



The Quarterly

The Superintendent's Letter



Richmond National Battlefield Park's "Capital History" series featured a tour of the Capitol grounds by Park Ranger Mike Gorman. This series was a great success in 2008 and will be repeated in 2009.

Fall has become one of our busiest seasons. Visitors walk the battlefield trails to experience the wonderful change in seasons, while school groups begin their annual pilgrimage to participate in the park's education programs. Meanwhile the staff is busy ending one fiscal year and starting another – assessing what we've accomplished, and establishing our goals for the new year.

This is a remarkable time in the history of both Richmond NBP

and the Maggie L. Walker NHS. The battlefields continue to grow and evolve thanks to our wonderful partners in preservation. We now manage nearly 2000 acres of core battlefield land in Hanover, Henrico and Chesterfield Counties. Preservation of the sacred resources continues to be one of our top priorities. An exciting new wayside exhibit program, slated for completion in spring, will ensure that the history of these sites will be seen and understood by visitors for years to come.

continued on page 2

Park Assists in State and National Firefighting Efforts

The wildland fires of 2008 have proven to be challenging for both state and national resources. This year Richmond National Battlefield Park and Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site's trained firefighting personnel responded to several large wildfires across the country.

Gina Smith answered the national call for firefighters by performing duties in Roswell, NM and Ocala, FL as a "mix master", an extremely unique position that oversees the tanker bases that supply aircraft with fire retardant slurry mix. "Slurry" is

a mix of chemicals that is dumped from the air onto the fire, acting as a suffocating factor on active fires and a retardant for areas close to the burns. Gina directly communicated with tanker pilots on the refueling of slurry mixes for their retardant drops.

Joe Temple served as a crew boss on the "South One" fire within The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. His duties included supervising a team of up to 24 firefighters. Joe also supervised 2 squad bosses on his crew. Joe's crew dug fire lines and installed fire

"Firefighting," continued on page 4



Maintenance Worker Gina Smith uses a refractometer to measure the salt content of fire retardant in Ocala, FL.

The Superintendent's Letter, continued

The Rural Plains project in Hanover County is making remarkable progress. The ca. 1725 Shelton ancestral home is now water-tight. This winter an Historic Structure Report will be undertaken by NPS staff to better inform us about future planning needs for preservation and interpretation of the building. If public or private funding becomes available this year, we hope to build a temporary parking lot, so visitors can access a battlefield trail system without having to wait for the house to be open for visitation.

Congress established the Maggie L. Walker site in 1978, and 30 years later we are finally nearing the end of the park's development. The last project is completing the restoration of several rooms in Mrs. Walker's home that previously had not been open to the public. Education programs will expand to build upon the success of last year that saw program participation grow by nearly 60 %.

As always, we will devote our fullest attention to the care and preservation of these resources for this and all future generations. We ask for your support and comments, because each of you has a stake in the important work that we do.

David Ruth

The Quarterly newsletter will be available by e-mail starting with the next issue. Please send your e-mail address to susie_sernaker@nps.gov to get on the list.

Rural Plains Archeology

The most ambitious and promising archeological work in the park's history is in progress at the Shelton House, on the Totopotomoy Creek battlefield. The house is 283 years old, and much of the site's history is completely unknown, especially from the period before the 1864 Civil War battle there.

Archeologists from the local firm of Dutton & Associates are working this autumn with three primary objectives: to identify the remains of various nearby structures that have disappeared over the years; to find, through the use of ground penetrating radar, where the main line of Civil War entrenchments once stood; and to learn more about the exterior appearance of the house in the Colonial and Civil War eras

Richmond's National Parks Go Green

At Richmond National Battlefield Park and Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site green is not a color, but a concept: that of environmentally and climate-friendly practices. The parks have an Environmental Management Team (EMT) that examines park operations and identifies ways to decrease or remove environmental impacts. The EMT examined the parks' solid waste management to increase the percentage of recycled waste. As a result the parks now recycle up to 85% of their waste.

The park is reducing its carbon footprint by using bio-diesel in all of its diesel-powered vehicles, replacing some vehicles with hybrids and reducing the parks' fleet of vehicles by eight. Environmentally-friendly products are replacing the harmful chemicals



An archeologist searches for evidence of outbuildings near the Shelton House.

through limited excavation around the foundation of the house.

