

# GEORGIA SOUTHERN & FLORIDA

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APPENDIX G



# CONTENTS

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## APPENDIX G

### Georgia Southern & Florida (GSF)

System Property Information Form  
GSF

GSF Mainline  
MAIN

Atlantic, Valdosta & Western  
VLDW

Hawkinsville & Florida Southern  
HKFS

Macon & Birmingham  
MCBH

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# GEORGIA SOUTHERN & FLORIDA (GSF)

The Georgia Southern & Florida Railroad (GSF) was chartered in 1885 to build a point-to-point railroad line from Macon, Georgia to Palatka, Florida, over a distance of 285 miles. The line was opened between Macon and Valdosta in February 1889 and completed to Palatka (east of Gainesville) in March of the following year.

The railroad quickly encountered financial trouble, entering receivership in 1891; President W. B. Sparks of Macon was appointed receiver. In 1895 it was reorganized as the Georgia Southern & Florida Railway under the financial control of the Southern Railway.

In 1902 the GSF bought the property of the Atlantic, Valdosta & Western Railway, a rail line between Valdosta and Jacksonville, Florida, giving the combined railroad system a second route to the Atlantic coast of Florida. By this time, the GSF also owned the Macon & Birmingham Railroad and the Hawkinsville & Florida Southern Railway.

The GSF's nickname was the Suwanee River Route. It crossed the river at White Springs, Florida; a second Suwanee crossing, at Fargo, Georgia, also came with the acquisition of the Atlantic, Valdosta & Western.

Today, the GSF remains officially in existence as a subsidiary of Norfolk Southern (NS). It no longer extends to Palatka, ending instead at Lake

**Other Names:** N/A

**NR Recommendation:** Eligible

**Period of Significance:** 1885-1982

**Physical Status:** Mixed (Active, Inactive, and Abandoned segments)

**Current Owner:** Norfolk Southern

**Predecessors:** N/A

**Successors/Lessees:** Central of Georgia; Louisville & Nashville Railroad; Atlantic Coast Line; Seaboard Coast Line; Seaboard System Railroad; CSX Transportation; Georgia Woodlands Railroad; Great Walton Railroad

**Mainline:** Macon to Florida state line via Cordele, Tifton, and Valdosta

**Branch Lines:** Valdosta to Jacksonville, FL; Macon (Sofkee) to LaGrange; Hawkinsville to Worth

City, Florida; the line south of Lake City is abandoned. Both the original GSF mainline between Macon and Valdosta and the former Atlantic, Valdosta & Western branch line to Jacksonville are now active, heavily-trafficked NS mainlines. Both of the GSF's subsidiary companies, the Macon & Birmingham and the Hawkinsville, Florida & Southern, entered receivership in 1922-23, and the full routes of both these lines are now inactive or abandoned.

## ACQUISITIONS AND SUBSIDIARIES

### Atlantic, Valdosta & Western

The Atlantic, Valdosta & Western Railway (VLDW), chartered in 1897, built a 110-mile mainline from Jacksonville across the northern edge of Florida and the southern edge of Georgia to Valdosta, where it connected with the GSF. Completed in 1899, the railroad also had some 45 spur line miles, most of which were logging routes in southern Clinch County, near the Okefenokee Swamp.

Promoted as the Jacksonville Short Line, the VLDW was purchased in 1902 by the GSF, which, by that point, was already under the control of the Southern Railway.



*Macon Terminal Station*

### **Macon & Birmingham Railroad**

Chartered December 26, 1888, the Macon & Birmingham Railroad (MBCH) connected Macon and LaGrange by way of a 105-mile route across Georgia's western Piedmont. It was completed to LaGrange in January 1891, about two months before its builder, the Macon Construction Company, entered receivership. However, its western destination of Birmingham was never reached by this rail company. Instead, much of the MCBH's unfinished roadbed to the west of LaGrange and into Alabama was later taken over and utilized by the Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic Railroad (AB&A) between January 1907 and the summer of 1908, for completion of their own line from LaGrange to Birmingham. For the AB&A, this extension established a direct route between Brunswick and Birmingham.

The MCBH was owned by the GSF, but the accounts were kept separate. Regardless, GSF timetables and maps from as early as 1895 showed the



*Caboose at Pineview, Wilcox County, along route of former Hawkinsville & Florida Southern*

two lines explicitly linked, offering one integrated route from LaGrange to Florida. The GSF's own line ran from Macon to Palatka, Florida and, by 1902, to Jacksonville. Thus, if the MBCH had achieved its planned terminus in Birmingham, the GSF could have preceded the AB&A in offering a direct connection between Birmingham and the Atlantic Coast.

The MCBH entered receivership in 1891 and was reorganized in 1895 as the Macon and Birmingham Railway. Never a profitable enterprise, it nonetheless continued to operate for more than a quarter-century. It was abandoned in 1922-23.

The railroad had a couple of nicknames, the LaGrange Route and the Pine Mountain Route, the latter for the scenic area it passed through west of Thomaston.

After the MCBH ended operations in the 1920s, the Central of Georgia purchased and continued to operate an eight-mile section from Thomaston west to peach orchards around the Crest community in northwestern Upson County. In Thomaston, this section was easily joined to the western end of the former Upson County Railroad, which had been operated as the Barnesville to Thomaston branch line of the Central of Georgia since the early 1870s. However, the segment between Thomaston and Crest has since become inactive or abandoned, like the rest of the former MCBH.

### **Hawkinsville & Florida Southern Railway**

The Hawkinsville & Florida Southern (HKFS) was first organized around 1889 as a logging line in the pine forests south of Hawkinsville. By 1895 it was also hauling general freight, along with passengers on freight trains. After a charter was received in 1896, the HKFS eventually transitioned to a 43-mile common carrier running south from Hawkinsville to a connection with the GSF at Worth, a place three miles north of Ashburn. The GSF controlled the HKFS through stock ownership. Hence, the company's general offices were never located in Hawkinsville, but instead in Atlanta, and later in Macon. Also, the railroad was built north from the GSF mainline in stages; it still had not yet reached Hawkinsville as late as 1898, according to Cram's *American Railway System Atlas*. The company also constructed a 15-mile branch line from Davisville to Fitzgerald. Despite the expansion of its service, the company still advertised as the Pine Belt Route, a nod to the landscape its trains traversed.

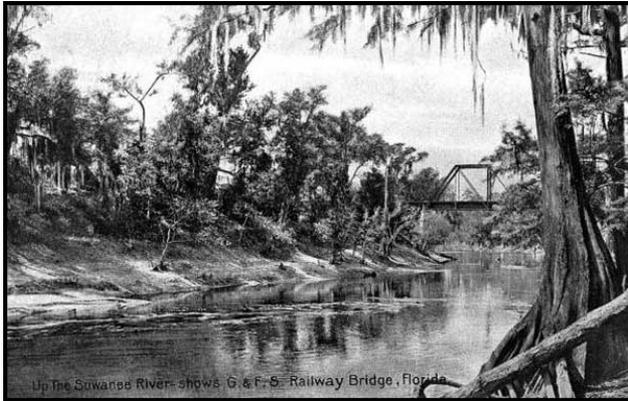
The HKFS railroad was leased to the Gulf Line Railway (Ashburn to Bridgeboro) in 1907. The Gulf Line was created in 1907 by Southern Railway to acquire and merge several small railroads in southern Georgia into a small system. Among these was not only the HKFS between Hawkinsville and Worth, but also the Flint River & Gulf Railway (FR&G), which ran from Ashburn to Sylvester. The FR&G was incorporated in 1903 with plans to build a railroad between Ashburn and Bainbridge. The first section of line from Ashburn opened the following year, and in 1906 the railroad reached Bridgeboro, 32 miles to the southwest.



*SR 230/Borum Street crossing, Unadilla*



*Unadilla, Dooly County*



Postcard view of GS&F bridge over Suwanee River, Florida, c. 1914



Pinehurst depot



Vienna

The HKFS was signed to a long-term lease and the FR&G was purchased by the new Gulf Line Railway. The two lines were then connected by 2.8 miles of trackage rights between Ashburn and Worth over the GSF mainline, since it was also controlled by the Southern Railway. A year later, in 1908, the Gulf Line extended its tracks to the southwest by constructing a new line from Sylvester to Camilla. At its north end in Hawkinsville, the merged HKFS and Gulf Line route also offered connection to the Southern Railway's Hawkinsville branch line from Cochran. Cochran was a stop on the Southern Railway's East Tennessee, Virginia & Georgia mainline between Macon and Brunswick, which originated as the Macon & Brunswick Railroad.

Another reorganization in 1913 resulted in the purchase and absorption of the Gulf Line by the Hawkinsville & Florida Southern, which continued operating under the control of the Southern Railway. In 1917, the Ocilla Southern Railroad completed a northern extension of its existing line between Nashville and Rochelle, creating a junction with the HKFS at the Pope City community. This independent short line then leased trackage rights on the HKFS from Pope City north into Hawkinsville, and from Hawkinsville to Perry on the Hawkinsville & Western Railroad. Nonetheless, the *Official Guide of the Railways* map of April 1918 shows the HKFS as an officially integrated connecting line to the GSF, but does not yet recognize the Ocilla Southern.

Despite the numerous connections that it offered to other railroad lines, the HKFS entered receivership in 1922 and was ordered to be sold. The southern end of the line from Camilla to Ashburn was purchased by the newly organized Georgia, Ashburn, Sylvester, & Camilla Railway. However, no buyers were found for the northern end between Hawkinsville and Worth, so these tracks were abandoned in 1923, the same year of abandonment of the Ocilla Southern Railroad. The HKFS branch line from Davisville to Fitzgerald had been abandoned some time earlier.

