Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

2008-2009 Biennial Report
… to create partnerships...to preserve, conserve, enhance, and interpret the nationally significant battlefields and related sites associated with the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley…

—Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District and Commission Act of 1996

Dear Friends:

As we approach our tenth anniversary in 2010, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation is positioning itself to build on the successes of our first decade. The last two fiscal years described in this biennial report have seen dramatic changes at the Battlefields Foundation. We’ve used this time of transformation as an opportunity to consider our progress so far and chart a course for the organization that will ensure its ability to accomplish its mission.

A New Executive Director

In April 2009, the Foundation’s Board of Trustees hired a new executive director, Shenandoah County resident Denman Zirkle. Denman has held positions in the finance industry since 1983. Prior to that he held management positions at Consolidated Rail and IBM. He currently serves as a trustee of the Civil War Preservation Trust and is a member of the board of directors of the Valley Conservation Council. Members of the Board were impressed with his leadership abilities, financial management background, and exemplary work with other preservation organizations. His enthusiasm over the last few months has energized us and his resourceful management will strengthen the Battlefields Foundation’s stewardship of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District.

We also saw the departure in late 2008 of Howard Kittell, who moved on to The Hermitage, the presidential home of Andrew Jackson in Nashville, Tennessee. Howard had directed the Foundation since its inception. During his tenure, the Battlefields Foundation and the National Historic District experienced a solid record of accomplishment and his work paved the way for the Foundation’s ongoing and future success.

SVBF Accomplishments: Cedar Creek and Third Winchester Properties, Two New Orientation Centers

During the last two years, the Foundation and its partners have made several benchmark achievements:

- protection of two large, significant tracts of land within two of the Valley’s largest battlefields—189 acres at Cedar Creek in July 2008 and 209 acres at Third Winchester in September 2009;
• the opening of the second and third of five planned Civil War Orientation Centers in the National Historic District—one in Winchester in May 2008 and the other in Harrisonburg in September 2009;
• the completion of the District-wide Interpretive Plan;
• and the publication of the first official visitors guide to the National Historic District.

We launched interpretive projects at several battlefields and continue to work with partners to protect additional battlefield land.

The Road Ahead

In 2008 and 2009, the Battlefields Foundation and its public and private partners assembled almost 90 percent of the $3.35 million needed to protect the 209-acre Huntsberry Farm at Third Winchester. To close the gap and make this project possible, the Foundation assumed a $380,000 mortgage. Now it is up to private donors from across the nation and the Valley to help the Battlefields Foundation retire this debt and take the steps needed to manage and interpret this and other preserved lands.

While we have made tremendous progress over the years with 6,000 acres preserved by the Foundation and its partners, we have much more to accomplish. More than 14,000 core battlefield acres remain unprotected at the ten battlefields in the National Historic District. In addition, the Foundation’s stewardship responsibilities increase as more land is protected. And we are helping partners throughout the Valley prepare to commemorate the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, which is just around the corner.

As my three-year tenure as Chairman of the Battlefields Foundation comes to an end, I look forward to returning to the rank and file of the Board of Trustees while continuing to support the Foundation as it enters this next exciting phase of its work. I am confident that incoming chairman Nicholas Picerno brings the strong commitment and able leadership the Foundation needs as we look ahead to an even more successful second decade.

Irvin E. Hess, M.D.
Chairman
Battlefield Preservation

The federal legislation creating the National Historic District identifies ten Civil War battlefields to be preserved. The law and the District's Management Plan mandate voluntary protection of these battlefields and the Valley's other cultural and natural resources.

Third Winchester: The Huntsberry Farm

In September 2009, US Senator Jim Webb joined the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and its partners to announce the protection of 209 acres at the heart of the Third Winchester battlefield. The Battlefields Foundation purchased the Huntsberry Farm with financial support from the Civil War Preservation Trust, the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Frederick County, and numerous private donors including the James R. Wilkins Family of Winchester. The project is the largest ever undertaken by the Foundation.

