

CHAPTER ONE

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY



Along the now green and peaceful Shenandoah Valley once raged some of the most bitterly contested battles of the Civil War. Today the Valley's battlefields and related resources remain essential to understanding that defining moment in the nation's history. Unfortunately, these resources are in trouble. Encroaching development threatens the historical integrity of the battlefields. The Civil War history of this region—the people, the landscapes, and the events—remains too little known beyond the Valley. Action is needed to protect both the resources and the stories they hold.

This Management Plan offers a comprehensive effort to address these and related issues.

The history of Civil War preservation initiatives in the Shenandoah Valley begins with years of grass-roots efforts, supported by Congress with passage of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District and Commission Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-333, section 606, “the legislation.”) (See Appendix A.) The act established both the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District (District) and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Commission (Commission). The Commission was given a three-year mandate for developing a grass-roots-based management plan for the District that would comply with all applicable federal regulations. The act called as well for the National Park Service (NPS) to assist the Commission in developing this plan.

The result of the joint efforts of these two parties, the Management Plan presents a foundation for decisions and actions to be made over the next ten to twenty years. It builds on the findings of the *Study of Civil War Sites in the Shenandoah Valley of*

Virginia (1992) which documents Civil War resources in the Valley. This Management Plan presents strategies for preserving battlefields and related resources, interpreting those resources, providing points of contact and information for visitors, and creating a structure for the management of the District and implementation of the plan.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared as part of this planning process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and regulations of the Council of Environmental Quality (40CFR1500-1508). The EIS is a programmatic evaluation of the plan described in Chapter Three. The plan was evaluated along with three other alternatives. An overview of the alternatives is included as Appendix B.

The EIS process was also used to consult with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. These parties agreed to a Programmatic Agreement that defines review responsibilities for future actions that result from the plan, involve federal funds, and may have an impact on historic properties. This agreement is included as Appendix C.



Today the Valley's battlefields and related resources remain essential to understanding that defining moment in the nation's history.

Public Law 104-333 also charged the NPS with submitting “to Congress a report recommending whether the District or components thereof meet the criteria for designation as a unit of the National Park Service.” That study—a Special Resource Study—was prepared concurrently by the NPS in consultation with the Commission.

ENABLING LEGISLATION



The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District and Commission Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-333), states these Congressional findings:

1. there are situated in the Shenandoah Valley in the Commonwealth of Virginia the sites of several key Civil War battles;
2. certain sites, battlefields, structures, and districts in the Shenandoah Valley are collectively of national significance in the history of the Civil War;
3. in 1992, the Secretary of the Interior issued a comprehensive study of significant sites and structures associated with Civil War battles in the Shenandoah Valley, and found that many of the sites within the Shenandoah Valley possess national significance and retain a high degree of historical integrity;
4. the preservation and interpretation of these sites will make a vital contribution to the understanding of the heritage of the United States;
5. the preservation of Civil War sites within a regional framework requires cooperation among local property owners and federal, state, and local government entities; and
6. partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, the regional entities of such governments, and the private sector offer the most effective opportunities for the enhancement and management of the Civil War battlefields and related sites in the Shenandoah Valley.¹



The Management Plan presents a foundation for decisions and actions to be made over the next ten to twenty years.

¹ Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District and Commission Act of 1996, 16 USC 461 sec. 606, b.1-6.

As described in the legislation, the District is comprised of eight counties and four independent cities in northwestern Virginia: Augusta, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren counties and their political subdivisions, and the independent cities of Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Winchester.

The legislation also identifies ten Civil War battlefields that the Commission must specifically address in the plan: McDowell, Cross Keys, Port Republic, New Market, Tom's Brook, Fisher's Hill, Cedar Creek, Second Winchester, Second Kernstown, and Opequon (Third Winchester). (See Map 1.)