#### System Locations:

##### **Mainline (MAIN)**

The GSF mainline runs from Macon south through Cordele and on through Tifton and Valdosta to the Florida state line between Melrose, Georgia and Jennings, Florida. In Florida, the mainline originally continued southeast to Palatka, but has been abandoned south of Lake City.

##### **Branch Line - Atlantic, Valdosta & Western (VLDW)**

Acquired by the GSF in 1902, this branch line connects with the original GSF mainline in Valdosta and runs east and southeast to Jacksonville, Florida.

### **Branch Line - Macon & Birmingham Railroad (MCBH)**

Controlled by the GSF as a subsidiary, this line formerly connected with the GSF at the community of Sofkee near Macon, and ran northwest through Thomaston, Woodbury, and on to LaGrange.

### **Branch Line - Hawkinsville & Florida Southern (HKFS)**

Controlled by the GSF as a subsidiary, this line formerly ran south from Hawkinsville through the towns of Pineview and Pitts and on to a connection with the GSF mainline at the Worth community.

## **SYSTEM DESCRIPTION**

The main trunk line of the GSF is now a vital part of NS operations in the state of Georgia, as it now constitutes the only NS mainline that runs on a north-south alignment through the southern half of the state, all the way to and into Florida. At the former northern terminus of the GSF in Macon, it connects to other NS mainlines that run west to Alabama, north to Tennessee, and east to South Carolina. Moreover, the former lines of the GSF now provide NS with their only intact connection between Macon and the port of Jacksonville, Florida, and from there to farther points south along the Atlantic coast.

The original GSF mainline is sited like a central axis or spine down the middle of the southern half of Georgia. Its long-standing importance to travel and commerce through the state is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that the designers of Interstate 75, and US 41 before it, practically copied the alignment of the GSF between Macon and Valdosta, placing it parallel and in close proximity to the railroad.

Of the three NS operated major rail lines that enter Macon from the south, the GSF mainline is in the middle. As it approaches Macon's Bronson Yard and its Terminal Station, it is flanked to the east by the former Southern Railway line between Macon and Brunswick, and to the west by the Central of Georgia division's former Southwestern Railroad lines to Columbus and Albany, passing through Fort Valley. Macon's Terminal Station, built in 1916, was owned equally and shared by the GSF, the Central of Georgia, and the Southern Railway.



*Cordele*

As Macon is located at the Fall Line on the Ocmulgee River, the GSF stretches through coastal plain for much of its length. Thus, the rail bed of the GSF mainline travels through relatively level terrain for many miles, minimizing the need for significant cuts or embankments. The same could be said for much of the roadbed of the HKFS subsidiary, and certainly of the GSF's acquired VLDW route, which stretches through the piney woods on both sides of the Georgia-Florida state line. It would not be accurate to say the same about the terrain through which the MCBH subsidiary passed; it operated north of the Fall Line, traversing the rolling hills and numerous stream valleys northwest of Macon, as well as the Flint River near Woodbury. All four associated lines of the GSF system stayed within primarily rural corridors, all passing through many square miles of forests and cultivated fields, planted with cotton, peanuts, peaches, pecans, watermelons, and other agricultural products. Besides the end points of Macon and LaGrange, the largest cities that any of the four railroads served are Thomaston (on the MCBH), Warner Robins, Cordele, Tifton, and Valdosta (on the GSF mainline). Only three of these, Macon, Warner Robins, and Valdosta, are today considered metropolitan areas by the U.S. Census Bureau.

## DETERMINATION OF NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

The Georgia Southern & Florida Railway system, including acquisitions and subsidiaries, was evaluated in total for eligibility for listing in the National Register using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, as outlined in 36 CFR Part 60.4.

In the areas of Commerce and Transportation under Criterion A, the GSF and its acquired VLDW affiliate facilitated the growth of exports of agricultural products from all parts of Georgia, including not only lumber and pine products such as naval stores, but also cotton, fruits, and vegetables, including peaches, watermelons, peanuts, and pecans. It created and operated a faster, more efficient means for farmers, lumber companies, and other enterprises along the line, as well as those linked to Macon by other connecting lines in the north part of the state, to ship their products to the Atlantic coast ports and important railroad junctions of Jacksonville and Palatka, both located along the St. Johns River in Florida. Conversely, it allowed the efficient importation of goods into Georgia and beyond from these same port cities.

In the areas of Community Planning and Development and Exploration/Settlement, the GSF mainline stimulated the growth of existing towns and the settlement of new towns in south central Georgia. It was built into and through an area of Georgia that was still sparsely settled at the end of the nineteenth century. The GSF served as an even greater and more notable impetus behind the creation of entirely new cities, town, and communities along the mainline, correlating with the placement of rail stops and stations. Many or even most of the existing municipalities that exist along the GSF rail corridor today were founded and settled as a result of the construction of the railroad. The railroad's critical role in the origination of many of these communities may be easily observed and recognized by the rail corridor's placement at the center of many of the community's commercial and residential districts. If a community along this rail corridor was not a previously existing county seat, and the rail bed runs through the heart of town, the community was likely initiated by the coming of the GSF.



GSF system map, January of 1896.

These four lines did not require the construction of any significant bridges, at least within Georgia. Both the GSF and the HKFS stayed within the divide between the drainage basins of the Flint River, to the west, and the Ocmulgee River, to the east. As noted above, the MCBH did cross the Flint River (its center bridge pier remains in place), and the VLDW bridged the Upper Suwannee River within Georgia, at Fargo. Just across the Florida line, in Jennings, the GSF mainline crosses over the narrow Alapaha River and, farther south, the Suwannee.

There are no known associations with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified with or documented through this railroad property. Therefore, the GSF system is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion B.

The GSF has been determined eligible for the National Register under Criterion C based on its significance in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. The railbeds for the GSF mainline and for its acquired VLDW branch line are still intact and in constant use. The roadbeds of these two point-to-point lines are thereby representative of the state of railroad design, including alignment, grading, and construction at the end of the nineteenth century. Some or even much of the original rail infrastructure of rails, ties, trestles, and bridges may have been replaced over the years, in the course of regular operational and safety upgrades, repairs, and improvements. Although these general modifications may diminish the integrity and significance of the railroad's parts and components as physical artifacts, they in no way lessen the significance or integrity presented by the retained route alignments of these two lines. Although a substantial portion of the MCBH's rails and ties were removed at some point following the line's abandonment in 1922-23, this corridor's alignment remains largely intact, and is physically represented by the line's remnant sections of built up railbed and rail embankments, as well as a number of deep cuts. Most of the MCBH's railbed is physically and visually present in the landscape and still conveys its historically significant design characteristics, which in its case is defined by a twisty path with many curves.

Also, seven rail depots amongst the four rail lines are still extant. This intact collection includes the GSF depot buildings along the MAIN in Warner Robins, Grovania, Pinehurst, and Arabi. The wood-framed building in Arabi has been relocated a short distance from the rail corridor, but is still set within the Arabi community, so the reduction in its integrity of setting has been minimized, and it is still reflective of one of the GSF's types and styles of small rail depots. Two small, wood-framed MCBH depots are still extant at Dyas and Thunder. In addition, shared union passenger depots are located along the MAIN in Macon and Tifton, and a union freight depot is also located in Tifton.

On the other hand, the HKFS does not retain integrity. The HKFS was abandoned so long ago that its contiguousness and physical intactness has been compromised. Although numerous sections of the abandoned railroad grade can be located and recognized, it has been disturbed and broken into disjointed pieces, either by development, the repeated plowing of agricultural fields that have employed parts of the rail right-of-way, or by repurposing and adaptive reuse of the rail corridors as county roads or state highways. However, the HKFS was a point-to-point railroad line of comparatively short physical length, and even though it was connected to the GSF mainline



*Arabi depot*



*Tifton Union Station*



*Tifton Union freight depot*



*Ashburn*

at the Worth community, it never contributed large amounts of passenger or freight train traffic to the GSF mainline. Therefore, on balance, its lack of contributing status and the impact of its loss on the overall eligibility, significance, and integrity of the GSF system is minimal, and outweighed by the significance and integrity of the majority of the systems' intact rail mileage.

There are no indications that any of the GSF's rail corridors is likely to yield information on important research questions in history or prehistory. The GSF rail system overall does not appear to have the potential to be the principal source of important information. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the property under Criterion D.

Because the GSF system remains substantially intact, it retains integrity in the areas of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; see attached System Feature Inventory Forms for further analyses of integrity. Even though one of its subsidiary lines (HKFS) has been abandoned and is no longer extant as an intact railroad corridor, as described above, the GSF system is eligible for the National Register under

Criterion A for its significance in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Exploration/Settlement, and Transportation, and under Criterion C for significance in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. Due in part to its position of geographic and logistical importance, and its corresponding commercial usefulness, the GSF mainline is still in heavy use today. The GSF's period of significance is 1885 to 1982, including and spanning the near century between the GSF's initial charter and the merger of Southern Railway and Norfolk & Western to create the unified Norfolk Southern.

### **PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARIES**

For the GSF component lines that are intact, and have sufficient significance and integrity to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the proposed National Register boundaries for listing correspond to the current railroad corridor rights-of-way of all eligible and contributing sections. Within Georgia, these sections consists of the full length of the GSF mainline (i.e. MAIN) from Macon south to the Florida state line near the Melrose community, and of the VLDW from Valdosta towards Jacksonville, Florida, which crosses the state line near the Council community.

