

# Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park General Management Plan

## 2009 Scoping Summary Report

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### Introduction

The National Park Service has begun the scoping process for the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement as required pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Scoping is a process that begins early in the development of a general management plan (GMP) for all units of the National Park System, and continues throughout the planning process. Scoping is conducted both internally by National Park Service planning teams and externally with the public including partners, local governments, other interested parties, and the general public. A Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register at the beginning of the scoping process to invite comment and participation. This report describes the public involvement activities that NPS has completed thus far for the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park GMP, and summarizes comments and ideas that have been raised by the public.

### Scoping with the General Public

NPS hosted a series of four open house workshops and four outdoor information stations to solicit public input regarding the issues that should be addressed in the GMP, as well as ideas, opportunities, and concerns for the future of the park. In advance of the meetings, NPS staff issued a press release to several media sources, emailed meeting announcements to the park email list, and distributed the first GMP newsletter.

The first newsletter issued in summer 2009 described the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park's GMP process. The newsletter invited the public to provide ideas and comments for the planning process, and posed a series of questions that asked people their opinions on what is most special to them about the park; what opportunities they see for the future of the park; their suggestions for better protection of important views and historic lands related to the battles; ways for visitors to enjoy and experience the park, while ensuring that historic, cultural, and natural resources are protected; and which organization, institutions, and individuals might be interested in partnering with park staff to preserve and interpret battlefield lands. Prior to the public scoping meetings, the newsletter was sent out to the park mailing list, posted on the park's website, and distributed locally.

During the open house workshops and outdoor information sessions, the public was introduced to the GMP process via information posters, the GMP newsletter, park maps, and through discussion with members of the planning team. The public was invited to fill out comment cards, provide comments directly on park maps, or write comments on large blank sheets of paper. Additionally, the public was invited to provide comments, ideas, and opportunities for the future of the park via email ([FRSP\\_GMP@NPS.gov](mailto:FRSP_GMP@NPS.gov)) and mail.

Open house workshops were held:

- The Riverbend High School – July 29, 2009
- The Central Rappahannock Regional Library – July 30, 2009
- The Lake of the Woods Clubhouse – September 9, 2009
- Chatham Manor – September 8, 2009

Outdoor GMP information sessions were held:

- Fredericksburg Visitor Center – July 9, 2009
- Chancellorsville Visitor Center – July 9, 2009
- Fredericksburg Visitor Center – July 30, 2009
- Chancellorsville Visitor Center – July 30, 2009

#### Scoping with Partners

The GMP team held 3 meetings with park partners and stakeholders to gather information about what these groups value about the park, and their concerns and ideas for the GMP. Group meetings included:

- Recreation and Compatible Uses at the Park - October 22, 2009
- Tourism and Access - October 22, 2009
- Partner Preservation - February 3, 2010

#### Comments Received on the NPS PEPC Web Site

The NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website provides the public with an electronic link for obtaining information about or commenting upon the GMP process. 6 comments were received on PEPC.

#### Summary

This report provides a summary of the public comments organized by topic, which were received so far as part of initial public scoping. Between the ideas generated through the comment cards, emails, letters, map comments, and other sources, the GMP team received hundreds of comments. These comments came in various forms, including comment cards (95), emails (58), letters (36), PEPC comments (6), map comments (135), and other forms (154).

In addition, the GMP team received a letter and petition signed by over 500 people requesting that *“...multi-use trails be re-opened and/or new trails be established in the National Military Battlefield areas of Northern and Central Virginia....”*

## **Question 1 - What is most special to you about Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park?**

### **Resource Management and Protection**

- Historic scene restoration
- Historic scene restoration of Chatham; change orientation of main entrance to the riverside and allow 1920's garden to compliment Civil War era resources

