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amendment to the general management plan  
development concept plan

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CHALMETTE UNIT  
JEAN LAFITTE



NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK / LOUISIANA



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AMENDMENT TO THE  
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

Chalmette Unit  
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve  
St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana

February 1987 Draft

U.S. Department of the Interior / National Park Service



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## INTRODUCTION

This document amends the general management plan/development concept plan (GMP/DCP) approved in April 1982 for Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Only the proposals associated with the Chalmette Unit are being amended. Similarly, the Interpretive Prospectus, approved in May 1983, will be amended to reflect the proposals contained in this document. Some additional site-specific replanning for interpretation will also be required.

## BACKGROUND

During routine archeological clearance initiated by the National Park Service (NPS) prior to construction of an interpretive structure at the Chalmette Unit, field surveys resulted in discovery of building foundation remnants and associated historic trash deposits. The foundations proved to be that of two houses associated with the Rodriguez Estate, a country home extant at the time of the Battle of New Orleans. Subsequent research and archeological surveys conducted in 1983 and 1984 have revealed an eighteenth century plantation house to the north of the Rodriguez House, plus several outbuildings from both the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and a discrepancy in the alignment of features along the north-south axis of the battlefield. Site locations identified by historians and archeologists shifted the battlefield approximately 600 feet north from the locations projected in the mid-1930s upon which existing interpretation is based.

Sixteen battlefield features significant to re-interpretation of the battlefield were studied and located through archeological survey or from maps and coinciding anomalies on the ground (See the Historical Base Map.). The features were then ranked in order of the researchers' confidence in their location projections, with locations verified by archeological survey ranked highest. Following are the sixteen features and their ranking by order of confidence:

