

# Shepherdstown Battlefield

Special Resource Study/Boundary Study/Environmental Assessment  
Newsletter 2

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Dear Interested Party,

The National Park Service is beginning the public review phase of a special resource study and boundary study of Shepherdstown Battlefield, located near the town of Shepherdstown, West Virginia. In 2009, Congress passed the legislation directing the National Park Service to evaluate the national significance of the battlefield and its potential for inclusion in the national park system. The legislation directing the Department of the Interior to undertake this study also directed the National Park Service to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of including the study area within the boundary of either Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield. This special resources study has taken place in coordination with Antietam National Battlefield, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park over the last two years.

Please join us for public meetings to be held on September 9 and 11, 2014. Locations and times can be found inside the newsletter. At the meeting, Civil War historian Thomas McGrath (North Country Community College, The College of Essex, and Franklin) will present his research on the events that occurred during the two-day battle at Shepherdstown and the impact of the battle on U.S. history. The National Park Service study team will explain the study outcomes, answer your questions, and gather your comments about the study findings, the proposed boundary adjustment, and other issues related to the study.

Comments received during this public review period will be forwarded, along with the study, to the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary of the Interior will then make a recommendation to Congress based on the study's findings and the public comments. The adjustment of the boundary of either Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield would require an act of Congress.

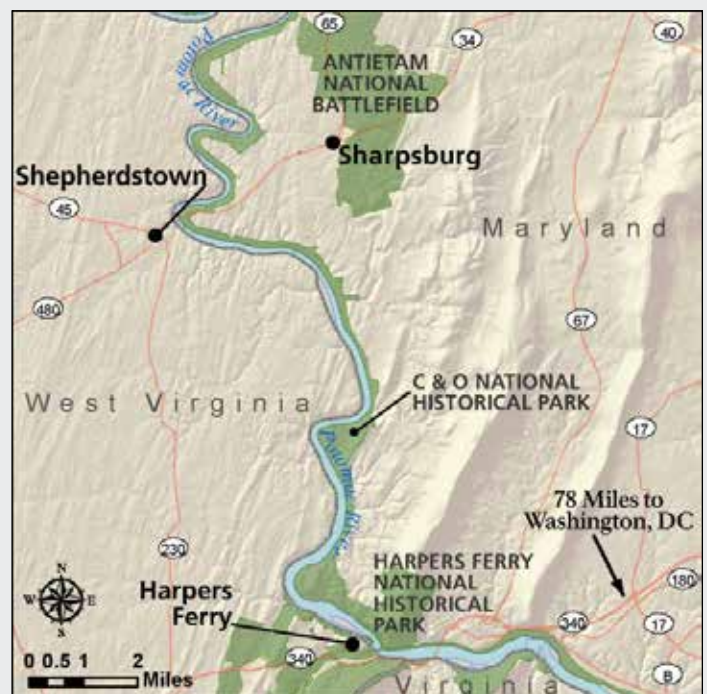
Thank you for taking the time to learn about and comment on this study. You may provide your thoughts at the public meeting or online at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/SHBA>.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

*Lisa A. Mendelson-Ielmini*

Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini  
Acting Regional Director, National Capital Region  
National Park Service





## INTRODUCTION

Shepherdstown Battlefield has been a focus of public interest for several years. One of the most recent publications on Shepherdstown Battlefield is *Shepherdstown: Last Clash of the Antietam Campaign, September 19-20, 1862*, by Thomas McGrath (2008). In 2010, the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service, in their *Update to the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields, State of West Virginia*, identified Shepherdstown Battlefield as a site needing additional protection. Also, nonprofit organizations (independent of the National Park Service) have been working to preserve the lands associated with the battle for the last decade. In 2009, legislation championed by the late Senator Robert Byrd (Public Law 111-11, Title VII, Subtitle C, Section 7205) was passed by the U.S. Congress directing the Department of the Interior to undertake this special resource study. This study evaluates the importance of the battle to U.S. history in addition to the suitability and feasibility of adjusting the boundary of either Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield to include the Shepherdstown Battlefield.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF SHEPHERDSTOWN

When shots rang out at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, sectional tensions boiled over, drawing America into Civil War. As the battle lines were drawn between North and South, the border states witnessed some of the worst fighting of the war and saw significant loss of American lives. Confederate General Robert E. Lee's 1862 Maryland Campaign became a defining moment of the American Civil War and the history of the nation. Considered the bloodiest one-day battle in American history, the Battle of Antietam proved to be a tactical draw for both sides, yet a strategic victory for the Union. Following the Battle of Antietam, Confederate forces began their withdrawal across the Potomac River into Virginia. This hasty withdrawal on September 18, 1862, would also set in motion the final conflict of the Maryland Campaign—the Battle of Shepherdstown.

