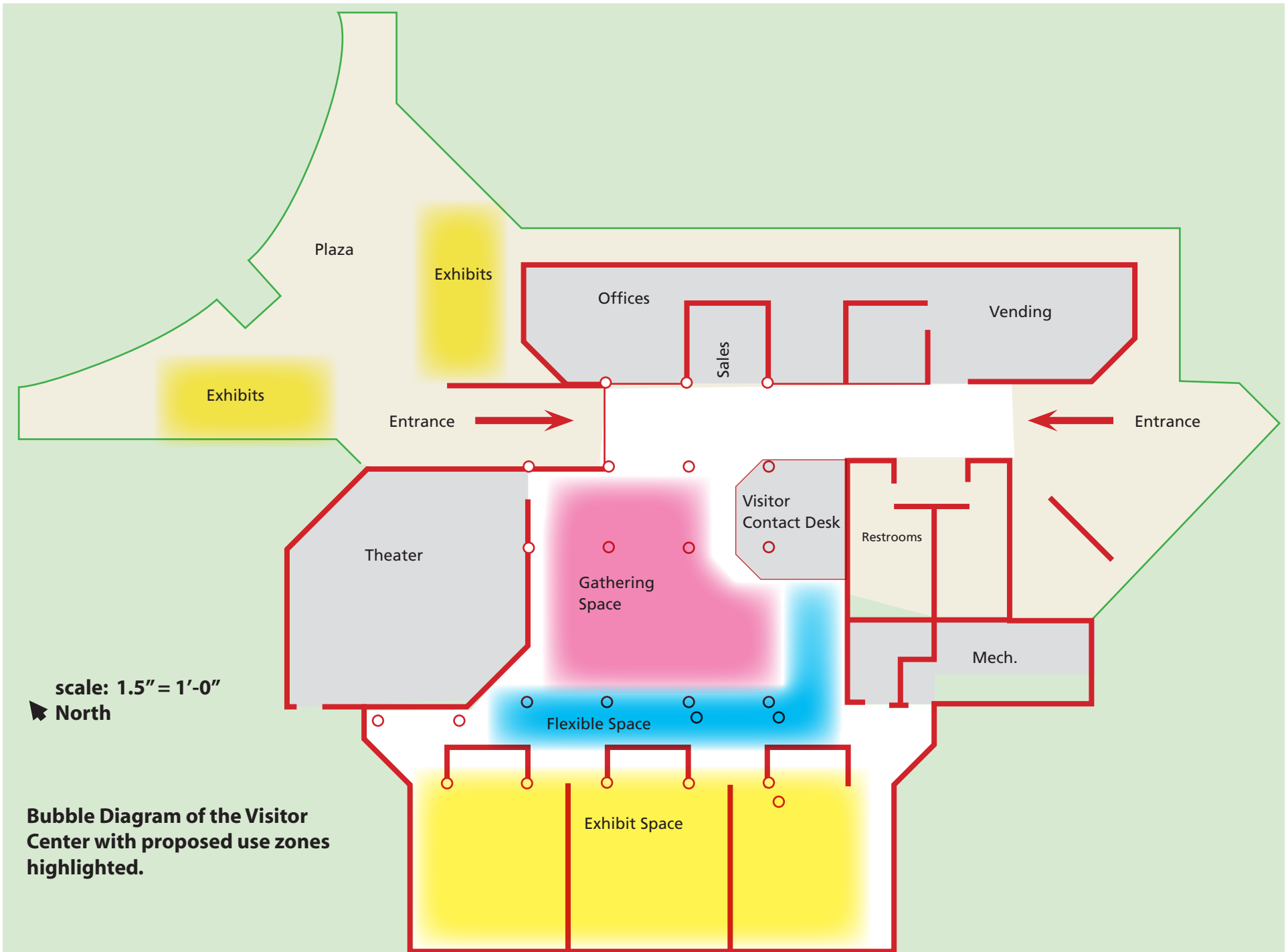
- Create a flexible interpretive space for groups
- Interpret the historical significance of the site
- Educate about the Osotouy Unit
- Create some permanent components with changeable content
- Provide exhibits that encompass the seven interpretive themes

The primary focus of the main building at Arkansas Post National Memorial should be to serve repeat visitors from the local area, and secondarily to serve one-time visitors coming from a distance. To support this intent, Arkansas Post National Memorial should consider a combination of uses for the public areas of the building—a flexible gathering space, interactive interpretive exhibit space with changeable content, and a dedicated classroom/workshop space—in addition to the existing retail bookstore and small theater. The building's office space should be expanded, and meeting and work/store rooms should be added as well.

