GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING A BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION PLAN

Every battlefield is a unique place with its own set of assets and challenges. Options for preservation are different at each site. Preservation advocates need to develop strategies that balance land and resource protection, private landowner concerns, and public access and use. For battlefields already seriously compromised by development, preservation options may be limited, allowing only the acquisition of a small fraction of undisturbed land as a commemorative area. For battlefields in excellent condition, the range of preservation actions is extensive and will require a broad vision for the best way to protect, maintain, and conserve the battle site.

Why Develop a Battlefield Preservation Plan?

There are many reasons to develop a battlefield preservation plan, not the least of which is to stake a claim in the public policy decision-making process. The purpose of a preservation plan should be to provide clear guidance to battlefield advocates, local officials, landowners, and interested citizens about what needs to be done to protect the battlefield and its associated historic resouces. In addition, a preservation plan can or should do the following things:

- Galvanize public attention about the need to protect the site and its surroundings.
- Educate and inform the public about this part of the community's heritage and its continuing value.
- Clarify where the battlefield is located and identify property owners who own pieces of it.
- Locate, identify, and document historic features on the battlefield.
- Indicate how State and local governments can enhance preservation of the battlefield and minimize harmful actions.
- Encourage sensitive and compatible development in and around the battlefield.
- Demonstrate that battlefield preservation, as part of the community's heritage and physical character, contributes to local economic vitality and stablity.
- Address issues relating to land use regulation, tourism, interpretation, and design that affect the battlefield.
- Create an agenda for future preservation activities that will have broad support.
- Strengthen political understanding and support for preservation.

What Is a Battlefield Preservation Plan?

A battlefield preservation plan is a document that defines the overall vision for preserving the battlefield and guides future preservation work, i.e. it provides a specific direction and concrete steps to be taken to reach agreed-upon goals. A battlefield preservation plan may discuss topics found in the other kinds of plans, such as historical themes to be incorporated in the battlefield's interpretive program or critical lands identified as needing protection. However, a preservation plan will not treat these issues in as great a depth as would plans produced solely to address those topics (see below).

Not every battlefield preservation plan will look the same or address the same issues. Battlefield preservation plans vary depending on a variety of factors, including:

- the size/acreage of the battlefield;
- the level of knowledge about the battle and the specific locations where the battle actions occurred, as well as knowledge about the historic resources associated with the battle;
- the extent to which the battlefield has been recognized as an important historic place;
- whether the site, or some portion of it, is substantially protected and whether a management entity exists to "run" the battlefield;
- the kinds of threats facing the battlefield; and
- the broader economic and social context of the communities in which the site is located.

Regardless of what issues face a particular battlefield, a preservation plan is essential in establishing a strategy with specific, prioritized actions to guide preservation efforts and ensure the long-term protection of the battlefield.

A battlefield preservation plan and its goals should reflect consensus among all parties involved with the site (the management entity, local officials, citizens, property owners, and other interest groups) as to the reasons for preserving the site and the long-term management objectives. Developing goals will be most effective if a public participation process is used. Public participation can take many forms, from large public meetings to survey questionnaires to interactive web sites. The specific method(s) used to communicate with and involve the public in the planning process should be tailored to each community.

Other types of plans that address in detail issues identified in a battlefield preservation plan include:

- **Resource Protection Plans** set forth policies and programs to identify, document, protect, and manage the unique set of cultural and historic resources found on the battlefield.
- **Master plans** establish an overall management concept for the battlefield.
- **Site plans**, often prepared by a landscape architect or civil engineer, lay out the specific placement of buildings (visitors centers, etc.) and roads on a particular site.
- **Interpretive plans** suggest how the historic events should be interpreted and identify expertise, materials, and facilities needed to accomplish the interpretation.

Who creates the battlefield preservation plan?

The public, working in tandem with preservation professionals creates the plan. A battlefield preservation plan is a community effort providing both a forum for public involvement and an opportunity for preservation professionals to assist in defining preservation planning goals and identifying potential issues.