### **CONTRIBUTING FEATURES**

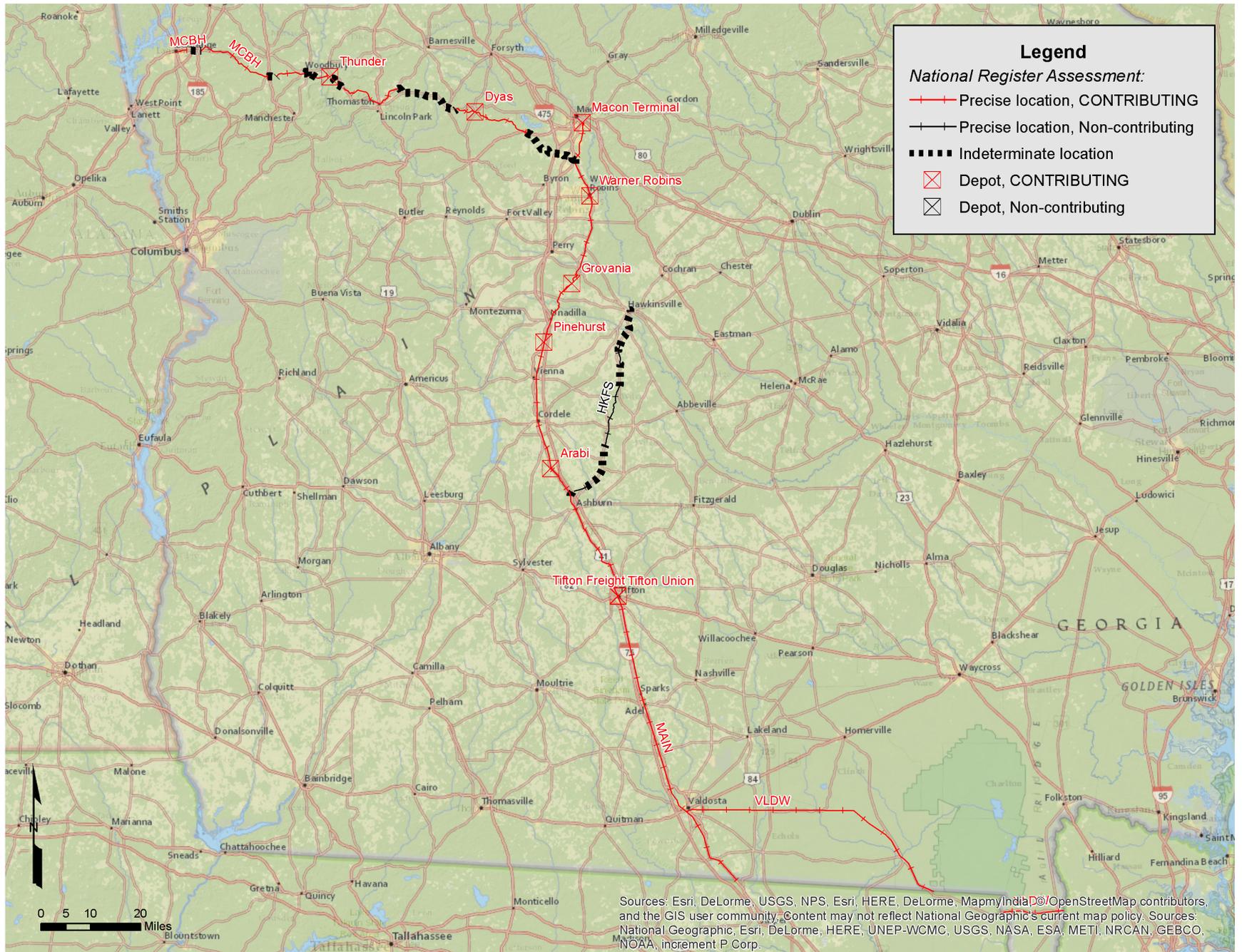
GSF mainline (MAIN) and VLDW and MCBH branch lines (see attached System Feature Inventory Forms)

### **NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES**

HKFS branch line (see attached System Feature Inventory Forms)

### **PREPARED BY**

Steve Storey, David Ray, Matt McDaniel, Erin Murphy, George Rounds, and Chris Mroccka



# GEORGIA SOUTHERN & FLORIDA MAINLINE (MAIN)

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**Other names:** Gulf Line Railway

**Historic System:** Georgia Southern & Florida Railroad

**NR Evaluation:** Eligible/Contributing

**Physical Status:** Active

**Current owner:** Norfolk Southern

**Predecessors:** N/A

**Location:** Macon south to Florida state line at Melrose, via Warner Robins, Cordele, Tifton, and Valdosta



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**GEORGIA SOUTHERN & FLORIDA RAILROAD (GSF)**  
System Feature Inventory Form

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## DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

The Georgia Southern & Florida Railroad (GSF) was chartered in 1885 to build a point-to-point railroad line from Macon, Georgia to Palatka, Florida, over a distance of 285 miles. The line was opened between Macon and Valdosta in February 1889 and completed to Palatka (east of Gainesville) in March of the following year.

The railroad quickly encountered financial trouble, entering receivership in 1891; President W. B. Sparks of Macon was appointed receiver. In 1895 it was reorganized as the Georgia Southern and Florida Railway under the financial control of the Southern Railway.

The GSF's nickname was the Suwanee River Route. It crossed that river at White Springs, Florida.

Today, the GS&F remains officially in existence as a subsidiary of Norfolk Southern (NS), the successor to the Southern Railway. It no longer extends to Palatka, ending instead at Lake City, Florida; the line farther south of Lake City is abandoned. This original GS&F main line between Macon and Valdosta is now an active, heavily-trafficked NS main line.

## DESCRIPTION

The GSF's main trunk line (MAIN) is a vital part of NS operations in the state of Georgia, because it now constitutes the only NS main line that runs on a north-south alignment through the southern half of the state, all the way to and into Florida. At the northern terminus of the GSF in Macon, it connects to other NS main lines that run west to Alabama, north to Tennessee, and east to South Carolina; this has been the case since the inception of the GSF, as Macon was already a bustling rail hub.

Of the three NS operated major rail lines that enter Macon from the south, the MAIN is in the middle. As it approaches Macon's Bronson Yard and its Terminal Station, it is flanked to the east by the former Southern Railway line between Macon and Brunswick, and to the west by the Central of Georgia division's former Southwestern Railroad lines to Columbus and Albany, passing through Fort Valley.

The MAIN is sited like a central axis or spine down the middle of the southern half of Georgia. As Macon is located at the Fall Line on the Ocmulgee River, the MAIN stretches through coastal plain for much of its length. Thus, the MAIN's railbed travels through relatively level terrain for many miles, minimizing the need for significant cuts or embankments.

It also stretches across a primarily rural landscape, passing through many square miles of forests and cultivated fields, planted with cotton, peanuts, peaches, pecans, watermelons, and other agricultural products.

From Macon to the Florida state line between Melrose, Georgia and Jennings, Florida, this single-line railroad corridor consists of approximately 170 miles of mainline track.

### **NATIONAL REGISTER CONTRIBUTING STATUS**

The GSF's mainline (MAIN) is a component of the GSF system; the GSF system is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its significance in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Exploration/Settlement, and Transportation, and under Criterion C for significance in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. The MAIN, which was developed and operated as the initial and primary component of the GSF system, was evaluated for its contributions to the historic significance and potential National Register-eligibility of the GSF system.

The MAIN contributes to the National Register eligibility of the GSF system under Criterion A for its significance in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Exploration/Settlement, and Transportation. The GSF mainline trains traveled longitudinally along the central spine of the southern half of the state of Georgia, thereby connecting the middle part of the state at Macon to the Atlantic coast of northern Florida. Due in part to its position of geographic and logistical importance, and its corresponding commercial usefulness, the MAIN line is still in heavy use today.

In the areas of Commerce and Transportation, the MAIN facilitated the growth of exports of agricultural products from all parts of Georgia, including not only lumber and pine products such as naval stores, but also cotton, fruits, and vegetables, including peaches, watermelons, peanuts, and pecans. It created and operated a faster, more efficient means for farmers, lumber companies, and other enterprises along the line, as well as those linked to Macon by other connecting lines in the north part of

the state, to ship their products to the Atlantic coast port and important railroad junction at Palatka, located along the St. Johns River in Florida. Conversely, it allowed the easy importation of goods into Georgia and beyond.

In the areas of Community Planning and Development and Exploration/Settlement, the MAIN stimulated the growth of existing towns and the settlement of new towns in south central Georgia. It was built into and through an area of Georgia that was still sparsely settled at the end of the nineteenth century. The MAIN served as an even greater and more notable impetus behind the creation of entirely new cities, towns, and communities along the main line, correlating with the placement of rail stops and stations. Many or even most of the existing municipalities that exist along the MAIN corridor today were founded and settled as a result of the construction of the railroad. The railroad's critical role in the origination of many of these communities may be easily observed and recognized by the rail corridor's placement at the center of many of the community's commercial and residential districts. If a community along this rail corridor was not a previously existing county seat, and the rail bed runs through the town's center, the community was likely initiated by the coming of the GSF.

