

Agenda
Regular Work Session of the Mayor and Council
City of Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia
January 28, 2021 / 6:00 p.m.

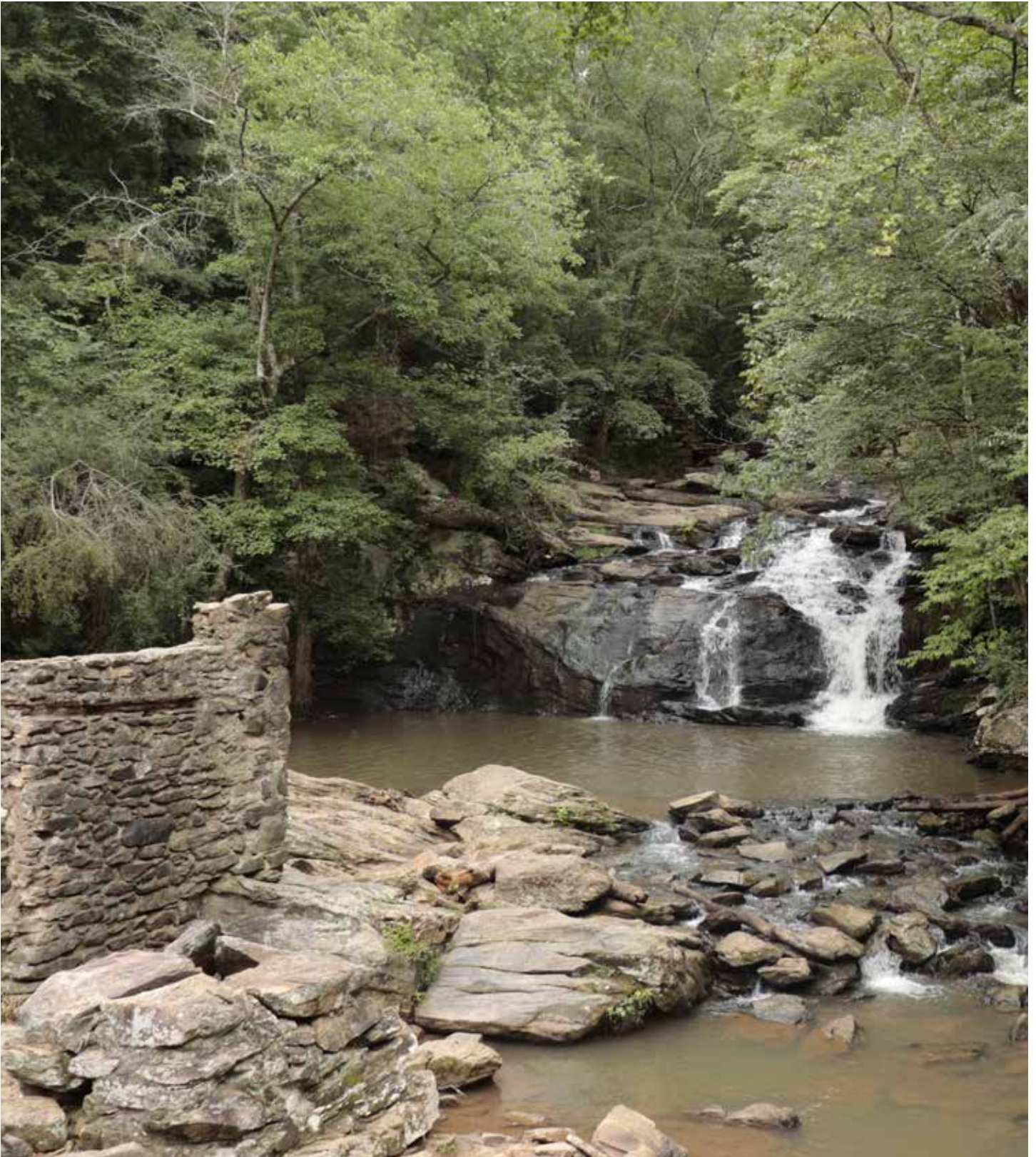
Note: Meeting is being held as a virtual meeting only. Please visit www.chatthillsga.us for information on accessing the meeting via teleconference or videoconference.

Click [HERE](#) for Zoom link
ID: 846 8663 2198
Code: 524348
Dial in: 646-558-8656

Discussion Items

1. Cochran Mill Park Interpretive Master Plan – Allison Duncan
2. Council Meeting Agenda Review
3. City Facility naming – Mayor Reed

Mayor and Council Comments and Updates



Cochran Mill Park Interpretive Master Plan

HP-160524-002

December 2020

Executive Summary

In October 2017, the City of Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia (City) finalized a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the US Federal Highway Administration (US FHWA) and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (GA SHPO). The purpose of this MOA was to develop an Interpretive Master Plan for Cochran Mill Park. This plan serves to mitigate the adverse effect on the Owen Cochran Mill complex, specifically a historic bridge structure on a stretch of road that was formerly Cochran Mill Road. This bridge is in close proximity to the former mill site, now in ruins. This structure has long been disused for vehicular traffic and was no longer safe to pedestrian traffic due to damage from repeated flooding of Little Bear Creek.

This plan examined Cochran Mill Park in the context of the early history of Campbell County; through the changes made by various owners over time; as a relevant component of the history of Georgia industry, in particular grist mills; its tenure as a public park, first managed by Fulton County and later by the City of Chattahoochee Hills. The park contends with a variety of issues that impact visitation and interpretation, including multi-purpose uses, such as hiking, biking and horseback riding; public safety and vandalism. Current interpretive elements are documented and recommendations include continuation of the popular smartphone app for the park and expansion of the current signage program. Recommendations for further interpretive possibilities include undertaking archaeological investigations and creating a preservation plan for extant resources.

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Background

In October 2017, the City of Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia (City) finalized a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the US Federal Highway Administration (US FHWA) and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (GA SHPO). The purpose of this MOA was to develop an Interpretive Master Plan for Cochran Mill Park. This plan serves to mitigate the adverse effect on the Owen Cochran Mill complex, specifically a historic bridge structure on a stretch of road that was formerly Cochran Mill Road. This bridge is in close proximity to the former mill site, now in ruins. This structure has long been disused for vehicular traffic and was no longer safe to pedestrian traffic due to damage from repeated flooding of Little Bear Creek.

The City of Chattahoochee Hills applied for and received a grant from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) to construct handicapped accessible parking, connecting trails and the pedestrian bridge within the park. Specifically, the pedestrian bridge would be located in tandem with the historic bridge structure at the Owen Cochran Mill complex. The remaining steel supports and frame are preserved while a modern superstructure is imposed within this frame. This allows for safe pedestrian travel across the new structure while effectively preserving the remains of the historic structure.

Purpose

Per the MOA between the City and the US FHWA and GA SHPO, the City shall complete an Interpretive Master Plan for Cochran Mill Park. This plan will include identification and documentation of historic properties within the park along with recommendations for signage formatting and design and digital media options, formatting and design in order to interpret the history of the park. A draft plan will be submitted to GA SHPO for review and comment. Once revised and finalized, a hard copy and digital copy will be submitted to GA SHPO for the project file.



The remains of the historic bridge with the new pedestrian bridge fitted into place.

Acknowledgements

Georgia Department of Transportation & Federal Highway Administration
Jennifer Giersch, Environmental Coordinator

Georgia State Historic Preservation Office
Jennifer Dixon, Environmental Review & Preservation Planning Program Manager

Chattahoochee Hills Mayor and Council
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Chattahoochee Hills Parks Commission
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Roland Alston
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Chattahoochee Hills Historic Commission
Allison Duncan, Chair
Sarah Love, Vice Chair
Amber Lightsey, Secretary
Brian Gross
Lila Rhyne
Kim Taylor-Cloud
Gene Griffith

All images are by the author, unless otherwise indicated.

Cover Photo: Ruins of the Owen Cochran Mill site on Little Bear Creek in Cochran Mill Park.



The dam of the Berry Cochran Mill stretches across a rock sheet on Bear Creek that provided a uniquely suited site for this 19th century mill.

