DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR

CEDAR CREEK AND BELLE GROVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

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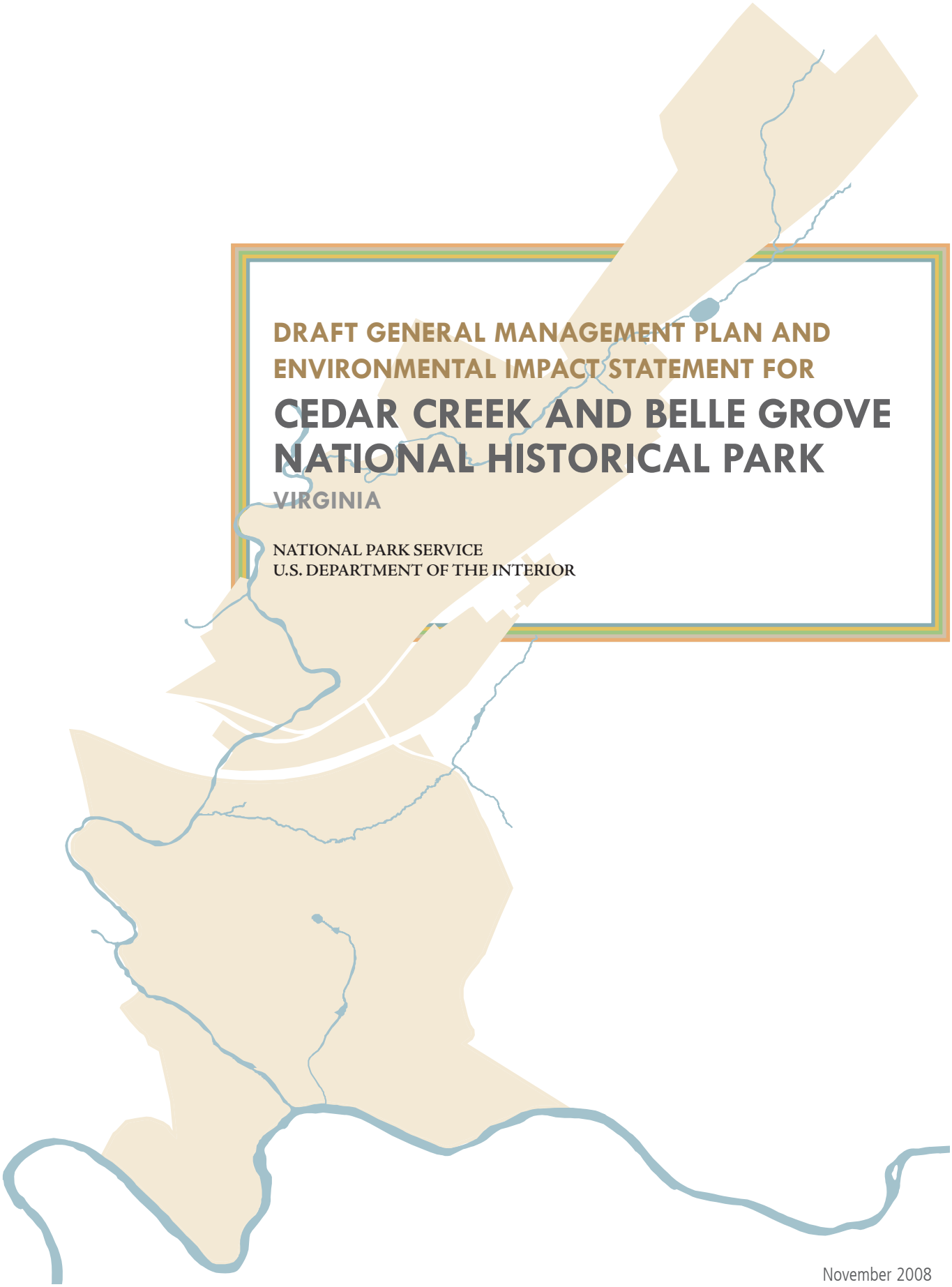


DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR

CEDAR CREEK AND BELLE GROVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

VIRGINIA

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

November 2008

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Cedar Creek and Belle Grove
National Historical Park
7718 ½ Main St., P.O. Box 700
Middletown, Virginia 22645

November 2008

Dear Reader:

The National Park Service is pleased to provide you with a copy of the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park (NHP). This is an exciting time in the history of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. The Draft General Management Plan (GMP), once reviewed and finalized, will guide the management of the park for the next 20 years.

We invite you to comment on this plan and you may do so by any one of several methods. The preferred method of comment is on the park's planning web site at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/cebe. Second, you may mail your comments to Superintendent Diann Jacox, Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP, P.O. Box 700, Middletown, VA 22645.

Whether you comment on the web site or through the mail, if you include your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The National Park Service will accept comments on the Draft GMP from the public for a period of 90 days following publication of the Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. The closing date for sending in your comments will be announced in the local media and on the park's planning website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/cebe. It can also be obtained by calling the park office at (540) 868-9176.

Additionally, we will hold public meetings to solicit comments on the Draft GMP during the public review period. Dates, times, and locations will be announced on the agency's planning website, http://parkplanning.nps.gov/cebe, and in local papers.

Additional copies of the Draft GMP may be obtained by contacting the park at (540) 868-9176. CDs and a limited number of printed copies are available. We prefer that you request a CD as the printed copies are expensive to produce. The document is also available for download at the park's planning web site. Finally, the document is available for review at the park office at 7718½ Main St., Middletown, VA.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Sincerely,

Diann Jacox
Superintendent

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

Frederick, Shenandoah, Warren Counties, Virginia

Public Review Draft – November, 2008

This Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement describes four alternatives for the future management of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, the environment that would be affected by the alternative management actions, and the environmental consequences of implementing the alternatives.

Alternative A (Continuation of Current Management) would continue the current management practices into the future. Visitors would experience the park at sites owned and independently managed by the Key Partners. The National Park Service (NPS) would provide technical assistance and bring national recognition and visibility to the park by virtue of being part of the national park system.

Under **Alternative B**, visitors would experience the park at sites owned by the Key Partners and through electronic media and NPS ranger led tours and programs. Visitors would access the park via auto-touring routes and a few non-motorized trails located primarily on Key Partner properties. The primary NPS role would be to provide interpretive programs and technical assistance. The Key Partners would have the primary responsibility for land and resource protection. There would be increased coordination among the NPS and the Key Partners, with the NPS serving as a coordinator for land and resource protection.

Under **Alternative C**, visitors would experience the park at an NPS developed and managed visitor center and at visitor focal areas owned and managed by the NPS and the Key Partners. The NPS and the Key Partners would coordinate interpretive programs at these sites. Visitors would access the park via auto-touring routes and a system of non-motorized trails that would provide opportunities for interpretation. The NPS and the Key Partners would develop a coordinated land protection plan focused on acquisition of key historic sites that would become visitor focal areas. The NPS and the Key Partners would have formal agreements to undertake special projects and general park management.

Alternative D is the **Preferred Alternative.** Under this alternative, visitors would experience the park at an NPS developed and managed visitor center and at visitor focal areas owned and managed by the NPS and the Key Partners. The NPS and the Key Partners would coordinate interpretive programs at these sites. Visitors would access the park via auto-touring routes and an extensive system of non-motorized trails that would provide opportunities for interpretation and recreation, connect focal areas, and tie to communities and resources outside the park. The NPS and the Key Partners would develop a coordinated land protection plan focused on acquisition of cultural landscapes, sensitive natural resource areas, and lands providing connections between NPS and Key Partner properties. The NPS and the Key Partners would have formal agreements that define responsibilities for special projects, programs, events, and specific park operations.

Environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the alternatives are addressed in the GMP/EIS. Impact topics addressed in this document include archeological resources, ethnographic resources, historic structures, cultural landscapes, museum collections, scenic/visual resources and viewsheds, soils, groundwater, surface water quality, vegetation, visitor use and experience, and the socioeconomic environment.

Notes to Reviewers and Respondents

This general management plan and environmental impact statement is available online at the National Park Service's *Planning, Environment, and Public Comment* web site http://parkplanning.nps.gov/cebe. Hard copies and CDs are available by calling the National Park Service at (540) 868-9176. The National Park Service will accept comments on the Draft GMP/EIS from the public for a period of 90 days following publication of the Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. If you wish to comment, you may do so by any one of several methods. The preferred method of comment is via the internet at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/cebe. You may mail your comments to Superintendent Diann Jacox, Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP, P.O. Box 700, Middletown, VA 22645. You may also hand deliver your comments to the National Park Service office at 7718½ Main St., Middletown, VA. If you include your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Summary

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park (NHP) was created by Congress in December 2002 to help preserve, protect, and interpret a nationally significant Civil War landscape and antebellum plantation; to tell the rich story of Shenandoah Valley history; to preserve historic, natural, cultural, military, and scenic resources; and to serve as a focal point within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District. The park is located in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, adjacent to the historic towns of Middletown and Strasburg, and is within the counties of Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren. The park consists of approximately 3,713 acres that includes prehistoric resources, ecologically important areas, evidence of valley settlement and early European history of the region, examples of plantation life and culture, and significant Civil War resources.

The Battle of Cedar Creek had a direct impact on the course of the Civil War, nearly eliminating Confederate military presence in the Valley. Substantial portions of the Cedar Creek Battlefield lie within the park, including historic landscapes, structures, monuments, river fords, military encampments, and avenues of approach. Early European settlement is evident in the park, notably the Valley Pike that has been a major roadway throughout its history, from a prehistoric hunting path, to a wagon road, to a turnpike, to a U.S. highway. The park contains significant examples of the valley's antebellum agricultural community, including manor houses, farmsteads, mills, and a complex network of road traces that reflect the economic and social fabric of the rural community. Belle Grove, Harmony Hall, and Long Meadow, the plantation homes of the Hite and Bowman families, are three impressive historic structures in the park that speak to the power and influence of the slaveholding class – despite being a distinct minority west of the Blue Ridge – during the antebellum period. The natural landscapes and resources of the park offer visitors opportunities for quiet and solitude in an ever-expanding suburban area. Cedar Creek and the Shenandoah River, limestone upland habitats, and cave and karst features in the park provide regionally and nationally significant opportunities for visitor enjoyment and scientific study.

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is a partnership park, currently with limited property in federal ownership, that works collaboratively with other entities including Belle Grove, Inc., the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Shenandoah County, and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. These legislated Key Partners provide the foundation for protecting, preserving, and interpreting park resources by virtue of their ownership of significant acreage within the park, their commitment to a shared preservation ethic, their willingness to provide visitor services and public access, and their consent to manage their property as part of the national historical park. The National Park Service (NPS) also cooperates with its community partners – the towns of Middletown and Strasburg, and the counties of Frederick, Shenandoah, and

Warren – to further the purposes of the park. As a partnership park, the success of this plan is not solely determined by the NPS; instead, the plan's success depends upon the will, perseverance, and cooperation of all those who have the authority and desire to implement it and ascribe to a unified vision for managing the park. It is incumbent upon the NPS, the Key Partners, and the surrounding communities to engage each other in the management of the park to protect landscapes and viewsheds, maintain the rural character of the area, and manage the park as a contiguous whole rather than islands of resources.

The area around Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is changing rapidly. Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren counties are now considered to be within the Washington, D.C. commuting area, which has sparked dramatic growth in the region, particularly along the I-66 corridor. Between 2000 and 2005 the population growth rate in these three counties has been nearly twice that of the rest of Virginia. Agricultural land uses have declined while conversion of land to commercial and residential uses is on the rise. There are new residential developments within and adjacent to the park. I-81 and the I-81/I-66 interchange are slated for upgrades by the highway department, likely leading to road widening that will consume park land. A limestone quarry along the northern boundary of the park has submitted an application for an expansion that would nearly double its size, and a major power transmission line may be built within the park's viewshed. All of these changes affect the ability of the NPS and the Key Partners to preserve the park landscapes, rural character, and scenic views that the enabling legislation seeks to protect: "The panoramic views of the mountains, natural areas, and waterways provide visitors with an inspiring setting of great natural beauty. The historic, natural, cultural, military, and scenic resources…are nationally and regionally significant."

Other changes have been favorable. The Key Partners now own and protect about a third of the land within the park boundary, preserving historic resources, maintaining open space, and protecting unique natural resources. Partnerships have been formed to defend these unique resources and local residents appreciate the value of park preservation.

Alternatives Considered

This document is a draft general management plan and environmental impact statement (GMP/EIS) for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. The GMP provides the NPS and the Key Partners with the necessary framework to guide the management of the park for the next 15 to 20 years. This is the first GMP for the park; it is intended to be a useful, long-term decision-making tool, providing a logical and trackable rationale for decisions about protection and public use of park resources.

This draft GMP presents four alternatives for the management, use, and development of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP; all alternatives are intended to protect natural and cultural resources while serving the needs of park visitors. The

four alternatives, described briefly here, were developed around the need to define an appropriate role for the NPS at the park. The alternatives present differing visions for how the NPS and the Key Partners would manage the park.

- **Alternative A.** Under this alternative, current management practices would generally continue as they are today and visitors would experience the park as they do today with few management changes. Belle Grove Plantation and the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation visitor contact facility would be the primary destinations within the park. Occasional small group tours would be offered at Harmony Hall. Visitors would visit these sites and learn the stories of the Battle of Cedar Creek and antebellum plantation life. Some visitors would be interested in exploring the park, which they would do on their own using information obtained from sources other than the NPS. No wayfinding would be provided and because most land would remain in private ownership, visitors would not be able to view sites other than from public rights-of-way.

  Visitors would generally not perceive the park as a unit of the national park system. The NPS would continue to minimally staff the park and maintain a small administrative office outside the park. The primary role of the NPS would be to provide technical assistance to the Key Partners, the Community Partners, and private landowners regarding preservation of historic and natural resources.

  The Key Partners would independently assume responsibilities for interpretation, resource protection, and visitor services, and would maintain visitor contact facilities on their properties.

  While there would be no limit to land acreage that could be acquired under this alternative (or any of the other alternatives), it is not expected that there would be a significant change in the amount of park land owned by the Key Partners or by the NPS.

- **Alternative B.** In Alternative B, the cultural heritage and natural history stories of the park would be told through interpretive media and programs offered by the Key Partners and the NPS at existing sites, with opportunities for visitors to explore rural areas of the park on interpretive self-guided auto routes. Belle Grove Plantation, the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation visitor contact facility, and the Keister Tract would be the primary destinations within the park. Regular small group tours would be offered at Harmony Hall. Auto routes in the park's rural areas would have wayfinding signage, a wayside pull-off, and supporting interpretive materials made available at the Key Partner sites as well as through the internet. Visitors would also explore Belle Grove Plantation and lands owned by the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation on non-motorized trails. All of the park's stories would be told at sites throughout the park.

Most visitors would perceive the park as a unit of the national park system. NPS rangers would offer interpretive programs and activities at the Key Partner sites and possibly other properties in the park. The NPS would provide technical assistance to the Key Partners, the Community Partners, and private landowners regarding preservation of historic and natural resources within the park. The NPS would rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the farmhouse and barn at the Whitham Farm. NPS park offices would be located outside the park or perhaps at the rehabilitated Whitham Farm.

The NPS and the Key Partners would develop a coordinated interpretive program that would identify the primary interpretive themes and their related stories, as well as places in the park where those stories would be told. There would be an informal collaborative relationship regarding natural and cultural resource protection. Written agreements would be entered into for special projects and management programs.

While the Key Partners would continue to purchase high-priority tracts of land, the current land status – about a third of the park owned and protected from development by the Key Partners – would not be expected to change significantly under Alternative B.

- **Alternative C.** In Alternative C, the park's cultural heritage and natural history stories would be told at a central location with a unified message; this central hub would orient visitors to the park, the operations of the NPS and the Key Partners, and the National Historic District. Focal areas elsewhere in the park would provide immersion experiences where stories would be told in more depth. Focal areas would include the existing Key Partner sites at Belle Grove Plantation, the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation visitor contact facility, Harmony Hall, and the Keister Tract. Several additional focal areas would be added as historically significant sites are acquired. Visitors would travel to focal areas via auto routes with wayfinding signage, several wayside pull-offs, and supporting interpretive materials made available at the Key Partner sites as well as through the internet. Visitors would also explore the park on trails that connect lands owned by the Key Partners and the NPS and that follow the course of the Battle of Cedar Creek and the historic mill road network. All of the park's stories would be told at sites throughout the park.

  Visitors would perceive the park as a unit of the national park system. NPS rangers would offer interpretive programs and activities at a visitor center, at Key Partner sites, at NPS-owned focal areas, and possibly at other locations in the park. The NPS would provide technical assistance to the Key Partners, the Community Partners, and private landowners regarding preservation of historic and natural resources within and in proximity to the park, as well as its viewsheds. The NPS would rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the farmhouse

and barn at the Whitham Farm. NPS park offices would be located at a visitor center and perhaps at the rehabilitated Whitham Farm.

The NPS and the Key Partners would develop a coordinated interpretive program that would utilize the primary interpretive themes and their related stories, as well as identify places in the park where those stories would be told. There would be an informal collaborative relationship regarding natural and cultural resource protection. Written agreements would be entered into for special projects and special management programs.

The NPS and Key Partners would acquire land from willing sellers, providing resource protection at key historic sites that would become visitor focal areas.

- **Alternative D.** In Alternative D, the park's cultural heritage and natural history stories would be told at a central location with a unified message. This central hub would orient visitors to the park, the operations of the NPS and the Key Partners, and the National Historic District; this hub would support educational programs, research, and other activities that help the park realize its special mandates for resource conservation. Focal areas within protected cultural landscapes elsewhere in the park would provide immersion experiences where stories would be told in more depth. Focal areas would include the existing Key Partner sites at Belle Grove Plantation, the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation visitor contact facility, Harmony Hall, and the Keister Tract. Several additional focal areas would be added as historically significant sites and adjoining cultural landscapes are acquired. Visitors would travel to focal areas via auto routes with wayfinding signage, wayside pull-offs, and supporting interpretive materials made available at NPS and Key Partner sites as well as through the internet. Visitors would also explore the park on trails that connect lands owned by the Key Partners and the NPS, that follow the course of the Battle of Cedar Creek and the historic mill road network, and that connect to the towns of Middletown and Strasburg and the George Washington National Forest. All of the park's stories would be told at sites throughout the park.

  Visitors would perceive the park as a unit of the national park system. NPS rangers would offer interpretive programs and activities at a visitor center, at Key Partner sites, at NPS-owned focal areas, and at other properties in and outside the park. The NPS would provide technical assistance to the Key Partners, the Community Partners, and private landowners regarding preservation of historic and natural resources within and in proximity to the park, as well as protection of the park's viewsheds and related resources outside the park boundary. The NPS would rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the farmhouse and barn at the Whitham Farm. NPS park offices would be located within a visitor center and perhaps at the rehabilitated Whitham Farm.

