

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1521

To preserve and protect archaeological sites and historical resources of the central Mississippi Valley through the establishment of the Mississippi Valley National Historical Park as a unit of the National Park System on former Eaker Air Force Base in Blytheville, Arkansas.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 22, 1999

Mr. BERRY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To preserve and protect archaeological sites and historical resources of the central Mississippi Valley through the establishment of the Mississippi Valley National Historical Park as a unit of the National Park System on former Eaker Air Force Base in Blytheville, Arkansas.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Mississippi Valley National Historical Park Act of
6 1999”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of
2 this Act is as follows:

- 3 Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- 4 Sec. 2. Findings.
- 5 Sec. 3. Mississippi Valley National Historical Park, Blytheville, Arkansas.
- 6 Sec. 4. Transfer of jurisdiction, Eaker Air Force Base, for historical park.
- 7 Sec. 5. Acquisition of Chickasawba Mound for inclusion in historical park.
- 8 Sec. 6. Administration of historical park.

9 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

10 Congress finds the following:

11 (1) The central and lower Mississippi Valley re-
12 gion contained the highest population levels and the
13 most complex Native American societies north of
14 Mexico before the arrival of European peoples in the
15 16th century.

16 (2) In addition, the Mississippi Valley has also
17 hosted Spanish, French, English, and ultimately
18 American societies at different times in the last 450
19 years.

20 (3) Blytheville, Arkansas, is centrally located in
21 the Mississippi Valley region.

22 (4) Former Eaker Air Force Base, which is lo-
cated outside of Blytheville, Arkansas, in the central
Mississippi Valley region, is the site of 14 archae-
ological sites associated with Native Americans.

(5) Because of its value in illustrating and in-
terpreting the heritage of the United States, the
largest of these archaeological sites, was recognized

1 by the National Park Service as a National Historic
2 Landmark in 1996.

3 (6) Another archaeological site outside of
4 Blytheville, Arkansas, the Chickasawba Mound, was
5 placed on the National Register of Historic Places in
6 1984 because of its historic and archaeological re-
7 sources.

8 (7) These previous actions by the Department
9 of the Interior recognize that these archaeological
10 sites are likely to benefit, educate, and inspire
11 present and future generations of Americans, but no
12 unified heritage park for the central Mississippi Val-
13 ley region exists within the National Park Service.

14 (8) Blytheville, Arkansas, also possesses many
15 other regionally and nationally significant natural,
16 seismic, cultural, and recreational resources associ-
17 ated with the heritage of the central Mississippi Val-
18 ley region.

19 (9) The sites and resources associated with the
20 heritage of the central Mississippi Valley region re-
21 quire recognition through the establishment of a na-
22 tional historical park for the central Mississippi Val-
23 ley region as a unit of the National Park System.

24 (10) As a result of the closing of Eaker Air
25 Force Base in Blytheville, Arkansas, pursuant to the

1 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990,
2 Federal land and facilities are readily available for
3 the establishment of a national historical park for
4 the central Mississippi Valley region to protect the
5 archaeological sites located on the former military
6 installation, as well as to preserve, maintain, and in-
7 terpret the natural, seismic, cultural, and rec-
8 reational heritage of the central Mississippi Valley
9 region for the benefit, education, and inspiration of
10 present and future generations of Americans.

11 **SEC. 3. MISSISSIPPI VALLEY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK,**
12 **BLYTHEVILLE, ARKANSAS.**

13 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—In order to preserve for the
14 benefit and inspiration of the people of the United States
15 as a national historical park certain properties in Blythe-
16 ville, Arkansas, and its vicinity associated with the archae-
17 ological, natural, seismic, cultural, and recreational herit-
18 age of the Mississippi Valley region, there is established
19 as a unit of the National Park System the Mississippi Val-
20 ley National Historical Park in the State of Arkansas.

21 (b) BOUNDARIES.—The historical park shall consist
22 of approximately 570 acres, including the real property
23 transferred to the National Park Service at former Eaker
24 Air Force Base under section 4 and the parcel of real
25 property containing the archaeological site known as the

1 Chickasawba Mound and authorized for acquisition under
2 section 5. The boundaries of the historical park shall also
3 include all property authorized to be acquired for inclusion
4 in the park by any law enacted after the date of the enact-
5 ment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 4. TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION, EAKER AIR FORCE**
7 **BASE, FOR HISTORICAL PARK.**

8 (a) **TRANSFER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES.**—The
9 Secretary of Defense shall transfer, without reimburse-
10 ment, to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary
11 of the Interior the parcels of real property (including im-
12 provements thereon) located at former Eaker Air Force
13 Base, Blytheville, Arkansas, consisting of the archae-
14 ological sites depicted on the map entitled “Arkansas
15 Aeroplex Archaeological Sites”.

16 (b) **VISITOR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SITES.**—

17 (1) **TRANSFER REQUIRED.**—To preserve the
18 historical character and landscape of the main fea-
19 tures of the historical park, the Secretary of Defense
20 also shall transfer, without reimbursement, to the
21 administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of the
22 Interior an additional parcel of real property at
23 former Eaker Air Force Base for the development of
24 visitor, administrative, museum, curatorial, and
25 maintenance facilities for the historical park.

1 this Act and the laws generally applicable to units of the
2 National Park System, including the Act of August 25,
3 1916 (commonly known as the National Park Service Or-
4 ganic Act; 16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), and the Act of August
5 21, 1935 (commonly known as the Historic Sites, Build-
6 ings, and Antiquities Act; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

7 (b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

8 (1) AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of the Inte-
9 rior may consult and enter into cooperative agree-
10 ments with interested entities and individuals to pro-
11 vide for the preservation, development, interpreta-
12 tion, and use of the historical park.

13 (2) CONDITIONS.—Any payment made by the
14 Secretary pursuant to such a cooperative agreement
15 shall be subject to an agreement that conversion,
16 use, or disposal of the project assisted under the co-
17 operative agreement for purposes contrary to the
18 purposes of the historical park, as determined by the
19 Secretary, shall result in a right of the United
20 States to reimbursement of all funds made available
21 to such project or the proportion of the increased
22 value of the project attributable to such funds as de-
23 termined at the time of such conversion, use, or dis-
24 posal, whichever is greater.

1 (c) ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.—Subject to
2 sections 4 and 5, the Secretary of the Interior may ac-
3 quire, within the boundaries of the historical park, real
4 property with appropriated or donated funds, by donation,
5 or by exchange for inclusion in the historical park.

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