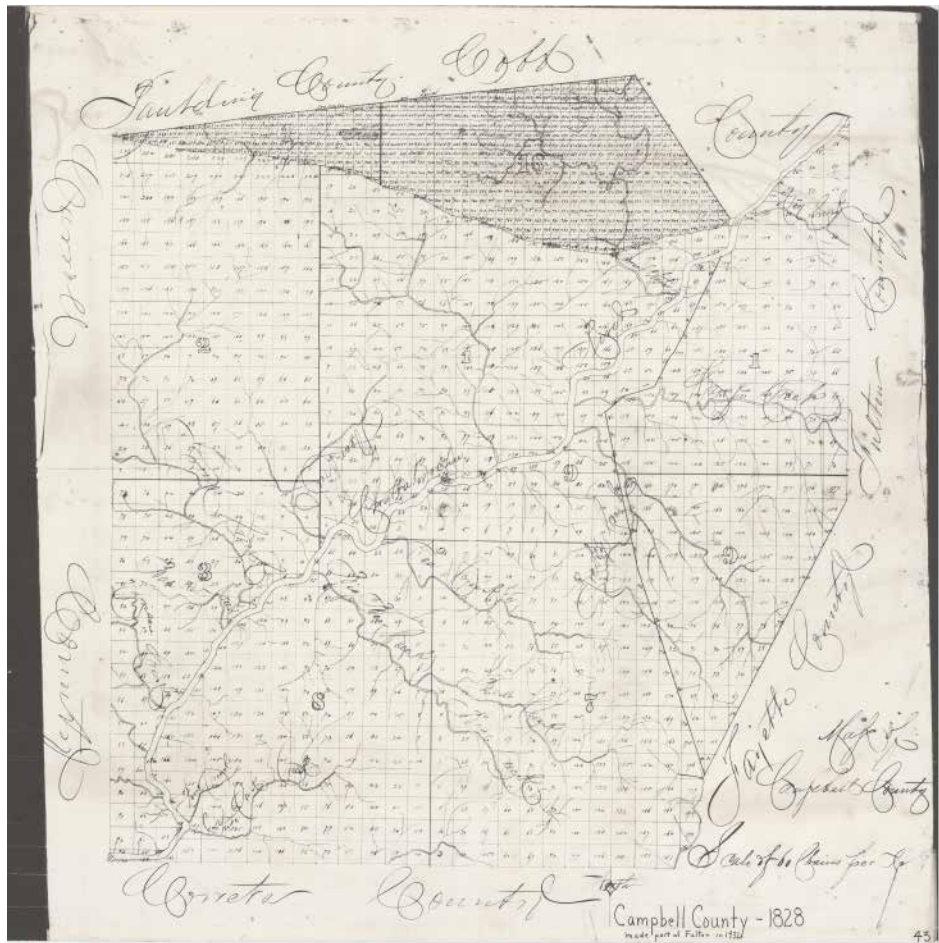
Context

Campbell County and Fulton County

Campbell County was created by act of the Georgia General Assembly in 1828 from land ceded by the Creek Indians in 1825. Much of the land that became Campbell County was distributed in the 1827 Land Lottery. Those receiving lots were granted rights to own and farm the land they received. Over time, commerce and industry were introduced through mercantile stores, sawmills, and grist mills. Communities built churches and schools, and all sites were connected through a network of rural roads.

In August 1929, the General Assembly approved the merger of Campbell County with Fulton County, subject to voter referendums. The merger of the two counties became effective January 1, 1932. The county seat of Campbell County had moved from Campbellton to Fairburn in 1870, and at the same time, the General Assembly voted to create Douglas County from portions of Campbell County west of the Chattahoochee River. The south end of Fulton County, including land roughly located between Old Campbellton and the Chattahoochee River on the west, and the cities of Fairburn and Palmetto along with the railroad right-of-way to the east, settled into a long era of decline and stasis.

As a result, much of the original community footprint from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, is still visible. It is this area that comprises the City of Chattahoochee Hills, which was created by the General Assembly in 2007. Upon its incorporation, the city declared its intent to remain "...deliberately and permanently rural," with 60-70 percent of the city used as open space, in turn preserving many of the sites of its early history.



Map of Campbell County, 1828 with Bear Creek and Little Bear Creek prominently shown.
Source: University of Georgia Map and Government Information Library

Context

Georgia Grist Mills

Grist Mills were a community necessity and common sight in early Georgia. The former mills in Cochran Mill Park remain only as disparate elements scattered throughout the 800 acres preserved as public greenspace. However, through documentation of extant grist mills, much can be gleaned about the operation of this early industry. Included here are descriptions from other National Register-listed local mills that provide insight into the operations of the Cochran Mills.

Cave Springs, Georgia: The beginnings of industrial development in Cave Springs began as early as 1857 with the construction of a combination grist-and-saw mill. The mills were in operation basically to serve the local communities as, opposed to a larger region. The mills were involved in processing agricultural goods as well as providing lumber of the construction of residential and commercial structures.

The mill that is documented in Cave Springs was constructed by Armistead Richardson and John Carroll around 1857. They were co-partners in the operation. The documentation on this mill indicates, "...in terms of industry, this property is significant as the principle historic industry in the multiple-resource area and as a major mill in the region. Corn and grains were ground, lumber was sawed, and at the turn of the century, electricity for the city was generated at this mill."

Lula, Georgia: The documentation of Head's Mill identifies the elements of the larger context involved in the engineering of the mill. It details the alterations made to the landscape so as to channel water to the wheel. It identifies that the dam at the site was constructed of a composite of rubble and a mortar, probably a rough mixture of sand and lime.

The Head's Mill complex consists of a grist mill, millrace, dam, portions of the sluiceway between the millrace and the dam, barn, and garage. The grist mill was built around 1850 and is a two and one half story, wood-framed structure with an overshot type waterwheel and millrace. The existing metal wheel and elevated millrace replaced the previous wooden structures during the 1930s. The dam is made of early poured concrete that probably dates from the 1880s. A large part of the earthen and wooden sluiceway that directed water from the dam to the millway remains visible. A one-story brick structure built into a sloping bank also dates from the mid-19th century and was reused around 1940 as a garage. A c. 1890 wood-framed barn stands across the road from the mill.

Lawrenceville, Georgia: The Alcovy Road Grist Mill is the focal point of Gwinnett County's Freeman's Mill Park. The mill has been restored by Gwinnett County and is fitted with interpretive exhibits on the process of milling. According to the National Register listing, "the interior workings and equipment of the mill remain intact, except for the removal of the wheat stones." The exterior description of the mill includes many similar elements to those documented in Cave Springs and Lula, Georgia. A more complete description of the milling process is documented at the Alcovy Road Grist Mill, due to the survival of the interior mechanisms. Among those are several of the mill stones, and the belt and gears that were turned by the movement of the water falling over the water wheel.

Context

The property was used as a grist mill from its construction [1868-1879] until 1986. The corn was first run through the corn sheller to remove the kernels from the cob. The cobs were used as firewood or run through the hammer mill with other debris to make feed for livestock. The kernels were then sifted to remove more debris before being funneled down a chute to the elevator belt, which had a capacity of 20 bushels. This belt carried the corn up to the second floor to pass through the blower. After additional trash had been blown from the kernels, the corn traveled back down the chute into the hopper and onto the stones. A mirror hung above the hopper to allow the miller to view the grinding to make sure there was always corn on the stones. If the stones turned without corn, they would wear down too quickly. The ground meal came out of an opening at the bottom of the stones and into a wooden bin ready to be bagged. The stones could be adjusted to change the coarseness of the meal as desired.

Today, there is only one known substantially intact mill structure left in Fulton County, and that is located at Wilkerson Mill, also on Bear Creek in the City of Chattahoochee Hills. Wilkerson Mill, Henry's Mill and Cochran Mill were all located along Bear Creek and Little Bear Creek, each taking advantage of the specific geography that could be engineered to create the water power needed to run the mills.

The mills that historically operated within today's Cochran Mill Park boundary shared elements documented at other mill sites in Georgia. They operated by directing the force of a local water supply through dams, races and sluice gates into the mill. This would turn the wheels, belts and gears that turned the millstones and crushed the grain into meal, or operated a saw for the milling of wood. Adjacent buildings provided storage and the miller's house may be located nearby. The siting of all of these elements in the natural environment was done so as to deliberately take advantage of the topography and the creeks. The force of the water running over or under the waterwheel was the essential component that activated all mechanisms of the milling process.