The NPS and the Key Partners would develop a coordinated interpretive program that would utilize the primary interpretive themes and their related stories, as well as identify places in the park where those stories would be told. There would be a formal relationship among the NPS and the Key Partners regarding resource management, interpretive programs, and park operations.

Protection of the park's resources would emphasize acquisition from willing sellers of cultural landscapes, sensitive natural resources, and connections between lands owned by the NPS and Key Partners.

The GMP proposes six management zones in the park that are common to the three action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, and D). Management zones are a tool that defines desired conditions and appropriate management and development for geographic regions within the park. For each zone a land protection strategy is proposed. A more detailed land protection plan that will identify priorities for protecting land within the park and the tools to accomplish protection goals will be developed by the NPS and the Key Partners upon completion of the GMP.

Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives

Impacts to the environment under these alternatives would be generally beneficial, particularly under Alternatives C and D.

The action alternatives propose different visions for achieving the goals of providing visitor services, protecting park resources, preserving the landscapes of the park, and helping the public understand the unique experience of the Battle of Cedar Creek and the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley. With the increased land ownership and staffing called for under Alternatives C and D, there is an increased ability to accomplish these goals. Additionally, the action alternatives call for an increasing amount of collaboration with the Key Partners. With increased personnel and coordination, the NPS and the Key Partners would be better equipped to develop and implement proactive land protection strategies for resource preservation within and outside park boundaries.

Specific environmental impacts associated with the alternatives are described in Chapter 4 of the GMP.

Agency Preferred Alternative – Alternative D

The NPS has identified Alternative D as the preferred alternative to guide long-term management of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. Selection of Alternative D as the preferred alternative is based on the analysis and findings of the GMP planning team as well as on public comments received during the planning process. The GMP planning team has determined that Alternative D would fulfill the NPS statutory mission and responsibilities at the park and would be advantageous when compared to Alternatives A, B, and C with respect to protecting the park's natural and cultural

resources; enhancing interpretation, education, and public understanding; enhancing public use and enjoyment of the park; effectively managing the park; and providing effective technical assistance to the park's partners and landowners.

The Next Steps

After the distribution of the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, there will be a 60-day public review and comment period after which the NPS planning team will evaluate comments from other federal agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals regarding the draft plan; and will incorporate appropriate changes into a Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. The final plan will include letters from governmental agencies, any substantive comments on the draft document, and NPS responses to those comments. Following distribution of the final plan and a 30-day no-action period, a record of decision approving a final plan will be signed by the NPS regional director. The record of decision documents the NPS selection of an alternative for implementation. Once it is signed, the plan can then be implemented.

Implementation of the Plan

The implementation of the approved plan, no matter which alternative, will depend not only on future NPS funding and servicewide priorities, but also on partnership funds, time, and effort. The approval of a GMP does not guarantee that funding and staffing needed to implement the plan will be forthcoming. Full implementation of the plan could be many years in the future.

Once the GMP has been approved, additional feasibility studies and more detailed planning, environmental documentation, and consultations would be completed, as appropriate, before certain actions in the selected alternative can be carried out. Future program and implementation plans, describing specific actions that managers intend to undertake and accomplish, will tier from the desired conditions and long-term goals set forth in this general management plan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 – Purpose and Need for Action

1.1 Proposed Federal Action 1-1
1.2 Purpose of the Action 1-2
1.3 Need for the Action 1-2
1.4 Vision for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP 1-3
1.5 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Overview 1-4
1.5.1 The Park's Regional Context 1-4
1.5.2 Overview of the Park's Resources 1-6
1.5.3 The Park's Origin and Legislative History 1-7
1.5.4 Park Boundary, Size, and Ownership 1-9
1.5.5 The Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory Commission 1-9
1.5.6 The Park's Key Partners 1-10
1.5.7 The Park's Community Partners 1-13
1.5.8 Technical and Financial Assistance to the Park's Partners 1-15
1.6 Foundation for Planning 1-15
1.6.1 Park Statement of Purpose 1-15
1.6.2 Park Statement of Significance 1-16
1.6.3 Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values 1-17
1.6.4 Primary Interpretive Themes 1-17
1.6.5 Legislative Mandates 1-22
1.6.6 Legislative and Policy Requirements 1-22
1.7 GMP/EIS Scoping Process 1-24
1.7.1 Scoping Activities 1-24
1.7.2 Interests and Concerns Identified through Scoping 1-25
1.8 Decisions Needed to Guide Park Management 1-26
1.9 Impact Topics 1-33
1.9.1 Impact Topics Retained for Impact Analysis 1-34
1.9.2 Impact Topics Dismissed from Impact Analysis 1-38
1.10 Relationship to Other Plans and Projects 1-49
1.10.1 Frederick County 1-50
1.10.2 Shenandoah County 1-52
1.10.3 Warren County 1-55
1.10.4 Other Plans and Projects 1-56
1.11 Park Boundaries 1-59

Chapter 2 – Alternatives

2.1 Development of Alternatives 2-1
2.2 Alternative A (Continuation of Existing Management) 2-5
2.2.1 Alternative A Concept 2-5
2.2.2 Partnerships 2-5
2.2.3 Land Protection 2-5
2.2.4 Resource Management 2-6
2.2.5 Visitor Experience, Interpretation, and Education 2-8
2.2.6 Park Facilities 2-8
2.2.7 Transportation, Access, and Circulation 2-9
2.2.8 Park Operations and Staffing 2-9
2.2.9 Technical Assistance 2-9
2.2.10 Related Resources 2-10
2.2.11 Costs 2-10
2.3 Management Elements Common to the Action Alternatives 2-11
2.4 Management Zones 2-16
2.5 Appropriate Kinds and Levels of Management, Development, and Access..... 2-22
2.5.1 Area-Specific Desired Conditions 2-22
2.5.2 Area-Specific Needed and Allowable Changes 2-22
2.6 Alternative B 2-25
2.6.1 Alternative B Concept 2-25
2.6.2 Partnerships 2-25
2.6.3 Land Protection 2-26
2.6.4 Resource Management 2-26
2.6.5 Visitor Experience, Interpretation, and Education 2-28
2.6.6 Park Facilities 2-28
2.6.7 Transportation, Access, and Circulation 2-29
2.6.8 Park Operations and Staffing 2-29
2.6.9 Technical Assistance 2-30
2.6.10 Related Resources 2-30
2.6.11 Costs 2-30
2.7 Alternative C 2-31
2.7.1 Alternative C Concept 2-31
2.7.2 Partnerships 2-32
2.7.3 Land Protection 2-32
2.7.4 Resource Management 2-34
2.7.5 Visitor Experience, Interpretation, and Education 2-35
2.7.6 Park Facilities 2-35
2.7.7 Transportation, Access, and Circulation 2-36
2.7.8 Park Operations and Staffing 2-36
2.7.9 Technical Assistance 2-37

2.7.10 Related Resources 2-37
2.7.11 Costs 2-38
2.8 Alternative D 2-39
2.8.1 Alternative D Concept 2-39
2.8.2 Partnerships 2-40
2.8.3 Land Protection 2-40
2.8.4 Resource Management 2-40
2.8.5 Visitor Experience, Interpretation, and Education 2-42
2.8.6 Park Facilities 2-43
2.8.7 Transportation, Access, and Circulation 2-44
2.8.8 Park Operations and Staffing 2-44
2.8.9 Technical Assistance 2-45
2.8.10 Related Resources 2-45
2.8.11 Costs 2-46
2.9 User Capacity 2-47
2.10 Mitigation Measures 2-50
2.10.1 Cultural Resource Mitigation Measures 2-53
2.10.2 Natural Resource Mitigation Measures 2-54
2.11 Cost Comparison 2-56
2.11.1 Estimated Costs for Implementing the Plan 2-56
2.11.2 Funding for Actions Identified in the Plan 2-57
2.12 Alternatives Dismissed from Further Consideration 2-58
2.12.1 Alternatives Based on Interpretive Themes 2-58
2.13 Alternatives Comparison Table 2-59
2.14 Impact Comparison Table 2-63
2.15 Consistency with the National Environmental Policy Act 2-67
2.15.1 Environmentally Preferred Alternative 2-68
2.16 Selection of the Preferred Alternative 2-68

Chapter 3 – Affected Environment

3.1 Introduction 3-1
3.1.1 Park Setting 3-1
3.1.2 Park Significance 3-1
3.1.3 Organization of This Chapter 3-2
3.2 Cultural Environment 3-3
3.2.1 Historical Designations 3-3
3.2.2 Historical Context 3-4
3.2.3 Archeological Resources 3-12
3.2.4 Ethnographic Resources 3-14
3.2.5 Sacred Sites 3-18
3.2.6 Historic Structures 3-18
3.2.7 Cultural Landscapes 3-21

3.2.8 Museum Collections 3-33
3.3 Natural Environment 3-34
3.3.1 Topography 3-35
3.3.2 Climate 3-35
3.3.3 Air Quality 3-35
3.3.4 Lightscape Management 3-36
3.3.5 Soundscape Management 3-36
3.3.6 Scenic/Visual Resources/Viewsheds 3-37
3.3.7 Geologic Resources 3-38
3.3.8 Paleontological Resources 3-39
3.3.9 Soils 3-39
3.3.10 Prime and Unique Farmlands 3-41
3.3.11 Water Resources 3-41
3.3.12 Vegetation 3-46
3.3.13 Wildlife 3-54
3.3.14 Fisheries and Aquatic Life 3-55
3.3.15 Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species 3-56
3.3.16 State Listed Threatened and Endangered Species 3-59
3.4 Visitor Use and Experience 3-61
3.4.1 Types of Visitors 3-61
3.4.2 Park Partner Visitation and Facilities 3-63
3.4.3 Other Visitor Use 3-66
3.4.4 Regional Sites and Attractions 3-67
3.5 Socioeconomic Environment 3-68
3.5.1 Population 3-68
3.5.2 Race and Ethnicity 3-69
3.5.3 Income 3-70
3.5.4 Low Income Populations 3-72
3.5.5 Earnings by Major Industries 3-73
3.5.6 Employment by Major Industries 3-74
3.5.7 Unemployment 3-76
3.5.8 Poverty 3-78
3.5.9 Economic Impact of the Park 3-79

Chapter 4 – Environmental Consequences

4.1 Introduction 4-1
4.2 Methods and Assumptions for Analyzing Impacts 4-2
4.2.1 Cultural Resources 4-3
4.2.2 Natural Resources 4-5
4.2.3 Visitor Use and Experience 4-5
4.2.4 Socioeconomic Environment 4-5
4.2.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis 4-6

4.2.6 Impairment of Park Resources 4-13
4.3 Environmental Consequences of Alternative A (Continuation of Existing Management) 4-15
4.3.1 Cultural Resources..... 4-15
4.3.2 Natural Resources 4-23
4.3.3 Visitor Use and Experience 4-38
4.3.4 Socioeconomic Environment 4-41
4.3.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts 4-44
4.3.6 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources..... 4-44
4.3.7 Relationship between Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Long-Term Productivity 4-45
4.4 Environmental Consequences of Alternative B..... 4-45
4.4.1 Cultural Resources..... 4-45
4.4.2 Natural Resources 4-53
4.4.3 Visitor Use and Experience 4-67
4.4.4 Socioeconomic Environment 4-68
4.4.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts 4-74
4.4.6 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources..... 4-74
4.4.7 Relationship between Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Long-Term Productivity 4-74
4.5 Environmental Consequences of Alternative C..... 4-75
4.5.1 Cultural Resources..... 4-75
4.5.2 Natural Resources 4-85
4.5.3 Visitor Use and Experience 4-103
4.5.4 Socioeconomic Environment 4-105
4.5.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts 4-110
4.5.6 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources..... 4-110
4.5.7 Relationship between Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Long-Term Productivity 4-110
4.6 Environmental Consequences of Alternative D 4-110
4.6.1 Cultural Resources..... 4-110
4.6.2 Natural Resources 4-121
4.6.3 Visitor Use and Experience 4-142
4.6.4 Socioeconomic Environment 4-144
4.6.5 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts 4-148
4.6.6 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources..... 4-148
4.6.7 Relationship between Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Long-Term Productivity 4-149

Chapter 5 – Consultation and Coordination

5.1 Public Involvement and Agency Coordination 5-1
5.2 Section 106 Consultation 5-1
5.3 Section 7 Consultation 5-5
5.4 Draft GMP/EIS Document Review 5-6
5.5 List of Draft GMP/EIS Recipients 5-7

Appendices

Appendix A. Park Enabling Legislation A-1
Appendix B. Applicable Federal and Commonwealth of Virginia Laws and Regulations and National Park Service Policies B-1
Appendix C. Scoping Summary and Analysis C-1
Appendix D. Compliance Coordination D-1

References

Glossary

Acronyms

Preparers

Index

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Regional Location 1-5
Figure 1.2 Park Existing Conditions 1-11
Figure 1.3 Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District .. 1-14
Figure 2.1 Management Zones 2-17
Figure 2.2 Alternative B – Park Character and Visitor Experience 2-27
Figure 2.3 Alternative C – Park Character and Visitor Experience 2-33
Figure 2.4 Alternative D – Park Character and Visitor Experience 2-41
Figure 3.1 Cultural Resources Nominated to or Determined Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places 3-5
Figure 3.2 1864 Land Use 3-25
Figure 3.3 1937 Land Use 3-27
Figure 3.4 2002 Land Use 3-29
Figure 3.5 Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance ... 3-43
Figure 3.6 Hydrology 3-47
Figure 3.7 Vegetation Communities 3-49
Figure 3.8 Significant Natural Resources 3-53

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Federal Funding Spent by the Key Partners for Land Protection at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP (as of June 2007) 1-12
Table 1.2 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values 1-18
Table 1.3 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Primary Interpretive Themes 1-22
Table 1.4 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Special Mandates 1-23
Table 2.1 Overview of the Four Alternative Concepts 2-3
Table 2.2 Relationship of the Alternative Concepts to the GMP Decision Points 2-4
Table 2.3 Management Zones 2-20
Table 2.4 Area-Specific Desired Conditions and Needed Changes (Common to All Action Alternatives) 2-23
Table 2.5 Park User Capacity Indicators 2-51
Table 2.6 Cost Comparison 2-57
Table 2.7 Comparison of Alternatives 2-59
Table 2.8 Impact Comparison Table 2-63
Table 3.1 Potential Listed Plant Species for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP 3-56
Table 3.2 Potential Listed Wildlife Species for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP 3-58
Table 3.3 Population of the Park Region 3-69
Table 3.4 Population Growth of the Park Region 3-69
Table 3.5 Population, Race, and Ethnicity, 2000 3-70
Table 3.6 Per Capita Personal Income 3-71
Table 3.7 Median Household Income 3-72
Table 3.8 Income and Poverty, 2000 3-72
Table 3.9 Earnings by Industry, 2004 3-74
Table 3.10 Total Full- and Part-Time Employment by Industry, 2004 3-75
Table 3.11 Employment and Unemployment Status, 1990 3-77
Table 3.12 Employment and Unemployment Status, 2000 3-77
Table 3.13 Employment and Unemployment Status, 2005 3-77
Table 3.14 Poverty Status, 1989, 1999, and 2004 3-78
Table 3.15 Annual Budgets for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP 3-81
Table 4.1 Impact Threshold Definitions 4-7
Table 4.2 Visitor Use at Nearby NPS Civil War Battlefield Parks 4-70
Table 4.3 Economic Impacts for NPS Battlefield Parks near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park 4-72
Table 5.1 Running List of Consultation and Public Involvement 5-2

How to Read This Plan…

The National Park Service (NPS) has developed this Draft General Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement to guide management decision making at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park for the next 15 to 20 years. The public and many local, state, and federal agencies have assisted the NPS with preparing the plan. This plan is divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1 – Purpose of and Need for Action describes the federal action and reasons why the general management plan (GMP) is being prepared. Chapter 1 presents the park's purpose and significance statements and describes the fundamental and other important resources and values that are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. This section also describes the planning process and issues that are addressed in the plan.

Chapter 2 – Alternatives describes, evaluates, and compares the Continuation of Current Management Alternative and three action alternatives. The Continuation of Current Management Alternative (Alternative A) provides a baseline from which the three action alternatives (B, C, and D) can be evaluated. Desired resource conditions, opportunities for visitor experience, as well as levels of development intensity necessary to accomplish each alternative are presented. Alternative D is the agency preferred alternative and the environmentally preferred alternative.

Chapter 3 – Affected Environment describes the existing natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources that could be potentially affected by implementing either one of the alternatives.

Chapter 4 – Environmental Consequences describes the potential impacts to the park's resource values that could result from implementing any of the alternatives.

Chapter 5 – Consultation and Coordination describes the public involvement and agency coordination process that occurred during the GMP planning process.

Appendices provide additional supporting technical data and relevant background material cited throughout the plan.

References are books and documents from which background and supporting information was obtained.

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

CEDAR CREEK AND BELLE GROVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

1.1 Proposed Federal Action 1-1
1.2 Purpose of the Action 1-2
1.3 Need for the Action 1-2
1.4 Vision for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP 1-3
1.5 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Overview 1-4
1.6 Foundation for Planning 1-15
1.7 GMP/EIS Scoping Process 1-24
1.8 Decisions Needed to Guide Park Management 1-26
1.9 Impact Topics 1-33
1.10 Relationship to Other Plans and Projects 1-49
1.11 Park Boundaries 1-59

1.0 Purpose and Need for Action

1.1 Proposed Federal Action

On December 19, 2002, Congress adopted enabling legislation creating Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park (NHP) in Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren counties, Virginia, as a "partnership" park unit of the national park system. The National Park Service (NPS) and its partners at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – as identified in Section 13 of the park's enabling legislation (see Appendix A) – are responsible for managing Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP to conserve its scenery, natural and historic resources, and wildlife, and to provide for its enjoyment in a manner that will leave the park unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations (NPS 2006d). The park's Community Partners at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP include the adjacent historic towns of Middletown and Strasburg as well as Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren counties. The park's Key Partners – who collectively own or hold easements on 1,339 acres within the park – include Belle Grove, Incorporated, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Shenandoah County, and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

The proposed federal action considered in this environmental impact statement is the implementation of a programmatic management framework – in the form of a general management plan (GMP) – to accomplish the purposes for which Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP was established by Congress. This GMP is the park's first comprehensive plan and has been prepared as required in Section 8 of the park's enabling legislation and as generally required pursuant to NPS management policies for all units of the national park system (NPS 2006d). It will guide management decision making at the park for the next 15 to 20 years.

