

**Congressman Austin Scott (GA-o8)**  
**U.S. House of Representatives Committee on**  
**Natural Resources Member Day**  
**H.R. 2345 – Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and**  
**Preserve Establishment Act**  
**Wednesday, May 14, 2025**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of  
Committee.

Thank you for allowing me the time to discuss my bill H.R. 2345 which would redesignate Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park in Macon as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve, the first National Park in Georgia, a bipartisan initiative going back to 1934.

Congressman Bishop and I, along with then Senators Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson, first authored the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Boundary Revision Act in 2014. It was later passed in 2019 and formally enacted in the John D. Dingell, J.R. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which expanded park boundaries, authorized a special resource study that was completed in 2023, and changed its name to the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park.

As an avid sportsman, I worked with Georgia Department of Natural resources to protect and expand hunting and fishing access within the preserve boundary. The language prioritizes public hunting and fishing access, while protecting states' rights in regulation and private property rights of middle Georgians.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I would also like to highlight the positive national security implications of the proposed boundary expansion to include land near or adjacent to Robins Air Force Base, which would preserve installation operational areas and land use compatibility for military maneuvers.

Georgia is composed of roughly 38 million acres, about 5.25% of it is in the federal registry, much of which constitutes land in Georgia's critical military bases. This establishment of a national preserve will only increase the federal land inventory of Georgia by about 0.018%, assuming all land within the proposed boundary's acreage is able to be acquired from willing sellers (not immediate and not realistic). Land will only be acquired through purchase from willing sellers, donation, or land exchange, no imminent domain is authorized.

Last Congress, I worked closely with Chairman Tiffany and his staff to address committee concerns regarding federal land and management of the park and preserve. The 119<sup>th</sup> version of this bill incorporates that committee feedback with a significantly smaller proposed boundary for the preserve and removal of tribal co-management language.

This redesignation and relatively small addition to the federal register has the potential to have a significant economic impact for the middle Georgia region. I understand and acknowledge the very real challenges in states with high acreage of federal land, but this is not a concern that middle Georgians have. Middle Georgians' concerns lie in the potential commercial development of pristine hunting and fishing lands, the threats to national security and regional economic viability associated with not

protecting the encroachment zone of Robins Air Force Base, and the loss of the irreplaceable Muscogee (Creek) cultural resources and sacred sites.

The Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act would create a historic opportunity to protect important natural and cultural resources, protect hunting and fishing for generations to come, and bring economic opportunities to Middle Georgia through the creation of Georgia's first National Park.

I appreciate the committee's consideration of this bill and I look forward to our continued work together.