

III. Viewsheds: Historically Based

Viewsheds Selection Principles

Page 15 outlines five principles used to select the ten key Public Vantage Points (PVPs), which were analyzed in the previous section of this study. Those principles included high elevations, historical significance, accessibility, representation of both battles, and geographic variety. In selecting the fifteen “historically based viewsheds” (HBVs) to be studied, these same basic considerations came into play. In short, they constitute the second tier of viewsheds that did not make the initial cut that determined the PVPs. Furthermore, while the PVPs were intended to focus on viewshed anchors within the National Park Service (NPS) boundaries, this category was intended to consider viewsheds both internal and external to the park.

Selected Historically Based Viewsheds

The following fifteen HBVs were selected for the study:

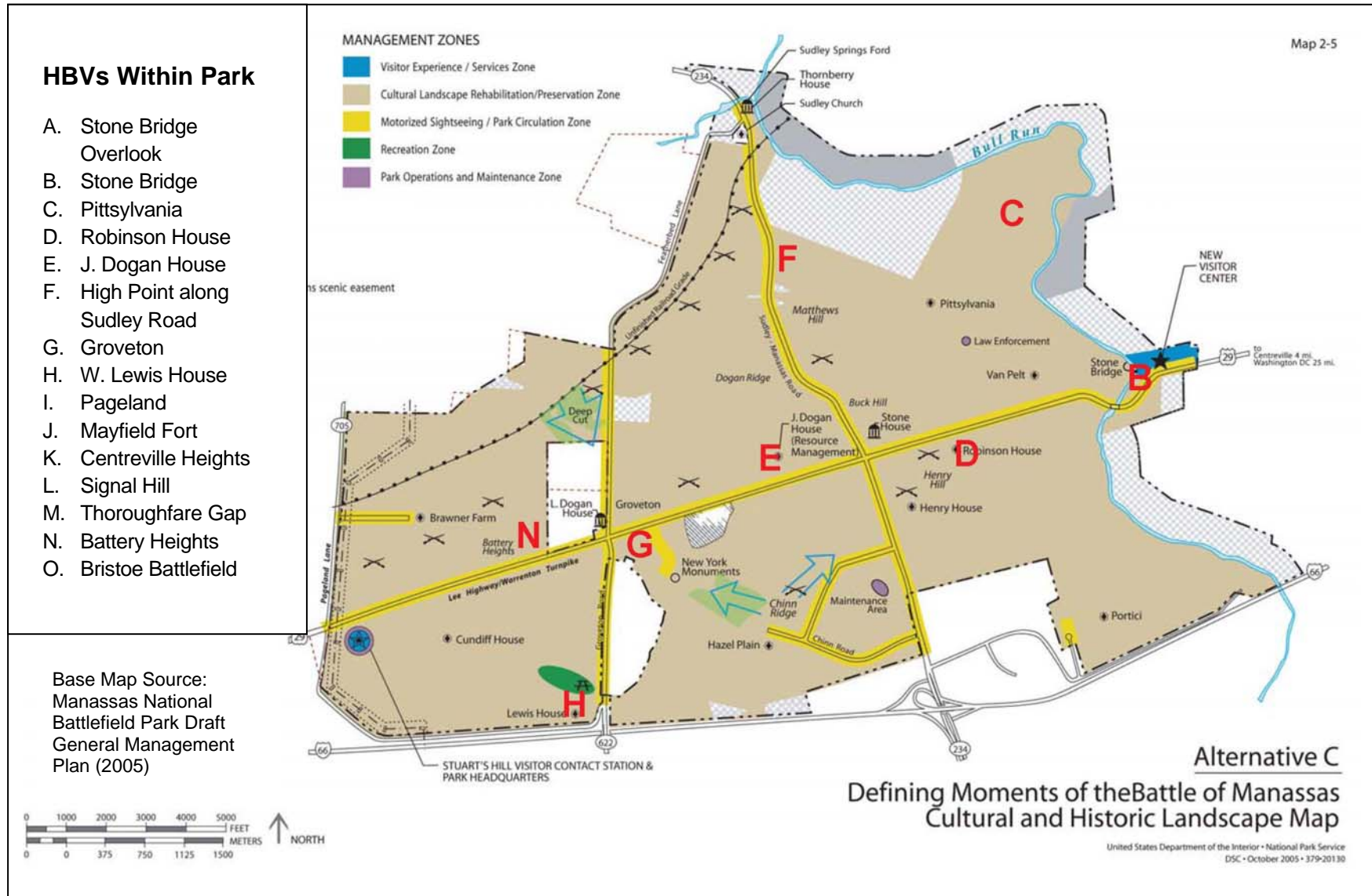
- A. Stone Bridge Overlook
- B. Stone Bridge
- C. Pittsylvania
- D. Robinson House
- E. J. Dogan House
- F. High Point along Sudley Road
- G. Groveton
- H. W. Lewis House
- I. Pageland
- J. Mayfield Fort

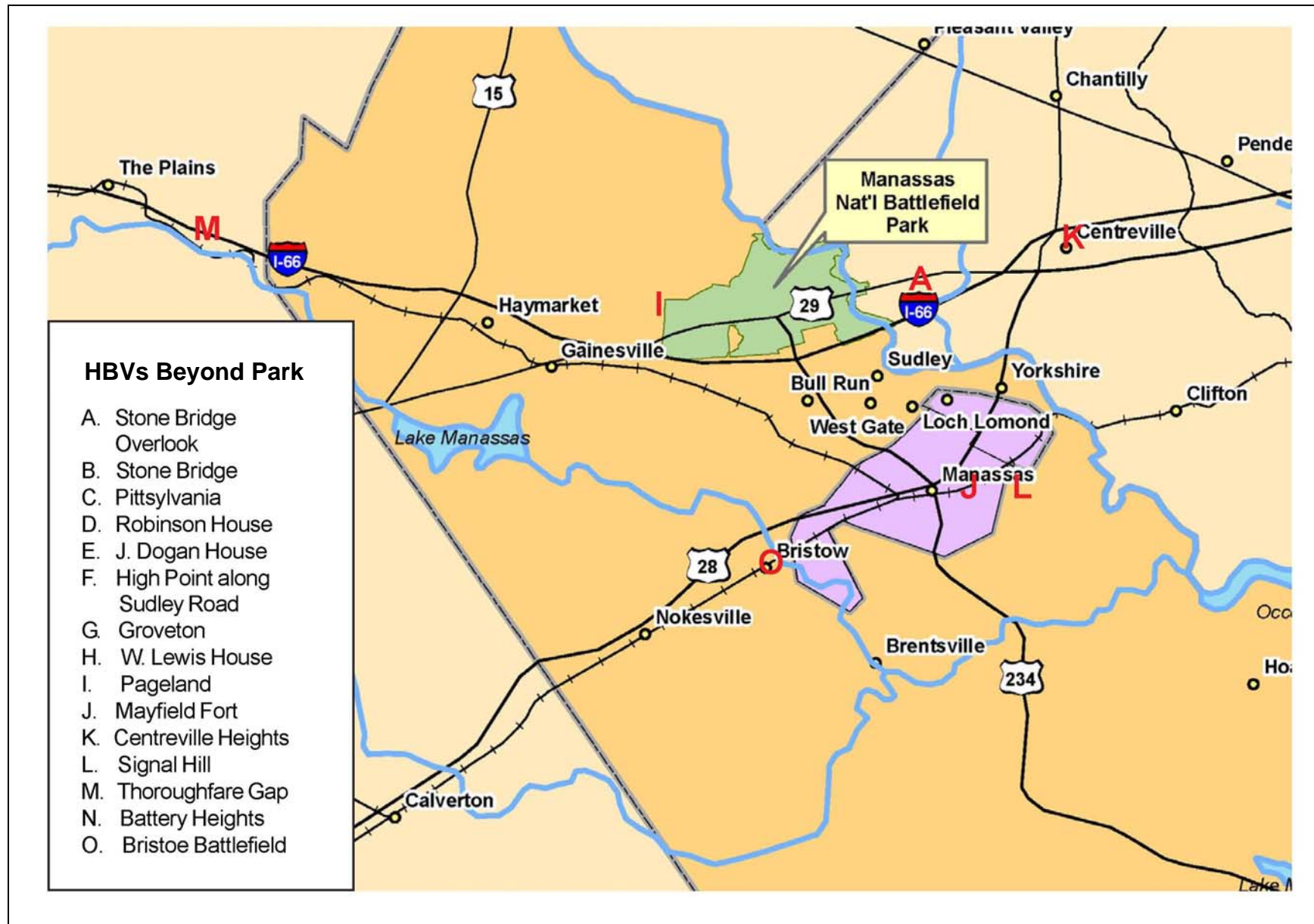
- K. Centreville Heights
- L. Signal Hill
- M. Thoroughfare Gap
- N. Battery Heights
- O. Bristoe Battlefield

