

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Manassas National Battlefield Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: MANA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Manassas National Battlefield Park was established to preserve the historic landscape containing historic sites, buildings, objects and views that contribute to the national significance of the First and Second Battles of Manassas, for the use, inspiration, and benefit of the public. Manassas National Battlefield Park is in the enviable position of celebrating the Centennial of the National Park Service and the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War between 2011 and 2016. We recently completed our General Management Plan, in which we have established our vision for the future of the park. As part of that plan, we will create a focal point for the Second Battle of Manassas at the recently rehabilitated Brawner Farm. We plan to use our first Centennial Challenge grant to develop exhibits and interpretive media at this handicap accessible facility. We will begin clearing some 140 acres of forest near Brawner Farm to further implement our General Management Plan and further interpret the Second Battle of Manassas. Ultimately, the linchpin of our General Management Plan will be the relocation of two local highways, Routes 29 and 234 around the battlefield. We recently completed a bypass study with the Federal Highway Administration to accomplish this goal, and have obtained approval from the local counties and the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board for our preferred alternative. In short, we plan to showcase Manassas as one of the premier parks during the Centennial and Sesquicentennial, by implementing our General Management Plan and by working with our partners to improve all of our park programs.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Robert K. Sutton, Ph.D., Park Superintendent

Site: MANA

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

For every project Manassas has initiated over the past 10 years, we have endeavored to make the facility, trail, or feature as accessible and safe as possible. As an example, Brawner Farmhouse, which has just been rehabilitated under the Line Item Construction Program, is fully accessible, with an handicap parking lot, an accessible trail, and handicap ramp into the building, and a handicap platform to see the battlefield. We will use the Centennial Challenge Grant to ensure that all of the exhibits, interpretive media, and trails are handicap accessible. We will continue to make every effort to make as many facilities in the park as accessible as possible.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Using the Line Item construction program, we have rehabilitated all of the historic structures into good condition. We also have established a plan to maintain these structures in good condition for the foreseeable future. The Dogan House is the sole high-priority building that is currently listed in "poor" condition (as determined by Facility Condition Index). It will be returned to "good" condition with the installation of a new roof in 2008, along with some scheduled interior maintenance to be performed by park staff. Dogan House will become an important piece of the story of Second Manassas, and will be a tool to allow us to further implement our General Management Plan.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

The park has identified the need for a biotech position in our OFS request to enhance our ability to control invasive plant species. Until that position is funded, we will be using the Exotic Plant Management Team from the regional office for our control efforts, concentrating on a few key invasives and locations within the park. In addition, our agricultural lease program helps control some exotic species. We do not have any reintroductions planned, although Bobwhite Quail might be a considered option in the near future.

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Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

Assets above a 40 Asset Priority Index are predominantly listed in "good" condition as determined by the Facility Condition Index. The park maintenance division will direct their efforts to maintain this level of acceptable condition for years to come, while focusing on a few selected assets that will need extra care to achieve a "good" Facility Condition Index rating.

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Site: MANA

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

We will continue to improve the natural resources in the park by concentrating our efforts to establish stream side buffers to enhance water quality and to convert fields and meadows to native warm season grasses.

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Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

Manassas has identified 18 landscapes for listing on the Cultural Landscape Inventory. We will make the commitment to upgrade 2 of these landscapes by 2011. We have listed 79 sites listed in good condition in Archeological Sites Management Information System of the 92 sites listed in the park. The remainder of the sites will be assessed this year.

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Site: MANA

STEWARDSHIP

Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In our Draft General Management Plan, we have identified 4 parcels of land that will help us tell the complete story of both battles that were fought at Manassas. In order for Manassas to expand its boundary, we must have Congressional action to do so. We hope that will take place by the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MANA

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park's education program works with students through the regional initiative "Bridging the Watershed." Working in partnership with the Alice Ferguson Foundation, rangers attend annual training and certification programs and pass on their knowledge through conducted environmental science field studies in the park. We view our program as one in which students are able to integrate the management of natural resources in a historical park. Thus, the students learn about history and natural resource management. Currently the staff works primarily with high school age students but plans are under development to expand the program to middle school students.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MANA

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

We initiated a continuing program to upgrade all of the fields--that are under the hay leasing program--to remove invasive vegetation, and plant native warm season grasses, which among other things reduced the run-offs into park streams. We also have planted native vegetation on stream banks to further reduce run-off. We will continue to reduce invasive plant species throughout the park as well.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MANA

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

The park's interpretation division is working with the Alice Ferguson Foundation and the staff of the "Bridging the Watershed" education program to design a park-specific teaching module on wetlands restoration. The program will highlight and explain the stages undertaken by the park to restore a section of wetlands in the Brownsville area in the southwestern quadrant of the park. Students will learn about historic landscape preservation as well as current economic and political issues associated with the project. The park is also designing a new interpretive exhibit for the lobby of the Visitor Center that explains how park lands and their inhabitants are threatened by human factors such as commuter traffic, auto emissions, road noise, housing developments, stormwater run-off and invasive exotics.

