Natchez Trace Parkway
2011 Business Plan
Sunrise on the Tennessee section
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INTRODUCTION

National Park Business Planning Process

Business planning is an essential part of national park management. The business planning process is undertaken to help parks manage their financial and operational resources more effectively and strategically.

This plan articulates the financial and operational status of the Natchez Trace Parkway. It was written primarily in 2011; however, 2010 was the last full budget cycle of financial data available. Where possible, information was incorporated from both years to provide the most contemporary financial and operational information.

Overall, this plan documents the breadth of responsibilities undertaken by each of the Parkway’s functional areas. It discusses how the Parkway’s resources are allocated, and outlines goals and priorities to help increase overall effectiveness.

Using the best historical data and predictive modeling available, the plan provides a basic foundation for future decision making while familiarizing readers with the range of dynamics that shape the management of a national park unit in the 21st Century.

National Park Service Organic Act: “...to promote and regulate the use of the... national parks...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” -16 USC 1
INTRODUCTION

On behalf of our National Park Service team, it is my privilege to present the 2011 business plan for the Natchez Trace Parkway and associated units: Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail and Tupelo and Brices Cross Roads National Battlefields.

The Natchez Trace Parkway is a 444-mile/52,000-acre unit of the National Park Service that commemorates one of the oldest transportation routes in North America. As you will see in this document, the entire Natchez Trace corridor is filled with a tremendous range of natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources enjoyed by an average of 14 million people each year. Another special aspect of the Natchez Trace is the number of partners who help support our efforts. Very few parks have the opportunity to work with so many members of Congress (13); states (3); counties (25); communities (20); tribal governments (2); private and commercial landowners (3,000); National Heritage Areas (3); and other conservation, economic development, tourism, and preservation partners.

As with any public or private organization, our success is heavily dependent on financial capacity. Planning for the future is always a difficult challenge, especially given the unpredictable nature of our financial climate. Circumstances change regularly and projections made in 2011 may change dramatically by 2015, so our plans need to be flexible and realistic.

This plan has several purposes. First, it provides an overview of the significance of the Natchez Trace Parkway and its resources. Second, it outlines our primary goals and objectives and how our operations currently work to achieve those objectives. Last, it provides a comprehensive look at how we maximize and leverage our existing dollars, how we compete effectively for funding in the future, and how we manage potential fiscal adversity in upcoming years.

It is important for you to look at this plan with realistic expectations. It is not possible to answer every question or address every scenario the Parkway could face in the future. We expend millions of taxpayer dollars each year and it makes sense for us to use transparent and proven financial practices to manage our operations. This plan provides a basic framework for those efforts. In the end, we have an obligation to ensure our strategies are progressive, sustainable, collaborative, and help us achieve our mission as outlined in the Organic Act.

We hope the document is as useful to you as the business planning process has been to us. Your continued support is essential to helping us navigate the future.

Cameron Sholly
Superintendent
This business plan describes the financial and operational condition of the Natchez Trace Parkway in Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011. The plan is the result of an in-depth look at the Parkway’s historical trends, current operations, projected financial outlooks, and management priorities.

There are many factors that influence the costs of operating a multi-state national park unit.

Uncontrollable Factors:

**Geography:** The Parkway’s size and geographic makeup influence almost every aspect of its operation. The Natchez Trace spans 444 miles through three states, and it takes 10 hours to drive from end to end.

**Increased visitation levels:** In 2010, nearly 14 million people traveled the Parkway. The corresponding increases in usage translate to increased operational demands and visitor expectations.

Controllable Factors:

**Labor costs:** Personnel salaries and benefits make up approximately 80% of the Parkway’s budget. Ensuring that the right number of personnel are in the right locations at the right times—and understanding the ramifications of too many or too few employees—are all critical to the operation of the Parkway.

**Operational practices:** How the Parkway operates is a multi-million dollar decision with wide-ranging impacts. Providing quality levels of visitor services and resource protection while staying within the financial means of the Parkway is not only important, it is also mandated and expected.

**Leveraging partnerships:** The Parkway has a significant economic and environmental influence on the counties and communities it traverses. The linear corridor is also highly vulnerable to economic development. Increasing the quality and quantity of Parkway partnerships will not only help promote economic vibrancy, but also protect the Parkway corridor over the long term.

In Fiscal Year 2010, $13 million was spent on day-to-day operation and administration of the Parkway and another $32 million on one-time investment projects, deferred maintenance, and roads projects.
INTRODUCTION

Key Points:

- The total cost to construct the Parkway was $500 million. Construction was completed between 1938 and 2005.

- In FY10 the Parkway operated with 147 full-time equivalents (FTE). An FTE is equal to 2,080 hours of work per year. Of its total operations budget, the park spent over $9 million (or 80% of its budget) on salaries and benefits.

- In order to maintain an adequate level of field operations, over the past two years the Parkway has lapsed the Deputy Superintendent position, the Chief of Resources Management position, and several other key positions.

- Over the last 10 years, the Parkway has lapsed or eliminated 28 permanent positions, while increasing the use of temporary employees by 29 positions over the same period.

- The Parkway spends over $330,000 more to manage its vehicle fleet today than it did in 2000.

- The Interpretation and Resources Management divisions have been identified as having insufficient capacity to meet necessary goals and objectives of the NPS mission. These two programs represent the Parkway’s first and second budget priorities.

- In FY11 the Parkway’s budget lost $200,000 through various external assessments and management efficiency reductions.

- Spending power was reduced again by an additional $189,000 in FY11 due to mandatory step and grade increases for its employees.

The Parkway has a deferred maintenance backlog exceeding $200 million.

Education programs reached record numbers in 2010–11.

Investments funded in 2010 and 2011 include $10 million on new multi-use trails, $17 million on roads maintenance, and a $4 million rehabilitation of the Meriwether Lewis site.

Current unfunded investment priorities include acquiring $5 million to improve visitor access to the Emerald Mound, a National Historic Landmark and the second largest Native American burial mound in the United States.

The Parkway will continue to implement a number of major cost reduction strategies such as adjusting operations, reducing fleet size, and other cost-saving measures.

Executive Summary (continued)
The Natchez Trace Parkway has five primary goal areas which serve to guide the overall strategic direction of its operations. Successful performance in each strategic area depends largely on financial capacity and the Parkway’s ability to target areas that have the most significant influence on visitor service and resource protection levels. Each broad goal area plays an important role in helping achieve the overall mission of the National Park Service.

### Strategic Goals

- **Expand Capacity in Partnerships, Education, and Outreach Programs**
  - **Goal:** Significantly expand partnership, outreach, and education efforts.
  - **Recently completed actions:**
    - Completed comprehensive interpretive management review
    - Completed over 50 new educational lesson plans
    - Redesigned new interim Parkway brochure
    - Designed new National Scenic Trail brochure
    - Acquired funding for new interpretive film
    - Initiated formal partnerships with four school systems
    - 10,000 youths educated by interpreters
    - Significantly expanded interaction with conservation, national heritage, and tourism partners
  - **Progress rating:**
  - **Moving forward:**
    - Complete new Parkway film by 2014
    - Create another 25 new curriculum-based lesson plans by 2013
    - Double youth outreach through innovative education outreach and practices by 2014
    - Initiate formal partnerships with 10 more school systems by 2013
    - Assist National Heritage Areas with completion of management planning
    - Complete partnership and stakeholder communication plan by 2013
    - Continue broadening conservation and tourism partnerships

- **Protect the Parkway for the Future**
  - **Goal:** Improve the condition of the Parkway’s natural, cultural, and historic resources along with aggressively protecting scenic view sheds.
  - **Recently completed actions:**
    - Acquired funding to develop a new resources stewardship planning tool using the latest geographic information systems (GIS)
    - Initiated scenic resource protection strategy in partnership with the Land Trust for Tennessee
    - Planted 15,000 new trees for scenic protection
    - Acquired 86 new acres to provide better visitor access and protection of the Emerald Mound
    - Completed largest Native American repatriation in Choctaw history
    - Five overhead transmission lines were moved underground, in partnership with energy companies
  - **Progress rating:**
  - **Moving forward:**
    - Plant 100,000 new trees by 2016
    - Complete new resources planning tool by 2014 (funded in 2011)
    - Treat 100 acres of exotic species per year
    - Complete exotic species management plan by 2013

- **Set New Environmental Leadership Standards**
  - **Goal:** Reduce environmental impacts of Parkway operations using progressive environmental practices and alternative energies and fuels.
  - **Recently completed actions:**
    - Installed the Parkway’s first photovoltaic system, eliminating utility costs for the Meriwether Lewis sub-district
    - Evaluated fleet usage and carbon outputs
    - Initiated formal recycling program
    - Developed green procurement plan
  - **Progress rating:**
  - **Moving forward:**
    - Become a climate-friendly park by 2014
    - Reduce carbon footprint 10% through fleet reductions and more energy efficient operations, utility practices, and additional sequestration capacity by 2015
    - Expand environmental partnerships and messaging along the entire corridor
    - Expand recycling program to rural sections of the Parkway by 2013
The Parkway spent over $800,000 on employee development, technical training, leadership training, safety, and new equipment in 2010.