Other viewsheds considered, but not selected, for further study include Stone Bridge, Stone House, High Point Along Featherbed Road, Mitchell’s Ford, Bull Run Railroad Bridge, Blackburn’s Ford, Dawkin’s Branch and McLean’s Ford. See pages 9-10 of the Purpose section of the Plan document regarding the selection methodology applied to the selection process for viewsheds, both PVPs and HBVs. The following two pages contain two maps. The map on page 80 illustrates all of the HBVs located within the NPS boundaries. The map on page 81 shows HBVs located beyond the NPS boundaries.

Visibility from Historically Based Viewsheds

The map on page 82 illustrates visibility from the fifteen HBVs. The HBVs are pin-pointed by a light blue dot. The legend at left of the map shows 14 different color-shaded levels of visibility. The number indicates the number of HBVs from which the colored areas are visible. For example, areas featuring the darkest shading are visible from 14 separate HBVs, while areas with the lightest shading are visible from only one HBV. This map is based upon a vegetation height of 40 feet and the viewing height of 5’10”, the average height of a man today.

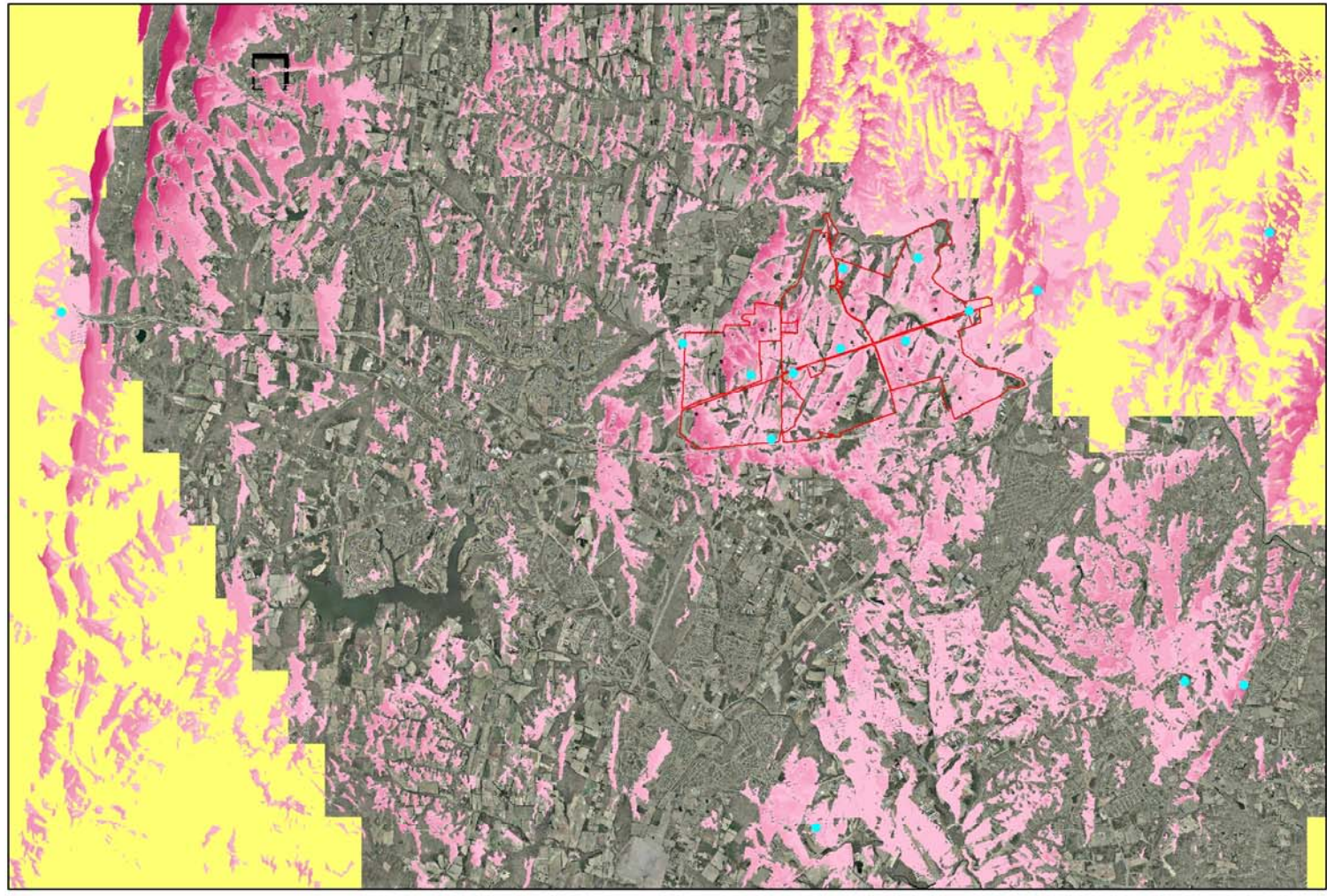
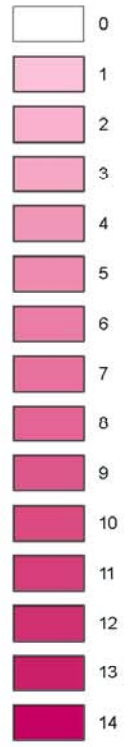






Legend

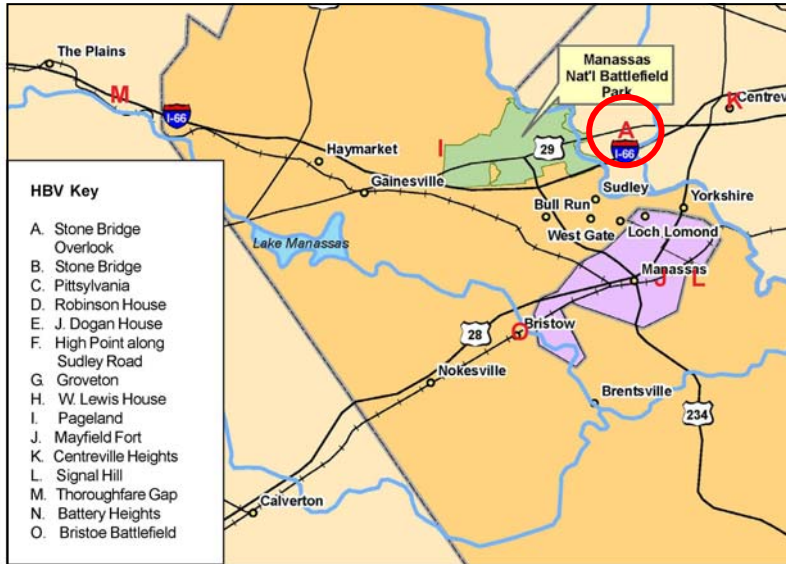
All HBV's



Historically Based Viewsheds Visibility



A) STONE BRIDGE OVERLOOK



Historic Significance

Situated along the Warrenton Turnpike, this high ground provided clear views east and west toward Centreville and the Manassas Battlefields. The opening artillery shots of the First Battle of Manassas were fired from near this location. Among those first

shots was at least one that struck the Van Pelt House (Public Gathering Area 3).