### First Order of Confidence

- Rodriguez House (two structures)
- American battery No. 3

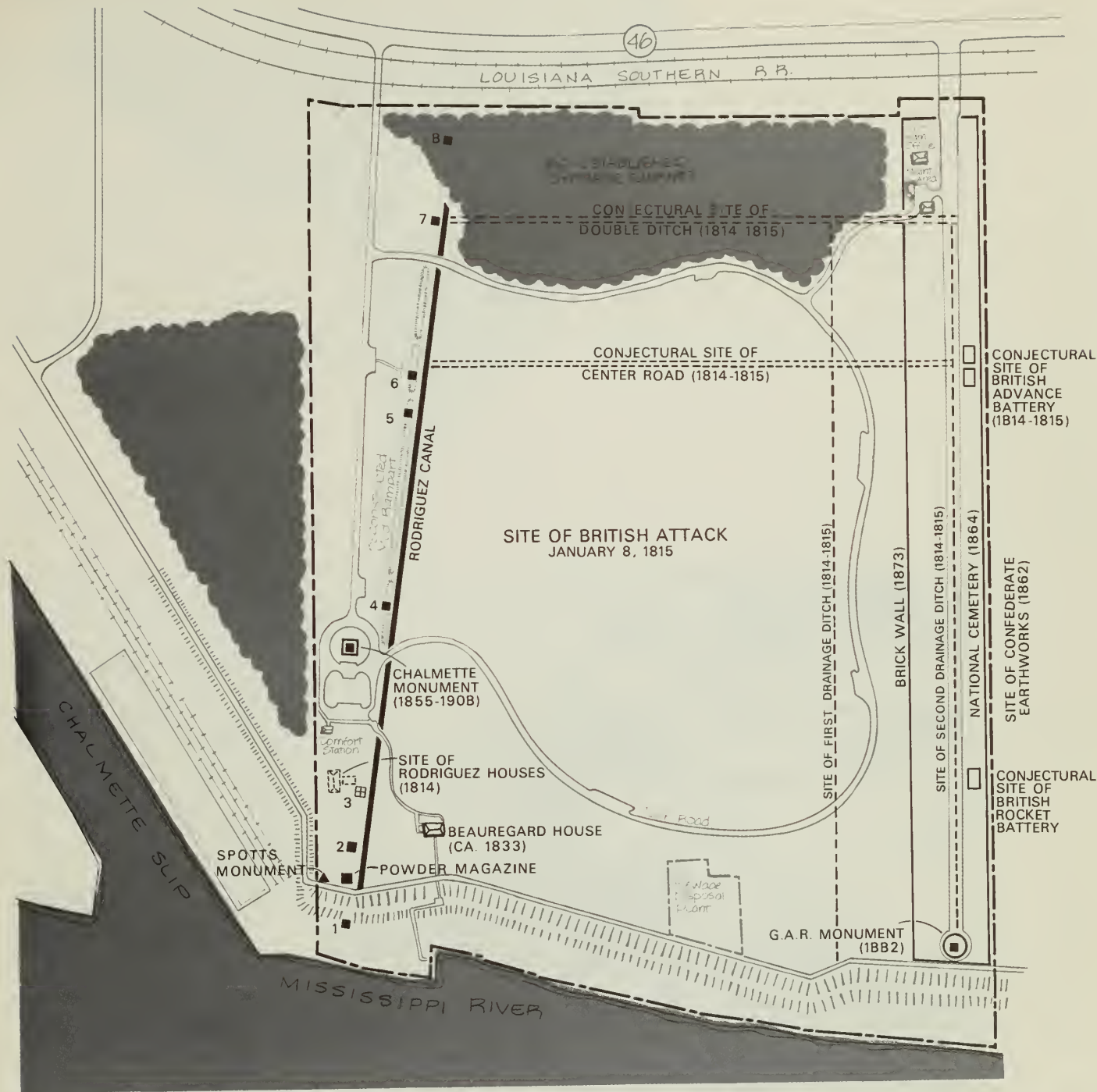
### Second Order of Confidence

- British advance battery
- Center road
- American batteries 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8
- Powder magazine
- 1815 shoreline

### Third Order of Confidence

- Double Ditch
- First drainage ditch
- Second drainage ditch





- CONJECTURAL BATTERY POSITIONS, 1814-1815
- ⊞ KNOWN BATTERY POSITION, 1814-1815

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HISTORICAL BASE MAP

**CHALMETTE UNIT**  
JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND PRESERVE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Park Service archeologists and historians utilized the realigned battlefield features to position British troop movements of the December 28, 1814; January 1, 1815; and January 8, 1815 battles. Three British troop movement corridors were identified within the park boundary (See the Engagement of January 8, 1815 troop movement map.). The first corridor, along a portion of the levee road, was the route of Lieutenant Colonel Rennie's movements against the American redoubt in advance of battery 1. A second corridor, the route of Major General Keane, traverses the battlefield obliquely from the southeast quadrant toward batteries 7 and 8 on the American line. The route of Major General Gibbs' advances against the American line is identified by a third corridor that covers an area from the projected locations of the British advance battery, Center Road, and Double Ditch toward American batteries 7 and 8.



LOUISIANA  
MILITIA  
RESERVES

ENCAMPMENT  
UNDER A- APR

JACKSON'S HEADQUARTERS

BLANCHARD 4  
ERECTED APR  
JAN 8TH 1815

OF  
VENU  
TATION  
LDINGS

26 PDRS 11  
7th U.S. INF

## BATTERY EMPLACEMENT

### AMERICAN

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> HUMPHREY<br>2-12 PDRS<br>1 HOWITZER | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> GARRIGUES<br>1-18 PDRS<br>1-6 PDRS |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> NORRIS<br>1-24 PDRS                 | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> SPOTTS<br>1-18 PDRS<br>1-6 PDRS    |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> YOUX/BELUCHE<br>2-24 PDRS           | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> HARRISON<br>1 HOWITZER             |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> CRAWLEY<br>1-32 PDRS                |   |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> PERRY<br>1-12 PDRS<br>1-6 PDRS      |   |

### BRITISH

- ☐ BATTERY
- ☐ REDOUBT (APPROXIMATE LOCATION)

APPROXIMATELY  
200 YARDS

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ENGAGEMENT OF JANUARY 8, 1815  
NEW ORLEANS CAMPAIGN 1814-1815  
TROOP MOVEMENT

# CHALMETTE UNIT

N LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND PRESERVE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE





### BATTERY EMPLACEMENT

#### AMERICAN

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> HUMPHREY<br>2-12 PDRS<br>1 HOWITZER | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> GARRIGUES<br>1-18 PDRS<br>1-6 PDRS |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> NORRIS<br>1-24 PDRS                 | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> SPOTTS<br>1-18 PDRS<br>1-6 PDRS    |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> YOUX/BELUCHE<br>2-24 PDRS           | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> HARRISON<br>1 HOWITZER             |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> CRAWLEY<br>1-32 PDRS                |   |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> PERRY<br>1-12 PDRS<br>1-6 PDRS      |   |

#### BRITISH

- ☐ BATTERY
- ☐ REDOUBT (APPROXIMATE LOCATION)

AREA OF  
BIENVENU  
PLANTATION  
BUILDINGS

APPROXIMATELY  
200 YARDS

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**CHALMETTE UNIT**  
JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND PRESERVE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**ENGAGEMENT OF JANUARY 8, 1815**  
NEW ORLEANS CAMPAIGN 1814-1815  
TROOP MOVEMENT

## VISITOR USE PLAN

### GOALS

A revised plan for visitor use at Chalmette was needed to reflect the new information about the battlefield and to adjust developments in response to the changed feature locations. The following goals guided the new planning effort:

Maximize protection of known and suspected historic resources.

Remove existing and avoid additional visual intrusions in the most significant battlefield areas (i.e., the area of Gibbs' advance toward batteries 7 and 8 in the vicinity of the northern portion of the tour road and the re-established cypress swamp, and the area of Rennie's advance along the levee road).

Provide a reasonable pattern for visitor circulation.

Provide a logical, understandable sequence of interpretation.

### VISITOR USE, INTERPRETATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

Visitors will enter the park as they do now along the west side of the battlefield (See the General Management Plan / Development Concept Plan.). Signing and redesign of the entry road will encourage them to proceed to a parking area and interpretive center located near the Chalmette monument. A new interpretive wayside exhibit will be located in the vicinity of batteries 7 and 8 near the park entrance. A turnout and parking for this wayside will be separated from vehicles entering the park by a traffic island, so that arriving visitors will be directed first to the interpretive center. The National Park Service will also work with the State of Louisiana and St. Bernard Parish, prior to design of the entry road modifications, to address safety problems at the intersection of the entry road and State Route 46.

At the interpretive center visitors will receive an historical overview of the campaign, battles, and their significance. Walkways from this area will lead to the site of the Rodriguez House, to batteries 2 and 3, along the American rampart, and to the Beauregard House. New wayside interpretive exhibits will be located at these sites; interpretation at the Beauregard House is described below.

The tour road will continue to be accessible to vehicles, but it will be widened to allow two-way traffic and will terminate at a cul-de-sac with parking south of the Center Road. These road modifications will restore more of the battlefield to historic conditions, and will place visitors at a central point along the line of British battle positions, enabling them to better visualize the battlefield from the British perspective. A new wayside exhibit at the cul-de-sac will interpret British aspects of the battle. A short trail will lead from this wayside to the Center Road and the site of the British advance battery, and new wayside exhibits will be located at each

site. Widening of the road will require archeological clearance along its length, and data recovery may also be required at the crossings over the Rodriguez Canal and the first drainage ditch.