All of this work will help the park protect the various resources at "Rural Plains," while increasing the staff's ability to interpret the site for future visitors.



The parks' new eco-friendly wash bay recycles water and prevents chemicals and oil washed from the vehicles from entering the local watershed.

in the maintenance division's arsenal against bugs, weeds and germs. In law enforcement lead-free ammunition is now mandated for all NPS sites.

Richmond's parks have applied to the "Climate Friendly Park" program. The park's goal to be accepted into the program by next year. To learn more about this program go to www.nps.gov/climatefriendlyparks/.

Cadastral Survey Work Begins at Park Units

Richmond National Battlefield Park has contracted Vanasse, Hangen Brustlin (VHB), a local firm, to conduct field cadastral survey work determining precise boundary lines for four of the park units. The survey work will establish boundaries at the newest park unit, Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield (Rural Plains), and two recently acquired parcels on the Cold Harbor battlefield. Gaines' Mill will receive an update to an older survey.

When completed, boundary markers will be placed around each unit to protect the cultural and natural resources. The new markers will also provide adjacent owners and the public with a clear delineation of property lines.

Sensitive cultural and natural resources at each unit make surveying a challenge. The survey crews completing the work understand this, and are working to avoid impacting the resources. Seasonal Management Assistant Penny Loukakous oversaw the contractors during her summer employment, and kept a log of the work they performed.

Once the data gathering and surveying in the field have been completed and analyzed, the physical monuments and signs will be set, and the final survey drawings will be completed and filed with Hanover County, the local governing body. Currently, all work is expected to be completed by April 2009. If you have any questions about



Penny Loukakous, studies survey notes with a contractor during the cadastral survey.

the surveys, contact Chief Ranger Tim Mauch at 804-795-5018, ext. 1.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Richmond National Battlefield Park was established in 1936 to commemorate the battlefields around Richmond, Virginia, Capital of the Confederacy, 1861-1865.

Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site was established in 1978 to preserve and protect the home of the first woman to found and be president of a bank.

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Employee Profile: Eola Dance

This issue of the Quarterly welcomes Eola Dance to the Richmond family. Eola is the new lead ranger at Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, and she comes to us from Frederick Douglass National Historic Site. Eola was recruited by the National Park Service when she graduated from Southern University and A&M College in 2001. "At the time," recalled Eola, "I observed great passion for the resources in the rangers I met, and I thought it would be exciting and educational to work at a national park."

In the next ten years Eola hopes to complete her master's degree in Public History at Howard University, as well as continue her research on the Underground Railroad and the American Civil War. She would also like to exhibit her water-color paintings and



Eola Dance, lead interpretive ranger at Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site.

pastel drawings.

Eola was born at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, VA to Ret. Lt. Lee A. Lewis and Elvena Bijole Lewis. She is the youngest of their eight children. She and her husband, Avary, have one son, Alan. When not painting, Eola enjoys yoga and jogging in her free time.



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The Quarterly

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“Firefighting,” continued from page 1

hoses and irrigation lines.

Andrew Trivizas and Allan Barker responded to the “South One” fire in August. Andrew performed duties as a “squad boss” which is similar to that of a crew boss, but oversees up to 12 firefighters. Alan Barker served as a firefighter working on Andrew’s squad building fire lines. The “South One” fire was complex; crews often found the fire burning underground and starting new spot fires at different locations. One solution was to install irrigation pipes so that the fire could be flooded with water supplied by Lake Drummond.

Richmond National Battlefield Park is not without its own wildfires. Our trained firefighters assisted the Hanover County Volunteer Fire Department when high winds knocked down a power pole starting a wildfire adjacent to the Gaines’ Mill battlefield.

There will always be the potential for wildland fires when managing public lands. Park staff will be there to assist for local, state and national incidents.

Locations of front page images (left to right): Chimborazo Medical Museum; Cold Harbor battlefield; Drewry’s Bluff battlefield; Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site; The Parsonage at Malvern Hill battlefield; Civil War Visitor Center at Tredegar Iron Works.