Physical Description

The views associated with this historically based viewshed (HBV) are most significant looking east toward Centreville and looking west toward the battlefield, including toward the Van Pelt House. As reflected in the photographs on the following page, this HBV anchor is a high point along Route 29.

Consequently, when looking east, the ground gradually drops off in elevation and the road disappears, although the landscape can be seen in the distance. Both sides of the road are primarily flanked by evergreen trees, and man-made improvements include road signage, utility poles, overhead wires, and street lights.

When looking west toward the battlefield, the same types of physical features are evident as viewed to the east, although there are fewer trees. Another distinction is that the slope of the land is relatively flat and the elevation does not drop off until further into the background. This view is terminated by the battlefield lands far off in the horizon.

HBV A: Stone Bridge Overlook



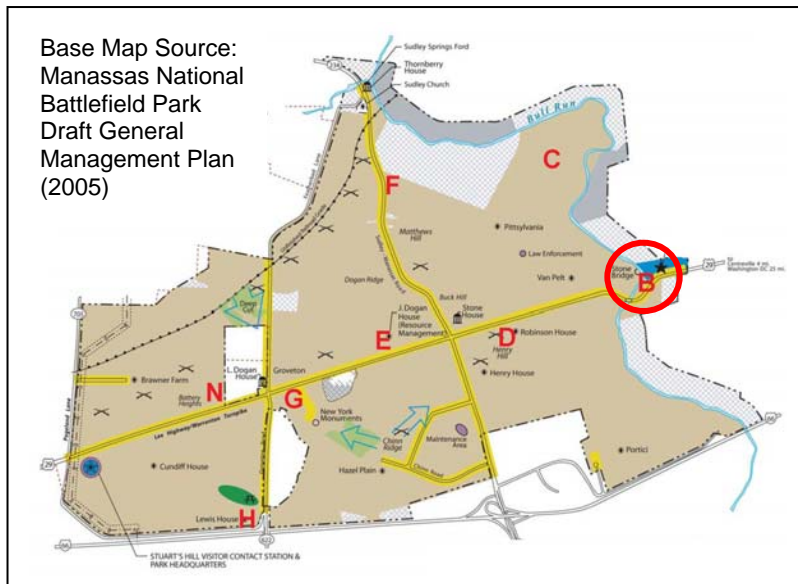
W



E

LEGEND	
Compass Direction	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

B) STONE BRIDGE (Auto Tour Stop 11)



Historic Significance

Built in the 1820s, the Stone Bridge spanned Bull Run on the Warrenton Turnpike. It was the location of the opening shots of First Manassas and the location of the primary route of retreat for Federals at Second Manassas. The bridge came through the first battle unscathed, but had been destroyed by Confederates prior to Second Manassas. A reconstructed bridge remains in place today.

The impact of the stream and bridge upon both battles cannot be overemphasized. The creek's steep banks created a physical

obstacle that resulted in all military traffic "bottlenecking" at the bridge. This was disruptive both for troop and supply transit and for military maneuvering. Similarly, the trees associated with Bull Run created a visual barrier.

Physical Description

Unlike many of the other viewshed anchors associated with this study, this particular location is relatively low topographically. Given that it is located at a creek – Bull Run – that situation is understandable. Thus, when looking both east and west, the ground elevation gradually climbs as the views extend further out. To the north and west of the bridge, a narrow trail can be seen meandering along the west side of the creek. Views to the east, south and west are dominated by Route 29 and its associated bridge running parallel to the Stone Bridge. Because of the existence of the creek, there is a good deal of tree cover within this viewshed. The east side of the creek is dominated by evergreen trees, while the west side is dominated by deciduous trees. Views extending significantly beyond the Stone Bridge are only along corridors free of trees - the trail, Route 29 and Bull Run. Other than the guard rail near the Route 29 bridge, this viewshed appears to be relatively free of modern intrusions such as overhead lines, signage, and street lights. While they actually exist to some extent, the trees flanking Route 29 visually obscure them. Also, the split rail fence along the path adds to the historic and natural character of this viewshed area.

HBV B: Stone Bridge Viewshed Panorama



NW

N

NE



E

SE

S

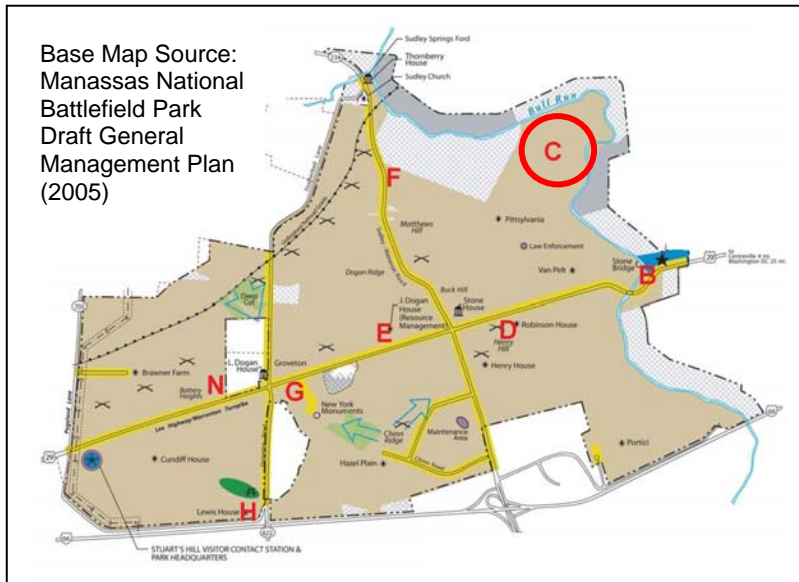


SW

W

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

C) PITTSYLVANIA



especially to the west toward Matthews Hill and toward Bull Run fords to the east.

Physical Description

In general, this viewshed is very open and free of obscuring vegetation within the foreground and middleground. The foreground and middleground in all directions feature flat to gently rolling fields. The view to the north, east and southeast – toward Bull Run – features a background in which the topography drops off toward the creek and primarily deciduous trees line the creek. The views in the opposite direction – to the south and west – are not as extensive before tree cover terminates the view. The tree line visible in these directions is comprised primarily of evergreens.