### **Visitor Use and Experience**

- Allows visitors to imagine/feel the history of the Civil War
- Atmosphere of the park
- Enjoy living history programs
- History of the park, and learning opportunities
- Importance of preserving historically significant resources
- Innis House, Ellwood, and Wilderness Battlefield
- Natural beauty of park and history
- Open spaces
- Park allows opportunity to experience history, open space, and recreation (including trails)
- Park offers opportunity to experience history and nature
- Park preserves open space and historic resources
- Preservation of historic sites and structures, including Ellwood, Chatham, Sunken Road
- The park is a special and beautiful place

### **Visitor Use and Experience – Access and Orientation**

- Bus parking at Widow Tapp Field (pull off in bad place at Hill Ewell)
- Opportunity to pave Jackson Trail West
- The park is located close to home
- The park is not fully handicapped accessible

### **Visitor Use and Experience – Recreation**

- Opportunity to ride horses on trails in park
- Park offers recreational opportunities (trails)
- Role of horses in the battles, and opportunity to learn park's history through equestrian uses

### **Visitor Use and Experience – Interpretation and Education**

- Appreciate park staff and volunteers
- Enjoy films and interpretive information, would like to see additional personal stories
- Park has a broad range of history to interpret, including Colonial, Revolutionary War, Federal, Antebellum, Civil War and Reconstruction-era historical sites and stories
- Park offers ability to learn about history and experience nature

### **External Factors and Partnerships**

- Equestrian community could offer the park trail clearing and maintenance, horseback "patrols", and encourages the retention of the park's rural character

## Question 2 - What opportunities do you see for the future of the park?

### Resource Management and Protection

- Change tree lines to better understand battle movements and historic scene
- Continued restoration
- Park preserves open space and historic resources. Park offers opportunity to experience history and nature
- Park to preserve significant lands, in collaboration with community
- Protection of park resources provides educational opportunity
- Richardson House to be better taken care of

### Visitor Use and Experience – Access and Orientation

- Enhanced gateway to Wilderness
- Improve roads/ put back maps at Brock Road and Orange Plank Road
- Improve traffic at Route 20 in the Wilderness. What route would be possible in order to make 20 a four lane road?
- The park is close/accessible to many people

### Visitor Use and Experience – Recreation

- Allow for hiking paths, with restrictions
- Better support of staff riders and individual tours and research
- Connect park sites via a connecting trail and connect to regional network
- Currently there are few opportunities in the park for equestrian riders
- Enjoyed park walking trails
- Equestrian uses in parks provides opportunity to learn the park's history, as well as conservation and preservation
- Promoting horse/multi-purpose trails is one way to increase interest in the park
- Provide additional access through a multi-use trail system
- Provide additional trail system for equestrian uses, with trailer parking
- Provide guided tours on horseback, with interpretive signage
- Visitors enjoy seeing horses in the park due to their role in the park's history

### Visitor Use and Experience – Interpretation and Education

- Additional access and increased understanding
- Additional monuments to commemorate soldiers
- Additional visibility for Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House. Additional tours and events to promote these battlefields.
- Educational programs and tours for adults and children
- Expand outreach programs and activities, including a military staff ride service program and a Civil War summer camp
- Living history programs on NPS lands
- More attention to the Wilderness Battlefield
- New interpretive exhibits and facilities, opportunity to incorporate additional technology in the visitor experience, through new exhibits, podcasts, audio clips
- Park offers visitors an opportunity to learn about the history of the Civil War
- Use volunteers to expand interpretive capacity

- Utilize the Sesquicentennial to inform and educate the public about the history of the park, and the plans for the future

#### Park Boundary

- Expand the Park's interpretable sites into the village of Falmouth and in particular Moncure Conway House. Opportunity to interpret abolitionism, slave life and emancipation, industrial and commercial life, and wartime impacts on civilians.
- Include the Union Church and Cemetery in the park boundary
- Increase the boundaries of the park to include significant battlefield lands
- Prevent the development of big-box commercial development near park boundaries

