Foundation Document Overview
Richmond National Battlefield Park
Virginia

Contact Information
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Significance statements express why Richmond 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.

- Embedded in the former capital of the Confederacy, whose capture and defense were principal war aims, the park comprises the most diverse and comprehensive collection of interconnected Civil War sites and stories in the country including battlefield landscapes, river warfare, fortifications, industrial sites, domestic landscapes, military medicine and hospitals, and the contributions and achievements of the United States Colored Troops.

- The defeat of the U.S. Army in the June–July 1862 Seven Days Battles outside Richmond fundamentally altered the course of the war, ending the possibility of a relatively short war, bringing emancipation more directly into the equation as a Union war aim, and emboldening the Confederate army to seize the initiative and take the war into the North in September 1862.
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.

- **1862 and 1864–65 Battlefield Landscapes**
- **Archeological Resources**
- **Historic Structures**
- **Sense of Place and Setting**
- **Museum Collections**

Richmond 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.

- **Partner and Community Connections**
- **Commemorative Monuments and Markers**
- **Natural Communities**
- **Appropriate Recreation**

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.

- **Richmond as the Capital of the Confederacy**
- **Civilians at War**
- **The Battles for Richmond**
- **The Contributions of African American Soldiers**
Richmond National Battlefield Park was initially authorized by an act of Congress on March 2, 1936 (49 Stat. 1155), to commemorate, interpret, and actively manage cultural and natural resources at American Civil War battlefields around Richmond, Virginia, the industrial and political capital of the Confederacy. Initial sites included: Beaver Dam Creek, Cold Harbor, Gaines’ Mill, Frayser’s Farm (Glendale), Malvern Hill, Fort Harrison, Drewry’s Bluff, and Totopotomoy Creek. The Richmond National Battlefield Park Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 2373-2376) added the New Market Heights Battlefield, along with many other Civil War sites, to the park’s authorized boundary and amended the park’s maximum boundary in and around the City of Richmond to 7,307 acres. As of 2016, the park has grown extensively from the 764 acres that existed in 1996, when the last general management plan was approved, to 3,632 acres spread over three counties.

The park also protects historic resources and performs visitor services at a collection of four additional sites that are associated with Civil War era military, medical, and industrial operations in and around Richmond: Chickahominy Bluff, Chimborazo Hospital, Tredegar Iron Works, and Parker’s Battery. Additionally, the 2000 legislation specified that the park establish a monument or memorial to honor the 14 Medal of Honor recipients from the United States Colored Troops who fought in the Battle of New Market Heights, in eastern Henrico County.

The concentration of diverse Civil War resources found in the Richmond area is unparalleled. With carefully developed battlefield preservation commemoration and interpretive efforts including close cooperation with other public and private agencies preserving Civil War resources, Richmond National Battlefield Park has become a moving and eloquent place where visitors can explore the meaning of the American Civil War and its relevance to the modern world.