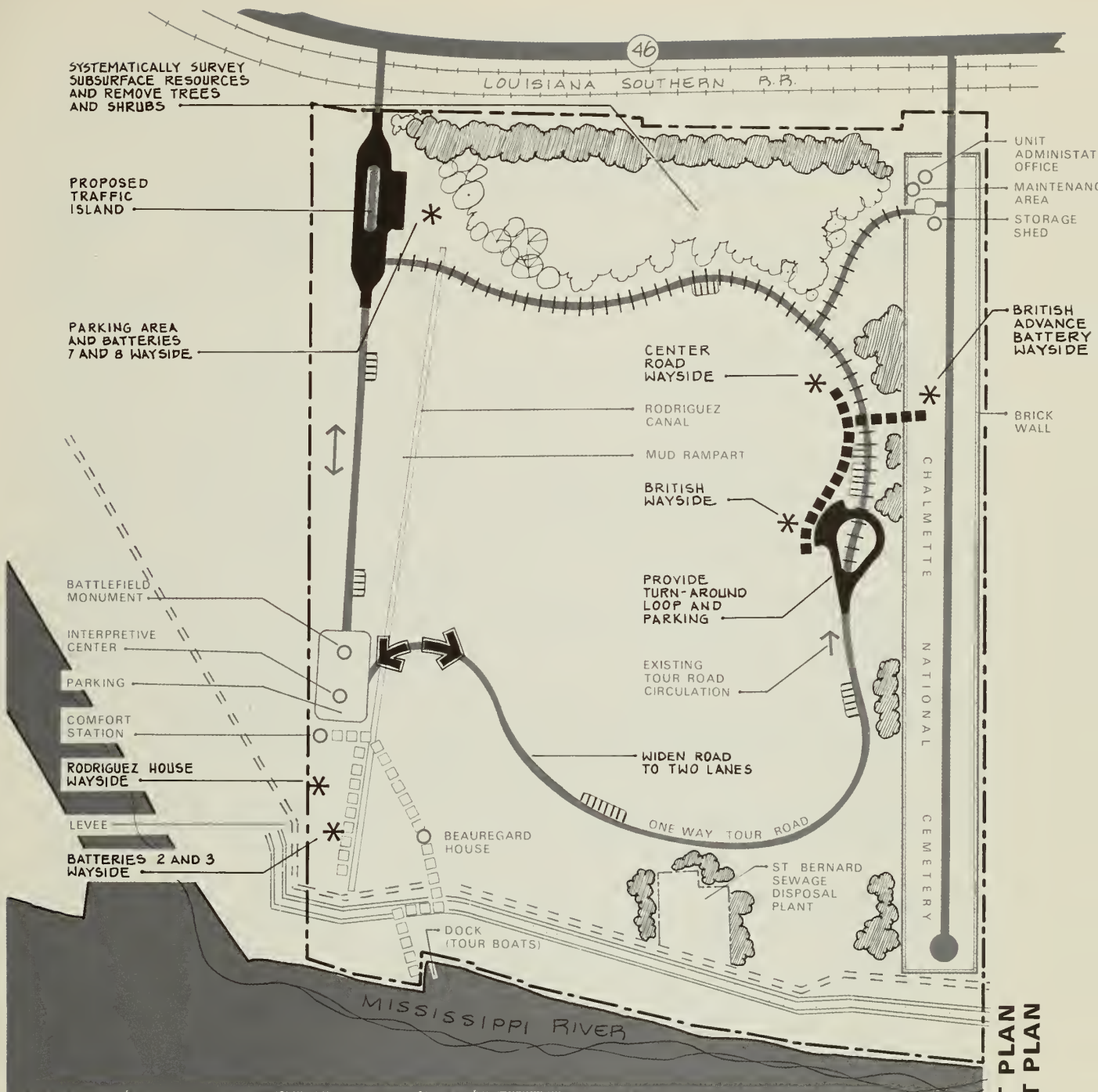
The existing road section between the entrance road and proposed cul-de-sac will be removed, as will the utility road from the battlefield to the park administrative areas. The eventual goal will be to remove the forested area once managed as an historic cypress swamp. However, due to the historic significance of the area and the possibility of extant subsurface resources, careful planning must be done prior to undertaking vegetation removal.

After visiting the battlefield, visitors could go to the Beauregard House. Interpretive exhibits on the first floor will place the battlefield in its historical context. Interpretive themes for these exhibits will treat the Battle of New Orleans as one campaign in the War of 1812 and will describe the history of the battlefield prior to and following the battle to provide visitors with an understanding of the contemporary landscape as the result of combined natural and human processes.

A new wayside exhibit plan will be prepared to specify the content of the interpretive waysides, the treatment of battlefield features, and the capacity of parking areas and turnouts at waysides. An amendment to the interpretive prospectus will also be prepared to address specific media and messages to be conveyed to visitors at the interpretive center and the Beauregard House.

All new or rehabilitated facilities for visitor use or park administration, and all park interpretive programs, will be accessible to the mobility impaired. All interpretive media developments will be usable by visitors with sensory handicaps.





#### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- REDESIGN INTERSECTION
- PARKING AREA
- ROADWAY TO BE OBLITERATED
- TRAIL
- INTERPRETIVE WAYSIDE
- VEGETATIVE SCREEN

#### EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

- ROAD
- STRUCTURE
- TRAIL
- PARKING AREA
- VEGETATION

NOTE: SOME EXISTING PARKING AREAS MAY BE RELOCATED OR REMOVED; THEIR NUMBER AND LOCATION ARE TO BE IDENTIFIED IN A SUBSEQUENT INTERPRETIVE PLAN.

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## GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

### CHALMETTE UNIT

JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND PRESERVE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# DEVELOPMENT COSTS AND PHASING

Phase/Development Items		Size	Cost
1. Utilities			
Install fire protection system		water line & fire hydrant	\$ 22,000
Install underground electric lines		1800 ft.	29,000
Remove overhead electric		1800 ft.	7,000
* Conduct archeological survey		.33 ac.	1,000
	Subtotal		\$ 59,000
2. Tour and Service Roads			
Widen road to two lanes		2400 ft.	\$ 240,000
Construct turnaround loop		600 ft.	60,000
Construct parking area		15 cars & 2 buses	33,000
Reconstruct intersection		450 sq. yd.	24,000
Obliterate and restore northern section and four parking areas		4300 sq. yd.	86,000
Obliterate and restore service road		470 sq. yd.	10,000
* Conduct archeological survey		2.2 ac.	5,000
	Subtotal		\$ 458,000
3. Entrance Road			
Reconstruct entrance, including traffic island		500 ft.	\$ 60,000
Construct parking area		15 cars & 2 buses	33,000
Obliterate and restore two parking areas		450 sq. yd.	9,000
* Conduct archeological survey		0.5 ac.	1,000
	Subtotal		\$ 103,000
4. Paved Trails			
Construct barrier-free trail		1000 ft.	\$ 12,000
* Conduct archeological survey		0.2 ac.	1,000
	Subtotal		\$ 13,000
5. Wayside Exhibits			
Produce and install exhibits		6 sites	\$ 15,000
6. Landscaping			
Remove trees and shrubs		9 ac.	\$ 63,000
Plant trees		50 trees	17,000
* Conduct archeological survey		9 ac.	18,000
	Subtotal		\$ 98,000
Net Construction Costs			\$ 746,000
Gross Construction Costs**			\$ 977,260**

\* Archeological survey costs do not include data recovery.

\*\* Gross costs include 31 percent of net construction costs to cover project supervision and contingencies. Additional project planning and design costs (average 15% of net construction costs) are omitted since they are not funded from line-item construction accounts.



## RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

Due to the absence of recorded information on the original furnishings of the Beauregard House and the NPS policy against using comparable furnishings from an historic period, the house cannot be furnished to NPS standards at present. Full restoration of the building exterior faces the same difficulty. Therefore, at this time, the interior will be adaptively used and the exterior will be preserved.

The research projects described below will provide information that is necessary to support planning for site-related interpretation and to further develop the park's resource data base. Future research will be phased to coincide with priorities for implementation of the interpretive and management proposals for the Chalmette unit. Also, some of the archeological research needs can be addressed through the archeological clearance investigations associated with planned interpretive developments.

Less than 20 percent of the Chalmette Unit has been subjected to an appropriate level of archeological survey. Survey work at Chalmette will entail systematic shovel testing, augering, and other forms of subsurface exploration (metal detection, magnetometer survey, etc.). Following is a list of archeological survey projects that address specific research needs.

1. Archeological tests at the Rodriguez Estate are necessary to better define the size and limits of the secondary residence (the smaller eastern residence). These tests are also important in order to obtain more accurate information on the appearance of the main house at the time of the battle. This limited research will be undertaken before the locations of these houses are marked on the ground for interpretive purposes.
2. Additional problem-oriented testing will be undertaken at battery 3 to discover more information on details of battery construction, particularly gun-platform construction. This work will be done prior to design of battery or artillery reconstructive exhibits.
3. Contour maps of the Center Road and the British advance battery location will be prepared, both as basic documentation of these features and as an aid to interpretive planning. This work will be followed by a non-destructive soil-augering program to document the subsurface characteristics of these features.
4. A metal detection and/or magnetometer survey will be conducted forward and behind the American rampart at the locations of the main British attack. This will include a systematic shovel-test program to determine the density and pattern of military debris. The purpose of this work would be to gain a more complete picture of the fighting near the rampart. (The research will be coordinated with the planned tree clearance in front of batteries 7 and 8; it would largely serve as a mitigative measure prior to interpretive development in this section of the park.)

