

BATTLEFIELD UPDATE

American Battlefield Protection Program -- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
No. 29 January-February 1992

FY 92 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Fiscal Year 1992 budget for the American Battlefield Protection Program includes funds for earthworks and archeological site stabilization as well as preservation planning, to be provided to the priority sites through a competitive grant program. The staff of the program is developing the grant package and will be distributing it to interested parties at the twenty-five sites. For further information on the grant program, contact Maureen Foster, Historian for the American Battlefield Protection Program, at 202-343-9521 or at the address listed below.

There will be a training workshop for those interested in battlefield preservation in late May or early June 1992, organized in cooperation with the Kentucky Heritage Council. Further information on the conference, *Civil War Battlefields: Forging Effective Partnership*, will be forthcoming. Contact Maureen Foster for details.

FY93 BUDGET REQUEST

The Fiscal Year 1993 budget request for the American Battlefield Protection Program includes an increase of \$7.9 million above current funding, for a total of \$10 million. The requested increases will be used for emergency non-federal acquisition and easement assistance at the twenty-five priority Civil War sites generally, and more specifically to cooperate with the Congress in initiating efforts to protect important sites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia pursuant to the report on this subject recently prepared at the request of the Congress. (See full report on the Shenandoah Valley report below.) These funds will not be used for Federal land acquisition but instead to leverage fund-raising by State and local government or by appropriate non-profit organizations. Typically this assistance would only be used to fund a portion of any given acquisition project.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Bills have been introduced in this session of the Virginia Legislature which affect historic preservation and protection of American battlefields in that State. The provisions of Virginia Senate Bill 514/House Bill 1029 would weaken or altogether eliminate Virginia's ability to participate in the exemplary Federal, State, local, and private sector partnership through which the National Historic Preservation Act is administered.

Several sections of these bills threaten the fundamental assumptions of this partnership. Rather than having historic significance evaluated by a board of experts at the State level, applying nationally accepted objective criteria, and having the State program broadly monitored to ensure general consistency with other States, the bills would give individual property owners sole authority to determine which properties in Virginia are historically significant.

The bills also would require that only property owners (of an individual property or in a proposed historic district) could propose a nomination to the National Register. The bills would require that a majority of property owners affirmatively consent to the nomination of a property to the National Register, whereas the National Historic Preservation Act specifies only that if a majority of private property owners object, the property will not be listed in the National Register. The bills further would require that every property in a historic district contribute to the district's significance, a situation virtually impossible to achieve. The bills also include a number of other provisions inconsistent with the National Historic Preservation Act. A 1986 survey by the Virginia Division of Tourism showed that more tourists -- 91% -- come to the State because of its historic atmosphere than for any other reason.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY STUDY

The National Park Service distributed a draft of its study on Civil War sites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in November and is now finishing the report based on the comments received. The legislation which authorized the study called for four components: identification of Civil

War sites in Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, threats to their integrity, alternatives for preservation and interpretation, and consideration of new National Park Service units. The legislation also stipulated that the study must include views and recommendations of the National Park System Advisory Board.

The study centers on fifteen battles on twelve sites. Because the protection of large landscapes is driving much of the Congressional concern on Civil War sites, the study focused on battlefields rather than numerous individual buildings and small sites. The study includes the history, significance, and status of principal Civil War battle sites. In the draft report, a range of possible options for their preservation were identified. The National Park Service was not requested by Congress to identify a preferred alternative. The final report will have many options, including the views of the local and state governments and the public.

The study began in December 1991 as a massive cooperative effort. The study could not have been completed without cooperation from counties, city governments, local historical societies, preservation organizations, and a wide range of other individuals including property owners who, out of love for the resource, gave their assistance to the study.

The most significant contribution of the study is the documentation of resources, especially the location of battlefields. Only two are listed on the National Register: New Market Battlefield and Cedar Creek National Historic Landmark; thirteen of the fifteen battlefields have never been significantly surveyed or documented. Battlefields are large landscapes. The average size of battlefields in the Valley was 5,000 acres. Most of the battlefields are in a good state of preservation.

Because Congress mandated that sites be studied within a regional context, the study looks at connections between sites. The valley was a major transportation corridor and source of food stuffs. In terms of significance, the battlefield sites are clearly nationally significant. Taken collectively, they may qualify by campaign level as nationally significant; however, no single battlefield, except Cedar Creek which is already a National Historic Landmark and perhaps Opequon (Third Winchester), is nationally significant.

The study looked at short- and long-term threats. Development is the biggest threat, particularly in the northern valley nearer the Washington, DC, area. Ten of the fifteen battlefields have Interstate-81 running through them. The battlefields are experiencing specific and imminent threats because battles were fought along the infrastructure of the mid-19th century (waterways,

turnpikes, railroads) which are also the path of major transportation corridors today and into the 21st century.

Four alternatives are presented in the study: 1) No action; 2) Coordination at the regional level with some level of funding and effort with all individuals interested in interpretation and preservation at the local level; federal participation would be in leadership, funding, and stimulation; 3) Affiliated Area status, which would mean ownership and management by others, with a relationship to the National Park Service for funding and interpretation; 4) Creation of national park unit. The comment period was an opportunity for other alternatives to be identified.