The General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) complies with all applicable statutory requirements and polices, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978. It addresses the following:

- the types of management actions required for the preservation of park resources
- the types and general intensities of development (including visitor circulation and transportation patterns, systems, and modes) associated with public enjoyment and use of the area, including general locations, timing of implementation and anticipated costs
- visitor carrying capacities and implementation commitments for all areas of the park
- a brief discussion of the need for a potential park boundary adjustment

1.2 Purpose of the Action

The purpose of the GMP is to provide a decision-making framework that ensures that the management decisions made by the NPS, the park's Key Partners, and the park's Community Partners carry out as effectively and efficiently as possible the NPS mission at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. The NPS and its partners routinely make decisions about ways to preserve the park's significant natural and cultural resources for public enjoyment, about competing demands for limited resources, about priorities for using available funds and staff, and about differing local and nationwide interests and views of what is most important at the park. The decision-making framework in the park's GMP will provide the guidance to make these management choices in a manner that is consistent with the purposes for which Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP was established by Congress as a unit of the national park system.

1.3 Need for the Action

The GMP for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP addresses several needs:

- it ensures that the park's fundamental and other important resources and values are preserved and protected
- it meets NPS legal requirements for comprehensive general management planning as a guide for more specific projects, to base decisions on adequate environmental information and analysis, and to track progress toward goals
- it provides a logical trackable rationale for decision making by the NPS and its partners that focuses first on why the park was established and what the desired future conditions of those resources should be
- it considers the concerns, expectations, and values of private landowners within the park and of the general public related to land protection and management of resources and visitor experience in the park
- it ensures that management decisions by the NPS and its partners promote the efficient use of public funds and that managers are accountable to the public for their management decisions

The GMP also addresses the congressional mandate in the park's enabling legislation that requires the NPS to work with the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory Commission to prepare a management plan for the park. Section 8 of the park's enabling legislation explicitly states the following:

> "*The Secretary, in consultation with the [Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory] Commission, shall prepare a management plan for the park. In particular, the management plan shall contain provisions to address the needs of owners of non-federal land, including independent nonprofit organizations within the boundaries of the park.*"

1.4 Vision for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP

Through the GMP planning process a vision for the park's future has developed that provides a shared understanding among the NPS, the Key Partners, the Community Partners, private landowners in the park, and the general public as to what Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP should be like in 15 to 20 years. The vision states the essential qualities of the park in the future, summarized as follows:

The Park as a Unit of the National Park System. The park is managed to achieve a unified consistent vision as a unit of the national park system. The park's resources are protected and enjoyed by the public in a manner leaving them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Visitors know they are in a national park and are oriented to the entire park and to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District.

An Exemplary Partnership. The park functions as a cohesive whole. The NPS and the Key Partners make management decisions based on a shared understanding of desired resource conditions and visitor experiences in the park. The Community Partners encourage conservation of resources within and in proximity to the park. Private landowners are stewards of the park's resources. The needs of private landowners are addressed in park management decisions. A nonprofit "friends group" – established to assist with accomplishing the park's mission – helps the NPS in various ways, such as by providing volunteer services, assisting with resource management, conducting fundraising efforts, and publicizing important issues.

Resource Protection. Park management encourages conservation of the historic and natural resources within and in proximity to the park by landowners, local governments, organizations, and businesses. Significant resources are protected and preserved by the NPS and the Key Partners for the enjoyment of future generations. Volunteers help patrol and protect sensitive resources from vandalism, theft, and destruction.

Land Protection. To the extent that funding is available, resources are protected and the conversion of rural lands to developed uses within the park is reduced through fee simple acquisition of property or purchase of conservation easements. The Key Partners, other nonprofit organizations, and a park friends group assist the NPS with securing funding for land acquisition.

Visitor Experience. The NPS and the Key Partners collaborate to tell all stories related to the park's primary interpretive themes wherever appropriate, whether at sites owned by the NPS or the Key Partners. The NPS interprets the larger park landscapes. Battle of Cedar Creek reenactments continue as special events sponsored by some of the Key Partners. The visitor experience is safe and enjoyable; visitors experience a high degree of satisfaction from their trip to the park.

Visitor Facilities. The NPS and the Key Partners have a central hub where visitors can be oriented to the entire park. Park facilities provide services and opportunities for visitors to explore the park. Undue redundancy of facility development is avoided. Site suitability criteria are used to determine the location of visitor facilities. Sustainable design and construction methods, techniques, and materials are used.

1.5 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Overview

1.5.1 The Park's Regional Context

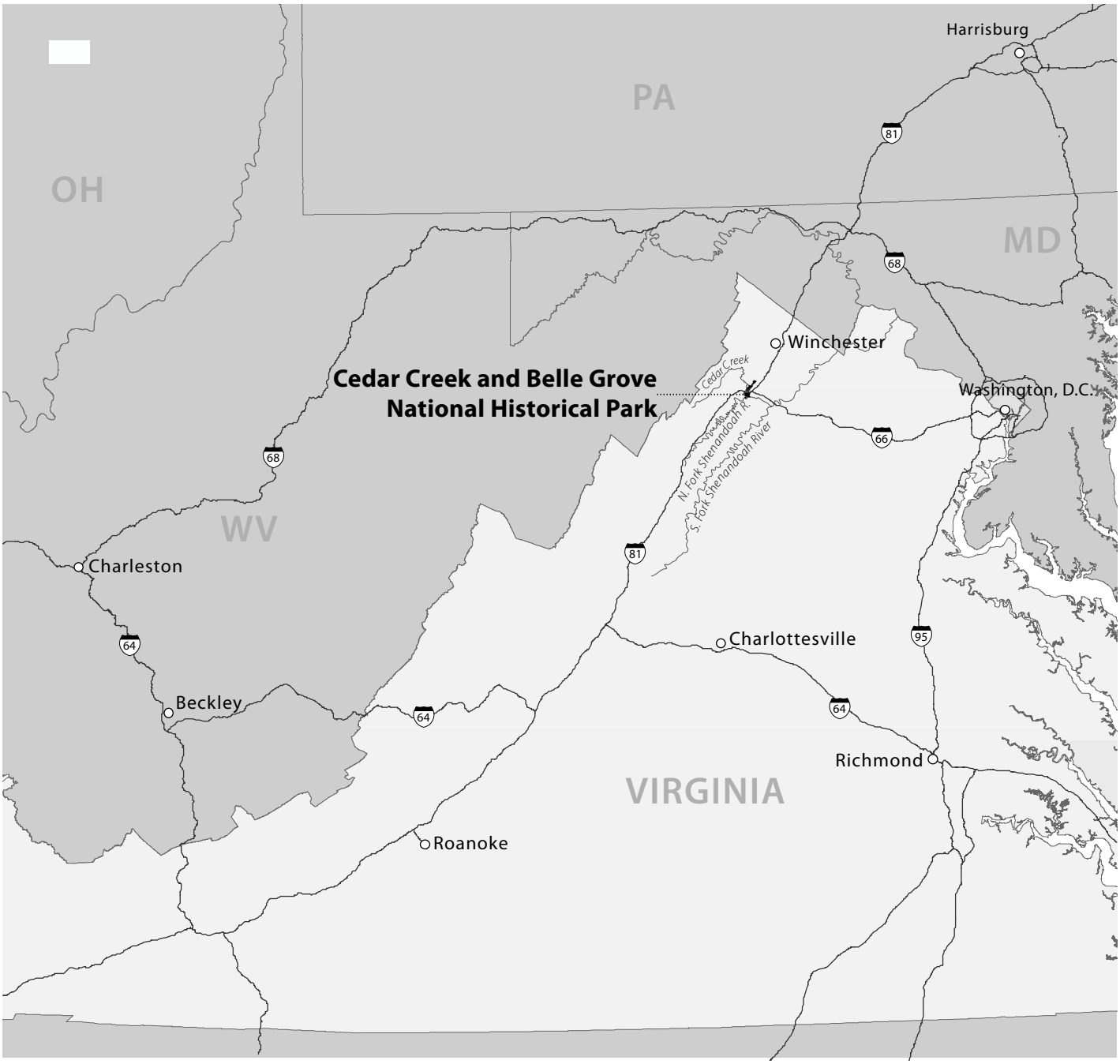
Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is located in the northern Shenandoah Valley approximately 75 miles west of Washington, D.C. (Figure 1.1). The northern Shenandoah Valley in Virginia encompasses the five counties in the northwest corner of the commonwealth between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the eastern slopes of the Appalachian Mountains. The lower sections of the North and South Forks of the Shenandoah River meander through the valley, converging at Front Royal to create the Shenandoah River. The park encompasses land within Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren counties, Virginia, and adjoins the towns of Strasburg and Middletown, Virginia, near the I-81 and I-66 interchange. Winchester is approximately ten miles north of the park. Front Royal – a gateway to Shenandoah National Park – is six miles east of the park. George Washington National Forest is immediately to the south.

A diverse blend of agriculture, tourism, and industry drives the regional economy in the northern Shenandoah Valley. Agriculture has historically been the primary economic activity. Food to support the Confederacy during the Civil War came largely from the valley, leading to its distinction as "the Breadbasket of the Confederacy." Until the 1970s the Shenandoah Valley remained largely rural in character. With construction of I-81 and I-66, the valley became a major north south transportation corridor in the eastern United States and readily accessible to the Metropolitan Washington Area.

Since the opening of the interstates, the northern Shenandoah Valley has experienced dramatic growth, particularly in the I-81 corridor adjacent to the city of Winchester. Some older towns have also experienced significant change in recent years. The town of Strasburg – immediately adjacent to Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – grew by 43 percent from 1980 to 2000. Development in the I-81 corridor has largely been suburban in character – typically moderate density residential development with supporting commercial centers along major roads and at interstate interchanges. Many new residents are employed in the Metropolitan Washington Area. Manufacturing and other industries have also developed in the vicinity of interstate interchanges. In addition the Shenandoah Valley and nearby

Figure 1.1

Regional Location



Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

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mountains have become popular tourist destinations, attracting visitors to a number of national parks, national forests, historic battlefields, rivers and streams, and other recreational and historic points of interest. Outside of the interstate corridors and towns, the five Virginia counties in the northern Shenandoah Valley remain largely rural in character and farming is a major land use, although agriculture is not one of the top economic activities. All five counties are seeking to retain the rural character in their long-term growth management strategies.

1.5.2 Overview of the Park's Resources

- **Cultural Resource Overview**

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP includes a nationally significant Civil War historic landscape and antebellum plantation manor house. It was the site of the decisive October 19, 1864 Union victory that defeated the Confederate army in the Shenandoah Valley and effectively placed the valley in the hands of northern forces for the remainder of the war, clearing the way for continuation of the systematic destruction of the "Breadbasket of the Confederacy." The park encompasses a portion of the core fighting area of the Cedar Creek Battlefield. The Union victory at Cedar Creek – combined with the Union successes in Georgia – rekindled public support for Abraham Lincoln, leading to a Republican victory in the November 1864 presidential election, ultimately leading to the end of the Civil War.

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP also encompasses part of the 7,500-acre Belle Grove Plantation, including Belle Grove Manor House. The manor house was built by Isaac Hite, Jr., a Revolutionary War patriot who was married to the sister of James Madison, fifth president of the United States. Evidence suggests that Thomas Jefferson helped design the house. The manor house was at the center of the Battle of Cedar Creek and served as headquarters for the occupying forces.

Preliminary archeological studies have revealed evidence of numerous archeological sites and site complexes within the park boundary (Geier et al 2006). These include sites that exhibit evidence of American Indian occupation, sites with potential military significance, sites associated with residential and agricultural development beginning in the late 18th century, sites related to water-powered milling and quarrying activities, and transportation-related sites such as fords, bridges, roads (such as Valley Pike), and rail lines.

Preliminary ethnographic resource studies indicate that there are places in the park that have significance for their associations with American Indians, African-Americans, Germans, and Scots-Irish; non-conformist religious practitioners; and commemorators of the Confederacy (Bragdon et al 2006). These places offer opportunities to tell stories that can bring the area's lengthy and complex history to life and to demonstrate that borderlands or crossroads areas - such as the northern Shenandoah Valley in which the park is located – constitute the focus of intense, multi-faceted cultural experiences.

- **Natural Resource Overview**

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is located within the ridge and valley physiographic province, composed of rolling uplands flanked by discontinuous northeast trending ridges, bluffs, and foothills. Elevations range between 500 and 700 feet. The North Fork of the Shenandoah River flows along the park's southern boundary. Cedar Creek flows along much of the park's western boundary, joining the North Fork of the Shenandoah within the park. Prime farmland soils occur in approximately 15 percent of the park. Vegetative cover is composed of forest and woodlands (40 percent), grasslands (50 percent), and riparian/wetland (10 percent). Many areas of the park are known to have significant natural resources, such as 1) the Panther Conservation Site, encompassing a unique montane dry calcarious forest/woodland area with high biodiversity along Cedar Creek; 2) the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, Meadow Brook, Middle Marsh Brook, Buffalo Marsh Run, and Cedar Creek, designated by the state as "threatened and endangered species waters" due to the presence of three state listed species; and 3) a portion of the North Fork near Strasburg, designated a "stream conservation unit" because of its general biodiversity significance. No federally-listed plant or animal species are known to be present in the park, although several occur within the broader three-county area.

1.5.3 The Park's Origin and Legislative History

President George W. Bush signed legislation establishing Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP on December 19, 2002 (Public Law 107-373) (see Appendix A). Congressional action creating the park culminated a 35-year effort by local communities, organizations, agencies, and the general public to protect the significant cultural resources in the Cedar Creek area related to the Civil War and the cultural history of the Shenandoah Valley.

Cedar Creek Battlefield and Belle Grove Plantation National Historic Landmark was designated on August 11, 1969. The boundaries of the National Historic Landmark include some of the core area of the battlefield where fighting occurred on October 19, 1864.

In 1990 Congress passed the Civil War Sites Study Act (Public Law 101-628) and charged the NPS with studying Civil War sites and battlefields in the Shenandoah Valley. In 1992, the NPS released the *Study of Civil War Sites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia* (NPS 1992). The study identified 15 primary battlefields and examined the feasibility of adding the region and its battlefields to the national park system. Based upon findings the National Park Advisory Board recommended that the NPS participate in planning and interpretation within a partnership park or national heritage corridor, emphasizing the importance of the public and private sectors working together to protect the resources of the Shenandoah Valley.

In 1993 the NPS developed the *Draft Shenandoah Valley Civil War Battlefields Assessment* (NPS 1993) which looked at management of the battlefields in greater depth. The assessment recommended the creation of a Shenandoah Valley Heritage Area and proposed the development of a partnership preservation plan to set a comprehensive agenda for the conservation, management, interpretation, and promotion of the resources of the Shenandoah Valley.

In addition to these studies, many local plans and studies were prepared. Among them were the *Frederick County-Winchester Civil War Site Inventory* (Frederick County 1994) and the *Battlefield Network Plan* (Frederick County 1997) prepared by Frederick County-Winchester Battlefield Task Force.

These preservation efforts and past studies led to passage of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District and Commission Act of 1996 (P.L 104-333). The act created the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Commission and charged it with preparing a management plan for the eight counties and four independent cities included within the historic district. Section 606(g)(6) of the act specifically charged the NPS with completing a special resource study to determine whether the district or components of the district met the criteria for designation as a unit of the national park system.

The ensuing *Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Management Plan* (Heritage Partners, Inc. et al 2000c) was approved by Congress on October 25, 2000. Pursuant to the plan the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation was incorporated as the lead managing partner for the district, responsible for fulfilling the recommendations of the approved management plan.

The separate NPS effort to evaluate the potential for a national park unit in the valley involved a wide-reaching program for soliciting public involvement to ensure that the special resource study built on past preservation efforts and reflected the ideas and concerns of valley residents and others interested in the historic district. Public support and interest in the study was overwhelming and strong public support was evident for continued NPS involvement in the area (NPS 2001). The study addressed the factors necessary to ensure long-term resource protection and to accommodate visitor use, considering the size and configuration of the area, access and development issues, ownership patterns, land value and acquisition costs, and the ability to effectively manage the area at reasonable cost. Findings summarized in the *Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Special Resource Study* (NPS 2001) determined that Cedar Creek Battlefield area – including much of the land within the National Historic Landmark boundary - met the feasibility criteria and offered many opportunities for efficient, cost-effective administration as a unit of the national park system. The study further found that much of the land was in large contiguous farms and that fee-simple ownership would be necessary to protect key resources from development. It warned that if no action is taken, it would be likely

that only fragments of the battlefield and other resources in the Cedar Creek area would be protected, and opportunities for visitor enjoyment would be severely limited.

Ultimately the *Special Resources Study* (NPS 2001) recommended that the Cedar Creek Battlefield be included as a unit of the national park system. In December 2002, however, Public Law 107-373 authorized establishment of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, an area containing far more diverse and extensive resources than envisioned in the study. In addition to Civil War battlefield resources, the new park contains prehistoric resources, ecologically important areas, evidence of valley settlement and early European history of the region, and Belle Grove and plantation culture.

1.5.4 Park Boundary, Size, and Ownership

Section 5 of the park's enabling legislation established the park boundary at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. There are approximately 3,713 acres within the Congressionally authorized park boundary (Figure 1.2). Currently the NPS owns 8.0 acres within the park boundary. The park's Key Partners (see Section 1.5.6 below) own approximately 1,307 acres and hold conservation easements on an additional 32 acres.

At Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP the NPS is authorized to acquire additional property only from willing sellers, by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange. The NPS is also authorized to hold conservation easements within the park and on lands adjacent to the park, and may acquire land outside the park boundary for development of visitor, administrative, museum, curatorial, and maintenance facilities. The park enabling legislation does not give the NPS authority to condemn private property.

1.5.5 The Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory Commission

In the park's enabling legislation, Congress directed that a 15-member federal advisory commission be established for four purposes:

- advising the Secretary of the Interior in the preparation and implementation of a general management plan for the park
- advising the Secretary of the Interior with respect to the identification of sites of significance outside the park boundary deemed necessary to fulfill the park's purpose
- encouraging conservation of the historic and natural resources within and in proximity of the park by landowners, local governments, organizations, and businesses
- to advise the Secretary of the Interior regarding the designation of funds from possible endowment funds established with the NPS for the interpretation, preservation, and maintenance of park resources and public access areas

The Park Advisory Commission met bimonthly from July 2005 to September 2007, and since then has met quarterly. The Commission has worked cooperatively with the NPS planning team to develop the GMP. The GMP alternatives reflect the advice and recommendations received from the Commission during these meetings.

1.5.6 The Park's Key Partners

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is one of several "partnership parks" in the national park system. In the park's enabling legislation Congress identified a number of parties with whom the NPS will work cooperatively to accomplish the purposes for which the park was established. NPS's partners include local landowners, governments, and several independent not-for-profit organizations. Section 13 of the park's enabling legislation directs the NPS to acknowledge and support the continued participation of five Key Partners that own and operate properties within the park for the benefit of the public. The Key Partners and their specific functions highlighted in the park's enabling legislation are described below.