The MAIN has also been determined to contribute to the GSF system's eligibility because of its significance and integrity in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. The MAIN's railbed is still intact and in constant use. The roadbed of this point-to-point line is thereby representative of the state of railroad design and engineering, including alignment, grading, and construction at the end of the nineteenth century. Some or even much of the original rail infrastructure of rails, ties, trestles, and bridges may have been replaced over the years, in the course of regular operational and safety upgrades, repairs, and improvements. Although these general modifications may diminish the integrity and significance of the railroad's parts and components as physical artifacts, they in no way lessen the significance or integrity presented by the main line's retained route alignment.

Also, four rail depots along the MAIN between Macon and the Florida line are still extant. This intact collection includes the GSF depots in Warner

Robins, Grovania, Pinehurst, and Arabi. The wood-framed building in Arabi has been relocated a short distance from the rail corridor but is still set within the Arabi community, so the reduction in its integrity of setting has been minimized, and it is still reflective of one of the GSF's types and styles of small rail depots. Union passenger depots are located in Macon and Tifton, and a union freight depot is also located in Tifton. In all, these depots along the MAIN are illustrative of the various layouts and applied stylistic traits that were utilized in depot construction during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They help the GSF system convey significance in the area of Architecture under Criterion C.

### **EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY**

The MAIN has been determined to possess integrity in the areas of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The railroad has not been relocated, and its alignment remains substantially unchanged since its construction; therefore, the resource retains integrity of location and setting. As the alignment and roadbed, including cuts and grades, remains intact, and other materials have been upgraded to enable continued operation of the line, the resource also substantially retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The railroad also retains integrity of feeling and association as it conveys its physical characteristics as a historic railroad line. This high degree of integrity in all areas is benefited by the retention of five of the MAIN's original depots at their original locations or in close proximity to the railbed.

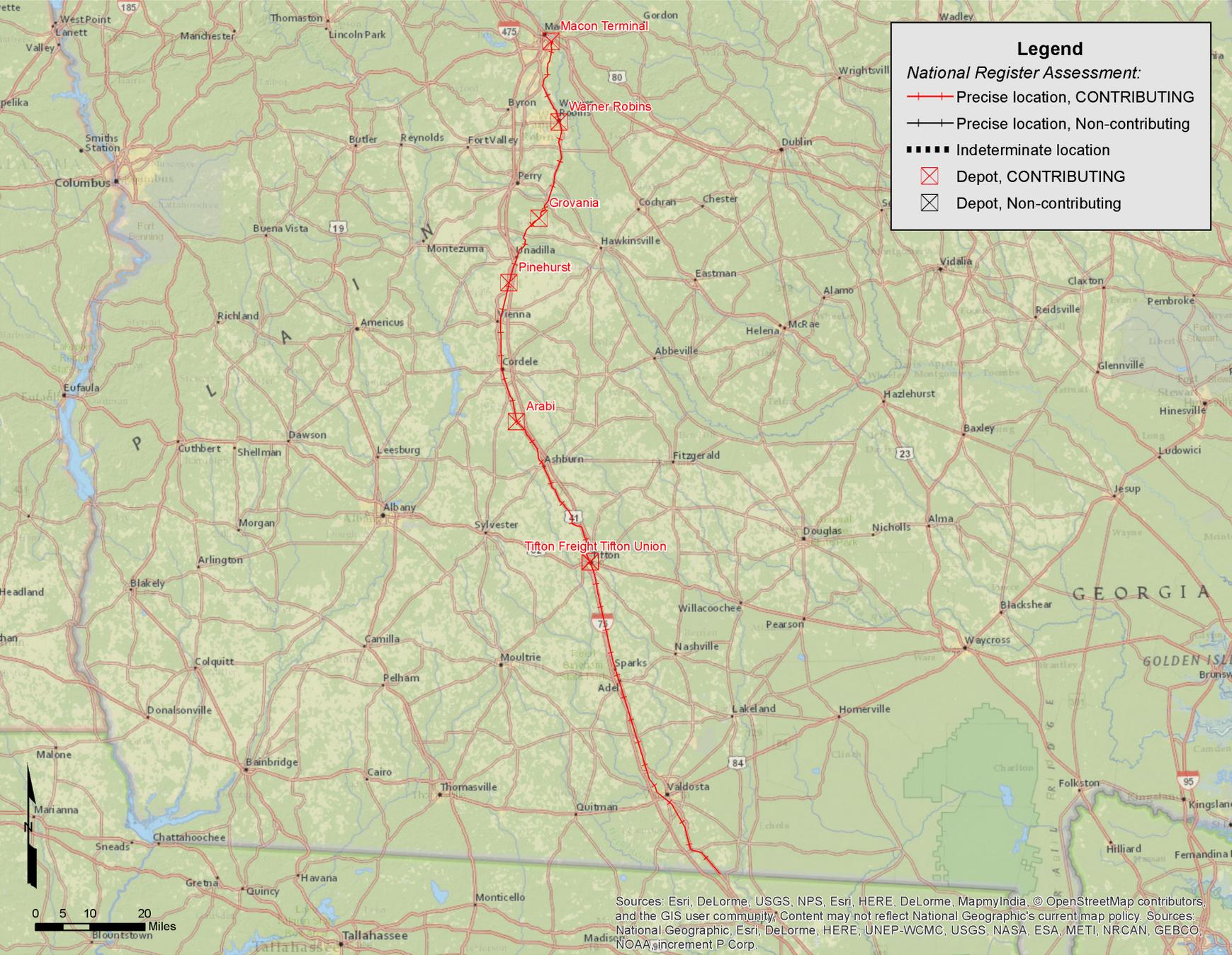
### **PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY**

The MAIN's proposed National Register boundary corresponds to the current railroad corridor rights-of-way of the line's entirety. These corridor rights-of-way extend the full length of the GSF mainline within Georgia, from Macon Terminal Station and Bronson Yard in Macon all the way south to the Florida state line, just south of the Melrose community. Contributing features include extant original GSF depots in Warner Robins, Grovania, Pinehurst, and Arabi, and union passenger and freight depots in Macon and Tifton.

### **PREPARED BY**

Steve Storey, David Ray, Matt McDaniel, Erin Murphy, George Rounds, and Chris Mroczka