The legislation states that the purpose of the designation of the District and the creation of the Commission is to:

1. preserve, conserve, and interpret the legacy of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley;
2. recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key Civil War battles in the Shenandoah Valley, including those battlefields associated with the Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson campaign of 1862 and the decisive campaigns of 1864;
3. recognize and interpret the effect of the Civil War on the civilian population of the Shenandoah Valley during the War and postwar reconstruction period; and
4. create partnerships among federal, state, and local governments, the regional entities of such governments, and the private sector to preserve, conserve, enhance,

and interpret the nationally significant battlefields and related sites associated with the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley.²

The legislation charges the Commission with: (1) developing a management plan for the District; (2) assisting the Commonwealth of Virginia and any political entity in the management, protection, and interpretation of the natural, cultural, and historic resources within the District; and (3) taking appropriate

action to encourage protection of the resources within the District by landowners, local governments, organizations, and businesses. However, the legislation directs that the Commission "shall in no way infringe upon the authorities and policies of



The preservation and interpretation of these sites will make a vital contribution to the understanding of the heritage of the United States.

² *Ibid.*, c.1-4.

the Commonwealth of Virginia or any political subdivision.”³

The legislation states that the Management Plan must include:

- A. an inventory which includes any property in the District which should be preserved, restored, managed, maintained, or acquired because of its national historic significance;
- B. provisions for the protection and interpretation of the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the District consistent with the purposes of this section;
- C. provisions for the establishment of a management entity which shall be a unit of government or a private nonprofit organization that administers and manages the District consistent with the plan;
- D. recommendations to the Commonwealth of Virginia (and political subdivisions thereof) for the management, protection, and interpretation of the natural, cultural, and historical resources of the District;
- E. identification of appropriate partnerships between the federal, state, and local governments and regional entities, and the private sector, in furtherance of the purposes of this section;
- F. locations for visitor contact and major interpretive facilities;
- G. provisions for implementing a continuing program of interpretation and visitor education concerning the resources and values of the District;
- H. provisions for a uniform historical marker and wayside exhibit program in the District, including a provision for marking, with the consent of the owner, historic structures and properties that are contained within the historic core areas [of the battlefields] and contribute to the understanding of the District;
- I. recommendations for means of ensuring continued local involvement and participation in the management, protection, and development of the District; and
- J. provisions for appropriate living-history demonstrations and battlefield reenactments.⁴

As directed by the legislation, the Commission is composed of nineteen members appointed by the United States Secretary of the Interior. Five members represent local governments and the communities of the District, ten members represent District

³ *Ibid.*, i.1.C.

⁴ *Ibid.*, f.2.A-J.

property owners associated with the battlefields, one member is an expert in historic preservation, and one is a recognized Civil War historian. The Governor of Virginia or a designee and the Director of the NPS or a designee both serve *ex officio*. Members serve without compensation, and are appointed for the three-year life of the Commission. The legislation also authorizes operational funding for the Commission's three-year life.

As authorized in the legislation, upon completion of the Management Plan and its acceptance by the Secretary of the Interior, the Commission's successor—the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (Foundation)—will become eligible to receive \$500,000 annually from the federal government for operations. The successor will also become eligible for appropriations of up to \$2,000,000 annually for grants, technical assistance, and land acquisition (requires a dollar-for-dollar match of non-federal money). In addition, the Secretary may receive up to \$2,000,000 per year to support battlefield preservation in the District. (See Appendix A for the full language of P.L. 104-333.)

PAST STUDIES



There is a substantial history of public concern for the preservation of the Shenandoah Valley's Civil War history. The groundwork of the current plan and its recommendations was laid out in a number of earlier preservation studies of the Valley's Civil War resources.

The earliest efforts to preserve the Shenandoah Valley's Civil War history began in the late-19th century with the creation of commemorative monuments to soldiers, regiments, and events. In more recent years, interest has shifted to battlefield preservation, commemoration, and interpretation. To this end, acreage has been purchased for preservation at nine of the ten battlefields here under study, but in no instance has the majority of any one battlefield been preserved.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED STUDIES

Growing concern for the future of these battlefields resulted, in 1990, in Congressional passage of Public Law 101-638, charging the NPS with studying the Civil War sites and battlefields in the Valley. A multi-year effort on the part of local governments, planning district commissions, private preservation and commemoration groups, historians, and other interested parties resulted in the *Study of Civil War Sites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia* (1992). This study identified fifteen main battlefields in the Valley and analyzed the feasibility of adding them to the National Park System.⁵

In late 1990 federal legislation also created the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission to study Civil War sites throughout the country; its findings were reported in the *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields* (1993). Later in 1993 the NPS published the *Draft Shenandoah Valley Civil War Battlefields Assessment*, which explored battlefield management issues in greater detail. This report recommended creating a Shenandoah Valley Heritage Area, proposed the development of a partnership preservation plan, and laid the foundation for creating the District and Commission. Many of the goals outlined by this previous study are reflected in recommendations contained in this Management Plan, with a comprehensive agenda for the conservation, interpretation, promotion, and management of the Valley's resources.