Historic Significance

Pittsylvania, the Landon Carter plantation, saw important troop movements during both battles. At First Manassas, Confederates stopped here at the battle’s opening and later, Union troops staged and fell back over the area. At Second Manassas, Union soldiers again retreated here. At some point in time the house burned down. Modern woods block much of the 1860s viewshed,

HBV C: Pittsylvania Viewshed Panorama



NE

E



SE

S

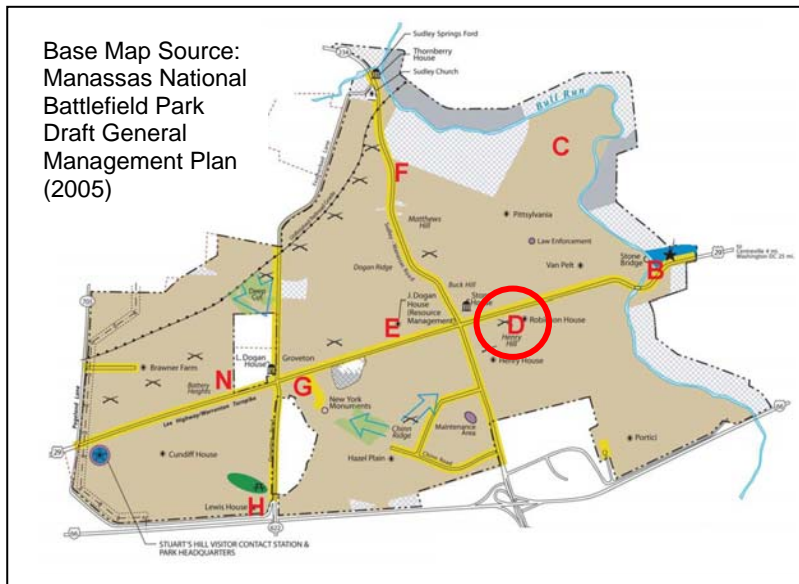


W

NW

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

D) ROBINSON HOUSE



Historic Significance

The home of a freed slave, the Robinson House stood during both the First and Second Battles of Manassas. Although it sustained little damage as the Confederates retreated through its yard during the First Battle of Manassas, it sustained damage when used as a Union field hospital during Second Manassas. The original house was razed by the Robinson Family in 1926 to make room for an addition to the post-war north wing of the dwelling. No house survives on this site today.

Physical Description

The view from this viewshed anchor is relatively flat and open. To the north, northeast and northwest is Route 29. Located in the middleground, the road itself is slightly topographically depressed and out of view, although it is lined with a split rail fence. The northerly side of the road consists of open fields, and the view is terminated in the background by wooded areas in the far distance. The woods directly north are predominantly evergreens, while the woods flanking either side to the east and west transition to primarily deciduous trees. Toward the south and west of the viewshed anchor the landscape is extremely open and unobstructed. The topography is gently rolling and the elevation level gradually declines in this direction. Patches of wooded area terminate the viewshed in the distant horizon, while the foreground features a split rail fence and a few random trees, both deciduous and evergreen (cedars). In general, this viewshed, in all directions, is void of any significant modern intrusions that detract from its overall historic character.

HBV D: Robinson House Viewshed Panorama



NE

E



SE

S



SW

W

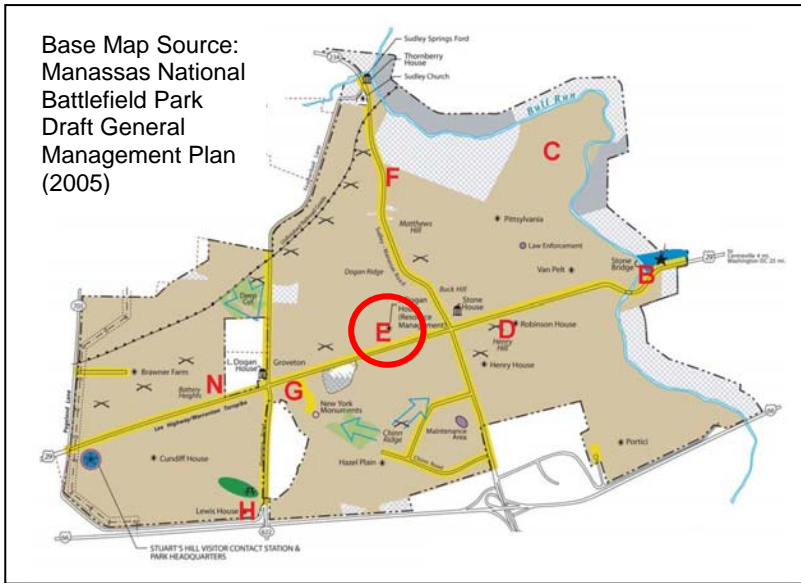
NW

LEGEND

Compass Direction

- N North
- NE Northeast
- E East
- SE Southeast
- S South
- SW Southwest
- W West
- NW Northwest

E) J. DOGAN HOUSE



Physical Description

This site is on a natural ridge that runs roughly along a north-south axis perpendicular to Route 29. The house site is located just north of Route 29. The views in all directions are very open and visually unobstructed, and the terrain gradually falls away in all directions. The only significant foreground feature is the post Civil War historic house that replaced the original structure, which is just north of the viewshed anchor. This building is accompanied by a few outbuildings and trees, as well as a driveway and small parking area. There is also a system of utility poles and utility lines along Route 29, and a lateral line connects the house to this system. In all directions, the viewshed is terminated in the distant horizon with wooded areas, which are dominated by deciduous trees, but include some evergreen trees interspersed throughout.

Historic Significance

John Dogan's house, which stood on the crest of a ridge, was built in the 1790s and destroyed by fire during the Civil War. The current structure, built in the 1880s, stands near the original house site. Due to its clear lines of site and tactically central location, Dogan Ridge served as Union infantry and artillery positions during both battles.

HBV E: J. Dogan House Viewshed Panorama



N NE E SE



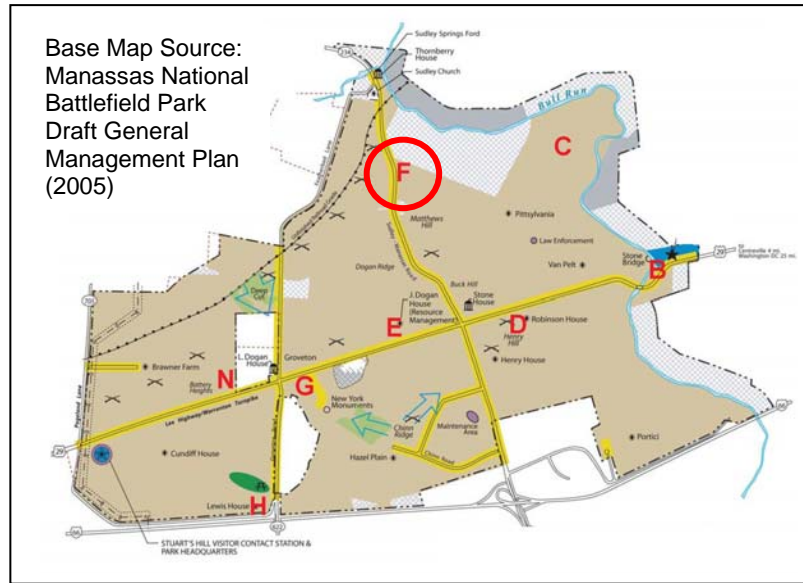
S SW



W NW

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

F) HIGH POINT ALONG SUDLEY ROAD



Physical Description

Although this viewshed may be anchored at a “high point” along the Sudley Road, the surrounding vegetation limits the views. The immediate area – the foreground – is relatively open. The main features within the foreground are the early-twentieth century house and outbuildings located to the northeast, which includes a random mix of deciduous and evergreen trees, the road to the south and southwest, and a wooden fence to the west and northwest. The road includes a series of utility poles and overhead lines that are relatively visible because of the lack of roadside trees within this immediate area. The background in all directions features wooded areas dominated by deciduous trees, but featuring evergreens as well.

Historic Significance

The structures at this location, the National Park Service’s Quarters Nine, date from the early-twentieth century, but the site would have seen Union troop movements and staging for assaults upon Matthews Hill at First Manassas and the Railroad Cut at Second Manassas.