The force of water that operated the mills was also a primary threat to the structures in times of flood. Mills were often wooden structures set high on stone foundations. The wooden members made the structures susceptible to fire. And despite the height of many mills on stout stone foundations, floods could cause serious damage and destruction of structures and equipment vital to the equipment of the mills.



Undated photo of the Beard-Wilkerson Mill
Source: Gene Griffith and Elizabeth Dean

Context

Wilkerson Mill

Wilkerson Mill is the last standing grist mill in Fulton County. It is located about one mile upstream of Cochran Mill Park on Little Bear Creek, and it is privately owned. It is included in this report for reference, as there is much about the extant structure and site that can be instructive for the interpretation of the Cochran Mill sites.

It is believed that the mill was constructed around 1867 by William R. Wilkerson and William S. Mosely. It is identified in a deed from 1870 whereby Mosely conveyed a half interest in the mill and seven acres of land to Wilkerson. During its operation, the mill ground both corn and wheat, and was used to create hydroelectric power.

The house adjacent to the mill, known is the Denton house, is named for the family that owned the mill between 1930 to 1939. After the Dentons, it was owned by the Thompson family, with Jack Thompson serving as the last operator of the mill in the 1970s. Most recently, the mill has been the namesake setting for Wilkerson Mill Gardens, a privately owned landscape nursery. Owners Gene Griffith and Elizabeth Dean have held the property since 1983, preserving the site of the mill and the dam on Little Bear Creek.



Wilkerson Mill in 2017

The Cochran Mill Park Sites

Henry's Mill

Little evidence remains of the site of Henry's Mill. It is identified on an 1850 map of landholders in the area, and local lore identifies that it was burned by Union soldiers during the Civil War. Individuals interviewed for this report identify that an old mill stone sunk deep in Bear Creek can be seen during times of drought when the water is low. The present day location identified as Henry's Mill does reflect many of the elements typical of early grist mills, including the grade change needed to divert water for the operation of the mill equipment.



Henry's Mill was located on Bear Creek near these shoals. There is little evidence of the mill that formerly occupied this site.

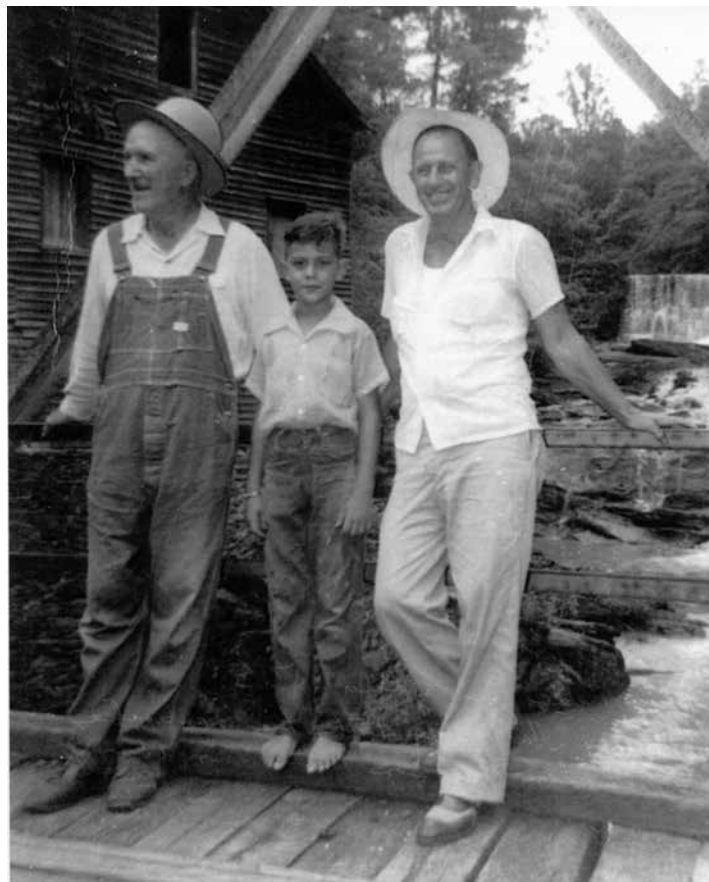
The Cochran Family Mills and Sites

Four principal members of the Cochran Family are associated with the mill structures in the park.

- Chester Cheadle Cochran, 1790-1845 – Cheadle Cochran is credited with owning or building the first mill in the park. He is described variously as moving from Fayette to Campbell/Fulton County. Or, it is possible he settled in Fayette County, portions of which became Campbell/ Fulton County when the State legislature created the new county in 1828. Either way, after a life of entrepreneurial endeavors and service to the community in various political roles, historians point to his will as the reason to believe that there was a mill on the site during his tenure: “His economic standing was shown by his estate, which was listed in his will as comprising 700 acres of land, 40 slaves, a merchant mill, and other considerations.”
- Berry Wynn Cochran, Sr., 1828-1895 – both Berry Cochran and his younger brother, Owen Cochran, served as officers for the Confederacy in the Civil War. Both returned to the family land after the war and established milling operations. It has been identified that Berry built a new mill on the property at an advantageous site on Bear Creek around 1870. He is also credited with building a mill for his brother, Owen.
- Owen Henry Cochran, 1831-1909 – It is not fully known whether the mill site on Little Bear Creek was the original site of the Cheadle Cochran Mill, which was then renovated/ rebuilt for Owen Cochran with or without the help of his brother, Berry Cochran. It is generally assumed that only two Cochran Mill sites existed, the older site on Little Bear Creek and closest to Cochran Mill Road, and the second site built by Berry Cochran on Bear Creek.
- Berry Wynn Cochran, Jr. – In an interview with Berry Cochran, Jr published in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine in 1965, he recalls that his father’s mill included hand sawed floor boards that were joined together by tongue and groove carpentry. He recalls the sawmill on the site, as well as the various and different stones used to grind corn and flour. With advances in new milling technology, and changes in the value of various agricultural commodities, older mills gave way to a new generation of technology. Berry Cochran Jr. converted the old mill to manufacture electricity in 1909, and sold power to the city of Palmetto until 1918. He sold his Palmetto franchise to one of the new electric power companies that would ultimately be consolidated into Georgia Power, and several years later sold the entire property to W.B. Russell.



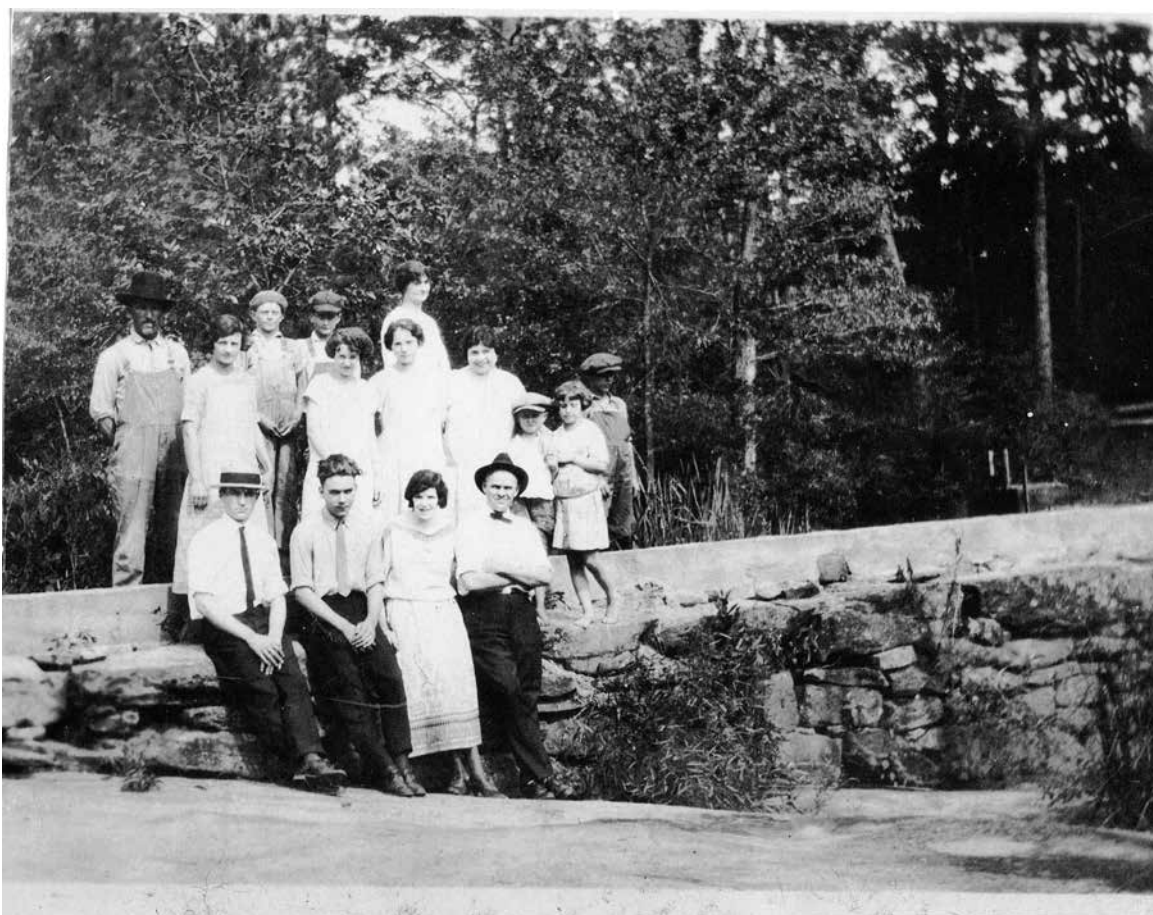
Owen Cochran Mill; possible site of an earlier mill operated by Cheadle Cochran, Source: Lila H. Rhyne