Much of the land owned by the Key Partners includes the core fighting area associated with the Battle of Cedar Creek. As of July 2008, the Key Partners had acquired within the park 1,307 acres in fee and had protected 32 acres through conservation easements. A combination of NPS, state, and local funding, as well as private donations, have been used to acquire interests in land. Some property has been donated. Approximately $1.6 million in NPS funding has been spent by the Key Partners on land acquisition (see Table 1.1).

- **Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation**

Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation owns approximately 308.59 acres within the park. The Foundation's landholdings include core area battlefield surrounding the historic Heater House, land along Cedar Creek where the remains of the Federal XIX Corps Earthworks are located, and a parcel on the east side of Valley Pike (Route 11) where the Foundation operates a visitor contact facility with administrative offices. These properties are used in part for the annual Battle of Cedar Creek reenactment hosted by the Foundation.

The park enabling legislation states that the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation may:

> *"continue to own, operate, and manage the lands acquired by the Foundation within the park*
>
> *continue to conduct reenactments and other events within the park*
>
> *transfer ownership interest in portions of their land to the NPS by donation, sale, or other means that meet the legal requirements of NPS land acquisitions"*

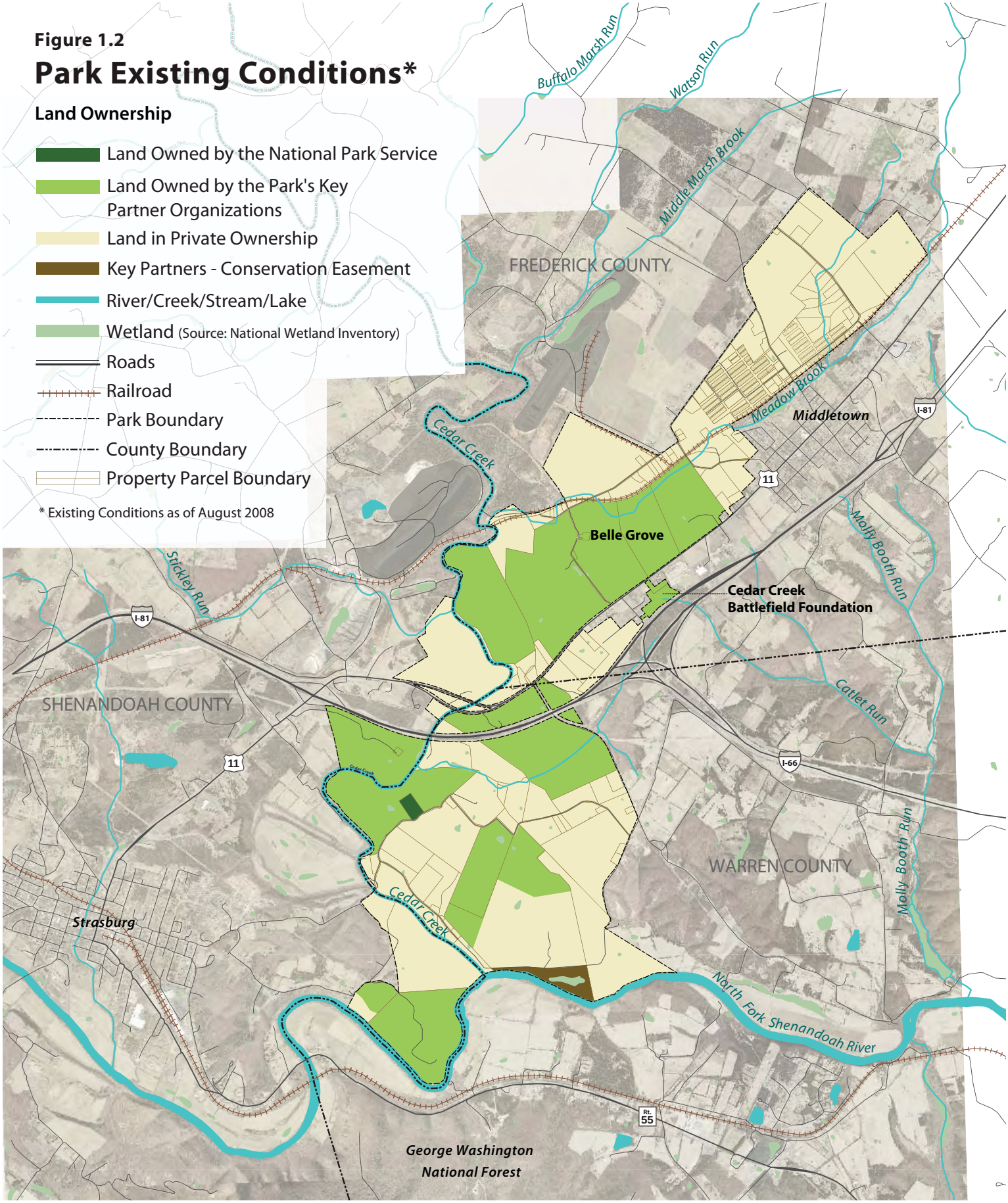
Figure 1.2

Park Existing Conditions*

Land Ownership

- Land Owned by the National Park Service
- Land Owned by the Park's Key Partner Organizations
- Land in Private Ownership
- Key Partners - Conservation Easement
- River/Creek/Stream/Lake
- Wetland (Source: National Wetland Inventory)
- Roads
- Railroad
- Park Boundary
- County Boundary
- Property Parcel Boundary

* Existing Conditions as of August 2008



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N

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

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Table 1.1 NPS Funding Spent by the Key Partners for Land Acquisition at Cedar Creek

Key Partner	Funding Source	Year	Amount
Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation	National Park Service, Civil War Commemorative Coin Grant	1996	$72,993
Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation	National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant	2000-2001	$250,000
Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation	National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant	2001	$75,000
National Trust for Historic Preservation	National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant	2002	$250,000
Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation	National Park Service	2002	$380,000
Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation	National Park Service	2004	$350,000
Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation	National Park Service	2005	$270,000
TOTAL			**$1,647,993**

- **National Trust for Historic Preservation and Belle Grove, Inc.**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation owns 283.42 acres that were originally part of the 7,500-acre Belle Grove Plantation and that are in the core area of the Cedar Creek Battlefield. The National Trust acquired Belle Grove Manor House, related buildings, and the adjoining land in 1964 through a bequest from Francis Welles Hunnewell. Since 1972 Belle Grove, Inc. has assumed stewardship responsibility for Belle Grove Plantation through a cooperative lease agreement with the National Trust.

Belle Grove, Inc. is a nonprofit organization (under *Internal Revenue Code* Section 501 (c) (3)) whose mission is the stewardship of Belle Grove Plantation and Harmony Hall - both National Historic Landmarks located within the boundary of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. Belle Grove, Inc. owns 104.11 acres within the park, including property on which lies the Belle Grove overseer's cottage, a tract along Water Plant Road on the east side of Route 11, and property on Fort Bowman Road near Strasburg, including Harmony Hall (Bowman's Fort) and adjoining land along Cedar Creek. Belle Grove, Inc. manages both Belle Grove manor house and Harmony Hall for the benefit and inspiration of the public. Belle Grove Plantation is regularly open to the public and serves as the focus of many educational and interpretive programs as well as special events. Harmony Hall is open on a limited basis for small group tours.

The Cedar Creek and Belle Grove Plantation NHP enabling legislation states the following:

> *"The National Trust for Historic Preservation and Belle Grove, Inc. may continue to own, operate, and manage Belle Grove Plantation and its structures and grounds within the park boundary*
>
> *Belle Grove may continue to own the house and grounds at Bowman's Fort (Harmony Hall) for the purpose of permanent preservation, with a long-term goal of opening the property to the public"*

- **Shenandoah County**

Shenandoah County owns 151 acres on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River at the southern end of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. The county acquired the land for purposes of providing a passive recreation area and providing additional access to the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. Currently the site is not open to the public. The Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP enabling legislation states that Shenandoah County:

> *"may continue to own, operate, and manage the Keister park site for the benefit of the public"*

- **Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation**

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation is the nonprofit foundation created in 2000 by Congress as the entity responsible for preserving, protecting, interpreting, and promoting ten Civil War battlefields and related sites in the Shenandoah Valley, including the Cedar Creek Battlefield (see Figure 1.3). The Foundation is also the entity charged with implementing the *Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Management Plan* (Heritage Partners, Inc. et al 2000c). As of July 2008 the Foundation owned 460.3 acres and holds conservation easements on 32 acres within the park boundary. These properties are currently in agricultural use and are not open to the public.

The park enabling legislation states that the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation…

> *"may continue to administer and manage the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District in partnership with the NPS and in accordance with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Historic District Management Plan"*

1.5.7 The Park's Community Partners

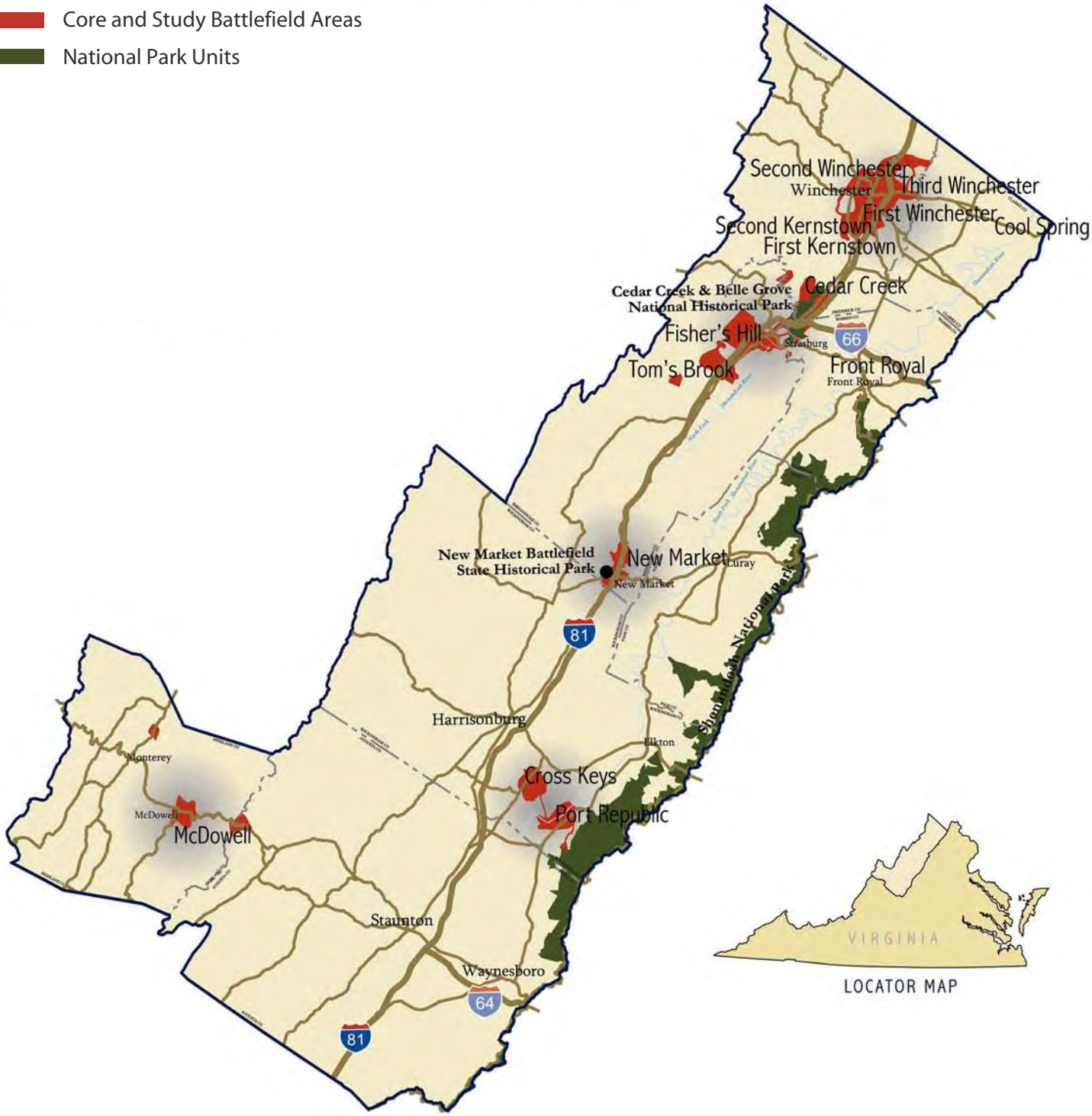
The park's Community Partners include the adjacent historic towns of Strasburg and Middletown, Virginia, as well as Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren counties, Virginia. Section 13 of the enabling legislation states that the NPS and its community partners *"will cooperate in furthering the purposes of the park."*

Figure 1.3

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District

Core and Study Battlefield Areas

National Park Units



Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

VIRGINIA

National Park Service **U.S. Department of the Interior**

1.5.8 Technical and Financial Assistance to the Park's Partners

The park's enabling legislation states that the NPS shall encourage conservation of the historic and natural resources within and in proximity to the park by landowners, local governments, organizations, and businesses. The legislation authorizes the NPS to provide technical and financial assistance to individuals, organizations, and governmental entities for purposes of preserving historic structures within the park; maintaining natural or cultural landscapes of the park; local preservation planning, interpretation, and management of public visitation for the park; and, furthering goals of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation related to the park.

1.6 Foundation for Planning

The *Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Foundation for Planning* (NPS 2006a) provides the basic guidance for management decisions made at the park. It was developed early in the GMP planning process. It is a formal statement of the park's core mission that reflects a shared understanding or consensus regarding what is most important about the park. The *Foundation for Planning* is composed of the following elements:

- the park's statement of purpose
- the park's statement of significance
- the park's primary interpretive themes
- the park's fundamental and other important resources and values
- the park's legislative mandates and other special mandates
- general legislative and policy requirements

1.6.1 Park Statement of Purpose

The park's purpose statements convey the reasons for which the park was set aside as a unit of the national park system. They are grounded in an analysis of park legislation and legislative history, and provide fundamental criteria against which the appropriateness of GMP recommendations, operational decisions, and actions are tested.

The purposes of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP are stated in the park's *Foundation for Planning* (NPS 2006a):

> *"to preserve, protect, and interpret a nationally significant Civil War landscape and antebellum agricultural community for the education, inspiration, and benefit of present and future generations*
>
> *to tell the rich story of Shenandoah Valley history from early settlement onward, including the Battle of Cedar Creek and its significance in the course of the Civil War*

to preserve the significant historic, natural, cultural, military, and scenic resources found in and around the Cedar Creek Battlefield and Belle Grove Plantation areas through partnerships with local landowners and the community

to serve as a focal point within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District to recognize and interpret important Civil War events and geographic locations, including the key battles and campaigns of 1862 and 1864"

1.6.2 Park Statement of Significance

The park's significance statements express why the park's resources and values are important enough to warrant national park designation. They accomplish the following: (1) they describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and national park system context, (2) they are directly linked to the purpose of the park, (3) they are substantiated by data or consensus, and (4) they reflect the most current scientific or scholarly inquiry and cultural perceptions about the park.

Four statements express why the resources and values of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP are important enough to warrant national park designation:

*The **Battle of Cedar Creek** was a principal strategic operation that had a decisive influence on the Valley Campaign of 1864 and a direct impact on the course of the Civil War. The Union victory contributed to the re-election of President Abraham Lincoln and nearly eliminated the Confederate military presence in the Shenandoah Valley. The battlefield and strategic landscapes at Cedar Creek retain a high degree of integrity, serve to memorialize the events of the battle, and contribute to greater understanding of the Civil War.*

*Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP include well-preserved cultural and natural landscape features from the **early European settlement** of the Shenandoah Valley when the region was a frontier, including features associated with transportation, migration, and commerce.*

*Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP contains historically significant examples of the **antebellum agricultural community** that defined the northern Shenandoah Valley, its ethnic and cultural traditions, merchant milling and market systems, and farm economy that included both slave labor and family farms, as well as examples of the post-Civil War transformation of a changing labor structure. A representative example of the valley's agricultural history and culture is preserved and interpreted at the nationally significant Belle Grove Manor House.*

*The park's **natural and cultural landscapes** are nationally and regionally significant. The panoramic views of the mountains, natural areas, waterways, and pastoral surroundings convey an aesthetic and historic sense of 19th and 20th century life in the Shenandoah Valley, provide visitors with an inspiring setting of great natural beauty, and offer outstanding opportunities for quiet and solitude in an ever expanding suburban area.*

1.6.3 Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are the park's attributes – its features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, opportunities for visitor enjoyment, or others – that are critical to achieving the park's purpose and to maintaining its significance. **Other important resources and values** are the other park attributes that are important, although they are not related to the park's purpose and significance. Table 1.2 presents the statements that describe the fundamental and other important resources and values of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. These are the fundamental resources and values that warrant primary consideration during planning and management or that are important to park management and planning.

1.6.4 Primary Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are the most important ideas or concepts to be communicated to the public about a park. At Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP there are seven primary interpretive themes (Table 1.3). These themes relate directly to the park's purpose and significance. They connect the fundamental resources and values that contribute to the park's significance with relevant ideas, meanings, concepts, contexts, beliefs, and values. The themes provide the framework for interpretation at the park, drive what is appropriate in the park, and provide the basis for the park's educational programs. Park managers take these themes into account when setting priorities for events and activities. The themes also provide direction for planners and designers of the park's exhibits, publications, and audiovisual programs.

Table 1.2 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

__Left__: Scene from the 2005 reenactment of the Battle of Cedar Creek

__Right__: Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation property near the XIX Corps earthworks

Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

Park Significance Statement 1

The Battle of Cedar Creek was a principal strategic operation that had a decisive influence on the Valley Campaign of 1864 and a direct impact on the course of the Civil War. The Union victory contributed to the re-election of President Abraham Lincoln and nearly eliminated the Confederate military presence in the Shenandoah Valley. The battlefield and strategic landscapes at Cedar Creek retain a high degree of integrity, serve to memorialize the events of the battle, and contribute to greater understanding of the Civil War.

Fundamental Resources Related to Statement 1

- the Cedar Creek Battlefield – a National Historic Landmark – and its resources, including buildings, structures, monuments, river fords, historic landscapes, and archeological resources associated with the Battle of Cedar Creek
- archeological resources associated with the Battle of Cedar Creek and the Union Army's encampment that was attacked, including those that have been recovered as well as those that remain underground
- road traces, earthworks, and sections of the Old Valley Turnpike that played a critical role in the Battle of Cedar Creek
- landscape, structures, and archeological resources within the park that help interpret the battles and deployments associated with Stonewall Jackson's campaigns of 1862 and avenues of approach
- military encampments and avenues of approach

Fundamental Values Related to Statement 1

- the geography, topography, and landscape features of the region which directly influenced the conduct and outcome of the Battle of Cedar Creek and the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley
- the opportunity for visitors to experience the authentic locations of the Battle of Cedar Creek and to retrace its course

Other Important Values Related to Statement 1

- other battlefields within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District that help in understanding the Battle of Cedar Creek and, in a large context, the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley
- folklore and folk culture in the Shenandoah Valley that has been influenced and shaped by the Civil War

Table 1.2 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values (continued)

Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

***Left**: Harmony Hall (Bowman's Fort)*

***Right**: Long Meadow Road near Long Meadow Farm*

Park Significance Statement 2

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP includes well-preserved cultural and natural landscape features from the early European settlement of the Shenandoah Valley when the region was a frontier, including features associated with transportation, migration, and commerce.