**GEORGIA SOUTHERN & FLORIDA RAILROAD**  
**Main Line System Feature Inventory Form**



MAIN: Resource Location Map



MAIN: Macon Terminal Station



MAIN: Elberta depot at Warner Robins, Houston County



MAIN: Warner Robins depot



MAIN: Grovania depot, Houston County



MAIN: Elko, Houston County



MAIN: West Railroad Street, Unadilla, Dooly County



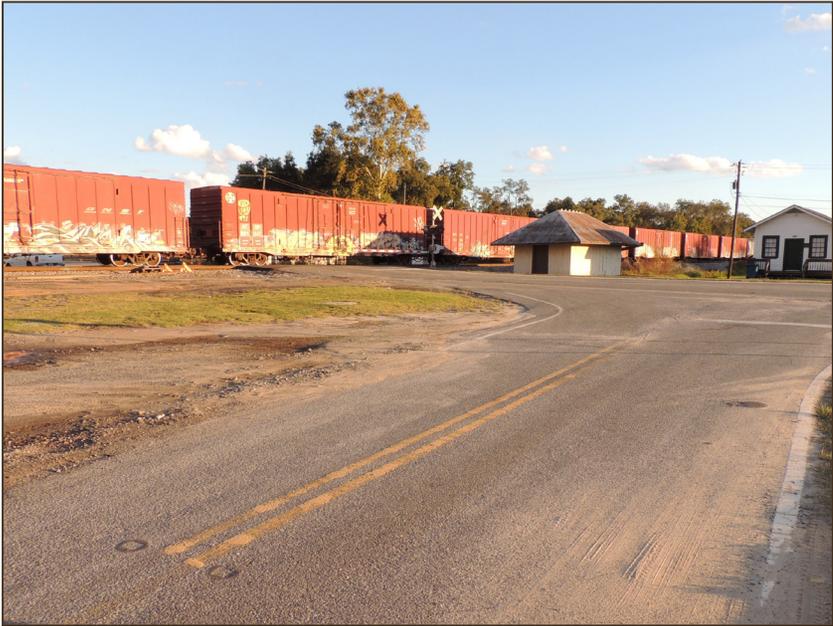
MAIN: Borum Street crossing, Unadilla



MAIN: Platform near Second Street crossing, Unadilla



MAIN: Pinehurst depot, Dooly County



MAIN: West Railroad Street, Pinehurst



MAIN: Seventh Street, Vienna, Dooly County



MAIN: Richwood, Dooly County



MAIN: West Ninth Avenue, Cordele, Crisp County



MAIN: Cordele Junction



MAIN: Thirteenth Avenue crossing, Cordele



MAIN: Second Avenue, Arabi, Crisp County



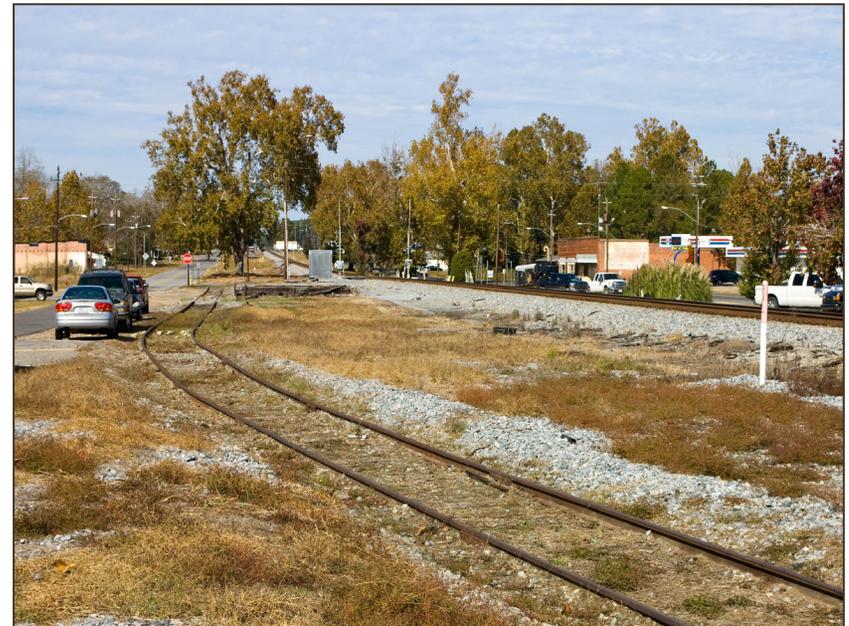
MAIN: Arabi depot



MAIN: SR 112 crossing, Ashburn, Turner County



MAIN: Railroad Avenue, Sycamore, Turner County



MAIN: Railroad Avenue, Sycamore



MAIN: US 41/SR 7, Cycloneta vicinity, Turner County



MAIN: Chula-Whidden Mill Road, Chula, Tift County



MAIN: Carpenter Road crossing, Chula



MAIN: Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Tifton, Tift County



MAIN: Union passenger depot at Tifton



MAIN: Union freight depot, Tifton



MAIN: US 41/SR 7 at Eldorado, Tift County



MAIN: Railroad Street, Lenox, Cook County



MAIN: GAF Moultrie branch wye, Sparks, Cook County



MAIN: Colquitt Street crossing, Sparks



MAIN: SR 37 crossing, Adel, Cook County



MAIN: Ninth Street, Adel



MAIN: Old Coffee Road crossing, Cecil, Cook County



MAIN: Main Street crossing, Hahira, Lowndes County



MAIN: Lester Road crossing, Valdosta



MAIN: Johnston Road crossing, Dasher, Lowndes County



MAIN: US 41/SR 7, Lake Park vicinity, Lowndes County



MAIN: SR 376 crossing, Lake Park, Lowndes County

# ATLANTIC, VALDOSTA & WESTERN (VLDW)

**Other names:** Jacksonville Short Line  
**Historic System:** Georgia Southern & Florida Railroad  
**NR Evaluation:** Eligible/Contributing  
**Physical Status:** Active  
**Current owner:** Norfolk Southern  
**Predecessors:** N/A

**Location:** Valdosta, Lowndes County, to Jacksonville, Florida



**GEORGIA SOUTHERN & FLORIDA RAILROAD (GSF)**  
System Feature Inventory Form

## DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

Chartered in 1897, the Atlantic, Valdosta & Western Railway (VLDW) built a 110-mile main line westward from Jacksonville across the southern edge of Georgia to Valdosta, where it connected with the decade old Georgia Southern & Florida Railway (GSF), as well as the other railroads that passed through Valdosta, such as the Plant System's antebellum Savannah, Florida & Western mainline. Completed in 1899, the railroad also had some 45 spur-line miles, most of which were logging routes in southern Clinch County near the Okefenokee Swamp.

Promoted as the Jacksonville Short Line, the VLDW general offices were located in Jacksonville. The entire line was purchased by the GSF in 1902. The acquisition gave the GSF a more direct route from Georgia to the Atlantic coast at Jacksonville than that offered by its own original mainline, which stretched to Palatka, on the St. John's River south of Jacksonville.

By the time of the VLDW's takeover, the GSF was already under the control of the Southern Railway. The line between Jacksonville and Valdosta is still in operation as a Norfolk Southern mainline.

## DESCRIPTION

This railroad corridor ran on a general northwest to southeast alignment from Valdosta to Jacksonville. However, it truly consists of two east-west oriented sections, east from Valdosta and west from Jacksonville, that are joined in the middle by a northwest-southeast aligned connector, or dogleg. Fargo is located at the center of this diagonal section.

The VLDW connects with the GSF mainline in the southwestern edge of downtown Valdosta, by way of a curving intersection between the two. The VLDW then runs parallel to and close alongside CSX's former ACL/Savannah, Florida & Western mainline, as they both pass through the south side of downtown and beneath a viaduct carrying South Ashley Street/US 41 Business. Through this part of Valdosta, Florida Avenue runs alongside the south side of the rail right-of-way, almost all the way to the VLDW rail yard, which begins just east of South Fry Street.

From this long, but relatively narrow yard, known as Langdale Yard and consisting of up to ten tracks side-by-side, the rail corridor continues east through Howell and Haylow. From Langdale Yard to the former station stop community in Clinch County known as Headlight, the VLDW line runs dead straight, without bends; most of the railroad passage through Georgia is characterized by such long straight runs. Consistently, the

topography of the area is nearly level, and the landscape is covered mostly by vast acreages of forests and pine plantations.

Although there are numerous named station stops along the route, this far southern region of Georgia is still lightly populated. There are only a few small residential hamlets along the line, such as Howell and Haylow; and the only town of any size along the VLDW's course in Georgia is Fargo, with a 2010 census population of 321. The VLDW crosses the Suwanee River at Fargo and the Alapaha River near the Mayday community; both rivers are crossed by low deck-type bridges of concrete and steel plate girders.

No depots are extant along the length of the VLDW within Georgia.

### **NATIONAL REGISTER CONTRIBUTING STATUS**

The Atlantic, Valdosta & Western (VLDW) is a component of the GSF system; the GSF system is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its significance in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Exploration/Settlement, and Transportation, and under Criterion C for significance in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. The VLDW was evaluated for its contributions to the historic significance and potential National Register-eligibility of the GSF system.

The VLDW contributes to the National Register eligibility of the GSF system under Criterion A for its significance in the areas of Commerce and Transportation. The trains on the VLDW travel along the southernmost edge of Georgia, for a linear distance that covers most of the eastern half of the state's width. In so doing, it connects the Atlantic coast port of Jacksonville with the GSF line that runs north-south alongside I-75, on a central axis across south Georgia. It thereby connects northeastern Florida to the entire southern half of Georgia and to points north from connections in Macon. Due in part to its position of geographic and logistical importance, and its corresponding commercial usefulness, the VLDW is still in heavy use today.

In the areas of Commerce and Transportation, the VLDW facilitated the growth of exports of agricultural products from all parts of Georgia, including not only lumber and pine products such as naval stores, but also cotton, fruits, and vegetables, including peaches, watermelons, peanuts, and pecans. It created and operated a faster, more efficient means for farmers, lumber companies, and other enterprises along the line or along south Georgia's feeder lines, as well as those linked to Macon by other connecting lines in the north part of the state, to ship their products to the Atlantic coast port of Jacksonville. Conversely, it allowed the easy importation of goods into Georgia, Alabama, and beyond. For all these reasons, it also achieved significance in the area of Transportation, for being not only an important, long-serving part of the GSF system, but also of the interconnected web of railroads that provided thorough coverage of south Georgia.

The VLDW also has been determined to contribute to the GSF system's eligibility because of its significance and integrity in the area of Engineering. The VLDW is still intact and in constant use. The railbed of this mainline is thereby representative of the state of railroad design and engineering, including alignment, grading, and construction at the turn of the 20th century. Most if not all of the original rail infrastructure of rails, ties, trestles, and bridges may have been replaced over the years, in the course of regular operational and safety upgrades, repairs, and improvements. Although these general modifications may diminish the integrity and significance of the railroad's parts and components as physical artifacts, they in no way lessen the significance or integrity presented by the VLDW's retained route alignment.

### **EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY**

The VLDW has been determined to possess integrity in the areas of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The railroad has not been relocated, and its alignment remains substantially unchanged since its construction; therefore, the resource retains integrity of location and setting. As the alignment and roadbed, including cuts and grades, remains intact, and other materials have been upgraded to enable continued operation of the line, the resource also substantially retains

integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The railroad also retains integrity of feeling and association as it conveys its physical characteristics as a historic railroad line.