Owen Cochran Mill and the old Cochran Mill Road bridge that is the subject of this grant, Source: Lila H. Rhyne



Berry Cochran Mill, with family of miller Texas Peek, Source: Lila H. Rhyne



Berry Cochran Mill Dam, possibly members of the Blalock Family, Source: Lila H. Rhyne

Undoubtedly, these individuals are placeholders for the larger story of the families with their wives and children – free and enslaved – that operated the mills and farmed the surrounding land. Historical record identifies all of the Cochran family members as civic minded, industrious community members. As the owners of the mills, they would also have time to serve in government positions and undertake additional entrepreneurial endeavors. Their residences would have been elsewhere.

The mills would have been run by other families as employees of the Cochran family. Two names are known. Bill Cook – identified as the next to last miller at the Owen Cochran Mill complex. Texas Peek – identified as the miller for the Berry Cochran Mill complex.

The properties eventually left the ownership of the namesake Cochran mill families, and others came in to make their mark on the property.

- W.B. Russell – identified as the man who purchased the Berry Cochran Mill complex from Berry Wynn Cochran, Jr. in the 1920s. It is unknown if Russell continued to operate the mill in any sort of capacity once it passes out of the Cochran family.
- Braxton Blalock, Jr – identified as the individual who built the concrete dam below the Berry Cochran Mill complex, thus creating a lake around the house he had constructed there. He acquired the property first as part of an inheritance through his maternal lineage. He sold the property to first to Hiram Evans, and then later acquired the property again. Though this time, it was bought at auction, and Blalock then sold it as a private residence for the Bartenfield family.
- Hiram Evans – Mr. Blalock sold the property to Hiram Evans. Evans was one-time head of the Ku Klux Klan. Mr. Evans was documented as living in a “...large residence in a prestigious Atlanta neighborhood.” This is most likely a reference to the well-documented Evans-Cucich House at 306 Peachtree Battle Avenue NW, also notable as one of the only art deco residential structures in Atlanta. So it is unlikely he occupied any portion of the Cochran Mill site as a permanent residence. Though not his home, speculation abounds at the meetings Evans may have hosted at the “fortress-like clubhouse” surrounded by a lake and electrified fence, and only accessible by a boardwalk through the old mill. Outside of Klan activities, Evans was also involved in an investigation for price fixing during his time as a contractor for the State of Georgia.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Bartenfield – acquired the property from Braxton Blalock Jr after he acquired it at auction. The Bartenfield’s sold the property to Fulton County in 1967.

The land that became Cochran Mill park was acquired by Fulton County in 1967. It had been identified in early regional planning documents as a desirable acquisition as a part of a regional greenspace program. The City of Chattahoochee Hills purchased the park from Fulton County after its incorporation in 2008.



Aerial image of Berry Cochran Mill with shoals, lake and house
 Source: University of Georgia Map and Government Information Library, Thomas Lowe and Associates, 1968



View of the Berry Cochran Mill with lake, house and shoals in the background
 Source: Lila H. Rhyne from an article in the Atlanta Weekly, 1965

The Cochran Mill Park Sites

There are two identified cemeteries in Cochran Mill Park. Both are located in proximity to Upper Wooten Road. Neither cemetery has formal inscribed tombstones, but the size and arrangement of the stones is typical of certain cemeteries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They have been referred to as “primitive” by an unattributed local history blog. Though primitive belies the reality that the availability of formal headstones was often limited by resources and transport. Whether these were cemeteries associated with early families, local religious congregations or some other connection, the use of stones reflects the tradition of using materials readily available. It would not be uncommon for some type of wooden marker to be used also, though many such wooden markers did not stand up to the elements over time.

Though in reasonably close proximity to the trails of the park, neither cemetery is identified on trail maps, nor marked with any sort of signage in the park.

The historic road bed of Cochran Mill Road passes through the park and is used as a pedestrian trail. Two historic bridges are included along this road. The first is located at the ruins of the Owen Cochran Mill near the main parking area, and the second is used as a pedestrian bridge along the trail.

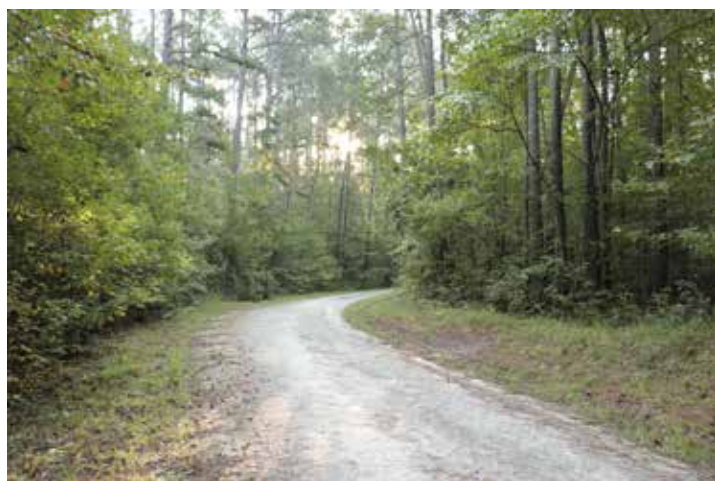
Upper Wooten Road was a local road before it was closed as a foot path through the park. Topographical maps show the presence of structures along the road. In certain areas, the remnants of landscape features give clues to former homesteads. Formal arrangements of trees and remnants of stacked stone suggest early borders delineated with landscape improvements. Seasonal bulbs and other ornamentals planted as edges or flowering beds mark sites where kitchen gardens and pleasure gardens could have previously been maintained. Many of these areas are outside of the proper park boundaries, but can be seen when traveling down the road on foot, bike or horseback between Cochran Mill Park and Rico Park.



One two cemeteries located inside of the park.



The old bed of Cochran Mill Road is used as a multi-purpose trail.



The old bed of Upper Wooten Road is used as a multi-use trail.



This bridge over Bear Creek is now used as a part of the multi-use trail network at Cochran Mill Park.

Interpretation

Current Interpretive Elements in Cochran Mill Park

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Chattahoochee Hills uses the brand “deliberately rural” to describe its vision for the city. In many ways, this is reflective of the current interpretive philosophy of the park. Cochran Mill Park has been a public park since 1967, first under the stewardship of Fulton County, and then eventually the City of Chattahoochee Hills after it was chartered as a new city in 2008. The decision to limit signage and other visual obtrusions in the park has been a deliberate choice. In doing so, visitors to the park can enjoy the environment in a mostly natural state.

The following elements are currently used to convey information about the park.

