

*Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park
Federal Advisory Commission Meeting*

March 19, 2015

Strasburg Town Hall
174 East King Street
Strasburg, Virginia

- 1) General Introductions
John Adamson
- 2) Adoption of Minutes
John Adamson
- 3) Update—FAC Member Nomination Process
Jim Northup
- 4) Update—Final Trail Management Strategy
Amy Bracewell
- 5) Update—Shared Graphic Identity
Amy Bracewell
- 6) Update—Summer Operations
Amy Bracewell
- 7) Slavery Interpretation Workshop
Amy Bracewell
- 8) Appomattox Anniversary—Bells Across the Land
Amy Bracewell
- 9) Update—National Park Service Centennial
Jim Northup
- 10) NPS Overview
John Adamson
- 11) New Business

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Jim Northup, Designated Federal Official (DFO); John Adamson, Belle Grove, Inc.; Carl Bernhards, Middletown; Dave Blount, Private Landowner; Amy Bracewell, NPS; Eric Lawrence, Frederick County; Nicholas Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF); and Richard Redmon, Strasburg.

Commission members absent: Katie Donahue, USFS; Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (CCBF); Lee Meyer, Warren County; and Rob Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Others in attendance: Paul Coussan, Civil War Trust; Wayne Crump, Private Landowner; Michael Duggan, Private Landowner; Bob Grogg, NPS Volunteer; Jered Hoover, Shenandoah County Parks and Recreation; Patrick Kehoe, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation; Kristen Laise, Belle Grove, Inc.; and Dave Stegmaier, District Office, U.S. Representative Barbara Comstock.

John Adamson called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and asked for introductions by everyone present.

The meeting notes from December 18, 2014, were approved.

Jim Northup talked about the state of current nominations to the federal advisory commission. The Civil War Trust, which will now have a seat on the commission, has been asked to nominate a representative. Shenandoah County will also name a replacement for Pam Salokangas. Northup has been trying to reach Jeanne Frink to see if she wishes to continue on the commission. If he continues to be unsuccessful he will approach the state about a replacement. John Adamson reported that the Frinks are on a round-the-world cruise, which must explain why she cannot be reached.

Amy Bracewell announced that the Trails Development Strategy and Management Plan is complete and has been approved by all partners. This is a dynamic, working document. The NPS will work with all partners to implement the pilot projects. The long-term trail corridors will depend on land acquisitions, easements, and private landowner approvals. As trails are developed each will have a trailhead sign with basic information and regulations. The Shenandoah N.P. trail crew and the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) will be assisting in trail development.

Everyone is reviewing the color options that are now available for the shared graphic identity.

Summer hours will begin March 21, 2015, with the visitor contact station open seven days a week. Belle Grove also opens this weekend with Middletown Appreciation Day. Ranger programs will be weekends only and then daily beginning in mid-June. March 28, 2015, is Civil War Trust Park Day, during which the Vermont Monument will be cleaned up and the CCBF will clean the Entrenchments Trail. History at Sunset programs will feature a variety of topics: Winchester's cemeteries, emancipation in the postwar Shenandoah Valley, Middletown during the Civil War, "Looking Beyond the Big House" at Belle Grove, and the Star Fort in Winchester. In September there will be a star party at the Thoburn property to celebrate astronomy and the night sky. Park programs are being repackaged since we are seeing that we have almost talked to more groups—Rotary, or example—than to people in park programs. A lecture series is in the works for the fall.

On April 2 and 3, 2015, the Tracing Center on Histories and Legacies of Slavery will put on a two-day workshop at Lord Fairfax CC. It is sponsored by Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP and is open to NPS, Belle Grove, and CCBF volunteers and other interested persons.

Bells Across the Land, which marks the events at Appomattox Court House April 9, 1865, has participants lined up in 27 states and 23 parks. The Liberty Bell will be ceremoniously tapped. Communities across the country are being asked to ring their bells at 315 p.m. Locally bells will be rung in Woodstock, Strasburg, New Market, Winchester, and Front Royal.

Jim Northup reported that momentum for the NPS centennial is building. He will be able to report on concrete proposals at the next meeting.

John Adamson talked about how the park and the FAC are moving into a new phase. Generally he expressed the concerns that FAC members may not be fully aware of nor familiar with NPS policies and procedures. What initiatives are in the works? How does the budget process work? What is research in the NPS? In other words, if the commissioners were better acquainted with or somewhat knowledgeable about the workings of the NPS all members would be able to perform their duties better. Perhaps a Parks 101 would be good for the commissioners, say ten minutes on a given topic at each FAC meeting?

Northup replied that not every park is a partnership, so there are not readily available packages of information to answer these questions or to provide the education that is needed. All agreed, however, that talking about the history, budget, and the organization are topics that should be addressed, and perhaps in the next three FAC meetings. Other topics would be to investigate how other partnership parks operate, what are creative funding sources, and the role of Friends' groups.

Old Business

None

New Business

Jim Northup said that he wanted the commissioners to know about a letter that he had received Tuesday, March 17, 2015, signed by Northeast Regional Director Mike Caldwell and National Capital Regional Director Bob Vogel. Northup began with some background on the two regions managed by Caldwell and Vogel. National Capital Region manages twenty-six parks in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Northeast Region manages seventy-three parks in the thirteen states from Virginia and West Virginia to Maine. The letter advised the superintendents of parks in

Virginia that the National Park Service Director is considering realigning regional boundaries along state lines. Such a realignment would mean that no longer would parks within the same state be administered by two different regional offices. Some people find this situation confusing. This would mean, if adopted, that all parks in Virginia would leave the Northeast Region and become part of National Capital Region. The status of parks in Maryland and West Virginia is being considered. The Director has asked that he receive comments on the proposal in May. A decision will be made in June. If the Director decides that the Virginia parks will join National Capital Region, the move will become effective October 1, 2015, the beginning of the new fiscal year.

Commission members had questions about how they might state their sense of the appropriateness of the realignment. A consensus developed that at the moment no one had enough information to make an informed decision, either against or in support of the proposed move. They asked that Northrup keep chair John Adamson informed of all developments. Adamson, in turn, would let members know what he has learned and would call a special meeting of the FAC if he deemed it necessary.

The next meeting will be at the Middletown Town Hall, June 18, 2015, at 9 a.m.

John Adamson adjourned the meeting at 10:19 a.m.

Handouts

Agenda

Meeting Notes for March 19, 2015

Trail Development Strategy and Management Plan

2015 National Park Service Special Events Calendar