

*Agency Official 106 Effect Report*

*Rehabilitate and Resurface Parking Area on the Chancellorsville and Wilderness Battlefields  
Spotsylvania County, Virginia*

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park  
120 Chatham Lane  
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22405**

## **Description and Purpose of Undertaking**

### **Purpose**

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park was authorized by an act of Congress on February 14, 1927 (44 Stat. 1091). The purpose of the park, as stated in the act, is “to commemorate the Civil War battles of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Court House, Wilderness, and Chancellorsville, including Salem Church ... to survey, locate, and preserve the lines of the opposing armies in said battles, to open, construct, and repair such roads, highways, paths, and other approaches as may be necessary to make the historical points accessible to the public and to students of said battles ... and together also with such additional land as the Secretary of War may deem necessary for monuments, markers, tablets, roads, highways, paths, approaches, and to carry out the general purposes of this Act.” By Executive Order 6166 in 1933 the park was transferred to the Department of the Interior to be administered by the National Park Service.

### **Need**

The Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park proposes to rehabilitate and resurface parking areas and driving tour-stops at Chancellorsville and Wilderness Battlefields.

Today, the National Park Service maintains approximately 30 miles of roads within the boundaries of the park, 27 miles of these roads are classified as public use park roads. These roads were constructed in the 1930s to provide visitors an opportunity to see the battlefields and the 38 miles of earthworks in the park. Parking areas were later installed to facilitate access to prominent sites along these roads and at designated stops along the park's driving tour.

In 2010, over 2 million people visited the park and used the park roads. Increasing visitor-use and traffic strains the efficiency and carrying capacity of many of the park roads. Today, many of the roads are in need of attention and maintenance. Moreover, in the last ten years, the park has seen a steady increase in use of the park by recreational visitors. As a consequence, the designated parking areas frequently experience overflow problems and visitors are forced to park along road shoulders and other non-designated locations. Erosion and parking overflows have created safety hazards and intrude upon the historic setting and ultimately the visitor experience.

The park proposes to use monies supplied by the Federal Highways Administration to rehabilitate and resurface parking areas and driving tour-stops on the Chancellorsville and Wilderness Battlefields.

## Property Description

### A. Major Physical Components

1. Chancellorsville Battlefield – The area of the proposed project lies along State Route 3 within the Chancellorsville Battlefield in Spotsylvania County. Chancellorsville Battlefield is comprised of 2,587.04 acres and is a mixture of open fields and gently rolling wooded plateaus, bisected by numerous streams and swamps. State Route 3, a four-lane divided highway, bisects the Chancellorsville Battlefield from east to west.
2. Wilderness Battlefield – The area of the proposed project lies within the Wilderness Battlefield in Spotsylvania County. Wilderness is comprised of 2,841.10 acres and is a mixture of open fields and gently rolling wooded plateaus, bisected by numerous streams and swamps. State Route 20, a two-lane highway, bisects the northern portion of Wilderness Battlefield. County Road 621, a two-lane road, bisects the southern portion of Wilderness Battlefield. County Road 613, a two-lane road, runs along the eastern edge of Wilderness Battlefield.

### B. Historical Significance

1. Chancellorsville Battlefield – The project area lies within the core area of the May 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville.
2. Wilderness Battlefield – The project area lies within the core area of the May 1864 Battle of the Wilderness.

### C. Archaeological Significance

1. Chancellorsville Battlefield – It is doubtful that archaeological resources will be adversely affected by the rehabilitation of the parking areas, as they are within the footprint of existing parking areas or within areas previously disturbed by roadway construction.
2. Wilderness Battlefield - It is doubtful that archaeological resources will be adversely affected by the rehabilitation of the parking areas, as they are within the footprint of existing parking areas or areas previously disturbed by agricultural use.

### D. Historical Landscapes

1. Chancellorsville Battlefield – It is doubtful that the cultural landscape will be adversely affected by the rehabilitation of the parking areas, as they are within the footprint of existing parking areas or within areas previously used for parking.
2. Wilderness Battlefield - It is doubtful that the cultural landscape will be adversely affected by the rehabilitation of the parking areas, as they are within the footprint of existing parking areas or within areas currently used for vehicular access.

### E. Historic Architecture

1. Chancellorsville Battlefield – Furnace Road is on the park's List of Classified Structures as IDLCS #82122. In the draft of the park's most recent updated National Register documentation, this structure is considered contributing. It is doubtful that the project will have any effect on the structure, as the parking area is proposed for a location until recently was used as an official parking area.

2. Wilderness Battlefield – There are no known historic structures that could potentially be affected by the construction of the deceleration lane.

## **Description of Alternatives**

### **Alternative A – No Action**

This option would 1) hinder the fulfillment of the park's General Management Plan directive to interpret historic resources and 2) foster continued deterioration of the historic scene.