#### Park Operations & Facilities

- Wilderness Battlefield deserves its own visitor center

#### External Factors and Partnerships

- Create formal partnerships with governmental and private organizations with compatible interests in historical preservation and interpretation
- Establish information exchanges with the network of organizations and individuals researching relevant topics
- Improved visitation, repeat visitors, community use
- Promote lodging and dining opportunities to support the park
- The park as economic driver for the region through collaboration with neighbors. Consider the concept of "civil war central"
- Work with friends groups

### **Question 3 - How can we better protect important views and historic lands related to the battles?**

#### Resource Management and Protection

- Clear fallen trees and other storm damage
- Continue existing preservation efforts
- Fence off certain areas from visitors
- History educational opportunities
- Improve management of earthworks and restore earthworks from downed trees
- Keep the park natural and car emissions down
- Protection of resources through vegetation buffering
- Protection through education
- Regional long-range planning considering compatibility
- Regulations to protect viewscape
- Remove postwar forestation and development
- Seek funding to assist

#### Visitor Use and Experience – Access and Orientation

- Improve safety for visitors at park stopping sites
- Provide clear signage for trail users and to all park sites

#### Visitor Use and Experience – Recreation

- Equestrian uses are appropriate due to their historic role in the Civil War
- Provide additional access through multi-use trails
- Trails as mechanism for resource protection

#### Park Boundary

- Buffer existing resources through a boundary expansion
- Consider an expansion of the park boundary and additional land purchases
- Continue to work with preservation partners and local groups to preserve significant lands. Work with all levels of government on park land issues.
- Create incentives for landowners who give lands or give easements to the park or whose land is in within the future park boundary and are currently caring for the land
- Incorporate CWPT/CVBT properties into authorized NPS boundary
- Prevent the development of big-box commercial development near park boundaries

#### Park Operations and Facilities

- Address vacant in-holding structures
- Improve the visitor center
- Keep park resources clean and safe
- Provide access to the President's House with period furnishings

#### External Factors and Partnerships

- Additional community use on trails
- Allow local communities to pursue revenue generating opportunities (i.e. Wal-Mart)
- Community members to help "patrol" park and assist with maintenance
- Consider developing maps and images that show critical park resources, with threats identified. Such data would help to raise awareness with partners groups.
- Education of public, park visitors, developers, and governing bodies the need to balance present day development with preservation
- Increase awareness of the park and related battlefield resources as a heritage tourism mechanism
- Preserve sensitive resources related to the park via land use planning tools such as buffering, ordinances, and zoning
- Promotion, engagement, volunteerism
- Through strengthened relationships with the public
- Work collaboratively through partnerships with families, developers, and elected officials

#### **Question 4 - What are ways for visitors to enjoy an experience the park, while ensuring that historic, cultural, and natural resources are protected?**

#### Resource Management and Protection

- Easy access to statues and memorials
- Historic fence lines
- Keep the park natural
- Landscape restoration

- Prevent the development of big-box commercial development near park boundaries
- Protect some areas and resources from visitors
- Put additional monuments in the battlefields
- Resource protection via established multi-use trails
- Update the markers

#### Visitor Use and Experience – Access and Orientation

- Additional access for all users
- Additional small parking lots
- Can be difficult to locate the park
- Improved bus access at Chatham
- Minimize vehicle traffic

#### Visitor Use and Experience – Recreation

- Additional access for equestrian uses via trail system
- Connection trails between park units and other nearby sites
- Equestrian access (as offered at other NPS sites) could provide a good way to learn about the park's history. With appropriate guidance/rules, equestrian uses will not damage parklands.
- Equestrian community can assist in developing trails
- Equestrian uses are appropriate due to their historic role in the Civil War and park visitors enjoy seeing horses
- Multiple-use trails, including Tapp Farm parking to Brock Road; Along Brock Road to Jackson Trail W. along Brock Road connecting Jackson Trail W. to Jackson Trail E; and Along Rt. 20 to Rt. 3 along Rt. 3 to Chancellorsville.
- Offer equestrian events, including guided trails