HBV F: High Point Along Sudley Road Viewshed Panorama



NE

E

SE



S

SW



W

NW

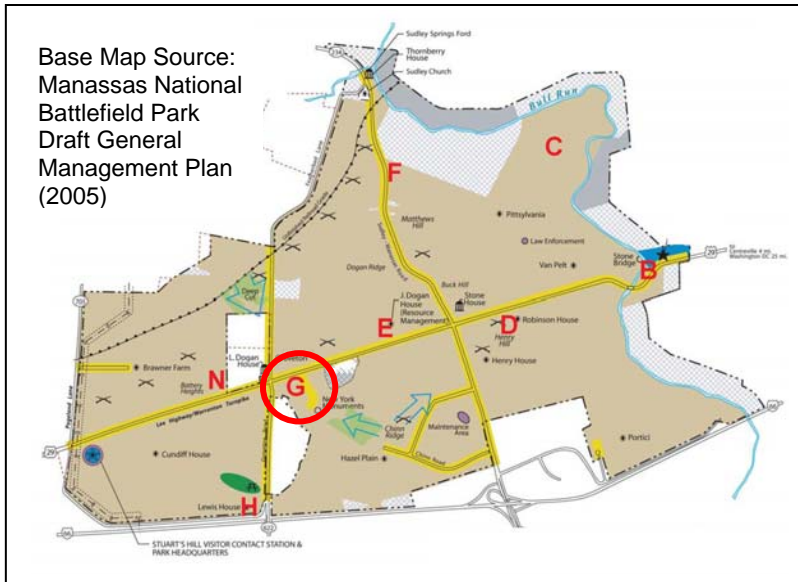
N

LEGEND

Compass Direction

- N North
- NE Northeast
- E East
- SE Southeast
- S South
- SW Southwest
- W West
- NW Northwest

G) GROVETON (Auto Tour Stop 7)



Historic Significance

The small group of structures known as Groveton sat at the Warrenton Turnpike / Groveton-Sudley Road intersection. One known surviving structure of the Groveton area is the Lucinda Dogan House, at the northwest corner of the intersection. No trace of the historic village exists south of the Warrenton Turnpike - the location of this viewshed - at which stand New York infantry monuments and cannon position markings from Second Manassas.

Physical Description

This viewshed anchor is located within a generally flat and gently rolling area, but relative to its context, it is a slightly raised elevation. The area is extremely open and unobstructed, with only a few exceptions. Within the foreground to the immediate south/southeast is the 14th Brooklyn monument and a cannon. The foreground to the northwest also features a cannon, and the foreground to the southwest features an interpretive wayside.

One impressive view is looking north along the Groveton-Sudley Road. Lined with a split rail fence, the road drops in elevation within the middleground and then gradually raises as it reaches the background and becomes lost in a grove of trees – evergreens east of the road and deciduous trees west of the road. Another important view is looking west and southwest down Route 29 – the direction from which the Union forces marched when the Confederates unexpectedly attacked to initiate the Second Battle of Manassas. This road segment still has a historic character and is lined with a split rail fence.

HBV G: Groveton Viewshed Panorama



N NE E



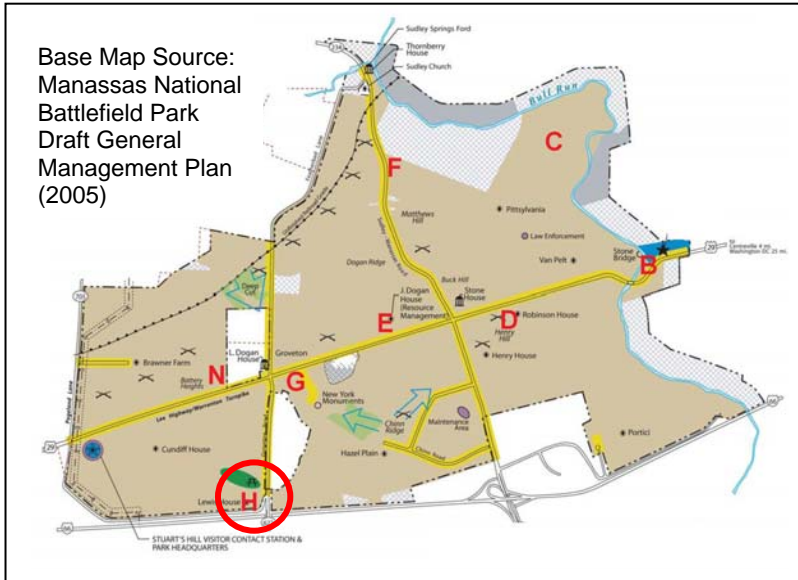
SE S SW



W NW

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

H) W. LEWIS HOUSE



Physical Description

This viewshed anchor is the most southerly of all those located within the national park. Because of their historic significance, the views to the north are the most important. The views in all directions are somewhat open and unobstructed, although random clusters of both evergreen and deciduous trees exist within the foreground and midground. This area features some of the flattest topography within the battlefield. The background views in all directions terminate with wooded areas in the distant horizon. The view to the south, southeast and southwest is surprisingly intact given its proximity to I-66. This view features only limited visible development at present, but that condition may change with future growth in the region.

Historic Significance

The Lewis plantation, Brownsville, found itself between the lines of battle at Second Manassas. The house survived the Civil War, but was destroyed by fire in 1900. Postwar alterations of the landscape have been reversed, and the area bears much resemblance to its wartime appearance.

HBV H: W. Lewis House Viewshed Panorama



N

NE

E



SE

S



SW

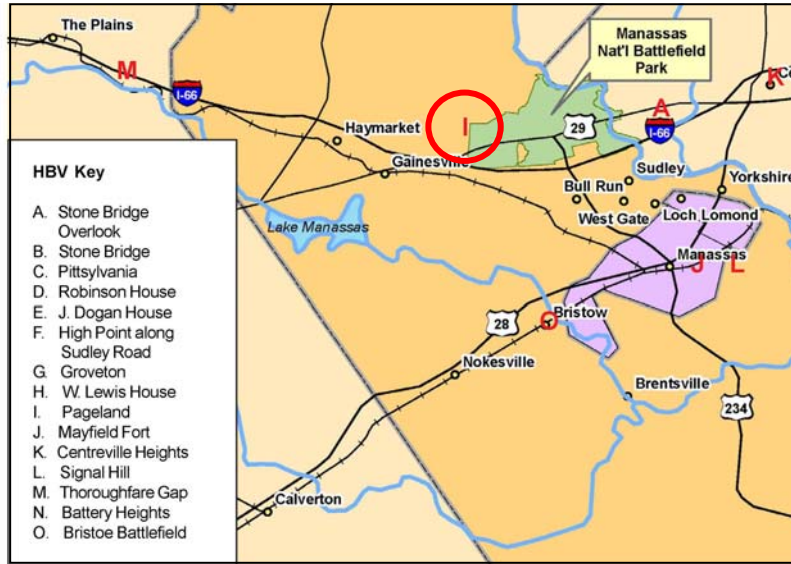
W

LEGEND

Compass Direction

- N North
- NE Northeast
- E East
- SE Southeast
- S South
- SW Southwest
- W West
- NW Northwest

