

Civil War News Roundup - 04/04/2008
Courtesy of the Civil War Preservation Trust
(www.civilwar.org)

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Park Day at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park

04/04/2008

Northwest Arkansas Times (AR)

<http://www.nwanews.com/nwat/news/63817/>

Saturday is Park Day at the Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. The event begins with a 9 a.m. meeting at Hindman Hall Visitor Center.

The day is a chance for volunteers to clean up the battlefield for the 100 th anniversary of the park. Volunteers will team with the Civil War Preservation Trust to help clean and restore America's battlefields, cemeteries and shrines with a grant from The History Channel. Park Day is a nationwide effort and also benefits from the help of Keep Arkansas Beautiful.

Volunteers are needed to clean and beautify the battlefield and park grounds: General cleaning, trash pickup, raking leaves, painting signs, repairing and replacing split rail fence, cleaning park roads and trails, gardening, and maintenance and cleaning the historic houses on the grounds. Local Master Gardeners will prepare the park's heritage vegetable and herb gardens.

Some tools will be provided, but volunteers are asked to bring gloves and tools if possible. Coffee, water and some snacks will be provided. Volunteers will receive a Park Day T-shirt and have the opportunity to hear a local historian discuss the significance of the site.

For more information, call the Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park at (479) 846-2990.

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Perryville rejects subdivision zoning near battlefield
By Greg Kocher

04/03/2008

Lexington Herald-Leader (KY)

<http://www.kentucky.com/779/story/365954.html>

PERRYVILLE — By a 4-1 vote Thursday night, the Perryville City Council rejected a proposed subdivision that would have been near Kentucky's largest Civil War battlefield. "I'm relieved," said Sherry Robinson, a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, who had spoken against the proposal. "Right now, we're ecstatic."

Marion "Pete" Coyle Jr., the landowner who had wanted to develop a portion of his farm on U.S. 150 just west of downtown Perryville, had little comment after the vote.

"I'm upset right now," Coyle said as he left City Hall.

Had the council approved the rezoning, Coyle could have put 53 single-family houses, an assisted living center and two commercial highway businesses on 34 acres.

But the proposal came under fire from Civil War re-enactors and preservationists who feared the rezoning would only open more farmland around the battlefield to development. At last count, city hall had received 169 telephone calls, many from re-enactors around the country who opposed the development. Re-enactors say Perryville remains relatively unspoiled and appears much as it would have to its original combatants.

"We have to continue to protect this land, because if we don't there's a strong possibility it may rear its head again," said Union re-enactor Chad Greene of Perryville.

The proposed rezoning prompted the Civil War Preservation Trust, a non-profit group in Washington D.C., to put Perryville on its Top 10 list of endangered battlefields last month.

Some 7,500 were killed or wounded in the October 1862 Battle of Perryville. It was a tactical Confederate victory, but Kentucky remained in Union hands for the rest of the war. Perryville council member Sheila Cox recalled those soldiers while reading a written statement about her support for Coyle's proposal.

"I would hope to think that the soldiers that lost their lives for rights and freedom did not intend for us not to grow and make progress," Cox said.

She added: “The battlefield and the city of Perryville both need to understand that each other have got to give and take in order to survive. The Coyle proposal has taken great pains in seeing that the plans include the best interests of both parties.”

But council member Georgeanne Edwards said Coyle had failed to demonstrate a need for the rezoning. And she said there was no evidence of any major economic, social or physical changes to the area that might warrant a zone change.

“Also, the development is not compatible with the efforts to preserve the Perryville battlefield, and the historically significant land surrounding the battlefield,” Edwards said.

On the vote to reject the rezoning, council members Edwards, Bill Chance, Julie Clay and Dawn Hastings voted yes, and Cox voted no. Council member Phillip Crowe was absent. Mayor Anne Sleet was not permitted to vote because she is not a member of the legislative body.

Troops did not fight on the Coyle property. However, Old Mackville Road, used by both Confederate and Union soldiers as they went to and from the battlefield, crosses through the property.

Last fall Coyle had preliminary talks with the state Parks Department, which wanted to purchase an easement for the old road and turn it into a walking trail.

But those talks stalled when Gov. Steve Beshear shifted \$29 million in bond money to the Kentucky Horse Park for preparations for the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games.

Council member Clay said she was encouraged that Coyle wanted to preserve the Old Mackville Road corridor.

“I think that’s something we should look into,” Clay said. “We do receive a lot of visitors to the battlefield. And I think walking the land that the soldiers walked would be an interesting and agreeable thing to promote.”

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Wilderness Battlefield Friends seek volunteers to help with Park Day

04/03/2008

Orange County Review (VA)

http://www.orangenews.com/ocn/news/local/article/wilderness_battlefield_friends_seek_volunteers_to_help_with_park_day/7885/

The Wilderness Battlefield will be one of 110 Civil War battlefields, parks and historical sites that are participating in the Civil War Preservation Trust's (CWPT) Park Day 2008 on Saturday, April 5.