- **Main Kiosk** – there is one main parking lot for the park. Included in this area are restrooms, a pavilion, a playground, and a wooden information kiosk adjacent to the fee station. The main kiosk includes trail maps, a listing of park rules and best practices for visitors, and information on upcoming events in the park.
- **Trail Markers** – Four trails are marked with color coded symbols – red, green, orange and yellow. Trail maps are available in the main kiosk. Trail markers on carsonite posts are posted at regular intervals throughout the park. In addition to identifying the trail by its color, the markers also include directional arrows to keep people on the correct trail. They include symbols depicting which trails are appropriate for hiking, biking and horseback riding. And most recently symbols have been included to direct individuals along the trails that will lead them to waterfalls, along with approximate distances.
- **Interpretive Trail Markers** – an interpretive trail has been developed along the orange trail. This includes the main ruins of both the Owen Cochran Mill and the Berry Cochran Mill. The interpretive trail is keyed to letters posted on orange posts along the trail. A printed handout is needed to interpret the corresponding letters and sites. The interpretive trail includes areas of both historic and natural interest.



The Main Kiosk in the parking lot of the park is used to display an array of information on the park.



Carsonite posts are used as trail markers.
Source: Roland Alston

- **Trail Blazes** – in addition to trail markers, trail blazes are located at regular intervals along the trail. The blazes are color coded to each trail, and are primarily affixed to trees along the trail. The blazes help keep trail users on the path and moving in the right direction on the trail. The city is also deploying a pilot program for small kiosks displaying the trail map at various points out in the park. Due to concerns of vandalism, a limited number of kiosks will be constructed. More may be added in the future if the first set are not damaged or destroyed.
- **Smartphone App** – a smart phone app for the park and the trail identifies many of the sites of interest included in the interpretive trail. The app will alert users to upcoming points of interest. The app was originally created to be compatible with the Apple IOS operating system. After recent upgrades by Apple, the app was no longer compatible with the new operating system. The city has been working to upgrade the App to be compatible with both Apple IOS and Android, and anticipates that it will be available to users again in 2021.
- **Miscellaneous Signage** – there are other small signs – primarily in the parking area – that notify visitors of important rules and/ or safety information, including hours the park is open, penalties for not paying the parking fee, and spaces reserved for horse trailers.



Interpretive trail markers are keyed to color coded maps available at the Main Kiosk.



Trail blazes mark the various trails in the park and are keyed to color coded maps available at the Main Kiosk.



An example of the small map kiosk that will be installed at various points along the trails in the park.

Source: Roland Alston



The Cochran Mill Park Trail Map, Red and Yellow Trails
Source: Roland Alston



The Cochran Mill Park Trail Map, Orange and Green Trails
Source: Roland Alston

**Chattahoochee Hills
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Ken Langley, Lila Hargis Rhyne,
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COCHRAN MILL PARK INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

The Interpretive Trail follows the Orange Trail in a 2.5 mile loop along Little Bear Creek and Big Bear Creek and then returns through the woods. The first Orange Marker is located across the parking lot from the kiosk. (See Cochran Mill Park Map)



These improvements to Cochran Mill Park were made possible, in part, by a grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails Program.

- (E) On brown posts "E" indicates that you are on the east side of the park.
- (F) **Big Bear Creek** - Step onto the bridge to see the rapids created where the water flows over the rocks. Still pools occur where the water is deeper. Riffles occur where the water is shallow. This is called a pool-riffle sequence. Small waterfalls add oxygen to the water for the organisms that live in the stream. Enjoy the sound of the water rushing over the rocks.
- Turn back and continue on the orange trail. Take the trail to the left (Marker 7).
- (G) **Native Azaleas and Laurel** - Stream banks are lined with native azaleas and laurel 10 to 15 feet tall. Flowers typically bloom in late April and early May.
- (H) **Hydro-electric Plant Ruins** - Berry Winn Cochran Jr., a 1903 graduate of Georgia Tech, and grandson of



Fortress-Like Clubhouse in lake with Berry Cochran Mill on right and catwalk connecting the two.
Photo from Atlanta Journal, 1942

- (A) **Council Oaks** - In the median between the parking lots, the Council Oaks were planted on Arbor Day in 2015 by Chattahoochee Hills Mayor Tom Reed, and City Council members John Taylor, Richard Schmidt, Claire Williams, Faye Godwin, and Don Hayes. These oaks honor the volunteers who have made possible the many park improvements.

Walk down to Cochran Mill Road, across the crosswalk, down the gravel road (Marker 1).

- (B) **Original Roadbed** - Until this portion of Cochran Mill Road was rerouted

and new bridges were built, this gravel road was Cochran Mill Road. The current road was paved in 1978.

- (C) **Steel Truss Bridge** - This bridge, built over Little Bear Creek in the late 1800's, was closed after a storm damaged the bridge. **A Walk in the Woods** - Scenes from the movie starring Robert Redford and Nick Nolte were filmed in this creek and at other locations in the park. **Cheadle Cochran Mill** - Across the creek, you can see the foundation ruins of the gristmill built in the early 1800's by Cheadle Cochran. His son, Owen Cochran, took over the mill after his father's death in 1854. For more than 100 years, local farmers brought their corn to this mill to be ground into grits, cornmeal, and feed.

Walk along Little Bear Creek (Marker 2).



Steel Truss Bridge with Cheadle Cochran Mill on left, mill dam and falls on right.



Cheadle Cochran Mill
Photo from upstream near the dam.

- (D) **Mature Forest** - Perhaps because this slope was too steep to farm, a hardwood forest grows here, with many large oaks and beeches. **Christmas Ferns**, with their evergreen fronds, can be identified by their leaflets shaped like Santa's boot. **Little Bear Creek** - A meander or bend in the stream has been formed here by water eroding the outer bank and depositing silt on the inner bank.

Continue on this trail, and then turn right at Cochran Mill Road (Marker 3). Walk across the first bridge, and turn right at the gate (Marker 4). Continue on this trail along the flat flood plain. Follow the road as it curves right, then take a sharp left turn (Marker 5). (Note: For a closer look at the Cheadle Cochran Mill ruins, instead of turning left, continue straight to the bridge over Little Bear Creek, then turn around, and retrace your steps.) Walk until you reach the bridge over Big Bear Creek (Marker 6).



Berry Cochran Mill

metamorphic rock to the right of the trail. Lichen and mosses thrive here. At the contact between the two types of rock, granite and schist, the waters of Big Bear Creek flow.

- (L) **Berry Cochran Mill** - A second Cochran Mill was built in 1870, by Cheadle's oldest son Berry Winn Cochran Sr. The mill was located in the low area on the opposite side of the creek. The dam, which has been breached, was constructed of fieldstone.

Take the trail to the right, away from the creek (Marker 8).

- (M) **Squirrel Hangout** - As you walk through the woods, look on high spots like this fallen tree for evidence of squirrels. Nut shells provide a clue. As old trees decay, they provide nutrients for young trees. Look for small trees growing from this **Nurse Log**.

- (N) **Terracing** - Look on the hillsides to see terraces built in the 1800's to create a series of platforms on

which to grow crops. Cotton, watermelons, corn, apples, peaches, wheat, oats, barley and rye were commonly grown in this area. Terracing can be seen on the hill on right side of the trail but not on the steep rocky hill to the left. Notice the difference in the kinds of trees growing on the terraced land that was farmed and on the land that is not terraced and not farmed.

- (O) **Club Moss** - Sometimes called ground cedar, this small evergreen plant is related to the earliest land plants, which evolved about 395 million years ago. Plants like these grew to 100 feet in height. When they died and decayed, they formed coal. Club Mosses are considered the oldest extant (living) vascular plants on earth.

Turn right (Marker 9).

- (P) On brown posts "P" with an arrow shows the direction back to the Parking Lot.

- (Q) **Mysterious Trench** - While the purpose of this trench is unknown, one possible explanation is that it was the site of a still used to make moonshine whiskey.

- (R) **Granite Boulders** - The unusual shape of the granite boulders suggests that this was an old quarry. Stones from this site may have been cut and hauled to the nearby creeks to build dams and foundations for the mills.

Continue on this trail to the next intersection (Marker 7). Turn left and walk back the way you came. Big Bear Creek will be on your right.

City Wayfinding Program

The City of Chattahoochee Hills has explored a community wayfinding program for many years. General brand guidelines were identified first through an Our Town Grant provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Subsequently, the City worked with the Atlanta Regional Commission to develop a plan for locating gateway and wayfinding signage throughout the city.