Becoming more effective in operational and financial management practices is vital to the success of the Parkway in all five goal areas.

**Improve Public Safety and Resource Protection Performance**

**Goal:** Develop a comprehensive public safety and resource protection strategy which will effectively reduce Parkway injuries, fatalities, and resource crimes, using progressive enforcement and education practices.

**Recently completed actions:**
- Reduced visitor accidents by 15% in 2010
- Increased efforts to identify boundary encroachments
- Awarded new $10 million microwave radio communications contract to significantly improve radio communications and officer safety
- Trained one of the largest numbers of new NPS law enforcement rangers in the agency

**Progress rating:**

**Moving forward:**
- Develop public safety and resource protection strategy connected to new law enforcement needs assessment by 2013
- Reduce visitor accidents another 10% by 2014
- Increase impaired driving arrests 100% by 2014
- Increase anti-poaching patrols 100% by 2014
- Establish staffing baselines for minimum and optimal public safety and resource protection levels
- Re-mark 1,000 miles of boundary by 2018
- Complete new microwave radio installation by 2014
- Acquire new computer-aided dispatch system by 2013 (funded 2011)
- Continue providing support to national Field Training and Evaluation Program

**Develop a Safe, Diverse, Qualified, and Team-Oriented Workforce**

**Goal:** Improve employee safety practices; provide wide-ranging employee opportunities for professional development, academic and technical training, and professional collaboration.

**Recently completed actions:**
- Reduced employee injury rates by 48%
- Reduced property damage payouts by 60%
- Conducted three Operational Leadership sessions, and other employee safety training
- Provided tuition assistance to employees for undergraduate and graduate level studies as authorized by OPM (Office of Personnel Management)
- Maintained 38% diversity ratio

**Progress rating:**

**Moving forward:**
- Standardize, expand, and incentivize employee development and tuition assistance programs
- Develop more effective leadership, communications, and team-oriented training opportunities for all employees
- Increase technical training opportunities
- Continue providing the very best equipment, tools, and training to help employees accomplish the NPS mission safely
- Train all employees in Operational Leadership by 2012
The Natchez Trace Parkway was created by Congress as a unit of the National Park Service in 1938 to commemorate the historic travel corridor known as the “Natchez Trace Trail.” The Natchez Trace is one of the oldest transportation routes in North America. Its human use dates back as far as 8000 BC.

The Parkway stretches 444 miles, and takes 10 hours to drive from end to end as it moves through three states, 25 counties, and 20 communities. The combined residential population of the counties it traverses is nearly two million. In addition, there are over 3,000 commercial and private land owners immediately adjacent to the boundary of the Parkway.

**A rich history, worth protecting:** The Natchez Trace has seen centuries of Native American use and was located in the heart of the Natchez, Chickasaw, and Choctaw Nations. In 1801, it was designated by President Thomas Jefferson as a US Postal route on the western frontier. It is also the death and burial site of Governor Meriwether Lewis, who died along the Natchez Trace in 1809. General Andrew Jackson used it as a major route for moving his troops during the War of 1812. The Trail of Tears crosses in four different locations, and in 1864, numerous Civil War battles occurred in and around the Natchez Trace corridor.
The Parkway today: The modern Parkway was completed in 2005 at a cost of $500 million and covers one of the largest geographic ranges of any unit in the National Park Service. It is surrounded by 52,000 acres of impressive scenic, natural, cultural, and historic resources encompassing a variety of traditional southern landscapes. The Natchez Trace offers travelers a mosaic of hardwood and softwood forest communities, wetlands, prairie landscapes, agricultural croplands, and abundant wildlife.

In 1996, the Parkway was designated as a National Scenic Byway and All-American Road for its significant historic, cultural, natural, and scenic qualities. In 1983, Congress designated the Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail as a separate unit of the National Park Service. This 65-mile scenic trail parallels the Parkway in areas ranging from middle Tennessee to southern Mississippi.

The park’s infrastructure is extensive and widespread. Many of the park’s facilities and services represent major capital investments that require considerable operational support on an ongoing basis. The unusually large scale of the Parkway’s infrastructure is an important consideration in its overall operations and strategic direction.

It takes 10 hours to drive the Parkway from end to end, moving through three states, 25 counties, and 20 communities.
The Natchez Trace continues to develop as a popular destination for visitors from around the world. Because of its linear nature and 50 entrances, tracking visitation trends can be very challenging for both the NPS and the tourism industry.

**Recreational use:** In 2010 (the last full year of data), 5.9 million people visited the Parkway recreationally. Although visitation levels are relatively consistent from month to month throughout the year, the highest recreational use occurs in the spring and fall seasons. The Parkway is especially popular during the spring wildflower bloom and during the fall foliage change.

**Non-recreational use:** A major user base of the Parkway comes from local residents using it as a commuting route. In 2010, approximately eight million users fell into this category. With several major population centers along the Parkway, it serves as an important transportation corridor. As of the 2010 Census, nearly two million people resided in the 25 counties the Parkway traverses. That number is expected to rise over the next decade and beyond.

### Top National Park Units by Visitation, 2010
(Annual recreational visits)

An average of 14 million people travel the Parkway each year.

Visitation has steadily increased since the Parkway was completed in 2005.
In 2010, the Natchez Trace was designated as an official tourism trail for Nashville and Tennessee. It was also featured as a “must-see destination” in publications such as LIFE magazine. The increased profile of the Parkway has translated into larger numbers of visitors at various times of the year.

With such a high influx of visitors, the Parkway enhances economic vibrancy for the communities between Natchez, Nashville, and the other surrounding areas. Based on conservative economic modeling, Natchez Trace visitors spend an estimated $120 million per year in the local economies. The cities of Nashville, Memphis, and New Orleans receive nearly 30 million tourists annually, and they spend billions of dollars in those local economies. Serving as a scenic and historical corridor through the area, the Parkway sits in a strategic location between these cities.

Important Economic Contributors:

The Natchez Trace Compact: In an ambitious effort to promote visitation to the communities located on either side of the historic route, the Natchez Trace Compact was formed in 1999. The Compact, which now has 20 member communities in all three states, helps provide marketing and information to visitors on both the Natchez Trace Parkway and the communities within the corridor.

Civil War tourism: Civil War sites on and adjacent to the Parkway include Shiloh National Military Park and Corinth (separate NPS unit); Brices Cross Roads, and Tupelo National Battlefield Sites (administered by the Natchez Trace Parkway); Vicksburg National Military Park (separate NPS unit); and other sites such as the Battles of Raymond and Port Gibson. With an estimated $192 billion spent nationally on Civil War and Heritage tourism in 2010, the Parkway plans to continue partnering with communities and other park units to promote these important parts of American history.

Music tourism: The Natchez Trace runs between hubs of the music tourism industry, from Nashville, home of country music, to New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz. Tupelo and Memphis each boast museums featuring the king of rock and roll, Elvis Presley. There are blues trails in Mississippi and music trails in Alabama. This is a multi-billion dollar industry with a full range of economic opportunities.

Historic and scenic trails: The Natchez Trace itself has 180 separate sections of historic trace that parallel the present-day Parkway. Efforts are underway to make it a part of the National Lewis and Clark Trail. The historic Trail of Tears route crosses the Parkway in four locations, and the Natchez Trace has over 65 miles of Congressionally designated National Scenic Trails.

