Park News

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Battlefield Dispatch

Interested in Finding a Civil War Regiment? There's an App for That...

by Park Ranger Christopher Young

For the past several years, park staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to bring a new experience to those visiting Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. On any given day, there are numerous visitors who inquire about where a certain regiment fought during the Battle of Chickamauga or during the Battles for Chattanooga.

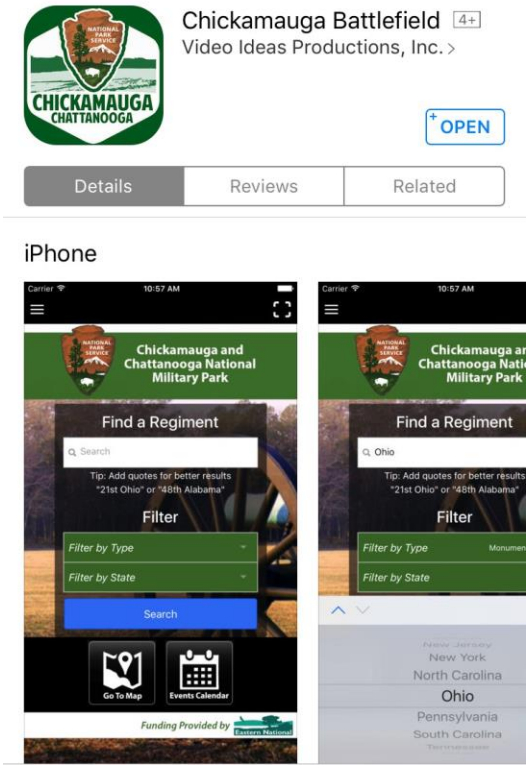
How do staff members currently locate this information and share it with inquiring visitors? Staff working the information desks, located inside the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center or the Lookout Mountain Battlefield Visitor Center, locate the regiment in question. Then, tablet (made of cast iron) and monument/marker (stone or bronze) information can be printed from an internal documentation system. Once that is complete, regimental positions can be located on a map behind the information desk and marked on a park brochure. However, this can be relatively difficult to follow if visitors are unfamiliar with the area.

With that being the case, park volunteers entered copious amounts of data ranging from GPS coordinates to hiking and taking photos of tablets to upload in a system called PointsMap - www.pointsmap.com/chickamauga. This data can all be searched from a desktop, but that often does not help visitors on the battlefield. So, the park and volunteers worked with a local company to produce an app, allowing visitors to easily search regimental information and find a regiment's tablet and monument/marker on the battlefield with a few clicks. Not only that, visitors can view photos of the tablets and monuments/markers, read a transcribed version of the engraved text, and even click on a mapping button with driving/walking directions. As a word of caution, although tablets and monuments/markers are accessible through mapping, visitors may also wish to take a trail map with them until the trails are uploaded within the system. The trails will hopefully be uploaded by next summer.

This app can be downloaded on iPhone or Android and is FREE to the public. Directions to use the "Find a Regiment" app are included with the download.

Visitors can download and utilize this new tool to search for Union and Confederate regiments engaged in the Battle of Chickamauga and the Battles for Chattanooga. The park would also ask, for those using the app, to provide comments concerning ease or difficulty of use and any developmental suggestions pertaining to this app. An attached card is available for visitors to complete and drop in the comment card slot at the visitor register podiums at both the Chickamauga Battlefield and Lookout Mountain Battlefield visitor centers.

Special thank goes out to not only the park volunteers and staff who made this possible, but to Eastern National, which provided the funds to support the creation and continuation of this app.



Screenshot of the park's "Find a Regiment" app, located in the App Store fo iPhone and Android *Video Ideas Productions, Inc. Photo*

Eastern National
Serving the Visitors to America's National Parks and Other Public Trusts

Senior Pass Price Set to Increase

by Chief Ranger Todd Roeder

On Monday, August 28, 2017, the price of the America the Beautiful –National Parks & Federal Recreation Lands Senior Pass (Senior Pass) will go up to $80. On December 16, 2016, the US Congress passed the National Park Service Centennial Act, increasing the amount of the $10 Lifetime Senior Pass. This is the first time the Senior Pass has been increased since 1994. The revenue will be used to enhance visitor experiences within the parks.

Legislation states the new $80 senior pass must be equivalent in cost to the America the Beautiful – National Parks & Federal Recreation Lands Annual Pass. However, for those who qualify for the pass, yet do not want to purchase a lifetime pass, that person may purchase a yearly pass for $20. Four annual Senior Passes purchased in prior years can be traded in for the $80 lifetime pass.