Fundamental Resources Related to Statement 2

- Belle Grove, Harmony Hall, George Bowman Mill, Long Meadow Farm, Heater House, Whitham Farm, and their associated settings
- prehistoric and historic archeological resources containing information on the interaction between and effect of the natural environment on early prehistoric and historic settlement life

Fundamental Values Related to Statement 2

- transportation, commerce, and the settlement pattern in the northern Shenandoah Valley
- the Valley Pike (Route 11) as a major roadway throughout its history – from a hunting path, to a wagon road, to a turnpike, to U.S. Route 11
- the topography and landscape, and its influence on travel, transportation, and commerce

Other Important Resources Related to Statement 2

- historic road traces

Other Important Values Related to Statement 2

- the religious institutions of the Shenandoah Valley (Quaker, Mennonite, Church of the Brethren) that distinguish the area from eastern Virginia and more closely link the region with Pennsylvania

Table 1.2 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values (continued)

Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

__Left__: Belle Grove Manor House, owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and managed by Belle Grove, Inc.

__Right__: Bowman's Mill Road ford across Cedar Creek, looking east into the park

Park Significance Statement 3

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP contains historically significant examples of the antebellum agricultural community that defined the northern Shenandoah Valley, its ethnic and cultural traditions, merchant milling and market systems, and farm economy that included both slave labor and family farms, as well as examples of the post-Civil War transformation of a changing labor structure. A representative example of the valley's agricultural history and culture is preserved and interpreted at the nationally significant Belle Grove plantation.

Fundamental Resources Related to Statement 3

- Belle Grove, a National Historic Landmark, and its settings
- the working fields of Isaac Bowman's "Mount Pleasant" Plantation, the Solomon Heater Farm (Hoge's and Cornelius Baldwin's "Cedar Grove"), and the well-preserved archeological remains of the "Hotchkiss" Farmstead
- archeological resources associated with agricultural production and milling: primary merchant milling and rural industrial complexes including the Daniel Stickley Mills and Farm, the Hite-Hottle milling and distillery complex at the mouth of Meadow Brook, the Isaac Bowman Mill complex on Cedar Creek, and the Miller's Mill on Meadow Brook north of Middletown
- a complex network of extant road traces that reflect the economic and social fabric of the rural community and its tie to the emerging market centers at Strasburg and Middletown
- cultural landscapes associated with agriculture, plantation life, and family farming

Fundamental Values Related to Statement 3

- plantation life and culture
- limestone's importance to the Shenandoah Valley as a building material for structures, as the parent material for the fertile soils, and as the resource that supported emergence of an important 19th century quarrying industry
- the transportation systems that allowed for social interaction and the movement of agricultural products
- the significance of the Shenandoah Valley's granary to the Civil War

Other Important Resources Related to Statement 3

- cemeteries
- fords and bridges

Other Important Values Related to Statement 3

- family farms and farmsteads in the Shenandoah Valley and their relationship to Belle Grove Plantation
- The changing agriculture in the northern Shenandoah Valley – subsistence farming to wheat production to livestock to orchards – and the market forces that drove those changes

Table 1.2 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values (continued)

Fundamental and Other Important Resources and Values

***Left**: Confluence of Cedar Creek and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River (Signal Knob visible in the background)*

***Right**: Panoramic view from Valley Pike (Route 11) of the Heater House (owned by the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation), the Shenandoah Valley, and the Allegheny Mountains*

Park Significance Statement 4

The park's natural and cultural landscapes are nationally and regionally significant. The panoramic views of the mountains, natural areas, waterways, and pastoral surroundings convey an aesthetic and historic sense of 19th and 20th century life in the Shenandoah Valley, provide visitors with an inspiring setting of great natural beauty, and offer outstanding opportunities for quiet and solitude in an ever expanding suburban area.

Fundamental Resources Related to Statement 4

- Cedar Creek as a high quality stream and important riparian area

Fundamental Values Related to Statement 4

- landscapes and panoramic views, particularly of the Blue Ridge, Massanutten, and Allegheny Mountains
- the natural resources of the Shenandoah Valley and their influence on human activities before, during, and after the Civil War

Other Important Values Related to Statement 4

- the limestone geologic system that creates waterways – Cedar Creek and the Shenandoah River – that are unique to the region
- patterns of field, woodlot, and lane in the region

Table 1.3 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Primary Interpretive Themes

Primary Interpretive Themes
Overall Fertile soil and an excellent transportation corridor brought wealth and prosperity to the peacetime Shenandoah Valley, but made it a target of destruction and an avenue of invasion and counter-invasion during the Civil War, bringing death and destruction and permanent change to the social order and economic life of the valley.
Natural The well-watered rich limestone soil and other abundant natural resources of the Shenandoah Valley supported a flourishing Native American population and attracted early settlers to the region.
Colonial Virginia colonial land policies promised both opportunity and danger to new settlers as the Shenandoah Valley became a buffer to French and Indian claims.
Ante-Bellum Belle Grove Manor House represents the height of a Shenandoah Valley agricultural society and economic system based on grain and slavery.
Military The desperate and dramatic Battle of Cedar Creek established federal control of the Shenandoah Valley, ending military threats to Washington and denying the valley's rich granary to the Confederate Army.
Political Combined with the capture of Atlanta, the Battle of Cedar Creek virtually assured the reelection of Abraham Lincoln and the relentless prosecution of the war to its ultimate conclusion.
Post-War The area encompassed by Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP underwent significant changes in land ownership, settlement patterns, and labor systems as a result of the Civil War.

1.6.5 Legislative Mandates

At Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP a number of important legislative mandates are included in the park's enabling legislation that direct how the park is to be managed (see Table 1.4).

1.6.6 Legislative and Policy Requirements

Park management at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is guided by the enabling legislation for the park, as well as a number of laws, acts, and executive orders that are recognized by NPS as vital to its mission. NPS *Management Policies* (NPS 2006d) also guides management of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP and other national park units. These management policies and the servicewide laws define the conditions desired in national parks and ensure that parks are managed in

Table 1.4 Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP – Legislative Mandates

Legislative Mandates (from Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Act, Public Law 107-373, December 19, 2002)	
Park Advisory Commission [16 USC 410iii-7]	There is established the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory Commission whose duties are to: - advise the Secretary in the preparation and implementation of a GMP - advise the Secretary with respect to identification of sites of significance outside the park boundary deemed necessary to fulfill the purposes of the park
Key Partners Organizations [16 USC 410iii-11]	In recognition that central portions of the park are owned and operated for the benefit of the public by key partner organizations, the Secretary shall acknowledge and support the continued participation of these partners in the management of the park: - Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation - National Trust for Historic Preservation and Belle Grove, Inc. - Shenandoah County - park community partners (defined as surrounding towns and counties - Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation Each of these key partner organizations may continue to own, operate, and manage their lands within the park.
Battle Reenactments [16 USC 410iii-11]	The Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation may continue to conduct battle reenactments within the park.
Conservation of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP [16 USC 410iii-11]	Encouragement of Conservation – The Secretary and the Commission shall encourage conservation of the historic and natural resources within and in proximity to the park by landowners, local governments, organizations, and businesses Provision of Technical Assistance – The Secretary may provide technical assistance to local governments, in cooperative efforts which complement the values of the park Cooperation by federal agencies – Any federal entity conducting supporting activities directly affecting the park shall consult, cooperate, and, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate its activities with the Secretary in a manner that: - is consistent with the purposes of this Act and the standards and criteria established pursuant to the GMP developed pursuant to Section 8 - is not likely to have an adverse effect on the resources of the park, and - is likely to provide for full public participation in order to consider the views of all interested parties
Private Property Owners [16 USC 410iii-6]	The general management plan shall contain provisions to address the needs of owners of non-federal land, including independent nonprofit organizations within the boundaries of the park

accordance with national regulations consistently applied throughout the national park system. These requirements are summarized in Appendix B.

1.7 GMP/EIS Scoping Process

1.7.1 Scoping Activities

The NPS initiated the scoping process on June 21, 2005, with publication in the *Federal Register* of the notice of intent to prepare the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP GMP and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As required pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), scoping is an ongoing process that has continued since that time. It has occurred internally with the NPS staff, its Key Partners, and the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory Commission, and externally with the park's Community Partners, other public agencies, and the general public. The objectives of the scoping process are to obtain information regarding the following:

- the issues related to management of the park
- the range of management alternatives that should be considered in the GMP to address those issues
- the extent of the analysis necessary for making an informed decision on the preferred management alternative

Scoping activities included the following:

- identification of issues and impact topics
- review of other related projects and planning documents
- preparation of a public involvement plan
- identification of consultation and coordination required with other agencies
- development of a schedule for NEPA compliance which allowed adequate time to prepare and distribute alternatives under consideration for public review and comment prior to selection of the preferred alternative consultation with federal and local agencies

External scoping involved a variety of public involvement activities, summarized as follows:

- scoping activities were conducted at the bimonthly meetings of the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory Commission from July 2005 through November 2006
- scoping activities were conducted at several monthly meetings of the park's Key Partners

- the NPS met on several occasions with elected officials and staff of the town of Middletown, town of Strasburg, Frederick County, Shenandoah County, and Warren County
- the NPS met with numerous individuals affiliated with local colleges and not for profit organizations
- the NPS met with numerous other stakeholder groups
- the NPS hosted a public scoping meeting in Strasburg (June 20, 2006), Middletown (June 21, 2006), and Front Royal (June 22, 2006)
- the NPS consulted with numerous federal, state, and regional agencies
- a newsletter was mailed to interested parties in February 2007 and posted on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website; the newsletter outlined the GMP alternatives under consideration and included a mail-back response form with a series of questions designed to elicit public comment on the alternatives
- the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website provided opportunities for the public to provide comments via the internet and to review newsletters and announcements of upcoming events that were routinely posted by the NPS

Scoping activities and interests and concerns identified through December 2006 are summarized in the *GMP/EIS Scoping Report* (NPS 2006b).

1.7.2 Interests and Concerns Identified through Scoping

Project scoping identified a wide range of issues relevant to the management of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. In order to identify which issues are appropriately addressed in general management level planning they have been sorted into four categories, as follows:

- interests and concerns that are appropriately addressed by the GMP
- interests and concerns that are adequately addressed by servicewide law or policy guidance
- interests and concerns that should be addressed in implementation plans
- interests and concerns that are beyond the scope of the GMP or future implementation plans

The complete list of comments received – sorted by these four categories – is included in Appendix C.

1.8 Decisions Needed to Guide Park Management

Decision points are the major decisions to be addressed in general management planning. They are the questions that the GMP will consider and answer through the development of alternative management concepts, each offering a different approach to future management of park resources and visitor experience. Decision points are defined through distillation of the most relevant management issues – the concerns, opportunities, interests, expectations, and suggestions – that emerge through the public scoping process.

The alternatives considered for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP address seven decision points. The decision points are described below along with a brief summary of how the GMP alternatives respond to each.

- **Decision Point 1 – How would the park's resources be protected?**

Land development within the park's boundary is a major threat to the park's resources and its viewshed. Only 1,339 of the 3,713 acres within the legislative boundary of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP are currently protected by the park's Key Partners. In addition the NPS owns 8.0 acres. In recent years development has dramatically increased in the I-81 corridor from Strasburg to Winchester. Considerable rural land in the Middletown and Strasburg areas has been converted to developed uses. Growth is anticipated to continue with further loss of the rural land base within and around the park. In addition the proposed expansion of I-81 now under consideration by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has the potential to impact from 325 to 436 acres of land within the park, most of which is likely to be permanently taken for highway use (FHWA 2007a).

Protecting the park's land base and the resources on those lands could be accomplished in three primary ways:

- the land could be acquired (or conservation easements could be acquired) by the NPS, the Key Partners, the Community Partners, or other public or nonprofit conservation organization
- the Community Partners could manage growth to protect park resources
- the park's private landowners could take voluntarily actions to protect park resources

The extent and timing of actions in these three areas would determine if the park would ultimately consist of a patchwork of developed private lands or if it would be expanded to encompass significant historic sites embedded in a protected landscape. The GMP scoping sessions have indicated concerns for the park's future integrity and confirmed a strong sense of urgency for undertaking effective protection strategies.

Managing growth to protect park resources is made difficult because the park's legislative boundary encompasses portions of Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren counties and is adjacent to the towns of Strasburg and Middletown, both of which have authority to annex land within the park boundary. Privately owned land within the park's legislative boundary is subject to different land use plans and regulations in each government jurisdiction. Presently, there is not a unified and consistent vision for resource conservation and guiding future growth in the communities adjoining the park.

GMP land protection issues define three areas of need: (1) determining protection priorities, (2) developing effective protection strategies, and (3) defining the protection roles and responsibilities of the NPS, the Key Partners, and the Community Partners. All of the GMP action alternatives envision a common set of criteria for prioritizing significant individual resource sites that need to be protected and a common set of strategies for cooperating with the park's Community Partners to protect the park's rural land base. Alternatives A and B would rely more heavily on Community Partner actions and cooperation with NPS to protect park resources because less land would be protected through fee simple acquisition by the NPS and the Key Partners.

- **Decision Point 2 – What would be the visitor's interpretive experience?**

A coordinated approach to interpretation by the NPS and the Key Partners would offer the best opportunity to effectively tell the park's stories. In the future the park's interpretive program would focus on six primary interpretive themes (see Table 1.3). There are two major questions as to how the associated stories would be told: (1) to what extent would visitors have opportunities to experience the park's resources at locations where stories can best be told?; and (2) what are the potential roles and responsibilities of the NPS and the Key Partners in interpretive planning and programming?

The first question addresses the type of "place-based" experience visitors would have at the park. The park could focus the visitor experience on the lands currently owned and protected by the Key Partners, as would be the case under Alternative A (continuation of current management). Alternatively, as envisioned in the Alternatives B, C, and D, interpretive experiences could be provided both at the Key Partners' properties and at other sites throughout the park.

Regarding potential roles and responsibilities, the NPS and the Key Partners have several choices related to interpretive planning and interpretive programs. Each could maintain independent interpretive practices (Alternative B). Alternatively, the NPS and the Key Partners could engage in coordinated interpretive planning, the implementation of which would be the responsibility of individual entities (Alternative C). A third choice would be a more fully developed interpretive

partnership among the NPS and the Key Partners responsible for both interpretive planning and implementation (Alternative D).

- **Decision Point 3 – What would be the park's needs for visitor facilities and services?**

A major question raised during the GMP planning process focuses on the need for and functions of a park visitor center and what alternative sites and facility types should be considered if a visitor center is appropriate. Although a number of relatively small visitor contact facilities could be dispersed at several key sites within the park, NPS scoping sessions suggest a strong public preference for a centralized park visitor center in an existing or new building. In addition to serving the visiting public, that facility could potentially support additional educational, research, and other activities to help the park realize its legislative mandate for resource conservation. Space in the NPS visitor center could also be available to the park's Key Partners and Community Partners for meetings and special programs.

The park's enabling legislation states that the park should be a focal point for interpreting important events and geographic locations within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District. The National Historic District's *Management Plan* (Heritage Partners, Inc. et al 2000c) calls for five cluster orientation centers, one of which would be somewhere in the area of the park or in the adjacent areas of Fishers Hill or Tom's Brook. GMP scoping meetings have raised the question as to what extent a visitor center at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP would serve the National Historic District. Also to be considered are other existing facilities and services in the area surrounding the park and the extent to which the park would be a hub for heritage tourism.

The GMP alternatives vary in the extent to which the NPS would be involved in providing visitor facilities. Alternatives A and B do not include an NPS developed and managed visitor center; instead, the Key Partners would provide visitor contact and orientation facilities. Alternatives C and D assume that the NPS would develop and manage a visitor center that would be a central hub for interpretation and orientation to the park and the National Historic District. The following criteria would be taken into account when choosing a location for a visitor center:

- The visitor center would need access to utilities and main travel corridors
- The site must have suitable building conditions
- The visitor center would not be located at or close to sensitive or significant natural or historic resources and would not be located within the sensitive resource zone
- The visitor center would not be an imposing structure on the landscape, be located in key viewsheds, or adversely impact scenic resources
- The visitor center would not disrupt travel patterns for local residents

- The visitor center would not be located in an area that would induce private development incompatible with the park setting

In accordance with Executive Order 13423, "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management," the park visitor center would be designed to be energy efficient, reduce enclosed space, and when practical, export interior functions to exterior locations. The visitor center would attempt to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings. Re-use of an existing structure to serve as a park visitor center has not been ruled out, but at this time a suitable facility has not been found. The Whitham Farm, owned by the NPS, fails to meet several of the criteria for a visitor center outlined above.

- **Decision Point 4 – How would visitors access and move around the park?**

The park presents challenges for visitors who may be anticipating a traditional national park experience. Presently, beyond the existing facilities owned by the Key Partners, most visitors perceive the park as difficult to explore and understand. I-81 is a major barrier within the park. As I-81 swings to the west, it bisects the park's central section. With interchanges at Middletown and Strasburg, I-81 provides excellent accessibility for visitors arriving from the north or south. However, it is a physical barrier to east-west visitor circulation in the park's central section. Within the park there is only one underpass at Water Plant Road (State Route 840). Studies are currently underway to plan for additional lanes and enlarged interchanges on I-81. Specific impacts and mitigation measures associated with the project will be determined in Tier 2 NEPA compliance actions to be completed by FHWA and VDOT (see Section 1.10.3 below).

Local traffic generally utilizes Valley Pike (Route 11) and a network of small rural roads. Valley Pike (Route 11) is west of I-81, generally paralleling it in the vicinity of the park. In some places it defines the park's boundary and in others it bisects the park. Valley Pike (Route 11) is likely to become a major north-south collector road for park visitors. Given its periodic traffic volumes and truck traffic, the road could become a potential safety hazard for park visitors. Moving away from the I-81 and Valley Pike (Route 11) travel corridors, visitors unfamiliar with the area face difficulties in navigating a network of local collector and rural roads taking them in and out of the park's currently unmarked boundary. Visitors could also find themselves on narrow and, in some cases, unpaved rural roads, particularly in the southern section of the park.

The NPS scoping meetings indicated qualified support for automobile touring routes, provided that such routes have the capacity to safely accommodate visitor traffic and would not encourage visitors to trespass on or otherwise adversely impact private properties. Many people also expressed a strong interest in pedestrian and

bicycle trails that would eventually connect to other trails outside the park. Such a trail network could provide an effective means for immersing visitors in an interpretive experience removed from automobiles and detracting land uses. Several scoping sessions suggested a trail route re-tracing the Battle of Cedar Creek.