The property had been owned by the Huntsberry family since the early settlement of the Shenandoah Valley. It lies northeast of Winchester and links areas previously protected by the Battlefields Foundation and CWPT. All together the preserved area creates a 575-acre battlefield preserve.

The property also contains almost a half-mile of Redbud Run, a major tributary of Opequon Creek. Preservation of this area protects the stream’s sloped and forested buffer, which will enhance the water quality of the Opequon, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay.

The property will remain in agricultural use while the Battlefields Foundation conducts archaeological and cultural resource studies to learn more about the history that it holds.

Cedar Creek: VIII Corps Encampments

In July 2008, the Battlefields Foundation protected 189 acres of core battlefield at Cedar Creek. The property lies in Warren County at the heart of the new Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and links previously protected areas within the park boundary.

As the site of the encampments and line of battle for the Union VIII Corps, the property saw some of the most dramatic fighting of the 19 October 1864 battle. Across this landscape, through the early morning mist, Gen. Jubal Early’s Confederates assaulted Federal troops, many still asleep in their camps.

The Battlefields Foundation purchased the property from the estate of Goldie Cooley Hudson, a descendant of the Hite family who lived at Belle Grove Plantation during the battle.

Kathleen S. Kilpatrick (far right), Director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, announces the acquisition of the VIII Corps property.
Stewardship

Preserving battlefields is more than purchasing land or easements—ensuring that these historic landscapes are well managed is equally important. In its stewardship of its protected properties, the Foundation uses best management practices for natural and cultural landscapes.

Fisher’s Hill: Valley Pike Project

In the summer of 2009, the Battlefields Foundation initiated a project to create a new trail system in northern Shenandoah County connecting the Fisher’s Hill battlefield with the town of Strasburg and the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.

The exact location of the trail network will be determined over the next year via a public planning process involving local residents, landowners, partner organizations, and county and town officials as well as a team of experts in historic resource management and recreational planning. Initial construction of the trail is expected to begin next year on properties owned by the Battlefields Foundation.

The planning and management of this project will be guided by a team that includes Pam Sheets, the director of Shenandoah County Parks and Recreation; David Ruth, superintendent of Richmond National Battlefield Park; Joanna Wilson, an archeologist with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources; and Sarah Mauck, Strasburg town councilor. The project is funded in part by federal transportation enhancement grants.

Second Winchester: Star Fort

In 2007, the Middlesex Artillery-Fleet’s Battery donated to the Battlefields Foundation one of the last remaining Civil War-era defensive forts around Winchester: Star Fort. Following a management plan created by Frederick County, several projects have been completed to improve the site for future interpretation and use.

A new Virginia Civil War Trails sign was unveiled in 2008 to introduce the fort to neighbors and visitors.

In 2009, Eagle Scout Morgan McDaniel coordinated a site cleanup project at Star Fort, which included the strategic clearing of trees and removal of invasive plants to prepare for trails and other projects.
The Battlefields Foundation is directed by the District’s Management Plan to create a regional interpretive program that includes visitor education, living history demonstrations, and other interpretive techniques, all unified through a District wayfinding system.

**National Historic District Interpretive Plan Completed**

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Interpretive Plan, approved in 2008 by the Battlefield Foundation’s Board of Trustees, serves as a blueprint for cooperation and collaboration by partners throughout the District. The plan will help partners throughout the Valley coordinate their work to interpret our Civil War history.

The purpose of the plan is not to define or dictate to partners how they interpret the history of their individual sites. Rather, it encourages them to work together and facilitates that effort. Development of the plan was a collaboration of the dozens of museums, historic sites, and other organizations in the District that tell aspects of the Civil War story.

**Interpretive Plan Vision Statement**

“By the beginning of the Civil War Sesquicentennial, the events and experiences of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley will be comprehensively interpreted at an array of authentic historic sites and landscapes as will the culture and heritage of the Valley. The interpretive experience in the National Historic District will be known as the most engaging and best integrated Civil War heritage experience in the nation…”

**Interpretive Plan Recommendations**

**Historic Roadways and Valley Towns**

- Designate a system of Historic Roadways and wayside exhibits.
- Consider seeking Federal and state byway status for the Valley Turnpike and other key Historic Roadways.
- Encourage and collaborate with the Valley’s historic towns to identify, preserve, and interpret each town’s unique role in the region’s Civil War story.

