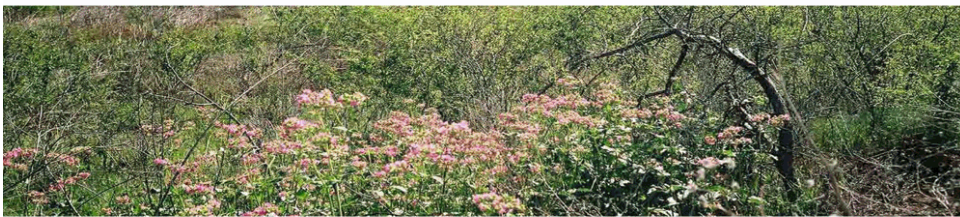

National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
2005



Washita NHS landscape
Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

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Inventory Summary

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

CLI General Information:

Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

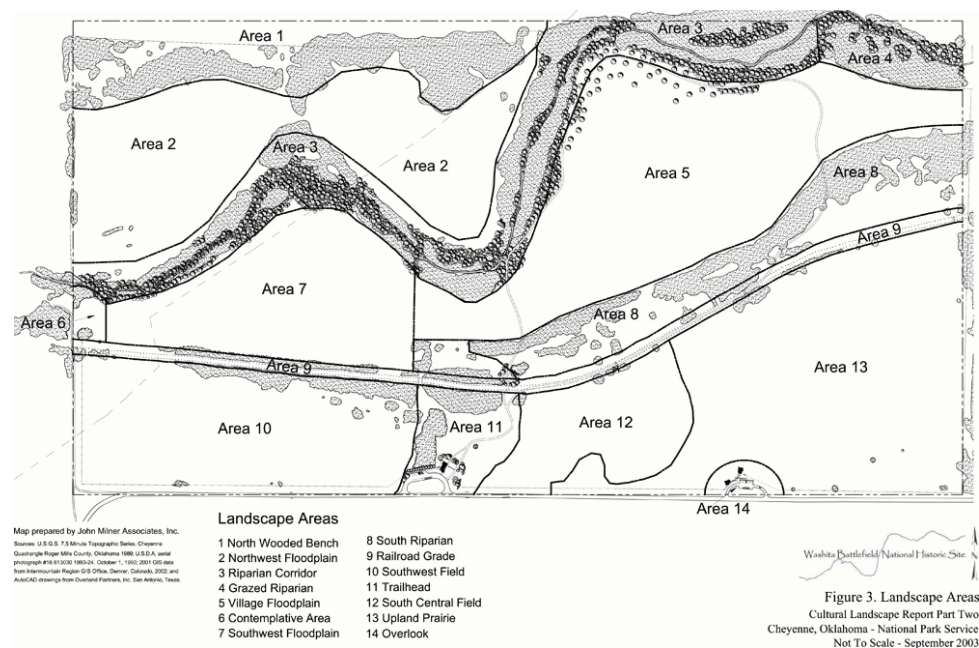
Inventory Unit Description:

Washita Battlefield NHS is a 315.2 acre property located in Rogers Mill County, which abuts Texas in far west central Oklahoma. The NHS is comprised of a single continuous tract of land that straddles the Washita River just northwest of the city of Cheyenne, Oklahoma.

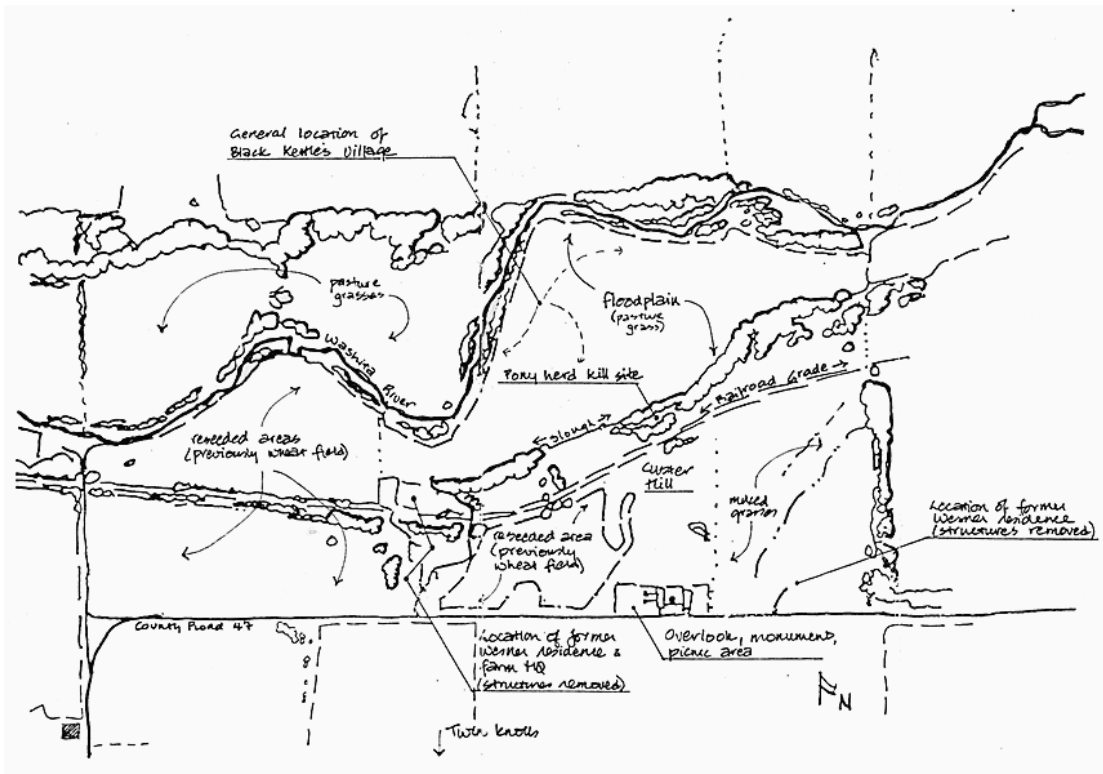
The Washita Battlefield NHS Landscape is a historic site and ethnographic landscape that consists of a section of the Washita River corridor, adjacent floodplain and upland areas, located in western Oklahoma. The general area was used by Plains Tribes as a traditional use area (e.g. hunting). In 1868, the most intense activity of the Washita Battle occurred within the core area. Since 1868, a number of memorials have been placed on the slope to the south of the river, overlooking the village site, and the area has been settled and farmed/ranched by Anglo-American settlers.

Although conclusive physical evidence of the location of Chief Black Kettle's village has not yet surfaced, historic records and oral histories indicate with some confidence that the core area is the location of the village and the most intense activity of the Washita conflict. Topographic features important to the historic event are substantially intact, and historic locations (e.g. village area, pony herd kill site, Custer hill) are identified and visible. The core area, and the battlefield as a whole, has traditional and contemporary cultural and historical value for the Cheyenne community, and to other Native American groups.

Site Plan



Site plan of Washita Battlefield NHS showing various landscape areas, 2003. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Site plan of Washita Battlefield, 1998. Source: NPS.

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Washita NHS landscape
Property Level:	Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	850475
Parent Landscape:	850475

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code:	Washita Battlefield National Historic Site -WABA
Park Organization Code:	7720
Park Administrative Unit:	Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

A Level 2 CLI was completed for the battlefield by Jill Cowley in November 1999. Later on, Cultural Landscape Report was written by John Milner Associates (JMA) in September 2003. The CLR was submitted to the Oklahoma SHPO for concurrence in summer 2003, and concurrence on the CLR serves as concurrence on the CLI. The information from the Level 2 CLI and CLR was transferred to this CLI format by Michele Curran and Jill Cowley.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	06/27/2005
National Register Concurrence:	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Date of Concurrence Determination:	07/11/2003

National Register Concurrence Narrative:

The Oklahoma SHPO concurred with the findings of the CLR (the basis of this CLI) on 7/11/2003.

Concurrence Graphic Information:



Oklahoma Historical Society

OK SHPO
Founded May 27, 1893

State Historic Preservation Office • 2704 Villa Prom • Shepherd Mall • Oklahoma City, OK 73107-2441
Telephone 405/521-6249 • Fax 405/947-2918

July 11, 2003

Mr. James Bellamy
NPS Intermountain Support Office
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, NM 87504-0728

RE: File #1841-01; Washita Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report
(CLR) Part Two, Roger Mills County

Dear Mr. Bellamy:

We have reviewed the two reports submitted for comment on the above project. We have no objection to continued planning as proposed; however, we do request that you keep us informed about your efforts to complete the evaluation of the two archeological sites mentioned in the latest report for their National Register eligibility (e.g. prehistoric site in "Area 10" and the "Wesner farm", Area 11).

