

# Mill Springs Battlefield

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Monument  
Kentucky



## Visitor Guide



MILL SPRINGS BATTLEFIELD ASSOCIATION

During the American Civil War, Kentucky sat on the seam of a nation tearing itself apart. Each side sought control of the key border state. Troops clashed on muddy Kentucky fields on a cold January morning in 1862. As one of the first decisive Union victories, the Battle of Mill Springs boosted morale, assured Kentucky's place in the union, and contributed to further US Army victories as they advanced deeper into the Western Theater of the Civil War.

### Battle on the Border

The question of secession split the Kentucky legislature, just as it divided families. Though a slave-holding state, Kentucky citizens held commercial and social ties to both their northern and southern neighbors. The state declared neutrality, but Kentucky's strategic location, large population, and assembly of rivers and railroads made it impossible for Union and Confederate forces to ignore. Both sides sent troops to fight for control.

The Battle of Mill Springs began at dawn on January 19, 1862. Recently reinforced

Union troops confronted and confounded a surprise Confederate attack. Rain, smoke, and fog muddled the field of battle. Union forces drove the Confederates back to Beech Grove camp and across the river, as cannon fire continued into the night. Twenty-four hours after they had started marching, the Confederates were scattered and defeated.

Newspapers across the land reported on the first major fight in the Western Theater. The decisive victory bolstered Union morale and solidified Kentucky's loyalty.

### A History of Community Engagement

Over 200 men died in the Battle of Mill Springs. As the war dragged on and claimed more lives, Mill Springs faded from the nation's collective memory. Members of the local community became stewards of the land and its history, keeping alive the memory of the fallen soldiers.

Many locals contributed over the years, creating a tradition of preservation. The Logan family donated a piece of the battlefield for a national cemetery where Union dead could be properly interred. A child who saw honors at that cemetery began decorating

the Confederate gravesite too. This simple, but longstanding gesture inspired memorials, a county park, and more engagement. In 1993, the non-profit Mill Springs Battlefield Association formed to preserve the battlefield, and support research, education, and events.

Just as the Battle of Mill Springs grabbed the nation's attention in 1862, the battlefield's 2019 designation as a national monument puts a new spotlight on the area. With help from its local partners, the NPS preserves and shares this place's part in a complicated and dark time in American history.

## Connecting the Monument's Sections

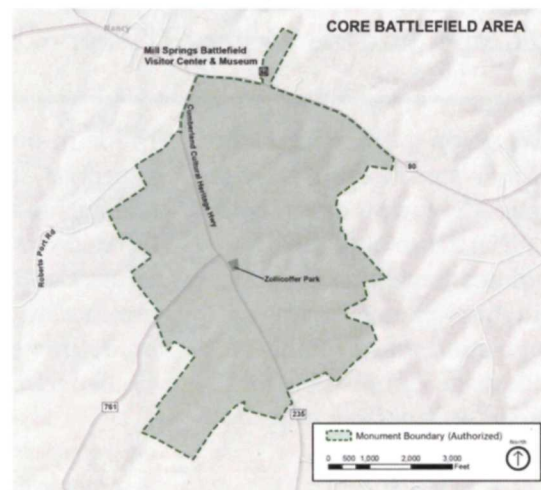
### CORE BATTLEFIELD AREA

The Visitor Center and Museum sit at the northern end of the battlefield area, next to **Mill Springs National Cemetery**. A drive south along State Hwy 235 takes you through rolling hills where the battle played out.

The heaviest fighting took place near **Zollicoffer Park**, named for Confederate General Felix Zollicoffer who died there. The government of Pulaski County donated this small park to the NPS. It includes a monument to the fallen general, Confederate mass grave and cemetery, and walking trail with informative signage.

### BEECH GROVE FORTIFIED ENCAMPMENT

Confederate troops built their winter camp on this peninsula between the Cumberland River and White Oak Creek. Multiple Driving Tour stops with informative signs mark events of the battle. You will not find a ferry boat waiting at the old ferry landing site, but there are views of Lake Cumberland.



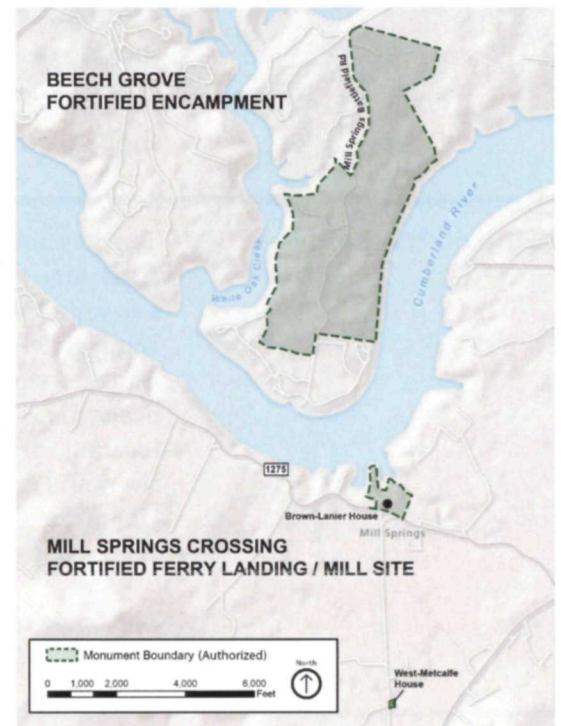
The new national monument was made possible by land donations from The Mill Springs Battlefield Association and the government of Pulaski County, Kentucky. The National Park Service is working to acquire additional properties.

### MILL SPRINGS CROSSING FORTIFIED FERRY LANDING AND MILL SITE

Built prior to the Civil War, the **Brown-Lanier House** and accompanying grist mill sit on the southern side of the Cumberland River (now Lake Cumberland). Home to the family that ran the mill, the Brown-Lanier House played host to generals from both sides—Confederate officers before the Battle of Mill Springs, and victorious Union generals afterward.

Powered by numerous springs in the area, **Mill Springs Mill** is operated by the Army Corps of Engineers and seasonally open to the public.

**WEST-METCALFE HOUSE** The West-Metcalf House in Wayne County served as Confederate headquarters and a battlefield hospital during the Battle of Mill Springs. It is currently not open to the public.



## Visiting Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument



Facilities developed by the Mill Springs Battlefield Association, including the Mill Springs Battlefield Visitor Center and Museum and Brown-Lanier House, are seasonally open to the public. The Association offers a film, exhibits, gift shop, and resource library at the visitor center. A 10-stop self-guided Driving Tour begins there.

Zollicoffer Park is open daily, dawn to dusk.

Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument  
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[www.nps.gov/misp](http://www.nps.gov/misp)  
[www.millsprings.net](http://www.millsprings.net)