On Park Day, thousands of volunteers throughout the United States work together to clean up and repair facilities, exhibits and grounds that represent historical significance.

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB) is coordinating the activities on the Wilderness Battlefield, which is the largest of the four battlefields that make up the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. The volunteers who participate in the Wilderness cleanup that day will receive a free t-shirt, donated by the History Channel and CWPT. This is the 11th year that Park Day has been sponsored by those two organizations.

Craig Rains, chairman of FoWB's Park Day 2008, said volunteers were needed to pitch in that day.

"This will be a great time for hands-on participation by people who care about preserving the Civil War history of this part of Orange and Spotsylvania counties," Rains said.

"Even something as simple as picking up trash along the highway is paying tribute to the thousands of men who fought in this horrible battle that helped shape our country."

Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts who take part will receive a patch from CWPT, while supplies last. FoWB will provide free water and snacks to all volunteers.

Wilderness Battlefield projects will include pickup on roads throughout the battlefield, painting of the National Park Service exhibit shelter on Saunder's Field, repairing and repainting a foot bridge at Saunder's Field and painting metal signs denoting entrenchments along Hill-Ewell Drive. Other projects will include cleanup of the Longstreet wounding site on Orange Plank Road and the parking area of the Vermont monument at the intersection of Brock Road and Orange Plank Road. Other projects may be developed.

Volunteers should bring work gloves. The National Park Service is providing trash bags for those who will pick up litter and furnishing paint and paint brushes for those doing painting projects.

Rains said volunteers from as far away as North Carolina and Ohio volunteered to participate on the Wilderness battlefield last year. In addition, 18 Cub Scouts and parents from Spotsylvania County joined to clean up the Saunder's Field portion of the battlefield.

Rains said local volunteers for the April 5 event should meet at 9 a.m. at the Wilderness Battlefield Exhibit Shelter, located on Route 20, about two miles west of the intersection with Route 3 at Wilderness. Extra parking will be available along Hill-Ewell Road at Saunder's Field. In case of inclement weather, the event will be rescheduled for April 19.

To begin the day, a local historian will give the volunteers a brief overview of the importance of the Battle of the Wilderness, which was fought in May, 1864 and was the first time Generals Grant and Lee faced each other on the battlefield.

For more information on the National Park Day 2008 project, go to the Civil War Preservation Trust and <http://www.civilwar.org/parkday>.

CWPT is the largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization in the United States. Its goal is to preserve the nation's endangered Civil War sites and to promote the appreciation of these hallowed grounds through education and heritage tourism.

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield is a nonprofit volunteer organization with members in 29 states and three countries. Its mission is to preserve, promote and protect the historic Wilderness battlefield, along with the history of its battles and the soldiers and area citizens whose lives were affected by the events of that time. Visit <http://www.fowb.org> for more information about FoWB and its events.

For more information about Park Day 2008 at Wilderness Battlefield, contact Craig Rains at 540-972-2844 or by e-mail at craigrains@hotmail.com.

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Foes See Picacho Rail-Yard Pick Up Steam By Daniel Scarpinato

4/3/2008

Arizona Daily Star (AZ)

<http://www.azstarnet.com/metro/232653>

More than a year after Union Pacific announced plans to build a rail yard near the foot of Picacho Peak, the project continues to face resistance.

But foes have found that with railroads regulated by the federal government, there's little that can be done in Arizona to alter or halt the project.

The site stretches six miles along Interstate 10, just east of the peak. Concerns about the site are multiple — and passions on either side are high.

The entire area the railroad is seeking to acquire, 1,500 acres, is three times the size of a rail yard in Tucson.

How big is that? If you lay the plot of land over Tucson it would stretch from the UA's Arizona Stadium to near Pantano Road. And the rail yard itself would not only exceed the size of Tucson International Airport — it would even be larger than Phoenix's Sky Harbor International Airport.

The rail yard's initial size is expected to be about 550 acres.

Such a facility is needed, Union Pacific says, because the number of trains that cross through the area daily is expected to nearly double during the next 10 years. Between 1999 and 2006, Union Pacific's Arizona business increased by 46 percent, the company reports.

Nevertheless, concerns remain about the environmental impacts, particularly the proposed yard's proximity to a Central Arizona Project canal that delivers water to Southern Arizona. Farm and business owners worry it could harm them, since Union Pacific is seeking to purchase state land leased by Herb Kai, a cotton and pecan farmer. And preservationists say the spot — the site of an important Civil War battle — is filled with nostalgia.

"It's not the kind of thing you want next to a signature state park," said Sandy Bahr, lobbyist for the Sierra Club.

But those in favor of the development say the project could inject jobs into the economy of Pinal County, the fastest-growing county in the country. They also say noise and population would be minimized, in part by buffer space around the facility.

