

# NEWS LOCAL & STATE

## Bill introduces to Establish Ocmulgee Mounds as Georgia's First National Park & Preserve

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- U.S. Representatives Austin Scott (GA-08) and Sanford Bishop (GA-02), alongside U.S. Senators Jon Ossoff and Reverend Raphael Warnock, introduced bipartisan legislation to establish Georgia's first National Park.

Reps. Scott and Bishop and Sens. Ossoff and Rev. Warnock introduced the bipartisan, bicameral Ocmulgee Mounds Park and Preserve Establishment Act, which would establish Ocmulgee Mounds and surrounding areas in Middle Georgia as a National Park and Preserve.

The House bill is cosponsored by 11 other members of Georgia's Congressional Delegation: Reps. Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (GA-01), Drew Ferguson (GA-03), Henry C. "Hank" Johnson (GA-04), Nikema Williams (GA-05), Rich McCormick (GA-06), Lucy McBath (GA-07), Mike Collins (GA-10), Barry Loudermilk (GA-11), Rick Allen (GA-12), David Scott (GA-13), and Marjorie Taylor Greene (GA-14).

The area is the ancestral home of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and has been inhabited continuously by humans for over 12,000 years. American Indians first arrived in the area during the Paleo-Indian Period hunting Ice Age mammals. Around 900 CE, the Mississippian Period began, and Muskogean people constructed mounds for meeting, living, burial, agricultural, and other purposes, many of which remain today and would be encompassed in the new U.S. National Park and Preserve.

Late last year, the U.S. National Park Service released a Special Resource Study that was initiated in response to a bill authored and passed into law by Reps. Scott and Bishop and former Senators Isakson and Perdue in 2019 that had been first introduced in 2014 by Reps. Scott and Bishop and former Senators Isakson and Chambliss.

The new bipartisan bill incorporates information from the Special Resource Study to define the boundaries of the proposed National Park and Preserve in close coordination with the feedback collected from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation; local elected officials; business, faith, agricultural, environmental, and community leaders; Robins Air Force Base; and more.

"The Ocmulgee Mounds are of invaluable cultural, communal, and economic significance to our state. Designating them as the first National Park and Preserve in Georgia is a great bipartisan and intragovernmental effort, and I thank Rep. Sanford Bishop, Senators Ossoff and Warnock, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and all local stakeholders for their efforts to preserve this remarkable cultural site," Rep. Austin Scott said.

"This bill reflects the voice of a multitude of Georgians who wish to elevate the Ocmulgee Mounds to its proper place as one of America's National Parks. The new Ocmulgee Mounds National Park will encompass lands that are rich in historical and cultural resources which provide abundant opportunities for hunting, camping, fishing, and other recreational activities," said Rep. Bishop. "This bipartisan bill is the product of a longstanding effort that not only honors the Muscogee Creek Nation and our country's indigenous people but also the vibrant history, culture, and natural beauty of our state. As a national park we can better preserve and draw thousands of visitors a year to this national treasure."

"It is thrilling to introduce this bipartisan legislation that would establish Georgia's first National Park & Preserve right here in Macon-Bibb County and Middle Georgia," Senator Ossoff said. "I'm grateful to Congressman Scott, Congressman Bishop, and Senator Reverend Warnock. Above all, I want to commend the extraordinary efforts of local officials, and in particular, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Macon-Bibb County Mayor Pro Tem Seth Clark for their years of hard work, advocacy, and leadership that has made this moment possible."

"Ocmulgee Mounds is a living testament to our intertwined histories and a robust source of economic and cultural vitality, so I'm proud to support the bipartisan, bicameral efforts to establish Ocmulgee Mounds as Georgia's first National Park and Preserve," said Senator Reverend Warnock. "I want to thank Congressmen Scott and Bishop for their yearslong efforts on this in the U.S. House, as well as Senator Ossoff for his leadership. Working together, we are proving what is possible when we put politics aside and center the people of Georgia."

"The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has worked closely with Senators Ossoff and Warnock and Representatives Scott and Bishop to help develop and review the draft Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Bill. We are in full support of the draft text and proposed boundary of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve unit. We are thrilled to see this bill introduced and stand ready to support this legislation every step of the way," said David W. Hill, Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. "It has been a privilege and honor to collaborate with these Senators, Members, and their staff to establish Georgia's first National Park and Preserve. The Ocmulgee Mounds, Ocmulgee River, and all of middle Georgia hold historical significance to The Muscogee (Creek) Nation. We are ready to help preserve and co-manage the land which holds the rich cultural history, natural resources, and recreational opportunities that a National Park and Preserve will bring to Georgia."

"The Ocmulgee Corridor is a special place, recognized as one of America's most important wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia," said Seth C. Clark, Macon-Bibb County Mayor Pro Tempore and Executive Director of the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative. "Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will enhance resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the federally recognized tribe of purview, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Department of Interior, protect and enhance hunting and fishing access, protect private property rights in middle Georgia, and serve as a robust form of economic development for the Middle Georgia region. The Park and Preserve is key to the success of this mission, which, in turn, is key to the economic well-being of Macon-Bibb County and the region. All of these factors, as well as the reconciliation offered to our region through an authentic relationship with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, are vital to the long-term viability of middle Georgia and as such I proudly support the creation of the National Park and Preserve. I urge Congress to act this year so that Middle Georgia can finally begin the next chapter in their stewardship of this important landscape."

"It is imperative to be at the table when creating a management plan, rather than have it presented after the fact in consultation; with the absence of a genuine eye to eye relationship with the ancestral people, the story of ancient architectural marvels becomes one of archeological terminology," said Tracie Revis, citizen and former chief of staff of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Director of Advocacy for the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative (ONPPI). "Through this legislation the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is offered the opportunity to be in full partnership to protect their own cultural and natural resources through co-management."