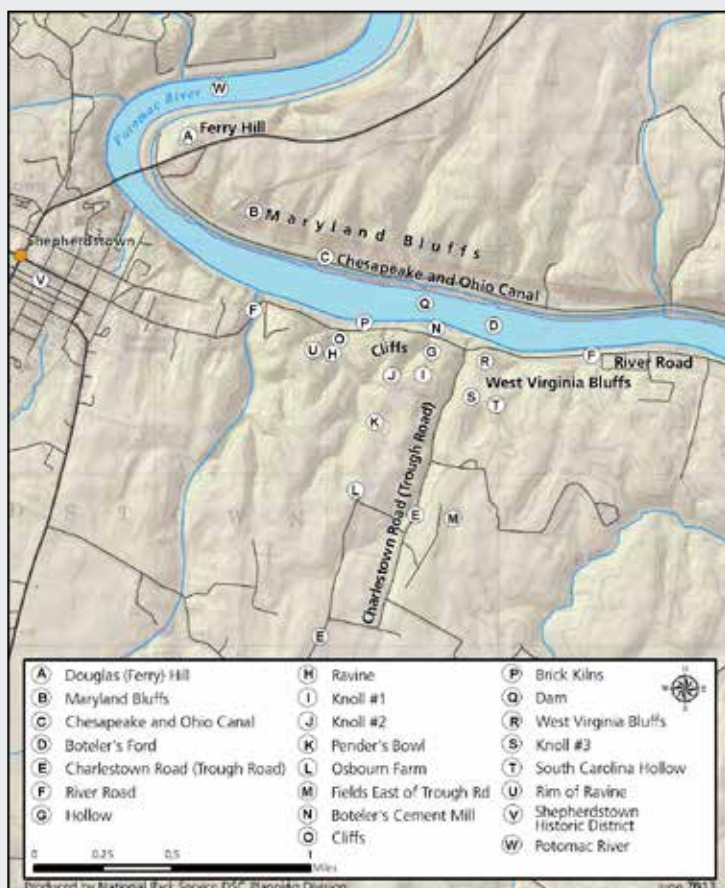
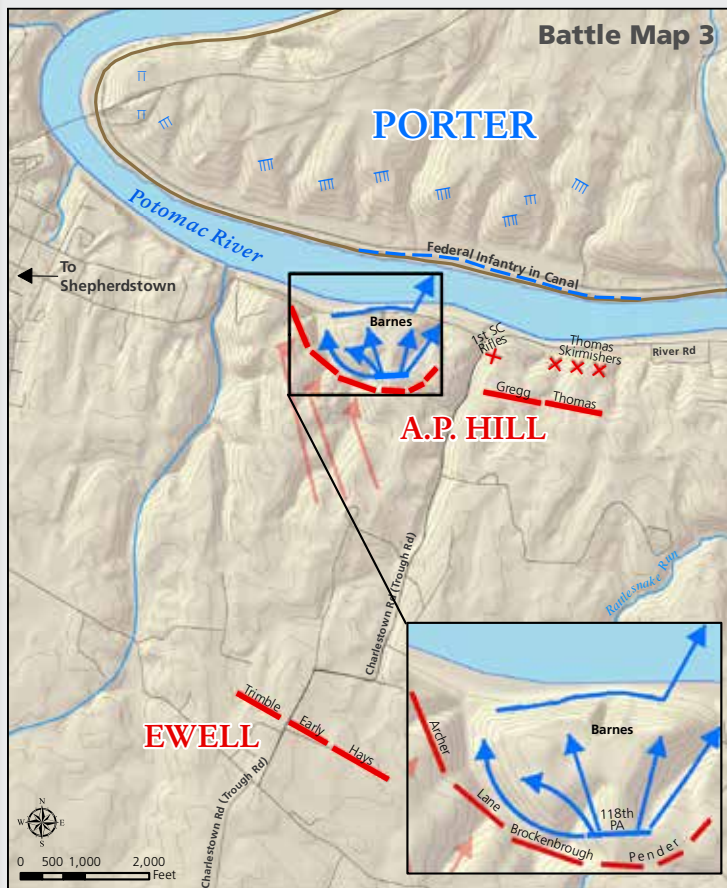
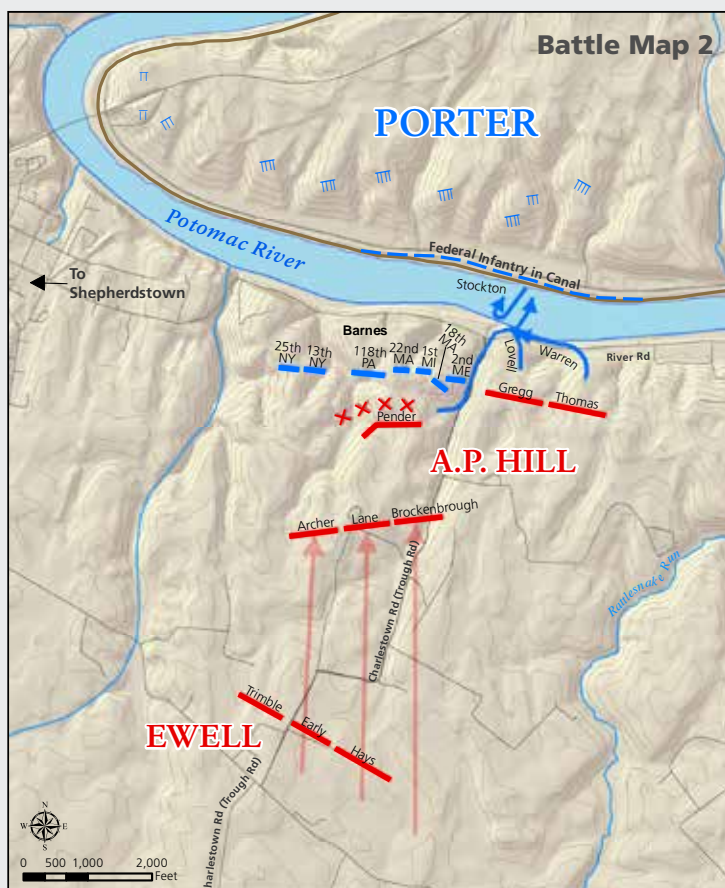
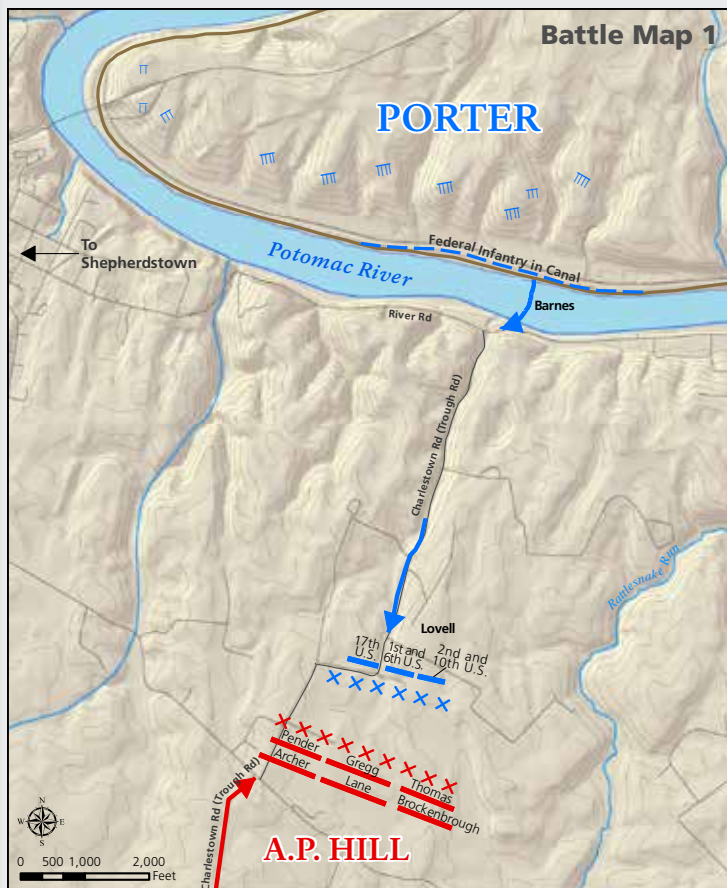
Approximately 1.5 miles downstream from Shepherdstown, Boteler's Ford (also known as Blackford's / Shepherdstown / Pack Horse Ford) served as the primary crossing point of the Potomac River for the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. As Lee's forces moved back into Virginia after the Battle of Antietam, he appointed Brig. Gen. William Nelson Pendleton to protect this vital river crossing with 44 cannons placed in artillery positions on the bluffs above the south side of the river. Federal forces set up significantly more artillery positions on the northern banks of the river on the Maryland bluffs and took advantage of the then-drained Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to use as a trench for sharpshooters. Both sides exchanged artillery fire, but it was not until the movement of Federal soldiers into Virginia on September 19, 1862, and the capture of Confederate artillery that the skirmish erupted into a bloody battle.

