Foundation Document Overview
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park
Georgia

Contact Information
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Significance statements express why Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

1. Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is the only nationally designated battle site that commemorates the 1864 Atlanta Campaign. Union victory in this campaign ensured the re-election of Abraham Lincoln and thereby the eventual preservation of the Union.

2. Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park preserves 8.9 miles of original Civil War field fortifications, which were decisive elements in later stages of the American Civil War.

3. Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is the largely intact site of a major Civil War battle, contained within one of the largest contiguous federally managed public green spaces in a major metropolitan area of the United States.

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Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- General Sherman’s Military Strategy.
- Cheatham Hill Memorialization.
- Historic Transportation Corridors.
- Field Fortifications.
- Urban Wildlands Experience.

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- Historic Structures.
- Cannons.
- Grave of the Unknown Soldier.
- Site Specific Collections.
- Migratory and Other Bird Species.
- Wildlife Habitat.
- Trail System Provides for a Diverse Array of Recreational Opportunities.
- Natural Features.

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- The strategy and tactics used at Kennesaw Mountain and throughout the Atlanta Campaign led to the final outcome of the Civil War.
- The Civil War was a significant event leading toward Civil Rights.
- The story of Kennesaw Mountain changes with the interaction of the people, the mountain itself, and its surrounding landscape.
- Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park serves as a memorial to the war-weary soldiers and civilians caught up in the conflict.
- Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park preserves a battlefield hallowed by the sacrifices of more than 5,000 Americans.
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is located in Cobb County, Georgia, about 25 miles by road northwest of downtown Atlanta, within the northern suburbs of the greater Atlanta metropolitan area, which has a population of about 5 million people. The name Kennesaw is derived from the Cherokee Indian “Gah-nee-sah” meaning cemetery or burial ground. This name became a self-fulfilling prophecy when the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain resulted in 5,350 casualties between June 19, 1864 and July 2, 1864. Ultimately, more than 67,000 soldiers were killed, wounded, and captured during the Atlanta Campaign of the Civil War.

The park boundary encompasses approximately 2,923 acres of mostly hardwood forest that preserves a Civil War battleground of the Atlanta Campaign. The battle was fought here from June 19, 1864, until July 2, 1864. Gen. William T. Sherman’s army consisted of 100,000 men, 254 guns, and 35,000 horses. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston’s army had 63,000 men and 187 guns.

Following the American Civil War, a group of Illinois veterans purchased a 60 acre plot of land in what is currently the southern portion of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. This area, as well as a monument erected at the site, became the origins for the current boundaries of the park. In 1916 the land was offered to the federal government, which placed it under the jurisdiction of the War Department in 1926 until it was transferred to the Department of the Interior to be administered by the National Park Service in 1935.