

BATTLEFIELD UPDATE

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Cooperative Planning Effort Seen As Model

ABPP ASSISTS PARK PLANNING

Is it possible to reconcile suburban growth with the preservation of large areas of open land? Can the National Park Service work cooperatively with neighboring jurisdictions to manage development around park boundaries?

These major issues now arise as the National Park Service attempts to deal with the explosive growth facing the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park, located 50 miles south of Washington, D.C. This current challenge is not unlike the situation confronted by many once-isolated national parks.

Residential subdivisions and strip-commercial development are beginning to surround the four major units at Fredericksburg and pose a severe challenge to the park's mission of explaining the significance of the Civil War battles that claimed more than 100,000 lives.

The historic conflicts at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Courthouse rendered this corner of Virginia into America's "killing fields," the bloodiest spot on the continent.

Planning actions taken during the next five years will determine whether or not the battlefields within the National Park will be surrounded by suburban sprawl or whether the rolling farm country, which characterized the area during the Civil War, can continue to convey the meaning of this place.

The Development of the Park

The history of the park's establishment and, in particular, the methods used by the federal government to buy land there illustrate why development impinges on this



National Park more than similar growth occurring around other parks. Created by Congress in 1927 and placed under the jurisdiction of the War Department, the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania park was purchased in long narrow strips that follow trench lines and marching paths rather than being created with large parcels encompassing entire combat areas. Often these strips of land cut through the middle of existing farms. To persuade reluctant farmers to sell to the government and to allow their land to be divided in this way, the Army liberally granted perpetual access rights to the new roads routed along trench lines for visitor access. What started out as a pragmatic and cost-effective method of land acquisition, designed in an era when the area's agrarian nature seemed assured,

actually sowed the seeds of today's management challenges. Although the park's land holdings have been expanded in each of the four battlefield units, less than half of the core-battle zone is contained within the authorized boundary of each battlefield.

Growth in the Fredericksburg Area

During the 1980s Fredericksburg and surrounding counties were among the fastest-growing jurisdictions in Virginia. According to a recent study by the University of Virginia's Center for Public Service, the area now ranks as the state's fastest-growing region, outpacing even Northern Virginia, its nearest competitor. Spotsylvania County, which claims the bulk of the park's approximately 8,000 acres, will increase in population to a projected 92,000 by the year 2000 from 32,000 in 1980. The county is like many jurisdictions in Virginia, which views land-use planning with caution and which severely restricts local governments in exercising regulatory authority over private development. Until recently, Spotsylvania did not focus extensively on the widespread development headed toward it from Washington, D.C., along Interstate 95.

A Shift Away from Unquestioned Growth

Circumstances within the last three years have boosted hopes for the improvement of this bleak scenario.

First, the recession that began in 1990 halted many development proposals. A change in local politics

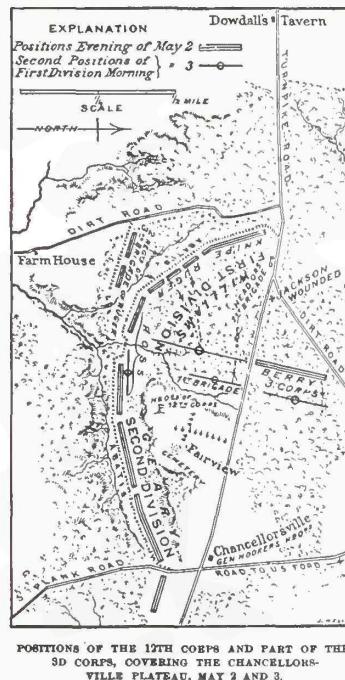
in 1991 brought several new elected officials to the board of supervisors, the county's governing body. The shift in local politics away from unquestioned acceptance of growth may be due in part to the arrival of a critical mass of newcomers familiar with the high costs and congestion brought about by overdevelopment in nearby Northern Virginia. Many of these newcomers came to Spotsylvania precisely because it offers a less expensive and less harried semirural lifestyle than is available in suburban areas closer to Washington.

A New Approach by the NPS

In 1990, new Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park Superintendent Maria Burks sought to improve the park's relations with local officials, including those from Spotsylvania County. Burks crafted a new strategy for dealing with development of "related lands" that lie outside the park boundary but remain critical to the park's interpretive mission. The new approach grew out of the realization that previous park efforts to comment on local land-use decisions were not very effective because official park review of development proposals came long after developers had invested money in engineered designs. This placed the Park Service in the reactive position of attempting to change decisions that had already been made, except in the most formal sense.

To forge a common bond with the county and other localities, the park set out to become an active and concerned member of the community's broader land-management team. Park staff participated in such planning groups as the Fredericksburg Visions Task Force and the Hospitality Council. Park managers initiated a partnership with the local preservation organization and the regional planning council to host a series of dinner seminars for elected officials. The seminars showcased innovative planning and open-space development techniques particularly applicable to areas around the battlefields. Park staff also paid attention to the planning needs of the localities and matched them with grants opportunities.

Approximately \$30,000 in grants for preservation, exhibit design and construction, and rails-to-trails projects went directly to localities through the park's efforts.



POSITIONS OF THE 10TH CORPS AND PART OF THE 3D CORPS, COVERING THE CHANCELLORSVILLE PLATEAU, MAY 2 AND 3.