On the afternoon of September 19, 1862, elements of the Union Fifth Corps crossed the river at Boteler's Ford, capturing 4 of 44 artillery pieces before returning to the northern banks of the Potomac River at dusk. A panicked Pendleton fled the battlefield, not having fully assessed the situation. Pendleton reported to Lee that his artillery had been captured by the Federals. Following this report, Lee quickly changed his plans and prepared for battle, sending A. P. Hill's division, which included the brigades of Pender, Gregg, Thomas, Archer, Lane, and Brockenbrough, to counter the Federals at Boteler's Ford, while withdrawing the remainder of his Confederate forces farther south into the Shenandoah Valley.

On September 20, Federal forces under the command of Maj. Charles Lovell were taken by surprise by a large contingent of Confederate troops taking positions on both sides of Charlestown Road (Trough Road) and preparing to march north toward Boteler's Ford. As Federal forces pulled back toward the river and Confederate troops advanced, skirmishes broke out as soldiers on both sides moved into positions readying for battle. As fighting erupted, Federal artillery on the north side of the Potomac River opened fire. The forces of Union Colonel James Barnes, which had spread out along River Road and the knolls along the south side of the river, retreated across Boteler's Ford.

In the midst of the chaos, the green 118th Pennsylvania (Corn Exchange Regiment) found itself isolated and outflanked. Besides having only been in the service for three weeks, the men were armed with rifles that malfunctioned. The results were sadly predictable. The Pennsylvanians panicked and made a rush for the river. Some fell from the bluffs above the river. Others sought refuge in the nearby cement mill and kilns. Soon blue-coated bodies floated on the river as men of the 118th were shot while attempting to get back to the Maryland shore. The battle lasted less than an hour and the Confederates withdrew to escape the wrath of Union artillery fire from across the river. With more than 675 casualties, the Battle of Shepherdstown was the bloodiest battle in what became the State of West Virginia. It was also the last major action of the Maryland Campaign. Lee's failure in Maryland gave President Abraham Lincoln the impetus to issue the "Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation" on September 22, 1862, just two days after the Battle of Shepherdstown.







## WHAT IS A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY?

The National Park Service was created to conserve unimpaired outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The treasures in this system have been set aside by the American people to protect, preserve, and share our nation's greatest stories. Usually a new unit of the national park system is established by an act of Congress. Before passing such legislation, Congress requires reliable information about the quality of resources in the area under consideration and the potential for visitor enjoyment and efficient management. The National Park Service collects this information and provides a recommendation to the Department of the Interior, which then provides a report of its findings to Congress through a special resource study. This process ensures that only those candidate sites that are most deserving of national designation are included within the national park system.

## THIS SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY IS ALSO A BOUNDARY STUDY

When Congress directed the Department of the Interior to undertake this study effort, the Department of the Interior asked the National Park Service to determine if it would be appropriate to adjust the boundaries of either Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield to include the Shepherdstown Battlefield. Therefore, the study also includes a boundary adjustment study. To be clear, boundary adjustments can mean the inclusion of a distinct land area, not physically attached to an existing park, within the legislated boundary of that park. As described below, there is some overlap between the criteria for special resource studies and boundary studies.



## SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY CRITERIA

(NPS MANAGEMENT POLICIES 2006, SECTION 1.3):

For the Secretary of the Interior to recommend new park lands, an area must meet all of the following criteria:

- Contain nationally significant natural and/or cultural resources.
- Be a suitable new unit of the national park system that represents a natural or cultural theme or type of recreational resource that is not already adequately represented in the national park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land-managing entity.
- Be a feasible new unit of the national park system as determined by size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. It must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Important feasibility factors include land ownership, acquisition costs, life cycle maintenance costs, access, threats to the resource, and staff or development requirements.
- Require direct National Park Service management that cannot or will not be accomplished by another government entity or by the private sector.

## BOUNDARY STUDY CRITERIA

(NPS MANAGEMENT POLICIES 2006, SECTION 3.5):

For the Secretary of the Interior to recommend Shepherdstown Battlefield and related sites as an addition to an existing park unit, an area must meet one of the following criteria:

- Protect significant resources and values or enhance opportunities for public enjoyment related to park purposes.
- Address operational and management issues such as the need for access or the need for boundaries to correspond to logical boundary delineations such as topographic or other natural features or roads.
- Or otherwise protect park resources that are critical to fulfilling park purposes.

The addition would also have to meet both of the following criteria:

- Be a feasible addition to the national park system—the criteria are the same as the feasibility criteria for special resource studies described above.
- Require direct National Park Service management that cannot or will not be accomplished by another government entity or by the private sector.



## SUMMARY OF SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY FINDINGS

The National Park Service evaluated the national significance of the battlefield at Shepherdstown and the associated resources under the National Park Service National Historic Landmark Program criteria for national significance and determined that the study area was not nationally significant. Therefore, Shepherdstown Battlefield and its associated resources do not qualify as a new, independent unit of the national park system. A complete discussion of the finding can be found in the public review document in “Chapter 3: Evaluation of Shepherdstown Battlefield as a Potential New Unit of the National Park System”.

## SUMMARY OF BOUNDARY STUDY FINDINGS

The evaluation of Shepherdstown Battlefield under boundary study criteria determined that the battlefield would be a suitable and feasible addition to either Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield. As such, each of these boundary adjustment options is included in the study. These options are:

### **Option A: Antietam National Battlefield Boundary Adjustment, and**

### **Option B: Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Boundary Adjustment**

If Congress were to authorize a legislative boundary that would encompass the Shepherdstown battlefield as part of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield, there would be no immediate change to existing landownership and the National Park Service would not carry out any actions that would affect the battlefield lands. Uses of battlefield lands would continue as they were before the legislative boundary adjustment. Any changes to land ownership or use would be in the future as the National Park Service is able to acquire battlefield land from willing sellers and donors. Scenic or conservation easements could also be purchased from willing sellers and donors both within and adjacent to the boundary, in order to provide additional viewshed and resource protection.

Once the legislative boundary is authorized, the National Park Service would update the land protection plan for either Harpers Ferry National Historical Park or Antietam National Battlefield where specific priorities for land interests and land acquisitions would be identified. It is anticipated that protection of battlefield resources in the expanded boundary would occur through a mix of fee simple acquisition and conservation easements from willing sellers and donors. Fee simple acquisition would be the preferred acquisition tool only for highly sensitive resource areas and critical visitor access points.

Once land is under National Park Service ownership, future actions may include maintenance, protection, monitoring, and additional interpretation of the battlefield through cooperative



management between Antietam National Battlefield and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. To the greatest extent possible, the use of existing nearby NPS infrastructure, such as the Ferry Hill site managed by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, could be used to provide interpretation of the battlefield. This would be achieved in accordance with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park’s existing general management plan, long-range interpretive plan, and park foundation document. Additionally, the National Park Service could seek opportunities to work with state and local governments and interested nonprofit organizations to provide additional assistance with the maintenance, protection, and interpretation of the battlefield.

A complete description of the alternatives and application of the boundary study criteria to those alternatives are included in chapter 4 of the public review document.

## IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In addition to taking into consideration public input received during scoping, NPS operational requirements, and the expert opinions of historians and other subject matter experts, the National Park Service evaluated the proposed legislative boundary described in alternative 2 according to criteria for boundary adjustments defined in *NPS Management Policies 2006*, section 3.5. The study found that “Alternative 2, Option A, Antietam National Battlefield Boundary Adjustment” would be the most effective and efficient alternative and would also provide the greatest opportunities for visitor enjoyment. The study informed the development of the preferred alternative.

Alternative 2, option A would allow Antietam National Battlefield to expand upon existing interpretive themes, provide visitors with a more complete understanding of the Maryland Campaign, and protect significant resources and values, while enhancing opportunities for public enjoyment related to park purpose and enabling legislation. This option also allows for the protection of resources critical to fulfilling park purpose.

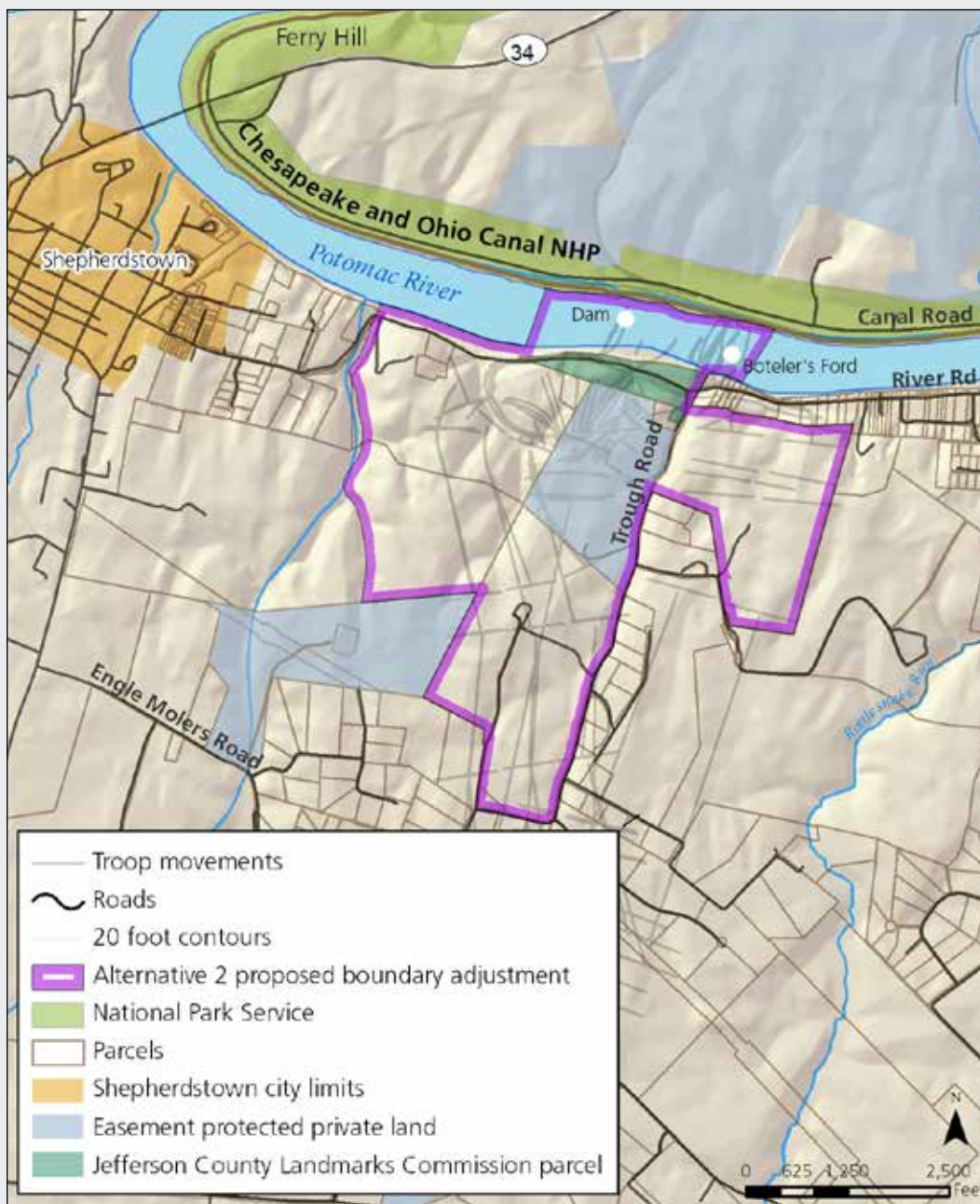


## PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE BOUNDARY

The proposed boundary for the Shepherdstown battlefield totals approximately 510 acres. The boundary generally follows the West Virginia and Maryland shores of the Potomac River to the north. The eastern boundary follows Trough Road (County Route 31/1) with the exception of a 94 acre tract east of the road. The southern boundary continues to follow Trough (County Route 31/1) road. The western boundary follows property lines and topographic features (ravine bottom). The proposed boundary is shown in figure 6.

The proposed legislative boundary focuses on the core battlefield area where significant loss of life occurred and/or where important battle actions took place. As a result, staging areas, troop movements, and artillery positions on both the northern and southern edges of the core battlefield were excluded from the proposed boundary. Additional exclusions to form the proposed boundary included

- parcels lacking historic integrity
- parcels with existing protection through preservation easements that were not core to the battlefield
- existing National Park Service lands





## HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

The National Park Service places a high value on public participation and strives to encourage participation in all aspects of decision making. Listed below are several ways to get involved.\*