A Flexible Space

Arkansas Post has historically been a gathering place, so the current center should continue to serve this role, inviting visitors to sit down and stay for more than just a few minutes. Comfortable and moveable seating, maps and reading material about the park, children's activities relating to the interpretive themes, and even coffee for sale in the bookstore are suggested to encourage this type of use.

The large open space in the heart of the building—currently filled with large static exhibits—would be a natural hub in which to create this flexible seating area that could also be cleared out for receptions or events. The visitor contact desk should be moved to a location against one of the walls—still prominent to visitors entering the center—yet away from an area where large crowds might be gathered. Both new and repeat visitors would be welcomed to sit down in the central area.



Bubble Diagram of the Visitor Center with proposed use zones highlighted.

Making History Tangible

In static interpretive exhibits inside the center, the story of Arkansas Post should be told in a way that encompasses the breadth of its long history. Because Arkansas Post National Memorial has few historic structures, the experience should be highly visual, tactile, and even experiential. The theme of “A Gathering Place” will begin outside, but should be carried through the interpretive exhibits inside the center.

Attractive introductory exhibits, visible from the gathering space, will welcome visitors to the interpretive area. The three distinct rooms at the back of the visitor center will be thematically linked by a single chronological exhibit that takes the visitor from prehistory to the present day, providing a snapshot of the uses of the area through time.

A recommended technique for this “visual timeline” is to create a wall mural in each room in a trompe l’oil style depicting Arkansas Post at several significant points in its history.



Example of Trompe l’oil mural style

These murals might have niches that hold touchable artifact reproductions and doors that open to reveal objects inside. The rooms would also contain immersive elements such as a period table that a visitor could sit at and play simple card games, a reconstructed trading post with touchable items, a river touch table, or a printing press that can be cranked. The use of technology, such as computer stations or videos, should be used where feasible using components with high reliability factors. It is important that repeat visitors do not come away with the impression that exhibits are broken or non-functioning.

Interpretive text, arranged chronologically by date or era would accompany the interactive murals. These short texts & images would supplement the GPS tour experience available outside and, like the GPS tour, focus on anecdotal stories instead of general events. Building on the theme of “A Gathering

Place,” they would provide visitors with short, first person accounts of life at Arkansas Post through its many incarnations up until 1863.

Existing three-dimensional elements such as a model of the fort and models of different river vessels should be retained and repurposed for these new exhibits.

At the modern end of the visual timeline, the visitor is asked to contribute to the story of Arkansas Post, as someone who has been part of this contemporary gathering place. A series of specific prompts, such as “Tell your story of Arkansas Post,” “Ask a question about Arkansas Post,” or “What is your favorite thing about Arkansas Post?” would encourage visitors to write a response on a colorful index card and drop it into a box. Park staff would select responses and post them in a display case (inaccessible to the general public). In this way, the open-ended timeline would be constantly changing, reflecting the diversity of visitors to the center over time.

Finally, the Osotouy Unit should be interpreted in an interactive exhibit that focuses on archaeology and how information is gathered. As the Osotouy Unit is developed further, more updated information can be added. This exhibit should also talk about other ongoing research and conservation, including that related to Climate Change for example.

Matrix of Recommendations for Interior Areas

Activity	Technique	Themes Supported
Create gathering space in center of building	Reposition visitor contact desk, add informal seating and light interpretive content	All themes
Offer non-perishable healthy snacks and refreshments for sale in the retail area	Stock non-perishable goods, make coffee, provide hot water for tea, etc.	6, 7
Create a changeable exhibit space	Curate local exhibits, install panels and cases that can be used for these displays. Create a format for labels that can easily be re-created for each exhibit.	1-7 (depending on content)
Develop Permanent exhibit space components	Introductory panels, trompe l’oil murals with interactive components and visual timeline	1,2,4,6
Develop three immersive vignettes	Period tables, printing press, archaeology, etc. that provide highly interactive settings	1,2,4,6
Repurpose existing models	Models of battlefield and types of river travel should be re-used in new exhibits.	2,3,5
Create an opportunity for visitors to react and tell their own story	Question prompts, area for display of responses	6
Interpret the Menard Osotouy Unit	Include exhibits that deal with American Indian archaeology generally and the Quapaw site specifically.	1