According to the CLR, the prehistoric site may be eligible for listing (page 2-58) and the Wesner farm still needs to be assessed for eligibility (page 2-72). We need further documentation on both sites before we can concur with eligibility on either location. Reference is made to a 2001 DRAFT report by Loy Neff. Although we did receive Neff's "Scope of Work" for archeological survey and testing of the park confines, we have not received the draft report.

Current plans are to construct the Trailhead facilities in the area of the Wesner farm site. Before any further actions are taken that might affect this location, whether or not the Wesner farmstead site is eligible for the National Register must be determined. The prehistoric site is in an area that is to be protected and maintained as a conservation grassland setting. While no impact to this site location is anticipated, we do recommend that its National Register eligibility also be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. If you have any questions, please call Charles Wallis, Historical Archeologist, at 405/521-6381. Please reference the above underlined file number when responding. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Melvina Heisch
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

OK SHPO concurrence on the Washita Battlefield NHS Landscape, 7/11/2003.

16 USC 461 note. **SEC. 607. WASHITA BATTLEFIELD.**

(a) FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.—

(1) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(A) the Battle of the Washita, November 27, 1868, was one of the largest engagements between Plains tribes and the United States Army on the Southern Great Plains. The site is a registered National Historic Landmark;

(B) Lt. Colonel George A. Custer, leading the 7th United States Cavalry, attacked the sleeping Cheyenne village of peace chief Black Kettle. Custer's attack resulted in more than 150 Indian casualties, many of them women and children;

(C) the Battle of the Washita symbolizes the struggle of the Southern Great Plains tribes to maintain their traditional lifeways and not to submit to reservation confinement; and

(D) the Washita battle site possesses a high degree of integrity and the cultural landscape is essentially intact. The Cheyenne village site has not been altered substantially except by periodic flooding of the Washita River.

(2) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are to—

(A) recognize the importance of the Battle of the Washita as a nationally significant element of frontier military history and as a symbol of the struggles of the Southern Great Plains tribes to maintain control of their traditional use areas; and

(B) establish the site of the Battle of the Washita as a national historic site and provide opportunities for American Indian groups including the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribe to be involved in the formulation of plans and educational programs for the national historic site.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to provide for the preservation and interpretation of the Battle of the Washita, there is hereby established the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site in the State of Oklahoma (hereafter in this section referred to as the "national historic site").

(2) BOUNDARY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The national historic site shall consist of—

(i) approximately 326 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Washita Battlefield National Historic Site", numbered 22,000A and dated 12/95; and

(ii) the private lands subject to conservation easements referred to in subsection (d)(2).

Congressional designation of WABA as a NHS.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Cultural Landscapes Program
Intermountain Region - Santa Fe
P.O. Box 728, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-0728
505-988-6899, 988-6876 fax

In Reply Refer to:

H2215(TMSF-CCL)

April 18, 2005

Memorandum

To: Wendy Lauritzen, Superintendent, Washita Battlefield National Historic Site
From: Jill Cowley, Historical Landscape Architect, TMSF
Subject: Cultural Landscape Inventory for Washita:
Concurrence and Completion

I am pleased to submit the updated Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Washita NHS. This CLI was initially submitted to the park for review in 2000, and subsequently revised per park comments. The current version is an update that responds to new Washington Office requirements for the database. Changes in formatting have been made, but no substantial changes in content. I would like to finish up this CLI this year; we need your written concurrence for completion.

The first three pages of the CLI (Executive Summary) provide some background on CLIs. Since CLI information is accessible by the public, let me know if the CLI contains any potentially culturally sensitive information that needs to be removed. A summary of CLI findings, including Condition Assessment, can be found in the Landscape Description Section, Part 1, page 4-7.

We are seeking your concurrence on:

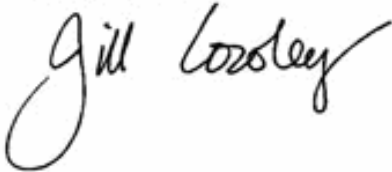
1. **Boundary and Eligibility:** The CLI, which addresses Washita NHS as a cultural landscape, supports the existing NHL status of the NHS. (Part 4, page 1).
2. **Condition Assessment:** The condition rating, as approved by the park in 2000, is fair (Part 4, page 4). This condition rating can be upgraded to "good" if you think that recent landscape restoration projects have improved overall landscape condition. Definitions of good, fair, and poor condition can be found in Part 4, page 4. Let me know if you'd like to change the condition rating.
3. **Management Category:** Must be Preserved and Maintained (Part 4, page 4).
4. **Contributing Elements:** The list of contributing landscape elements identified by the CLI can be found in Part 3a, page 3. Since the CLI approaches the unit holistically, a number of natural resources and natural features are included.

WABA NHS Landscape, Superintendent concurrence, 6/27/2005.

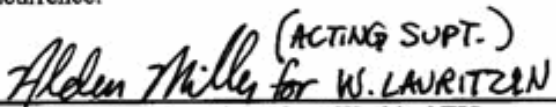
Please let me know if you have any questions about these concurrence categories, or would like to discuss the evaluation and conclusions. You can provide concurrence by signing and returning this memo, or by sending an e mail that references this memo. Since the Oklahoma Historical Society reviewed and approved the CLI in 2003, it is not necessary to resend it to them at this time.

This CLI can be updated at any time in the future. Once submitted to the WASO service-wide database, it will count towards GPRA goal Ib2B, and when upgraded to good condition, will count towards GPRA goal Ia7. CLI information can be used to help determine impacts to cultural landscape resources within Section 106 compliance.

I appreciate your assistance in helping us to finish up this CLI this fiscal year. Your response as soon as possible would be appreciated, so we can count on including this CLI in our transmittal to WASO this year. The amount of funding the IMR CLI receives for FY2006 is directly related to the number of CLIs we complete this year. Feel free to contact me at (505) 988-6899 if there are any questions.



Concurrence:

 (ACTING SUPT.)
Wendy Lauritzen, Superintendent, Washita NHS 27 JUNE 2005
Date

Enclosures

WABA NHS Landscape, Superintendent concurrence, p. 2., 6/27/2005.



Lisa Conard Frost/WABA/NPS
07/22/2010 01:10 PM

To Margaret Frisbie/SANTAFE/NPS
cc Carrie Mardorf/SANTAFE/NPS
bcc
Subject Re: CLI Condition Update 

Dear Margaret,

The CLI condition of Washita Battlefield NHS remains unchanged and is still in fair condition. We have not made any changes to the landscape since the last assessment. Plans to construct a new Overlook, Trail and Trailhead have not been funded. This project is still a hope for the future, but we are unsure as to when it might be funded. No changes to the landscape are planned until this occurs.

Thank you,

LISA

Lisa Conard Frost, Superintendent
Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

Superintendent concurrence on the condition of the landscape, 7/22/2010.

Revisions Impacting Change in Concurrence:

Other

Revision Narrative:

Edited text to correct typos, added images, clarified image sources, uploaded CLR to Landscape Documents section, June 2012.

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

Washita Battlefield NHS is a 315.2 acre property located in Rogers Mill County, which abuts Texas in far west-central Oklahoma. The NHS is comprised of a single continuous tract of land that straddles the Washita River just northwest of the city of Cheyenne, Oklahoma. The rectangular site, approximately one mile by one-half mile in size, is bounded to the south by State Highway 47A, which forms a short loop to the north of Highway 47. The western boundary of the NHS extends north, and along the same alignments, of the return portion of State Highway 47A. The Washita River enters the site approximately halfway along the western border and meanders across the northern half of the site in a diagonal direction, abutting the northern boundary along its eastern half. Chief Black Kettle's Cheyenne village is believed to have been located in one of the meanders south of the river in the northeast quarter of the NHS.