- Public involvement in the planning process helps in defining a community's goals for its historic resources and the actions it will take and strategies it will develop to reach those goals. Early and continuing public engagement is essential in helping to build consensus toward a shared vision for a community's historic resources. Battlefields are large land areas with multiple property owners and interest groups, therefore battlefield preservation is inherently a public endeavor. Informing the public about battlefield planning and getting public input and agreement during the planning process is critical to the success of the preservation effort.
- Preservation professionals contribute to the planning process by working closely with the community to help define goals, identify issues, and outline strategies. They ensure that the public is aware of and understands historic preservation standards, practices, and laws.

When should the Historic Preservation Planning process begin?

To have a positive effect, the Historic Preservation Planning process should begin ideally when a battlefield or associated site has been identified and located on the landscape

When organizing a battlefield preservation effort and developing a battlefield preservation plan, contact your State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The SHPO's responsibilities include conducting surveys to identify historic properties, nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places, developing a statewide preservation plan, and providing technical assistance to Federal, State, and local agencies and the public. SHPOs also review Federal projects (highways!) that affect historic properties. For a list of SHPO websites visit http://www.ncshpo.org/find/index.htm

Elements of a Battlefield Preservation Plan

Ideally, a battlefield preservation plan will articulate the goals for the battlefield site and implementation strategies, including specific tasks, to achieve those goals. The ABPP recommends that, in general, battlefield preservation plans address the fourteen factors below.

Historical significance of the battle and the battlefield. The plan should briefly discuss the significance of the battlefield without going into a detailed history and analysis of every aspect of the battle. The most critical thing is to state the importance (military and otherwise) of what happened at the site.

Location and geographical area of the battlefield. The plan should describe and map the location and extent of the battlefield. Guidance on defining the boundaries of battlefields is provided in National Register Bulletin 40.

Cultural and natural resources. Briefly discuss, describe, and map historic resources and natural features within the area of the battlefield. It is important to conduct a cultural resource survey of the battlefield prior to or during the planning process in order to identify, inventory, and evaluate battlefield resources. Battlefield landscapes contain cultural features such as farmhouses, old roads and road traces, and earthen fortifications. The natural landscape is also important as it most likely influenced the course of battle. The plan should note all natural (terrain) features that played a role in the battle, as well as any sensitive environmental areas such as wildlife habitats. The plan should also identify and briefly discuss resources significant to other periods of history, especially any resources already listed in or eligible for the NRHP. It is important to indicate the level of knowledge about these resources and to cite any previous studies of historic and natural resources within the battlefield.

Current condition of the battlefield. If not already completed, on-site surveys will be necessary to determine the current condition of the battlefield and to identify individual resources within the battlefield. The plan should note whether the battlefield landscape is in the same general condition as it was at the time of battle, what land-use changes have occurred since the battle, whether cultural resources associated with the battle are extant or destroyed, and what percentage of the entire battlefield remains today.

Brief history of protection efforts. Past efforts to protect battlefield land and resources may influence the goals and recommended actions of a new plan. For example, an earlier public land purchase may already protect a portion of the battlefield. Plans should identify earlier initiatives, their level of success, and whether additional action is needed.

Current land use of the battlefield and its immediate surroundings. The plan should describe current uses of land within the battlefield and surrounding areas. Is the land in agricultural use? if so, what kind of farming is taking place? Is forestry or quarrying present on the site? Do existing or planned residential or commercial uses occur on or near the site? The plan should discuss the extent to which these and other uses may affect the battlefield landscape, features, and viewsheds.

Land Ownership. The plan should identify by parcel all types of battlefield landowners. The plan need not identify by name individual owners, but should indicate what land is in private, public, and semi-public ownership. Public owners may be identified, and additional information about the purpose of the public land is helpful. For example, a state historic site preserving and commemorating the battle and a county recreational park with playing fields, tennis courts, a pool, and other amenities have very different impacts on the historic landscape.