#### Visitor Use and Experience – Interpretation and Education

- Additional opportunities to interact with staff
- Allow visitors to access exhibits
- Educate visitors about the park prior to their visit to spark interest
- Energy efficient bus tours
- Enjoyed park materials and information
- Guided tours, special events, driving tours, expanded exhibits, and educational programs
- iPod and cell phone tours
- Living history programs
- Multiple use trails, with interpretive and directional signs
- Opportunities for visitors to learn history of their ancestors
- Provide more videos
- Waysides and information/research

#### Park Operation and Facilities

- Consider a "Stonewall" Jackson and Lee-oriented permanent exhibit
- Continue to explore and develop all of the possibilities of a Museum of the Confederacy satellite within the Chancellorsville battlefield
- Ensure proper maintenance and ranger patrols

- New visitor center with living history and updated exhibits
- Promote a leave no trace philosophy
- Provide meeting spaces
- Rules and regulations with support from the equestrian community
- Signage and enforcement
- The Museum of the Confederacy satellite facility should include additional space for temporary/rotating exhibits from other Civil War museums or private collectors
- Visitor comfort stations and centers

**Question 5 - What organizations, institutions, and individuals might be interested in partnering with park staff to preserve and interpret battlefield lands?**

- 4H Groups and FFA
- Activists
- American Hiking Society
- Archaeological Groups
- Archives: Rappahannock Heritage Center; county archives; Virginia State Library; selected Universities with archival collections
- BCH Friends of the Battlefield
- Boy and Girl Scouts
- Businesses
- City and County Governments: Fredericksburg, Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, Caroline, Orange, and Culpeper
- Civil War Roundtables in Region
- Community leaders
- Conservation USA
- County historical societies: Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, Caroline, Orange
- Ellwood volunteers
- Environmental groups
- Equestrian groups, local saddle clubs, and trail riding clubs - Back Country Horsemen of America, Battlefield Back Country Horsemen, Battlefield Equestrian Society, Battlefield Horse Society, Battlefield Saddle Club, Clifton Horse Society, Culpeper Horse Owners Association, Lake of the Woods Stables, Majestic Meadow Stables, Nokesville Horse Society, Ridge Riders Saddle Club, Rusty Stirrup Riding Club, and Shenandoah Ride Club
- Equestrian Land Conservation Resource
- Friends Groups: Friends of the Fredericksburg Area Battlefields; Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield (Ellwood); Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites
- Historians, historical groups, heritage organizations, and Civil War groups
- Lease program with farmers
- Legislators
- Local landowners with historic resources
- Local park and recreation governments
- Local schools
- Military and FBI schools
- Military veterans groups - MOAA, ROA, Legion, DAV



- Moncure Conway Society
- Museums: Museum of the Confederacy; Fredericksburg Area Museum; County museums; Virginia Historical Society; Civil War Life Museum; White Oak Civil War Museum; Civil War Museum (Philadelphia, PA, formerly MOLLUS); National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg, PA.; Smithsonian Institution
- National Defense University on Ft. McNair in Washington DC
- Other National Parks in Region (Richmond to Manassas, Northern Neck)
- People with connections to the park
- Preservation organizations: Central Virginia Battlefield Trust, Civil War Preservation Trust
- Private Foundations: Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, George Washington Foundation, Moncure Conway Foundation
- Private history and interest groups
- Private tour guides
- Re-enactor and living history organizations
- Regional Civil War and antiques dealers
- Regional colleges' and universities' history faculties, historic preservation departments at local colleges, and county and city schools history coordinators
- Relic hunter organizations
- Specific event groups: "Yankees in Falmouth!" Living History Event;" Sesquicentennial Events; etc.
- Spotsylvania Greenway Initiative
- Spotsylvania Visitor Center
- Stafford Historical Society
- States and government officials
- Students and teachers
- The Committee of 500
- Tourism offices
- Veteran's Affairs and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Virginia Horse Council
- Virginia Quarter Horse Association
- Virginia Wild Horse and Burro Association
- Volunteers
- Youth Groups and Youth Church Groups