### **Alternative B – Resurface Parking Lots With In-Kind Materials**

This option would involve regarding the existing gravel driveways and depositing a new layer of gravel. While this would maintain the existing parking areas, it would not alleviate long-term erosion and safety problems, nor would it help to protect significant resources.

### **Alternative C – Preferred Alternative**

This option would involve the following:

1. Pave McLaws Drive Parking Area – This will entail the paving of the existing parking area along McLaws Drive at the head of the McLaws Line Walking Trail on the Chancellorsville Battlefield. The parking lot measures 25' x 30' x 20' x 45' with a 30' x 15' entrance off McLaws Drive. The park proposes to pave this area by excavation of 6 to 8 inches in depth with a gravel base and asphalt installed. This area has been disturbed by continued vehicular use and parking, as well as repeated installation of layers of gravel.
2. Relocate Lee-Jackson Bivouac Pull-Off – This will entail moving the parking at the Lee-Jackson Bivouac Tour Stop on the Chancellorsville Battlefield. In 2002, the parking area was moved from the tour stop to a point about 30 feet further west along Furnace Road. In the past decade, visitor use has continued at the former parking area and resulted in uncontrolled erosion. The park proposes to move the parking area back to where it was originally located. This will entail:
  - A. The removal of the existing parking area by milling the pavement and removing the asphalt and gravel base. Top soil will be added, the area graded, seeded and covered in straw to facilitate regeneration of grass.
  - B. Installation of the new parking area will require the addition of top soil to build the road shoulder up a few inches and then gravel and asphalt added to create a pull-off approximately 96' in length and 10' off the road edge.
3. Pave Hays Monument Pull-Off – This will entail the paving of the existing pull-off at the Alexander Hays Monument along County Road 613 on the Wilderness Battlefield. The pull-off is currently covered in gravel and heavily eroded. Adjacent to a busy county road, visitors have difficulty getting gaining enough acceleration to merge into traffic when leaving the stop. Additionally, surviving earthworks are dangerously close to the pull-off, which lack barriers to keep cars from possibly hitting or driving onto the edge of the trenches. The park proposes to pave this area by excavation of 6 to 8 inches in depth

with a gravel base and asphalt installed. The size of the area to be paved is approximately 70' in length by about 10' in wide. This area has been disturbed by continued vehicular use and parking, as well as repeated installation of layers of gravel. The park also proposes to add concrete curbing, to reduce potential vehicular impacts on the adjacent earthworks.

4. Pave James Wadsworth Monument Pull-Off – This will entail the paving of the existing pull-off at the James Wadsworth Monument along County Road 621 on the Wilderness Battlefield. The pull-off is currently gravel and heavily eroded. Adjacent to a busy county road, visitors have difficulty getting enough acceleration to merge into traffic when leaving the stop. The park proposes to pave this area by excavation of 6 to 8 inches in depth with a gravel base and asphalt installed. The size of the area to be paved is approximately 70' in length by about 10' in wide. This area has been disturbed by continued vehicular use and parking, as well as repeated installation of layers of gravel.

5. Expand Widow Tapp Parking Lot – This will entail repaving the existing Widow Tapp Parking Lot on the Wilderness Battlefield. Additionally, the park proposes to extend the parking to the east to more adequately facilitate bus parking. As it stands now, it is nearly impossible for a tour bus to use the parking lot if there is another vehicle there. To facilitate use by tour buses, the park proposes to pave an extension of the existing parking lot that is about 45' in length by about 15' in width. This will allow for a bus to pull in and be able to back out and turn around. The paving will require excavation of 6 to 8 inches in depth with a gravel base and asphalt installed. This area has been disturbed by repeated agricultural use and erosion caused by repeated use by agricultural vehicle access.

## **Park Consultation**

The park has consulted and worked with the Federal Highways Administration and Virginia Department of Transportation in designing this project.

The proposal has been addressed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposal was circulated among the park's Section-106 Team of Advisors for archaeology, historic landscapes, and architecture. They all concurred that the project would have "no adverse effect" on historic properties.

The proposal is going through a 30-day public comment and review period. During that time, the project is being posted on the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment website. The park contacted representatives of interested local organizations such as the University of Mary Washington's Department of Historic Preservation, Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield, Spotsylvania County, and the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust.

The project will undergo a 30-day comment and review period with the Virginia SHPO.

### **Description of Mitigation Measures**

A. The proposed rehabilitation and installation of parking areas and pulloffs have been designed, as much as possible, to take advantage of areas disturbed archaeologically.

B. Staging areas will be off park property.

### **Effect Analysis**

It is the park's opinion that this undertaking will have "no adverse effect" on historic resources.

### **Report Prepared By**

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