I) PAGELAND



Historic Significance

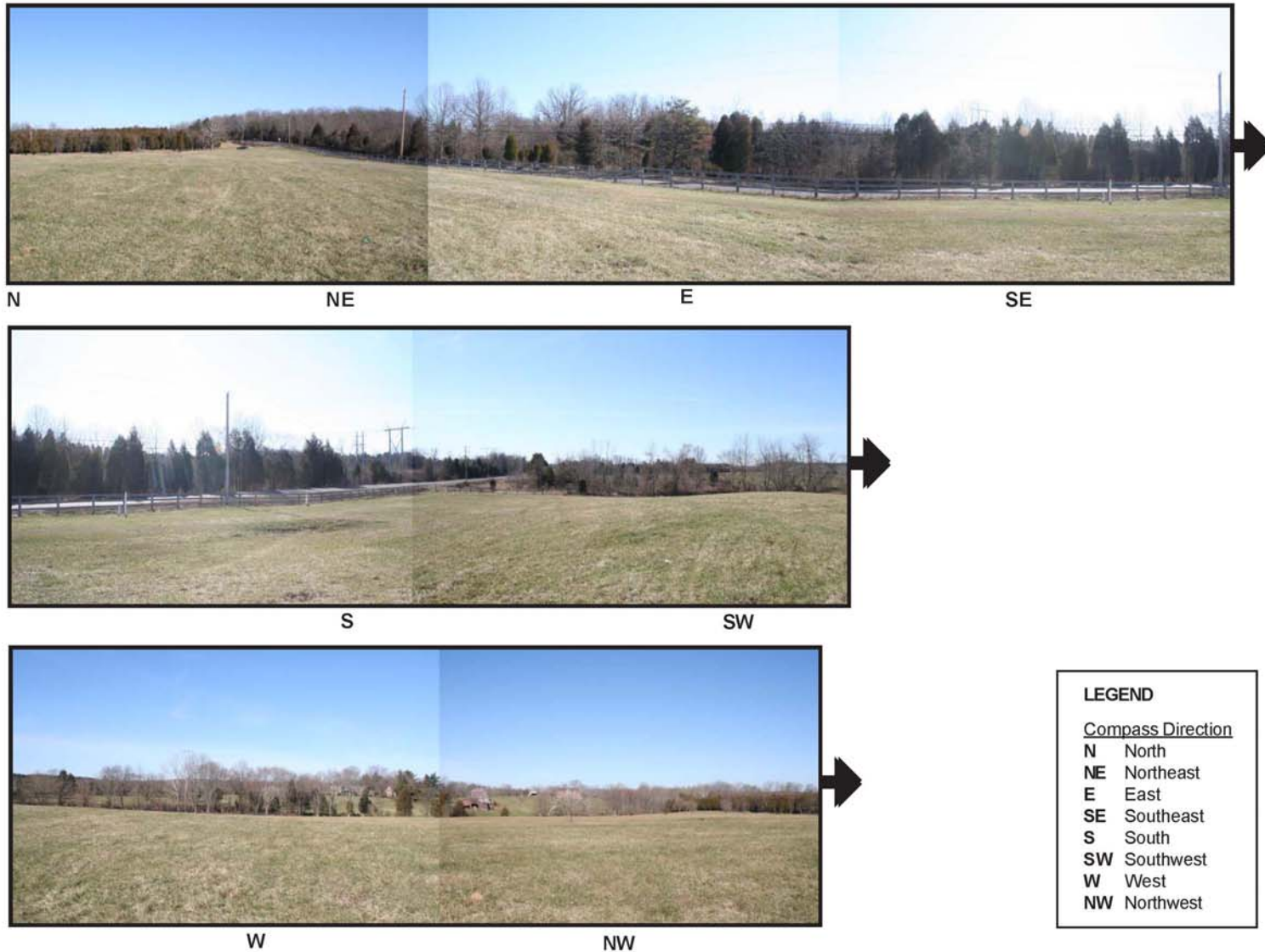
This site just west of Pageland Lane is outside the NPS boundary. During the Battle of Second Manassas, this location would have been in the rear of the Confederate right flank. The brigades of Jubal Early and Henry Forno occupied the ridge on Pageland Farm on the morning of August 29, 1862, for the purpose of covering Jackson’s right flank until Longstreet’s forces arrived later that morning.

Physical Description

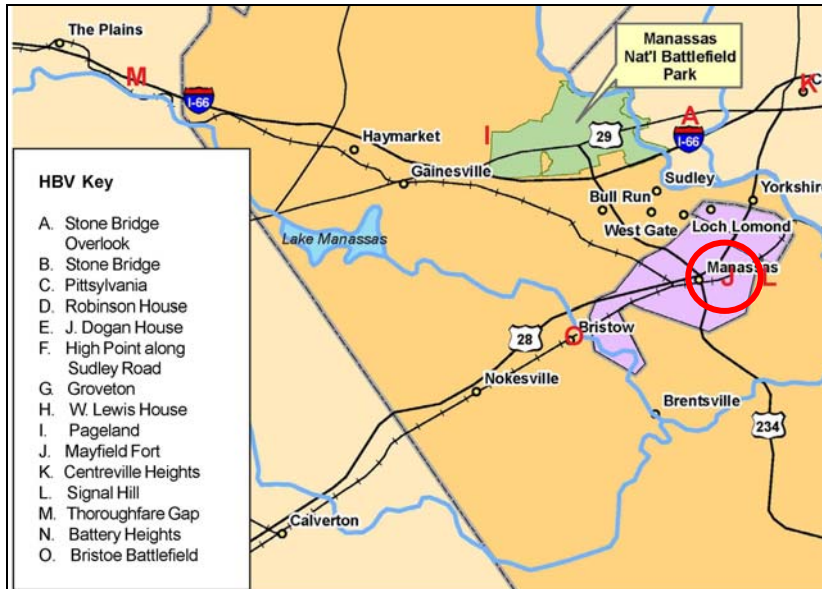
This viewshed anchor is located on the western edge of the national park, just northwest of the intersection of Route 29 and Pageland Lane. The surrounding topography is gently rolling. The view to the north up Pageland is an open field on the west side of the road and lined with woodlands on the east side. Those woods are primarily deciduous with some evergreens. The road is lined with a wooden fence and, although utility poles and overhead lines exist, they do not detract significantly from the view. The view south and southeast down Pageland toward I-66 is very similar, but the existing high-voltage electrical transmission lines can be seen in the distance on the east side of Pageland. Views to the west feature sporadic low-density modern development, as these lands are beyond the NPS boundaries and privately owned. They are also of prime importance for protecting the battlefield’s viewsheds in the future.

It should be noted that the approved alignment of the Tri-County Parkway will overlay or be immediately east of Pageland Lane. Although the proposed parkway will adversely affect views in this area, it will also alleviate the national park’s internal traffic, as this portion of the parkway will serve as part of the Battlefield bypass. In short, the visual integrity of viewsheds associated with Route 234 will potentially be enhanced by the diversion of traffic to the bypass. Also potentially impacting this area is the proposed new high voltage power lines within the Dominion Virginia Power easement, which would be roughly 15 feet taller than the current lines (see page 131).