Key to the Interpretive Themes used in Matrix of Recommendations

- 1 American Indian Heritage
- 2 Colonial-Civil War History
- 3 Human & Environment Interaction
- 4 Africa & African American Experience
- 5 Significance of the Three Rivers
- 6 Personal Connections
- 7 Environmental Issues & Climate Change

- Expand programs to all educational levels (elementary, middle, high school, and college)
 - a. College/University course developed for training social studies and history teachers to use “Parks as Classrooms”
 - b. Professional development for teachers—related to existing park programs, educational uses of park
 - c. Credit for teachers (continuing education)—summer teacher institute
 - d. Continued updates of existing educational materials and new ones developed
 - e. University history and education department partners
 - f. Add Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans

Specific Recommendations for Distance Learning

Beyond the reaches of the local community, the remote location of Arkansas Post makes it a good candidate for developing or contributing to existing distance learning programs. Recommendations for the distance learning program:

- Develop a traveling trunk or Pocket-Vest Interpretation program.

- Invest in distance learning technology/teleconferencing equipment similar to equipment used at Homestead National Monument of America.
- Partner with area community colleges that have distance learning technology/teleconferencing equipment available for use.
- Expand website resources for teachers and students.

Specific Recommendations for Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits are covered in the Specific Recommendations: Exterior section, here is a summary of the recommended actions:

- Develop a sign/wayside plans for both the Memorial and Osotouy units for consistency in type and style. Retain existing waysides if appropriate.
- Design, fabricate, and install new attractive and durable waysides that do not clutter the natural landscape.

Specific Recommendations for Print Media

Visitors looking to take home literature about the park should be able to find something to fit their needs. In addition, print materials can supplement accessibility to existing interpretation by offering a large-print or Braille version. Finally, as the visitor center transforms into a gathering place for local visitors—the Heritage Center—updated reading material encourages visitors to sit down and enjoy the space.

- Revise and reprint park map and guide to incorporate Osotouy Unit, when it is staffed.
- Publish new, updated park handbook
- Develop self-guided nature/history walk brochure that links river, natural features and topography with the human history of the Post
- Develop site bulletins on a variety of stories related to the park’s primary interpretive themes
- Develop bird and plant lists
- Create large print and Braille version of park interpretive brochures, site bulletins, and wayside exhibits for visually impaired visitors

Specific Recommendations for Personal Services

Staffing

- **Increase interpretation and education staff**

The operation of the Osotouy Unit will require additional staff to operate effectively, at a minimum, two GS05 subject-to-furlough interpretive guides should be added to staff the new visitor contact station. In addition, one full time GS09 park ranger (Protection) should be added to the staff to augment educational program, community engagement, and volunteer coordination. The addition of an Education Specialist (subject to furlough) during the school months will also greatly increase the number of students and teachers the park can serve. This investment will result in an expanded and more lucrative volunteer program for the park as will as significant increases in visitation and community engagement due to educational outreach and increased events. All vacancies occurring on the interpretive staff should be filled in a timely manner with no positions lapsed. The staff is so small that a lapse in even one position will impact the ability of the team to serve the public. If possible, recruit bilingual (Spanish/English) interpreters to fill new positions.

- **Expand volunteer program**

Dedicating staff time and funding to increase the volunteer program will result in significant return on investment through contributions of labor to the park. In addition, volunteering is a primary means through which people develop a deep connection to the meanings and significance of park resources and engage in stewardship behaviors that benefit the park and carry over into their communities. In addition, volunteers are more likely than average visitors or community members to join the park's friends group and make financial contributions to help preserve the park. Expanding the volunteer program will allow the park to expand all the other interpretive and education programs and services offered, accommodating increased visitation and community engagement activities.

- **Develop an internship program**

In collaboration with regional universities and community colleges, the park should establish an internship program for college and graduate students in history, education, museum studies, and other related fields. This program could provide valuable experience for students and economically feasible project work for the park. A partner organization such as the Student Conservation Association could assist with recruiting and logistics.