National Heritage Areas: Three National Heritage Areas sit within the immediate periphery of the Natchez Trace Parkway. These include the Tennessee Civil War NHA, Muscle Shoals NHA, and the Mississippi Hills NHA. National Heritage Areas are dedicated to conserving local heritage and protecting cultural and historic resources. The Parkway works closely with NHA partners to improve historic and cultural education opportunities.
In 2010, the Natchez Trace was designated as a top tourism trail in Tennessee. Ongoing efforts to bolster the Parkway’s visibility are critical to improving partnerships and outreach.
The Natchez Trace has a diverse partnership portfolio. Due to its linear profile, relationships with public, private, and corporate partners are essential to the park accomplishing its mission. Balancing economic and environmental decision making is an ongoing challenge, especially as heavy economic development and populations increase along the boundaries of the Parkway. Partnerships are critical in helping people understand the economic and environmental value of the Natchez Trace corridor. These partnerships are also essential in helping protect the entire corridor from future degradation.
National park units rely on a variety of sources to fund operations, projects, and other requirements, as described below.

**Congressionally appropriated base**: The most reliable type of funding for the Parkway is appropriated base funding, which is referred to as “ONPS” (Operations of the National Park System). This type of funding is used for day-to-day operations and in conjunction with any other available funds sources. More detail is provided in the financial section beginning on page 26. The Parkway’s ONPS budget in FY10 was $12.1 million, with another $1 million allocated for wildland fire protection.

**Congressionally appropriated non-base**: Congress also appropriates funds for one-time projects. This funding can fluctuate dramatically from year to year and is not used for day-to-day operations. The Natchez Trace competes for these funds, which are based on NPS priorities and park needs. In FY10, the Parkway spent roughly $15 million on one-time investments and deferred maintenance projects, which was a record amount. Through a partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, another $17 million was spent to maintain the 444 miles of roadway and the nearly 400 bridges.

**NPS Fee Demonstration Program**: Many large parks charge visitor entrance fees and keep up to 80% of those dollars to use for projects and other park-related activities. This program gives parks another reliable fund source to help them manage various aspects of park operations and projects. The Natchez Trace does not collect fees and therefore has less financial latitude and capacity than other similarly sized parks, making the Parkway more reliant on ONPS dollars.

**Other revenues and reimbursables**: Revenue is just a small part of the Parkway’s budget. These sources include rent for employee housing, special use and filming permits, and donations. The total revenue accumulated by the Parkway in FY10 was $100,000.

**Annual Base Funding per Visitor, 2011** (min. 100,000 visitors)

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**Top 25 NPS Operating Budgets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Park</th>
<th>FY10 Appropriation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yellowstone NP</td>
<td>$36,958,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>National Mall and Memorial Parks</td>
<td>$33,347,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yosemite NP</td>
<td>$29,855,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gateway NRA</td>
<td>$26,538,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Independence NHP</td>
<td>$24,627,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grand Canyon NP</td>
<td>$23,077,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Great Smoky Mountains NP</td>
<td>$20,341,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lake Mead NRA</td>
<td>$18,329,000</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Everglades NP</td>
<td>$17,991,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sequoia NP &amp; Kings Canyon NP</td>
<td>$17,306,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Golden Gate NRA</td>
<td>$17,235,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Blue Ridge Parkway</td>
<td>$16,743,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Statue of Liberty NM/Ellis Island</td>
<td>$16,330,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Glacier NP</td>
<td>$14,410,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Denali NP &amp; Preserve</td>
<td>$13,976,000</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Grand Teton NP</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Shenandoah NP</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Olympic NP</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Natchez Trace Parkway</td>
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<td>Glen Canyon NRA</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Cuyahoga Valley NP</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>National Capital Parks-East</td>
<td>$10,912,000</td>
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In FY10, the Parkway had 147 full-time equivalent employees (FTE). These were divided among several employment categories including: permanent full-time (PFT), permanent-subject-to-furlough (PSF), and temporary employees. An FTE is equal to 2,080 hours of work per year. Since “temporary” employees normally only work a portion of six months or 1,040 hours, one FTE can equate to several temporary employees. Therefore, the total number of employees working on the Parkway during the busy season reaches nearly 200 at peak.

The Parkway is organized into five main divisions:

1. **Resources Management**  
   - Natural, Cultural, Historic, Scenic

2. **Visitor and Resource Protection**  
   - Public Safety–Law Enforcement, Resource Protection, Special Park Uses, Fire Management

3. **Interpretation and Education**  
   - Community Outreach, Visitor Services, Partnerships, Youth Education

4. **Facility Management and Parkway Maintenance**  
   - Engineering, Landscape and Parkway Maintenance, Asset Management

5. **Administration and Business Services**  
   - Budget Execution, Information Technologies, Property Management, Human Resources, Contracting

The roles and responsibilities of each of these major divisions are outlined in the next section, Divisions and Programs, beginning on page 16.

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### Division Staffing and Budget Delineations: A Deceiving Picture

Over the past several decades, budget allocations between divisions have largely favored Facility Management and Visitor and Resource Protection.

However, although the budget delineations reflect less funding in certain divisions, some of the allocation numbers are deceiving because workloads regularly cross divisional boundaries. For instance, the Facility Management division performs extensive scenic resource protection through landscape maintenance activities, spending more than $2 million each year in this area alone.

The Visitor and Resource Protection division manages the Agricultural Lease Program, along with extensive boundary patrol operations, which directly affect Resources Management. Therefore, the capacity and activities of Resources Management cannot be purely gauged by budget allocations.

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### Current Parkway Operations

#### Parkway Staffing Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>SUPV 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Temp 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>PSF 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this chart reflects, the total number of people employed over the past decade has remained relatively consistent. However, the Parkway has significantly decreased the number of supervisors and permanent full time employees while it has increased its reliance on temporary and permanent part-time employees. This is primarily due to increased costs and budget erosion, as explained on pages 26–27.

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### 2010 Divisional Allocations

- **Facility Management and Maintenance:** $6.2 million
- **Visitor and Resource Protection:** $5.3 million
- **Administration and Business Services:** $3.3 million
- **Interpretation and Education:** $700,000
- **Resources Management and Superintendent’s Office:** $980,000
- **Facility Management and Maintenance:** $992,000

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The roles and responsibilities of each of these major divisions are outlined in the next section, Divisions and Programs, beginning on page 16.
Resources Management: Natural and Scenic

The Resources Management division is responsible for managing all natural, cultural, and scenic resources along the 444-mile corridor. Because of its linear design, the Natchez Trace presents many challenges: balancing the needs of the surrounding urban communities with the key mission of preserving natural, cultural, and scenic resources. This division is the smallest on the Parkway, yet has some of the largest and most complex responsibilities. Approximately $600,000 is needed to bridge the gap between existing staffing and the minimum staff levels required to effectively manage the division. This request is outlined in the Parkway's top funding priorities.

Natural Resources
The Parkway traverses five degrees of the Earth’s latitude and seven major eco-regions, including 40 forest types and more than 2,600 species of plants and animals. Unique sites known for their high ecological diversity, such as the Duck River and the Blackbelt Prairie, are just a few of the natural resource treasures located along the Parkway.

With modern-day development continuing to increase, the Natchez Trace corridor has effectively become a safe haven for an incredible diversity of plant, animal, and bird species. Management of resources in such a linear geography is challenging and requires very innovative and strategically collaborative resources management methods.

Scenic Resources
Offering travelers a traditional southern landscape experience crossing numerous physiographic regions, the Natchez Trace is designated as a National Scenic Byway for its intrinsic scenic qualities. Protecting scenic view sheds has become one of the most difficult challenges the Parkway faces, especially around major population centers like Nashville, Tennessee; Tupelo, Mississippi; and Jackson, Mississippi. In 2010, the Parkway began to develop a comprehensive scenic resources management strategy in concert with the Land Trust for Tennessee and its other partners. This effort will increase exponentially over the next few years as the Parkway attempts to develop a model that adequately mitigates existing scenic impairments while helping to predict and prevent future impacts.

Exotic Species Eradication
The Natchez Trace is home to several exotic plants, such as Chinese privet, kudzu, and Japanese honeysuckle. Because of their detrimental effects to natural areas, the Parkway works to treat approximately 100 acres of exotics each year. Since 2005, the Parkway has treated nearly 90% of its 80 known acres of kudzu. Future challenges include increased mapping and treatment of Chinese privet, which is estimated to infest approximately 2,000 acres of land within the boundary.