**Battlefield Clusters and Orientation Centers**

- Create orientation centers in each of the five battlefield clusters.
- Develop plans for each battlefield cluster area to facilitate cooperation and ensure adequate visitor facilities.

**Civil War-related Interpretive Sites**

- Encourage collaboration and coordination among regional and local Civil War-related sites.
- Foster mentorship by regional attractions to local interpretive sites.
- Support the development of innovative, high-quality interpretive plans and exhibits at individual interpretive sites.

**Additional Interpretive Publications and Tools**

- Produce a guidebook for visitors planning to explore the Valley’s Civil War story.
- Expand the District’s website to include additional interpretive content and links to history sites.
- Develop self-guided Valley-wide driving tours.
- Continue to partner with the Virginia Civil War Trails wayside exhibit program.
- Offer multimedia interpretation: podcasts, audio tours, interactive exhibits.

The Battlefields Foundation and the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley presented an Interpretive Planning Workshop in Winchester in 2009. Beyond showing partners how enhanced interpretative programs can benefit their sites and visitors, the workshop also suggested opportunities to use the new Interpretive Plan for the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District.
Tourism & Visitor Services

Guiding visitors through the National Historic District requires a high-quality branding and marketing program to strengthen the Shenandoah Valley’s position as a preeminent visitor destination, one that provides fuel for the region’s economic engine.

Commemorating the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War

As the nation approaches the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War—which begins in 2011 and runs through 2015—the Battlefields Foundation is preparing the Shenandoah Valley to commemorate this transformative period in American history. In partnership with the Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission and communities throughout the region, the Foundation is assisting Civil War sites and organizations in the Valley in the interpretation of their unique Civil War stories, which is also a key goal of the District’s interpretive and marketing plans.

As the main theatre of the Civil War and the site of more than 60 percent of its battles, Virginia is expected to be a primary destination for travelers seeking to learn more about this important chapter in American history.

The National Historic District’s Civil War Orientation Centers, its website, and visitors guide are key components of the Foundation’s effort to educate visitors about the Shenandoah Valley’s Civil War history and draw them to the historic sites and landscapes where they can explore that history first-hand.

Publication of the first Official Guide to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield National Historic District

The Battlefields Foundation released the first official visitors guide to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District in 2008. This free, 48-page, full-color booklet provides an overview of the Valley’s Civil War history and information about how to explore that history at sites throughout the region. Funded in part by a grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation and by tourism offices throughout the Valley, the guide contains timelines, maps, and information about military campaigns and historic sites, as well as information about how and where to explore those places today. It is the first comprehensive Civil War guide to orient people to the complexity of the Valley campaigns and the region’s rich Civil War history.
The District’s Management Plan groups the battlefields and related historic sites into five geographic “clusters.” The Battlefields Foundation works with partner organizations in each cluster area, encouraging them to collaborate in telling their communities’ unique Civil War stories.

**Two New Civil War Orientation Centers in the Valley**

In 2008 and 2009, the Battlefields Foundation opened the second and third of five planned Civil War Orientation Centers in the National Historic District.

In 2008, a center was opened in Winchester, and in 2009 another center opened in downtown Harrisonburg. The creation of centers follows the directive in the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Management Plan which calls for five orientation centers spread throughout the eight-county District. With the McDowell Orientation Center, which opened in 2005, three of the five centers are now open and helping to orient visitors to the Valley’s significant Civil War history and sites.

Like the McDowell center, the new facilities feature large maps, photographs, timelines, and stories associated with their areas and the Valley as a whole. Most importantly, the centers direct visitors to the historic sites, museums, and other locations where they can still experience these places today.