5. A non-destructive auger-testing program will be undertaken in the area of batteries 7 and 8. The work will be done prior to interpretive development to (a) obtain information on the surviving rampart segment, (b) determine the size of the Rodriguez Canal in this sector, (c) ascertain the exact position of batteries 7 and 8, (d) locate the Double Ditch, and (e) determine the position of the "Inverted Redan." The research will serve to "ground-truth" battle features for purposes of interpretive planning. Limited archeological testing with trenches or grids may have to be employed to find some of the features.
6. A small auger-testing program (10 holes) will be undertaken at the location of a large magnetometer anomaly thought to mark batteries 5 and 6. This small investigation should serve to verify the exact position of this battery pair.

Before finalizing historical landscaping decisions, the National Park Service will prepare a cultural landscape report on the park in order to obtain an accurate picture of the battlefield in 1815. An expert in Mississippi Delta ecology or plant communities should be included in this research to advise on what natural and agricultural vegetative patterns may have been extant at that time.

Historical research needs to be conducted on the roles that the Rodriguez, Macarty, Chalmette, and other plantations played during the battle. More complete domestic histories of these estates should be prepared for use in interpretation, at the Beauregard House, of the eighteenth and nineteenth century history of the St. Bernard Parish. Limited archeological testing at the location of the newly found Spanish Colonial plantation house could also help to shed light on this important discovery.

Historical research on the wider framework of the battle, outside the park proper, will continue. As new information comes to light it will be included in the interpretive program where appropriate. A cooperative agreement with St. Bernard Parish will be sought to help effect this research.

More historical research needs to be conducted on the battle to identify uniforms and equipment, to record histories of individual units and biographies of important persons involved, and to document involvement of Choctaw Indians in the battle.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Battlefield vegetation will be maintained to simulate rough field conditions, and attempts to stop the deterioration of the live oak and pecan trees will continue. The northern portion of the battlefield, currently in second-growth forest (approximately 30 years old), will be cleared to more accurately portray historic conditions. The 1982 general management plan (GMP) erroneously identified the area as a "former cypress swamp;" however, historic accounts, aerial photography, and the existing vegetation indicate that the area was probably not a wetland at the time of the battle. Moist soils in the area are apparently caused by incidental impoundment from the

nearby railroad grade. With the exception of a vegetative screen along the adjacent railroad right-of-way, trees and undergrowth will be removed and grasses will be planted and maintained to simulate rough field conditions. Similarly, the abandoned road sections will be returned to field grasses.

Research will be conducted on air pollution and its effect on the unit's vegetation and cultural resources. The visual intrusiveness of adjacent industry will be mitigated by additional vegetative screening. The National Park Service will encourage St. Bernard Parish to paint the sewage disposal plant in a color that blends with its immediate environment, and will support any efforts by the parish to relocate the facility away from the battlefield. Overhead powerlines will be placed underground and adequate waterlines will be provided for fire protection.







## MANAGEMENT ZONING

### CULTURAL RESOURCES ZONE

This zone coincides with the boundary that delimits this National Register property (See Management Zoning). Management emphasis is upon preservation, protection, and interpretation of the cultural resources, including the setting, that occur within the unit boundary.

There are three subzones. Resources included in the preservation subzone are the battlefield proper, the Rodriguez Canal, the mud rampart, the Rodriguez House, and the seventeenth century Plantation House. The adaptive use subzone includes the Beauregard House and a two-story brick structure located in the adjacent national cemetery. These structures have been modified -- the former for visitor use, the latter for administrative office space. The Chalmette National Cemetery and the Chalmette Battlefield Monument are included in the commemoration subzone and will be managed to maintain a commemorative setting rather than a particular historic period.

### PARK DEVELOPMENT ZONE

This zone encompasses the area where visitor use and facilities alter cultural resources or the setting. Facilities provide for visitor use and for operation of the unit.