Monitoring the Parkway’s Natural Resources
The Natchez Trace is located within the Gulf Coast Inventory and Monitoring Network, one of 32 NPS-wide ecoregional networks. The Parkway works closely with the Gulf Coast network for monitoring of water quality, reptiles/amphibians, and geological resources, as well as for vegetation mapping and geographic information system needs. Because of the limited capacity of the Resources Management division, the Parkway relies heavily on the services of the Gulf Coast network to help supplement natural resources management capacities along the corridor.
Top Natural Resources Management Priorities:

- Complete scenic resource protection strategy
- Treat and reduce Exotic Species: Chinese privet and kudzu
- Complete Resource Stewardship Planning Tool by 2014 (funded 2011)
- Complete comprehensive scenic resources protection plan by 2013
- Plant 100,000 new trees by 2016

Ecological Regions and Natural Resources

- Nashville Basin
  - Maple-oak-hickory-ash forests
  - Gravely streams underlain with limestone
- Highland Rim
  - Transitional to mixed forests of the Appalachians
  - Home of rare cedar glade ecosystems
- Fall Line Hills
  - Mixed oak-pine forest
  - Ecoregion with highest number of currently threatened or endangered species (5)
- Blackland Prairie/Margins
  - Blackbelt forests and bluestem prairie
  - Highly diverse: 60+ bird species and 400+ plant species
- Northern Hilly Gulf Coastal Plain
  - Mixed pine-oak forests
  - Home to more than 30 species of reptiles and amphibians
- Southern Rolling Hills
  - Oak-hickory-pine and southern floodplain forests
  - Naturally fertile soils have largely been converted to agricultural uses
- Mississippi Valley Bluff Hills and Loess Plains
  - Oak-hickory-pine forests
  - Rare loess soil found in only one other North American location
Resources Management: Cultural and Historic

The Natchez Trace Parkway corridor is filled with cultural and historic resources, including 22 Native American ceremonial and burial mounds and many other significant sites. The Parkway contains 239 historic structures, 350 archeological sites, and approximately 180 sections of the historic “Natchez Trace Trail.” The Parkway’s museum collection includes more than 870,000 items such as historic tools, arrowheads, pottery, and military artifacts.

Some of the key historic sites along the Parkway include:

- Emerald Mound: A National Historic Landmark and 2nd largest Native American burial/ceremonial mound in the United States
- Pharr Mounds: The largest set of Native American mounds in the southeastern United States
- Governor Meriwether Lewis Death and Burial Site
- Chickasaw Village
- Colbert Ferry
- Numerous Civil War Battlefield sites
- Mount Locust Historic Inn
- Gordon House

The division works closely with a variety of partners, including three state historic preservation offices and numerous Native American tribes. In 2011, the Parkway staff helped complete the largest Native American repatriation in the history of the Choctaw Nation.

239 historic structures
20 tribal consultations in 2010
871,214 museum items

Civil War Battlefield Sites Along the Natchez Trace

Two Civil War battlefield sites are located along the Parkway: Brices Cross Roads (June 10, 1864), and Tupelo (July 14–15, 1864). These sites are separate units of the National Park Service, but both operate under the administration of the Natchez Trace Parkway.

At the Battle of Brices Cross Roads, half of the 223 Union soldiers that were reported as killed belonged to Bouton’s Brigade of United States Colored Troops. The Battle of Tupelo was the last time that Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest’s famed cavalry corps fought the Union infantry during the war.

Southeast Archeological Center

The NPS Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) provides regular technical assistance to the Natchez Trace and is an invaluable partner in the park’s cultural resource management efforts.

In 2011, SEAC was a primary partner with the Natchez Trace in helping the Choctaw perform the largest Native American repatriation in the Tribe’s history.
Top Cultural Resource Management Priorities:

- Rehabilitate Historic Gordon House by 2015
- Acquire funding for and complete two major Native American repatriations by 2015 in partnership with tribes
- Improve baseline inventory and monitoring of historic and cultural resources

Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail

One of the lesser known treasures of the Parkway is the National Scenic Trail, five sections of multi-use trail winding through Mississippi and Tennessee, following portions of the Old Natchez Trace. The trails cater to a variety of recreationalists including hikers, runners, and horseback riders.

The National Scenic Trail, which encompasses more than 68 miles of trails, is maintained almost exclusively by volunteers and partners under the supervision of a park ranger. Volunteers build boardwalks, bridges, stairs, and erosion control structures. They also perform a variety of repairs, mark the trail, and groom sections for special use such as horseback riding. Key volunteer groups include The Boy Scouts of America, The Student Conservation Association, local horseback riding organizations, and universities.

Ranger Rachel Davidson manages the program in the Ridgeland district. “When the program started here in 2005, I had to search for people interested in helping.” Since its inception the program has grown immensely, both in size and popularity, through word-of-mouth. Rachel estimates that in 2010, 180 volunteers contributed approximately 3,000 hours in trail maintenance, nearly four times the number of hours than when the program began five years ago.
Interpretation and Education

The Interpretation and Education division provides a voice for the Parkway’s diverse resources through public information, exhibits, interpretive media, visitor center operations, interpretive programs, partnership development, and curriculum-based educational services. One visitor center in each of four districts serves as a hub for that district’s interpretive staff. From north to south, the centers include: the Meriwether Lewis site at milepost (MP) 386; the Parkway Visitor Center (and Headquarters) at MP 266; the Parkway Information Cabin at MP 102; and the historic Mount Locust site at MP 15. In 2010, the Parkway closed the visitor contact center at Colbert Ferry in order to place limited staff in other areas along the corridor.

Personal Services
As the public face of the Parkway, Interpretive Rangers working at visitor centers are a familiar and trusted resource. Primary functions include:

• Providing interpretation through visitor center contacts, phone, website, email, and news media
• Conducting interpretive programs highlighting the park’s diverse natural and cultural resources
• Maintaining relationships with local community, tourism, schools, and other partner organizations

Non-Personal Services
The large number of visitors and the elongated nature of a parkway with multiple access points makes non-personal services (maps, site bulletins, exhibits, web content, bulletin boards, and waysides) critical to the park’s educational mission.

Quality interpretive waysides, site bulletins, and web content—available at any time to the park visitor—are efficient and cost-effective ways to interpret the park’s resources.

Top Priorities

• Complete new Parkway film by 2014 (funded 2011)
• Complete another 25 curriculum-based lesson plans by 2013
• Double youth outreach through innovative education outreach and practices by 2014
• Initiate formal partnerships with 10 more school systems by 2013
• Assist National Heritage Areas with completion of management planning
• Complete partnership and stakeholder communication plan by 2013

200 education programs annually reaching thousands of youths and adults

4 new formal partnerships with educational institutions in 2011

75 new curriculum-based lesson plans by 2013

Parks as Classrooms
A multi-year National Scenic Trails grant has allowed the Parkway to implement Parks as Classrooms, a K-12 educational program designed to educate students about the Natchez Trace, foster interest in the aesthetic, historic, and economic importance of this ancient trail, and encourage public use of the National Scenic Trail sections along it. As of 2011, over 50 curriculum-based lesson plans have been developed in partnership with school teachers and administrators. The Parkway has also held several workshops for teachers to learn about these lesson plans and how to implement them in their own classrooms.

A Parkway ranger performs a living history demonstration, providing valuable educational information on the history of the Natchez Trace.
The Visitor and Resource Protection division is responsible for providing law enforcement, emergency services, resource protection, and many other important functions along the entire 444-mile corridor. The division partners with over 100 local county and state law enforcement, emergency service, and fire departments in order to maximize public safety and service levels.

**Public Safety–Law Enforcement**
Parkway law enforcement rangers handle thousands of incidents each year including poaching violations, traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities, boundary encroachments, drug trafficking, and more.

**Emergency Communications Center**
The Natchez Trace emergency communications center handles thousands of law enforcement and emergency service calls for the entire Parkway each year.

**Agricultural Lease Program**
The division manages 794 agricultural leases, which help maintain the scenic integrity of the traditional southern landscape along the Parkway. The program enhances roadside vistas, reduces the number of acres that the Parkway maintains, and fosters relationships with park neighbors.

**Boundary Patrol**
The perimeter of the Natchez Trace boundary stretches nearly 1,000 miles. With over 3,000 private landowners adjacent to the Parkway, boundary marking and patrol are essential to helping the Parkway protect its resources.

