

Bull Run Civil War Round Table (BRCWRT) Preservation Corner

June 26, 2023

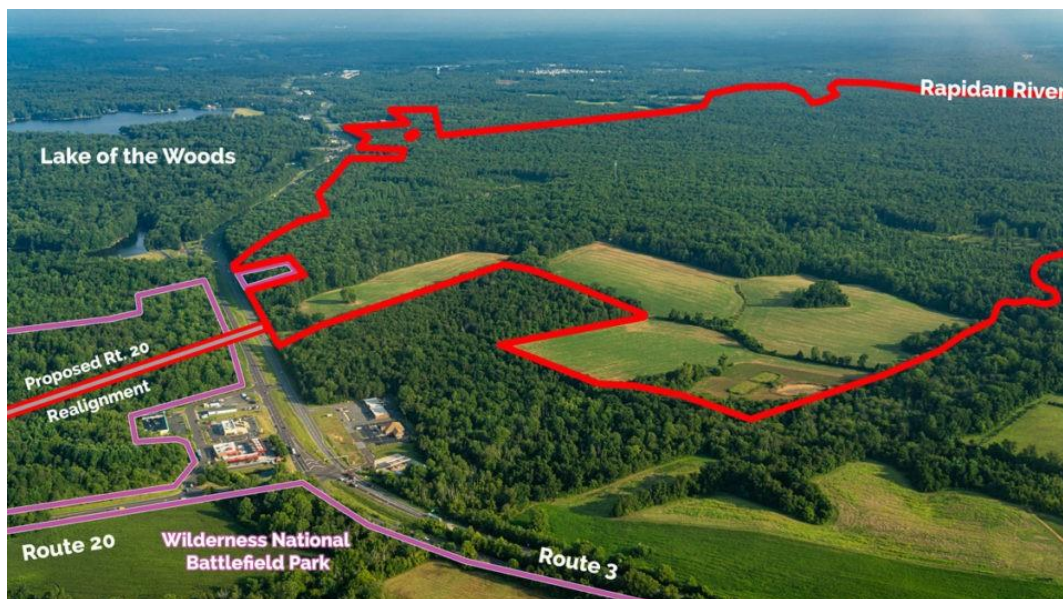


Greetings BRCWRT Members and Friends - This edition of *Preservation Corner* highlights a new threat to the Wilderness and Chancellorsville Battlefields, the Wilderness Crossing Development, and includes updates regarding the proposed Manassas Logistics Center (Chapel Springs) development project and the Prince William Digital Gateway (PWDG).

Wilderness Crossing (Wilderness Battlefield)

On May 24, 2023, together with local nonprofit organizations and private citizens, the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) filed a legal challenge in Orange County, Virginia against a mega-development that would blanket a historic landscape with more than 2,600 acres of residential, commercial, and industrial development, including data centers and distribution warehouses. The filing, made in Orange County Circuit Court, identifies a host of substantive and procedural flaws with the development project and the County's approval - requiring approval invalidation.

In its press release announcing the legal filing, ABT noted that Wilderness Crossing is a 2,600-acre rezoning and proposed development in Orange County near the intersection of Rt. 3 and Rt. 20 adjacent to the Wilderness Battlefield and across from Lake of the Woods. On April 25, 2023, the Orange County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to approve the rezoning request, making it the largest land rezoning in County history. Plans envision development on hundreds of acres of forested, undeveloped land adjacent to the Wilderness Battlefield for industrial, commercial, and residential uses. The rezoned area directly abuts battlefield land on which the May 1864 Battle of the Wilderness raged, includes hundreds of acres within the Battlefield Study Area where soldiers maneuvered and deployed, and where historic and archaeological resources exist.



