

## Bull Run Civil War Round Table (BRCWRT) Preservation Corner

July 22, 2022



Greetings BRCWRT Members and Friends - This edition of *Preservation Corner* highlights action taken by the Virginia Legislature to establish Culpeper Battlefields State Park and the legislature's significant investment in battlefield preservation in the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District and provides an update on the PW Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) in Prince William County (PWC) and its attendant threat to Manassas National Battlefield Park.

Among many outcomes resulting from the finalization in June 2022 of the biennial budget for the Commonwealth of Virginia is a new unit of the state park system, Culpeper Battlefields State Park that is slated to open on July 1, 2024. The Park will be formed through a 1,700-acre land donation by the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) including land on the battlefields of Brandy Station, Cedar Mountain, Kelly's Ford and Rappahannock Station - land that Bud Hall and his neighbors and colleagues in Culpeper County, ABT, the Brandy Station Foundation, and the Friends of Cedar Mountain Battlefield have been protecting for decades.



*Fleetwood Hill at Brandy Station Battlefield in Culpeper County, Virginia (Bud Hall)*

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In celebrating this milestone, ABT President David Duncan issued the following statement: "At the American Battlefield Trust, we are fond of saying that 'we build parks and tell stories,' some of the greatest stories in American history. In this instance, we mean it especially literally — the creation of this new state park is the culmination of hard work across long years. First, the preservation of this land, both safeguarding it from threats of inappropriate development and then its outright purchase. But also, significant effort to demonstrate that this new park will be a meaningful addition to Virginia's landscape in terms of recreation opportunities and economic potential via heritage tourism.

Within the biennial budget the Virginia legislature also made their most significant investment in battlefield preservation since the creation of the Virginia Battlefield Protection Fund in 2010. During the next two years the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District (NHD) will receive \$4.75 million dollars to promote heritage tourism, increase public access to preserved lands, and improve the visitor experience at previously preserved battlefield sites throughout the Shenandoah Valley. Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) CEO Kevin Walker has called this "an unprecedented and unparalleled investment in battlefield parks and battlefield tourism, one that will benefit the citizens of Virginia for decades to come."

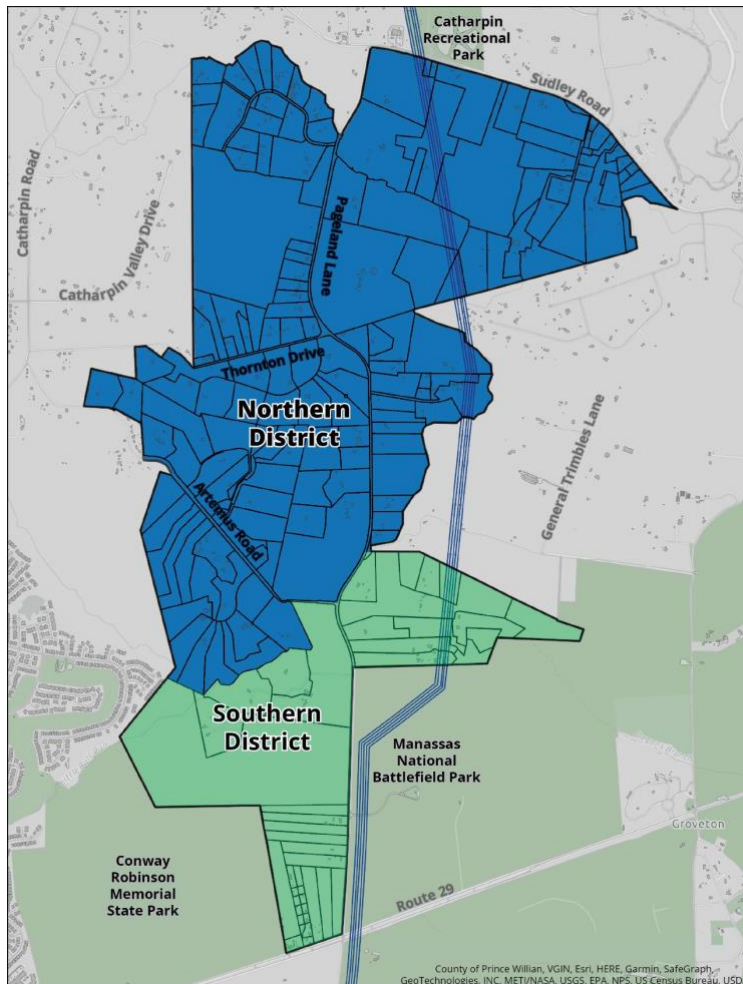
These funds will help SVBF develop seven new battlefield parks - Second Winchester, Fisher's Hill, Tom's Brook, New Market, Cross Keys, Port Republic, and McDowell - totaling 1,731 acres, across four counties, and add new services at Third Winchester, Cedar Creek and Piedmont Battlefields. Planned improvements throughout the historic district will include highway signage, parking, trailheads, restrooms, and interpretive signage, as well as completion of the Shenandoah Valley Civil War Museum, and the establishment of the New Market History and Education Center.