- **Expand the Teacher to Ranger to Teacher Program**

The Teacher to Ranger to Teacher program originated in the Intermountain Region and is now spreading throughout the National Park System. School teachers spend their summer vacation as uniformed park rangers supplementing the park's interpretive operation, developing education programs, and learning about park resources. During the school year, they bring their students to the park for educational programs. In addition, during National Park Week, they wear their uniforms to school and provide programs and lessons about the park for students. In this way, teachers enhance their content knowledge in history, social studies, or science and learn how to use parks as classrooms. At the same time, parks gain valuable ambassadors in their communities, and get education projects accomplished by professional educators.

Programming

- Ensure programmatic accessibility for personal services

The Park should adopt accessibility standards for personal services interpretation and invest in assistive equipment. Up-to-date TTY equipment, hearing assist devices, lavalier microphones, written scripts or summaries of interpretive talks, hands-on props and opportunities for tactile experiences, wheel chairs, electric wheelchair/cart, and other assistive devices should be available.

- Enhance and expand programs

With increased interpretive staff, volunteers, and interns, as well as help from the friends group, Arkansas Post National Memorial can expand its menu of personal services programs and events. A wider menu of programs and ever-changing events will appeal to local community members, encouraging a higher level of repeat visitation, as well as serving the needs of first time visitors. These can be gradually introduced and increased as staff, volunteers, and visitation increases. Stakeholders generated a partial list of program ideas including the following:

- **History Programs**
Focus on universal concepts—family, war, bravery, loss
Increase living history and costumed interpretation programs and events from key periods in the site’s history
- **Nature Programs**
Offer canoe or kayak tours— A voyager-style canoe might be utilized to take out larger groups—historic accounts indicate that explorers and natives both utilized canoes capable of carrying several people.
Offer fishing clinics and events
Provide nature walks and tours
- **Archaeology Programs**
Begin providing special scheduled programs/tours at the Osotouy Unit even before the site is officially developed for visitors

Develop hands-on or simulated archeology programs
- **Programs for the Arts**
Provide monthly evening programs including guest lecturers, museum-theater, period music, etc.
Offer visual arts/ cultural arts programs
Start an Artist/Writer in Residence program

Specific Recommendations for Curriculum-based Education Program

The Curriculum-based Education Program is an excellent way to engage many members of the community from students of all ages to their parents and guardians, to schoolteachers and administration. To achieve a successful program with local support and sustainability, an Education Steering Committee should be created. Specific recommendations for Curriculum-Based Education Programs:

Coordination/On-going Evaluation

- Establish an Education Steering Committee of school administrators, teachers, university professors, and students to guide the development of the new dedicated education space and new/revised educational curriculum-based programs and materials.

Programming

- Programs should reflect national and state standards for curriculum, requiring continual updates.
- Invest in a deep partnership with Arkansas and Desha County Schools, offering programs at every grade level for all county students.

Specific Recommendations for Audio-visual/Multi-media

Arkansas Post can embrace several new technologies and media to help visitors visualize the uses and structures that once defined this place. In addition to PDA and cell phone tours, film and video would also help to bring engaging, emotional storytelling to the park. The park's remote location also provides an opportunity for it to fill a niche as a place for cultural, educational entertainment on evenings and weekends. Finally, film is an excellent way to bring visitors closer to the Osotouy Unit, an area that currently has limited accessibility for the public. Recommended actions:

- **Increase the use of the theater for a variety of films that attract a wide range of visitors**

Hold a theme and culture-related film festival annually

Have screenings of mission-related films on loan from other institutions as well as the orientation film

Develop short film on Osotouy Unit and show it daily in the theater

- **Utilize new technology to enhance interpretive experiences**

Develop cell phone tours for Memorial and Osotouy units.