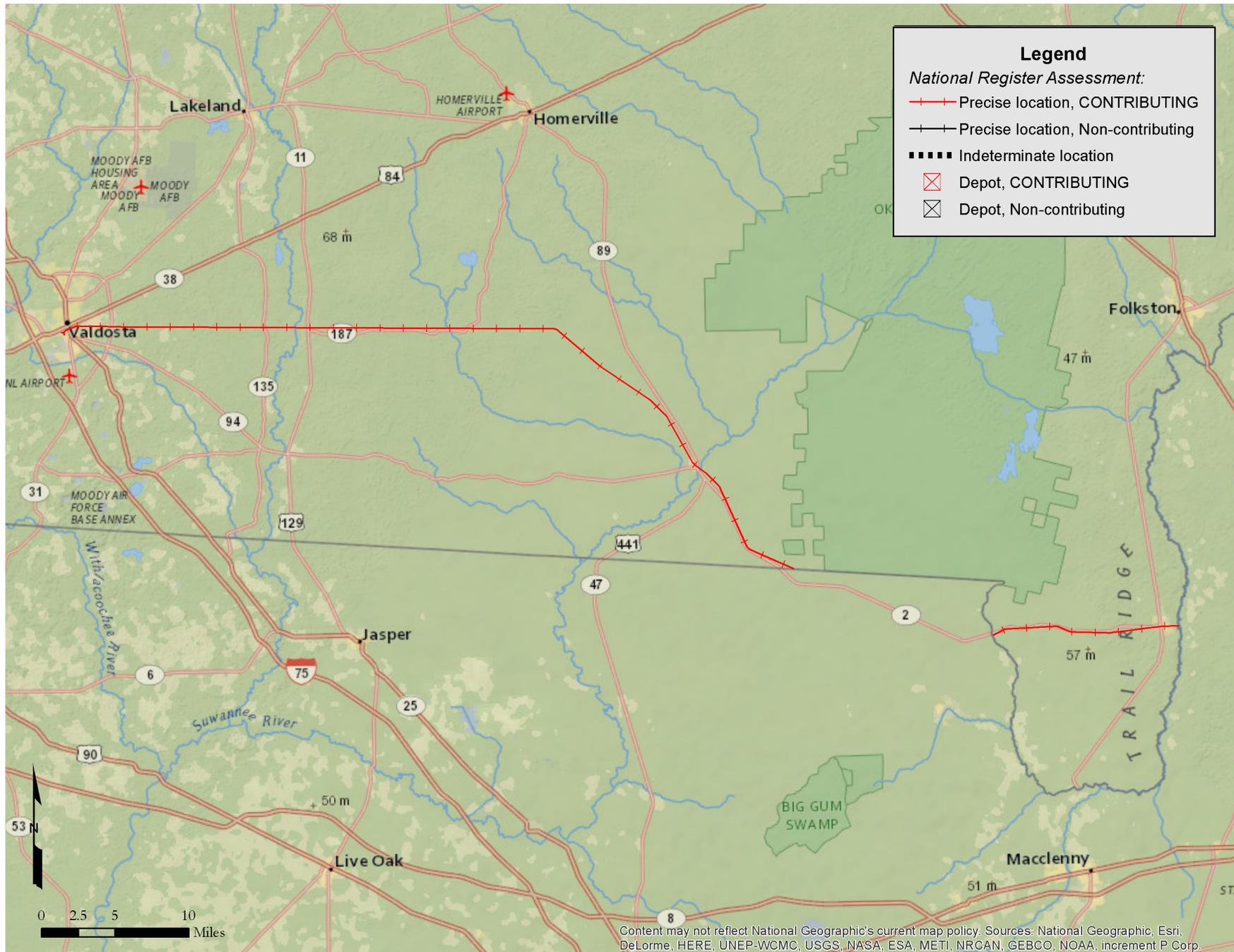
### **PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY**

The proposed National Register boundary for the VLDW corresponds to the current and historic railroad corridor rights-of-way of the line's entirety. These corridor rights-of-way extend the full length of the VLDW mainline within Georgia, and expand in width on the east side of Valdosta, near its Woodgate neighborhood, to include the grounds of the VLDW's Langdale Yard, still in use by NS.

The proposed boundary contains all National Register qualifying characteristics and features of the resource and consists of the railroad corridor's fully intact, unbroken alignment, which includes the railbed, level crossings, bridges and trestles, and other elements of the rail resource, including cuts and built-up grades.

### **PREPARED BY**

Steve Storey, David Ray, Matt McDaniel, Erin Murphy, George Rounds, and Chris Mroczka



VLDW: Resource Location Map



VLDW: Langdale yard, Valdosta



VLDW: Langdale yard, Valdosta



VLDW: SR 7 Bypass, Valdosta



VLDW: SR 135, Howell Crossing, Echols County



VLDW: Alapaha River, Echols County



VLDW: SR 187 crossing, Echols County



VLDW: SR 89 crossing, Fargo, Clinch County



VLDW: SR 185 crossing, Moniac, Charlton County



VLDW: SR 185 crossing, Moniac, Charlton County



VLDW: SR 94 at approx. St. Marys, Lake City & Gulf crossing, Charlton County



VLDW: St. George, Charlton County



VLDW: SR 23 crossing, St. George

# HAWKINSVILLE & FLORIDA SOUTHERN (HKFS)

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**Other names:** Gulf Line Railway

**Location:** Worth, Turner County, to  
Hawkinsville, Pulaski County

**Historic System:** Georgia Southern & Florida  
Railroad

**NR Evaluation:** Not eligible/Non-contributing

**Physical Status:** Abandoned and dismantled

**Current owner:** N/A

**Predecessors:** N/A



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**GEORGIA SOUTHERN & FLORIDA RAILROAD (GSF)**  
System Feature Inventory Form

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## DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

Although initially developed as a logging railroad as early as 1889, the Hawkinsville & Florida Southern (HKFS) was chartered in 1896. This north-to-south, point-to-point rail line stretched from Hawkinsville in the north to a connection with the Georgia Southern & Florida Railway's (GSF's) main line at the small community of Worth, approximately three miles north of Ashburn. The entire length covered 43 miles.

The GSF controlled the HKFS by means of stock ownership, although management was kept separate. The GSF was, in turn, controlled in the same way by the Southern Railway.

After numerous reorganizations during its period of operation, the HKFS entered receivership in 1922 and was ordered to be sold. However, no buyers with plans for continuing operations came forward, so it was abandoned in 1923.

## DESCRIPTION

At its maximum length, this single-line railroad corridor ran on a general north-south alignment from Hawkinsville to Worth (three-miles north of Ashburn along US 41/SR 7).

Traces of the HKFS railroad grade can be found throughout the length of its former rail corridor. A single piece of remnant rail was located in Hawkinsville, buried in the asphalt pavement of North Florida Avenue, the city's first street west of the Ocmulgee River. Not only did the railroad engage in 'street-running' in Hawkinsville, but seemingly did so in other communities, such as Finleyson, Pineview, and Pitts, although no material evidence was discovered in these towns.

Evidence of the extant roadbed and rail corridor can be located to the south of Hawkinsville; however, more routine are instances of the disturbance and/or eradication of the railbed. The gently rolling or near-level terrain through which the former railroad passed is still rural, but it is heavily cultivated, either for row crops such as cotton, for orchards of pecan trees, or for pine plantations. In many such cases, the preparation for planting, or the repeated plowing of agricultural fields, has erased all remains of the railbed. In other locations where the railroad ran through the center of town, such as at Finleyson, Pineview, and Pitts, asphalt pavement (of SR 112 and SR 215) has covered over the rail corridor. Last, many of the intact areas of railbed seem to indicate that this railroad usually left a light footprint on the surrounding terrain. Either because the topography was already relatively level or because the railroad was not constructed to the highest specifications, there are comparatively few examples of deep cuts

or built-up embankments. Instead, the trains appear to have traveled up and down with the general terrain. Such construction seems to have left the railroad grade more susceptible to easy erasure.

The result of these factors is that there are now numerous gaps in the continuity of the HKFS rail corridor. Some traces are extant, but the entirety of the former alignment is now separated into many non-contiguous and small sections. Moreover, this rail alignment was not required to bridge any significant rivers during its length, so there are no remnant bridge piers attesting to the course of the former railroad. On balance, the HKFS railbed no longer conveys its former standing as an uninterrupted railroad corridor.

### **NATIONAL REGISTER CONTRIBUTING STATUS**

The Hawkinsville & Florida Southern (HKFS) is a component of the GSF system; the GSF system is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its significance in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Exploration/Settlement, and Transportation, and under Criterion C for significance in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. The HKFS, which was operated as a subsidiary of the GSF, was evaluated for its contributions to the historic significance and potential National Register eligibility of the GSF system.

The HKFS does not contribute to the GSF system's National Register eligibility under Criterion A. No available information indicates that this railroad line had a notably significant impact on the growth or success of commerce in the area, even at a local level. Few of the communities along the line ever achieved substantial growth. In essence, the railroad was a logging line that attempted to expand in size, scope, and mission, but failed. Its lifespan as a fully developed route between the GSF main line and Hawkinsville was only about twenty-five years, and that period of time was marked by numerous reorganizations. Therefore, the HKFS is not significant and does not contribute in the area of transportation.

The HKFS was also evaluated under Criterion C for potential significance and contributing status in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. Based upon on-site surveys in the field, it has been determined that this

former railroad line no longer possesses historic significance in these areas, as it lacks integrity. Remaining evidence of the railroad's former railbed is limited to scattered and low sections of raised grade or shallow cuts. However, along the full length of the corridor, these remnants are few in number, and the overall continuity of the railbed has been broken and substantially disrupted and obscured. Furthermore, no depots, warehouses, or platforms are in existence. Accordingly, it has been determined that the railroad corridor's integrity has been substantially diminished in the areas of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. As a consequence, the HKFS does not represent a good example of a rural, branch-line railroad from the early twentieth century, and does not convey significance in the areas of Architecture or Engineering.

In its present known state, the former HKSF rail corridor does not contribute to the National Register eligibility of the GSF system.