State and County:

State: OK

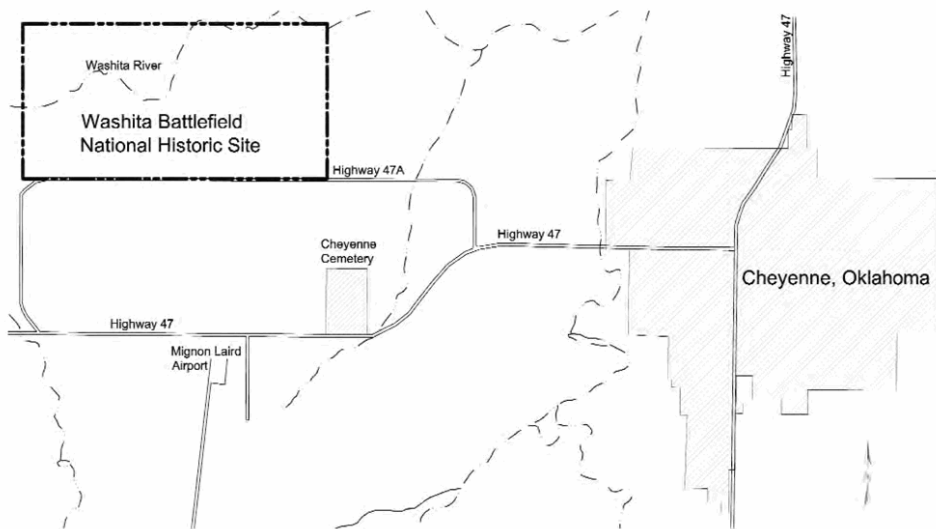
County: Roger Mills County

Size (Acres): 315.20

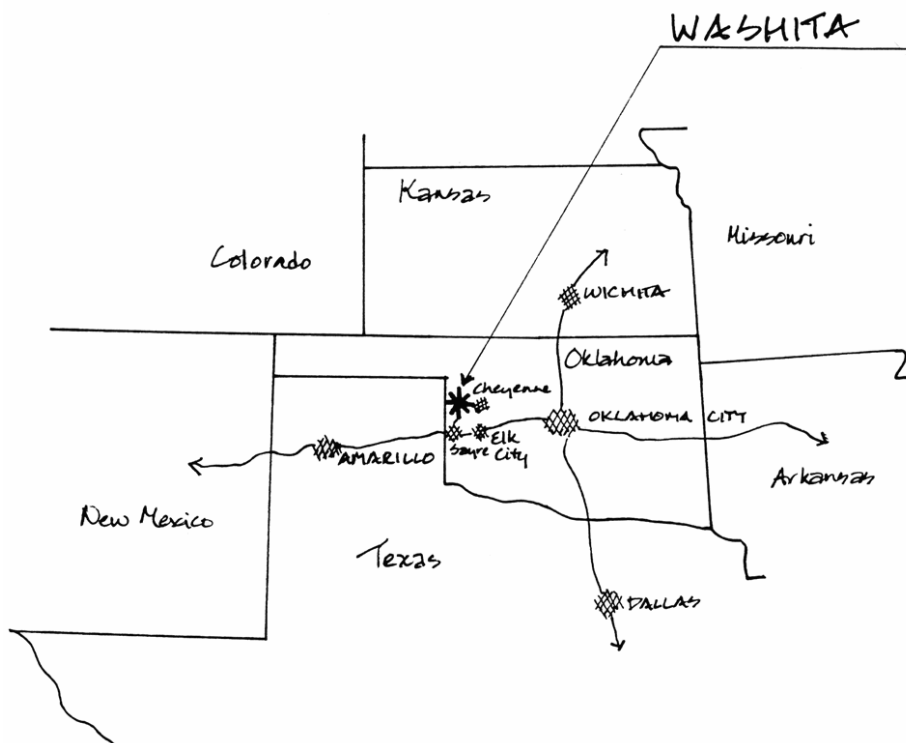
Boundary UTMS:

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Datum:	NAD 83
UTM Zone:	14
UTM Easting:	433,850
UTM Northing:	3,947,200
Source:	USGS Map 1:24,000
Type of Point:	Point
Datum:	NAD 83
UTM Zone:	14
UTM Easting:	439,500
UTM Northing:	3,947,200
Source:	USGS Map 1:24,000
Type of Point:	Point
Datum:	NAD 83
UTM Zone:	14
UTM Easting:	439,400
UTM Northing:	3,941,500
Source:	USGS Map 1:24,000
Type of Point:	Point
Datum:	NAD 83
UTM Zone:	14
UTM Easting:	433,950
UTM Northing:	3,941,550

Location Map:



Vicinity map showing Washita Battlefield NHS and surrounding context. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Regional Map showing location of Washita Battlefield. Source: NPS.

Regional Context:

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

In the 1860s, the core area of Washita was located within both the Tribal and U.S. exploration/trading/military areas. It was a wintering and hunting area and believed to be a sanctuary from the U.S. Army for Plains Tribes. The area was also part of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation. Camp Supply (now Fort Supply), located to the north, was established in November 1868. Fort Sill, located to the south, was established after the Battle of the Washita, in December 1868 and January 1869. The Washita River served as a major circulation route for Anglo-American explorers and traders moving west. The Washita conflict site is one of the areas within the Red River Wars region. The core area is significant to contemporary Plains groups, especially the Cheyenne-Arapaho. Today, the area is part of rural western Oklahoma, where agriculture involves mostly wheat, cattle and cotton.

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

The study area is located within the larger Washita River valley in the rolling hills and plains country of western Oklahoma. The river's riparian corridor and the red sandstone bluffs to the north provide more variety in vegetation and topography than much of the surrounding region. From Brown 1964, Appendix, pp. 3-5: “. . . In general, the battle site is a natural amphitheatre formed by the Washita River. The river flows easterly on a meandering course. Cutting through the red shale of the region, the stream has carved a valley about 1 1/2 to 2 miles wide. Flanking the valley on north and south are craggy bluffs and hills of resistant red sandstone standing 250-400 feet above the lowlands. The course of the river is timbered with elms, cottonwoods, and willows. Bordering the timber are parallel swaths of agricultural land which quickly give way to broken slopes covered with grass, sage and shinnery (oak). The low oaks and brush thicken as the land rises into the hills (in some areas). This higher, broken land is presently used for grazing.”

Type of Context: Political

Description:

The core area is about 1 mile west of the town of Cheyenne, the county seat of Roger Mills County. Surrounding lands that are within the larger battlefield/NHL are presently in private ownership. The core area is surrounded by farming and ranching country, with some acreage set aside within the Black Kettle Grasslands, administered by the U.S. Forest Service. Traditionally-associated communities and interest groups include the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes, Custer groups (potentially Custer Battlefield and Museum Association, Little Bighorn Association, and Order of Indian Wars), the Washita Battlefield Historical Society, the Oklahoma Historical Society, and the Council on Abandoned Military Posts (CAMP).

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 04/18/2005

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Preservation of the Washita Battlefield is mandated in the enabling legislation for the National Historic Site; the area must be preserved and maintained.

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Explanatory Narrative:

NPS owns NHS in fee simple

Public Access:

Type of Access: Other Restrictions

Explanatory Narrative:

At this time, there is general public access to the Overlook/memorial area and public access to the core area self-guided trail system (day-use only).

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Description:

The inventory area includes the entire Washita Battlefield NHS; however, additional features are present on lands outside the NHS boundary. Areas/features included on adjacent lands (some within NHL boundary) include: the site where Elliott and 19 of his men were killed; Elliott's troops' graves (approx. 6-8 miles downstream, east of Chief Black Kettle's village site, approx. at site of Sheridan's December 11, 1868 camp); location of winter encampment of Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche, and other Plains Tribes (about 2-5 miles east of Black Kettle village site); Cheyenne women's death song site (just south of core area boundary); Twin Knolls, to which the Cheyenne (including Magpie) fled during the conflict (just south of core area boundary) (according to Rea 1997, p. 19-20, a large number of women and children were observed fleeing in the area of the knolls during the conflict); and the Osage scout observation knoll, where Chief Black Kettle's village was first observed (north of core area boundary).

National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Entered Inadequately Documented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

Washita Battlefield NHS was administratively entered into the National Register of Historic Places on 10/15/1966. A written nomination form was later completed in 6/15/1976 to provide additional detail about the National Register listing.

Prior to the listing on the National Register, the property was listed as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on 1/12/1965. Neither NR nomination or NHL nomination adequately address the cultural landscape. This CLI provides additional documentation about the landscape that should be included in future nominations.

Existing NRIS Information:

Name in National Register:	Washita Battlefield National Historic Site
NRIS Number:	66000633
Other Names:	None
Primary Certification Date:	10/15/1966
Other Certifications and Date:	NHL - 1/12/1965

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence:	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Contributing/Individual:	Individual
National Register Classification:	Site
Significance Level:	National
Significance Criteria:	A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
Significance Criteria:	B - Associated with lives of persons significant in our past
Significance Criteria:	D - Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history

Period of Significance:

Time Period:	CE 1868
Historic Context Theme:	Peopling Places
Subtheme:	Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
Facet:	Native Cultural Adaptations At Contact
Other Facet:	None
Time Period:	1865 BCE - CE 1939
Historic Context Theme:	Shaping the Political Landscape
Subtheme:	Political and Military Affairs 1865-1939
Facet:	The Reconstruction Era, 1865-1877
Other Facet:	None

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Military

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Area of Significance Category: Ethnic Heritage

Area of Significance Subcategory: Native American

Statement of Significance:

Washita is a sacred place with ongoing spiritual value. The Washita landscape is significant as the location of the nationally significant event -- the Battle of the Washita. Existing landforms, vegetation, and other contributing landscape elements derive their significance from their association with this event. The core area is significant as the place where the traumatic event took place, and where the memory of the event, and its aftermath, is embedded. The river corridor, lowlying floodplain and grassy hills of the core area are significant as part of the overall battlefield (NHL). The core area is the place which has been set aside to preserve the memory of the conflict and to honor those who died and those whose lives were permanently affected by this event.