Some local governments are interested in the economic benefits of battlefield preservation, specifically tourism. The study includes a study of heritage tourism. Civil War sites have the potential to draw large numbers of visitors.

Chief Historian Edwin C. Bearss and Mr. Jeffry Wert were two nationally recognized Civil War historians who participated in the study as required by the legislation. Mr. Bearss stated, at the National Park System Advisory Board meeting, that the Valley maintains a greater integrity of communication lines and transportation than any other major campaigns in the Civil War. He stated again that the Valley is nationally significant as a entire entity, not as individual components (Cedar Creek being the exception). Mr. Bearss believes that the study is important for its site identification and documentation and its maps. The site identification maps in the study surpass all battlefield maps on park areas and non-park areas that he has ever seen. He stated that a practical plan to preserve, protect and interpret the Valley as a whole must be developed. The sites must be thought about in relationship to each other. It is an awesome responsibility, he stressed, because in 2020 the hand of growth will erase these sites and they will become but a memory.

The staff briefed interested members of Congress and provided them with copies of the drafts. It has also mailed copies to individuals, particularly those within the Shenandoah Valley: county administrators, boards of supervisors, mayors, planning commissions, many organizations, and major Civil War historians within the Valley.

DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

The Southwest coordinator for the American Battlefield Protection Program announced that preservation plans for three sites in the Southwest Region are completed. The

three sites are Prairie Grove Battlefield in Arkansas, Port Hudson in Louisiana, and Honey Springs in Oklahoma. The State Historic Preservation Offices as well as state parks systems in the three states worked extensively on these plans.

ON-SITE ACTIVITIES

Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF) announced the purchase of 40 acres of land on the historic Grove Farm. As a part of the Grove Farm, this land has been witness to many significant events related to the Maryland Campaign of 1862. A campground, a hospital site, a review field for President Lincoln's visit to the Union army, and the path of Confederate General Lee's retreat all can be traced to the Grove Farm. With the proper easements applied to this land, SHAF intends to ensure that it will remain as farmland. The purchase was made possible by a coordinated effort from a number of organizations. SHAF was able to obtain a grant from the Maryland Environmental Trust. Marking their first effort in land purchase, the American Battlefield Protection Foundation also contributed funds. The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites also played a role in this purchase, awarding SHAF a matching grant. SHAF now has the task of amassing the balance of \$100,000 through fund-raising efforts.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table petitioned the Manassas City Council to have Cannon Branch Fort listed as a historic site. The fort is an 1863-65 Union installation protecting the key bridge on the historic Alexandria and Orange Railroad. The fort and most approaches to it are owned by the city of Manassas. The petition carried 376 signatures, most with comments expressing the need to preserve and protect Cannon Branch Fort for future generations.

CIVIL WAR SITES ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Commission met at the Sumner School in Washington, D.C. on November 21, 1991. The Commission reviewed the list of battle sites which will be surveyed in the study. Frances H. Kennedy, director of the Conservation Fund's Civil War Battlefield Campaign addressed the Commission, speaking on the importance of documentation of historic properties and alternatives for their preservation. Denis Galvin, Associate Director for Planning, National Park Service, provided the Commissioners with information on the National Park

Service's activities on partnership parks and affiliated area programs. The Commissions's next meeting is scheduled for February 1-3, 1992, in Nashville, Tennessee. For further information on the Commission study, contact Ms. Jan Townsend, project manager, at Interagency Resources Division (address below) or at 202-343-9547.

OTHER PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

The Conservation Fund has purchased land adjacent to Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park in Arkansas, approximately twelve miles southwest of Fayetteville. The Conservation Fund is a national nonprofit land conservation organization. The property is on the ridge above the battlefield where Union and Confederate forces clashed 130 years ago. Frances H. Kennedy, the director of The Conservation Fund's Civil War Battlefield Campaign, praised the sellers, "Both families agreed that the land should be added to the park. Their decision is a clear statement of their personal commitment and of the community's concern for the protection of this important historic site." Dr. John Bain, one of the sellers, noted, "My wife and I feel honored that our property will become part of Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park." When public funds are available, the Conservation Fund plans to transfer the property to the state. "This purchase is an important step in the preservation of the Prairie Grove Battlefield and for the battlefield preservation movement in Arkansas," said Cathy Buford, State Historic Preservation Officer. "This is the kind of public-private effort that is needed to make the American Battlefield Protection Program succeed in Arkansas.

The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) has purchased nearly 195 acres of Fisher's Hill Battlefield in Shenandoah County, Virginia. The property includes the critical portion of the Confederate defense line at the battle as well as a portion of the ground used by Union troops to make their attack. More than 1,200 individuals, groups, and corporations contributed to this effort to preserve a portion of the battlefield.

NOTE: This update is distributed bi-monthly to interested parties. If you have information which might be included in the Update or names of people to add to the mailing list, please call Maureen Danaher Foster at (202) 343-9521 or fax the information to (202) 343-1836 [Attn: Maureen Foster]. The address is: American Battlefield Protection Program, Interagency Resources Division, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

There was no *Battlefield Update* in November-December 1991 due to the end of the year crunch. Maureen Foster has again assumed responsibility for the Update.