### **Prince William (PW) Digital Gateway (Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2021-0004)**

On July 7, 2022, the PW County Planning Office published a Draft PW Digital Gateway Plan - likely an indicator that the CPA will be approved, and the PW Digital Gateway will become a reality, with details regarding land use designation, physical design, mitigating impacts on cultural and historic sites and viewsheds, infrastructure impacts, etc. to be determined. The Draft Plan includes staff recommended policies and action strategies in eight functional areas (land use, community design, cultural resources, economic development, green infrastructure, mobility, water and sewer, sustainability, and level of service) for incorporating the digital gateway into the Comprehensive Plan should the Board of Supervisors approve the CPA. The Draft Plan includes no recommendations on the CPA itself for the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors.

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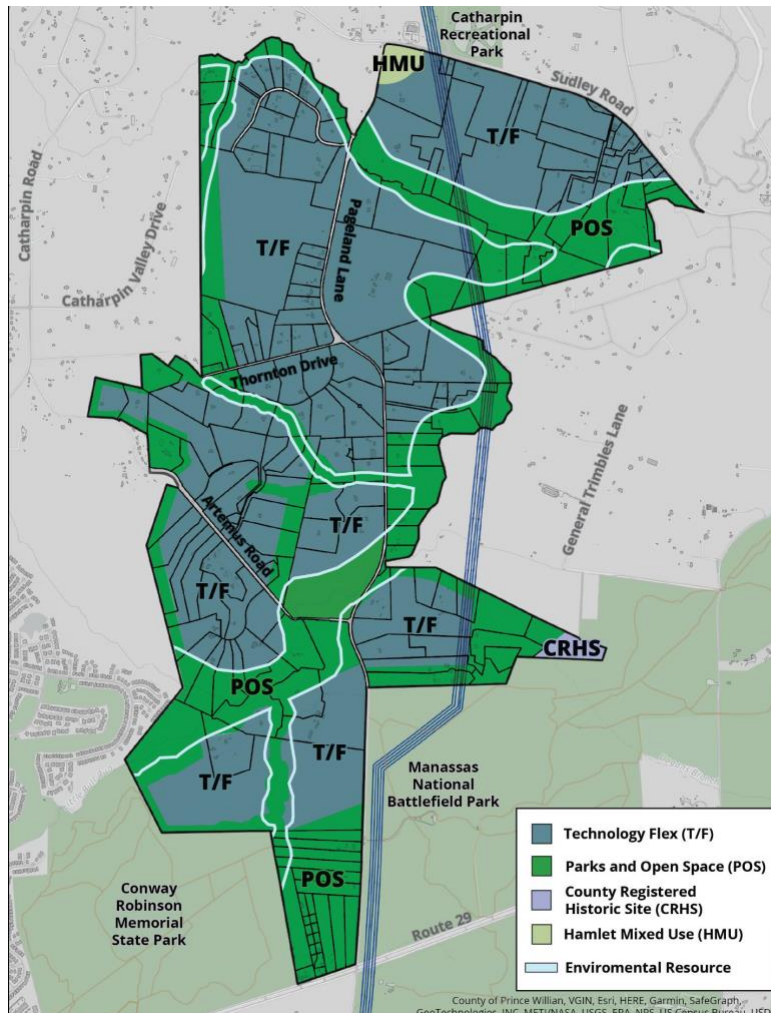
*PW Digital Gateway Study Area and Subdistrict Map (Draft Plan)*

The Draft Plan can be viewed on the [PW Digital Gateway project web page](#). Comments on the Draft Plan may be submitted here - [comment form](#).

While the Draft Plan addresses many of the concerns raised by residents and historic preservation organizations, it does not eliminate the development threat to historic land within the corridor, including Manassas National Battlefield Park (MNBK) and the 107 acres of land within the designated Southern District that lie within the American Battlefield Protection Program's designated Manassas Battlefield Core Area. The Draft Plan does include measures intended to mitigate the adverse impacts of the proposed data centers on MNBK, including land use designation for some of the most threatening areas as Parks and Open Space (see figure below).