Still, since the issue poked its head up more than a year ago, it's been engulfed in politics.

State Rep. Jonathan Paton, R-Tucson, introduced a bill last year that attracted bipartisan support but also got wrapped up in a debate over federal pre-emption. Ultimately, it earned a veto from Gov. Janet Napolitano.

This year, as Union Pacific continues to seek the land at auction through the Land Department, rail-yard foes started over. But the legislation takes less drastic measures that some say could make the development all but certain.

Law narrowed

While lawmakers initially sought to give the Arizona Corporation Commission the power over deciding whether a railroad can use state land and whether the railroad can exercise its condemnation power, the new version is much more limited in scope.

Now it directs the Arizona Department of Transportation to conduct environmental impact studies and call a public hearing on major rail projects. And to pacify advocates of a long-desired Tucson-Phoenix commuter rail, the bill would exempt those kinds of state projects.

But the potential effects of the railroad remain vague.

"Obviously, there's going to be an impact," says Janick Artiola, a research scientist and associate professor in the UA's Department of Soil, Water and Environmental Science. But Artiola said it's hard to predict.

"When you exhaust chemicals into the air, you don't know where it's going to end up — it could be minimal, or it could end up a mile away," he said. And on the concern about the proximity of the potential yard to the CAP canal about a half-mile away, he said, "The closer you bring in traffic to an open source of water, the more likely there will be an impact."

Luis Heredia, public affairs director for Union Pacific, says those issues will be vetted since the railroad must already meet state and federal environmental standards.

"We feel the process is redundant," he said of the legislation.

State Rep. Steve Farley, D-Tucson, says expanding the railroad could be good for the environment since it might reduce the need for commercial trucks on I-10. "We shouldn't be making it harder; we should be making it easier for the railroad," he said.

The Land Department has yet to determine whether to put the land up for auction, as Union Pacific has requested, said Jamie Hogue, deputy commissioner.

The department is not required to do environmental impact studies. It would only be after Union Pacific obtains the property that the railroad would need to face the state and federal regulations.

Union Pacific remains opposed to the legislation, and during a hearing before the Senate Transportation Committee Tuesday at the state Capitol, a railroad attorney predicted a legal challenge if the legislation is passed. The bill, which has already passed the House, cleared that committee and needs to go to the full Senate.

Rooftops or train tracks?

Legislators and community activists say the railroad failed in the beginning to listen to communities when in 2006 it sought to develop projects in Red Rock and Yuma.

In an effort to better deal with anxiety, Union Pacific recruited Heredia, a former staffer for U.S. Rep. Raúl Grijalva, D-Ariz. Heredia, who grew up in Yuma, says despite the complaints, "local communities are in the front seat of the process."

"That whole stretch will either transform into rooftops, or it can transform into some economic opportunity for Pinal County," he said.

A proponent of the rail yard, state Rep. Tom Prezelski, D-Tucson, says he's not fond of the "urbanization going on in the area, and I'm not sure if it's sustainable, but I think this project is good for the state," he said.

Prezelski was an opponent of Paton's legislation last year, but this year he helped lead discussions with Union Pacific to bring the bill to its current form. But Prezelski says he still thinks it conflicts with federal law.

Historic ground

Since the 1970s, Tucsonan Richard Collins has been one of about 300 Arizonans who reenact a Civil War battle near the base of the peak. Collins says the actual 1862 battle, which resulted in the withdrawal of Confederate forces from Arizona, was likely in the area where the rail yard would be.

"I think it would destroy a lot of historic ground," Collins said. "Important historical areas of Arizona are disappearing very quickly, and this seems a shortsighted solution to the railroad problem."

Paton, the sponsor of this year's legislation, says the railroad is still being treated the way it was in the 1800s.

"It's a different day in Arizona," he said. "We're not in the Old West anymore. We're in the New West that has whole different demographic pressures."

Workers undecided

The Union Pacific workers union — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen — is unsure how the project would affect them, said Vince Verna, legislative liaison for the Tucson chapter.

"There's potential reasons we could have some heartburn over it," said Verna. Chief among their concerns is the potential commute for Tucson engineers.

"I don't see very many people picking up stakes and moving to Red Rock," Verna said. Since shifts can last up to 16 hours, Verna said driving 60 miles home from work could be dangerous, and the union is waiting for more information — like whether Union Pacific will provide transportation.

Heredia said no determinations on transportation for employees will be made until the project is further along, and he stressed that the site will provide new jobs for residents in Pinal County.

Meanwhile, the impact of the latest legislative attempt to deal with the railroad remains to be seen.

While Union Pacific argues it could harm its business in the state, others say the legislation does little more than let people air their concerns.

And on that point, Heredia says, Pinal County has already had its own hearings.

But for the sponsor of the bill, that's not enough. "Giving the citizens the power to speak their mind is a powerful thing," Paton said.