From the legislation:

". .the Battle of the Washita was one of the largest engagements between Plains tribes and the U.S. Army on the Southern Great Plains. The site is a registered National Historic Landmark.
". . the Battle of the Washita symbolizes the struggle of the Southern Great Plains tribes to maintain their traditional lifeways and not to submit to reservation confinement"

". the importance of the Battle of the Washita as a nationally significant element of frontier military history and as a symbol of the struggles of the Southern Great Plains tribes to maintain control of their traditional use areas"

For additional information, also see the 1976 NR form.

From legislative testimony:

From the Statement of Chief Lawrence H. Hart, Southern Cheyenne Tribe, July 18, 1998:

" . There is not one Cheyenne person in Western Oklahoma who does not have any connection to the event of November 27, 1868. All the Cheyenne Indian people are linear descendants or have some relationship to those who were victims or those who survived the so-called battle. Furthermore, all of us have oral tradition stories we have imbedded in our minds passed down to us three, four, five or more generations. As the drafted Bill indicates, this historic event represents an important milestone in the history of the Plains Indian relations. It is indeed a milestone in Cheyenne Indian history, but it is not the only one Cherishing children. That in essence, was the view of Black Kettle. That's why he was motivated to go to Camp Weld, near Denver in September of 1864. That's why he signed the Treaty of Little Arkansas just a year after Sand Creek. That's why he signed the Treaty of Medicine Lodge in 1867. That's why he went to Fort Cobb to seek assurance. That's why the Dog Soldiers were opposed to his actions following Sand Creek. That's why he was asked to take his band and camp separate from the main Cheyenne Indian Village in November of 1868. His village was beyond that of the Arapaho, who always camped separately from the Cheyenne. That's why Black Kettle's village was highly vulnerable. November 27, 1868 was the last day in the life of this great peace chief . . . This and other stories need to be told . . . Above all else, a National Park can be of great benefit educationally to all of us and to future generations."

From the Statement of Jerry Rogers, Associate Director for Cultural Resources, National Park Service, July 29, 1994:

"The Washita National Historic Site would preserve significant resources related to one of the largest battles between Plains Indian tribes and the United States Army on the Southern Plains. This encounter, one of the most controversial in the nation's efforts to subjugate Native tribes, is perceived by many historians as the slaughter of noncombatant women and children asleep in their lodges. . . In the broadest context, the Battle of the Washita can be interpreted as a conflict of cultures . . (it) remains as a tragic, classic example of the cultural failings involving American Indians and whites."

From the Statement of Dr. Robert Blackburn, Deputy Director, Oklahoma Historical Society, July 29, 1994:

"On the heels of the Reconstructive Treaties came the military offensive to clear the Southern Plains of nomadic tribes such as the Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, and Cheyenne. Again, it was an attempt to open the last frontier to white settlers. The first major battle in this new crusade was Custer's attack

on Black Kettle's village on the Washita River. It was the inaugural test of General Phil Sheridan's winter campaign, designed to defeat and demoralize the plains Indians. It worked all too well. The attack on Black Kettle's village was the beginning of the end for the nomadic way of life of the Southern Plains and the beginning of reservation life with all the attendant features of punishment, abuse, and attempts at cultural genocide--an American version of the Holocaust."

From Cheyenne-Arapaho tribal members (summarized from meeting presentations and notes):

The Washita landscape has deep emotional associations for many members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. Accounts of the conflict from relatives who survived the event have emotional immediacy. Some members feel it is very important not to disturb the area, because the spirits of those who died there still inhabit the landscape. For many, Washita means more in terms of the conflict's effect on the people involved than in terms of military history. The conflict at Washita was an atrocity, and learning the associated stories is part of the healing process. (L. Hart, J. Big Medicine, G. Yellowman)

Washita can be thought of as representing:

- Warriors (Cheyenne/Arapaho, Dog Soldiers, War Society Members / Soldier Society members)
 - Army (Custer, U.S. Govt)
 - Scouts (Osage, Ben Clark)
 - Sacred/Spiritual place
 - Harmony (land, river, water, air, plants, buffalo - i.e. all natural elements, which have spiritual meaning)
 - Innocence (women, children, elders, all non-combatants)
 - Troops (U.S. soldiers)
 - Attack (the attack on a people and whole culture, the killing and trauma)
- (From G. Yellowman)

Note: Comanche and Kiowa warriors were also involved, in repelling Custer's attack. Romero, one of Custer's Scouts, played a prominent role in the attack and later married into the Cheyenne Tribe. Romero was Mexican; there were many adopted Mexican captives among the tribes. Several were warriors who took an active role in the Plains Wars on the Indian side.

There is some indication that, for some Cheyenne-Arapaho, the site is recognized as the location of a historic event but was not historically/traditionally an annual camping location for the Cheyenne or Arapaho; however, that it was a Kiowa hunting area.

Additional information regarding the importance of the Washita site to Tribal and non-Tribal communities may be found in the Cheyenne Oral History Study (Warde 1999) and the Ethnographic Study (in progress).

National Register significance criteria:

Washita is nationally significant as a cultural landscape in addition to its significance as a National Historic Landmark site. As a cultural landscape, Washita is significant under Criteria A, B and D:

Criteria A: Event

The Washita landscape is significant as the location of the Battle of the Washita.

Criteria B: Person

The Washita landscape is significant for its association with General Custer, Chief Black Kettle, and potentially other significant persons.

Criteria D: Information Potential

The Washita landscape is significant for its potential to provide further information on the conflict itself, on the impacts and implications of the conflict, on the contemporary and historic natural environment, and on ethnographic associations with the landscape.

On this basis, it is recommended that the existing nomination for Washita be revised to more fully incorporate landscape values. Also, the property category can be changed to district.

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Historic Site
Ethnographic/Traditional

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Primary Historic Function: Battle Site
Primary Current Use: Government-Other

Current and Historic Names:

Name	Type of Name
Washita Battlefield	Historic
Washita Battlefield National Historic Site (NHS)	Current

Ethnographic Study Conducted: Yes-Restricted Information

Associated Group:

Name of Group:	Cheyennes, Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche, Plains Apache, Osage (especially Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes)
Type of Association:	Current
Name of Group:	Local/regional: agricultural community & Custer groups (e.g. Order of Indian Wars, Custer Battlefield and Museum Association, Little Bighorn Association)
Type of Association:	Current

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1700 - 1800	Inhabited	First Peoples (Wichitas) occupied region
CE 1700 - 1840	Inhabited	Post-contact Plains relocations, migrations, and transient population (Comanches, Kiowas, Osages, and Pawnees)
CE 1800 - 1850	Inhabited	The Washita region was the traditional use area for the Kiowa, Comanche, and Plains Apache before 1840 and through the Civil War. The Cheyenne remained north of the Arkansas before their 1840 peace agreement with the Comanche and Kiowa
CE 1830 - 1840	Inhabited	Jacksonian Indian Removal Policy -- eastern tribes moved west into Oklahoma
CE 1830	Explored	Anglo-American explorer / naturalist expeditions map, survey and illustrate the region Eg explorers Randolph and Marcy; naturalists Sibley and Nuttall
CE 1864	Military Operation	Sand Creek Massacre -- Chivington attacks Chief Black Kettle's camp
CE 1865 - 1867	Military Operation	Little Arkansas Treaty -- established first Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation in Indian Territory
CE 1867	Military Operation	Medicine Lodge Treaties; attempt to restrict Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche and Kiowa to reservations
CE 1868	Military Operation	Chief Black Kettle meets with Colonel Hazen to try to negotiate peace

	Inhabited	Chief Black Kettle's band establishes camp along the Washita River
	Military Operation	Battle of the Washita - "Lt. Colonel George A. Custer, leading the 7th U.S. Cavalry, attacked the sleeping Cheyenne village of Peace Chief Black Kettle." (from Washita Legislation
		Chief Black Kettle
		Lt. Colonel George A. Custer
CE 1869	Military Operation	Cheyenne forced onto reservations
	Memorialized	"Quaker / Grant Peace Policy" -- U.S. government response to outcry over Washita killing; ultimately unsuccessful
CE 1873	Explored	Hackbusch cadastral survey (survey notes include observations on plants present, width of river)
CE 1889	Homesteaded	Oklahoma or Unassigned Lands Run
CE 1890	Memorialized	Placement of U.S. Army memorial marker on battle site
CE 1891 - 1892	Platted	Indian Allotment (Darlington Indian Agency)
CE 1892	Homesteaded	Cheyenne-Arapaho Land Run
CE 1928 - 1929	Developed	Panhandle and Santa Fe Railroad line constructed through the core area
CE 1920 - 1929	Farmed/Harvested	Wheat boom; major increase in Washita region ploughing and planting
CE 1930 - 1939	Altered	Dust Bowl era -- farming and oil fields in decline in Washita region; landowners who farmed/ranched the battlefield area included J.H. Williams