Short- and long-term threats. It is critical for the plan to address threats to the preservation of the battlefield. In most cases, methods of dealing with threats will become the focus of the plan's recommendations. Threats may be the result of human action or natural processes. Man-made threats include incompatible development (residential, commercial, or industrial) that results in wholesale loss of battlefield resources, setting, and archeological record, and the unscientific removal of archeological evidence (relic hunting/looting), which also diminishes the battlefield's archeological evidence. Among various natural threats are soil erosion, pest infestation, and decay due to the forces of nature. The plan should differentiate between imminent threats and long-term threats and evaluate the relative severity of the threats.

Community characteristics. The plan should note community characteristics, such as demographic information, economic issues, and the local political climate. This information places battlefield preservation efforts into a larger, "real-life" context. It also helps planners identify ways battlefield preservation can benefit the community and how to market preservation efforts to the community.

Land use planning capabilities. The plan should identify the land-use planning and regulatory capabilities of municipalities with jurisdiction over the battlefield. It should indicate whether a county or town has adopted a comprehensive plan, whether the comprehensive plan addresses the battlefield or historic resources in general, and whether the locality uses zoning, ordinances, or any other mechanism to regulate development and land use. If the battlefield is zoned, the plan should discuss and map the types of zoning in place. Most importantly, the plan should indicate what regulatory powers the municipalities have that, even if not currently practiced, could help protect the battlefield if implemented in the future (for example, a new county Purchase of Development Rights program).

Priorities for protection. This is perhaps the most sensitive and yet most important part of the plan. It establishes priorities for preserving land by indicating which battlefield parcels need to be protected immediately, in the short-term, and in the long term. The plan should lay out reasonable criteria that justify the recommended prioritization. The ABPP suggests that planners use the following categories when developing criteria for prioritizing battlefield parcels: historical significance, level of threat, interpretive viability, presence/absence of important cultural resources (such as earthworks and archeological sites), significant viewsheds, landscape continuity (proximity to other parcels already under protection), and management issues (i.e., parcels appropriate for visitor service facilities). The emphasis given each criterion depends on the goals of the individual preservation plan.

Effective land protection methods. Many tools can be used in preserving battlefield land. They range from acquisition of land and interests in land (easements), to regulatory mechanisms such as zoning, to tax incentives such as placing certain parcels in agricultural or forestal districts. The plan should identify the most effective tools for protecting land and resources and should explain why those tools are the most appropriate for the battlefield and community in question.

Attitudes toward battlefield protection. At the beginning of the planning process, planners should find out how the community, local elected officials, and battlefield landowners feel about the concept of protecting the battlefield. Knowing how local groups have reacted to previous preservation initiatives can help planners develop sensitive approaches to working with various interest groups. If the plan is to have any chance of being implemented, it must have strong local support. The plan should outline strategies for involving the public in future preservation efforts. It should also document the support to date of people and organizations essential to the success of the preservation effort.

Partnerships, strategies, and actions to protect the battlefield. The plan's goals, objectives, and recommendations should form a logical sequence of actions (an action plan) to be taken over the next several years to make preservation a reality. In addition to describing specific objectives and projects, the plan should identify parties most likely to carry out the recommended tasks.

Additional Resources

Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. Provides professional guidance for historic preservation activities, including preservation planning. The standards for planning outline a process that determines when an area should be examined for historic properties, whether an identified property is significant, and how a significant property should be treated. The Standards are available online at http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm

Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. Provides guidance to cultural landscape owners, stewards and managers, landscape architects, preservation planners, architects, contractors, and project reviewers prior to and during the planning and implementation of project work. The Guidelines are available online at http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/