**Wildland Fire Management**
The Natchez Trace Fire Management Branch is responsible for fire suppression, fuels management, and fire effects monitoring along the entire Parkway. Additionally, the branch provides support to 10 other NPS units, four National Forest Service units, the Tennessee Department of Forestry, and approximately 63 volunteer and paid fire departments.

**National Field Training and Evaluation Program**
The Natchez Trace is a major participant in the NPS Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP). The program helps provide essential field training to new law enforcement rangers. The Parkway currently has six qualified field training rangers who commit thousands of hours per year toward the FTEP. The NATR FTEP staff has trained over 30 rangers since 2004, which is one of the highest numbers in the NPS. Supporting a program like FTEP is highly beneficial to the NPS but it also places large demands on the field training staff.

**Top Priorities**

**Public Safety**
- Develop comprehensive public safety strategy designed to reduce fatalities and injuries
- Acquire computer automated dispatch system capable of providing analytic data on division operations
- Increase public safety effectiveness through targeted enforcement and education efforts
- Continue setting the national standard in the field training and evaluation program

**Resource Protection**
- Re-mark 1,000 miles of Parkway boundary over the next seven years
- Increase agricultural lease accountability to ensure scenic view shed protection
- Improve condition of 65 miles of National Scenic Trail segments
- Continue aggressive wildland fire management practices to promote ecosystem vibrancy and reduce hazardous fuels
Facility Management and Parkway Maintenance

The Natchez Trace Facility Management and Maintenance division is responsible for maintaining the infrastructure of the Parkway’s assets, which include 444 miles of primary roads, nearly 400 bridges, 50 miles of secondary roads, and hundreds of buildings, utilities, and other assets. The division is organized into four districts and nine sub-districts, with each sub-district responsible for approximately 50 miles of Parkway. The division is staffed with approximately 100 employees ranging from engineers to tractor operators, carpenters, and mechanics. Roughly 40% of the division’s workforce is seasonal, and is employed only during the summer months to help with heavier workloads in landscape maintenance and higher visitor use. The division shares employees across districts and relies heavily on a cross-training methodology to ensure each position can provide a wide range of skill sets and expertise.

Most Efficient Organization (MEO): The Parkway was one of a select number of national park units to successfully implement the MEO model. MEO is a competitive sourcing process through which the federal government competes with the private sector for management of certain activities. As with any competitive process, the best and most cost-effective bidder is awarded the contract. In 2005, the Parkway’s maintenance division competed against the private sector and was able to demonstrate that the Parkway’s maintenance structure was the cheapest and most effective means of accomplishing various workloads along the Natchez Trace corridor.

Cultural and scenic landscape maintenance: The Parkway is a designed landscape. Of its total 52,000 acres, over 8,500 are directly adjacent to the roadway and must be maintained. As such, mowing is central to maintaining the designed landscape and scenic integrity of the Parkway. Each year, the division mows enough grass to circumnavigate the Earth 1.5 times at the equator.

Park Asset Management Plan: A Parkway Asset Management Plan (PAMP) was completed in 2009. The PAMP helps to provide critical information on the Parkway’s assets, especially relating to condition and deferred maintenance. The Parkway’s asset portfolio is valued at just over $2 billion. Using a Facility Condition Index (FCI), the relative condition of each asset can be determined. The FCI is calculated by dividing the deferred maintenance of an asset by its current replacement value. FCI can range from 0.0 to 1. An FCI score closer to 0.0 reflects a better condition. Funding priorities are set through a variety of techniques including use of the Asset Priority Index (API). The Parkway assigns each asset an API score based on its importance to the Parkway’s mission. The API score range is from 1 to 100 and the higher the API score, the more important it is to the Parkway’s mission. The pie charts to the right reflect the number of assets in each category along with the estimated deferred maintenance requirements.

$2,000,000 is spent each year to maintain the cultural and scenic landscape of the Natchez Trace.
Facility Management and Parkway Maintenance (continued)

Roads maintenance: Road maintenance for the 444-mile Parkway is accomplished through a partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), via the Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP). The Parkway competes for FLHP funding with other parks throughout the agency.

The NPS and FHWA use a very proactive strategy to help reduce overall costs of maintaining the Parkway’s road system. This strategy works to maintain road and bridge infrastructure by keeping up with regular maintenance, thus preventing much more expensive reconstruction costs over the long term. Allowing road assets to deteriorate can cost exponentially more than keeping up with regular preventative maintenance.

Road improvements are categorized in three primary areas: preventative maintenance (PM) includes basic resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation. This is the least expensive form of roads maintenance. The “3R” category includes more expensive rehabilitation such as structural overlays, deck replacements, and other minor-moderate maintenance and improvements. The “4R” category is the most costly category of maintenance, and often includes long-term road closures. This category includes extensive reconstruction of pavement, embankments, and bridges.

The charts below outline the financial benefits of employing a strong preventative maintenance strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preventive Maintenance</td>
<td>$5,500,000</td>
<td>$5,359,020</td>
<td>$5,700,000</td>
<td>$8,560,000</td>
<td>$1,908,000</td>
<td>$4,949,830</td>
<td>$7,762,520</td>
<td>$8,692,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3R</td>
<td>$5,859,020</td>
<td>$6,200,000</td>
<td>$7,672,060</td>
<td>$8,692,700</td>
<td>$3,360,000</td>
<td>$12,000,000</td>
<td>$11,125,520</td>
<td>$8,692,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4R</td>
<td>$6,500,000</td>
<td>$5,500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Good preventative maintenance can cost $150,000 per mile every 10 to 15 years.

Lack of preventative maintenance can lead to full reconstruction, which can cost up to $1 million per mile.

Proactive strategy cost: $67 million
Reactive strategy cost: $183 million

Total savings of proactive strategy: $116 million

Top Priorities
- Develop more efficient and cost-effective landscape maintenance and mowing practices by 2013
- Recalculate and prioritize all Parkway assets by 2012
- Complete new Park Asset Management Plan by 2014
- Upgrade all boundary surveys using GPS by 2014
- Provide better employee cross-training on heavy equipment by 2013
Administration and Business Services

The Administration and Business Services division provides administrative and business services in support of operational programs. Professional and technical assistance is provided in the areas of budget and finance, information systems management, property and fleet management, human resources management, and contracting and procurement support. The division also provides some centralized overhead support services that are not otherwise associated with a specific operational division.

Budget Execution and Finance
The budget and finance branch is responsible for all cost accounting, accounts payable and receivable, and budgetary forecasting for the Parkway.

Information Systems Management
The Parkway is highly dependent on interconnected information technology and integrated data systems. Information Systems Management ensures continuous operations of these systems by maintaining the local area network system at Parkway headquarters, nine wide area network regional locations, four visitor contact locations, and various data storage and retrieval systems centers spread across the 444-mile long Parkway.

Property and Fleet Management
The Parkway owns and maintains almost 1,200 pieces of equipment, valued at approximately $6.2 million. In addition, it leases over 100 vehicles from the General Services Administration.

Human Resources
The human resources branch provides support for a variety of services to both management and the individual employees, including staffing and recruitment, employee retention, position classification, management/employee relations services, payroll processing, benefits counseling, and employee development services.

Contracting and Procurement
The Contracting and Procurement branch is responsible for all government contracts and orders issued by the Parkway. Support in this area varies from purchasing routine supplies, equipment, vehicles, and technical materials, to acquisition of large dollar construction and renovation contracts.

Top Priorities
• Continue transition of Administrative Support Unit to ensure seamless inter-park cooperation in the realms of Human Resources and Contracting
• Increase IT capacity
• Modernize property management system

Consolidation of Human Resources and Contracting
In 2010, the Parkway became the home for the newly organized Western Administrative Support Unit (WASU). The WASU functions as one of four regional Human Resources and Contracting hubs servicing 13 different parks in the western part of the region. Within the first year, the unit processed over 4,000 personnel actions and awarded over $20 million in government contracts. The Parkway has set aggressive performance targets to improve HR and contracting service levels throughout the ASU.

Over 4,000 personnel actions processed each year
Over $20 million in contracts awarded in 2010
1,200 pieces of equipment, valued at over $6 million
Parkway Funding History and Recent Investments

Parkway operations vary from year to year as conditions change. Over the past several decades, the Parkway’s base budget has not kept pace with inflation and other rising costs, which has led to major reductions in permanent staffing levels and other operational practices. Constant budget erosion, without substantive base increases over long time frames, has significantly reduced the Parkway’s operating capacity.