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America's Civil War Battlefields Under Siege

3/30/2008

CNN Sunday Morning (National)

<http://www.cnn.com/>

America's civil war battlefields. They are under siege.

TRACE ADKINS, COUNTRY MUSIC SINGER: It's just consuming everything in its path and if permitted to continue unchecked it will just erase all the truly hallowed historic places that we have in this country.

NGUYEN: So, can the past be saved? While still making room for the future?

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

NGUYEN: Take a look, live pictures right now, we are going to be showing you momentarily the Olympic torch. These pictures of the flames leave Greece, and is headed to Beijing where it will be handed over to the organizers of this year's Olympics.

Well, some major civil war battlefields here in America such as, you know, Gettysburg. They have been preserved but many lesser known sites are under steady attack from developers.

HOLMES: And right now, a skirmish between the past and the future is taking place at several historic battlefields. Here now is CNN's Kate Bolduan.

KATE BOLDUAN, CNN, CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): They're footprints of our nation's past, land hundreds of thousands died to protect. Battles reenacted time and again to keep the stories alive. Now, almost 150 years old, preservationists say the country's civil war battlefields are under siege once again.

TRACE ADKINS, COUNTRY MUSIC SINGER: The main threat to battlefields these days is urban sprawl. BOLDUAN: One of the people leading the effort is Trace Adkins. Better known as the country music star and a contestant on NBC's celebrity apprentice. Adkins says he's also the great great grandson of a confederate soldier and he wants to make sure his as well as the nation's heritage isn't bulldozed by urban development.

ADKINS: It's just consuming everything in its path. And if permitted to continue unchecked it will just erase all that the truly hallowed historic places that we have in this country.

BOLDUAN: The Civil War preservation trust, a non-profit organization says it spent \$120 million saving 25,000 acres of battleground across the country. Recently, the group added 10 more sites stretching from Arkansas to Pennsylvania to its endangered list.

BOLDUAN: This, the Monocacy battlefield in Maryland is one of the endangered. It's known as the battle that defended Washington from the south. But preservationists say it is now this land that needs to be defended from a proposed waste energy plant right next door.

JIM LIGHTHIZER, CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION TRUST: If we don't do something fast, if we don't do something now, that endangered land will in fact become lost.

BOLDUAN: But Frederick county officials say there is much more to be gained than lost from the proposed development. In a statement, the director of utility says the county has a well- documented history of working closely with the National Park Service. "I expect that similar cooperative efforts will occur between the county and the National Park Service to ensure that our structure doesn't have an unreasonable impact on the parks' operations.

But Trace Adkins and other preservationists say they'll continue their fight to honor the nations' fading history.

ADKINS: It's an old cliché, I know, but it's true, you know. How can you know where you're going if you don't know where you've been?

BOLDUAN: Kate Bolduan, CNN, Monocacy, Maryland.

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Civil War Battle of Hartville Visitor's Site Taking Shape

3/28/2008

Mansfield Mirror (MO)

http://www.mansfieldmirror.com/publish/article_3187.shtml

The Battle of Hartville Visitor's Site project moved closer to completion on Friday March 21 when the frame and roof were installed by local contractor Calvin Morrow. The construction had been delayed due to this year's inclement weather. The site is adjacent to the Steele Cemetery on State Highway 5 in Hartville. The mass grave of Confederate soldiers who died in the Battle of Hartville is located in that cemetery.

The Wright County IDA owns the Visitor's Site and sponsored the project which was proposed more than a year ago. The structure will be open to visitors who will be able to view displays that will depict and interpret the Battle of Hartville which took place in January of 1863, during the Civil War.

Ted Quirk, Executive Director of the Wright County IDA, explained that the site will serve two purposes: economic development and memorializing the battle in which soldiers from both sides of the conflict sacrificed their lives. He stated: "Historic sites are among the most popular tourist destinations in the United States and tourism is one of the most important industries in the world. The tourism industry accounts for more jobs and more dollars than most industries — at either the state or national level. The Battle of Hartville was a significant event that took place right here. It is of great interest to people all over — and, now, they will be able to learn about the battle and see the ground on which so many men died."

Mr. Quirk said that " the IDA's focus in establishing the Battle of Hartville Visitor's Site is centered on fueling the tourism industry in Wright County. That industry is already very healthy because of attractions like the Wilder Home and Museum, Bakersville, Rosewood Farm, the M.S.U. Fruit Station, and Mansfield Woods.

Those sites have been exceptionally successful and other tourism businesses are starting to emerge as well. Recognizing the importance of the Battle of Hartville is a major step in driving tourism in this area and it will be even more important when the 150th anniversary of the Civil War is commemorated in a few years (2011-2015).

Millions of dollars will be invested across the country over the next few years as local, state, and national entities prepare for the sesquicentennial commemoration."