The City has recently contracted with a consulting firm to deploy a final concept for gateway and commercial wayfinding throughout the City. The Chattahoochee Hills Historic Commission has recommended a series of local landmarks to be identified through the wayfinding program. The Commission has also recommended that the consultants explore the possibility of a third type of wayfinding that is more modest than community gateways or commercial wayfinding signs. This third option would be compatible with brand design of other city signage, but be scaled in a way that is appropriate for local cultural landmarks.

The outcomes of this project are pending, but it is anticipated that signage guidelines developed through this project may be an option for consideration for use in the city's parks, as appropriate.

Public Safety

Cochran Mill Park has become an increasingly popular destination for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders. Visitors use the park for a variety of recreational activities including hiking and swimming. The park enjoys an active relationship with local cycling enthusiasts and organizations that assist in trail maintenance for the cycling community. And it is one of the few parks in the area appropriate for horseback riding on designated trails. The main parking lot includes an ADA accessible mounting platform for horseback riding, underscoring the wide variety of users the park currently accommodates.

The increasing use of the park has required a commensurate response in public safety measures on behalf of the city. Two considerations are relevant for the purposes of this report.

Emergency Response. The Chattahoochee Hills Fire Rescue Department has documented 10 incidents requiring emergency response at Cochran Mill Park between January and August 2020. This higher-than-usual demand on city resources included both personal injury to hikers and bikers, and search and rescue operations for individuals lost on the trail network. Of the 10 total incidents, six required some form of ambulance transport. In an effort to improve public safety at the park, the City Fire Chief has recommended that additional trail blazes are installed on all trails such that interval-distance between trail makers is significantly reduced. Also, developing a numbering system for the blazes will allow users to identify the last number they passed, which could aid rescue parties in more efficiently locating injured or lost individuals.

The City Fire Chief has also recommended that the installation of waypoint or location signs that clearly identify the most visited locations in the park could help people better plan their hike. Identifying distances to these locations will help visitors to anticipate whether they have the stamina to undertake the requisite distance during daylight hours.

The preliminary sites recommended for identification of waypoint signs include Cochran Mill upper dam; Cochran Mill lower dam; Rock area Nature Center Trail; Henry Mill Falls (lower); Henry Mill Falls (upper); Zack's Glade; Cochran Mill Bridge and Falls; and trail intersections. As the City completes the recommendations of the wayfinding signage program, the signage standards developed for local landmarks and cultural resources may be an option for the desired waypoint signs in Cochran Mill Park.

Vandalism. Increased use of the park lends itself to opportunities for increased vandalism. Some acts of vandalism are deliberate, tagging park features with markers and paint. Signs in and around the park have been shot with firearms or lost due to theft or destruction. Individuals freely climb on top of the ruins of historic structures or actively use metal detectors to seek artifacts.

The City of Chattahoochee Hills has adopted local ordinances that provide penalties for the theft of/ damage to cultural resources within the park. Signage will be installed in the main parking area that alerts people these actions are illegal and provides a number to the Chattahoochee Hills Police Department so that incidents may be reported.

Ongoing issues with vandalism also influence the installation of signage within the park. The installation of high quality interpretive signage is likely to be a target for vandalism. Many of the resources within the park that could benefit from interpretive panels with text and photos, are also located at remote locations on the trail system. This could increase the possibility for casual or deliberate damage to any markers installed in these locations. The expense of manufacturing and installing any type of sign has to be weighed against the cost to maintain it, including the likelihood that it will be damaged or destroyed.



Some forms of vandalism, including graffiti and tags, are visible and damaging intrusions into the park. This site is one of the old bridges along Cochran Mill Road over Little Bear Creek that is now used as a pedestrian bridge.



Vandalism of multiple surfaces is present within the park.



Trash from picnics, parties and other celebrations are left on trails and in gathering spaces in the park.



Remnants of retaining walls and other landscape features are scattered throughout the park, and largely left overgrown and unchecked.



Visitors climb and swim at the sites of the Owen Cochran Mill, further threatening the deterioration of the ruins at the site.

Recommendations

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties is the benchmark for determining appropriate actions in regard to historic sites and resources. Four main alternatives should be evaluated for any given site.

- Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity and materials of an historic property.
- Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical or cultural values.
- Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.
- Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Of the four treatments, Preservation is the most appropriate level of intervention for the sites at Cochran Mill Park. Though much can be learned about mill sites in adjacent communities, the structures associated with Henry's Mill and the Cochran Mills are mostly lost to time. The ruins of historic features indicate the general areas of activity. The connections through the historic roads and drives that are still evident in the park allow a sense of how this early industry connected to the larger community. Archaeological investigation can yield more information through examination of the subsurface resources in the park. And the fact that the property has had relatively few owners since first parceled out in the 1827 land lottery means the changes to the landscape over time have been relatively minimal and straightforward.

Enhanced interpretation of the park can be accomplished by providing greater access to those historic documents that help the visitor to visualize the sites at Cochran Mill Park as they would have existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Specifically, the period of significance between around 1865 and 1920 captures the return of brothers Owen Cochran and Berry Cochran, Sr. to their family homesite after the Civil War. As a part of the reconstruction of the south, they improve upon and establish new industry to rebuild their community after the war. Berry Cochran Jr. continues to evolve the industrial power on the land, adding the electric generator to provide power to the City of Palmetto. Implicit in this period of significance would be the role that Cheadle Cochran may have played as owning or establishing the first mill. More research is needed to properly identify and understand this earliest portion of the history of the site.

A second period of significance is between around 1920 and 1967, covering the time that the property transfers outside of the Cochran family and transitions toward non-industrial uses. By the time the site is acquired by Fulton County in 1967, all milling activity had ceased. As opposed to the first period of significance which encapsulates a largely static view of the property as serving the industrial needs of the local community, the second period of significance covers multiple disparate events with a less physical evidence of these activities:

- The decline of small scale local industry with the rise of geographic clustering and concentration of industrial uses.
- The political activities of Hiram Evans, a nationally prominent and controversial individual
- The suburban growth of metro Atlanta, and the use of the property first as an exurban residential retreat, and then eventually as a suburban community greenspace, or as described in a 1988 article in the Atlanta Journal Constitution, a "pastoral sanctuary" for residents of a growing metro area who are "...full of concrete and hunger for natural beauty."



The dam at the Berry Cochran Mill site has been compromised in several places. Vegetation is allowed to overgrow the structure.



Debris backs up behind the dam at the Berry Cochran Mill site.

Recommendations

Archaeological Investigations Needed

Several of the cultural resources described in this document were extant at the time Fulton County acquired the land for the park. The mills were lost to vandalism, and today there are little more than crumbling ruins of previous sites and structures. The loss of many structures is unfortunate, but there are still opportunities to learn more about these sites from the subsurface archaeological record.

The city is aware of the threat of continued vandalism from those who use metal detectors and other means of search for artifacts within the park. The city has passed ordinances prohibiting this activity and posted signs notifying visitors that type of treasure hunting is not allowed. Though fines and other penalties can be exacted for violations, the best protection against this kind of activity would be proactive examination of the archaeological resources in the park.

The National Register of Historic Places recognizes that archaeological sites have the power to yield information that is both new and significant. Much is known about the park from published documents and oral histories, but very little of this information has been supplemented by the tangible record that is still available through archaeological investigation. A plan to undertake systematic investigation of archaeological resources in the park will yield greater material for understanding and interpreting the park.



Ruins of the Berry Cochran Mill adjacent to the Green Trail.

Preservation Plan for Extant Resources Needed

Similar to the concerns for archaeological resources, the ruins of existing sites and structures remain largely neglected within the park. The natural environment has been allowed to overtake many sites of historic interest. The old dams have been breached and the free flow of water erodes the integrity of the structures. The site of the lake has become largely overgrown with boggy vegetation. Seawalls are buried in silt. The old road beds, given over to pedestrian paths, have lost much of their integrity, marked only by granite curbing intermittently visible to those who know to look for it.

The foundations of the mills themselves are generally marked only by heaps of granite lying where it has fallen. Vegetation is allowed to encroach in many areas. And those that are relatively clear of vegetation are alluring sites for visitors to climb over. There has been lament over the loss of the mill structures during Fulton County's tenure. But as a city park, little has been done to secure historic sites from further deterioration.

The remains of sites and structures are possibly the most powerful interpretive tool in the park. But with little intervention to keep what remains in a state of good maintenance and repair, the park risks losing what is left of its namesake. Beyond a plan for interpreting the significance for these sites, the city should develop a plan of routine maintenance for the preservation of extant historic features in the park, treating the natural and manmade environment as one cohesive cultural landscape.