**Adjusted base budget:** The Parkway’s base operating budget in 1990 was $5.2 million, compared with $12.1 million in 2010. When adjusted for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the increase in funding over that 20-year time frame is approximately $2.1 million. In the last decade alone, the Parkway’s labor costs have increased by $4 million due to increased salaries, benefits, and other inflationary costs related to fleet, fuel, and equipment.

**Base funding increases:** The last major funding increase the Parkway received was in 2006. The Parkway is located in the southeast region of the NPS. One of seven regions in the agency, there are over 60 units in the southeast region alone. Each year, the Parkway competes with these other parks for funding increases, and only a small number receive base funding increases each year.

**Staffing impacts and changes:** Due to the increased costs of staffing, without additional funding the Parkway’s base budget erodes to some degree each year. This normally translates to lapses or elimination of permanent positions. The Parkway has eliminated 28 permanent full time positions in the past 10 years, becoming more reliant on temporary employees, who do not receive health and retirement benefits. Although in many cases it makes sense to use temporary employees, much of the Parkway’s workload is year-round, and reducing the number of permanent positions translates to fewer staff available to handle year-round workloads.

**Natchez Trace Parkway Appropriated Base Budget History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Base Funding</th>
<th>Constant Dollar (1990 Dollar)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$5,209</td>
<td>$5,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$12,178</td>
<td>$7,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The inflation-adjusted (“constant dollar”) figures are calculated using the government-published Consumer Price Index.*

**Recently Funded Projects:**

Investments are considered as significant one-time expenditures to develop and improve the Parkway’s infrastructure. In Fiscal Year 2010, the Parkway completed projects totaling over $32 million.

The most significant projects included:

**Meriwether Lewis rehabilitation, $4 million:** Included a new interpretive trail system and exhibits, rehabilitation of the historic information cabin, a new parking lot, and new wheelchair-accessible visitor restrooms. Other improvements were made to the campground and picnic areas, along with a significant tree-planting project.

**Multi-use trail, multicity trail connection system/construction, $10 million:** Funded through the Federal Highway Administration’s Eastern Federal Lands Division, over five miles of new multi-use paths were completed connecting the Parkway with several cities in the Jackson metropolitan area.

**Road paving and improvements, $17 million:** Thirty miles of pavement overlays were completed in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration.

**Other deferred maintenance projects, $1 million:** Replacement of water systems, roofs, and other projects.

**Visitor restroom replacements, $1 million:** The Parkway replaced eight comfort stations along the length of the 444 miles.
The Parkway’s expenditures have increased substantially over the past decade. Increasing employee salaries, benefits, and other inflationary costs such as fuel prices have eroded the overall capacity of the Parkway. In 2010, the Parkway spent over $9 million in labor costs; this was up from approximately $5 million in 2000.

Some of the major factors driving costs up include:

**Salary and benefit increases:** Many years, Congress grants federal employees annual cost of living increases ranging from 1% to 2.5%. These increases help the government maintain a competitive workforce by ensuring workforce salaries improve with inflation. These increases also drive up the overall costs of the workforce. As an example, the base salary of a non-supervisory (GS-9/1) law enforcement ranger in 2000 was $35,728. In 2011, the salary of an employee at the same grade/step level was $49,029, which was an increase of $13,301 per position. The health and retirement benefits for the same position in 2000 were roughly $14,000. That number increased to $21,073 in 2011, a difference of over $7,000 per position.

**Mandatory pay cost increases:** Separate from the base salary increases listed above, federal employees are banded in a grade/step pay system. With good performance, an employee can receive an automatic “step” increase each year, every other year, or every third year depending on their tenure with the grade level.

These increases are gradual; however, the larger the staff size, the more a park pays in step increases each year. In 2011, A GS-9/1 had a base salary of $49,029 while a GS-9/10 had a salary of $63,259, a difference of $14,230. If an employee remained at the GS-9 level, it would take roughly 18 years to reach the maximum step level. In 2011, the Parkway paid out an additional $189,000 to cover these increases.

**Support costs:** Many positions require specific equipment and training certifications. These costs are referred to as “support costs” and can vary dramatically depending on the type of position.

**Increased fleet costs:** Increased monthly lease and mileage costs have also increased substantially over the past decade. The Parkway spent $442,870 to manage its fleet in 2000. For the same fleet in 2010, the Parkway spent $774,335, a difference of $331,465.

**Other rising costs:** The Parkway absorbed annual assessments from the regional and national offices totaling $264,000 in 2011. Comparatively, this assessment level was approximately $75,000 in 2000, an increase of over 350%. These assessments are used to cover a variety of regional and national support mechanisms such as software licensing and program support. The Parkway’s budget was also reduced by another $100,000 in 2011 as part of a “management efficiency” assessment.

A one dollar per gallon jump in the price of diesel can cost the Parkway $50,000 more per year.

It takes over $330,000 more to pay for the same fleet in 2011 than it did 10 years ago.

**Evaluating the Costs of the Same Employee over 10 Years**

An employee hired as a GS-9/1 in 2000 would reach GS-9/7 by 2011 (base law enforcement position, non-supervisory)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2000 (GS-9/1)</strong></td>
<td>Base salary: $35,728</td>
<td>Benefits: $14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2011 (GS-9/7)</strong></td>
<td>Base salary: $49,029</td>
<td>Benefits: $22,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$85,322</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These pages describe a variety of potential budget scenarios and their related impacts. These are our own estimates, which were calculated for strategic planning purposes, and are not meant to communicate the intent of future congressional appropriations. With the year-to-year uncertainty of the Federal budget, it is important for the Parkway to be prepared to do the following:

- Manage existing dollars in a manner that maximizes visitor service and resource protection capacity
- Manage any potential fiscal reductions through a thoughtful and defensible decision making process that has the least potential impact on our goals and objectives
- Position the Parkway to compete for future base funding increases by demonstrating its capacity to do more with more

The Parkway operates very efficiently at the present levels (represented in the green box to the right). This page describes some potential scenarios and how reductions in fiscal capacity could correspond to our visitor service and resource protection capacity. It is not all-inclusive and, as with any model, there are many variables that would affect our decision making.

The graph below represents three potential budget scenarios; the colored boxes at right describe the corresponding impacts.

### Stable or Growing: Growth in some areas; impacts due to efficiency decisions only

- **Annual spending capacity:** $12.1 million–$11.0 million
- **Staffing:** Stable; continue improving overall service levels.
- **Visitor Facilities:** Maintain current seven day per week visitor center operations.
- **Restroom Facilities:** Maintain current 14 restroom facilities; daily cleaning.
- **Public Safety/Resource Protection:** Maintain one ranger per 40 Parkway miles; reasonable response times, continued decline of accidents, injuries, and fatalities.
- **Education and Outreach:** Maintain 175–200 education programs annually, reaching 10,000 youth per year.
- **Condition of Resources and Landscapes:** Maintain high quality visual landscape maintenance; improve overall resource management capacity.
- **Quality of the Visitor Experience:** Maintain and improve visitor service levels; maintain current 99% visitor satisfaction rating.

### Moderate to Major Impacts:

- **Annual spending capacity:** $11.0 million–$10.0 million
- **Staffing:** Levels begin degrading; expect loss of up to 56 seasonal and 5 PFT positions.
- **Visitor Facilities:** Maintain current seven day per week visitor center operations.
- **Restroom Facilities:** Evaluate closing seven restrooms along the 444-mile corridor.
- **Public Safety/Resource Protection:** Reduce to one ranger per 60 Parkway miles; increased response times; potential increases in accidents, injuries, and fatalities.
- **Education and Outreach:** Reduce to 100 education programs annually; 3,000 fewer youth reached each year; outreach capacity affected.
- **Condition of Resources and Landscapes:** Begin moderate changes to landscape maintenance practices; scenic integrity degradation noticeable.
- **Quality of the Visitor Experience:** Visitor satisfaction levels begin to decline.