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PW Digital Gateway Land Use Plan (Draft Plan)

The challenge here would likely be in plan implementation, as there is presumably little incentive for landowners or data center developers to develop parks or open space areas on these land tracts. Many of the other mitigation measures contained in the Draft Plan (setbacks, buffer areas, tree screens and afforestation, building and lighting restrictions, etc.) in practice have proven inadequate in effectively mitigating the adverse impacts they are intended to address. What may look and 'sound' good on paper does not necessarily achieve the desired results. It is typically not one adverse impact, but rather a combination of impacts, including visual and noise factors, associated with an industrial site that renders the mitigation measures ineffective.

The Draft Plan also includes a strategy to widen Pageland Lane to four lanes, divided by a landscaped median and with shared use (bike and pedestrian) paths on each side of the roadway - an undertaking that would certainly intensify and magnify the adverse impacts of adjacent data centers on MNBPs; historic sites and viewsheds. The Draft Plan does not address power needs or requirements for the data

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centers, and even though these data centers would be proximate to an existing Dominion Energy transmission line, that transmission line is "near or at capacity". Any data centers built in the Study Area north of U.S. Route 29 will require new power substations and/or transmission lines to provide the requisite electric power - a situation that would significantly increase the power infrastructure required to support the data centers in this corridor, with the attendant adverse impacts on MNBP and its historic sites and viewsheds.

Consideration of CPA#2021-0004, PW Digital Gateway by the PWC Planning Commission and Board of County Supervisors in on-going, as is development of an updated Comprehensive Plan, The Pathway to 2040, and revisions to PWC's Data Center Opportunity Zone Overlay District. Readers of this column, and particularly those who are Prince William County residents, are encouraged to let your voices and concerns be heard. You may contact the PW Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) and/or your respective PWC District Supervisor and let them know your concerns with the proposed PW Digital Gateway and the negative impacts on historical sites and cultural resources that would result from approving the PW Digital Gateway project as proposed.

PW Board of County Supervisors:

Chair (At Large): Ann B. Wheeler - [chair@pwcgov.org](mailto:chair@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4640

Neabsco District Supervisor: Victor S. Angry - [vsangry@pwcgov.org](mailto:vsangry@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4667

Brentsville District Supervisor: Jeanine M. Lawson - [jlawson@pwcgov.org](mailto:jlawson@pwcgov.org); 703-792-6190

Coles District Supervisor: Yesli Vega - [yvega@pwcgov.org](mailto:yvega@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4620

Gainesville District Supervisor: Pete K. Candland - [gainesville@pwcgov.org](mailto:gainesville@pwcgov.org); 703-792-6195

Occoquan District Supervisor: Kenny A. Boddye - [kboddye@pwcgov.org](mailto:kboddye@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4643

Potomac District Supervisor: Andrea O. Bailey, Vice Chair - [abailey@pwcgov.org](mailto:abailey@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4563

Woodbridge District Supervisor: Margaret Angela Franklin, Chair Pro-Tem - [mfranklin@pwcgov.org](mailto:mfranklin@pwcgov.org); 703-792-4646

You may also speak, in person or remotely, during the Public Comment segment of PWC Planning Commission and BOCS meetings. Though limited to 3 minutes for comments, this is sufficient time to speak to your concerns and recommendations. The schedule and agendas for Planning Commission and BOCS meetings can be found here <https://www.pwcva.gov/>

### ***Civil War Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads (GMU Fairfax Campus)***

The long-delayed dedication ceremony for the preserved and interpreted Civil War Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads historic site on George Mason University's (GMU) Fairfax Campus will be held on Friday, October 7, 2022 at 10:00 AM. Celebrating the six-year effort by BRCWRT and GMU to preserve and interpret this site, the ceremony will highlight the process and project developed and implemented by this terrific partnership team and will recognize many of the key people from GMU and BRCWRT, who made it all happen. Period music will be provided by GMU's own Green Machine 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment Band.

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Civil War Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads

The ceremony will be followed by a site tour for attendees, who wish to participate and learn more about the site's history. So, come on out and help celebrate and enjoy what promises to be a fun and enlightening event. Stay tuned for additional program information which is scheduled for publication in the near future.

You can read the full story of the preservation and interpretation of the site in the June/July 2021 edition of the Stone Wall newsletter ([http://bullruncwrt.org/BRCWRT/Newsletters21/Stone\\_Wall-June-July%202021-issue\\_5.pdf](http://bullruncwrt.org/BRCWRT/Newsletters21/Stone_Wall-June-July%202021-issue_5.pdf))

Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, BRCWRT's preservation actions and activities.

Blake Myers, BRCWRT Preservation Chair