### **EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY**

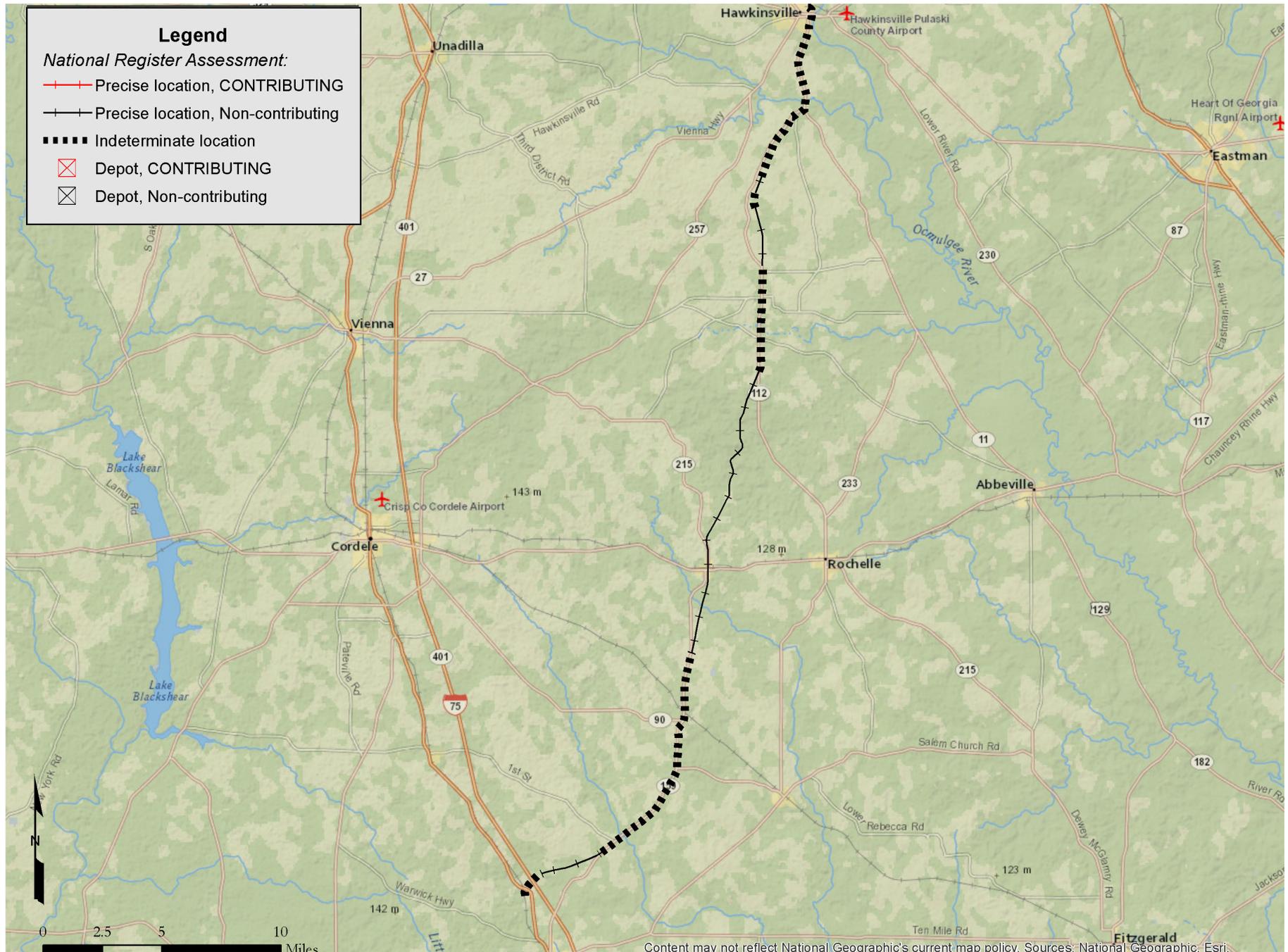
A ground-level field survey of the area of the former rail corridor was conducted, as was a review of available historic and current aerial imagery. In the vicinity of the abandoned right-of-way that was accessible to the surveyors, little remaining evidence of the railroad's former railbed or infrastructure, such as raised embankments, cuts, trestles, or bridges, was found, and it appears that no depots, warehouses, or platforms are in existence. Accordingly, it has been determined that the HKFS no longer retains integrity in the areas of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### **PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY**

Not applicable

### **PREPARED BY**

Steve Storey, David Ray, and Matt McDaniel



HKFS: Resource Location Map



HKFS: Hawkinsville union depot, Pulaski County



HKFS: North Florida Avenue, Hawkinsville



HKFS: Embedded rail, North Florida Avenue, Hawkinsville



HKFS: Railbed trace, Wallace Station vicinity, Pulaski County



HKFS: Former alignment location, Finleyson, Pulaski County



HKFS: Former alignment location, Finleyson



HKFS: Barrentine Road, alignment is treeline, Pineview vicinity, Wilcox



HKFS: Barrentine Road, alignment is treeline, Pineview vicinity, Wilcox



HKFS: North Depot Street, Pineview, Wilcox County



HKFS: SR 215, HKFS diverges into treeline, Pitts vicinity, Wilcox County



HKFS: Railbed in treeline along SR 215, Pitts vicinity



HKFS: Possible street-running location, North Eighth Street, Pitts



HKFS: Possible street-running location, South Eighth Street, Pitts



HKFS: Bush vicinity, Wilcox County



HKFS: Possible railbed remnant along SR 159, Amboy, Turner County



HKFS: SR 159 and Deep Creek, Turner County



HKFS: Rail cut at Deep Creek, Turner County



HKFS: Rail cut along SR 159 at CR 154, Turner County



HKFS: Shallow cut at CR 50 crossing, Shinglers, Turner County



HKFS: Rail embankment at CR 50 crossing, Shinglers



HKFS: Alignment along CR 251 at Interstate 75, Turner County



HKFS: CR 251 and former alignment., Worth, Turner County



HKFS: CR 251 and US 41/SR 7, Worth



HKFS: Site of HKFS wye from GSF main, Worth

# MACON & BIRMINGHAM RAILROAD (MCBH)

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**Other names:** Macon & Birmingham Railway  
**Historic System:** Georgia Southern & Florida Railroad  
**NR Evaluation:** Eligible/Contributing  
**Physical Status:** Abandoned and dismantled  
**Current owner:** N/A  
**Predecessors:** N/A

**Location:** Macon, Bibb County to LaGrange, Troup County



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**GEORGIA SOUTHERN & FLORIDA RAILROAD (GSF)**  
System Feature Inventory Form

## DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

Chartered December 26, 1888, the Macon & Birmingham Railroad (MCBH) connected Macon and LaGrange by way of a 105-mile route across Georgia's western Piedmont. It was completed to LaGrange in January 1891, about two months before its builder, the Macon Construction Company, entered receivership. However, its western destination of Birmingham was never reached by this rail company. Instead, much of the MCBH's unfinished roadbed to the west of LaGrange and into Alabama was later taken over and utilized by the Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic Railroad (AB&A) between January of 1907 and the summer of 1908, for completion of their own line from LaGrange to Birmingham. For the AB&A, this extension established a direct route between Brunswick and Birmingham.

The MCBH was owned by the Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad (GSF), but the accounts were kept separate. Regardless, GSF timetables and maps from as early as 1895 showed the two lines explicitly linked, offering one integrated route from LaGrange to Florida. The GSF's own line ran from Macon to Palatka, Florida and, by 1902, to Jacksonville. Thus, if the MCBH had achieved its planned terminus in Birmingham, the GS&F could have preceded the AB&A in offering a direct connection between Birmingham and the Atlantic Coast.

The MCBH entered receivership in 1891 and was reorganized in 1895 as the Macon & Birmingham Railway. Never a profitable enterprise, it nonetheless continued to operate for more than a quarter-century. It was abandoned in 1922-23.

The railroad had a couple of nicknames, the LaGrange Route and the Pine Mountain Route, the latter for the scenic area it passed through west of Thomaston.

After the MCBH ended operations in the 1920s, the Central of Georgia purchased and continued to operate an eight-mile section from Thomaston west to peach orchards around the Crest community in northwestern Upson County. In Thomaston, this section was easily joined to the western end of the former Upson County Railroad, which had been operated as the Barnesville to Thomaston branch line of the Central of Georgia since the early 1870s. However, the segment between Thomaston and Crest has since become inactive or abandoned, like the rest of the former MCBH. Thomaston's extant depot was erected in 1927 by the Central of Georgia alongside its newly acquired section of former MCBH track on the north side of downtown.

## DESCRIPTION

This railroad corridor ran on a general southeast-northwest alignment from Macon to LaGrange, by way of Thomaston and Woodbury.

Traces of the MCBH railroad grade can be found throughout the length of its former rail corridor, but the alignment is notably evident and discernable between LaGrange and the eastern edges of Thomaston, where the line ran parallel to and directly alongside the Central of Georgia's Thomaston & Barnesville/Upson County Railroad.

The line formerly entered/exited the Macon area, and there connected to the GSF mainline, on the south side of the city, at the Sofkee community. The railroad thereby avoided crossing Tobesofkee Creek by staying along its south bank. An intact remnant of the former wye trackage to the GSF is still in place and active as an access spur to an industrial facility.

Although the vast majority of the MCBH's former route between Macon and LaGrange is now abandoned, evidence of the extant roadbed and rail corridor can be routinely located. Most of the alignment is discernable on current aerial imagery as a continuous corridor, and only minimal lengths are indeterminate. Certainly, areas exist where active cultivation and the associated plowing of agricultural fields has erased the remains of the railbed.

In addition to the brief, still active section of the line taken over and still in use by Norfolk Southern's Central of Georgia division in Thomaston, a large percentage of the bed is still readily witnessed as an intact, connected linear feature. In concert with the ease of locating traces of the abandoned sections in between the aforementioned places, both at ground level and on aerial imagery, it can be said that, on balance, the former MCBH corridor is visible and present in its surrounding landscape, and thus conveys its former status as an active, uninterrupted railroad corridor.

## NATIONAL REGISTER CONTRIBUTING STATUS

The Macon & Birmingham Railroad (MCBH) is a component of the GSF system; the GSF system is eligible for the National Register under Criterion

A for its significance in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Exploration/Settlement, and Transportation, and under Criterion C for significance in the areas of Architecture and Engineering. The MCBH, which was owned and operated by the GSF for the majority of its history of service, was evaluated for its contributions to the historic significance and potential National Register eligibility of the GSF system.