### Severe Impacts:

- **Annual spending capacity:** $10.0 million and below
- **Staffing:** Expect loss of up to 56 seasonal and 20 PFT positions.
- **Visitor Facilities:** Reduce to five days per week.
- **Restroom Facilities:** Close seven restrooms along the 444-mile corridor.
- **Public Safety/Resource Protection:** Reduce to one ranger per 80 Parkway miles; major increases to response times; substantial increases in accidents, injuries, fatalities; increases in drunk driving, drug trafficking, illegal dumping.
- **Education and Outreach:** Reduce to 50 education programs annually; 4,500 fewer youth reached each year; outreach capacity affected.
- **Condition of Resources and Landscapes:** Begin severe changes to landscape maintenance practices; scenic integrity degradation very noticeable in certain areas of the Parkway.
- **Quality of the Visitor Experience:** Expect visitor satisfaction rating of 70% or lower.
The chart below offers suggestions on how the Parkway would adjust to the reduced or restricted budget scenarios on the opposing page. Current funding allows for relatively high levels of visitor service and resource protection. Reduced budgets will mean tough decision making. Any combination of the options below could be used to meet financial targets, the goal being to find the best balance in meeting the Parkway’s financial obligations while affecting the smallest possible number of visitors.

The Parkway’s financial contingency planning focuses on minimizing visitor impacts in the following primary areas, which are described in the chart and table at left.

### Visitor Facilities/Education and Outreach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>Highest Demand</th>
<th>Potential Implementation Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tupelo Visitor Center</td>
<td>40,000 visitors per year</td>
<td>Apr–Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgeland Contact Station</td>
<td>15,000 visitors per year</td>
<td>Apr–Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriwether Lewis Cabin</td>
<td>25,000 visitors per year</td>
<td>Apr–Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Locust Historic Site</td>
<td>28,000 visitors per year</td>
<td>Mar–Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Website</td>
<td>Updated weekly</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Education Programs</td>
<td>200 per year</td>
<td>Mar–Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit and Publications Design</td>
<td>Three publications/three major projects per year</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Public Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>Highest Demand</th>
<th>Potential Implementation Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement Patrol</td>
<td>444 miles of Parkway; 14 million visitors and commuters; 50 miles of secondary roads; 100 miles of trail</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Communications Center</td>
<td>10,000 calls for service; officer safety monitoring; visitor assistance</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resource Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>Highest Demand</th>
<th>Potential Implementation Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Mounds and Cultural Sites</td>
<td>22 sites</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archeological Sites</td>
<td>365 sites</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkway Boundary and Species Protection</td>
<td>1,000 miles of boundary; 55,000 acres of land</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Leases</td>
<td>750 leases</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Maintenance and Facility Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>Highest Demand</th>
<th>Potential Implementation Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Maintenance and Custodial Services</td>
<td>8,500 acres of maintained landscape</td>
<td>Apr–Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Maintenance</td>
<td>27 visitor use facilities</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Maintenance</td>
<td>180 buildings</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Services</td>
<td>1,000 lane miles of Parkway and secondary roads</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine and Waterways</td>
<td>23 water/wastewater treatment systems; five water tanks; 57 hydrants; water and sewer lines; fuel tanks and systems</td>
<td>Nov–Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative management</td>
<td>One dock, ramp, beach</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Administration and Management

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| Visitor centers and contact stations |

| Youth education and public outreach programs |

| Public safety and resource protection |

| Maintaining facilities and reducing deferred maintenance |

| Maintaining designed landscapes |
The Parkway will work to streamline operations and cut costs wherever possible, irrespective of future budget scenarios. However, it is important to understand the difference between decisions that are made to maximize existing dollars versus decisions that are made due to reductions in fiscal capacity. Decisions that are made to increase efficiency allow the Parkway to redirect any cost savings to improve other areas. Conversely, any reductions lowering the Parkway's base budget or spending power will have an effect on overall capacity. Any range of the yellow or red scenarios on the preceding pages will force the Parkway to make tough decisions relating to staffing, visitor services, and resource protection levels. These decisions will be made through a deliberative evaluation of potential impacts and will be prioritized by evaluating the overall impacts of a particular cut on the Parkway's resources and visitors.

### Strategies: Cost Reduction

The Parkway will work to streamline operations and cut costs wherever possible, irrespective of future budget scenarios. However, it is important to understand the difference between decisions that are made to maximize existing dollars versus decisions that are made due to reductions in fiscal capacity. Decisions that are made to increase efficiency allow the Parkway to redirect any cost savings to improve other areas. Conversely, any reductions lowering the Parkway's base budget or spending power will have an effect on overall capacity. Any range of the yellow or red scenarios on the preceding pages will force the Parkway to make tough decisions relating to staffing, visitor services, and resource protection levels. These decisions will be made through a deliberative evaluation of potential impacts and will be prioritized by evaluating the overall impacts of a particular cut on the Parkway's resources and visitors.

### Fixed Costs

**Current costs:** $8.7–9.0 million/year.

The Parkway spends approximately 80% of its operations budget on personnel. This percentage is excellent by most NPS standards; however, the ratio is deceiving because of a much larger obligation in other areas (e.g., the fleet size must be relatively large on a parkway). The costs and impacts of various positions on the Parkway vary dramatically. Decisions will be made through a careful evaluation process of the costs versus the benefits of each position. This is the single largest area for the Parkway to respond to cuts, but it is also the area that will have the largest influence on the Parkway's ability to protect resources and maintain service levels. Costs savings here could vary dramatically and are dependent on many factors.

### Fleet

**Current costs:** $775,000/year.

Purely to increase efficiency, the Parkway will work to reduce fleet size by 5% over the next four years. Although additional reductions will begin to affect operations, a 10% reduction over the next four years, using a phased approach, could save $100,000.

### Landscape Management Practices

**Current costs:** $2 million/year (personnel, equipment, fuel).

Landscape maintenance helps protect the integrity of the Parkway’s scenery. The majority of landscape costs are directly related to personnel, equipment, and fuel. The Parkway is constantly working to improve landscape maintenance techniques. Cutbacks and cost savings in this area would be closely tied to personnel reductions.

### Non-Government Cleaning Contracts

**Current costs:** $100,000/year.

The Parkway uses numerous cleaning contractors to clean restrooms and other facilities used by visitors and employees. This workload will shift to NPS personnel as the Parkway eliminates and/or reduces these contracts. In FY11, the Parkway reduced contracts by over $20,000 with another $15,000 possible in the next year.

### Employee Travel

**Current Costs:** $130,000/year.

Although over 60% of the Parkway’s travel is spent on “in park” travel, the Parkway will continue working to reduce travel costs where possible. Potential cost savings: $20,000.

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**The Value of Volunteers**

In 2010, community volunteers contributed 10,000 hours to the Interpretation and Partnerships division, including approximately 3,100 hours assisting the visitor center staff. The remaining volunteers were campground hosts and volunteers for Pioneer Days and Dulcimer Days, educational events hosted by partner groups.

Recruiting and training new volunteers represents a substantial cost, but the benefits greatly outweigh the costs. For example, the time investment to recruit a single FTE volunteer for a visitor center could be as high as $6,000; however, the value would be equivalent to a GS-04 level interpretive ranger, or approximately $34,000, for a net benefit of approximately $28,000 per volunteer.
Top Unfunded Priorities

Emerald Mound Access Road, $5.0 million:
The Emerald Mound is the second largest Native American burial and ceremonial mound in the country. The NPS currently owns approximately 56 acres, which include the eight-acre mound site. These parcels are one mile from the Parkway boundary. In 2011, a land acquisition process was completed in partnership with the State of Mississippi. By 2012, the NPS will own an 86-acre corridor connecting the Parkway boundary and the mound site. A new one-mile access road and parking lot are needed to facilitate direct visitor access to the mound site from the Parkway. The current county road access would be rerouted as part of the project.

John Gordon House Restoration and Site Rehabilitation, $1.0 million:
The John Gordon House is an historic inn along the Tennessee section of the Old Natchez Trace. This inn catered to travelers and also served as a major ferry crossing for the Duck River. The house is currently closed to the public due to deteriorated conditions inside.

Meriwether Lewis Education Center and Visitor Contact Station, $2.5 million
The Parkway has submitted funding (through the National Scenic Byways Program) to cover the construction of a new visitor contact and education center at the Meriwether Lewis Death and Burial Site. This project would complement the recently completed $4 million rehabilitation of the site, and would serve as the only NPS contact center on the Tennessee section of the Parkway (the northern 103 miles).