If you were born on or before August 27, 1955, you can still obtain a $10 senior lifetime pass up until August 27, 2017. The senior passes are available for purchase at the fee booth at Lookout Mountain Battlefield/Point Park, Friday through Tuesday. If you are planning to purchase a pass, please call the Lookout Mountain Battlefield Visitor Center at 423-821-7786 to make sure the fee booth is open. For additional information about the senior passes visit: https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/senior pass-changes.htm.

The current version o f the Senior Pass will have different photos, reflective of the annual and yearly passes set to be sold beginning August 28. *USGS Image*

National Public Lands Day We Need Your Help!

by Volunteer Coordinator Will Wilson

Join volunteers across the nation on Saturday, September 30, taking part in National Public Lands Day - the largest single-day volunteer effort for public lands in the United States.

NPLD began in 1994 with three sites and 700 volunteers, and proved to be such a huge success that it became a yearly tradition. Volunteers in every state visit parks, public and community gardens, beaches, wildlife preserves or forests and chip in to help these treasured places that belong to all Americans. They work to improve and restore the lands and facilities the public uses for recreation, education, exercise, and connecting with nature. NPLD educates Americans about the environment and natural resources, and the need for shared stewardship of these valued, irreplaceable lands; builds partnerships between the public sector and the local community based upon mutual interests in the enhancement and restoration of America's public lands; and improves public lands for outdoor recreation through hands-on work.

This year's activities at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park will focus on the walking path located at the historic Brotherton Cabin (Tour Stop 4) in the park. These walkways provide easy access to the cabin site for all visitors to the park and are in need of replacing.

Sign-up will start at 8:30 a.m. at the lower parking lot of the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center. Come dressed for outdoor work and wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty. For safety reasons and due to the nature of the work, clothing should include long-sleeved shirts, long pants, work gloves, and tennis shoes or work boots. Tools and materials will be provided. Come prepared for the summer conditions with a cap, sunscreen, bug spray, and plenty of water to drink.

Photos of the trails leading to and from Brotherton Cabin at Tour Stop 4 in Chickamauga Battlefield. *NPS Photos*

National Public Lands Day
A National Environmental Education Foundation Program

"Crossing at Thedford's Ford"

by Historian Jim Ogden

"The requisites for a good ford are, that the banks are low but not marshy, that the water obtains its greater depth gradually, the current moderate, the stream not subject of freshets, and that the bottom is even, hard and tenacious."

This is how a period military engineering manual in part describes fords on rivers, creeks, and streams. When Braxton Bragg moved on September 18, 1863, to attack the Union Army of the Cumberland in the valley of West Chickamauga Creek, he identified actual or possible crossings at three creek fords—Dalton's (sometimes called Hunt's), Thedford's, and Byram's (sometimes identified as Lambert's)—as well as two bridges. Incised into the underlying limestone geology, the resulting steep banks of the creek necessitated it being crossed at those existing and usual crossing points.

In addition to the requisites above, the depth of the water at the ford was a factor. Period manuals indicated that cavalry could ford where the water was as much as fifty-one or fifty-two inches deep. Up to thirty-six or thirty-nine inches was considered usually viable for infantry but, with notes that if the current was not too great, water courses of forty-eight or even fifty-one inches depth could be forded. It was the depth of the water at the ford relative to any artillery and wagons that must cross that significantly impacted the potential usefulness of a given crossing. Depending upon how water-tight the ammunition chests on the limbers and caissons might be or the bodies of the wagons, water on fords to be used by wheeled vehicles had to be as little as twenty-seven and a half or thirty inches in depth.

Accounts from Patrick Cleburne's Division suggest the water was probably hip or even waist deep at Thedford's Ford. Today when you walk down to the creek bank at Dalton's or Thedford's Fords it is hard to recognize that those fords once existed because they are largely silted in by the regular flooding of the creek and there is no use to break that incremental deposition down. But, it was by fords such as those, and others, which over twenty of Bragg's thirty-three infantry brigades crossed West Chickamauga Creek to then enter the battle in the valley of the "River of Death."

Youth Crews Help Conserve Park

by Preservationist Intern Meghan Weber

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park hosted two youth crews from the Southeast Conservation Corps this summer. These crews are made up of high schoolers ranging in age from 15-18 years old and are led by two adult crew leaders. Being a part of AmeriCorps allows these students to earn an education award and live out the pledge "to get things done for America."

The Historic Preservation crew was located in the battlefield working to preserve historic tablets, assess monuments, and clean cannons. The Urban Archelogy Corps crew worked out on Moccasin Bend constructing bog bridges on the Blue Blazes Trail, thus making it more accessible to hikers. This crew also worked alongside the Southeast Archeological Center to perform shovel tests on Stringers Ridge.