## Lakeland Fire Department Report

**04/24-** Call to a possible house fire on Hwy 84. Arrived to find that it was a debris fire behind the house.

**04/24-** Call to an auto accident on Valdosta Road but call was canceled.

**04/25-** Call to an alarm on Ruger Road. Arrived to determine that it was a faulty detector.

**04/25-** Call to an auto accident on Mill Street. Arrived to find that a vehicle had struck and broke a power pole. Mill Street

was closed until the damage could be repaired by the power company.

**04/28-** Call to a grass fire on Oak Bend. Arrived to find a fire spreading around a home and had it under control within minutes.

**04/28-** Call to an auto accident on Old Stockton Road. Arrived to find that a truck had struck a fence and all further response was canceled.

## Lakeland Police Department Report

• **April 21**, 1341 hours. Lakeland City Police Units were dispatched to East Simpson Avenue in reference to a domestic dispute. Offender's name: none listed. Incident type: none listed. Reporting Officer: Terry Grant. Property type: not listed.

• **April 23**, 1853 hours. Officer Harmon and Officer Grant were dispatched to East Davis Avenue in reference to a 53 year old man getting hit by a trailer's tag. Offender's name: none listed. Incident type: none listed. Reporting Officer: Terry Grant. Property type: not listed.

• **April 24**, 1155 hours. Lakeland City Police Units were at the Police Department with a walk-in. Offender's name: none listed. Incident type:

none listed. Reporting Officer: Gena Willis. Property type: not listed.

• **April 24**, 1922 hours. Lakeland Police Units were dispatched to Chestnut Ridge Circle in reference to a send police call. Offender's name: none listed. Incident type: none listed. Reporting Officer: Terry Grant. Property type: not listed.

• **April 24**, 2210 hours. Lakeland City Police Units were dispatched to East Peeler Avenue in reference to a domestic dispute. Offender's name: Jamel Isiah Thompson (28). Incident type: Battery, and Possession of ounce or less of marijuana. Reporting Officer: Terry Grant. Property type: not listed.

## Lanier County Sheriff's Office Report

• **April 23**, 0915 hours. **Leon Johnson Jr.** (44) charged with Failure to appear for finger printable charge (felony), and Probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for finger printable charge. Housed for: Ware County Jail. Arresting Agency: Lanier County Sheriff's Office. Arresting officer: Chris Souza. Property/Cash Bond: NO BOND.

• **April 24**, 0959 hours. **Jamel Isiah Thompson** (28) charged with Battery. Housed for: Coffee County Jail. Arresting Agency: Lakeland Police Department. Arresting officer: Officer Benka. Property/Cash Bond: none listed/none listed.

• **April 26**, 1440 hours. **Gabriel Orfan Elkins** (37) charged with Probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for finger printable charge. Housed for: Coffee County Jail. Arresting Agency: Lanier County Sheriff's Office. Arresting officer: Chris Souza. Property/Cash Bond: none listed/none listed.

• **April 26**, 1503 hours. **Tara Chantel Page** (26) charged with Criminal trespass. Housed for: Coffee County Jail. Arresting Agency: Lanier County Sheriff's Office. Arresting officer: Anthony Lawrence. Property/Cash Bond: none listed/none listed.

## Berrien Co. Sheriff's Office Report

• **April 21**, 1536 hours. **Kaylynn Sparks** charged with Failure to appear for finger printable charge – misdemeanor. Total Bond: 0. Court: Municipal.

• **April 21**, 1931 hours. **Keith Collins** charged with Simple battery, Cruelty to children, and Cruelty to children in the 3rd degree or subsequent offense. Total Bond: \$30,000. Court: Superior.

• **April 22**, 0256 hours. **Daquan Sims** charged with Possession and use of drug related objects, and Possession of Methamphetamine. Total Bond: \$10,000. Court: Superior.

• **April 22**, 1639 hours. **Bradley Passmore** charged with Felony-probation violation. Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 23**, 1122 hours. **Kiersten Picolo** charged with Probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for finger printable charge (felony). Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 23**, 1941 hours. **Emily Walker** charged with Failure to appear. Total Bond: 0. Court: Municipal.

• **April 25**, 0743 hours. **Adam Heath** charged with Special presentment bench warrant – grand jury indictment, Possession of drug related objects prohibited (misdemeanor), and Bondsman off bond. Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 25**, 1448 hours. **Caleb Ryan** charged with Failure to appear for finger printable charge – felony. Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 25**, 2305 hours. **Katelyn Barfield** charged with Possession and use of drug related objects, and Possession of methamphetamine. Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 26**, 0959 hours. **Austin Dillard** charged with Aggravated assault, Battery – Family violence (1st offense) Misdemeanor, and False imprisonment. Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 26**, 1053 hours. **Dontravious White** charged with Armed robbery (felony), Possession of firearm/knife during commission of/attempt to commit felonies (felony), and Pointing or aiming gun or pistol at another (misdemeanor). Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 26**, 1507 hours. **Jennifer Gaskins** charged with Probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for finger printable charge. Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 26**, 1714 hours. **Maison Zirkle** charged with Drug court (misdemeanor). Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

• **April 26**, 1842 hours. **Victoria Bell** charged with Driving under the influence drugs/alcohol, Failure to drive within single lane, Child safety restraints child under 8 years of age, DUI – endangerment of child under 14, Driving with suspension or revoked drivers license, and DUI – endangerment of child under 14. Total Bond: \$3,500. Court: Superior.

• **April 26**, 2212 hours. **Clinton McGlashan** charged with Probation violation (misdemeanor). Total Bond: 0. Court: Superior.

For the record, any redactions in law enforcement reports published by LCN are made by the reporting agency.

Lanier County News does NOT redact law enforcement reports.