Washita NHS landscape

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

CE 1930	Memorialized	1890 memorial marker replaced, and the body of a Cheyenne teenage boy, identified by Magpie as Hawk, was reburied at what is now the NHS Overlook and historic marker site.
CE 1937	Explored	National Park Service Historic Sites Survey completed for the area
CE 1940 - 1949	Restored	Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service or NRCS) restoration projects underway in the region; Black Kettle National Grasslands established
CE 1940	Mined	Mineral exploration (oil and natural gas) and leasing activity
CE 1945	Purchased/Sold	John Wesner purchases the core area; Wesner family runs agricultural operation
CE 1950	Engineered	Flood control of Washita River, resulting in bottomland/floodplain being cleared of trees and used for crops/pasture
	Military Operation	Battle re-enactments start / occur. Private Cheyenne commemorative ceremonies may have started about this time also (?).
CE 1958	Explored	National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings study completed for the area; one result was W. Brown 1964 Special Report on Washita Battlefield
CE 1960	Memorialized	Cheyenne on-site commemoration ceremonies (perhaps earlier?)
CE 1965	Established	Established as a National Historic Landmark, NHL boundaries encompass about 12 sq. miles; NHL plaque set up at memorial/overlook location shortly after
CE 1968	Memorialized	Lawrence Hart led a re-interment ceremony at the Black Kettle Museum, to rebury an unidentified Indian individual, who was found in 1934
	Memorialized	U.S. 7th Cavalry Association, out of California, re-enacted the Washita conflict, with 3500 spectators present.

Washita NHS landscape

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

CE 1970	Planned	National Historic Landmark forms completed
CE 1971	Purchased/Sold	Betty and Dale Wesner take over the property; continuation of agricultural activity with some changes
CE 1976	Planned	National Historic Landmark forms completed
CE 1980	Built	Brian Wesner residence built in southeast corner of core area
CE 1983	Established	NHL forms signed; site condition monitored through NHL reports
CE 1996	Established	Legislation passed to establish a 326-acre core area as National Historical Site (NPS now owns 315.2 acres); preservation emphasis established
CE 1997	Established	Core area transferred from Oklahoma Historical Society to National Park Service
CE 1998	Planted	Wheat field areas reseeded
	Memorialized	First Washita Symposium held in Cheyenne

Physical History:

1800-1999

The area which is now known as Western Oklahoma was for centuries used by indigenous people as part of their traditional territories. The First Peoples who occupied this area prior to the early 1800s included the Caddoan, Kiowa and Wichita Tribes. In the early 1800s, the core area was part of a large wintering/hunting area for Plains Tribes, within the greater expanse of their territory. Increasing Anglo-American exploration, settlement, and army presence during the early to mid 1800s increased Anglo-American-Tribal tensions. Starting in the 1830s, a series of treaties were established with Plains Tribes. In 1867, the Medicine Lodge Treaties were established with Plains Chiefs to try to move them to reservations; this effort was for the most part unsuccessful, and conflict continued.

Major General Philip H. Sheridan launched the punitive winter campaign against the Cheyennes and Arapaho in 1868. These tribes were denied sanctuary even though tribal leaders (including Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle) pledged peace. Sheridan's goal was to drive the tribes onto reservations, and to kill those guilty of raiding. At the Battle of Washita, this goal was interpreted differently -- no discrimination was made between the guilty and the innocent, and all tribal members were treated equally.

As part of the winter campaign, Custer's 7th Cavalry marched south from Fort Dodge to establish Camp Supply, then proceeded south to the Antelope Hills, which are northwest of the battlefield area. It was late November, with winter weather.

Meanwhile, Chief Black Kettle's band had set up camp about two to five miles west of other larger Plains tribes winter camps, in what is now known as the core area. Historic records indicate approximately 51 lodges, 200-300 people, and at least 800 ponies at Chief Black Kettle's camp. At this location, the band was close to the other tribes, were close to water, and were somewhat sheltered in the river valley, between the low hills.

On the night of November 26, 1868, Custer stopped his 800 men behind a ridge (to the northwest of, and outside the core area) where they waited for daybreak to attack. The 7th Cavalry was divided into four contingents, and attacked the village from all sides. The Cheyenne tried to escape, east along or through the river, and up the swales and hills to the south. There was scattered fighting and killing throughout the village area and on the hills to the south (within the core area). Historic accounts describe how Chief Black Kettle and his wife, Medicine Woman Later, were killed trying to cross the river. The Cheyenne claim 11 men and 19 women and children killed. An additional 53 women and children were taken prisoner.

Major Elliott and his men went east in pursuit of a group of Cheyenne boys. Arapaho reinforcements came in from the east, and Elliott and his men were overcome and killed. Sergeant Major Kennedy was killed at what is now known as Sergeant Major Creek, to the east of the core area. The 700 head pony herd was slaughtered by the soldiers, with Cheyenne, Arapaho, and members of other tribes watching from nearby hills. The white winter landscape turned red with blood, and the river flowed red. Custer withdrew in the late

afternoon, after a mock attack on the villages to the east. The core area was strewn with dead and with the remains of the village.

There is some debate over whether this action should be remembered as a battle or as a massacre. The event was lauded by the army as a victory, and it was a crushing defeat for the Cheyenne. As word of the results of the battle spread among the Plains Tribes, many panicked and dispersed or fled to more isolated areas, and some surrendered at Fort Cobb and elsewhere. Custer, along with Sheridan's force consisting of the 7th Cavalry and 19th Kansas volunteers, returned to the Washita Battle site on December 10 the same year, to assess the results and to look for the bodies of the missing officer and men. Custer continued to pursue the Cheyenne and Arapaho, finally forcing the surviving tribal members to accept reservation confinement.

The Battle of the Washita is accepted as the pivotal event in the Southern Plains "Indian Wars". It crushed the spirit of the Plains tribes, and served as a prototype of winter campaigns which continued through the 1870s and which ended the Plains "war". The battle played an important role in the national moral predicament of treatment of indigenous people; many settlers on the western frontier rejoiced, while many eastern humanitarians demanded more humane treatment of Indian people.

In 1892, the Oklahoma Land Run vastly increased Anglo-American settlement and agricultural use of the area. This continued throughout the twentieth century. In the 1960s, official interest in preserving the Washita Battlefield area resulted in a number of studies, and in 1996, protective legislation was passed.



Looking north from Custer Hill, 1998. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



1993 aerial photograph showing landscape changes since 1868. Source: USDA Aerial, 16 613030 1993-24.

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

In the case of Washita, where historical significance is associated with a specific event and its aftermath, the determination of contributing landscape characteristics is in large part a matter of comparing historic and contemporary conditions. As oral history and ethnographic work has been completed, further research on the landscape conditions in 1868, may reveal more information that would call for revisions to the CLI.

Relationships between characteristics are also important. Natural Systems and Features, Vegetation, Fauna, Land Use and Cultural Traditions together define the overall human ecology of the area, both during the historic period and during later periods.

Overall, contributing landscape characteristics at Washita are those which relate directly to landscape conditions in 1868, activities during the conflict, or on-going ethnographic and/or commemorative value of the site. Thus, landform, vegetation and wildlife characteristic of southern prairie ecosystems in the late 1800s, specific places and natural elements associated with the conflict, and commemorative features are contributing, while modifications related to agricultural or recreational development are noncontributing.

CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

- Washita River
- Riparian / floodplain ecosystem (vegetation and wildlife characteristic of historic period)
- Uplands ecosystems (vegetation and wildlife characteristic of the historic period)
- Topography (that reflecting 1868 conditions, not including agricultural terracing, railroad grade) and specific topographic features associated with conflict
- 1930 replacement of original 1890 Monument
- Chief Black Kettle's village - location, remains/artifacts, archeological evidence
- Specific historic locations (Village location, Pony Herd Kill site, Custer Hill)
- All in-situ artifacts from the battle
- Views and visual connections critical to outcome of battle
- Routes across landscape associated with battle
- All village and battle-related archeological sites
- Other markers/memorials/shrines
- Lack of evidence of modern development - (noises, smells, air quality, night sky visibility)
- Black Kettle tree location
- Places and/or resources associated with stories/songs about the battle and aftermath

The National Historic Landmark marker and granite State memorial are not “contributing”; that is, they are not historic resources directly associated with the event. However, neither are they “noncontributing”, because they do add to the meaning of the place and do reflect post-event commemorative efforts. Because they are features integral to the overall landscape (district), National

Register Criteria Consideration G (Commemorative Properties required to be over 50 years old) does not apply, and therefore they can be preserved as features relating to the historic event.

NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES (BIOTIC AND ABIOTIC):

- fencing and other structural remains associated with 19th and 20th century Anglo-American settlement and agriculture, or structures associated with educational/recreational development (e.g. picnic facilities), unless they have ethnographic value;
- railroad grade, agricultural terracing, and any other topographical modifications not associated with Washita's significance and which do not have ethnographic value;
- non-native/introduced vegetation that, based on historic/ethnographic evidence, is not believed to have been present on-site in 1868 and/or is not believed to be associated with the area's ethnographic significance. (note: oral histories/ethnographic work is needed to determine if there are any vegetation types or species that were not believed to be present during 1868 but that nevertheless have contemporary ethnographic value)

INTEGRITY EVALUATION

For Washita, as a historic site and ethnographic landscape, integrity is determined by comparing historic and contemporary conditions, and by determining ethnographic values and whether traditionally associated communities consider the area to retain integrity. The following integrity evaluation is based primarily on historic significance since ethnographic studies have not yet been completed.

While post-conflict alterations have been made (e.g. establishment of crop areas, terracing slopes, tree clearing in floodplain area, flood control of river, introduction of exotic/weed plant species, construction of railroad grade, development of residential/agricultural complexes), the physical landscape is substantially intact, and feeling and historic associations are strong. The Washita NHS landscape retains integrity, at the high level required for a National Historic Landmark.

Location: Integrity of location is high. Even though conclusive physical evidence that Chief Black Kettle's village was located as shown on Figure 11 has not yet surfaced, historic records and oral histories indicate with some confidence that the core area is the location of the village and the most intense activity of the Washita conflict. Topographic features important to the historic event are substantially intact, and historic locations (e.g. village area, pony herd kill site, Custer hill) are identified and visible.

Setting: Integrity of setting is high. The immediate and adjacent setting of the Washita core area is the entire area of the NHL Battlefield. While this area has changed since 1868 with the introduction of agricultural uses, it retains a rural and relatively undeveloped character. Views from the core area out to areas of the larger Battlefield are for the most part unobstructed. The general region also retains a rural character, with the exception of the town of Cheyenne.

Design: Since the significance of this landscape relates primarily to its relatively un-manipulated state

in 1868, community ecological organization is more relevant than landscape design. Integrity of design is medium. This assessment is based on the evidence of changes in size and population structure of plant and animal species, and changes in distribution, primarily due to agricultural activity since 1868.

Materials: The integrity of materials is medium. While the core area is substantially intact, physical elements (the river, landforms, soils) have been somewhat altered since 1868, with flood control and channelization of the river, agricultural terracing and the development of the railroad grade. Specific dominant plant and animal species have also changed.

Workmanship: Since the results of landscape modification techniques is not a significant landscape characteristic, this factor has limited applicability to Washita. Agricultural land management techniques date to after the historic period. While the one historic structural feature -- the 1930s replacement of the 1890 U.S. Army monument -- has integrity, the integrity of this feature does not determine the integrity of the landscape.

Feeling: The integrity of feeling is high. Even with remaining physical evidence of agricultural and railroad uses, the Washita core area landscape retains a strong sense of the past. Key physical elements are still present, and the meaning of the Washita landscape is very much alive in the memories of both traditionally-associated and other groups today. Evidences of this include the on-going interest in the historic event and the landscape and the setting aside of the core area for preservation, the impassioned talks given at the November 1998 Washita Symposium, and the Washita Trail Guide which communicates to visitors what on-site behavior is appropriate, given the sacredness of the Washita landscape.

Association: The integrity of association is high. The Washita core area landscape is definitively associated with the Washita conflict, the specific people involved, and the aftermath of the event through historical documentation, oral histories, on-site archeological findings, and personal testimonies.

Also, the association between contemporary traditionally-associated communities (and non-traditionally-associated communities) and the landscape of the core area is high, as discussed in the Statement of Significance section. The on-going Oral History project, and future ethnographic studies, will provide additional detail.

Landscape Characteristic:

Archeological Sites

Archeological work completed to date is described in Lees et. al. 1997. Artifacts were found using on-site metal detector scanning and selective excavation. Artifacts mainly consist of firearms ammunition. Geomorphological study was conducted within the core area in 1995 and 1997 involving the excavation of a series of core samples. No artifacts related to the conflict or Chief Black Kettle's village were found in 1995; the 1997 report has not yet been finalized.

Buildings and Structures

The existing 1930s replacement of the original 1890 memorial and its present location is historically significant. The 1965 National Historic Landmark marker, the State granite

monument, the National Historic Site sign, and the Overlook shelter and interpretive sign while indicating recent commemoration of the conflict and concern for public education, are not historically significant or contributing per se, but may have ethnographic value. Other structures within the Overlook area (parking bollards, picnic shelters, fencing, telephone pole, entry gate, and storage shed), while related to public enjoyment of the site and maintenance functions, are not in themselves historically significant / contributing. Throughout the core area, numerous fences and various other agricultural structures and features remain from recent agricultural and residential activity; these are non-contributing.

CONTRIBUTING

-1930s replacement of the original 1890 memorial and its present location

NON-CONTRIBUTING

-1965 National Historic Landmark marker;

-State granite monument;

-National Historic Site sign;

-overlook shelter and interpretive sign

-other structures: parking bollards, picnic shelters, fencing, telephone pole, entry gate, and storage shed

-fencing and various other agricultural structures

Character-defining Features:

Feature: 1930s Memorial replacing 1890 Memorial

Feature Identification Number: 116302

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: 1965 National Historic Landmark marker

Feature Identification Number: 160118

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: State granite monument

Feature Identification Number: 160122

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: National Historic Site sign

Feature Identification Number: 160147

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Overlook shelter and interpretive sign

Feature Identification Number: 160120

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Park bollards/picnic shelters/gate/poles

Feature Identification Number: 160116

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Fences and storage shed

Feature Identification Number: 160148

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Overlook Pavilion with surrounding small-scale structures, including signs, fences, and restroom, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Overlook pavilion, memorial, and commemorative features, 2002.. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.

Circulation

Contributing circulation patterns include those likely to have been present during the historic period (e.g. traditional use trails, animal trails or corridors, European hunter/trapper trails, and river crossings), and routes specifically associated with the conflict, (e.g. observation nodes, lines of advance/retreat, and reinforcement routes used by the other Plains tribes coming from the east). As a winter Cheyenne encampment, the major circulation route may have been along the river, with trails up into the uplands, possibly along the smaller drainages -- used by both people and animals. The account of the battle by Moving Behind (1955) mentions an old road crossing at a sharp curve in the river and remains of old roads, then in the form of steep paths (not identified on-site to date). During the conflict, the routes used by the U.S. troops to encircle and advance upon the village, and the routes used by the Cheyenne to attempt escape are contributing even though no specific visible features remain. The more visible post-1868 circulation patterns and features (the railroad grade, the adjacent county road, farm roads/lanes, cattle trails, and river crossings) are, however, noncontributing.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Historic trails/crossings from period

Feature Identification Number: 160155

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Routes associated with conflict

Feature Identification Number: 160149

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Old road used during conflict

Feature Identification Number: 160157

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Routes along river corridor

Feature Identification Number: 160151

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Post-1868 circulation patterns

Feature Identification Number: 160153

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Cluster Arrangement

The arrangement of all the different elements of Chief Black Kettle's village is not known at this time, but is historically significant. While the present location of the 1930s replacement of the original U.S. Army monument is historic, the overall arrangement of the memorials, markers and facilities within the Monument Overlook area is not historic.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Site of Chief Black Kettle's village

Feature Identification Number: 160159

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Constructed Water Features

N/A

Cultural Traditions

While cultural traditions in the form of land use practices associated with the historic period did not leave lasting physical remains, they are important to understanding the use and meaning of the landscape for the Cheyenne and the U.S. Army. A number of general cultural traditions are important and relevant to the Cheyenne use of the landscape as a winter camp (e.g. cultural principles of social and spatial organization used in setting up the camp, warrior and hunting traditions, the meaning and uses of buffalo and various other animals, and the collection of plant materials and use of specific plants for medicinal and ceremonial purposes), and specific relevant traditions (e.g. that the camp was arranged to face east, and that the camp was located on the south side of the river for ceremonial reasons in addition to the fact that this was the location of the greatest tree cover) (G. Yellowman, pers. comm.). The on-going Cheyenne Oral History project will likely bring to light other cultural traditions, e.g. stories or songs associated with specific locations. In recent years, ceremonies have been held at the site on the anniversary of the conflict. These ceremonies, because of their association with the

landscape and its ongoing ethnographic value, are included in cultural traditions.