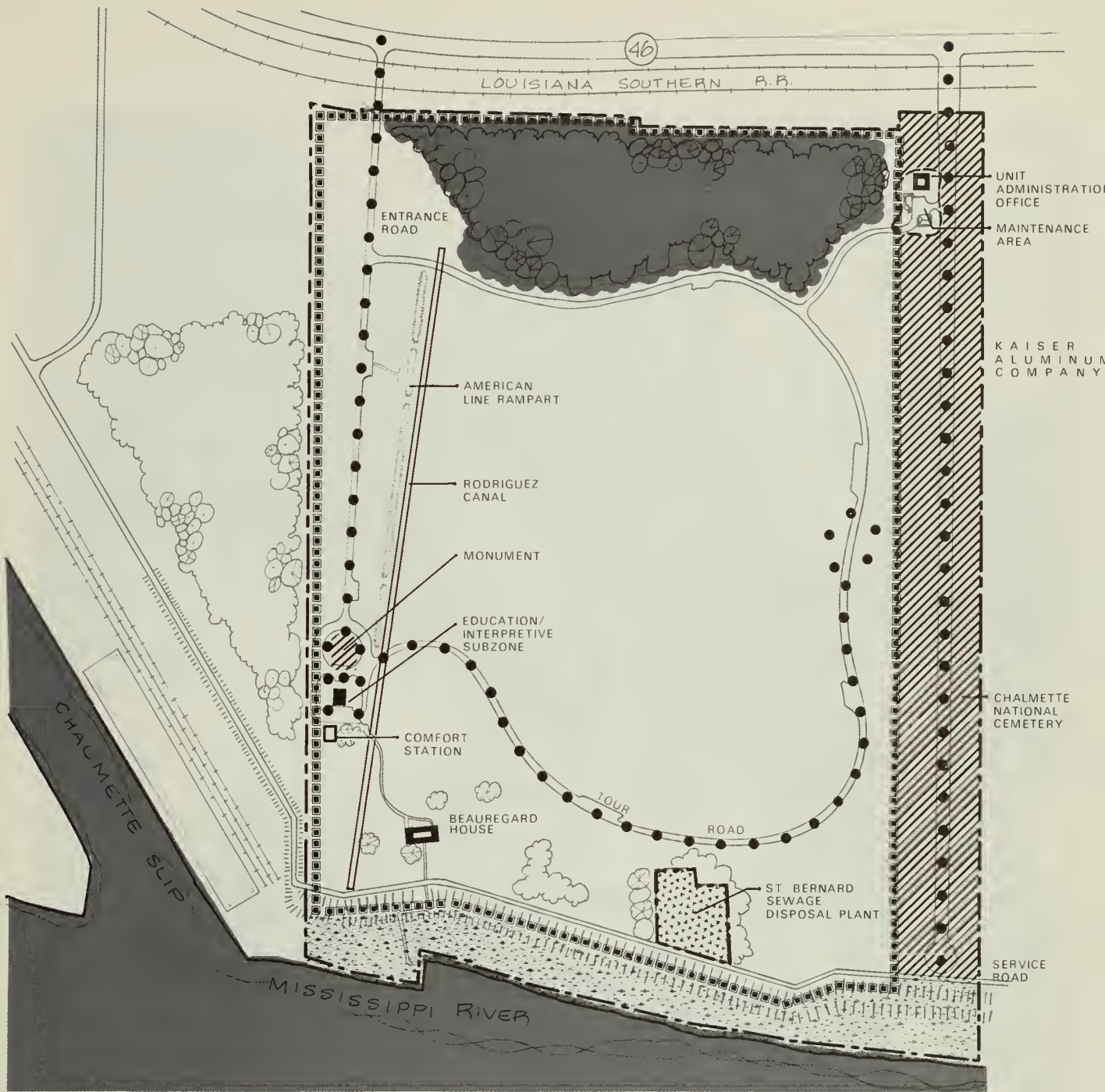
There are three subzones. The maintenance area located in the national cemetery is included in the administrative subzone. The existing visitor use and interpretive facilities provided at tour road waysides, the interpretive center, and the Beauregard House are included in the education/interpretive subzone; additional facilities to be included are the new wayside exhibits, trails, and walkways. Unit roads, including the battlefield and cemetery entrances, the tour road, wayside turnouts, battlefield parking area, and graveled haul road comprise the access/circulation subzone.