"In addition to the economic aspect of the Battle of Hartville Visitor's Site project, we are glad to be able to establish something that will honor the memory of the men who died on

this truly hallowed ground," Mr. Quirk stated. "Historians have recognized the importance of the Battle of Hartville for many years.

Once the Visitor's Site is completed, tourists and local citizens will be able to understand the significance of the Battle more easily and with greater appreciation for the valor and loss that occurred in Hartville almost 150 years ago."

State, Federal Officials Forming the Future of Fort Monroe
By Kate Wiltrout

3/26/2008

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (VA)

<http://hamptonroads.com/2008/03/state-federal-officials-forming-future-fort-monroe>

FORT MONROE

Transferring ownership of an Army fort is a complex task, especially when the place boasts as much history – and as much valuable real estate – as Fort Monroe.

Almost three years after the federal government announced that the Army would exit Fort Monroe, state and federal officials are beginning to hammer out specifics.

They aim to sign an agreement by August that would specify how the 570-acre peninsula will be managed after 2011.

A draft of the agreement released this week is 45 pages long. Kathleen Kilpatrick, the state historic preservation officer, warned that it's only going to get longer.

Kilpatrick is one of the state officials most closely involved in the transfer. The bulk of the property would revert to state control when the Army moves its personnel to Fort Eustis and Fort Knox, Ky.

The agreement will be revised to reflect public input and comments from more than 30 “consulting parties” involved in the process, Kilpatrick said. But she emphasized that the principles at its core are sound and won't change.

“It's a very strong agreement,” Kilpatrick said. “It's very preservation-friendly, while recognizing that preservation depends on creating economic sustainability to support your culture.”

The three guiding principles are to respect the fort's historic assets, provide public access and cover the cost of running what's essentially a small town.

The agreement divides the fort into five zones, each with its own rules for demolishing buildings and constructing new ones. The strictest rules would apply to everything within the moat-encircled stone fort built in the 1830s. Development at the grassy, eastern end of the base would be permitted, if it maintained the same scale, density and characteristics as its surroundings.

Beyond that, the agreement states that the Army would facilitate negotiations for a long-term loan of the collections at the Casemate Museum. The museum, built inside the cavernous stone halls of the fort, preserves the cell where Confederate President Jefferson Davis spent months in captivity after his capture at the end of the Civil War.

Another facet of the fort's history is its role in the crumbling of slavery. The Union general in charge during the Civil War decreed that escaped slaves be considered contraband of war, and granted them freedom inside the fort.

As part of the agreement, the Army would do more archaeological testing in search of the Freedmen's Cemetery rumored to have existed on base.

H.O. Malone, a retired Army historian who heads Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park, doesn't disagree that finding revenue to support it is crucial to the fort's future.

But he doesn't like how fast the agreement is coming together. He thinks the Army and state officials should focus instead on exactly who gets jurisdiction after the Army leaves.

"They're putting the cart before the horse," he said.

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Park Proposed for Civil War's 'Valley Forge'
By Clint Schemmer

3/26/2008

Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star (VA)

<http://fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2008/032008/03262008/366225>

Central Stafford County needs a public park, historians and preservationists say, but not of the usual kind.

This one, set atop ridges overlooking Accokeek Creek, would feature the most significant remaining set of unprotected Civil War forts and camps in the northern part of Virginia.

That's what they recommended yesterday to area officials meeting at the University of Mary Washington's graduate-studies center in Hartwood.

County Administrator Anthony Romanello convened the ad-hoc group, which included Stafford supervisors, archaeologists, historians, planners, private citizens, and officials from the public utility that runs the regional landfill where the historic sites are located.

To protect the sites as the landfill grows, the R-Board--or Rappahannock Regional Solid Waste Management Board--intends to preserve 14 to 20 acres of the 760-acre facility.

"The important thing is to convey this land unimpaired for our children--that's the first priority," said John Hennessy, chief historian of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. "The R-Board has done a great thing by setting this property aside."

In January, R-Board members voted unanimously to reshape an 80-acre landfill expansion, giving up 3 to 5 acres, to preserve one of the forts, R-Board Superintendent Andrew J. Mikel said. The other forts and winter camps sit on land nearer the creek, where environmental rules preclude landfill development.

Many participants in yesterday's meeting favored creating a park on the property so the public can see and appreciate the Civil War and 18th-century sites, which include four Union Army forts and two camps where soldiers spent the winter of 1862-63. Supervisor Paul Milde, who's Aquia District includes the tract, strongly supports the park concept.

QUICK ACTION URGED

The idea was first proposed two years ago by Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites, a private group that has worked with builders and county officials to protect and memorialize other Union sites in eastern Stafford.

FSCWS made supervisors and planning commissioners aware of the Civil War sites in 2006, presenting a 100-page report on them and urging that they be preserved as a park with a one-lane, one-way road to provide access for visitors. Officials were asked to keep the information confidential to help save the sites, which are little known to the general public but have been dug by relic hunters since the 1950s.