- **Project Website** – The project website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/SHBA>) contains updates and other information about the special resource study, as well as the public review document. It will also be open to receive public comments during the review period: **August 8 - October 3, 2014**. Please take time to review the study and provide comments directly on the project website.
- **Public Meeting to Review the Study** – A meeting to discuss the study is scheduled to take place at The Antietam National Battlefield Visitor Center in Sharpsburg, Maryland on September 9, 2014 and at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia on September 11, 2014. Presentations by Thomas McGrath and NPS staff will start promptly, followed by an open house format where you can speak individually with NPS staff to learn more about the study outcomes and provide comments. Large maps and information on the proposed alternatives will be on display for discussion.
- **Letters to the National Park Service** – If you would like to mail postal letters to the National Park Service, please address them to the Regional Director, National Capital Region, C/O Jordan Hoaglund-Planning, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 12795 West Alameda Parkway, PO Box 25287 Denver, CO 80225-0287.

*\*Note: To help us be able to contact members of the public about this project, please provide your e-mail address as part of your comment on our project website during this public scoping comment period.*

## WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS, IDEAS, AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

1. What do you think about the management options proposed in the alternatives?
2. What do you think about the proposed boundary?
3. Do you have any other ideas or comments you would like to share with us?

*Thank you for your participation!*

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE INFORMATION

### Tuesday, September 9, 2014

5 p.m. to 8 p.m. (presentations will start at 5 p.m. and be repeated at 6:30 p.m.)

Antietam National Battlefield Visitor Center  
5831 Dunker Church Rd, Sharpsburg, MD 21782  
301-432-5124

Located about a mile north of Sharpsburg, MD, on the Sharpsburg Pike/MD 65

For directions please call the number above or visit:  
<http://www.nps.gov/anti>

### Thursday, September 11, 2014

5 p.m. to 8 p.m. (presentations will start at 5 p.m. and be repeated at 6:30 p.m.)

Clarion Hotel & Conference Center;  
233 Lowe Drive, Shepherdstown, WV 25443;  
304-876-7000

Located off Kearneysville Pike/Rt. 480 in Shepherdstown, WV.

