While many areas along Cathead Creek remain pristine and unspoiled, other areas are undergoing extensive change. Houses and businesses dot the creek’s shoreline. The interstate highway, which began in 1970, continues to beckon new development.

African-American burial grounds are located within the Cathead Creek Historic District. These include the Oasis, Windy Hill, Ceylon, and Dunwoody cemeteries. Many burial grounds became lost when families moved from the area or the last family member passed away. The Great Migration of the late 1800s and early 1900s resulted in large numbers of rural African Americans leaving the South. They traveled to northern cities, hoping for jobs, fair treatment, and a safe life. This left many communities in the South depopulated with no one to care for the cemeteries. Other cemeteries became covered in vegetation that obscured marked, and especially unmarked, graves.

Historically, African-American families often could not afford stone carved tombstones, and natural stones were not common on the coast. Instead, they marked graves with wooden markers or objects significant to their culture and to the deceased. Objects included mirrors and shimmering items that reflected light such as mirrors, coins, and glass. It was believed that the reflection of light on these objects could trap a wayward spirit and illuminate a path for them to the spirit world. Kerosene lamp parts were placed on top of graves to guide those who died at night into the spirit realm. Vessels with water symbolized the transition between the worlds of the dead and those of the living were common on African-American graves. White articles were associated with death and the afterworld, items such as milk glass, plain whiteware ceramics, porcelain, and bleached seashells held such symbolism on graves. Wheel shells represented the water separating the worlds of the living and the dead, as well as the ocean separating the departed from Africa. Other objects placed on graves included special items of the deceased, such as a favorite cup. Personal items helped the deceased in the afterlife and also served the living well as the ocean separating the departed from Africa. Other objects placed on graves included special items of the deceased, such as a favorite cup. Personal items helped the deceased in the afterlife and also served the living.

It is most likely that many of these things happened to the Windy Hill Plantation Cemetery, which has become lost to time. Archaeologists were able, however, to relocate and document the African-American burial ground of Oasis Plantation Cemetery.

Another cemetery, Ceylon, dates to the early 1800s and was the original burial ground for African Americans enslaved on the Ceylon Plantation. Later, free African Americans buried their dead here as well.

Dunwoody Cemetery began when African Americans on the Sidon Plantation began burying their dead there in the 1700s. African Americans continued to use this cemetery well into the 1900s. Dozens of graves were relocated within the cemetery in 1993 when threatened by private construction.