Having waited two years for officials to act, FSCWS is now "impatient" to see the sites made into a park, said Glenn Trimmer, the group's director.

Trimmer said the tract is the best surviving piece of the "Valley Forge of the Civil War," the winter camps where the Union Army recovered from its defeats at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville and in the humiliating "Mud March," and gained the strength to fight again.

"You've got to remember," he said, "soldiers left these camps and went straight to Gettysburg. If they hadn't kept this army intact, and gotten it well trained and well drilled here, Gettysburg would have been a defeat."

Author and University of Richmond instructor John W. Mountcastle and Stafford historian Al Conner urged Stafford, Fredericksburg and the R-Board officials to work quickly so the public can enjoy the sites during the Civil War's 150th anniversary, which begins in 2011.

Mountcastle said the park could be a boon to regional tourism, much like two Civil War redoubts that Williamsburg saved and opened as a park last year during Jamestown's 400th anniversary.

DIGGING UP THE DETAILS

Kerry K. Schamel-Gonzalez, research supervisor with Dovetail Cultural Resource Group, described two archaeological studies the Fredericksburg firm has done of the tract for the R-Board.

Dovetail surveyed 12 sites, including four Civil War forts, two winter camps, a "corduroy" road built by Union troops, an 18th-century road trace and bridge site, two sandstone quarries, and 18th- and 19th-century home sites.

The forts were built to defend against a feared attack by Confederate cavalry, Schamel-Gonzalez said. A network of such earthworks protected the Union encampments in Stafford, home to at least 120,000 troops, and the army's bustling supply depot at Aquia Landing on the Potomac River.

Hennessy and others urged that the sites be put on the National Register of Historic Places, to attest to their importance and help preserve them.

Romanello, county Historical Commission Chairwoman Anita Dodd and others said it's imperative to do more archaeology on the whole tract to make sure officials know what historic sites--including Indian and Colonial ones--might be there.

At Romanello's suggestion, the principals agreed to form a small study group to hammer out the details of archaeology, preservation and park development.

In the meantime, Mikel warned that the historic area, which is posted, is being patrolled by the county Sheriff's Office. Trespassers will be arrested, he said.

The proposed park tract in central Stafford features 12 archaeological sites, including:

FORT 1: This two-faced, 248-foot-long Union Army battery has two gun platforms that may have held 3-inch ordnance rifles or 12-pound Napoleons. At its center is a square, 9-foot-deep supply pit or blockhouse. The fort area includes a zigzag trench and rifle pits.

FORT 2: This three-faced, 210-foot-long battery would have had four or five cannon.

FORT 3: This three-faced battery, which may have held six guns, included a heavily built blockhouse with below-ground storage for powder and shell.

FORT 4: Originally about 200 feet long, this earthwork has been damaged by logging.

WINTER CAMPS: A picket post and two dug-in winter camps, which had log shelters with fireplaces for the soldiers, neighbor the forts. One camp has what is believed to be an officers' quarters made of sandstone.

CORDUROY ROAD: Part of the area's wartime road network included a corduroy road built of logs so the Army of the Potomac could move wagons and heavy guns through boggy areas. Part of one such road, built of pine logs, is perfectly preserved in one swampy site.

BRIDGE ABUTMENTS: Sandstone abutments survive from a bridge that crossed a creek for a well-preserved 18th-century road that was a major route for the Union Army's 11th Corps.

QUARRIES: Two late 18th-century sandstone quarries, one of which appears to have later become a mill, speak to Stafford's role as a provider of building stone. Cut stone was put on skids and pulled by oxen or horse, or loaded onto shallow scows and taken downstream on Accokeek Creek. (The quarry at Government Island, on Aquia Creek, provided sandstone for the White House and the U.S. Capitol.)

--From reports by Dovetail Cultural Resource Group and the Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites

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Marine Archaeologist to Discuss Effort to Find Civil War Gunship
Sunk in 1864, the Water Witch flew both Northern and Confederate flags.

By Chuck Mobley

3/25/2008

Savannah Morning News (GA)

<http://savannahnow.com/node/468167>

Marine archaeologist Gordon Watts will be in Savannah on Thursday to speak about the search for the Water Witch, a Civil War gunship that served both the Union and Confederate navies.

Watts, a veteran diver and the founder of Tidewater Atlantic Research, found the wreckage of the gunboat last fall. The 2007 effort to find the Water Witch, which was built in 1851 by the U.S. Navy, was funded by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

The DOT was surveying the route for the next phase of the Truman Parkway, which will bridge the Vernon River, when archaeologists requested an extension to look for the wreckage.

"We had a fair idea of where it was," said deputy state archaeologist Christopher P. McCabe.

The Water Witch sank into the waters of the Vernon River in late 1864, ending a "story that even Hollywood couldn't have written," McCabe said.

