



Foundation Document Overview

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield

Missouri



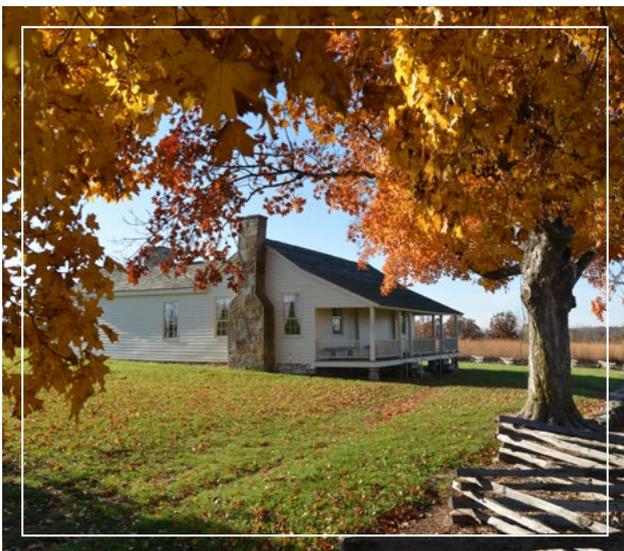
Contact Information

For more information about the *Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation Document*, contact: wicr_superintendent@nps.gov or (417) 732-2662 x227 or write to: Superintendent, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, 6424 West Farm Road 182, Republic, MO 65738

Purpose



The purpose of WILSON'S CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD is to commemorate the Battle of Wilson's Creek, preserve the associated battlefield, and interpret the battle within the context of the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi West.



Significance

Significance statements express why Wilson's Creek 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 Battle of Wilson's Creek was the second major battle of the Civil War and the first major battle west of the Mississippi River.
- Wilson's Creek National Battlefield was the site of the death of General Nathaniel Lyon, the first Union general killed in the Civil War. Lyon's death focused national attention on the potential loss of Missouri to the Confederacy.
- Wilson's Creek National Battlefield's comprehensive cultural landscape and rural character evoke the setting at the time of the battle that allows for interpretation and understanding of the events.
- Wilson's Creek National Battlefield's extensive research library, archives, and museum collections represent a nationally prominent and in-depth record of the battle and the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi West.



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.

- **Battlefield Landscape and Historical Views**
- **Ray House and Ray Spring House**
- **Collections**
- **Library**
- **Memorial Qualities**
- **Rural Setting**

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield contains 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.

- **Appropriate Recreation**
- **Archeological Resources**
- **Butterfield Stagecoach Route**
- **Cannons and Fences**
- **Cave Resources**
- **Structures and Landscape Features from Other Historic Periods**
- **Threatened and Endangered Species**
- **Research Opportunities**



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.

- **Missouri's Position as a Border State**
- **Political/Military Leaders and Missouri's Strategic Importance**
- **Battle Outcome the Result of Many Interrelated Factors**
- **Union Defeat and the Death of Lyon**
- **Lives of the Residents**
- **The Trans-Mississippi Theater**
- **Preservation and Commemoration**



Description

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield is approximately 10 miles southwest of Springfield, Missouri. The park was established on April 22, 1960, to preserve and commemorate the site of the Battle of Wilson's Creek, the second major battle of the Civil War and the first major battle west of the Mississippi River. On August 10, 1861, 5,400 Union troops under the command of General Lyon clashed in a brutal fight with 12,000 Confederate and Missouri State Guard soldiers under Generals McCulloch, Pearce, and Price. Although the Union lost the Battle of Wilson's Creek, its defeat signaled that Union reinforcements were desperately needed to prevent Missouri's total fall to the Confederacy. Missouri ranks third in the number of Civil War military actions within its border.

Interpretation and education at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield is based on the cultural landscape that is one of the finest preserved battlefields in the national park system, the finest Trans-Mississippi library collection in the United States, and the finest collection of Trans-Mississippi artifacts in the United States. The Wilson's Creek National Battlefield's Civil War Museum is home to one of the finest publicly held museum collections and contains the nation's largest archival and materials collections related to the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi West.

The park offers a 30-minute film overview of the battle, permanent exhibits of the battle and the war in the Trans-Mississippi Theater, a gift shop, and rotating interpretive exhibits. The Ray House is open for tours. Visitors drive along the 4.9-mile tour road and stop at the eight pullouts featuring the major historic points of the battle. The park also is a place where nature can be enjoyed by cyclists, walkers, equestrians, and runners who use the tour road and 10.6 miles of trails, including the historic Wire Road.