The concrete dam constructed by Blalock has been breached in order to drain the lake.

Continuity of Existing Signage and Introduction of New Signage

The City will continue to install the trail markers and interpretive blazes so as to better keep visitors on the trails. The addition of small kiosks with maps will help visitors to better locate themselves when out on the trails, and keeping information refreshed and updated at the main kiosk at the parking lot will help with the awareness of all park rules and regulations. The city has solid short term plans to expand the existing signage in the park, and in doing so, work with public safety personnel to help ensure a safe visitor experience.

Recommendations

Cochran Mill Park Smartphone App and Other Opportunities

The Cochran Mill smartphone app largely takes the place the interpretive trail markers and map. The City may need to consider the degree to which it plans to continue providing maps for the interpretive trail once the new app is deployed. At this time, the app is a preferable alternative to expensive interpretive signage that may largely be the target of vandalism. However, as more information becomes known about the park, it is recommended that the city review the interpretive trail, and consider expanding to other resources on different trails.

The City should also be cognizant of the digital divide in regard to interpretation at the park. Many people will have access to smartphones, but consideration should also be given to those who choose to forego a smartphone altogether, or at least choose to not bring them for a day outdoors. Technology developed for the smartphone app should also work for individuals with visual and hearing impairment.

As the city develops the app and other means of interpretation, consideration should be given to the needs of all park users, regardless of ability. The smartphone app is designed to share information with visitors once they are in proximity to a site. As most trails that take visitors to the unique historic and cultural sites are not ADA accessible, visitors with limited mobility may lose out in sharing all the park has to offer. Including substantive information about the historic and cultural resources on the park on the city's website could be one option to ensure greater access to that information. Supplementing the app with photos of existing conditions at each of the sites also provides access for visitors unable to reach them.

Permanent interpretive panels installed in the area around the main parking lot could be another option to help insure equity of interpretation. The desire to preserve the majority of the park in as natural state as possible is understood. But a modest exhibit of interpretive panels near the pavilion or play ground gets the city one step closer to bridging the digital divide and enhancing the quality of the experience of the visitor who may otherwise be limited in access to trails and existing interpretive content.

As park visitation increases, bringing additional revenues through parking fees and private events, consideration should be given to an enhanced system for interpretation. Though it may seem to be a far-off possibility, a ranger program could help address multiple concerns, including interpretation, maintenance, safety, access and prevention of vandalism. This would open the possibility conducting tours and other special events to provide an in-depth, personalized experience. With full-time or part-time ranger staff, the possibility of physical signage describing the history and significance of key points in the park may become feasible, insofar as there will be a more consistent presence to monitor for vandalism. And greater opportunities for programming – including in person sign language interpretation – can enhance the visitor experience.

Interpretive experiences through temporary or permanent exhibitions or installations may enhance the visitor's understanding of the site. Consideration of this option should be preceded by the adoption of a public art ordinance, or similar legislation by the city. There is a subjective quality to certain forms of interpretation, and there are many alternatives to evaluate against the policies of an adopted city public art ordinance. Showing a ghost outline of the mill structures against the natural environment, such as the NPS site of Ben Franklin's home, a part of Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, is one such example.

Appendix A: Sources

Georgia Architectural and Historic Properties Survey-Inventory Form – Carroll-Richardson Grist Mill, Cave Springs, Georgia, 1980, Georgia State Historic Preservation Office.

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Head's Mill, Lula, Georgia, 1989, Georgia State Historic Preservation Office.

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Alcovy Road Grist Mill/ Freeman's Mill, Dacula, Georgia, 1998, Georgia State Historic Preservation Office.

National Register of Historic Places Preliminary Registration Form – Wilkerson Mill, Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia, 2017, Georgia State Historic Preservation Office.

Mills of Mystery, unpublished manuscript, 1989, Lila H. Rhyne.

“Palmetto: A Town and Its People,” Barbara Crisp and Teresa Daugherty, eds., Town and Country Homemakers Club, 1979.

“Home in the Old Mill Stream,” by Willard Neal, published in The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine, 1965.

Appendix B: Relevant Plans and Studies

Recommendations for interpretive opportunities in Cochran Mill Park can be found in several other city plans and studies. Details are included here for context and direction.

Tourism Product Development Report June 2020

- Creating connections to key locations through trails would promote the city as an attractive local destination and residence and serve locals and visitors. Chattahoochee Riverlands and the Aerotropolis Greenway trail systems are long term projects connecting this area to the rest of Atlanta, but simple local connections from Serenbe to Cochran Mill Park, for example, using existing gravel roads and built gravel connectors along shoulder right of way on lesser traveled roads, would be an affordable way to make these connections for the community.
- Promote bike-packing adventures to start at or overnight in Cochran Mill Park or the new campground planned for Campbellton Park.
- Cochran Mill Park
 1. Promote the ADA equestrian mount
 - Promote the existence of, if not the only, publicly accessible ADA equestrian mounting block in the state
 - Note the ample room for parking horse trailers in the gravel lot
 - Indicate established system of shared trail use for hikers, bikers and equestrians
 - Suggest guided rides at Serenbe for newcomers
 2. Need hiking and equestrian trail angels
 - Place a notice in the kiosk that the park seeks to formalize trail angel/ volunteer group from the hiking and equestrian communities
 - Give them an email address to sign up at and respond with suggested trail maintenance days like MTB Atlanta already does from the mountain bike community
 - Invite them to solicit visitors from niche populations like : Outdoor Afro, Eco addendum, Hike it Baby, -Unlikely Hikers, Elder Hiking, Chattahoochee Trail Horse Association, and so forth to build up a diverse park support group
 3. Cochran Mill Park Heritage: Begin storytelling to bring cultural heritage to life
 - 1902 Bridge Preservation Projects – tell the story of this bridge, Historic Bridge Foundation, <https://historicbridgefoundation.com/>
 - Tell your mill story – Welcome all visitors so that all know the rules and etiquette of sharing the trails; add interpretive panels along the walk from the parking lot trailhead to the falls that include historic photos and written history about the Mill and ponds; add solar powered lighting on the bridge; continue to track visitor county for reference in future grants and development projects
 - Capture the perfect selfie at the falls; add a stationary cam to capture the beauty of falls and the bridge by offering a unique visitor experience by snapping that perfect souvenir photo that can be downloaded and shared on Chattahoochee Hills marketing site; suggest #heritage hashtags for visitors
 - Begin storytelling to bring cultural heritage to life
 - * Muscogee (Creek Native Americans)
 - * Develop a preservation plan to tell history, capture oral histories, create a site or sites to designate with markers

- * Build relationship with local/ national people/tribal nation to tell a historical narrative that is real and reflective of the Muscogee people and their experience and history
- * Develop a cultural center
- * Restorative work by partnering with the Muscogee Nation
- * Oral history project to capture the stories of the remaining families
- * Euchee Indian heritage
- * Combine Native American and African American heritage storytelling where they overlap

4. Cherry Hollow Farms

- Guide visitors to the Cochran Mill Park site for continued and local mill heritage

Chattahoochee Hills Art & Design Master Plan – 2012 NEA Our Town Grant

Design Standards for the Chattahoochee Hills Brand

- Natural – The traditional definition of “natural” is something that exists in or was formed by nature, or is based on the state of things in nature. In Chattahoochee Hills, nature is the main community characteristic that is celebrated by all
- Rural – This reflects the traditional life-style in Chattahoochee Hills and the social dynamics that have governed daily lives for generations. It suggests a tranquil life, free of the pressures of contemporary urban living.
- Beautiful – The visual beauty of Chattahoochee Hills is the trait that gives the most pleasure and satisfaction to residents and visitors. It is a delight to the sense and a magnet that will be among the most important characteristics driving the City’s future development.
- Artistic – It is more than just the presence of excellent visual and performing artists that marks Chattahoochee Hills as an artistic community. Almost without exception, the community has high visual standards that are aesthetically satisfying and reflective of its arts and crafts traditions. There are numerous instances in which everyday objects have been created with those traditions.
- Unique – Chattahoochee Hills has a character and a “feel” unlike any other community in the nation. City zoning, codes and plans are a main reason for this uniqueness. It is close to a major urban center, yet has prevented the intrusion of conventional suburban sprawl.
- Sophisticated – Sophisticated often refers to a person, images or tastes that are altered by education and experiences so as to be more worldly. In Chattahoochee Hills, sophisticated also describes the manner in which this new city is operated and its natural environment protected.
- Unexpected – Chattahoochee Hills is a surprising thing in many ways. Few expect to find a community such as this only a short distance for the heart of Atlanta. Fine food, shopping and accommodations in a dense setting such as Serenbe join with the pastoral nature of the City to create surprise.

