

*The Great American Outdoors Act is providing crucial funding – up to \$6.65 billion over five years – to fix our national parks’ crumbling roads, decaying buildings, outdated water systems and many more repair needs. This bill, along with other funding sources, is ensuring our parks can continue to welcome millions of visitors each year and protect the natural and cultural resources that tell our nation’s history.*

# Natchez Trace PARKWAY



**Winding through scenic stretches of Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, the Natchez Trace Parkway is a 444-mile recreational road that roughly follows the Old Natchez Trace, a historic travel corridor used by Native Americans, “Kaintucks,” European settlers, soldiers, future presidents, and traders of enslaved people.**

From the northern terminus near Nashville, the parkway meanders through 10,000 years of history, more than ten hours of picturesque driving through the rural Southeast down to the southern end in Natchez, Mississippi.

The parkway is one of the 10 most visited park units and also serves as a major commuter route for millions in cities and rural communities. Every year, the parkway welcomes 6.5 million recreational visitors and as many as 15 million visitors total. But those millions spread out along hundreds of miles, and visitors find peace and quiet—strolling on a path, hiking on Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail, biking sections of the parkway, horseback riding or camping at one of three campgrounds.

The parkway climate is sub-tropical, with as many as eight hot months per year and plenty of rain, regular thunderstorms and occasional hurricanes moving north from the Gulf of Mexico. At times, severe weather results in washouts and downed trees that can cause temporary road closures.

**THE CHALLENGE: a heavily-used scenic parkway relies largely on original pavement that is nearly 75 years old**

Paving of the Natchez Trace Parkway started in 1949, and much of the original pavement remains in place, in poor condition. The surface continues to deteriorate, creating rough and uneven driving surfaces and substantial edge rutting, driving

**BY THE NUMBERS:**



**\$105.7 million**  
estimated investment from the GAOA to repair projects



**\$54.3 million**  
in additional grants leveraged



**15 million**  
annual visitors



**75 year-old**  
original pavement



**444-miles**  
of recreational road

**PHOTOS:** Cover: ©Jordan Shell | Shutterstock  
Back: ©marekuliasz | Shutterstock



up the cost of future repairs and leaving drivers without basic safety and accessibility improvements. Fatalities have increased on the parkway in recent years, from an estimated six in 2005 to 11 in 2017; many resulted from lane departures, which may have been prevented by audible pavement markings and safety edges—angled pavement that provides a more manageable transition from the shoulder to pavement to prevent overcorrection.

### THE PROJECT

Through an estimated \$105.7 million investment over multiple years, the Great American Outdoors Act will improve, will improve approximately 50 miles of the Natchez Trace Parkway, including maintaining, repairing

or replacing multiple public access routes and parking lots. The investment will be used to leverage an additional \$54.3 million in grants from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program to rehabilitate a total of 83 miles of the parkway in Mississippi. The work includes rehabilitating the pavement structure by milling deteriorated pavement and making base and subgrade improvements as needed. Work also includes placing a new asphalt base and surface courses; sealing existing bridge joints; installing audible pavement markers and a safety edge to reduce the number of accidents; repairing or replacing culverts and bridges; and making accessibility improvements to parking areas (including ramps, striping, etc.) to ensure the facilities meet Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards.

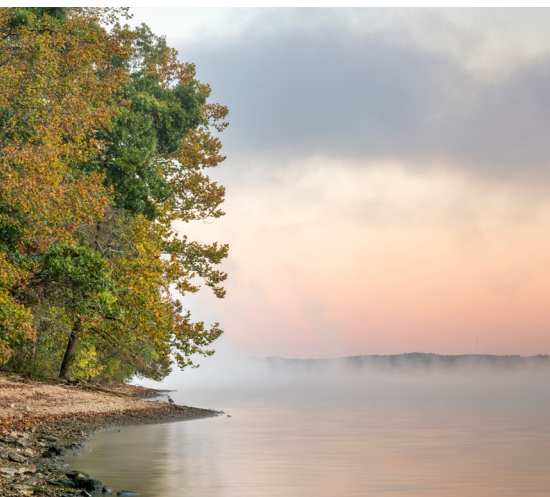
The Park Service and FHWA are currently working on the preliminary engineering for the project; construction is expected to start in September 2023 and to finish in October 2027. The work will be completed in phases and will require detours around the construction zones, which will impact motorists and bicyclists using the parkway. Access to interpretive and picnic sites and trails may be limited.

**“Repairing one-fifth of the total parkway route will improve pavement conditions on the roadway, providing a smoother and safer surface for motorists.”**

The combined projects will span the roadway from Milepost 121 to 204 including Webster, Choctaw, Attala, Leake and Madison counties.

### THE IMPACT

Repairing one-fifth of the total parkway route will improve pavement conditions on the roadway, providing a smoother and safer surface for motorists. In addition to the more stable and manageable road and bridge surfaces, safety of the mainline parkway will be increased for both motorists and cyclists with the incorporation of audible pavement markings and an asphalt safety edge. Improved conditions resulting from the project will allow for operations and maintenance to be focused on preventative maintenance rather than corrective and unscheduled maintenance. After project completion, the facilities and systems addressed by this project should not require major rehabilitation or replacement for the next 25-40 years.



The Great American Outdoors Act is successfully repairing infrastructure at hundreds of parks across the country. However, with a nearly \$22 billion backlog, much more is needed. We urge Congress to extend the Legacy Restoration Fund for an additional five years.

Preserving Our Past.



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Protecting Our Future.