The Southeast Conservation Corps is a part of a national organization called Conservation Legacy which was founded in 1998. This organization harkens back to the ideals of the Civilian Conservation Corps - putting young folks to work in the environmental conservation field. Conservation Legacy has crews working on natural, cultural, and historic resources in the Southeast as well as the Southwest.

These two crews had the opportunity to tour Moccasin Bend, Cravens House, Point Park and take field trips to Russell Cave National Monument and Stones River National Battlefield. The youth crews ended the season with a bang – literally – by learning the proper techniques to fire cannon.

Members of the Historic Preservation crew fire the park's 12 pound Howitzer as part of graduation. *NPS Photo (taken from a tree lift)*

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In 1863, Union and Confederate forces fought for control of Chattanooga, known as the "Gateway to the Deep South." Confederates were victorious at nearby Chickamauga in September. Renewed fighting in Chattanooga that November provided Union troops with victory and control of the city.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

From Battlefield to Bat Monitoring

by Preservationist Kiel Rommel

Two independent bat research programs were recently conducted at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. A National Park Service monitoring crew from Mammoth Cave performed a two night visual count of three caves located on Lookout Mountain. This monitoring team collected data through thermal imaging and night vision recordings to confirm activity and develop management plans to improve colony numbers and health.

Researchers from Clemson University also performed colony monitoring by implementing monitoring stations in different locations throughout the park. The monitoring units were small boxes mounted on metal poles approximately ten feet in height, and remained in place about a week. These stations did not focus on the cave entry and exit aspect of the colony but rather the grounds as bats foraged for food throughout the evening and night. After a week, the data was collected and the units were relocated to other sections of the park. Researchers monitored three different types of habitats: open fields, riparian areas, and forested areas.

A deadly disease called white-nose syndrome has seriously affected bat populations throughout the United States, killing off millions of bats since it was first detected in 2006. Named for the powdery residue it leaves on a bat's muzzle and wings, this fatal fungus disrupts bats during winter hibernation, causing them to fly when they would normally be inactive. With no insects to eat, afflicted bats diminish their fat reserves and starve.

In October of 2010, the park closed all caves in order to help prevent the spread of white-nose syndrome to the Southeast. However in 2012, NPS researchers discovered that bats hibernating in several of the Lookout Mountain caves contracted the disease.

Bats play an important role in controlling insect populations and are critical pollinators. For example, some bat species can eat up to 1,200 insects in a single hour. Fruit-eating bats are vital to seed spreading, which plays critical roles in rehabilitation in cleared and damaged forests. The Clemson study will compare current numbers of bats to numbers counted in a study that occurred in 2002 that monitored bats near the same locations within the park while the NPS monitoring data will confirm population shifts in or around their habitat.

How can you help the Bat Colony Population?

1. Be a bat ambassador
Learn more about bats, and share what you learn with family or friends. Bats get a bad rap and we need your help dispelling myths about bats and helping people learn about these fascinating and beneficial animals.

2. Reduce pesticides
Bats are primary predators of night-flying insects, including many pest species. Feed a hungry bat by minimizing the use of pesticides in your lawn and garden.

3. Promote natural bat habitat
Around your home leave dead and dying trees where they don't create a hazard … these are favored roosting sites for bats.

Researchers use nightvision technology to monitor bats in the park. *NPS Photo*

4. Protect water quality
Protect streams and wetlands to provide clean water sources and good foraging areas for bats.

5. Put up a bat house
Instructions can be found on Bat Conservation International's website at www.batcon.org/resources/getting-involved/bat-houses

6. Be a citizen scientist
Many levels of government, nonprofits, and educational institutions perform bat-related citizen science projects. Contact the natural resource agency in your state to learn what is available.

7. Avoid disturbing bats
Stay out of caves and mines where bats are hibernating in winter. If a bat is disturbed during hibernation, it may arouse and become active. This increased activity can lead to starvation if the bat's fat reserves are used up before winter is over.

8. Safely remove or exclude bats
If a bat accidently flies into your home, try to remove it safely without harming the bat. If bats take up residence in your home, use humane methods to exclude the bats. If you contact a professional to help with bat exclusion, be sure to ask them if they use humane methods. Safe removal and exclusion methods can be found on the Organization for Bat Conservation website at www.batconservation.org/learn

9. Help out
Join an organization that focuses on bat conservation.

10. Find out more
Find out more about white-nose syndrome, a disease that has killed millions of bats, and help to avoid possible spread of WNS by humans.