Add a download station in the visitor center so that visitors can download content directly to their mobile device

Develop a PDA tour

New technology is available using GPS and hand-held computers that allow a person to stand in front of a location such as a foundation at the town site and receive audio-visual interactive data on a hand-held computer. This technology allows visitors to see an artist's representation of what a landscape or structure looked like at a particular point in time, see a video clip, or listen to sounds, first person interpretation, or narration. This technology will help make the Post's historic landscape and its stories more tangible. PDA's could be available at the Heritage Center and Visitor Contact Station for rent. (see also Specific Recommendations: Exterior Areas for discussion of proposed PDA tour)

Specific Recommendations for Website and Internet Technology

The park's website is often the first place visitors "stop" on a tour of the park. Whether searching for a calendar of events, directions, hours of operation, or researching a term paper, the internet is the most widely-accessible venue through which Arkansas Post can reach the public. The park should improve its own site, but also look beyond, perhaps partnering and linking to a site sponsored by the new Friends Group. A site such as this could have features not available through NPS. Recommendations for the website:

- **Develop expanded website, either through the park or through a link to the new friends group. The website should include the following:**

- a. Extensive-user tested trip planning, way-finding, and orientation services
- b. Links to Google Maps and Arkansas and Desha County Chambers of Commerce
- c. Online Junior Web Ranger activities
- d. Downloadable maps
- e. Catalog of articles/online publications
- f. Links to other historic sites
- g. Links to other tourist attractions in the area

- h. Materials for teachers
- i. Materials for students
- j. Link to the Library of Congress and Encyclopedia of Arkansas
- k. Online collections, archives, maps, exhibits, tours
- l. Podcasts on various subjects (these can be created by students at the high school, community college, or university level)
- m. Translations of the park map and guide, site bulletins, and other print resources into other languages for downloading
- n. Genealogical information and links
- o. Interactive timeline
- p. Reservation system for school programs, facility rentals, etc.
- q. Link to a blog by park interpretive staff

Specific Recommendations for Community Engagement

Community engagement is vital to gain the support a park needs to become a dynamic, positive presence in its local area. The more the park staff is able to get out into the community, the more the community members will be encouraged to come to the park. Venues through which the park can expand its community engagement:

- **Support establishment and growth of Friends of Arkansas Post National Memorial and invest in a strong working relationship with them**
- **Engage the community through programs and events**
 - Provide theme-related cultural events, music, museum theater, film festivals, and related activities celebrating the cultural diversity of the area
 - Add additional living history events to the park calendar
 - Provide programs for nursing homes, assisted living, senior centers
- **Leverage partnerships with local cultural, educational, and historical groups and individuals**
 - Establish a strong partnership with Dumas, DeWitt and Gillett Public Libraries

Establish stronger partnerships with local historical societies

In the changeable exhibit space, curate exhibits that feature local artists or hold an art contest and display entries

- **Promote the park as a gathering place for local community groups and clubs**

Encourage community to walk for health by establish a walking club that includes an interpretive element

Establish a bicycling club to promote health and Mississippi River Trail, and develop a route and regular monthly rides from Memorial Unit to Osotouy Unit

Promote use of the park to local civic and religious organizations

Specific Recommendations for Engaging Ethnically and Racially Diverse Audiences

Arkansas Post, like most National Parks, struggles to reach out to ethnic minority groups who are currently underrepresented as participants in interpretive and educational events, and park interpretation as a whole. The park must do the hard work to find information about the historical presence of these groups at Arkansas Post. Their stories must be told at the park, presenting a more

inclusive history—the “whole story”. A key strategy will be to make efforts to reach out to these people in their communities. Other recommendations for engaging these audiences are:

- **Create other language translations of key media.**
 - Website translations into French, Spanish.
 - Translate other interpretive media in multiple languages.
- **Increase the visibility of ethnic minorities, as well as the stories relating to diversity at the park.**
 - Hire staff that are part of ethnic groups.
 - Ensure that many ethnic groups are represented in the visitor center media and stories.
 - Stock the bookstore with books, media, and other items that emphasize the diversity of heritage in the area.
 - Hold special events that highlight diversity, such as events for African American history month.
 - Emphasize the park’s inclusion in the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and Mississippi River Trail
 - Update park bulletin boards with material that highlights diversity

Ensure that development of the new Friends group is inclusive of ethnic minorities

- **Reach out to ethnic groups in their communities**

- Go to meetings of church groups, specifically black churches

- Cross promote diversity with other heritage sites including National Historic Landmarks and National Register properties in Eastern Arkansas.