Strategies for Protecting Archeological Sites on Private Lands. Identifies a wide variety of tools that are being used to protect archeological sites, summarizes the benefits of each, and notes features of these tools that merit special attention. Case study examples of actual archeological protection projects are presented to illustrate the use of selected protection strategies. Information on lessons learned and keys to success highlight experiences in communities across the country. Excerpts from selected documents provide examples of language that has been used in easements, ordinances, and plans for protecting archeological sites. The Strategies are available online at http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/pad/strategies/

Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes (Preservation Brief 36). Provides preservation professionals, cultural resource managers, and historic property owners a step-by-step process for preserving two types of cultural landscapes: historic designed and vernacular. *Preservation Brief 36* provides a framework and guidance for undertaking projects to ensure a successful balance between historic preservation and change to the landscape. Preservation Brief 36 is available online at http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief36.htm

Sustainable Military Earthworks Management [Currents #5]. Military earthworks management is an evolving science that requires an integrated approach to natural and cultural resource management. Many landscape stewards in the public and private sectors employ a variety of techniques in an effort to expand the range of successful management practices. *Currents #5* identifies management concepts for the landscape as a whole and develops a management strategy for militray earthworks. Although specific approaches to earthworks management differ based on individual conditions, the management fundamentals outlined in *Current #5* apply to every situation and are explored in detail in the online publication. Current #5 is available online at http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/hli/currents/earthworks/index.htm

Tips for Writing a Good Battlefield Preservation Plan

A battlefield preservation plan must be well written, well organized, and geared toward its intended audience in order to succeed. The statement that many plans end up on the shelf collecting dust may be a cliche, but it is also true. How can this be avoided? Anyone writing a plan intended to guide preservation work should consider the following points. As obvious as these may be, many plans ignore them and as a result, are never implemented.

Develop a vision or main message and make it exciting. The best plans are those that lay out an exciting vision for the future that stimulates the reader enough to make him or her want to be a part of it and help make it happen. If the plan is perceived as uninspiring it will not go very far.

Know the purpose of your plan and collect data to support that purpose. Plans can serve a variety of purposes. Decide exactly what you expect your plan to achieve. Do you want specific legislative changes to result, or are you more concerned with educating the community? Once you have decided what role the plan will play, gather information that will help you make your case. Do not waste time and effort collecting irrelevant information.

Know your audience. Plans can be written for a variety of audiences -- a particular constituency, a limited technical audience, the political leadership, the public. Once the plan's purpose has been decided, target the appropriate audience.

Include a table of contents and an executive summary. This seems basic, but amazingly some plans do not include these important features. People are busy, so organization is important. Provide a condensed version of your goals, findings, and recommendations up front in an executive summary.

Highlight your main points. Again, most people are busy. They will be looking for the "so what" in your plan. Do not make it hard for them to capture the plan's main points by burying major findings and recommendations in the text. State main points clearly, concisely, make them stand out visually on the page.

Use graphics to summarize findings. In the Information Age, people are used to getting information through visual displays. Use charts, diagrams, maps, photographs and drawings wherever possible to present information and convey your message.

Do not overwhelm the reader and obscure your message. If you've gone to a lot of trouble to collect information, you may be tempted to include all of it in the plan. Similarly, historians may want to include a long and detailed history of the battle. Be judicious. Your readers do not want to wade through a great deal of data or history. Include only as much history as necessary to communicate what happened and why it is important. Include more detailed information in an appendix or refer readers to other sources for more information.

Data should reinforce your plan's goals and objectives. Provide data to support the plan's goals and objectives. If the information in your plan does not help you to make your case, it should not be there. For example, if you intend to promote battlefield preservation as an economic development strategy that will help the community generate revenues from heritage tourism, provide figures showing how other jurisdictions with battlefield sites are getting these benefits.

Limit goals to those that are key, definable, concrete, and achievable. Although many plans attempt to be "comprehensive" by including goals on every possible issue, it is unrealistic to expect action to be taken on such a wide range of concerns. Plans that focus on a limited number of definable, concrete issues are more likely to achieve consensus and generate action than those with a laundry list of items to be addressed.