Development of the Orientation Centers was a partnership process. Each center’s location and interpretive content, were determined by local partners. The local tourism offices administer the Orientation Centers, in cooperation with the other stakeholders.

The Winchester-Frederick Civil War Orientation Center is housed inside a new building that is home to Shenandoah University’s History & Tourism Center. The Orientation Center is managed by the Winchester-Frederick County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Orientation Center is located in the Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center in downtown Harrisonburg and is operated by Harrisonburg Tourism and Visitor Services.
**Funding Local Projects: Grants to Partners**

The Battlefields Foundation's Implementation Grants program assists community-based organizations with projects to interpret, preserve, or promote the Shenandoah Valley's Civil War history and sites.

In 2009, the Battlefields Foundation awarded $46,490 to partner organizations throughout the National Historic District. The grants—which must be matched—will leverage a total of $105,092 for projects that protect, interpret, and/or promote the Shenandoah Valley's Civil War sites and enable partners to participate in implementing the District’s Management Plan. The Grants program is one way that the Foundation shares funding for the National Historic District with its partners.

**Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (Frederick County):**
$1,000 for Signage at Visitor Center and Battlefield Replacement of the sign at the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation Headquarters, and placement of a new sign about the Battle of Cedar Creek at the Heather House.

**Elkton Parks and Recreation Department (Rockingham County):**
$1,000 towards a Civil War Trail and Bridge Construction of a trail and bridge that will link the Miller-Kite Museum to a reenactment site, expand access to the museum, and enable the museum to host larger events.

**Highland Historical Society (Highland County):**
$2,640 to Install Directional Signage for the Highland County Museum and Civil War Orientation Center Development and installation of new signage at the Highland County Museum, as well as new directional signage to guide visitors to the museum.

**Kernstown Battlefield Association (Winchester & Frederick County):**
$8,000 for Pritchard House Historic Structures Report Completion of a historic structures report to guide the repair, cleaning, restoration and interpretation of the interior of the historic Pritchard House.

**Mt. Jackson Museum (Shenandoah County):**
$250 for a Battle of Mt. Clifton Highway Marker and Brochure Support for an effort to raise funds for an interpretive highway marker and brochure to tell the story of the Battle of Mt. Clifton.

**Museum of the Shenandoah Valley (Frederick County):**
$6,000 for the Rose Hill Clear View Project Brush and tree clearing on the Rose Hill Farm on the First Kernstown battlefield, which will enable visitors at the Sandy Ridge interpretive site to see the vantage point as it existed during the battle.

**Old Courthouse Civil War Museum (Winchester & Frederick County):**
$3,000 for Interpretation of Gettysburg Officers Graffiti Development of a permanent interpretive display about the graffiti on the court house walls, telling the story of the imprisoned Union soldiers who carved and wrote their names there.

**Shenandoah County Sesquicentennial Committee and Shenandoah County Tourism (Shenandoah County):**
$3,600 for “Caring for the Wounded” Brochure Development, printing, and distribution of a visitor brochure that will interpret Shenandoah County’s role in caring for the Civil War wounded and send visitors to sites that tell that story.

**Society of Port Republic Preservationists (Rockingham County):**
$1,000 to Install an Historic Graveyard Fence Installation of an historic fence at the Port Republic Riverside Graveyard, which will help preserve the burial site of the Civil War soldiers who are interred there.

**Strasburg Tourism Committee (Shenandoah County):**
$3,000 for an Interpretive Plan for Visitors Center Creation of a comprehensive interpretive and management plan to guide the development of a visitors center in Strasburg, a center that will also serve as the interim Civil War Orientation center for the area.

**10th Virginia Volunteer Infantry (Rockingham County):**
$6,000 for a Cross Keys/Port Republic Preservation March Support for a 2010 march between the battlefields of Cross Keys and Port Republic that will foster awareness of the importance of these historic sites while raising money for battlefield preservation.

**Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center (Rockingham County):**
$5,000 for the Publication of a Reference Book Publication of volume V of the series of reference books entitled “Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley,” documenting the experiences of civilians in Rockingham County during the war.