Simultaneously, park staff examined the positions that the park had taken on recent development proposals. Recognizing that growth and change are facts of life, the park began to focus on "key park values." Broadly defined, these are the specific elements of the visitor experience or the historic resources that are present at each site.

Responding to the park's new approach to land-management issues and to increasing widespread support for thoughtful planning, Spotsylvania County approached the park to prepare design standards for development on related lands. To achieve this, park staff, working with professional staff of the National Park Service Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, first had to map the lands and define the values. When the county began to revise its comprehensive plan in 1992, the park and the county presented the new maps and other information during the routine course of public sessions.

A Partnership with the American Battlefield Protection Program

The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), an initiative of

the National Park Service created in response to the conflict over a proposal to construct a shopping mall next to the Manassas National Battlefield Park, was asked to provide technical assistance and to support the work initiated by the park managers and the county. Because ABPP's mission is to strengthen the local stewardship of battlefields, the program was eager to provide assistance. ABPP recognized the innovative nature of the cooperative relationship between the county and Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania park as a potential model for the scores of other battlefields in both public and private ownership (few battlefields are entirely in public ownership).

To help solidify the working relationship between the park and the county and to ensure a full discussion of these issues, the ABPP provided substantial financial support to the county to revise the battlefield preservation component of the comprehensive plan. Spotsylvania County has contributed to this new alliance by creating a system for monitoring development proposals in areas within the park's study of county Civil War sites. Under this system, the park is given an opportunity to review the proposals and offer comments at the earliest stages of the county's review process.

ABPP also is funding the additional work involved in responding to the county's original request for design standards. The standards are being prepared for the Park Service by the Natural Lands Trust, under the direction of Randall Arendt and Michael Clarke. Arendt is a land-planning specialist and a well-known advocate of cluster techniques as a method of preserving open space and maintaining traditional landscape forms. The Trust also is developing voluntary landowner-stewardship program.

Geographic Information System

In addition to the financial support it has brought to the project, the American Battlefield Protection Program has tapped the NPS Cultural Resources Geographic Information System (GIS) Unit to comprehensively

map the four battlefields and their associated resources. The aim of the computer mapping project is to facilitate analyses of information from such diverse sources as historic maps from the 19th century to present-day aerial photographs showing current land-use/land-cover. In compiling the GIS, Park Service staffers use Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to pinpoint the locations of such historic features as house sites, road traces, and field fortifications.

For the first time, accurate maps will be available showing the locations of approximately 38 miles of earthwork fortifications that lie within the NPS boundary. By comparing the locations of these park features with the historic maps that depict them over a wider area than encompassed by the park, the park staff can make educated guesses about where such features exist outside the park. At some point, they can confirm such predictions by conducting a limited field survey (with the permission of the affected landowner).

Conclusion

Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park has come a long way in clarifying its interest in lands beyond its jurisdiction and in communicating the historic and interpretive values represented by these areas. A solid working relationship now is established between the county and the park; both sides see the value of having active and early participation by park managers in reviewing development in areas outside of the park. Early drafts of the new comprehensive plan highlight the need for the county to capitalize on the economic potential of the National Park by promoting selective, carefully controlled development in corridors linking the battlefield areas.

Implementation of the plan, of course, depends primarily on local politics. In the meantime, by working on a case-by-case basis with individual landowners, the park staff will strive to preserve the most significant resources within the context of compatible development.

NEW SUPERINTENDENT NAMED AT "FRED-SPOT" NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

Martha K. (Marti) Leicester is the newly appointed superintendent of the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park. Leicester, who currently serves as chief of program development of the Presidio in San Francisco, begins her new job in November.

"Ms. Leicester's extensive background in history, education, and community relations makes her especially well qualified to manage Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park," says B.J. Griffin, regional director of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the National Park Service. "She will use this ability to protect the park's eminence in Civil War history and work with the community to protect the land."

Leicester began her National Park Service career in 1972 as a seasonal park ranger at Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Salem, MA.

CIVIL WAR COIN ORDER INFORMATION AVAILABLE THROUGH C. W. TRUST

Further information about the sale of three new Civil War commemorative coins that will be sold starting in March by the U.S. Mint (*Battlefield Update*, September 1994) also is available by calling the Civil War Trust at (800) CWTRUST.

FORTRESS ROSECRANS SET TO OPEN OCTOBER 31

A ceremony on October 31 at Stones River National Battlefield will mark the transfer of Fortress Rosecrans from the City of Murfreesboro, TN, to the National Park Service. For further information, contact the park at (615) 893-9501.

COPIES OF THE CWSAC BATTLEFIELD REPORT AVAILABLE FROM ABPP

A limited stock of the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission's *Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields* is available to the public at no charge from the American Battlefield Protection Program. The 64-page report presents the findings of the Congressionally appointed Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, which was given the two-year mission of identifying the nation's significant Civil War battlefields, evaluating their condition, and making recommendations for their preservation.

The report has been distributed to Congress, the National Park Service, national historic preservation organizations, governors, state parks departments, state historic preservation offices, and local governments and preservation organizations associated with the priority battlefield sites identified by the Commission.

Interested individuals may request single copies of the report; preservation organizations, local and state governments, and other groups may request multiple copies for distribution. To request the report, write to: National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division--IMU, P.O. Box 37127, LL99, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

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