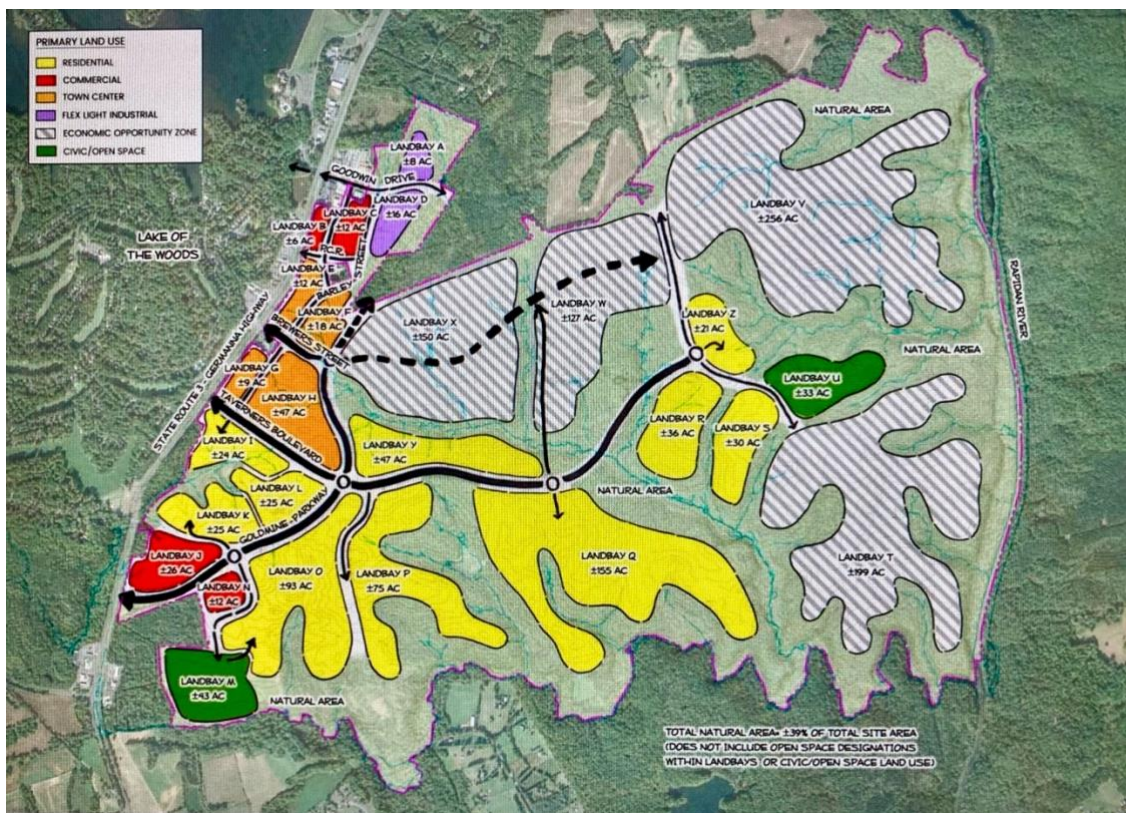
Aerial image of the Wilderness Crossing site across from the Sheetz and McDonald's at the Rt. 3/Rt. 20 intersection in Orange County (Photo by Hugh Kenny, PEC)

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Approved despite overwhelming opposition expressed during the public comment hearing and voted on the same evening it first appeared on the Board's agenda, the project represents, by far, the largest rezoning in Orange County history. All told, it could result in up to 5,000 residential units, and more than 800 acres of commercial and industrial development, with as much as 750 acres designated as economic opportunity zones that could be developed as data centers and distribution warehouses (see diagram, below).



Wilderness Crossing Projected Land Use Designation (American Battlefield Trust)

The plan also advances a long-envisioned realignment of the Route 3 and Route 20 interchange on the border with Spotsylvania County, which would have further detrimental impacts on the Wilderness Battlefield, including battlefield core lands owned by ABT and other conservation organizations, as well as the adjacent Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

In ABT's May 25, 2023, press release ABT President David Duncan stated, "To approve a project of this scale and magnitude without conducting analysis of the impacts to the hundreds of surrounding acres of protected historic landscape is unacceptable, as was the County's complete lack of response to repeated requests by the preservation community and the National Park Service to meet and discuss our concerns. As we have before, the Trust and its members will take a stand on behalf of history at the Wilderness."