The military strategy used at Washita by Custer's troops and the ordnance used are also cultural traditions associated with Washita (Lees et. al. 1997). The Washita conflict represented a change in the usual military tactics used in the Indian Wars; i.e. it was a winter surprise attack. Overall tactics also involved surrounding the village before attacking, and approaching the attack as part of a "total war", which required total elimination of the enemy.

CONTRIBUTING:

- All cultural traditions mentioned above.

NON-CONTRIBUTING:

- While cultural traditions associated with agricultural, railroad, and residential uses of the area may be significant to local families or local history of the Cheyenne area, they are noncontributing in the context of the Battle of the Washita.

Land Use

As described in the historic chronology and historic narrative above, land use within the core area has changed from wintering/hunting area for Plains tribes and the site of the 1868 conflict to agricultural use (primarily cattle grazing and wheat farming, transportation corridor (e.g. railroad) and extended family residential use, to today's preservation, commemoration and recreational uses.

CONTRIBUTING:

-Of existing land uses (preservation, commemoration, recreation), only commemoration relates directly to historic significance, and can be said to be contributing. However, preservation is definitely compatible with maintaining the significance and integrity of the landscape.

NON-CONTRIBUTING:

-Land uses that have involved major modification of the landscape uncharacteristic of the historic period, i.e. large-scale agricultural use and use for large-scale mechanized transportation corridor (railroad)

Natural Systems and Features

The Washita River, the dominant and defining natural feature within the core area, was called the Lodge Pole River by the Cheyenne (Hart, pers. comm). The river flows east into the Red River, and has over time eroded the terraces and river channel, and determined floodplain patterns, thus establishing the basic topographic relationships. Elevations at the core area range from 1935 to 2000 feet. The course and flow of the river has influenced the nature and extent of the riparian zone. According to Rea, 1997, "Drawing upon the maps and aerial photography, it appears the channel enters and leaves Section 12, 13-24 much as it did in 1868. It is between these points that the channel appears to have changed" (p.14). The 1873 Hackbusch survey maps indicate that the river now has more pronounced meanders than it did in the late 1800s. A number of relatively shallow, intermittent drainages lead down into the river, as they did during the 1860s. Construction of check dams upstream have modified river volume and flow.

The width of the south floodplain has apparently been reduced over time. Up until about the 1950s, the river flooded regularly from 1/4 to 1/2 mile south of its banks, i.e. extending to the present slough or escarpment. After the introduction of flood control on the Washita and the establishment of the main river channel, the secondary channel, and the pasture area, the river rarely floods the extent of the original floodplain (Brian Wesner, pers. comm.).

CONTRIBUTING:

- The Washita River, with high water quality and more extensive associated riparian zone. (While the Washita River as a free-flowing, naturally flooding river is contributing in terms of 1868 conditions, it may not be realistic to restore this condition).

NON-CONTRIBUTING:

- Vegetation that has been introduced since the 1868s, e.g. that associated with agriculture or introduced ornamentals; constricted riparian zone; agricultural terracing and railroad grade.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Washita River

Feature Identification Number: 160175

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Vegetation introduced post-1868

Feature Identification Number: 160177

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Washita River and riparian corridor, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Washita River oxbow, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.

Small Scale Features

Small scale features in the core area are for the most part described in the Structures section. The numerous prayer offerings which are tied to the Monument Overlook fence are likely significant ethnographic resources. The Oral History project, and other ethnographic work, may identify other small scale features having ethnographic significance.

Spatial Organization

During the 1860s, before the battle, the spatial organization of the study area was determined primarily according to the natural environment - i.e. the location of the river, the extent of the riparian vegetation, the topography, and other vegetation present. The riparian zone would have been spatially enclosed by the tree canopy; the upland areas generally open, divided to some degree by drainages leading down to the river and the associated shrubby riparian zone vegetation. Typical of prairie landscape of the region, the vegetated riparian area would have contrasted significantly with the more open uplands. Overall, the riparian and floodplain areas were, as they are today, surrounded and partially enclosed most directly by the escarpment defining the floodplain on the south, and at a greater distance by the hills to the north and the upland slope further to the south.

In the course of the conflict, the natural environment determined battle movements to a large degree, and different individuals and groups involved in the battle used different spaces and locations with the landscape as part of their attack or retreat. Those in the village by the river were at a tactical disadvantage compared to the troops who approached from the surrounding higher ground and encircled the village. Key conflict locations within the core area include the Cheyenne village site/area, Custer Command post/Custer Hill, and the Pony Herd Kill site.

Since 1868, the spatial organization of the study area has been substantially modified, with agricultural and residential development, and with the introduction of the railroad. The once-open uplands areas have been terraced and compartmentalized into agricultural fields and pastures, which are separated by fences, the railroad grade, farm roads, and bands of vegetation (e.g. shelter belt tree plantings) (Figs. 11, 21). Edges between vegetation types are more rectilinear and more distinct, with the division of space into fields and pastures, and with the substantial reduction of the riparian area. With the development of the residential/farming complex and the monument/picnic area on the slope south of the river, the focus of human activity has changed from the floodplain (village location) to the uplands (Wesner complex/State monument area). The railroad grade cuts through the area, dividing the site into north and south sections and interrupting drainage patterns in a way uncharacteristic of 1868 conditions.

The exact locations of the Washita River and Chief Black Kettle's Village in 1868 are not known at this time; on-going research is addressing this question (Lees et. al., 1997)

CONTRIBUTING

- basic contrast between protected river valley (riparian zone) and exposed upland areas;
- natural/irregular divisions of space by vegetation and topography;
- gradual transition of vegetation from riverside to floodplain to upland types;
- openness of uplands interrupted only by minor drainages;
- taller vegetation in the riparian/floodplain area, and lower vegetation in the upland areas

NON-CONTRIBUTING

- division of space along the contour (e.g. railroad grade), rather than up and down the slopes;
- rectilinear division of space;
- division of spaces by fences and permanent structures;
- taller trees in upland areas

Topography

From Lees et. al. 1997 (draft), p. 29 (C. Vance Haynes chapter):

"Whereas the floodplain of the Washita River may have undergone modification by fluvial processes since 1868, the overall site topography has changed very little and has not been significantly altered by agricultural activity. Therefore, the terrain today still reflects the terrain that existed during the engagement of November 27, 1868, keeping in mind that the position of the river with respect to the floodplain is not the same because this relationship is ever changing". That is, while upper terraces have remained fairly constant, some changes have occurred in last 150 years to the floodplain (lowest alluvial terrace) from flood events and shifting river channel.

During the conflict, U.S. forces used ridge lines or escarpments for shelter and to prevent the Cheyenne from escaping, thus the Cheyenne were mostly trapped in the valley. High points were used as lookouts - within the core area is included a knoll identified as Custer's Hill (Figs. 11, 13). Other lookout spots are located on adjacent lands. Within the core area, drainages were used as routes of retreat and as hiding places by the Cheyenne, and as attack routes by

the pursuing U.S. forces. According to Rea (1997) a number of ravines that were deep in 1868 have since filled in.

CONTRIBUTING:

-Custer Hill;

- topographical patterns and features that are likely to have been the same or similar at the time of the battle (i.e. the overall relationship between the river channel and floodplain terracing, including the slough and the two large ditches in the pasture/floodplain just south of the river).

NON-CONTRIBUTING:

-channelization of the river and regrading of the floodplain;

-agricultural terracing and removal of some hillocks;

-the introduction of railroad grade in 1929; and

-a 3-4 foot deep ditch in far northwest corner of core area (remains of attempt to divert river)

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Custer Hill

Feature Identification Number: 160181

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: River channel and floodplain terracing

Feature Identification Number: 160187

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Slough and 2 ditches

Feature Identification Number: 160183

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Channelization of the river

Feature Identification Number: 160179

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Ag terracing and hillock removal

Feature Identification Number: 160185

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Railroad grade

Feature Identification Number: 160189

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: 3-4 foot deep ditch in NW corner

Feature Identification Number: 160201

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Upland Prairie from Highway 47A, with knoll in middle ground, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Southwest field, looking south, 2002. Note: rise in topography. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Western Railroad Grade, looking west, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Eastern Railroad Grade, looking west, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.

Vegetation

NOTE: Ethnographic associations and uses of plant materials are potentially significant and contributing, in addition to changes in species composition and community organization during the historic period. To include all contributing aspects of vegetation, ethnobotanical information from the on-going Oral History project and ethnographic studies, which is NOT culturally

sensitive, will be integrated into this section at a later date.