HBV I: Pageland Viewshed Panorama



J) MAYFIELD FORT



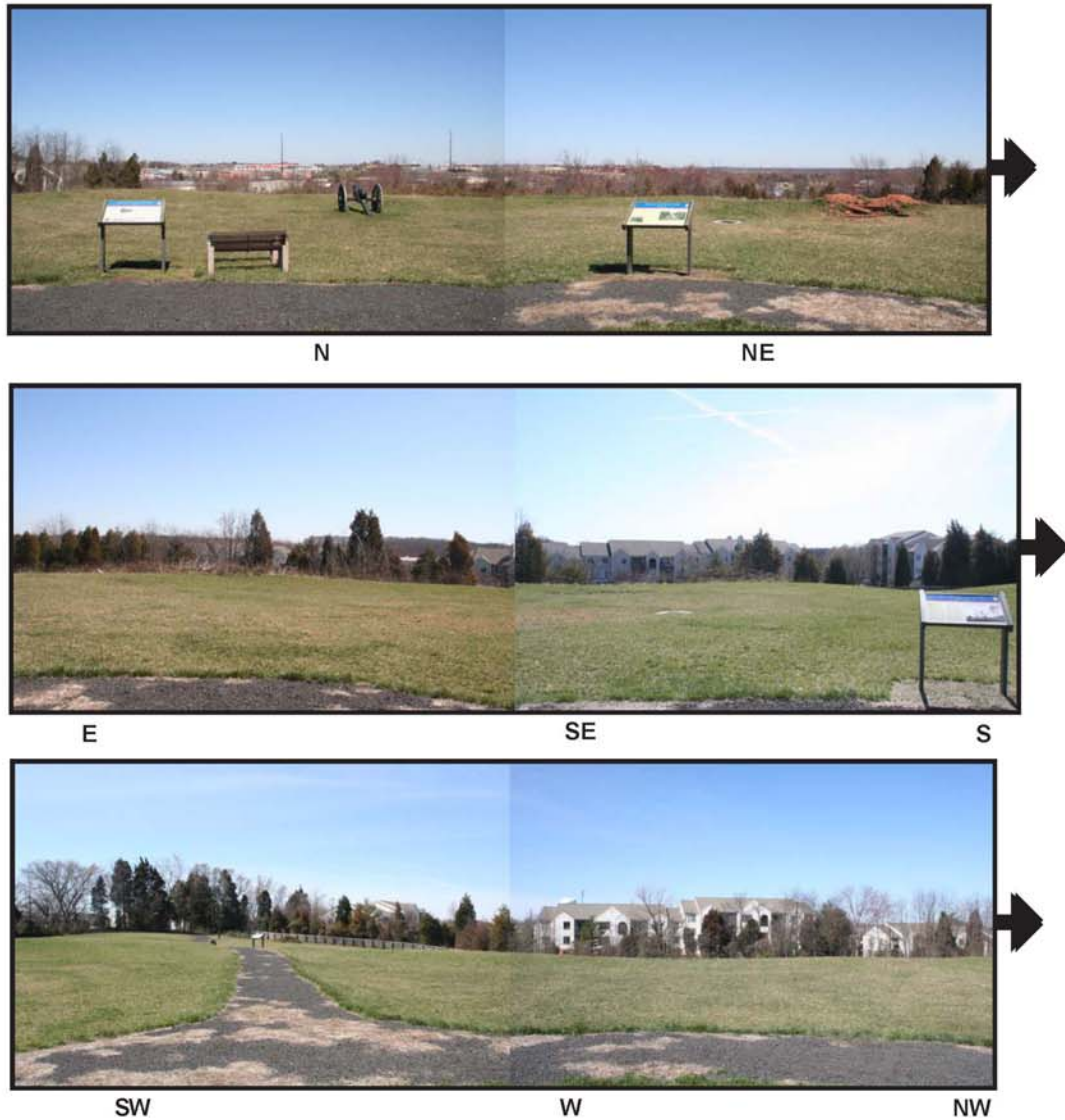
Physical Description

This viewshed is essentially an oasis located in a desert of development. It is located on a high point within its surrounding terrain, and the full perimeter is ringed with contemporary development in the background. The foreground is flat and open, and the key features include a paved trail, interpretive waysides and a cannon. The middleground falls off in elevation on all sides and features a tree line the full perimeter, while the background on all sides is dominated by development. The closest and most visible development consists of apartments on the west and southwest views, while the northwest view includes high-voltage electrical transmission lines in the distant horizon.

Historic Significance

This restored fort is one of only two surviving Civil War fortifications in Manassas. Built by the Confederates prior to the first battle as part of the Manassas Junction defenses, the ring of earthworks was eventually occupied by the Union forces and used as a base against the Confederates.

HBV J: Mayfield Fort Viewshed Panorama



LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

K) CENTREVILLE HEIGHTS

Yankees back to Centreville, cutting them off from Washington and their escape route.



Physical Description

Because of this viewshed anchor’s historic role as both a Union troop staging area and as the “public viewing area” for the First Battle of Manassas, the most significant views are to the west and southwest toward the battlefield. Anchored at the southeast corner of the intersection of Rt. 28 and Rt. 29, this viewshed is visually dominated by these two roads, which have the appearance at this location of typical highways. The southwesterly and westerly views are especially dominated by modern commercial development, although the Bull Run Mountains can be seen in the far distance. Other nearby locations for viewing this viewshed include the fire department parking lot on Old Centreville Road (just east of this viewshed anchor) and from Rt. 29 itself looking west-southwest when approaching the Rt. 28 overpass.

Historic Significance

Five miles east of Manassas Junction, Centreville served as a staging area for the Union army before its advance to Manassas and, with clear lines of sight to the west, was a gathering place for curious onlookers who journeyed from Washington City to watch the first major clash between Northern and Southern troops. After the Union defeat, Confederate forces tried unsuccessfully to beat the

HBV K: Centreville Heights



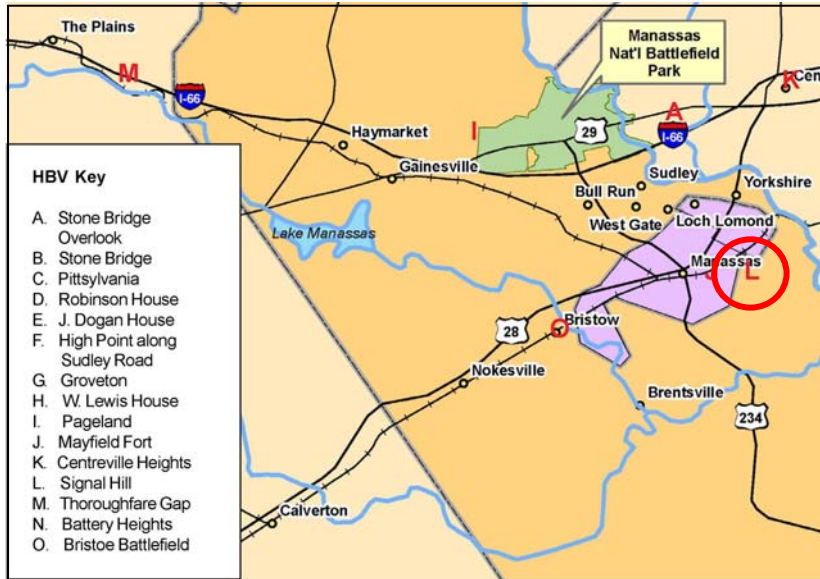
SW

W

NW

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

L) SIGNAL HILL



Physical Description

The most significant views from this viewshed anchor are to the west and northwest toward the Manassas Battlefield. This viewshed offers a very distinct foreground, middleground and background. The foreground features an east-west oriented road with utility poles and overhead wiring on its south side and a snake-rail fence on its north side. The middleground is the core of Signal Hill, consisting of a relatively flat open green space. The northwest view includes a parking area and some interpretive waysides. The terrain beyond the middleground falls off topographically and the background features trees, some randomly visible development, and a range of hills in the very distant background.

Historic Significance

This location on a once-treeless hilltop offered the Confederate army excellent sight lines to the north and west, without necessitating the building of a signal tower. It was also the site of the first American battlefield telecommunication, which warned of the location of a Union column threatening the Confederate flank (beyond the Van Pelt house, Public Gathering Area #3) and turned a potential defeat into a victory.

HBV L: Signal Hill

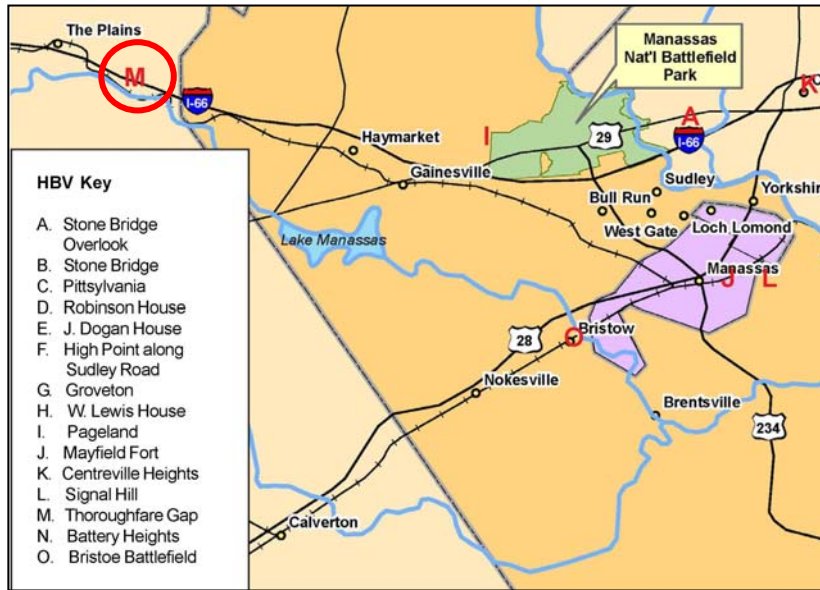


W

NW

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

M) THOROUGHFARE GAP



Historic Significance

Thoroughfare Gap was the site of a clash between Union and Confederate forces on August 28, 1862, which resulted in a loss for the Union that allowed two wings of Lee’s army to unite on the Manassas battlefield. This specific viewshed location is near the route of the Confederate advance.

