



Foundation Document Overview

Fort Necessity National Battlefield

Pennsylvania



Contact Information

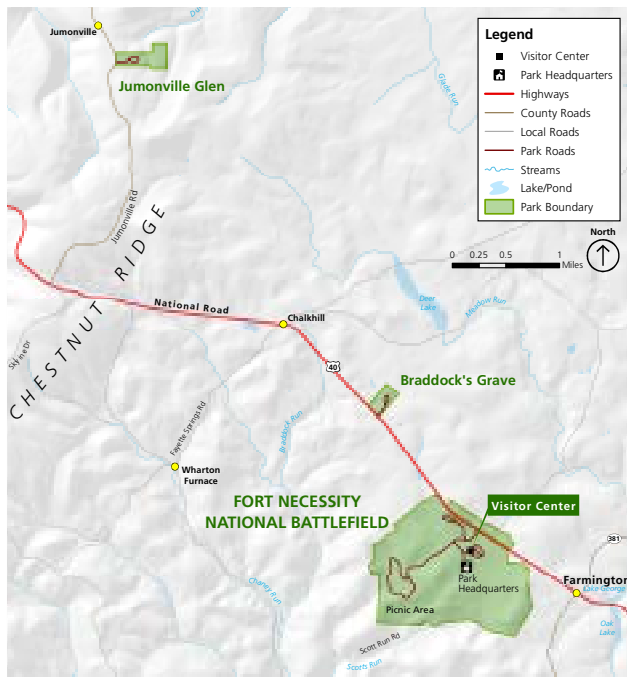
For more information about the *Fort Necessity National Battlefield Foundation Document*, contact: <http://www.nps.gov/fone> or (814) 893-6322 or write to:

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Purpose



FORT NECESSITY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD preserves the sites of the opening battles of the French and Indian War and commemorates George Washington's early military career and the global consequences of the conflict.



Significance

Significance statements express why Fort Necessity National Battlefield resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- The fighting at Jumonville Glen and Fort Necessity sparked the French and Indian War, which reconfigured the global balance of power and set the stage for the American Revolution.
- The skirmish at Jumonville Glen was 22-year-old George Washington's first military engagement, and the battle at Fort Necessity was the only time in his military career that he surrendered.
- During the Battle of Fort Necessity and throughout the French and Indian War, a young George Washington learned valuable lessons that shaped him into the leader who guided the Continental Army to victory during the American Revolution and prepared him to become the first president of the United States.
- The French and Indian War resulted in the expulsion of French colonial power from North America, and set the stage for westward expansion and large-scale geographic displacement of American Indians.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Fort Necessity.** The archeological site that served as the center of George Washington's defensive position during the Battle of Fort Necessity, composed of a supply shed, circular stockade, and earthworks built by his troops. Today, visitors can see reconstructions of the supply shed and stockade surrounded by remnants of the original earthworks.
- **Jumonville Glen.** The site of George Washington's first combat engagement and the opening shots of the French and Indian War. The site includes the surrounding lands that preserve the secluded, densely wooded setting where the skirmish took place in 1754.
- **The Great Meadows.** The site where the Battle of Fort Necessity occurred, which retains its historic character as a battlefield.
- **The Battlefield Collection.** Historic artifacts from the Battle of Fort Necessity, including fragments of the original fortifications and other artifacts associated with the battle.
- **Braddock's Gravesite and Monument.** The original burial site, road trace, and gravesite of British General Edward Braddock, mentor to George Washington. After the Battle of Fort Necessity, General Braddock assembled and led the largest army in North America at the time in an attempt to expel the French from the continent.
- **Braddock Road Trace.** The military road, built and used by George Washington in 1754 and expanded by General Braddock in 1755 that crosses Fort Necessity National Battlefield.



Other Important Resources & Values

Fort Necessity National Battlefield may contain other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **The Mount Washington Tavern.** An original 1830s stagecoach stop along the National Road that was built on land previously owned by George Washington. The tavern maintains its historic relationship to the National Road.
- **Commemorative monuments.**
 - » Braddock's granite monument – dedicated by the Braddock Park Memorial Association in 1913
 - » Rock monument at Braddock's Grave – erected by the Sons of the American Revolution
 - » Braddock's Burial Wayside
 - » Jumonville Glen monument – erected by the Westmoreland-Fayette Branch of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania
 - » Fort Necessity monument at Mount Washington Tavern – erected by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission of Fayette County in 1926
 - » The 1920 monument erected by the Great Meadows Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution
 - » Wharton Township Veterans Memorial
- **The Civilian Conservation Corps structures.** The roadbed, culverts, bridges, fireplaces, picnic shelters, and drinking fountains built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the construction of the park unit during the early 1930s.



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- The Battle of Fort Necessity at Great Meadows shattered a fragile peace existing between the principal Western European empires, catapulting the world into a brutal, definitive war that reconfigured the global balance of power and set the stage for the American Revolution.
- The various distinct and diverse American Indian nations that participated directly or indirectly in the French and Indian War emerged at the war's conclusion to find their previous life ways dramatically altered.
- George Washington's defeat at the Battle of Fort Necessity, and his experience commanding the men who fought there, taught the untested, ambitious young soldier lessons that helped forge his character and skill as a leader.
- The National Road united the young republic as the first federally funded highway and was a crucial corridor of commerce and communications, where travelers and residents converged at stopping points such as the Mount Washington Tavern.
- The various features (cultural, geographical, natural, and archeological) at Fort Necessity retain a discernible level of historical integrity, providing the opportunity for further study by scholars and reflection by visitors.



Description

Fort Necessity National Battlefield is in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, within the Allegheny Mountains. The park was established in 1931 to commemorate the Battle of Fort Necessity and George Washington's progression as a military officer and leader.

The main park unit comprises 852 acres and includes the remains of Fort Necessity, where George Washington had his first test as a commander in battle. Washington's men built Fort Necessity shortly after combat at Jumonville Glen, as they anticipated a French counterattack. On July 3, 1754, Washington and his men were surrounded by a force of French and Indians nearly double their number. The Battle of Fort Necessity ensued, and George Washington's force sustained nearly 100 casualties, equaling a quarter of their total number. On the evening of July 3rd, Washington surrendered Fort Necessity to the French. It was the first and only time Washington surrendered in his military career.

The 26-acre Jumonville Glen unit sits along the crest of Chestnut Ridge, seven miles west of the main park unit. In 1754, this secluded spot was the scene of George Washington's first military engagement, a dawn skirmish with a French force encamped at the bluff.

The 24-acre Braddock's Gravesite unit is about one mile west from the main park unit on U.S. Route 40. The site contains the original grave of General Edward Braddock. Braddock led a 2,400 man army on a disastrous campaign against the French in response to the Battle of Fort Necessity.

By the end of the French and Indian war George Washington had a reputation as a skilled military leader. This reputation served him well in 1775 when the Continental Congress selected him as the commander for its new army. Washington's hard won lessons from the French and Indian War helped him to overcome incredible odds in his victory over the British during the American Revolution.

The National Road

The decades after the French and Indian War were times of monumental change in North America. Americans continued their great march westward, over the Appalachians, into the Ohio River Valley. By 1806, Congress authorized the construction of the Cumberland Road, which later became known as the National Road, to address the need for transportation infrastructure to support this westward expansion. Many inns sprang up along the National Road to provide food and lodging for travelers along this thoroughfare. One of these inns, the Mount Washington Tavern, was built in the 1830s and resides in the main unit of the park.