The MCBH was evaluated under Criterion A; due to its status as the GSF's LaGrange Branch, the MCBH does contribute to the significance of the GSF system. For a duration of more than a quarter century (circa 1895-1923), the LaGrange Branch Line, advertised by the company as the "LaGrange Route," played a prominent role in the GSF system's overall state and local levels of significance in the areas of Commerce and Transportation. It benefited the region northwest of the northern end of the GSF's main trunk line, including Bibb, Monroe, Upson, Meriwether, Troup, and other counties, by providing shippers and passengers located along the route many additional outlets and points of connection to other mainlines, and thus contributing to the prosperity of the region of west central and northwest Georgia. It first helped sustain the success and ongoing growth of the GSF, which was completed only a couple of years before the MCBH, by opening up new markets to the fledgling rail network, and, conversely, by feeding traffic and customers to the main trunk line at Macon. For all these reasons, it achieved significance in the area of Transportation, for being not only an important, long-serving part of the GSF system, but also of the interconnected web of railroads that provided thorough coverage of Georgia at the turn of the twentieth century.

Moreover, the MCBH holds significance in its own right, for its own influence during its short period of operation as a stand-alone, short-line railroad company. The local significance of these contributions apply not only to the aforementioned areas of Commerce and Transportation, but also in the realm of Exploration/Settlement and Community Planning and Development. The small station towns and communities, such as Lizella and Harris City, reflect the impetus that the railroad was to their original founding. These small villages and their compact commercial districts, if still extant, generally face the former railroad right-of-way, displaying its

critical importance to not only their founding and settlement, but to their earliest efforts at community planning and development.

The MCBH was also evaluated for its potential to contribute to the significance of the GSF system under Criterion C, in the areas of Engineering and Architecture. Although a substantial portion of the railroad's rails and ties were removed at some point following the line's abandonment in 1922-23, significant segments of alignment remain substantially intact. The line is physically represented by remnant sections of built up railbed and rail embankments and also a number of deep cuts. Most of the railbed is physically and visually present in the landscape and still conveys its historically significant design characteristics, which in its case is defined by a twisting path with many curves. In part due to the maintained rural nature of the landscape of much of this region of west central Georgia, the essential linear – or here more aptly, curvilinear - quality and continuity of the MCBH has been mostly preserved, either as undisturbed rail embankments or repurposed roadways, or even still as short active sections of railroad, since some MCBH track in Thomaston is still in use by Norfolk Southern's Central of Georgia division. The railroad thus remains a good and generally intact example of late nineteenth-century rail engineering and construction within the hilly topography and rural landscape of this area of the Georgia piedmont.

Moreover, the railroad's two extant depots at Thunder and Dyas are not only constituent examples of the GSF system's remaining complement of single-story, wood-frame depots, they are completely unaltered, and thus constitute intact, if deteriorating, examples of the wide variety of types and styles of architecture that were applied to depots throughout the state.

As described above, the MCBH is able to contribute to the significance of the GSF system, and thus its National Register eligibility, under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce, Transportation, Exploration/Settlement, and Community Planning and Development, and under Criterion C in the areas of Engineering and Architecture. The MCBH corridor is still able to represent a good example of both a rural, short-line railroad and of a component branch line from the end of the nineteenth century.

## EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY

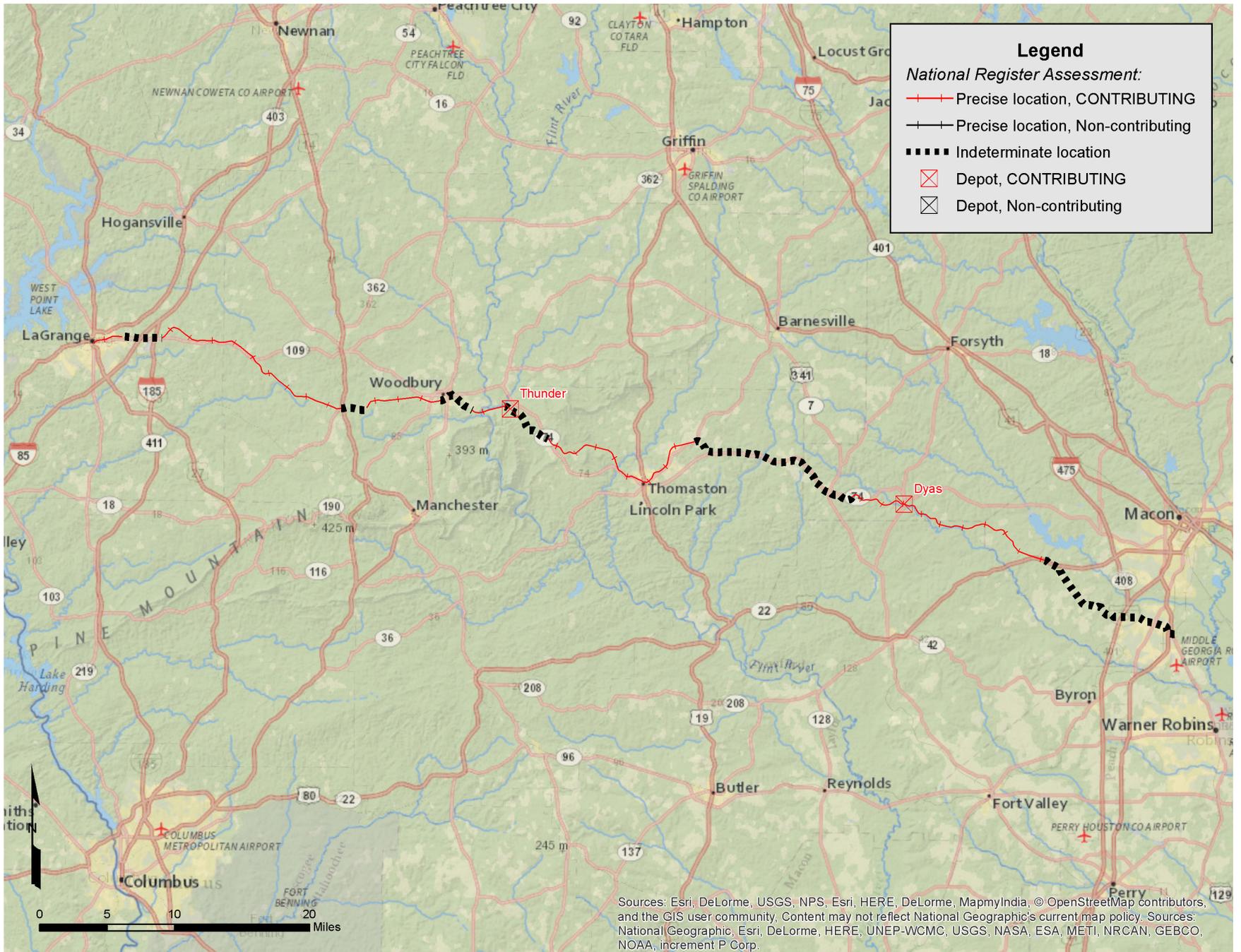
The MCBH has been determined to possess integrity in the areas of location, setting, feeling, and association, and to retain a fair degree of integrity in the areas of design, materials, and workmanship. The railroad has not been relocated, and its alignment remains substantially unchanged since its construction; therefore, the resource retains integrity of location and setting. As most of the alignment and roadbed, including cuts and raised grades, remains intact, despite the abandonment of much of its length and the subsequent removal of rails and ties, the resource also maintains a substantive level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The railroad also retains integrity of feeling and association, as it conveys its physical characteristics as a historic railroad line.

## PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY

The proposed National Register boundary for the MCBH corresponds to the railroad's historic rights-of-way, including short segments that are now parts of a roadway alignment and right-of-way, such as is manifested at Railroad Street in Mountville. This proposed boundary contains all National Register-qualifying characteristics and features of the resource and includes the railroad's former alignment, consisting of the railbed and other elements of the rail resource, such as any extant cuts and built-up grades. The proposed boundary also projects out from the rail right-of-way to include the railroad's extant and contributing depots in Dyas and Thunder, which both stand on their original sites alongside and adjacent to the former rail right-of-way.

## PREPARED BY

Steve Storey, David Ray, and Matt McDaniel



MCBH: Resource Location Map



MCBH: Lafayette Pkwy/SR 109 at ABC mainline, LaGrange, Troup County



MCBH: Railroad Street, Mountville, Troup County



MCBH: Extant grade at Odessa Road, Odessadale, Meriwether County



MCBH: Along former alignment, Fowler Street, Harris City, Meriwether Co.



MCBH: ABC mainline, Woodbury, Meriwether County



MCBH: Thunder depot, Upson County



MCBH: Undocumented ruins at Pickard, Upson County



MCBH: Baker Britt Road at alignment, Thomaston vicinity, Upson County



MCBH: Rail cut between SR 74 Alt and Emmaus Church Road, Thomaston



MCBH: North Bethel Street, Thomaston



MCBH: East Walker Street, Thomaston



MCBH: Extant cut at SR 74, just east of Culloden, Monroe County



MCBH: Dyas depot, Monroe County



MCBH: US 80 at Worsham Street, Lizella, Bibb County



MCBH: Hartley Bridge Road at School Road, Skipperton, Bibb County



MCBH: Remnant track at wye junction with GSF mainline, Sofkee, Bibb Co.