The ship was part of the Union naval force that was blockading Savannah and was captured by Confederate forces after a daring night-time attack on May 3, 1864. About 130 southern sailors, including African-American pilot Moses Dallas, rowed out to the Water Witch with muffled oars and gained control after a short, but bloody, struggle.

The Confederates thus had possession of the Water Witch but were never able to sail it into Savannah. Several months later, as Union forces approached, Confederate sailors burned and then sank it.

A state historical marker commemorating its capture was erected in Vernonburg in 1957.

Study of Morris Is., Folly's Tip Finished
By Robert Behre

3/25/2008

Post and Courier (SC)

http://www.charleston.net/news/2008/mar/13/study_morris_is_follys_tip_finished33698/

An in-depth study into the history and wildlife of oceanfront parcels on Morris Island and the northern tip of Folly Beach is finished, and now it's the public's turn to say how this information should guide what is built there.

The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission paid for the study as it weighs what sort of development and public access should be allowed on the northern tip of Morris Island, also known as Cummings Point, and the northern end of Folly Beach, an abandoned Coast Guard site.

The county already owns the Coast Guard site and is working with the Trust for Public Land and developer Bobby Ginn to manage Cummings Point, 62 acres on the island's undeveloped northern end just south of Fort Sumter.

Landscape architect Dale Jaeger and scientist Lee Allen of Allen & Associates presented the studies Wednesday downtown and at Folly Beach.

Both Cummings Point and the northern tip of Folly are visited regularly by the public, but neither has clear signs or paths. Jaeger said some visitors who bring their dogs or off-road vehicles to Cummings Point are causing the most damage.

Allen said he talked with one visitor who told him he didn't know threatened birds stopped there. "I said, 'Yes, your dog is chasing some federally protected plovers right now,' " he said.

The study shows which parts of the island are most sensitive, mostly because of the habitat they offer. They also suggest options for providing access.

On Cummings Point, the two options are: Doing practically nothing except for a kiosk with a list of rules and an interpretive sign near Fort Sumter, or building a dock, a moldering toilet facility (one with no running water) and a boardwalk linking the dock with the beach. The boardwalk would follow the route of an old road bed.

On Folly, the options include combinations of a trail system, signs, a large interpretive center with air conditioning and restrooms, a parking area and an overlook to the Morris Island Lighthouse across the inlet.

Dale said Cummings Point has eroded away and re-formed since Union and Confederate troops clashed there more than 140 years ago. While very few artifacts remain there from that time, the site still has historic value because of its spatial relationship with Forts Sumter and Moultrie.

Once the consultants receive the final public comments, they will rework the plan and unveil a final version June 26. After that, the county will decide what to do next.

The amount of public access to Cummings Point has been a sticking point as the Trust for Public Land, Ginn, the county and other groups have tried to formalize a deal to place it in public hands. The study could help break that jam.

"We'll look at what the public has to say and weigh the pros and cons," Hensley said.

At Battlefield, Family History Also At Stake
By Julie Scharper

3/24/2008

Baltimore Sun (MD)

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nation/bal-te.map24mar24,0,3712506.story>

GETTYSBURG, PA - Two days after the last shots of the bloodiest battle of the Civil War were fired here, a 16-year-old neighborhood boy named John H. Rosensteel walked onto the battlefield to help bury the dead.

There he found the body of a Confederate soldier, a boy about his own age, and picked up a rifle lying near him. The rifle was the first item in what would become the largest private collection of Gettysburg relics, as well as a family legacy.

Since that day in July 1863, Rosensteel's descendants have acquired and preserved tens of thousands of battle artifacts and shared them with the public. One family member built a museum along the Union battle line in 1921 to house them. Another created the building's famous electric map, which has educated generations of visitors about the Gettysburg battle by using colored lights to depict troop movements.

Now the museum - which the family sold to the National Park Service decades ago - is about to be razed. A new \$103 million museum and visitor's center will open nearly a mile away on the edge of the Union battle lines next month. The old site will be restored to the way it looked in 1863 - a quiet spot amid rolling fields.

While the thousands of Rosensteel artifacts will provide the historical core of the exhibits at the new center, the electric map might be headed for the scrap heap - a blow to family members and some loyal Gettysburg visitors.

Kathi Schue, president of the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association, says she first saw the map when she was in fifth grade and later returned there with her own child.

"The electric map is a national treasure," she says. "Do you know how many thousands of school kids have seen that map in the past 40 years? The things that they will be most likely to take away from their experience are the monuments and the map."

John Latschar, superintendent of the Gettysburg National Military Park, agrees that the map is "an icon of its age," but adds that it is "one hundred percent antiquated."

"From an architectural standpoint, it takes up an immense amount of space and we have consistent problems with school kids falling asleep," he said.