For all action alternatives, the NPS would seek to work with the Key Partners, and state and local government in developing and implementing plans for automobile tour routes and a park trail network. The GMP action alternatives portray two concepts for park circulation. Alternative B envisions tour routes focusing on access to selected sites, with limited circulation throughout the remainder of the park. Alternatives C and D would have designated tour routes guiding visitors throughout most of the park, with road improvements made to meet safety and capacity requirements.

Alternatives B, C, and D anticipate the potential for developing trails on protected lands owned by the NPS and the Key Partners. Alternatives C and D reflect a greater emphasis on a park trail concept, such as re-tracing the Battle of Cedar Creek, which may require acquiring lands or rights-of-way from willing sellers. Alternative D includes consideration of connecting park trails to a larger regional network.

During special events, buses could be used for moving visitors around the park. However, the use of buses on a regular or seasonal basis is not currently under consideration because projected visitation is not high enough.

- **Decision Point 5 – How would the park address related resources outside its boundary?**

Resources related to the purpose for which the park was created are known to exist outside the park boundary, although studies to specifically identify the location, extent, and significance of related resources have not been completed. The park's enabling legislation authorizes the NPS, the Key Partners, and Community Partners to protect these resources and to preserve the natural or historic setting of the park when viewed from within or outside the park. The public has also expressed concern for protecting related resources that are outside the park's boundary. Defining the general park management roles and responsibilities of the NPS, the Key Partners, and the Community Partners for protecting these resources is a GMP issue.

In establishing the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP Advisory Commission, the park's legislation directs the Commission to advise the Secretary of the Interior with respect to the identification of sites of significance outside of the park boundary deemed necessary to fulfill the purposes of the Act [Section 9(b)(2)]. The legislation also directs the Secretary and the Commission to encourage conservation of the historic and natural resources within and in proximity of the park by landowners, local governments, organizations and businesses [Section 10(a)] and states that such objectives should be achieved through public-private partnerships. The park's

enabling legislation authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire conservation easements and to enter into covenants on lands in or adjacent to the park from willing sellers. Such easements "shall have the effect of protecting the scenic, natural, and historic resources on adjacent lands and preserving the natural or historic setting of the park when viewed from within or outside the park" [Section 6].

Alternatives B, C, and D embrace the concept of identifying and monitoring significant related resources, and responding to protection needs and opportunities as they arise. Alternatives C and D would take further steps to proactively protect related resources, using strategies similar to those for protecting resources inside the park's legislative boundary. However, at this time, Alternatives C and D are unable to address the NPS role in other circumstances when related resources are more distant from its boundary.

All the GMP alternatives assume that the park boundary would be maintained as currently authorized. However, they recognize the possibility for a possible boundary adjustment at a future date, if demonstrated by a need to incorporate certain related resources into the park.

- **Decision Point 6 – How would the NPS and the Key Partners work together in managing the park?**

A management arrangement is needed to enable effective collaboration and management decision making at the park. Currently the Key Partners generally manage their lands under independent policies, e.g., with respect to resource protection, permitted uses, and facilities design and placement. The 8.0-acre parcel owned by the NPS is under private lease and is not presently open to the public. Related issues of particular concern to both the NPS and the Key Partners include: (1) the feasibility of developing consistent management policies for all protected lands in the park, and (2) the need for institutional arrangements enabling effective collaboration and decision making among the NPS and others.

The park's enabling legislation provides general direction for the management framework. It authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with interested public and private entities and individuals, through technical and financial assistance, including encouraging the conservation of the park's historic and natural resources [Section 12(a)]. The legislation also recognizes "key partner" organizations and their specific roles [Section 13(b)] (see Section 1.5.6 above). It indicates that the Secretary of the Interior shall acknowledge and support the continued participation of the partner organizations in managing the park.

The GMP alternatives outline the overall framework for future cooperation among the NPS and the Key Partners. All GMP alternatives assume adherence to NPS's underlying management principles related to protection of park resources and

values and its commitment to the public's appropriate use and enjoyment, including education and interpretation of park resources. The continuation of current management (Alternative A) suggests an informal arrangement such as establishing a working group committed to attending regular meetings, sharing information, and discussing issues of mutual interest and concern. Alternatives B, C, and D envision that the NPS and the Key Partners would develop a shared vision and preservation ethic as the basis for managing their lands and that the NPS would serve as facilitator among the Key Partners for land and resource protection and other shared goals. Alternatives B, C, and D also envision that the NPS and the Key Partners would develop cooperative agreements to manage various aspects of the park. Finally, Alternative D envisions a more formal relationship between the parties that would define a division of labor for certain park resources.

- **Decision Point 7 – To what extent would the NPS provide technical assistance to others?**

Clarification is needed regarding how the NPS would provide technical assistance to the park's partners. The park's enabling legislation authorizes the NPS to generally provide assistance as follows:

- to local governments, in cooperative efforts which complement the values of the park
- to persons, organizations, or governmental entities for (1) preserving historic structures within the park, (2) maintaining the natural or cultural landscape of the park, (3) local preservation planning, interpretation, and management of public visitation for the park, and (4) furthering the goals of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation related to the park
- to support the continued participation of the Key Partners in the management of the park

The Key Partners have expressed interest in clarifying more specifically the types and extent of this technical assistance.

Common to Alternatives B, C, and D is a commitment by the NPS to provide technical assistance to the Key Partners and the Community Partners in protecting resources within and contiguous to the park's legislative boundary. The staffing levels of the NPS would have a significant impact on the extent of technical assistance the agency would be able to provide. The NPS would establish priorities for determining how technical assistance would be allocated. The first priority would be to support protection of resources within the park, followed by assistance with protection of the park's viewsheds and related resources in proximity to the park.

1.9 Impact Topics

Understanding the consequences of making one management decision versus another is important to evaluating the GMP alternatives. As a result NPS GMPs are typically accompanied by an environmental impact statement (EIS). An EIS for a park GMP identifies the anticipated impacts of alternative management actions on resources and on park visitors and neighbors.

Impacts evaluated in EISs are organized by resource category, such as cultural resources, natural resources, and socioeconomics. The full range of impact topics considered is based on federal laws and other legal requirements, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidelines, NPS management policies, and scoping. Not all impact topics are relevant to all parks or to all management decisions. As a result they are divided into two groups – those for which impacts of the alternatives are evaluated and those which are dismissed from the impact analysis. Impact topics are dismissed from the impact analysis if they are found to be not relevant to the evaluation of GMP alternatives because either (a) implementing the alternatives would have no effect or a negligible effect on the resource or condition or (b) the resource or condition does not occur in the park.

Following is a discussion of the impact topics retained for the impact analysis and the impacts dismissed from the impact analysis for the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove GMP/EIS. Selection of topics to be retained is based on NPS staff knowledge of the park and the issues and concerns expressed by the public and other agencies during the GMP scoping process. The discussion that includes the rationale for dismissing specific impact topics is provided in Section 1.9.2 below.

Typically, the GMP/EIS Chapter 3, Affected Environment, includes a description of the existing conditions in the park only for resources and values that may be affected by actions proposed in the plan alternatives. However, since this GMP is the first comprehensive planning document produced since the park was established, Chapter 3 addresses a broader range of resources and values, including those not affected by the alternatives. A thorough description of relevant park resources and values is included for those topics that are retained for the impact analysis. Only a brief description of relevant park resources and values is included for impact topics that are dismissed from the impact analysis; this is done to provide baseline information for the park that is not currently available.

The GMP/EIS Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences, describes the impacts of the proposed GMP alternatives on resources and values for topics retained for analysis. Impact topics dismissed from further analysis are not analyzed in Chapter 4 of this EIS.

1.9.1 Impact Topics Retained for Impact Analysis

- **Archeological Resources**

Archeological resources are the material remains or physical evidence of past human life or activities, including the record of the effects of human activities on the environment. A three-volume archeological overview and assessment of lands within the legislated boundaries of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP identified over 100 archeological sites, both prehistoric and historic. Many of the archeological sites are eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Ground disturbance associated with proposed development (i.e., new trails or other facilities) has the potential to disturb currently identified as well as unidentified archeological resources. Other impacts to archeological resources may also occur, as rising levels of visitation may increase opportunities for inadvertent resource damage, vandalism, and looting. Any actions that would adversely affect these resources would be of concern to the park staff and the public. In addition, the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as the NPS's *Management Policies* (2006c), Director's Order 12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making* (2001), and NPS 28: *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (1998) require the consideration of potential impacts on archeological resources listed in or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, archeological resources will be analyzed in detail.

- **Ethnographic Resources**

Ethnographic resources are defined by the NPS as any "site, structure, object, landscape, or natural resource feature assigned traditional legendary, religious, subsistence, or other significance in the cultural system of a group traditionally associated with it" (NPS 28: *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (1998)). A draft ethnographic overview and assessment of the park has identified places that have "great significance" for stories associated with American Indians (several tribes have a cultural affiliation with lands in the park), African Americans, German and Scots-Irish settlers, nonconformist religious practitioners, and Civil War commemorators. Strategies for preserving these ethnographic resources need to be developed. Any change resulting from the proposed actions that could adversely affect these resources would be of concern to the park and the public. Therefore, ethnographic resources will be analyzed in detail.

- **Historic Structures**

Historic structures are a component of cultural landscapes and are significant for the roles they played in the history of the park. Long-term preservation and management of historic structures is often a challenge. Implementation of the actions proposed in this general management plan could affect the historic structures contained in Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. In addition, the National

Historic Preservation Act, as well as the National Park Service *Management Policies* (2006d), Director's Order 12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making* (2001), and NPS 28*: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (1998) require the consideration of potential impacts on historic properties listed in or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, historic structures will be analyzed in detail.

- **Cultural Landscapes**

According to NPS 28: *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (1998), a cultural landscape is

> *…a reflection of human adaptation and use of natural resources and is often expressed in the way land is organized and divided, patterns of settlement, land use, systems of circulation, and the types of structures that are built. The character of a cultural landscape is defined both by physical materials, such as roads, buildings, walls, and vegetation, and by use reflecting cultural values and traditions.*

Thus, cultural landscapes are the result of the long interaction between people and the land; they reflect the influence of human beliefs and actions over time upon the natural landscape. Shaped through time by historical land use and management practices – as well as politics and property laws, levels of technology, and economic conditions – cultural landscapes provide a living record of an area's past: a visual chronicle of its history. The dynamic nature of modern human life, however, contributes to the continual reshaping of cultural landscapes, making them a good source of information about specific times and places, but at the same time rendering their long-term preservation a challenge.

Actions proposed in the alternatives analyzed in the GMP could affect the elements that make up the park's cultural landscapes – the structures, topography, vegetation, circulation features, spatial organization, and land-use patterns. Therefore, cultural landscapes will be analyzed in detail.

- **Museum Collections**

According to NPS 28: *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (1998), prehistoric and historic objects, artifacts, works of art, archival documents, and natural history specimens comprise a park's museum collections. Although the NPS does not possess any objects, artifacts, or archival collections for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP, it is anticipated that archeological research will be conducted on NPS-administered lands in the future. Artifacts collected during that research, as well as associated materials, would constitute park collections that would be appropriately

accessioned and cataloged, preserved, protected, and made available for access and use according to NPS standards and guidelines.

Additionally, the park may acquire lands during the life of this plan that might generate collections requiring management. The NPS's Key Partners currently have collections of cultural resource objects, artifacts, and archives relating to the lands they own that have been compiled as a result of various archeological, historical, and architectural studies. Therefore, museum collections will be analyzed in detail.

- **Scenic/Visual Resources/Viewsheds**

Scenic resources are views and vistas that can be seen by visitors from certain vantage points in the park. Scenic resources and viewsheds are important contributors to the integrity of the park's battlefields and cultural landscapes. Scenic resources and viewsheds are fundamental to the park's purpose and significance or important for other reasons (NPS 2006a). Preserving or mitigating impacts to viewsheds has also been identified as a planning concern/issue during the GMP scoping process. The park contains non-historic permanent structures and land use activities that affect the park's scenic qualities. Structures and land uses adjacent to the park also affect the park's viewshed. These structures and activities can degrade scenic resources and affect visitor experiences. Among other things, alternatives in the plan include efforts to preserve the park's rural character and to minimize the impacts of adjacent development. Any impacts that would adversely affect scenic resources would be of concern to the park staff and the public. Therefore, scenic resources and viewsheds will be analyzed in detail.

- **Soils**

The park's soils are a key resource that helps determine where native vegetative communities occur; they also affect the area's productivity and drainage patterns. Soils are an important agricultural resource for the area and also provide structural support to buildings and other facilities in the park. Proposed developments in the alternatives could affect the park's soils. Any actions that would adversely affect these resources would be of concern to the park staff and the public. Therefore, soils will be analyzed in detail.

- **Groundwater**

Underlying the park is an aquifer that serves as a major source of domestic water supply for the area. Groundwater levels could be affected by development actions proposed in the GMP. The geologic setting and karst topography of the area increase the potential for impacts to groundwater quality. Any actions that would adversely affect groundwater resources would be of concern to the park staff and the public. Therefore, groundwater will be analyzed in detail.

- **Surface Water Quality**

The park contains a number of perennial and intermittent streams, including Cedar Creek, the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, Meadow Brook, and Stickley Run. These waterways provide important habitat to aquatic organisms and sensitive wildlife species in the area. Any actions that would adversely affect these resources would be of concern to the park staff and the public. Therefore, surface water quality will be analyzed in detail.

- **Vegetation**

The park supports a variety of vegetative communities and plant species, including some sensitive species and many nonnative species. Vegetation communities in the park consist of forest and woodlands, grasslands, and riparian and wetland areas. Vegetation is important because it provides wildlife habitat and protects riparian corridors that improve water quality and minimize flooding. Vegetation is also important because it contributes to the significant landscapes identified as either fundamental to the park's purpose and significance or important for other reasons (NPS 2006a). Actions in the alternatives could beneficially or adversely affect these resources, which would be of concern to the park staff as well as the public. Therefore, vegetation will be analyzed in detail.

- **Visitor Use and Experience**

Visitor use and experience could be affected by one or more of the actions in the alternatives, such as the provision of new recreational opportunities, the development of new visitor facilities and amenities, and the establishment of new partnerships. New facilities such as trails, interpretive media, and auto touring routes would change the way visitors use and experience the park. Furthermore, all of the alternatives could have an impact on overall visitor understanding, including interpretive and educational opportunities. Therefore, visitor use and experience will be analyzed in detail.

- **Regional and Local Economy**

An increase in tourism and park visitation is likely to occur as a result of implementing any of the alternatives. This visitation could result in increased spending in the local area. Although the economy of the region is diversified and may not be substantially affected by the park, some businesses and individuals in the gateway towns and local area could be beneficially impacted by increased spending. NPS and Key Partner contributions to this impact would be both direct and indirect. Direct impacts would result from the relatively small amount of NPS and Key Partner development and employment-related actions included in the alternatives. Indirect impacts would result from the multiplier effect of businesses and employee spending. Therefore, the economic impact of the park on the local and regional economy will be analyzed.

1.9.2 Impact Topics Dismissed from Impact Analysis

- **Indian Trust Resources**

Secretarial Order 3175 requires that any anticipated impacts to Indian trust resources from a proposed project or action by Department of the Interior agencies be explicitly addressed in environmental documents. The federal Indian trust responsibility is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the United States to protect tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, and it represents a duty to carry out the mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

There are no Indian trust resources in Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP or its general vicinity. The lands composing the park are not held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of Indians due to their status as Indians. Therefore, Indian trust resources were dismissed as an impact topic.

- **Sacred Sites**

According to Executive Order 13007, "Indian Sacred Sites," the NPS will accommodate, to the extent practicable, access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by religious practitioners from recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and would avoid adversely affecting the integrity of such sacred sites. The draft *Ethnographic Overview and Assessment* (Bragdon 2006) concluded that there are places within the park that have "great significance" in stories associated with American Indians; however, there are no known sacred sites within the park (Bragdon 2006). Copies of this draft GMP/EIS will be forwarded to each affiliated tribe for review and comment. If the tribes subsequently identify the presence of sacred sites within park boundaries, further planning would be undertaken in consultation with the tribes and appropriate mitigation measures developed as necessary. The location of any sacred sites would not be made public. Because there are no known sacred sites within park boundaries, sacred sites were dismissed as an impact topic.

- **Air Quality**

Section 118 of the 1963 Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq*.) requires a national park unit to meet all federal, state, and local air pollution standards. Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is within a Class II air quality area under the Clean Air Act, as amended. A Class II designation indicates the maximum allowable increase in concentrations of pollutants over baseline concentrations of sulfur dioxide and particulate matter as specified in Section 163 of the Clean Air Act. Further, the Clean Air Act provides that the federal land manager has an affirmative responsibility to protect air quality-related values (including visibility, plants,

animals, soils, water quality, cultural resources, and visitor health) from adverse pollution impacts.

The Clean Air Act requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify national ambient air quality standards to protect public health and welfare. Standards were set for the following pollutants: ozone (O_3); carbon monoxide (CO); nitrogen dioxide (NO_2); sulfur dioxide (SO_2); inhalable particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM_{10}) and less than 2.5 microns ($PM_{2.5}$); and lead (Pb). These pollutants are designated criteria pollutants because the standards satisfy criteria specified in the Clean Air Act. An area where a standard is exceeded more than three times in three years can be considered a nonattainment area.

In 1993, the EPA adopted regulations implementing Section 176 of the Clean Air Act as amended. Section 176 requires that federal actions conform to state implementation plans for achieving and maintaining the national standards. Federal actions must not cause or contribute to new violations of any standard, increase the frequency or severity of any existing violation, interfere with timely attainment or maintenance of any standard, delay emission reduction milestones, or contradict state implementation plan requirements. Federal actions that are subject to the general conformity regulations are required to mitigate or fully offset the emissions caused by the action, including both direct and indirect emissions over which that federal agency has some control.

The park's air quality met EPA standards in 2003 (the last year of available measurable data) for inhalable particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM_{10}) and sulfur dioxide; however, ozone standards were exceeded that same year. Currently, the area is still not in compliance with EPA standards for 8-hour ozone concentrations.

No actions proposed in the GMP would measurably affect the park's long-term, overall air quality. The precursors for ozone are primarily generated by fuel combustion, and one of the primary sources of ozone is mobile source emissions. Park staffing levels are expected to increase only gradually and minimally in the foreseeable future, and any adverse impacts (direct, indirect, or cumulative) to air quality related to park staff use of vehicles during the life of the GMP would be negligible. Park visitation would likely increase as a result of implementing actions proposed in the alternatives but emissions from visitor vehicles would be a very small percentage of the overall emissions generated by mobile and stationary sources in Frederick County, and such emissions would be imperceptible above existing background conditions. In addition, continued mobile source emission reductions due to technological improvements in engines and fuels would benefit air quality over time. Any adverse impacts (direct, indirect, or cumulative) to air quality related to park visitation would be negligible.