**Winchester Frederick County Historical Society (Winchester & Frederick County):**
$6,000 for a “They Served With Jackson” Exhibit Development of an exhibit at Stonewall Jackson’s Headquarters Museum that will tell the story of Jackson and his staff officers and interpret the artifacts from officers and soldiers who served under Jackson.
Management & Partnerships

In fulfilling its mission as the “lead managing partner” for the National Historic District, the Battlefields Foundation is working with and supporting local, regional, and national partners to protect, interpret, and promote Civil War battlefields and related sites in the Shenandoah Valley.

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

In 2008 and 2009, the National Park Service continued to develop the park’s General Management Plan, which will guide the development and operations of the park for the next 20 years. The Battlefields Foundation has been participating in the development of the GMP through its appointee to the park’s Federal Advisory Commission and its work as one of the park’s legislated Key Partners. As the plan is finalized in FY2010, the Foundation will work closely with all of the park’s partners and the NPS to support the new park as it begins operations and programs.

Acknowledging Extraordinary Work

Management of the National Historic District and accomplishing its mission depends on the hard work not only of the Battlefields Foundation’s Trustees and staff but also its partners and friends. In 2008 and 2009, the Foundation acknowledged the extraordinary efforts of a number of individuals whose work made significant contributions to the District’s success.

2008

Carrington Williams Preservation Award:
Former SVBF Executive Director Howard J. Kittell, for ten years of exemplary leadership in the development of the District’s Management Plan, the creation and cultivation of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, and the preservation of more than 2,000 acres of battlefield land.

Volunteer of the Year Award:
Scott H. Harris, Director of the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, and Don Pierce of CivilWarTraveler.com, for partnership above and beyond the call of duty in the development of the first official guide to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District.

2009

Carrington Williams Preservation Award:
Virginia House Speaker William J. Howell, for his work as co-chairman of the Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission and his ongoing commitment to preserving Virginia’s Civil War battlefields.

Volunteer of the Year Award:
Captain Jack Adams Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, for its work to clean and restore the Summers-Koontz monument on the New Market battlefield.

Chairman’s Award for Extraordinary Service by an SVBF Trustee:
W. C. Bedall of Rockingham County, for his personal leadership and devotion of more than 700 hours to the clearing and restoration of property owned by the Battlefields Foundation.

Friend of the Foundation Awards:
Surveyor Carl Rinker of Strasburg and Eagle Scout Morgan McDaniel of Winchester for services donated to the Battlefields Foundation in support of its preservation and stewardship work.
Funding the Battlefields Foundation’s Work

The District’s Management Plan outlines a substantial body of projects and programs for the Battlefields Foundation to accomplish and foster. None of this, however, would be possible without a substantial investment of public and private funding from a variety of sources.

In Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009, Federal appropriations for management of the National Historic District totaled $942,460 and the District’s battlefield preservation appropriation was $2,969,400. At a time of fiscal challenge, the Foundation is grateful to its congressional delegation—especially Sen. Jim Webb—for ensuring that we can continue our work to protect the Valley’s nationally significant Civil War battlefields.

Federal funding is only part of the formula required to protect and interpret the Valley’s remarkable Civil War landscape. In 2008 and 2009, the Battlefields Foundation received $1,539,512 in grants from Commonwealth of Virginia for land preservation in the Valley and Frederick County dedicated $112,000 out of its Open Space and Historic Preservation Fund to the Huntsberry Farm Project.

In addition, donations from private sources are becoming a larger piece of the funding puzzle. The Foundation received substantial support from a variety of funders listed in the center section of this report. Indeed, the current economic climate has focused the Foundation’s effort on grant funding and private donations.

In 2009, a year in which the Foundation diverted a substantial part of its fundraising effort to the Huntsberry Farm project, the organization was able to tap its reserves in order to fund its programmatic work. In the coming years, increasing the Foundation’s administrative and managerial efficiency as well as growing revenues from partnerships and private donors will be an important goal for the Battlefields Foundation.

### Management and Programs

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### Battlefield Preservation

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