- Welcome groups for family reunions

- Identify and work with historians within ethnic communities who are passionate about telling their history

- **Embrace the internet as a way to reach a more diverse audience.**

- Post You Tube videos and use other popular web technologies

- Add web links on the ARPO site to other tourism areas in the state/area that emphasize diverse heritage

- Create an opt-in electronic newsletter and include a section focusing on diversity

Specific Recommendations for Marketing and Tourism

The park currently engages in very little marketing. The park could be seen as the primary cultural and heritage center in the region, as well as a place of natural beauty. The following recommendations are potential opportunities to place the park top-of-mind for local community members searching for the kinds of recreational or cultural activities that the park offers. Recommended actions:

- **Enhance relationships and affiliations with Arkansas Media**

- Obtain spots on public radio, local newspapers, and TV stations (All four Little Rock TV stations have community bulletin boards for special events.)

- Subscribe to a press clipping service

- **Increase E-Marketing**

- Establish opt-in virtual mailing list for e-blasts and a quarterly newsletter that includes a calendar of events

- Create a live camera feed online of the alligator or simply a weather feed

- Create a blog that can be accessed through the NPS site (but not on the NPS site, as it is not permitted)

- **Increase distribution of map and park guide**

Place map and guide in local hotels and restaurants: Airport Gallery Space, Exhibits/Informational Booths at Days Inn

Use a less expensive rack card to place in area businesses

Place a kiosk at the state park

- **Increase promotion through both PR and static public bulletin boards**

Send press releases to AARP local newsletter

Cross promote site with other agencies such as US Fish and Wildlife Service, and state and county parks and museum

Send press releases to topical organizations, e.g. French Colonial Society

Better/Updated bulletin boards onsite

Highway signs need to be increased (farther away)

Contact Rural Arkansas magazine for a story and get events on their calendar

Capitalize on historical connection to the modern Gazette newspaper

Seek publication recognition (national

magazines, travel magazines, etc.)

- **Increase promotion by staffing booths at a variety of events.**

Partner with other Arkansas National Parks, staff booths at regional fairs

Set up booths at conferences

Set up booths at all local fairs in Little Rock and surrounding area

Specific Recommendations for Evaluation and Research Needs

Evaluation and tracking of visitor use and visitor services are the cornerstones of the 10-Year Goals for this interpretive plan. In order to mark positive changes at the park, a system must be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of services offered. Recommendations for this are as follows.

- **Social Science Research**

Conduct visitor study and conduct economic benefits study every five years

- **Historical Research**

Graduate student thesis/dissertations/ internships—partner with universities

- **Accessibility**

Invite National Center for Accessibility to assess programmatic accessibility at Arkansas and make recommendations for new programs, media, facilities, exhibits, and adaptations of existing programs and facilities.

- **Evaluation**

Include formative evaluation and user testing in planning and development of new exhibits/media

Develop an Education Steering Committee for ongoing evaluation of educational programs

Provide a box for visitor comment cards at heritage center and visitor contact station

Incorporate opportunities throughout new exhibits that allow visitors to share their own thoughts and interpretation of the meanings of park resources

Institute a strong audit/coaching program for interpretive staff, volunteers, and interns

Specific Recommendations for Professional Development Needs

Very large parks do not rely heavily on face-to-face personal contact between staff and visitors. But in a park of this size, the staff is at the heart of all visitor services. Staff

should be given as many opportunities as feasible to improve their interpretive skills, stay abreast of the latest trends in the field, and interact with interpreters and educators from other similar parks and organizations. Recommended activities are:

- **Encourage interpretive staff, volunteers, and interns to participate in the NPS Interpretive Development Program working toward completion of all 10 modules for certification**
- **Send staff to National Center for Accessibility courses on program accessibility and universal design**
- **Join the National Association for Interpretation as a basic institutional member and encourage staff to attend regional NAI workshops**
- **Send volunteer coordinator to NPS volunteer training and participate in statewide association of volunteer coordinators**
- **Provide staff with training opportunities in website design, podcast development, and other interpretive technology**

Specific Recommendations for Partnerships Related to Interpretation, Education, Information, and Orientation

Partnerships will be essential in accomplishing the ambitious goals and recommendations outlined in this plan. The park has a variety of existing partnerships which should be strengthened, and new partners should be sought to reach key audiences over the next ten years. The park's partnerships include, but are not limited to the following:

- Quapaw Tribe and Arkansas American Indian Center
- Arkansas Historical Preservation Program
- Arkansas Historical Society
- Grand Prairie Historical Society
- Arkansas Archeological Survey
- Arkansas Archeological Society
- Arkansas Trail of Tears Association
- Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site
- Arkansas Post Museum State Park
- Arkansas Early Re-enactors Association
- Arkansas Living History Association
- White River National Wildlife Refuge
- Delta Cultural Center
- University of Arkansas, Little Rock
- Phillips Community College
- Dumas Public Library
- Arkansas and Desha County Public School Systems
- Private Schools
- Home School Association
- SEAT—South East Arkansas Interpretive Team
- Delta Byways
- Delta Cultural Center
- Rural Heritage Group
- Local religious and civic organizations
- Local media outlets
- Arkansas State University Heritage Sites (Lakeport Plantation, Southern Tenant Farmers Museum)

Implementation Plan 2009-2012

Note—Staff should review the LIRP annually. In addition to following the implementation plan below, staff should consider the personal services programming and event ideas listed in the body of the LIRP during their annual interpretive planning process.

Action	Lead Staff	Estimated Cost	Potential partners
Add GS09 Park Ranger FTE to staff (education/volunteer coordinator)	Superintendent	\$75,000 annually	Midwest Regional Office
Develop college internship program	Supervisory Interpreter	\$10,000 annually	Area universities Student Conservation Association
Initiate Teacher to Ranger to Teacher Program	Education Coordinator	\$6000 annually	Midwest Regional Office County School Systems
Expand Volunteer In Parks Program	Volunteer Coordinator	\$3000 annually	Washington Office Volunteer Coordinator
Increase staff training and participation in Interpretive Competency Development	Supervisory Interpreter	\$5,000 annually	Mather Training Center Midwest Regional Office
Establish Education Steering Committee	Education Coordinator	\$3,000 annually	Arkansas and Desha County Schools Area universities
Establish curriculum based programs meeting state and national standards	Education Coordinator	\$5,000 annually	Education Steering Committee/ Teachers colleges at regional universities
Establish teacher training workshops to meet Professional Development Criteria	Education Coordinator	\$5,000 annually	Education Steering Committee/ Teachers colleges at regional universities
Revise and expand bookstore scope of sales	Supervisory Interpreter	N/A	Eastern National
Work with community leaders to start Friends of Arkansas Post	Superintendent	N/A	Community Groups
Obtain donation of canoes, kayaks, and related equipment for water tours	Supervisory Interpreter	N/A	Friends of Arkansas Post National Memorial, Sporting Goods Stores

Arkansas Post National Memorial

Action	Lead Staff	Estimated Cost	Potential partners
Complete Remote Sensing Archeological Survey of Arkansas Post Site	Chief of Resources Management	\$20,000	Arkansas Archeological Survey
Purchase/ upgrade accessibility equipment and devices/ lavalier microphones/ TTY/ wheel chairs/ etc.	Supervisory Interpreter	\$10,000	National Center for Accessibility Harpers Ferry Center Midwest Regional Office
Develop, print written scripts and summaries of interpretive talks for hearing impaired visitors	Supervisory Interpreter	\$12,000	National Center on Accessibility
Develop in-house large print version of map and guide, site bulletins, etc. for visually impaired visitors	Supervisory Interpreter	\$12,000	National Center on Accessibility
Develop and implement use of new technologies: Podcast/cell phone tours, internet media, long-distance learning, etc.	Supervisory Interpreter and Education Coordinator	\$50,000	National Center on Accessibility Harpers Ferry Center Midwest Regional Office Phillips Community College Arkansas Universities
Conduct an Economic Impact Study	Superintendent	\$20,000	Midwest Regional Office / Contractor
*Build an accessible dock and allow river access for boating	Chief of Maintenance	\$50,000	National Center for Accessibility
*Complete new landscape design for town site, including interpretive signs and elements	Superintendent/ Supervisory Interpreter	\$30,000	Harpers Ferry Center Denver Service Center
*Complete planning and construction drawings visitor center renovation	Superintendent	\$100,000	Denver Service Center

Action	Lead Staff	Estimated Cost	Potential partners
Complete exhibit plans for visitor center	Supervisory Interpreter	\$30,000	Harpers Ferry Center
*Plan roads, trails, comfort station, and visitor contact station Osotouy Unit	Superintendent	\$300000	Denver Service Center
Plan exhibits for Osotouy Unit Visitor Contact Station	Supervisory/Master Interpreter	\$15,000	Harpers Ferry Center
Develop signs, and wayside exhibit plan for Osotouy Unit	Supervisory/Master Interpreter	\$10,000	Harpers Ferry Center
Plan and implement CW150/Sesquicentennial Action Plan	Superintendent	Undetermined	Various Partners
Plan and implement NPS Centennial Initiative projects and celebration	Superintendent	Undetermined	Various Partners
Develop and implement a public relations and marketing plan	Supervisory Interpreter	N/A	Local Universities