Construction activities, including equipment operation and the hauling of material, could result in temporarily increased vehicle exhaust and emissions, as well as inhalable particulate matter. Construction dust associated with exposed soils would be controlled, if necessary, with the application of water or other approved dust palliatives. Also, activities that might create dust would be suspended when winds are too great to prevent visible dust clouds from affecting sensitive receptors (houses, schools, hospitals). In addition, any hydrocarbons, NO_2, SO_2 emissions, as well as airborne particulates created by fugitive dust plumes, would be rapidly dissipated because the location of the park and prevailing wind allows for good air circulation. Overall, there could be a local, short-term, negligible degradation of local air quality during construction activities; however, no measurable effects outside of the immediate construction site would be anticipated. Any construction-related, adverse effects to air quality would be temporary, lasting only as long as construction.

Implementation of any of the alternatives described in the GMP would result in either short- or long-term negligible adverse effects upon air quality. Therefore, air quality was dismissed as an impact topic.

- **Lightscape Management**

Light pollution in the park and surrounding area is currently present. NPS *Management Policies* (NPS 2006d) states that the NPS will preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the natural lightscapes of parks, including natural darkness. The NPS strives to minimize the intrusion of artificial light into the night scene by limiting the use of artificial outdoor lighting to basic safety requirements, shielding the lights when possible, and using minimal impact lighting techniques. Any new facilities proposed in the alternatives that would necessitate new night-time lighting would be constructed with down lighting that would minimize light pollution. The effects of actions contained in this plan on natural lightscapes would be negligible. Therefore, lightscape management was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Soundscape Management**

In accordance with NPS *Management Policies* (NPS 2006d) and Director's Order 47: *Sound Preservation and Noise Management*, an important part of the NPS mission is the preservation of natural soundscapes associated with national park units. Natural soundscapes exist in the absence of human-caused sound. The natural ambient soundscape is the aggregate of all the natural sounds that occur in park units, together with the physical capacity for transmitting natural sounds. Natural sounds occur within and beyond the range of sounds that humans can perceive and can be transmitted through air, water, or solid materials. The frequencies, magnitudes, and durations of human-caused sound considered acceptable varies

among NPS units, as well as potentially throughout each park unit; generally acceptable levels are greater in developed areas and less in undeveloped areas.

Current soundscape conditions include noise pollution from a variety of activities, such as commercial mining, highway traffic, residential living, and existing visitor use. None of the actions proposed in the alternatives would substantially alter long-term soundscape conditions in the park. Several developments may be built or improved under the alternatives (e.g., trails, visitor center, interpretive sites), but facility construction would only temporarily affect noise levels in parts of the park. Park visitation would likely increase as a result of implementing actions proposed in the alternatives, but additional noise generated from increased visitor use would not be a substantial factor when compared to existing conditions. Some long-term noise impacts from increased human activity could occur at areas where visitors are concentrated, such as at trailheads or popular attractions. However, the overall impact to parkwide soundscape conditions would be negligible relative to existing conditions. Therefore, soundscape management was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Karst Features**

Karst features, such as caves, sinkholes, and springs, were initially considered because they are prevalent throughout the region and because they are unique resources that provide niche habitats and affect area drainage networks. There are very few karst features within park boundaries and new facilities or recreational developments proposed under any of the management alternatives could be sited to avoid them. No impacts to karst features are anticipated under any of the alternatives; therefore, karst features were dismissed from further analysis.

- **Paleontological Resources**

Geologic formations in the park are composed of parent material that contains paleontological resources. No formal resource inventories have been conducted in the park; however, the Valley and Ridge province is known to be fossiliferous. These fossils are typically well below the surface; however, some fossils in the area are exposed where road cuts and rock outcrops occur. Preliminary research indicates that the greatest potential for paleontological resources would be on private property within the authorized park boundary or just outside of the park.

Site-specific surveys would be undertaken before any ground disturbance occurs in areas believed likely to contain fossils. If important paleontological resources were identified, the NPS would attempt to avoid the area, relocate the activity, or otherwise mitigate impacts from the actions being taken. Any specimens found and collected during construction activities would be managed according to NPS museum collection policies.

Proposed actions in the alternatives would have a negligible impact on paleontological resources; therefore, the topic was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Prime and Unique Farmlands**

Prime farmlands are defined as land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. Prime farmlands have the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. Unique farmlands are lands other than prime farmland that are used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops.

Prime farmland soils are mapped in various areas throughout the park, and are primarily associated with floodplains and alkaline soils (USDA 1991). Prime farmlands represent approximately 15 percent of the park. No major developments would be proposed in prime farmland soils. Recreational facilities such as trails could be built in floodplains that contain prime farmland soils; however, trails would typically be located in areas that are not currently used for agricultural purposes and the total area of prime farmland soil that would be converted to trail surface would be negligible. No unique farmlands have been identified in the park. Therefore, prime and unique farmlands were dismissed from further analysis.

- **Wetlands**

All wetlands in national park units are protected and managed in accordance with Executive Order 11990, “Protection of Wetlands”; NPS Director’s Order 77-1: *Wetland Protection* and its accompanying handbook (NPS 2002); and NPS *Management Policies* (NPS 2006d). This guidance requires the NPS to protect and enhance natural wetland values, and requires the examination of impacts on wetlands. It is NPS policy to avoid affecting wetlands and to minimize impacts when they are unavoidable.

Wetlands are scattered throughout the park, with the highest concentration occurring in the southern third of the park. Wetlands occur along rivers and streams, and around ponds, springs, and other isolated areas. Much of the wetland vegetation has been altered by livestock, agriculture, and flood control activities. Under all of the GMP alternatives, facilities proposed for development would be sited to avoid wetlands. No new development in the alternatives would be proposed in areas known to contain wetlands. No new uses of water originating from wetlands are proposed. Areas that may be wetlands would be mapped and delineated prior

to project design to ensure that any development undertaken by the NPS would avoid these areas. No impacts to wetlands would occur under any of the alternatives; therefore, wetlands were dismissed from further analysis.

- **Floodplains**

The park contains a number of perennial and intermittent streams, including Cedar Creek, the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, Meadow Brook, and Stickley Run. All of these drainages are subject to flooding following major storms or rapid snow melt. The floodplains of these drainages have been substantially modified by agricultural and flood control activities, but streams and rivers still contain important habitat for fish and wildlife, and are important for recreational uses, as well.

No new actions or facilities are being proposed in the alternatives that would adversely affect the protection, management, and use of these floodplains, or substantially change the character and natural processes of the floodplains. New foot trails could be built in the floodplain, but these are excepted actions according to NPS policy. Trails could alter hydrologic processes in floodplains, but their impact to floodplain values would be negligible. Under all of the alternatives, the NPS would continue to protect natural floodplains and take appropriate action to avoid safety risks to visitors and employees, as required under Executive Order 11988 and NPS Director's Order 77-2: *Floodplain Management*. Therefore, floodplains were dismissed from further analysis.

- **Wild and Scenic Rivers**

Virginia contains no federally designated wild and scenic rivers. Cedar Creek and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River have sections that are state listed in the Virginia Scenic Rivers program as being "worthy of further study" or "qualified, but not yet joined." Neither is listed as a state-designated scenic river. None of the actions in any of the alternatives would negatively affect the wild and scenic qualities of these two waterways because proposed development near these waterways would be minimal and compatible with the natural, scenic setting. Therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Exotic and Invasive Species**

The park contains a number of exotic and invasive species, both plants and animals. Their presence and extent do not represent a current planning issue at the GMP level. Proposed actions in the plan relating to construction and development would have a negligible to minor impact on these species and therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis. It is recognized that, if left unmanaged over time, such species could degrade park resources, particularly historic landscapes. Thus the plan has articulated management actions for controlling exotic and invasive

species in the context of applicable laws, executive orders and NPS policy. These actions are found in section 2.3, under Management Element 6 (in collaborative strategies between the park and its partners) and Management Element 9 (as an element of technical assistance provided by the park and its partners); among the mitigation measures described in section 2.10.2; and in the list of actions that could occur in the management of natural resources on NPS property, in section 2.2.4.

- **Wildlife**

The park supports a variety of wildlife species. Habitat loss and fragmentation in the region has caused displacement of wildlife; however, most of the wildlife species likely to be present in the park are generalists and have adapted to these conditions. Actions and activities outside of the park have probably affected wildlife more than park or activities of the Key Partners. In many cases, lands within the park boundary have acted as a refuge for wildlife.

Facility development in the park associated with the GMP alternatives would produce short-term and long-term adverse impacts to wildlife. Short-term impacts would include temporary displacement due to construction activities. Long-term impacts would include loss of habitat. The majority of new development would occur in areas of the park that already contain elements of the built environment. Facility development proposed in natural areas, or in areas that currently contain limited infrastructure, would be minimal. Because the level of facility development included in the GMP alternatives would be small and the proposed locations for new development would be compatible, the potential impacts to wildlife would be minor.

Increased visitor use in the park as a result of the alternatives would have short-term and long-term adverse impacts to wildlife. Short-term impacts would include temporary displacement of wildlife due to increased human activity. Long-term impacts could include displacement due to sustained increases in human activity, increased injury, or mortality due to motor vehicle conflict, or degradation or loss of habitat. Overall increases in visitation would be moderate and gradual, and would likely produce only minor impacts to wildlife.

Agricultural lands in the park would likely be managed differently under the alternatives. These differences in land use and management activity would likely have beneficial or adverse impacts on wildlife. Any changes would be minimal and would likely maintain traditional agricultural practices. Relative to the no-action alternative, these changes would likely result only in minor impacts.

Hunting of game species on private lands in the park is managed and regulated by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF). None of the alternatives would change the management of hunting or would result in substantial

changes that would affect game populations within the park. The long-term impact on area wildlife populations would be negligible.

Overall, the actions proposed in the alternatives would have minor impacts on wildlife or their habitats. Therefore, wildlife was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Fisheries and Aquatic Life**

The park contains several perennial streams that contain a variety of native and nonnative fish. Recreational fishing in the park is regulated by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VGDIF). None of the GMP alternatives would change the management of fishing or would result in substantial changes that would affect fish populations within the park. Increases in park visitation could increase sport fishing within the park, but the state's regulation of fisheries would avoid adverse impacts to fish populations. Overall increases in visitation would be moderate and gradual, and would likely produce negligible impacts to fisheries and aquatic life. The NPS would continue to work with the state to ensure that healthy fish populations are maintained in park waters.

The waters of Cedar Creek and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River provide habitat for a number of sensitive invertebrates, including several species of mussels. Actions contained in the GMP alternatives, such as trail and facility development and agricultural use, would have short-term and long-term impacts on fisheries and aquatic life. Short-term impacts would include increased erosion, increased sedimentation, and changes in water quality, primarily due to construction activities. Long-term impacts would include sustained water quality impacts due to surface water runoff and overall degradation of habitat. Facility development near waterways as part of the alternatives would be minimal, and when combined with the use of best management practices for erosion control and water quality, would result in negligible impacts to fisheries and aquatic life.

Overall, the actions proposed in the alternatives would have negligible impacts on fisheries and aquatic life. Therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species**

Informal consultation on the effect that proposed actions in this plan would have on federally listed threatened and endangered species was conducted with the Virginia Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. A letter from the USFWS dated December 20, 2006, stated that "no federally listed species are known to occur in the project area." Data provided by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage also do not identify any known current or historical occurrences of any federally listed plant or animal species in the park. Any areas that could host

federally listed species would be surveyed prior to project design to ensure that any development undertaken by the NPS would avoid these areas. Therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

- **State Listed Threatened and Endangered Species**

The presence of state listed species in the park was confirmed through GIS data and project review letters received from the State of Virginia. This information indicated that several state listed animals occur in the park or in the three counties that the park is located in, including two endangered species: brook floater (*Alasmidonta varicosa*) and Appalachian springsnail (*Fontigens bottimeri*), and two threatened species: wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*) and green floater (*Lasmigona subviridis*). No state listed plants are known to occur in the park (VDCR 2006).

State listed species were considered, but dismissed from further analysis because: 1) these species typically are not found in the park, or 2) their preferred habitat would not be physically disturbed by any of the GMP alternatives, or 3) the effects of actions in the GMP alternatives would be negligible. There are opportunities for future beneficial impacts from implementing conservation practices in the park, such as managing suitable habitat, preserving and enhancing riparian areas, implementing best management practices for soil erosion and water quality, and providing visitor education, but that level of specificity is not included in this plan. Included below is the rationale for dismissal of the state listed animals that are known to occur in or near the park.

Brook floater. The brook floater resides in the watershed of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. It is known to occur in the North Fork of the Shenandoah River within the park boundary. Mussels are sensitive to changes in water quality and are often used as indicators of water quality. The GMP includes a special resource zone along riparian areas in the park that would minimize impacts to the brook floater. Some actions contained in the GMP, such as trail construction and continued agricultural use in riparian areas, could affect the brook floater; however, the impact of those actions would be negligible, particularly when combined with the use of best practices for erosion and sediment control.

Appalachian springsnail. The Appalachian springsnail was recently discovered about a mile north of the park at Ogden's Cave. On July 1, 2006, it was listed by the state as endangered (Orndorff 2006). Very little is known about the species, other than that it is endemic to the area. State karst biologists believe that the geologic conditions of the Ogden's Cave site are similar to the conditions found in the park; however, there are no cave openings in the park where these similar resources occur. Threats to the species include habitat destruction and loss and water quality impacts. Since no development is being proposed in the GMP in areas

that contain karst features, the GMP would have no effect on the Appalachian springsnail.

Wood turtle. The wood turtle resides in the watershed of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. It is known to occur in the park in Cedar Creek, Meadow Brook, Middle Marsh Brook, and Buffalo Marsh Run. Threats to the wood turtle include impacts to water quality, stream bank erosion, development within riparian areas, and illegal collection (Kleopfer 2006). The GMP contains a special resource zone along all riparian areas in the park that would minimize impacts to the wood turtle. Some actions contained in the GMP could affect the wood turtle, such as trail construction and general visitation in riparian areas; however, the impact of those actions would be negligible.

Green floater. The green floater resides in the watershed of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. It is known to occur in the North Fork of the Shenandoah River within the park boundary. Mussels are sensitive to changes in water quality and are often used as indicators of water quality. The GMP contains a special resource zone along all riparian areas in the park that would minimize impacts to the green floater. Some actions contained in the plan, such as trail construction and continued agricultural use in riparian areas, could affect the green floater; however, the impact of those actions would be negligible, particularly when combined with the use of best practices for erosion and sediment control.

- **Natural or Depletable Resource Requirements and Conservation Potential**

The alternatives being considered would result in the extraction of resources from the park. Certain lands within the park are used for agricultural production, including livestock grazing and hay production. Fields under agricultural lease would continue to be used for pasture and occasionally harvested for hay. The fields would be managed to sustain this activity. The beneficial or adverse impacts of agricultural use are addressed and accounted for under the vegetation impact topic. Implementation of any of the GMP alternatives would result in the use of limited natural resources and energy for construction and operation of new facilities (e.g., trails). New development would be designed to be sustainable to the maximum extent practicable. Adverse impacts to depletable resources as a result of the GMP alternatives would be negligible; therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Energy Requirements and Conservation Potential**

CEQ guidelines for implementing NEPA require examination of energy requirements and conservation potential in environmental impact statements. The staff of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP strives to incorporate the principles of sustainable design and development into all facilities and park operations. Sustainability can be

described as the result achieved by doing things in ways that do not compromise the environment or its capacity to provide for present and future generations. Sustainable practices minimize the short-term and long-term environmental impacts of developments and other activities through resource conservation, recycling, waste minimization, and the use of energy efficient and ecologically responsible materials and techniques.

The NPS *Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design* (1993) provides a basis for achieving sustainability in facility planning and design, emphasizes the importance of bio-diversity, and encourages responsible decisions. The guidebook describes principles to be used in the design and management of visitor facilities that emphasize environmental sensitivity in construction, use of nontoxic materials, resource conservation, recycling, and integration of visitors with natural and cultural settings.

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP would minimize energy costs, eliminate waste, and conserve energy resources by using energy efficient and cost effective technology wherever possible. Energy efficiency would also be incorporated into any decision-making process during the design or acquisition of facilities, as well as all decisions affecting park operations. The use of value analysis and value engineering, including life cycle cost analysis, would be performed to examine energy, environmental, and economic implications of proposed development. The park staff would encourage suppliers, permittees, and contractors to follow sustainable practices and would address sustainable park and non-park practices in interpretive programs. Consequently, any adverse impacts relating to energy use, availability, or conservation would be negligible. Therefore, energy requirements and conservation potential was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Environmental Justice**

Executive Order 12898, "General Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," requires all federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities.

None of the actions proposed in any of the GMP alternatives would have disproportionate health or environmental effects on minorities or low-income populations or communities as defined in the EPA's *Final Guidance for Incorporating Environmental Justice Concerns in EPA's NEPA Compliance Analyses* (April 1998) because:

- The developments and actions of the GMP alternatives would not result in any identifiable adverse human health effects. Therefore, there would be

no direct or indirect negative or adverse effects on any minority or low-income population or community.

- The impacts on the natural and physical environment that occur due to any of the GMP alternatives would not significantly and adversely affect any minority or low-income population or community, and would not have disproportionate adverse effects to these groups.
- The GMP alternatives would not result in any identified effects that would be specific to any minority or low-income community.
- The GMP Planning Team actively solicited public participation as part of the planning process and gave equal consideration to input from all persons regardless of age, race, income status, or other socioeconomic or demographic factors.

Potential impacts to the socioeconomic environment resulting from implementation of the GMP alternatives would be either adverse or beneficial, and the intensity would be negligible. Potential impacts would occur mostly within the three-county region containing the park. These impacts would not occur all at one time but would be spread over a number of years, thus somewhat reducing their effects. In addition, the GMP planning team does not expect impacts on the socioeconomic environment to substantially alter the physical and social structure of the nearby communities. Therefore, this topic was dismissed from further analysis.

- **Transportation**

Visitor access and transportation could be affected by one or more of the actions in the alternatives, such as the development of trails and auto touring routes with waysides. While the impacts of these actions on visitor use and experience may be substantial, the impacts on visitor access and transportation would be negligible. Transportation to and through the park would continue to occur on existing roadways (I-81, U.S. 11, and city and county roads) that would mostly be unaffected by the actions included in the alternatives. Visitor access and local and regional transportation could be adversely affected on a short-term basis during construction; however, the impact would be negligible. Therefore, transportation was dismissed from further analysis.