Graphic design standards: wayfinding

- Material: wood for standards, frames and backing
- Color: “horse fence” black or creosote brown
- Brackets: metal brackets for temporary informational signs
- Typeface: Neutra Display Tilting
- Image: each standard is topped with a metal miniature local songbird, possibly painted bright colors indicating communities or neighborhoods in Chattahoochee Hills

Design Project Priorities 2014-15

- Public art projects - Crosswalks – Cochran Mill Park between east and west sides

ARC Wayfinding Plan 2013

Parks and recreation areas represent important destinations within the City as well...Cochran Mill Park, Hutcheson Ferry Park and Rico Park are public parks operated by the City of Chattahoochee Hills. Each offers an array of outdoor recreational opportunities. Stakeholders specifically noted that Cochran Mill Park and Hutcheson Ferry Park should be promoted as parking and staging areas for cyclist groups.

South Fulton Scenic Byways Historic Context 2007

Although not part of the Friendship Community, the nearby old Cochran Mill site and Wilkerson Mill are two historically significant properties. The stone wall and steel frame bridge ruins of the Cochran Mill (FU-111) (c. 1890) located in the 900 acre, county owned Cochran Mill Park at the intersection of Cochran Mill Road and Upper Wooten Road, are all that remain of the three mills built by the Cochran family during the mid to late nineteenth century on Little and Big Bear Creeks. Cheadle Cochran, the patriarch of the locally prominent Cochran family came to Campbell County during the late 1820s and build a lumber mill on Little Bear Creek. Cochran went on to become a state senator from 1822 to 1837 and was the main proponent of establishing rural mail routes throughout Georgia. His son, Berry Winn Cochran, Sr. built a gristmill powered by an upstream lock dam on Big Bear Creek close to Cochran Mill Road and about a mile from the original site. He built the third mill on a five foot dam across the ledge from the second mill. This mill was three stories tall and constructed of hand-hewn beams. It had a set of interchangeable set of stones for grinding various grains. Berry Winn Cochran Jr. a 1903 graduate of Georgia Tech, attached a small generator plant to the mill and supplied electricity to Palmetto from 1909 until 1918 when Georgia Power established its lines in the area. Fulton County bought 725 acres of the property in 1968 and an additional 175 in 1973. The mill burned down in 1974 and a flood in 1994 washed away part of its foundation.

South Fulton Historic Trail Video produced by the Old Campbell County Historical Society

Cochran Mill Park was established in 1967 by Fulton County. It embraces 800 acres of woodlands, wetlands, recreation and six miles of scenic trails that wind all over the woodlands and wetlands of Big Bear and Little Bear Creeks. It is believed that Cheadle Cochran build the grist mill on Little Bear Creek in the 1840's. Upon Cheadle's death in 1854, son Owen took over the mill and operated it until his death. The mill operated almost continuously until it closed in the 1960s. After the mill closed in the late 1960s, vandals began destroying the building and dynamited the dam. Presently all that is left of the mill are two stone pillars that supported the large water wheel. One of the Cochran brothers, Berry Cochran built a grist mill on the north side of Big Bear Creek in 1870. It can be reached by a half mile trail from the Owen Cochran Mill. The mill ground corn and wheat.

Throughout the life of the mill, the mill pond above the dam was also a mecca for swimming and recreation. A wooden bridge some fifty feet above the dam served as a swimming platform. Friendship Baptist Church used the mill pond in the summer to baptize converts. The creek at this point cascaded down some seventy feet over a granite spillway to a pool below. The water slide became famous throughout the community. The granite surface below the dam resembles a two step slide, both steps about thirty five feet in length. The first gently curved to a steeper decline about fifteen feet and leveled off. Then a second slope of about twenty five feet and a steeper curve into the pool at the base of the granite. The second slope was the favorite. The swimmer positioned himself in the stream of water running over the slope and a wild ride to the pool below.

About 1939 another dam was constructed several hundred feet below the original dam. The mill was completely surrounded by water and was demolished by vandals in 1972. A pavilion was built in the center of the man made lake and it too was later demolished. In 1967, Fulton County purchased the mill as a part of Cochran Mill Park.

Appendix C: Sites Included in the Smart Phone App

- Council Oaks - In the median between the parking lots, the Council Oaks were planted on Arbor Day in 2015 by Chattahoochee Hills Mayor Tom Reed, and City Council members John Taylor, Richard Schmidt, Claire Williams, Faye Godwin, and Don Hayes. These oaks honor the volunteers who have made possible the many park improvements.
- Original Roadbed - Until this portion of Cochran Mill Road was rerouted and new bridges were built, this gravel road was Cochran Mill Road. The current road was paved in 1978.
- Steel Truss Bridge - This bridge, built over Little Bear Creek in the late 1800's, was closed after a storm damaged the bridge. A Walk in the Woods - Scenes from the movie starring Robert Redford and Nick Nolte were filmed in this creek and at other locations in the park.
- Owen Cochran Mill - You can see the foundation ruins of the gristmill built in the early 1800's by Cheadle Cochran. His son, Owen Cochran, took over the mill after his father's death in 1854. For almost 100 years, local farmers brought their corn to this mill to be ground into grits, cornmeal, and feed.
- Owen Cochran Mill Dam - Constructed of fieldstone, this dam was originally 80 feet long.
- Big Bear Creek - Step onto the bridge to see the rapids created where the water flows over the rocks. Still pools occur where the water is deeper. Riffles occur where the water is shallow. This is called a pool-riffle sequence. Small waterfalls add oxygen to the water for the organisms that live in the stream. Enjoy the sound of the water rushing over the rocks.
- Native Azaleas and Laurel - Stream banks are lined with native azaleas and laurel 10 to 15 feet tall. Flowers typically bloom in late April and early May.
- Hydro-electric Plant Ruins - Berry Winn Cochran Jr., a 1903 graduate of Georgia Tech, and grandson of Cheadle Cochran, constructed this to provide the first electricity for the City of Palmetto in 1909. Since no one had electric appliances at that time, electricity was needed only for light and power was provided only at night. During the day, the electricity was off and the water powered the mill.
- Concrete Dam - This dam was built in 1939 on Big Bear Creek to create a lake. In it, a clubhouse was constructed on pilings sitting in 14 feet of water. The Atlanta Journal published an article on March 2, 1942, calling this a "Fortress-Like Clubhouse" because the lake was surrounded by a high fence charged with electricity, and to get to the clubhouse required walking through the old mill and crossing the lake on a catwalk. It was necessary to open six padlocks to reach the front door. "There, according to the grand jury's investigators, high state officials and others identified with the administration of former Governor E. D. Rivers, used to foregather (sic) for secret discussions of business and politics over big steak dinners."
- The Walking Dead - Scenes from Season 2, Episode 5 were filmed below.
- Granite Outcrops - About 300 million years ago, the huge granite outcrops seen on the opposite side of the creek, were formed by molten magma miles below the surface of the earth. Schist - Notice the ground water seeping through the cracks and fissures of this metamorphic rock to the right of the trail. Lichen and mosses thrive here. At the contact between the two types of rock, granite and schist, the waters of Big Bear Creek flow

- Berry Cochran Mill - A second Cochran Mill was built in 1870, by Cheadle's oldest son Berry Winn Cochran Sr. The mill was located in the low area on the north side of Big Bear Creek.
- Berry Cochran Mill Dam - Constructed of fieldstone, this dam was originally 80 feet long.
- Terracing - Look on the hillsides to see terraces built in the 1800's to create a series of platforms on which to grow crops. Cotton, watermelons, corn, apples, peaches, wheat, oats, barley and rye were commonly grown in this area. Terracing can be seen on the hill on right side of the trail but not on the steep rocky hill to the left. Notice the difference in the kinds of trees growing on the terraced land that was farmed and on the land that is not terraced and not farmed.
- Henry's Mill Falls