**Additional Comments - FRSP GMP@NPS.gov Emails, PEPC, Outdoor Information Session Comments, Letters, and Additional Comments from Comment Cards**

**Resource Management and Protection**

- Abandon the battle of the periwinkle, a beautiful and inoffensive plant that was planted to control erosion of the trenches. It does the job well, stays green, and does not have to be mowed.
- Clear more vistas for increased interest of battlefield events
- Resource protection via established multi-use trails

- Scene restoration, including Lee Hill and Chatham
- Some may object to the horse manure that might be left on trails, but it poses no health threat to humans and is biodegradable
- The impact of horse trails is minimal

#### Visitor Use and Experience - Access and Orientation

- Allow small tour buses - a small tour bus outfit should be allowed to provide this service, with proper screening/licensing by the NPS
- Concerned about traffic issues at the Chancellorsville, Spotsylvania and Wilderness sites. There are sites along Ewell-Hill Drive and Brock Road (including Laurell Hill, Alsop farm area, and Todd's Tavern) that are difficult to stop at due to a lack of safe spots
- Confusing signage to visitors center
- Construct an overpass at the intersection of Lee and Lansdowne
- Easy to get around the park
- Horses do not create noise and can be a form of transportation for the elderly and handicapped
- It is difficult for some to walk uphill and between sites, and gravel is not accessible for baby carriages and some wheelchairs
- Support the planned improvements to the Lafayette Boulevard corridor where it passes the park entrance. It would establish connectivity of walking and biking trails between Lee Drive and the city and improve the ease and safety of park access.

#### Visitor Use and Experience - Recreational Uses

- Additional park trails
- Connect the battlefields via a county-wide trail system
- Consider offering bicycle and nature rides and nature hikes
- Equestrian trails to be re-opened in the Wilderness Battlefield and a trail on Jackson's flanking march at Chancellorsville
- Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania Military Parks should have equestrian trails and trailer parking
- Horse owners contribute a great deal to the economy of this state
- Horses were a vital asset to the soldiers of the Civil War that it only seems natural that equestrians have access to these historic battlefields
- Shared trails between walkers and horsemen occur throughout the state and the country
- The Manassas National Battlefield has extensive multi-use trails that both horseback riders and hikers can use. This system of trails should be the standard for all National Military Parks.
- The park's goal should be to open 14 miles of off-road trails within the battlefield, equestrian trails to be re-opened in the Wilderness Battlefield, and a parking lot to accommodate 15 trailers
- Visitors enjoy seeing horses in the park due to their role in the park's history

#### Visitor Use and Experience - Interpretation and Education

- Add GPS for all units of the park
- Additional youth materials and classroom education programs
- An exhibit, wayside, and tour stop about the US Colored Troops in the Wilderness and Spotsylvania battles, at the Chancellorsville Visitor Center and put a historical marker at the intersection of Old Plank and Catharpin Road. These actions would increase public awareness of the role the USCT played here and bring more African Americans to this park.
- Audio recordings at tour stops to help tell stories

- Chatham is the only location in the region that speaks strongly and succinctly about the slave experience. Depict the story through more dedicated infrastructure, exhibits, and perhaps a replica of slave quarters to depict everyday lives of slaves at Chatham.
- Consider adding a Junior Ranger Program for the Wilderness Battlefield and for Spotsylvania Courthouse
- Consider initiating a curriculum-based educational program at Chatham and link to the Standards of Learning curriculum. An education coordinator may need to be hired, and parking facilities at Chatham need to be upgraded to safely handle current and future needs
- Enjoyed tour, stories, waysides, and the place.
- Interested in seeing interpretive information for the Presbyterian Church and the Richardson House
- Interpret treason at the war's conclusion, Lee's relationship with his assistant/secretary, and his views of slavery
- Less emphasis on battles, military strategy, generals, etc., and more emphasis on the personal stories of the soldiers would draw more families
- Market Chancellorsville as the prelude to Gettysburg that it was, not some singular battle that resulted in the loss of Jackson
- More about the history of the preservation of the battlefields i.e. CCC's building to Stone Wall
- More cannons and more living history
- More coverage of US Colored Troops
- Need walking "trail" guides or maps of the battlefields that are posted on site and be online to be printed off
- Slaughter Penn farm would be a good place for reenactments
- Technology that allows modern and historic images to be view together to show perspective
- The "trail to freedom" sites would tell a unique story in linked with Chatham, Moncure Conway House, the Port of Falmouth, and Aquia Landing.
- Update exhibits