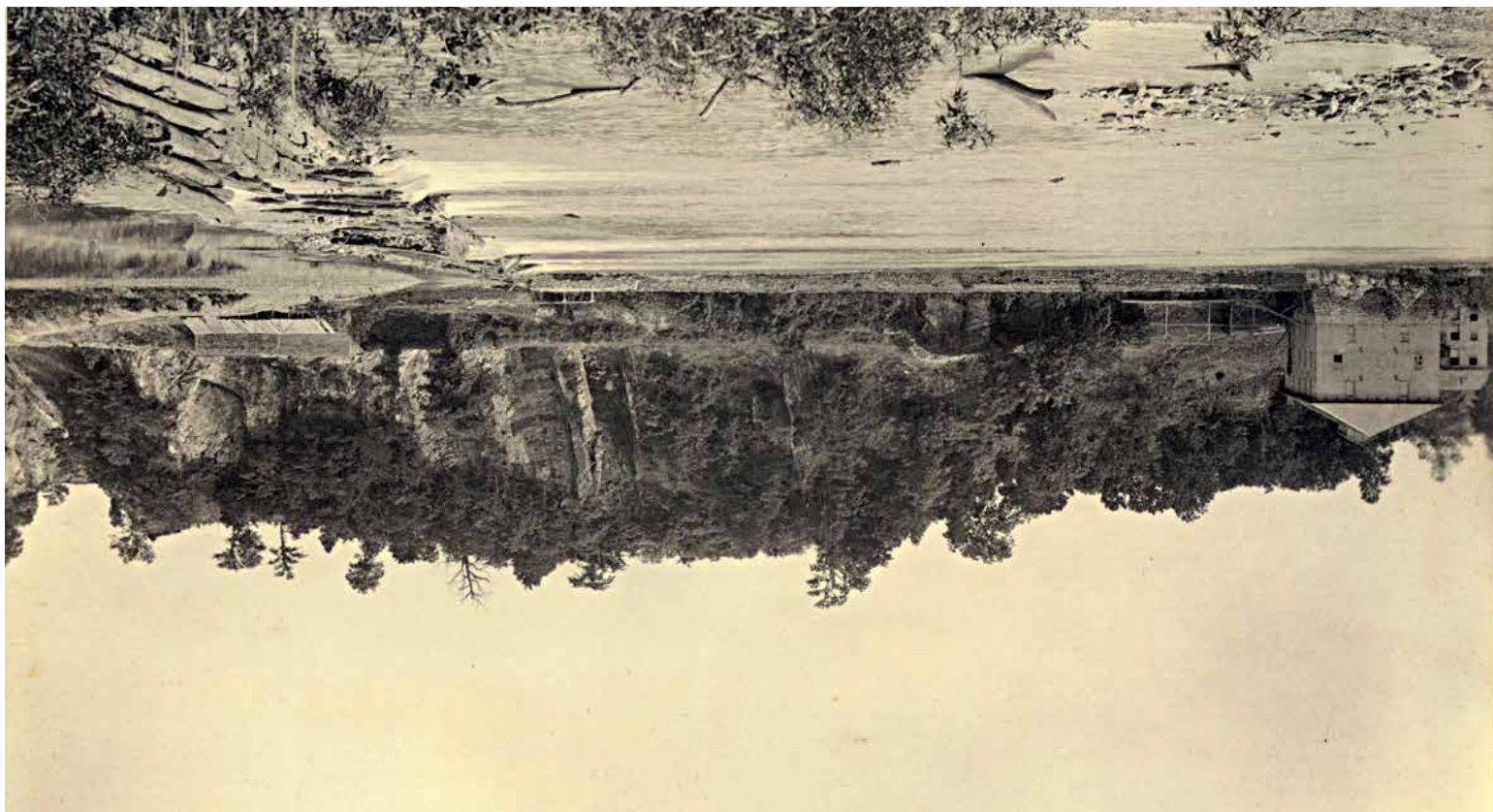
For directions, please call the number above or visit:  
[www.clarionhotel.com](http://www.clarionhotel.com).

Timeframe	Study Process	Key Steps and Outcomes
Winter 2012	Information Gathering and Public Scoping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract Civil War historians to provide research on the battle at Shepherdstown.</li> <li>• National Historic Landmark Program review of national significance.</li> <li>• Public scoping to gather public input.</li> </ul>
Spring – Winter 2012	Prepare Study	<p>The <i>Special Resource Study</i> includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource description and historical background.</li> <li>• Evaluation of suitability and feasibility for inclusion in the national park system.</li> <li>• A range of alternatives.</li> <li>• An environmental assessment that will evaluate the impacts of each potential alternative.</li> </ul>
Summer 2014	Public Review of Study <b>WE ARE HERE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review period to solicit feedback on the study.</li> </ul>
Fall 2014	Finalize study and transmit to the Secretary of the Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate comments from the public review into the study.</li> <li>• Prepare a final determination about whether the study area meets criteria.</li> <li>• Transmit the study to the Secretary of the Interior, who will then make a recommendation to Congress.</li> </ul>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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