Physical Description

Given this viewshed anchor’s location substantially west of the battlefield, as well as its history at the beginning of the Second Battle of Manassas, its most significant views are to the east. At this point, I-66, Route 55 (John Marshall Highway) and the rail line come together as parallel paths that pass through this natural gap in the terrain. The viewshed anchor is located on Route 55, which is a two-lane road with no paved shoulders and grassy drainage swales on either side, giving it a rural character similar to the appearance of its cross-section during the Civil War. The south side of the road has a wire fence supported by wooden posts, along with very tall power poles and overhead lines. The north side features the parallel interstate, which is elevated above the highway level. Both the interstate and the highway at this location have low guard rails. Both sides of the highway vary from being open without trees to having an occasional grouping of trees, both evergreens and deciduous.

The middleground of either side of the highway features relatively open lands, although the north side of the road is not visible beyond the interstate because of its elevation. The background of this viewshed makes obvious the source of its name – Thoroughfare Gap. On either side of the road is a large tree-covered hill extending both north and south as a ridge, while the road passes through a natural gap between the two hills.

HBV M: Thoroughfare Gap



NE

E

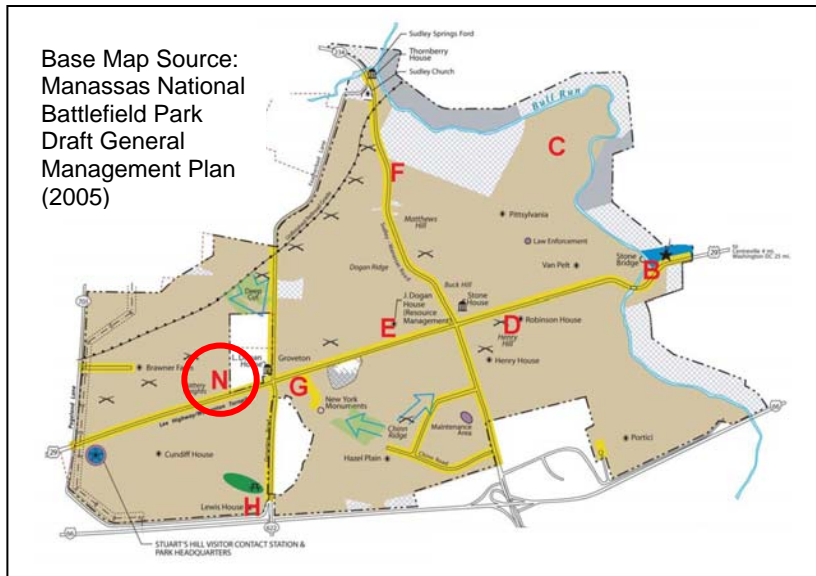
SE



S

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

N) BATTERY HEIGHTS (Auto Tour Stop 1)



Historic Significance

The site of the opening struggle of the Second Battle of Manassas. Stonewall Jackson's troops attacked Union General Rufus King's division on the late afternoon of August 28, 1862, as they marched along the Warrenton Turnpike. The roughly one and a half hour engagement that resulted rendered approximately one third of the 7,000 men engaged as casualties. On August 30th, responding to Jackson's plea for support, Longstreet directed Chapman's Battery ("Dixie Artillery") to take position here. Having an excellent field of

fire, the battery delivered a destructive enfilade fire into the flank of Fitz John Porter's lines, which were attacking the Confederate line at the unfinished railroad at the time. This location serves as the opening stop on the NPS's current tour route.

Physical Description

This viewshed is extremely open and visually unobstructed in all directions. Located on a slight ridge just north of Route 29, the topography in this area is level to gently rolling. The views to the south, southwest and west are the most significant, as they provide the same vantage point that Jackson's men had in attacking the Federals. A small parking area shaded by evergreen trees is visible in the distant middleground, and Route 29 is barely visible in the background. Beyond the road are wooded areas and a relatively open hill rises beyond that to terminate this view. The views to the north, northeast and northwest are similar in that the foreground and middleground are open fields and the background is an extensive wooded area. However, the foreground view to the northwest features a row of cannons pointing southwest toward the road – the same direction that the Northern columns approached from during the second battle's opening.

HBV N: Battery Heights Viewshed Panorama



NE

E

SE



S

SW

W

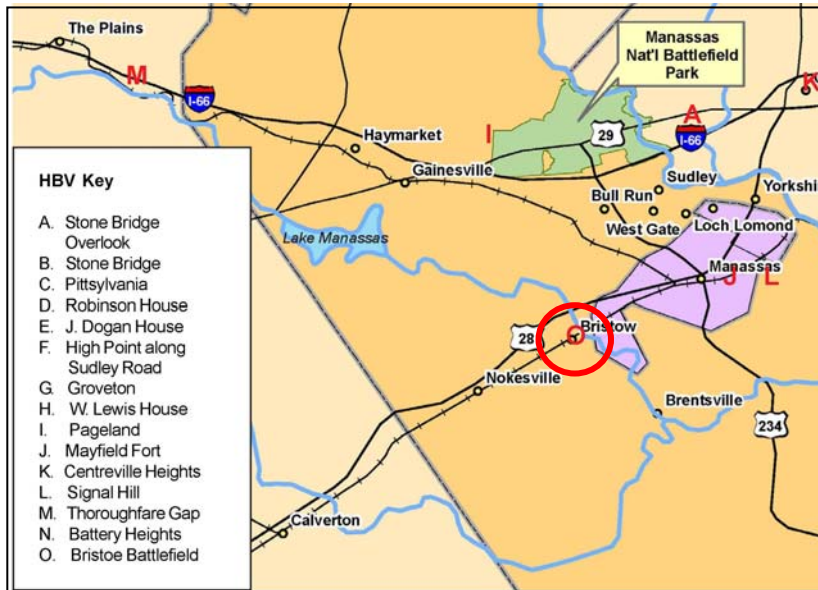


NW

N

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest

O) BRISTOE BATTLEFIELD



Physical Description

This viewshed anchor is located on a slightly elevated point within a generally flat area. The foreground and middleground views in all directions are somewhat open with only limited features, including random small tree grouping, both evergreen and deciduous. Other features include ruined stone foundations from a historic structure to the immediate south and southeast, and an agricultural silo, wire fence, paved driveway, and utility poles and overhead wires in the middleground. In the distant middleground looking east is a road with utility poles and overhead lines. The middleground to the west includes a small twentieth century house with a wooden fence. The background view looking west, including northwest and southwest, is dominated by twenty-first century residential development.

Historic Significance

Some seven miles southwest of Manassas Junction, this was the site of the October 13, 1863, Battle of Bristoe Station, which pitted Confederate General A. P. Hill's forces against those of Union General G. K. Warren. Bristoe Station was also captured by Stonewall Jackson's troops just before Second Manassas, cutting off Union General Pope's connection with his supply base.

HBV O: Bristoe Battlefield Viewshed Panorama



N NE E



SE S



SW W NW

LEGEND	
<u>Compass Direction</u>	
N	North
NE	Northeast
E	East
SE	Southeast
S	South
SW	Southwest
W	West
NW	Northwest