#### Park Boundary

- Consider expanding the park's boundaries to include the Moncure Conway House, Union Church, the Counting House, and the probable site of the old Falmouth Fort and consider archeological research in the Fort locale. Many sites could be connected through walkways along a cleared waterfront, on property now owned either by Stafford County or NPS.
- Incorporate Brandy Station, Graffiti House, Kelly's Ford, St. James Church, and Cedar Mountain into the park boundary. Acquire through joint agreements and staff with rangers and interns. Upper Pontoon Crossing Site and Scott House. By building up the exiting bank along Sophia Street toward the river, a pervious surfaced pull-over for vehicles can be built that would enable visitors on the current tour to safely pull off to viewing the site.
- Increase the boundaries of the park to include significant battlefield lands, including Slaughter Penn Farm and May 1 Battlefield
- Moncure Conway House should be considered for an expansion of the NPS's boundaries. Interpretive opportunities include, but not limited to: Slavery, The Underground Railroad, Women, and Community.
- NPS work to interpret and open public access in collaboration with Stafford County the historic Civil War assets adjacent to the landfill property
- Prevent the development of big-box commercial development near park boundaries

#### Park Operations and Facilities

- ADA accessible portable toilets in the picnic areas, and water where possible to reduce return trips to the visitor centers for rest stops
- Additional benches along park paths/walkways to increase access for all visitors, including handicapped visitors
- Additional care for gardens at Chatham
- Concerned that NPS land is managed in a restrictive way; including equestrian uses and re-enactments/living history
- Consider a name change for the park that encompasses the larger aspects of the area's role throughout the Civil War and/or includes Stafford
- Consider including "Stafford" in Chatham's identify (Historic Chatham on Stafford Heights) and in the official name of the Military Park. The result would be more inclusive and help define Stafford as a locality interested in promoting historically accurate visitor information, programming and heritage tourism.
- Consider including a Stafford history museum, and a shared location at Chatham Manor might provide a home for the museum
- Consider one big, updated, high tech visitor center for the entire park
- Make horses available to park visitors by using an outside stable, as is done in Gettysburg
- NPS does not provide trail head parking which prevents me from utilizing the NPS system
- Once the new Civil War Life Museum is built in Spotsylvania Court House, NPS should have a counter in the museum to promote park programs, and staffed with a seasonal and/or a volunteer.
- The park should have staffing and facilities earmarked to serve the ever growing school population in the area. There should be an indoor area available to school children.

#### External Factors and Partnerships

- Additional equestrian access will strengthen the state's tourism economy and the local economy
- Consider incorporating a partnership with Stafford County for a comprehensive interpretation of the historic site Aquia Landing
- Coordinate messaging about the park from local visitor and tourism offices
- Equestrian community could offer the park trail clearing and maintenance, horseback "patrols"
- The park needs to find a way to develop partnerships with local government and business to create an economic engine for Orange County. Local residents need to see the park as bringing significant benefits to the community. That will help generate local support for preservation and other Park Service goals.
- Work with the City, Spotsylvania County, and local landowners to facilitate a well designed, safe, trail network that ties the City and its parks together

#### Miscellaneous

- Devise a plan which will result in the delegation of the associated authority to the State of Virginia. Seek to examine the question of State and or local controls and authority and promote the needed culture and infrastructure needed to handle any resulting transition
- National Park Passes should be available for sale at the park