1.10 Relationship to Other Plans and Projects

Various public agencies and governmental bodies have recently completed plans or have projects underway that directly and/or indirectly relate to Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. The park's Community Partners – the three counties and two towns in the park vicinity – each have long-range comprehensive plans that include goals and strategies for managing growth. All speak to the need to mitigate or avoid adverse impacts to battlefield resources and other cultural resources. Most include goals and related actions designed to generally protect rural character while

at the same time encouraging economic development. The plans also address road improvements in the park vicinity and recognize the desirability of making trail connections to the park.

The GMP planning team has studied the related plans and projects and has taken into consideration their recommendations in formulating management strategies included in the GMP action alternatives. In general they demonstrate the need for the NPS and the Key Partners to work cooperatively with its community partners to accomplish mutual rural character preservation and resource protection goals. Review of these plans and projects clearly indicates that the most imminent threats to the park include the conversion of land within the park to developed uses and the likely expansion of I-81 through the park, which – based on findings of the *Tier 1 Final EIS* (FHWA 2007a) – has the potential to directly impact from 325 to 436 acres of the park, most of which is likely to be permanently taken for highway use.

Following is a summary of the related plans and projects considered most relevant to the GMP planning process, including a general description of plan policies and recommendations relevant to Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP.

1.10.1 Frederick County

- **Frederick County Comprehensive Plan**

The *Frederick County Comprehensive Plan* (Frederick County 2003) presents the county's growth management strategy for the ten-year period from 2003 through 2013. The major element of the plan is creation of an urban development area (UDA) as the location within the county where public investment will be directed to support more intensive forms of development. The UDA is located along the I-81 Corridor generally from Stephens City (Exit 307) to north of Winchester (Exit 317). Within this area public sewer and water service, as well as other facilities and services will be made available to support urban and suburban development densities. Outside of the UDA the plan identifies eleven rural community centers where the county will also promote improved public services. Rural areas compose the remainder of the county.

Land within and adjoining the legislative boundary of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is designated a rural area in the county plan. The primary growth pattern generally consists of widely scattered, large lot residential development. In places the land has been subdivided but is not yet developed. Minimum lot size is five acres, subject to meeting Public Health Department regulations for on-site wastewater disposal. For parcels greater than 20 acres, average density of one unit per five acres is retained but the minimum lot size can be reduced to two acres if a residual parcel composing 40 percent of the parcel remains undivided.

The county plan also incorporates by reference the recommendations of the *Frederick County – Winchester Battlefield Network Plan* (WBTF 1996). This plan recommends that key battlefield sites – including Cedar Creek – should be connected by tour routes, a uniform interpretive program, and an interpretive center. Additional land acquisition is recommended at Cedar Creek. The plan also supports the battlefield preservation goal by stating that the county will "require that open space dedication for developments in battlefield areas be used to create battlefield parks." It also states that the county will "include concerns for historic preservation and tourism in economic development strategies."

- **Town of Middletown Comprehensive Plan**

The *Middletown Comprehensive Plan 2005* (Middletown Planning Commission 2005) articulates a vision for the future of Middletown and identifies specific strategies and implementation steps to accomplish the vision. The town's vision is that it remains a small town within a rural setting. Cedar Creek and Belle Grove HNP is envisioned as an economic resource for the local tourism industry. The town expresses interest in working closely with Frederick County, the NPS, the Key Partners, local landowners, and preservation organizations "to preserve the battlefield through coordinated efforts, which may include land acquisition, refinements to development regulations, and voluntary efforts." It also anticipates "working closely with neighboring towns and the NPS to coordinate appropriate development of future service industry business for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP."

The plan envisions annexation of land within the Valley Pike (Route 11) corridor north and south of the town. Town expansion would extend north to Lord Fairfax Community College; development in this corridor would be similar in character to that of the town's existing main street. Town expansion would also extend south to (but would not include) land owned by the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (CCBF) at the Heater House (on the west side of Valley Pike (Route 11)) and at CCBF's visitor contact facility (on the east side of Valley Pike (Route 11)). No expansion of the town is proposed west across Meadow Brook Creek, stating that "this area should either be preserved as part of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP or have only minimal additional development, of a rural character, to minimize impacts on the battlefield."

Land proposed for annexation south of the town on the west side of Valley Pike (Route 11) is within the authorized limits of the park. The plan states that the new town area to the south would be a "transition area compatible with the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP" that would include "compatible industrial development among the existing industrial buildings" and a "mixture of low to moderate density residential uses." In the area west of Valley Pike (Route 11) a "wooded area between the town fabric and the battlefield should be provided and/or maintained to protect the viewshed of the battlefield."

A number of transportation components are included in the plan:

- a "historic trail" through town and Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP
- a walking/biking trail system throughout town
- a traffic signal at the intersection of Valley Pike (Route 11) and Reliance Road
- scenic byway designation for local roads
- development of the historic rail corridor for tourism or local transportation
- an alternative transportation corridor east of I-81 between Winchester and I-66

■ **Frederick County Road Improvement Plan**

The *Frederick County Road Improvement Plan* includes improvements to Cougill Road between Hite Road and Valley Pike (Route 11) for some time before 2012 and railroad crossing improvements to Belle Grove Road and Klines Mill Road in Fiscal Year 2006-2007.

■ **Virginia Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2006-2011 (Frederick County)**

The *Virginia Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2006-2011*(VDOT 2005) does not include any projects in Frederick County within the park or that would impact the park (exclusive of I-81 improvements).

1.10.2 Shenandoah County

■ **Shenandoah County Comprehensive Plan**

The *Shenandoah County Comprehensive Plan 2025* (SCDPZ 2005) includes general development goals and related objectives and strategies that will guide growth management in Shenandoah County. The county's vision for the future is that of a rural county characterized by open space and agriculture.

The plan contains a number of specific strategies to protect and enhance battlefield sites throughout the county:

- continue to show rural areas of battlefields as agricultural or forest uses
- limit the extension of water and sewer service into battlefield sites
- prevent road construction or improvements to existing roads that would cause adverse impacts to battlefield sites
- refrain from approving infrastructure or capital projects such as solid waste disposal facilities, schools, or communication towers that would impact battlefield sites

- explore implementation methods that the county can commit toward battlefield preservation such as purchase of development rights, agricultural and forest districts, agricultural support programs, and a battlefield preservation zoning district
- encourage use of donated easements and other voluntary measures to permanently protect Civil War sites
- identify specific scenic vistas throughout the county, erect appropriate roadside markers, and promote procedures for protecting, insofar as possible, those vistas from encroachment

Growth management throughout the county will direct new development at moderate densities to existing towns and areas adjoining existing towns where public services can be economically extended. The county plan designates public service areas (PSAs) in the vicinity of the county's existing towns where new development is appropriate based upon analysis of environmental suitability and opportunities for service extensions. Where individual water and sewage disposal systems must be used and rural secondary roads exist only very low density development will be allowed.

Strasburg is a major existing growth center within the County and provides public services within the Strasburg PSA. The Strasburg PSA encompasses land within the existing town as well as areas outside the town where services could be extended. The expansion area encompasses all of the land within the legislative boundary of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP located south of I-81 in Shenandoah County. The town is responsible for more detailed planning for land within the limits of the Strasburg PSA (see *Town of Strasburg Comprehensive Plan* below). However, until such time as rural land within the park boundary is annexed by the town, it will continue to be designated "agriculture" by the county with a minimum lot size of 3.5 acres.

Land located north of I-81 within the legislative boundary of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is designated "agriculture" by the county, with a minimum lot size of 3.5 acres.

■ Town of Strasburg Comprehensive Plan

The *Town of Strasburg Comprehensive Plan* (NSVRC 2002) provides a guiding vision and goals for the future development of Strasburg and the immediate surrounding area. The plan also identifies policies and actions to be implemented to achieve the vision and goals. A general goal of the plan is "to encourage the preservation and development of historically significant areas and buildings and quality tourist attractions such as museums and antique centers." A related implementing strategy for this goal states that the town will "preserve, protect, and enhance the Civil War Battlefield areas and support the Belle Grove and Cedar Creek National

Battlefield initiative." The plan also states that the town should continue to actively seek to have the national park visitor center located in Strasburg.

The study area addressed in the plan encompasses land within Shenandoah County that may be annexed by the town. The potential annexation area includes land within the legislative boundary of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP in the vicinity of Harmony Hall, Bowman's Ford, the Keister Tract, and private land adjoining the Keister Tract in the Pouts Hill Road corridor. Land owned by Shenandoah County at the Keister Tract and by Belle Grove, Inc. at Harmony Hall is designated "conservation" in the future land use map; uses in "conservation" areas are limited to agriculture, park, and recreational development. Private land within the park boundary is designated "low density residential"; the plan does not define the term "low density residential" except to say that development in these areas would occur "as topography and the capabilities of roads and public facilities allow."

- **Old Valley Pike Corridor Plan**

The *Old Valley Pike Corridor Plan* (NSVRC 2003) is adopted by reference as part of the *Shenandoah County Comprehensive Plan 2005* (SCDPZ 2005). The plan provides a concept plan for maintaining the traffic capacity of Old Valley Pike (Route 11) within Shenandoah County and for planning land uses and facilities along the corridor while protecting the historic and scenic resources within it. The major plan recommendation is creation of a corridor overlay district that extends 500 feet on each side of the road centerline. This area encompasses land along Valley Pike (Route 11) within the authorized limits of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP.

Major actions recommended in the *Old Valley Pike Corridor Plan* (NSVRC 2003) include the following:

- connecting towns and tourism sites via a multi-use trail system
- improving design quality of new development to achieve multiple goals of preserving rural character, providing safe and efficient travel, and promoting economic development
- making transportation system improvements that enhance the safety and operation of the corridor, promoting pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and minimizing the impact of traffic diverted from I-81
- maintaining roadway capacity and efficiency through coordinated land use and transportation planning
- using intelligent transportation systems technology to manage traffic flow
- providing distinct "gateways" at towns

Shenandoah County has prepared a draft ordinance implementing major recommendations of the corridor plan.

- **Strasburg 2020 Transportation Plan**

A number of roadway improvements within Strasburg are identified in the *Strasburg 2020 Transportation Plan* (VDOT 2002). Many of these projects are designed to improve travel on and through the main thoroughfares in Strasburg including Routes 5 and 11. A new road is proposed that would bypass Valley Pike (Route 11) and Route 55, with an extension of Crim Drive to connect with the bypass. Improvements are also planned for Bowmans Mill Road. Combined, these improvements will allow park visitors to travel from either I-81 Exit 296 or 298 to the Keister Tract area without traveling through downtown Strasburg.

- **Keister Tract Master Plan**

The *Keister Tract Master Plan* (EDAW et al 2005) provides an overall plan for use and development of the Keister Tract, encompassing 151 acres on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River at the southern end of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. Major recommended improvements include an interpretive center, an amphitheatre, campground (tent camping), comfort stations, boat ramp, picnicking facilities, park roads, a trail network, a ropes course, parking, and an operations facility. The trail system is designed to connect to Strasburg Town Park via a path along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. A new trail connection to George Washington National Forest is also proposed from the Keister Tract that would tie into a new shorter (but steeper) trail to Signal Knob than the existing trail from Fort Valley Road. Implementation of the full development program would necessitate improvements to Pouts Hill Road to accommodate projected levels of visitor use at the park.

1.10.3 Warren County

- **Warren County Comprehensive Plan**

The overall growth management goal of the *Warren County Comprehensive Plan 2005* (NSVRC 2005) is “to direct future development into an efficient and serviceable form that will preserve the county’s predominantly rural character.” This is to be accomplished by the following:

- developing land use policies and implementing land use decisions in such a manner as to limit average residential growth to no more than 3 percent per year, measured in new residential building permits
- directing new residential development to areas contiguous with Front Royal and to the rural villages that are served or will be served with adequate public facilities such as roads, sewer, and water
- encouraging location of new industrial and commercial development largely within the Route 340/522 Corridor and at Route 55 East (Linden)

Privately owned land within the authorized limits of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is designated "agricultural" on the county's Future Land Use Map and is zoned "agricultural." Agricultural zones have a required minimum lot size of two acres (which can be reduced to one acre in cluster housing developments).

No specific goals, policies, or implementation strategies in the plan specifically address Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. No major roadway improvements or other public investments are identified within the vicinity of the park.

- **Virginia Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2006-2011 (Warren County)**

The *Virginia Transportation Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2006-2011*(VDOT 2005) does not include any projects in Warren County within the park or that would impact the park (exclusive of I-81 improvements).

1.10.4 Other Plans and Projects

- **Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Management Plan and Implementation Plan**

The *Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Final Management Plan* (Heritage Partners, Inc. et al 2000c) identifies the actions to be taken to promote the protection and continued appreciation of the historic, cultural, and natural resources within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District. The *Implementation Plan* (Heritage Partners, Inc. et al 2000a) is a supplement to the district plan prepared to supplement and amplify the "clusters" approach and other actions contained in the district plan, focusing on the first five to seven years of the battlefield preservation program.

The plan structures the district according to geographic groupings – or clusters – of battlefields, nearby towns, and other visitor sites, and calls for specific area plans to be prepared for each cluster. It includes specific policy guidelines and recommended actions related to battlefield and resource protection, interpretation, visitor services, management, funding and costs, and implementation. The plan created the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation as the entity responsible for implementation of the plan and management of the district. The Foundation is also charged with fostering partnerships within the district and creating incentives for communities to collaborate on interpretive sites and other preservation-oriented Civil War orientation centers throughout the district.

The NPS is identified as one of the Foundation's partners which will participate in implementing the plan. Among the specific roles identified for the NPS is to collaborate with the district and its other partners to create Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP and to subsequently develop facilities at the new park to support the

plan and the district-wide interpretive plan. Specific recommended visitor services at Cedar Creek include the following:

- potentially create a new park unit with visitor center
- build walking trails at current visitor facilities
- develop parking and walking trails at river fords and the cemetery with display shelter or a Virginia Civil War Trails pull-off interpretive site
- consider a bicycle tour of the entire battlefield

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP was established in 2002, two years following adoption of the district's plan. In the park enabling legislation, the Foundation is identified as one of the park's Key Partners. The legislation further states that the Foundation "may continue to manage the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District in partnership with the NPS and in accordance with the Management Plan for the district in which the park is located."

- **Interstate 81 Corridor Improvement Project**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) are currently studying alternatives for the 325-mile stretch of I-81 within Virginia. Actions are needed to address capacity and safety problems resulting from the combination of the highway's geometric conditions with the traffic demands (including substantial truck traffic), speeds, and weather conditions.

In 2003 FHWA and VDOT signed a process streamlining agreement that defined the decision-making and approval process to be followed for a tiered environmental study of the I-81 corridor to determine transportation system needs that will satisfy the project purpose and need. The process includes two tiers. Tier 1 consists of a *Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* (FHWA 2006), a *Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)* (FHWA 2007a), and a *Tier 1 Record of Decision* (ROD) (FHWA 2007b). Tier 2 will include preparation of NEPA documents for individual, independent projects recommended based on findings of Tier 1 studies.

Transportation project planning for the I-81 project has progressed through completion of the *Tier 1 Final EIS* (FHWA 2007a). The FEIS identifies the "Build Concept" to be advanced into the Tier 2 planning process as "a non-separated highway facility that involves construction of no more than two general purpose lanes in each direction, where needed, to address 2035 travel demands." FHWA also proposes to advance I-81 as a toll pilot facility, following Tier 1 EIS findings that the impacts on Valley Pike (Route 11) and other roads (both local roadways and other interstate facilities) from traffic diverted from I-81 as a result of tolling would be low.

In Tier 2 studies FHWA and VDOT will undertake environmental studies and preliminary engineering design within eight corridor sections – referred to as Sections of Independent Utility (SIUs). Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP is located within SIU 7 (Exit 247 in Harrisonburg to Exit 300 at I-66) and SIU 8 (Exit 300 at I-66 to the West Virginia state line). The *Tier 1 Final EIS* (FHWA 2007a) identifies the need for two additional lanes on both the northbound and southbound roadway. This has the potential to directly impact from 325 to 436 acres within the legislative boundary of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP from mileposts 299 to 301 (FHWA 2007a). Included within the area of impact would be from 28.4 to 33.9 acres at Fort Bowman (Harmony Hall) owned by Belle Grove, Inc. (FHWA 2007a), as well as an unidentified area owned by the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation near their visitor contact facility on the east side of Valley Pike (Route 11) near Middletown. The amount of land to be permanently taken from the park has not yet been determined.

Compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations will occur for each project during Tier 2. Environmental assessments (EAs) will be the type of Tier 2 NEPA document for each SIU. Based on the detailed information in the EAs, decisions will be made on the significance of the impacts on each SIU. If significant impacts are identified within an SIU, an EIS will be prepared for the roadway segment (FHWA 2007a). Depending on the context of the proposed improvements and nature of the impacts, the Tier 2 NEPA documents may evaluate in detail one "build" alternative (FHWA 2007a).

As part Tier 2 FHWA will also complete compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. At that time the land to be permanently taken from Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP will be determined and other environmental consequences, such as noise, air quality, and scenic resource impacts will be assessed. Measures will also be considered to avoid and minimize impacts of the alternatives to the park and other specific cultural resources within the park potentially affected by the roadway improvement projects under consideration.

- **Virginia Outdoors Plan**

The *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)* is the state's official document regarding land conservation, outdoor recreation, and open space planning. The plan provides guidance for the protection of lands through actions of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. It is required in order for Virginia to take part in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program. The state is currently preparing the 2007 edition of the VOP. Agency coordination completed for the GMP has identified a number of recommended actions in the draft VOP update that pertain to land within Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP and its adjoining communities (VDCR 2007a) (see Appendix D), summarized as follows:

- protect the historic and open space context of Belle Grove and Harmony Hall
- implement the *Keister Tract Master Plan* (EDAW et al 2005)
- develop a greenway along the Shenandoah River to connect the park with other resources
- develop a managed blueway system of access and recreational use areas and provide additional public access along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River and Cedar Creek
- designate the historic and scenic Valley Road (Route 11) as a Virginia Scenic Byway
- complete and implement the Winchester-Frederick Bike-Pedestrian Plan
- maintain and pursue coordinated local and regional implementation of "Walking and Wheeling the Northern Shenandoah Valley"

1.11 Park Boundaries

In the future the NPS will complete a boundary study to determine if a park boundary adjustment is needed. Before this study can be completed, additional resource studies are needed to better understand the occurrence and significance of related lands in proximity to the park.

Federal law and NPS management policies state that park boundary adjustments may be recommended by the NPS and authorized by Congress if they accomplish one or more of the following:

- include significant resources or opportunities for public enjoyment related to the purposes of the park
- address operational and management issues such as access and boundary identification by topographic or other natural features or roads
- protect park resources critical to fulfilling park purposes

All recommendations for boundary changes must be feasible to administer considering their size, configuration, and ownership; costs; the views of and impacts on local communities and surrounding jurisdictions; and other factors such as the presence of hazardous substances or exotic species. Other alternatives for management and resource protection must have been assessed and judged to be not adequate.