Increasing Non-Appropriated Funding and Support

Increase Philanthropic Capacity: The Parkway has already worked closely with the Natchez Trace Parkway Association and other partners to improve philanthropic capacity. Continuing to develop grassroots support along the entire corridor will help us to improve support in a variety of realms, including land conservation and education.

Increase Partnerships and Cost Sharing on Projects: In order to cost share on a variety of projects, the Parkway will continue working closely with both existing and new partners.

Increased Use of Volunteers: As a means of improving visitor service levels, the Parkway will continue to increase its use of volunteers (see sidebar, opposite page).

Scenic Byways Grant Funding: The Parkway has been very successful at partnering with the National Scenic Byways Program. In 2011, the Parkway received $250,000 to develop a new resources management tool and another $400,000 to develop a new Parkway interpretive film.

Increasing Appropriated Funding

Increase Interpretive and Education Capacity: $656,000 (earliest: FY 2014)
Funding would be used to increase the Parkway’s capacity to provide better interpretation, education, outreach, and visitor service levels along the entire length of the Parkway. This would add 7.7 positions and increase direct visitor contacts by over 50% (i.e., more visitor center contacts). The funding would provide curriculum-based education programs to an additional 5,000 students who live along the Parkway.

Develop Comprehensive Resources Management Capacity: $604,000 (earliest: FY 2014)
Funding would develop a better core capacity to protect and maintain resources along the 444-mile corridor. This includes funding for a Lands Officer position to help manage the extensive number of interactions with communities, counties, and private land owners. Funding would also be used to increase natural resource management capacity relating to inventory and monitoring of the Parkway’s 2,600 plant and animal species; as well as continued work on scenic resource protection of the Parkway’s vulnerable view sheds.

Provide Public Safety and Maintenance Services for 22 miles of Newly Constructed Parkway and 15 Miles of Newly Constructed Multi-Use Trail: $747,000 (earliest: FY 2014)
Funding would provide for additional law enforcement rangers and maintenance personnel to protect and maintain newly-constructed, high-use recreational trail traveled by thousands each year.
The National Park Service scorecard is designed as a diagnostic tool to evaluate Servicewide performance and efficiency. Adapted from private sector balanced scorecards, the NPS scorecard—through the use of various measures designed to improve overall performance—helps provide managers a better and more analytic approach to financial planning. As budgets become tighter, effectively justifying existing allocations will become increasingly more important to reviewers of the NPS budget. These reviewers include the Department of the Interior and the President’s Office of Management and Budget. Additionally, the NPS has an ongoing responsibility to build a rational case for its funding needs, through a process that can be utilized by park, regional, and national managers. That case must also be understood by managers and budget examiners in the Department of the Interior, Office of Management and Budget, Congress, and the American public.

The chart below outlines 16 efficiency drivers and strategic performance measures. It shows the Parkway’s 2010 scores in each category alongside the NPS average. This helps the Parkway analyze its performance in comparison to the agency average. Targets have been established through 2014 to help improve scoring in several of the underperforming categories.

### The Scorecard as a Management Tool

The scorecard provides the Parkway’s management team with valuable information in a variety of performance areas, ranging from fleet ratios and labor costs to visitor satisfaction and employee safety, among many others.

To one degree or another, all of these measures are regularly analyzed as part of the Parkway’s overall management effectiveness. Since the primary purpose of the scorecard is to improve efficiency, many managerial decisions and operational priorities directly relate to these scorecard measures. These measures are statistically adjusted so that individual park units can compare their results to other park units as well as regional and national averages.
The scorecard is an important tool that establishes transparency and accountability in NPS budget decisions.

The color-coded scatter plot above represents the total yearly performance scores for the Parkway from 2004 through 2010 and projects performance through 2014. Future projections are based on a two-year and four-year management strategy designed to achieve better performance in each category wherever possible. The Parkway has steadily improved its scoring over the past seven years and in 2010 it reached above-average scores in both efficiency and strategic performance.
FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES

Fleet Analysis

With 444 miles of primary roadway and another 50 miles of secondary roads, the Natchez Trace relies heavily on its vehicle fleet to manage operations along the corridor. While this is one of the biggest expenses in the Natchez Trace budget, it is also one of the most important.

What was analyzed:

How many vehicles are needed to adequately maintain the Parkway?

Which types of vehicles are needed?

How can the costs associated with fleet operations be reduced?

What are the cost and benefits of reducing fleet size from a financial standpoint? What are they from a carbon emissions reduction standpoint?

What was determined:

The Natchez Trace fleet is a $775,000 expense.

The park spent approximately $330,000 more in 2011 than it did in 2000 to manage the same fleet.

20% of the fleet had fewer than 5,000 miles driven each year per vehicle (Phase I reduction criteria).

32% of the fleet had fewer than 10,000 miles driven each year per vehicle (Phase II reduction criteria).

Plan going forward:

The Parkway has developed an initial Phase I reduction list to begin reducing fleet size. Some vehicles have low mileage, but are still needed (e.g., dump trucks). However, there are many other vehicles with low mileage and low use that can be considered for possible elimination from the fleet.

The Parkway will strive to reduce its fleet size by 10% over the next four years.

The Parkway will identify vehicles that emit significant carbon emissions and develop a plan to reduce use, switch to vehicles that emit lower levels of CO₂, and, where possible, completely eliminate vehicles from the inventory.

The Natchez Trace fleet is a $775,000 expense.

The Parkway will strive to reduce its fleet size by 10% over the next four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 Reduction Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle 100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2 Reduction Analysis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,000-9,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle 100</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GSA Lease Increases (sample vehicle—LE Sedan)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$333 per month</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per Mile Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$0.16</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Key Statistics**

- **102** Leased vehicles
- **1.5** Million miles driven per year
- **$775,000** Approximate cost per year: 7% of total Parkway expenditure

**Cost**

Fleet represents the second largest single cost to the Parkway, after labor.

**Divisional Breakdown**

In 2010, pickup trucks and police sedans represented 81% of the leased vehicles, driving 95% of the cost. The majority of these vehicles are within the Facilities Management and Visitor and Resource Protection divisions.

**Fleet Mix**

The Parkway averages around 100 vehicles, the majority being pickup trucks and police sedans. Vehicle cost is a product of two factors: monthly lease cost and cost per mile. Due to the extensive miles driven and the number of vehicles, police sedans and pickup trucks comprise the bulk of the Parkway’s vehicle spending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle Count</th>
<th>Multi-Use Flatbed</th>
<th>Sedan</th>
<th>Semi-Truck Cab</th>
<th>Van</th>
<th>Dump Truck</th>
<th>SUV</th>
<th>Police Sedan</th>
<th>Pickup Truck</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per vehicle per year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per vehicle per year</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>23,100</td>
<td>23,100</td>
<td>14,900</td>
<td>106,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All vehicles per year</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>40,900</td>
<td>40,900</td>
<td>92,600</td>
<td>32,600</td>
<td>184,600</td>
<td>465,400</td>
<td>686,100</td>
<td>1,547,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per vehicle per year</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$5,100</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$5,300</td>
<td>$8,400</td>
<td>$9,800</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>$6,600</td>
<td>$69,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All vehicles per year</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$15,300</td>
<td>$47,800</td>
<td>$37,100</td>
<td>$67,600</td>
<td>$78,800</td>
<td>$217,800</td>
<td>$303,600</td>
<td>$775,000</td>
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</table>
Moving forward, the Natchez Trace management team will continue improving the Parkway’s opportunities and abilities to provide exceptional visitor services, educational experiences, and resources protection measures. Much of what is accomplished hinges on good financial planning and leveraging limited resources toward our goals and objectives. The goal is to do everything possible to mitigate negative impacts while still achieving the Parkway mission, irrespective of budget outlooks.

With the continued support of the US Congress, our many partners, stakeholders, and the millions of people who visit each year, the National Park Service can ensure that the Parkway continues to provide the very best historical, recreational, scenic, cultural, natural, and economic benefits to the entire region.

The Parkway team looks forward to working with you to determine the best and most effective ways of moving the Natchez Trace into the future.
Thanks are due to the following people for their generous help and support. Without all of their efforts, this business plan would not have been possible:

**Natchez Trace Parkway Management Team:**
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Michael Foster, Chief Ranger
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Barry Boyd, Chief of Facility Management
Lisa Mcinnis, Natural Resource Lead
Christina Smith, Cultural Resource Lead
Greg Smith, Scenic Resource Lead

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