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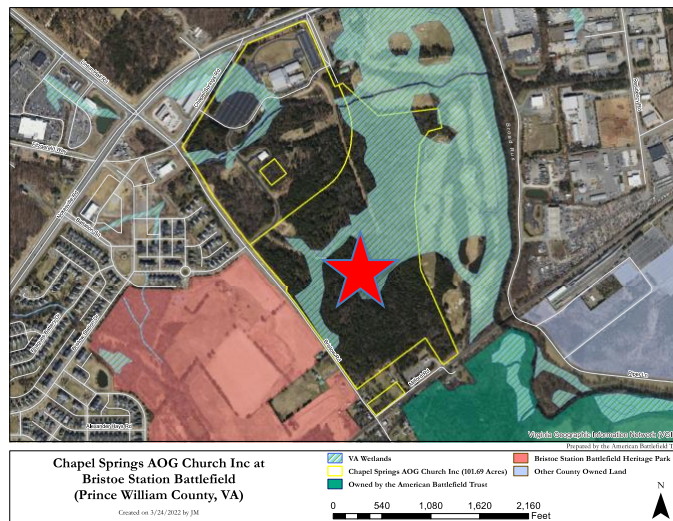
Readers may recall a similar Wilderness Battlefield preservation effort, beginning in 2009, when preservationists opposed a proposed development for a Walmart Supercenter to be built at the intersection of Route 3 and Route 20. Ultimately, a win-win result was achieved whereby the retailer donated the site for conservation and built the Supercenter further west on Route 3. Following this dispute, the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition produced the Wilderness Battlefield Gateway Study, a 2012 report envisioning a viable development path for the region. The Study was embraced by residents, park advocates, preservationists, and county officials alike, and many of its recommendations were adopted by Orange County in its Germanna-Wilderness Area Plan. Unfortunately, these mutually agreed upon development principles were ignored in the Wilderness Crossing development proposal.

BRCWRT members and readers are strongly encouraged to support ABT's legal challenge by urging officials to reconsider "Wilderness Crossing" and/or making a donation, and may do so at <https://www.battlefields.org/preserve/speak-out/stop-largest-rezoning-orange-county-history>.

Manassas Logistics Center Development at Bristow/Chapel Springs, (Bristoe Station and Kettle Run Battlefields)

Recent documents from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) indicate that USACE may be preparing to initiate, as part of the wetlands permitting required for the proposed development project, the Section 106 Review (required by the National Historic Preservation Act) in the August -September 2023 time frame.

Recall that the proposed project by commercial real estate developer Trammell Crow Company (TCC) and its affiliate Manassas Logistics Land Venture, LLC is located along Bristow Road and adjacent to Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park and preserved battlefield land owned by the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) (see map, below).



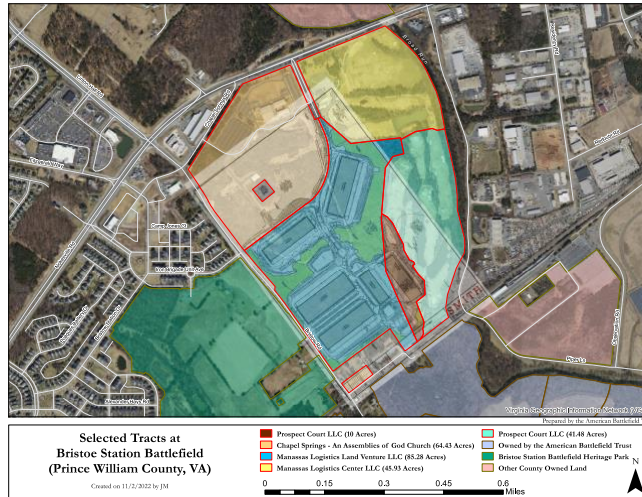
Proposed Project Land, Formerly Chapel Springs Church Property, Adjacent to Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park

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The proposed project includes six large warehouse and distribution buildings (772,400 square feet) and associated parking areas (see depiction, below).



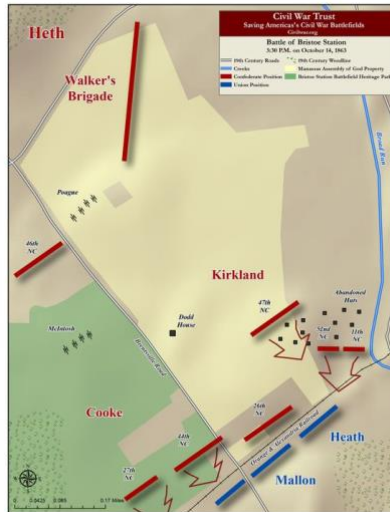
Project Concept Overlaid on Property Map

The documented civil war historical significance of this land includes the following:

- Battle of Bristoe Station (October 14, 1863) (see battle map, below)
 - The Rockbridge Artillery's (Poague's Battery) key position from which the battery shelled federal forces positioned along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad
 - The land over which Brigadier General William Kirkland's NC Brigade (formerly Pettigrew's Brigade) attacked federal forces positioned along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad
- Remnants of a Civil War era encampment with earthworks, and an associated cemetery containing military graves/burials (DHR-registered Archaeological Site 44PW0971 that has been deemed potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places [NHRP])
- In 1864 Ferrero's Division of the U.S. 9th Corps, including two brigades composed of the 19th, 23rd, 27th, 30th, 31st, 39th, and 43rd USCTs, and the 30th Connecticut Colored Infantry camped here while guarding the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and the bridge across Broad Run from in early May 1864. The division and its USCT brigades joined the Army of the Potomac near Spotsylvania Courthouse, from where they would fight in the Overland Campaign and subsequently in the Battle of the Crater in Petersburg on July 30, 1864.

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Civil War Trust (now American Battlefield Trust) Map - Battle of Bristoe Station

On June 21, 2023, Section 106 Review consulting parties received a revised Section 106 Coordination Form from USACE indicating USACE's extension of the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the proposed project to include those portions of the Bristoe Station Battlefield that are visible from the permit area, and USACE's determination that the project will have a direct and indirect adverse effect on Core areas of the Bristoe Station Battlefield and a direct adverse effect on archaeological resource 44PW0971. The Section 106 Coordination Form came with supporting documentation, and a request for consulting parties to provide any comments, questions and objections to USACE by July 24, 2023.

Additional updates on will be provided as available.

Prince William Digital Gateway (PWDG) Data Centers (Manassas National Battlefield Park and Manassas National Battlefield Historic District)

A short note on the potential impact of recent Primary Election results in Prince William County (PWC) on Data Center development in general and on the proposed PWDG data centers. A groundswell of public opposition to the large number of data center projects under consideration by PWC, the lack of transparency and accountability in the county's processes for developing the Comprehensive Plan Amendment establishing the PWDG, and for the seeming dismissal by the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) of resident, historic preservation, environmental, and energy concerns with proposed data center locations led to the defeat in the June 20, 2023 Democratic Primary of the BOCS Chair, a data center advocate, and narrow wins for several serving Supervisors, who have supported data center development.

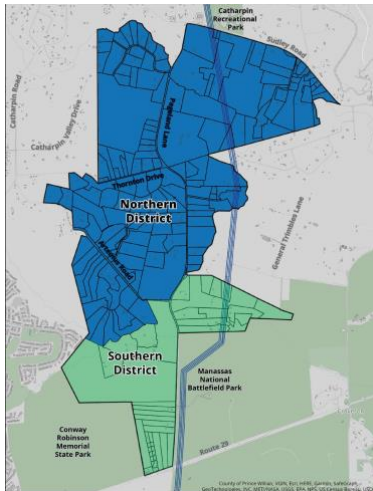
Whether these election results and the strong message they send will have any impact on BOCS consideration of data center proposals currently under review remains to be seen. The November 7, 2023, General Election is 4 months away, but we hope and trust that sitting BOCS members take to

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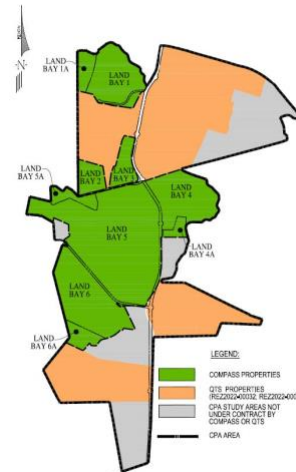
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heart the message delivered by PWC residents and reconsider any support for data center proposals that would negatively impact Manassas National Battlefield Park and other historic sites. Furthermore, that future PW BOCS ensure the process for considering data center development proposals is truly transparent, accounts for relevant resident, historic preservation, environmental and energy concerns, and is not driven by developer and political interests alone.



PW Digital Gateway Study Area and Subdistrict Map



PWDG Land Parcels Proposed for Data Centers

Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, Civil War historic preservation in general and BRCWRT's preservation projects, actions, and activities.

Blake Myers, BRCWRT Preservation Chair