The Washita core area is located in the transitional zone between the short and tall grass prairies, and thus contains plants characteristic of both zones. Generally, vegetation has evolved from that characteristic of a natural prairie ecosystem (grasses, forbs, legumes, and some shrubs and trees) to that of a mixed prairie, agricultural and residential environment, with a mixture of naturally-occurring prairie species, introduced agricultural plants (e.g. wheat and pasture grasses like Plains/Old World Bluestem), and introduced ornamental plants (esp. around the location of the previous Wesner residence complex).

An 1890 photograph shows a specific tree close to the riparian area which is identified as the Black Kettle tree. This tree had a blaze inscribed into the trunk by members of the Cheyenne community. Photographs from the 1930s indicate that the stump only remains. If remains of this tree, or its location, can be identified in the future, they need to be identified as the remains of a significant individual tree, the only specimen tree so far identified at Washita. Other potential specimen trees are those that also have blazes on their trunks, some of which have been identified on surveys but not located in this present inventory (see J. Burton, 1969 map, 1-C).

While Elliott West's (1995) description of the patterns of interrelationship between river valley ecology (vegetation in particular), bison habitat, and Plains Indian and Anglo-American use of river valley areas addresses the Central Plains north of Washita, overall patterns apply also to the Washita River valley. Because the Washita River valley is somewhat more arid than the central or northern plains focused on by West, the patterns he describes (general degradation of the natural environment) would have been even more present in the Washita River valley area (West, personal communication).

According to E. West, during the mid nineteenth century, river valleys on the Plains were the focal point for Plains Indians' winter activity (winter camps, following the bison who followed the grasses), and for Anglo-American's summer activity (east-west travel, sometimes in massive wagon trains) (West, 1995, p. 26).

Vegetation patterns along river valleys varied seasonally. Likely vegetation included short grasses such as buffalo grass, and mid-tall grasses, such as little and big bluestem. The mid-tall grasses sprouted earlier, down in the floodplain area, providing sheltered forage in early spring. As spring progressed into early summer, the shorter grasses took over in the floodplain areas and also started growing in the upland areas. Forage gradually declined as winter approached (West 1995, p. 21-22).

In the late 1850s and approaching the time of the Battle of the Washita, the impact of increased cross-plain traffic due to the western gold rushes, the long period of drought between the late 1840s and around 1862, and general overgrazing resulted in the overall depletion of the resources within the river valleys. The net result of overgrazing (by bison and horses) was the

reduction in mid-tall grasses and thus the reduction in early spring feed. What was abundant (bison, grassland, space) was not nearly as important as what was scarce (water, riparian habitat, shelter, winter forage) (West 1995, p. 49). This pattern emphasizes the importance of river valley areas for winter refuges. Following these patterns, Plains Indian communities would winter in the river valleys in smaller groups, then gather sometimes in large numbers for the summer bison hunts, returning to the river valleys in the fall (West 1995, p. 21-22).

CONTRIBUTING:

- Contributing vegetation patterns and specific species are those likely to have been present at the time of the battle (see above); i.e. any existing vegetation characteristic of the historic period is contributing. In addition, the river and riparian area is the most significant zone within the core area, because it represents habitat that was critical for survival during the historic period, especially for Plains Indian groups.

NON-CONTRIBUTING:

- Extant noncontributing vegetation patterns and types/species include: the reduced riparian vegetation zone and the presence of pasture grasses and miscellaneous herbaceous material in the floodplain where trees used to grow; all native and non-native plants unlikely to have been present during the historic period (e.g. tamarisk, Plains Bluestem, other non-native grasses); the presence of taller trees in the upland areas, especially not along drainages.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: River and Riparian area

Feature Identification Number: 160210

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Prairie

Feature Identification Number: 160212

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Black Kettle tree/ trees with blazes

Feature Identification Number: 160208

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Changes in veg since end of period

Feature Identification Number: 160216

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Upland prairie in southeast corner of site, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Village floodplain looking east, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Grazed riparian area, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



South central field from Highway 47A, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



South riparian area, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.

Views and Vistas

For Washita, this category addresses views more than vistas, since vistas are consciously designed. While the overall visual relationships are similar now to what they were in 1868 (enclosed views within the riparian corridor, far reaching views from upland locations, and most of the long range views between the floodplain and the upper benches), landscape modifications since the conflict have altered short-range views. A number of specific views were critical to the battle, (e.g. the view of village site from the surrounding area), and specific views are important to the commemoration and interpretation of the landscape today, (e.g. the view of most of the core area from the Overlook). Due to the nature of the core area, views extend into adjacent areas.

Landscape character types used in Litton's visual analysis of landscape are: enclosed landscape, feature landscape, panoramic landscape, focal landscape, detail landscape, and ephemeral landscape (seasonal or changeable visual qualities) (Litton 1974). Generally, the views along the river and within the riparian area would have been enclosed during the historic period -- more so in summer than in winter due to tree canopy -- and are somewhat less enclosed today due to the decrease in extent of tree growth. Generally, views from the upland areas would have been, and still are, panoramic. During the conflict, Chief Black Kettle's Village would have been the focal point on the landscape for Custer and his troops, and for the Cheyenne, directions from which the troops were approaching and escape route options would have been focal points. Ephemeral qualities include seasonal color changes and seasonal climatic changes. Oral History and other ethnographic studies may identify other important views and visual focal points.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Open view of northwest floodplain from across Washita River, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.



Contemplative area looking east, 2002. Source: John Milner Associates, CLR.

Other - Fauna and Landscape Qualities

Fauna

In 1868, the buffalo and pony herds would likely have been the major fauna present (seasonally) which are not present today. Cattle were moved off in late 1997. During the 1998 Vegetation Analysis survey, the following wildlife was observed (Stotts & DuBey, 1998):

North Bench -- turkey vultures, rabbit, gopher, deer , and bob-white quail.

North Floodplain -- armadillo, raccoon, bob-white quail

Meadow -- none noted

Washita River Riparian -- deer, turkey, beaver, raccoon, great blue heron, duck, and interior least tern

South Riparian -- turkey, raccoon, gopher, skunk, white-tailed deer, owls, bats, voles, glossy snakes

Farmstead -- none noted

Upland Range -- coyote, white-tailed deer, red-tail hawk, sand turtle, gopher, rabbit

Wheat Fields - none noted

Railroad - bobcat, prairie vole.

Stotts and DuBey listed the following species as Oklahoma Sensitive Wildlife species which “. . . may be in the park at present or may migrate back into the park as historical vegetation becomes established.” (Stotts & DuBey 1998, p. 31): Black tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*), Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii*), Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), Swainson’s hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), Earless lizard (*Holbrookia maculata*), Texas horned lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*), Texas longnosed snake (*Rhinocheilus lecontei*). The Interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) is mentioned on p. 16 as an endangered species that was observed during the survey and for which there may be several areas of suitable habitat along the Washita River Riparian zone.

Landscape Qualities

Contributing qualities include the relative absence of modern development and evidence of modern development (e.g. sounds, smells). Air quality may be reduced since 1868. Seasonal vegetation colors (e.g. dramatic fall colors), while attractive, are not contributing if the vegetation involved was not present during the historic period or if it has no ethnographic value.

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 01/01/2000

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The landscape of the Washita Battlefield NHS was assessed in fair condition in 2000.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 04/18/2005

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The battlefield landscape remained in fair condition. Superintendent concurrence was received 6/27/2005.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 07/22/2010

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The condition of the Washita Battlefield NHS remains unchanged and is in fair condition. No changes have been made to the landscape since the last assessment. Superintendent concurrence was received 7/22/2010.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Vegetation/Invasive Plants

External or Internal: External

Impact Description: Potential invasion of exotic plant seed from outside NHS boundary.

Treatment

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Preservation
Approved Treatment Document: Cultural Landscape Report
Document Date: 09/01/2003

Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:

In 2003, a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) was completed for the Washita Battlefield NHS landscape. The document, written by John Milner Associates focuses on short and long term treatment recommendations for the battlefield landscape. In particular, the report provides treatment guidelines and strategies for the preservation and enhancement of historic, cultural, and natural resources, in support of the legislated goals of protecting and preserving the visual scene as closely as possible as it was at the time of the battle.

Additionally, the enabling legislation for the NHS calls for protection and preservation of the "...national historic site, including the topographic features important to the battle site, artifacts and other physical remains of the battle, and the visual scene as closely as possible as it was at the time of the battle."

As of 1999, some treatment recommendations have been carried out. These include:

- Removal of Wesner 20th century residential and agricultural structures; some fencing and miscellaneous structural features remain
- Reseeding wheat field areas with native grass mix

Approved Treatment Completed: No

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Date: 09/01/2003

Landscape Approved Treatment Cost Explanatory Description:

No treatment costs are included in the CLR.

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