### OTHER USE ZONES

Lands owned by St. Bernard Parish and used for a sewage disposal plant are included in the utilities subzone. The levee protection subzone is comprised of a man-made levee that abuts the unit's southern boundary adjacent to the Mississippi River; management is shared through agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Lake Borgne Levee District.

SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT ZONES  
CHALMETTE UNIT

<u>Zone/Subzone</u>	<u>Total Acreage of Zone</u>	<u>Percent of Total Unit Acreage</u>
Cultural Resources Zone		
Preservation Subzone	110.0	77.0
Adaptive Use Subzone	0.2	0.1
Commemoration Subzone	17.3	12.0
Park Development Zone		
Administrative Subzone	0.2	0.1
Education/Interpretive Subzone	1.0	0.8
Access/Circulation Subzone	4.1	3.0
Other Use Zones		
Utilities Subzone	1.5	1.0
Levee Protection Subzone	8.6	6.0
TOTALS	<u>142.9</u>	<u>100.0</u>



#### CULTURAL RESOURCES ZONE

PRESERVATION SUBZONE



ADAPTIVE USE SUBZONE



COMMEMORATION SUBZONE



#### PARK DEVELOPMENT ZONE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUBZONE



EDUCATION / INTERPRETIVE SUBZONE



ACCESS / CIRCULATION



#### OTHER USE ZONE

UTILITIES SUBZONE



LEVEE PROTECTION SUBZONE



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MANAGEMENT ZONING

**CHALMETTE UNIT**  
JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND PRESERVE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE







## COMPLIANCE ACTIONS AND MITIGATION OF DEVELOPMENT

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

Because the proposals called for in this plan amendment differ from those approved in the park's 1982 GMP/DCP, additional compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act was necessary to supplement that previously completed on the GMP. In early 1984, the National Park Service found it necessary to ensure that the proposed interpretive center was in place prior to the opening of the New Orleans' Worlds Fair. Accordingly, compliance with section 106 for that element of this plan amendment was completed at that time. Under the programmatic memorandum of agreement between the National Park Service, the Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the Louisiana SHPO and the ACHP have reviewed this GMP amendment and have no objection to implementation of the amended plan.

Obliteration of the northern portion of the present tour road, widening of the southern portion of the road, and construction of the new cul-de-sac parking and trails will require intensive archeological testing where construction may affect unknown subsurface resources, and specifically near the Rodriguez Canal and several battle-related ditches. The bottoms of these ditches may have trapped artifacts lost by participants in the battle.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

Due to the recent discovery that the forested area on the northern portion of the battlefield is not a "former cypress swamp," this plan amendment calls for removal of most trees and undergrowth in the nine-acre area in order to return the area to the rough field conditions present at the time of the battle. While this area was probably not a wetland at that time, the construction of the nearby railroad grade has apparently caused incidental impoundment of water and creation of a wetland.

Federal agencies are directed to avoid development in wetlands wherever there is a practicable alternative and to avoid adverse impacts associated with the occupancy, modification, or destruction of wetlands to the extent possible. This plan amendment proposes modification of a manmade wetland to portray the historic condition of a nationally significant battlefield in accordance with various legislative mandates to preserve, protect, and interpret the cultural resources and setting of the area. Therefore, options for conducting management activities related to the historic setting outside of the wetland are nonexistent. In order to mitigate impacts associated with these activities in wetlands, the National Park Service has consulted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and will obtain a general permit to comply with section 404 of the Clean Water Act, prior to undertaking vegetation removal.

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the National Park Service has determined, following informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, that implementation of this plan amendment will have no effect on federally protected species or critical habitat.

## SELECTED REFERENCES

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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- 1983 "Interpretive Prospectus, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Louisiana." Denver Service Center.
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- 1985b Historic Resource Study, Chalmette Unit, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, by Jerome A. Greene. Denver Service Center.
- Undated "The Search for the Lost Riverfront," by Terje Berkedal. An unpublished manuscript on file at the Southwest Regional Office.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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