The new museum and visitor center, which will include two movie theaters, 12 galleries, a museum shop and "refreshment saloon," will explain the battle through exhibits designed to appeal to youth accustomed to the Internet and video games, Latschar says.

"The electric map concept, which is to orient people to the movement of troops on the battlefield, will be done much better in the new museum," he says.

Emily Rosensteel O'Neil, the great-niece of the boy who collected that first rifle, doesn't object to demolition of the old museum, but she is fighting to preserve the map, which her father, Joseph Rosensteel, completed in 1963, about a year before he died of cancer. Park officials plan to cut the map -- a sloped cement slab about the size of a backyard swimming pool -- into pieces, wrap it in plastic and store it in a barn with no definite plans to display it again.

O'Neil argues that the map remains a valuable educational tool.

"It is just an incredible way to visualize those three days" of the battle, she says. "The actual intent that my father had remains viable and extremely important to so many people."

For years, the Rosensteels made their home in part of the museum building, and as a little girl, O'Neil slept above rooms that held cannon balls as big as grapefruits, tattered uniforms and bibles found in the pockets of dead soldiers. She and her siblings roamed the battlefields, ducking behind monuments for games of hide-and-seek and startling flocks of vultures.

She was in charge of keeping her younger siblings quiet while her father lectured to museum guests. All the children learned his words by heart - particularly the text that accompanied the electric map, which one brother liked to recite at the dinner table.

"As a child, I grew up knowing that the most important thing in our family was the museum," says O'Neil, 66, a retired schoolteacher from Guilford, Conn. "Our family life revolved around it. This is our history."

The family sold the map, the museum and the land on which it sits to the National Park Service for \$2.6 million in 1972. They donated the trove of artifacts -- which by then numbered more than 38,000.

O'Neil says that few improvements have been made to the museum since her family sold it and much has been allowed to deteriorate. Outside the brick building, birds have built a nest in the final letter "r" in "Visitor's Center.

Inside, black spots of chewing gum dot the dingy carpet, foam rubber pokes from ripped bench cushions and dim lighting makes it difficult to view the exhibits.

The map room itself appears frozen in time. After paying \$4 admission, visitors settle into slate gray folding chairs overlooking the concrete relief map. A portrait of O'Neil's father, captioned "Originator of the Map," hangs under the podium where he used to lecture. A spotlight hung above the painting has burned out.

As the overhead lights dim, a sonorous male voice announces "You are located in the center of one of the most famous battlefields in the world." Orange and blue lights flicker on and off, representing the movements of Union and Confederate troops.

For decades after Rosensteel's death, a recording of his voice accompanied the presentation, but it was replaced in the 1980s. Most of the script still follows his wording, though, and O'Neil, sitting beside her husband Tom in the darkened auditorium, recites passages along with the narrator.

Rosensteel made an early version of the map in 1939, when he was 25, but wanted to create a bigger and better one for the battle's centennial. O'Neil recalls seeing her father crouched on his hands and knees, plotting dimensions on the map. He labored over recording the voiceover, she says, because he had already been weakened by the cancer that would claim his life.

Visitors to the historic Gettysburg site, which includes acres of bucolic fields, hundreds of monuments, the visitor center and a circular painting of the battle known as the Cyclorama, have varied opinions on the map.

Nathan Dapper, an American history teacher from Prior Lake, Minn. brought 45 of his students from Twin Lakes Middle School to see the map.

"It does a really good job of giving the kids an overall view of a huge battlefield. When they go out to the battlefield they have a point of reference," he says. "If you have some historical context, it's not a field, it's sacred ground."

Visitors J.D. Rymoff Jr. of Lebanon City, Pa. and Leslie Palmer, of Dover, Ohio, say that the map helped them understand the military strategy behind the battle. "It puts it in perspective," Rymoff says.

But other visitors to the battlefield said they skipped the map because it seems outdated.

Bente Dalsgaard of Denmark toured the battlefield with her husband and school age son on a misty afternoon. "Our son had already downloaded a video game of Gettysburg before we left Denmark. So you visualize it in a different way," she said.

Jim Campi, a spokesman for the Civil War Preservation Trust praises plans for the new museum and visitor center, which he calls "one of the most exciting Civil War projects on the books right now," but says that he hopes a new home can be found for the map.

Campi, who recalls seeing the map for the first time when he was a teenager suggests that the map could be displayed at an event commemorating the 150th anniversary of the battle in 2013. "It's antiquated, yes, but it's a great piece of Gettysburg history."

The superintendent says that he would be willing to donate the map to a government agency or nonprofit, but so far, he says, no group with the resources to transport, maintain and display the map has stepped forward.

The map could not simply be handed back to the Rosensteels, he says, because it's now federal property.

O'Neil says she doesn't understand why the map should languish in storage.

"I want the map to remain viable and I will do anything in my power to make that happen," she says. "I feel it's very sad and it's wrong that the map is going to be put in storage. This was my father's creation. This was his masterpiece."