*Complete required NEPA/Section106 Compliance

Implementation Plan 2013-2015

<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>
Renovate visitor center, install new landscape design, install new indoor and outdoor exhibits	Chief of Maintenance	\$3,000,000	Denver Service Center Harpers Ferry Center
Revise scope of sales for new expanded bookstore	Supervisory Interpreter	N/A	Eastern National
Provide Audio Described Tour of Visitor Center Memorial Unit Grounds	Supervisory Interpreter	\$15,000	National Center on Accessibility
Develop and provide distance learning education programs in collaboration with local universities	Education Coordinator	\$10,000	Phillips Community College
Begin development of Osotouy Unit	Superintendent	undetermined	
Plan and implement NPS Centennial Initiative projects and celebration	Supervisory Interpreter	Undetermined	Various Partners

*Complete required NEPA/Section106 Compliance

Implementation Plan 2016-2018

<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Estimated cost</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>
Develop new Long Range Interpretive Plan	Supervisory Interpreter	\$40,000	Harpers Ferry Center
Conduct Visitor Study	Supervisory	\$15,000	Visitor Services Project
Staff Osotouy Unit	Superintendent	undetermined	
Fabricate and install indoor and outdoor exhibits at Osotouy Unit	Supervisory Interpreter	\$100,000	

*Complete required NEPA/Section106 Compliance

Appendix I Workshop Participants

Participant	Title	Organization
Leo Acosta	Resources Manager	Arkansas Post National Memorial
Katherine AufderHeide	Staff	Congressman Marion Berry
Dyan Bohnert	Volunteer	Dumas, AR
Mark Christ	Community Outreach Director	AR Historical Preservation Program
John W. Cover	President	Grand Prairie Historical Society
Linda Cover	Member	Grand Prairie Historical Society
Ann M. Early	State Archeologist	Arkansas Archeological Survey
David N. Evans	Facilities Manager	Arkansas Post National Memorial
Raymond Frazier	Community Affairs Specialist	US Senator Blanche Lincoln
John House	Station Archeologist	Arkansas Archaeological Survey
Heather Huyck	Assistant Professor	College of William and Mary
Della Jamison	Maintenance Employee	Arkansas Post National Memorial
Carolyn Kent	Officer	Arkansas Trail of Tears
Laura Miller	Chief of Interpretation	Little Rock Central High School NHS
Christy Murphy	Superintendent	Arkansas Post Museum
Steve Reagan	Manager	White River NWR
Kenneth Robertson	Fire Chief	Watson, Arkansas
C.F. Scott	Editor	DeWitt Era-Enterprise
Karla Sigala	Park Ranger	Arkansas Post National Memorial
Ed Williams	Volunteer	Arkansas Early Reenactors Association
Edward E. Wood, Jr.	Superintendent	Arkansas Post National Memorial
Gregg Cook	Exhibits Curator	Delta Cultural Center
Donald C. Hubsch	Volunteer	Gillett, Arkansas
Johanna Miller Lewis	Professor	UALR, Department of History
Kathy Radomski	Director of Business & Training	Phillips Community College
Shaunn Kidd	Stakeholder	Gillett, Arkansas
Tracey Finch	Educator	Dumas High School

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Steve Smith	Stakeholder	Dumas, Arkansas
Jodi Morris	Education Coordinator	Arkansas Post National Memorial
Gay Morris	Park Visitor	Jonesboro, Arkansas
Sam Vaughn	Harpers Ferry Center	National Park Service
Julie Nathon	Exhibit Designer	Edquist Davis Exhibits
Julia Washburn	Principal	Trillium Resources Group

Appendix 2 NPS Logic Model

National Park Service Interpretation and Education Program Logic Model

DRAFT v.3b (10/2/06)

Premise: If the NPS offers high quality interpretive, curriculum-based, and informational programs to a diverse public, the public will have better quality of life and will be better equipped to help preserve and protect the National Park System for future generations.