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Site: MANA

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park is working with local volunteer groups to train them in trail maintenance practices to tackle some large scale efforts in the park. The park is planning to remove a large dump site at Lewis Ford that will involve the removal of abandoned tires, kitchen appliances, scrap metal and large deposits of river debris and downed timber. The park hopes to expand its volunteer program to develop a regular trail maintenance work crew to assist park maintenance employees with upkeep of the park's 50 miles of hiking and bridle trails.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MANA

RECREATION

- Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.
- Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

We have designated our trails--both those present and those we wish to open in the future in our General Management Plan. As part of implementation, the park has identified several sections of our trail network that will be upgraded for accessibility. The park will repair and replace the raised boardwalk on the Stone Bridge Loop trail with recycled lumber and improve a section closest to the bridge for wheelchair accessibility. The park has recently completed work on a new paved accessible trail at the Brawner Farm.

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Site: MANA

RECREATION

- Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.
- Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

The park's volunteer program is expected to grow over the next several years. The park recently completed work on the historic Henry House and Brawner Farm and will require more volunteers to staff these facilities when open to the public. The park's volunteer coordinator is developing partnerships with several volunteer groups such as the American Hiking Society, Potomac-Appalachian Trail Club and others to work on large scale trail maintenance projects over the next several years.

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Site: MANA

RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park will continue to expand and develop its partnerships with local Boy Scout-Girl Scout troops who assist with historic fence repairs, painting cannon limbers-caissons, and brush removal projects. The park's interpretive division is adding new hiking programs for scouts and summer school camps, including a special hiking patch that children can earn for completing certain requirements. The park's education staff will continue to reach out to local schools and participate in teacher training workshops that highlight the variety of activities that can be done in the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MANA

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

In partnership with "The Journey Through Hallowed Ground" we are promoting visitation to other lesser-known Civil War battlefields in the region, as well as increased awareness and visitation of National Park Service battlefields and sites.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

With the completion and opening of the Henry House and Brawner Farm, the interpretive staff plan to offer more facilitated programs each year. With assistance from volunteers, the park has increased the number of programs offered and added new programs on weekends (Chinn Ridge tour, Deep Cut tour, etc.) The park's living history and historic weapons demonstrations have also increased in frequency, due to an increase in the number and variety of volunteer re-enactment groups who assist park staff with programs on weekends in the summer. Our program attendance numbers have increased for the past three years and we hope to continue that trend. Ultimately, though, the completion of the bypass around the park will be the most important tool to improve on visitor experiences and safety.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MANA

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park works closely with local educators within a four county radius to offer park orientation programs and teacher workshops. The park hopes to expand its participation with summer programs through the "Teaching American History" grant workshops funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The park currently offers curriculum materials for download through our website or by email request. The park is still in the developmental stages of our website and, as staff become more familiar with the new Content Management System program, we have plans to add more interactive components for use in the classroom. The park is developing new curriculum materials for the study of Second Manassas and hopes to create complimentary park exhibits at Brawner Farm as well as flash animation map programs for the website.

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Site: MANA

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

The park is developing new interactive map features for use on the website and through touch-screen computer technology. Rather than create a fiber optic map, the park is creating a series of flash animation map graphics that tell the story of the Battle of Second Manassas in a way that will engage and enlighten younger audiences. The new technology will allow the park to update and add to the programs as new content is developed. The park is producing a series of short subject slide programs for continuous loop play on DVD players and display monitors at the Visitor Center or to play back from the website. Topics will include: monuments and memorials, local history, other Civil War events that occurred nearby, etc. Using modern technology, the park is able to provide visitors more interesting information using photos and color graphics and reduce printing costs.

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Site: MANA

EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The park just completed revisions to our Junior Ranger program. We expanded the program by developing and redesigning three separate activity booklets (ages 3-5, 6-9, 10-12). Each booklet was developed using learning strategies and teaching hierarchies that are age-appropriate. In addition, the park has expanded the use of children's activity stations at special events, increasing the number of children who participate in Junior Ranger programs throughout the year.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In addition to our educational programs for children, we are actively involved in the local "Lifelong Learning Institute" offering educational programs for senior citizens on the Civil War and the battles at Manassas.

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Site: MANA

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

The park has maintained consistently high marks on our annual visitor surveys for visitor satisfaction and understanding. Last year the park increased the percentage of visitors who had a strong understanding of park resources and significance. The Centennial Challenge Grant will be a critical tool in expanding our offerings to visitors, and thus increase their satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation for the events that took place in the park. In addition, the park plans to expand and improve interpretive media available to include: new waysides for the Brawner Loop trail, new interpretive site bulletins on Brawner archeology, Stone House, Henry House, nature guide for Stone Bridge Loop trail, to name a few. The park staff and volunteers will participate in quarterly interpretive training sessions to keep abreast of new information and interpretive techniques to better serve visitors to the park. The park's maintenance staff continues to make improvements to visitor services with new projects to include a new bathroom facility at Brawner Farm, new bathrooms and picnic pavillion at Brownsville and a new handicap accessible ramp to the Henry House.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MANA

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Manassas has strived to exceed diversity recruitment goals for the past 12 years.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MANA

PROFESSIONALISM

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Manassas is consistently one of the safest parks in which to work in the National Park Service. For nearly three years (over 950 days) the park staff did not sustain any lost-time accidents.

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