LOCALLY SPONSORED BATTLEFIELD STUDIES

Some battlefields within the District have been the subject of additional study. The Civil War Preservation Trust, Inc. (CWPT)⁶ sponsored the *Survey and Mapping of Fisher's Hill Battlefield Earthworks, Shenandoah County, Virginia* (1994). This study identified strategies for future research, planning, and preservation for the 208 acres owned by the CWPT. The battlefield's modest interpretive program is a model for

⁵ Of these fifteen, ten were ultimately identified for study in the 1996 legislation. Those not included in the legislation were Cool Springs, First Kernstown, First Winchester, Front Royal, and Piedmont.

⁶ The CWPT is the successor to the merged Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, Inc. and the Civil War Trust, Inc.

some of the ideas for battlefield development expressed in Chapter Three. The CWPT also prepared the *Master Plan for Port Republic Battlefield Site in Rockingham County, Virginia* (1994). This report addresses the design, budget, and development of access, parking, and an interpretive trail at a ten-acre property at The Coaling owned by the CWPT.

The Frederick County Department of Planning and Development prepared the *Frederick County-Winchester Civil War Site Inventory* in 1994, followed in 1997 by the *Battlefield Network Plan, Frederick County*. This latter report set forth goals and strategies for establishing a network of battlefield parks, and was a model for basic cluster planning for battlefields as described in Chapter Three of this Management Plan.

Frederick County also commissioned specific management plans for two battlefields. Recommendations for access, interpretation, and management were laid out in the *Kernstown Battlefield Management Plan* (1996), prepared in partnership with the City of Winchester. *Third Winchester (Opequon) Battlefield Preservation Plan* (1999) identified ways to carry out the *Network Plan* at this significant site. Both are models for individual battlefield plans.

In 1996 the Valley Conservation Council published the *McDowell Battlefield/Staunton to Parkersburg Plan*, and subsequently has created a voluntary preservation program along the Staunton-to-Parkersburg Pike in Augusta and Highland Counties, areas associated with the Battle of McDowell. Work is now underway to obtain conservation easements in the corridor and interpret and conserve places along the route. During this same period, the *McDowell Battlefield Master Plan* (1995) was prepared for the land owned by the CWPT.

Finally, in 1998 the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission published *A Study of Alternative Management Approaches for the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District*. An analysis of management structures used in National Heritage Areas and other regional heritage preservation programs, this study would help provide the Battlefields Commission with direction as it began its three-year assignment.

PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



The development of the Management Plan (and the EIS) has been organized into four phases:

- Phase I: Developing a vision/scoping (November 1998–March 1999)
- Phase II: Developing alternatives/data gathering (April 1999–October 1999)
- Phase III: Selecting a preferred alternative/drafting the plan (October 1999–May 2000)
- Phase IV: Developing the final plan/agency approvals (June 2000–November 2000)

During each of the first three phases, specific research tasks and decisions laid the groundwork for subsequent inquiry and decisions in the succeeding phases, resulting in the recommended course of action outlined in this plan.

To assure that the Commission's findings and recommendations would reflect what the people of the Valley wanted for their communities, the Commission created a wide-reaching program for soliciting public involvement in the planning process. Each phase of the process began with a facilitated Commission workshop where Commissioners and members of the public established the direction for research in that phase. Each concluded with a series of public meetings at which the findings from that phase were presented for review and comment. Through these public meetings the Commission could verify that its work reflected the concerns and interests of the governments and residents within the District.

In addition to holding these public meetings, the Commission published at least one newsletter during each of the phases. Additional meetings held during each phase brought together public-trust battlefield owners as well as heritage conservation, tourism, and economic development interests to review and comment on the Commission's work. Commissioners and staff also made numerous presentations to



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local governments, state and federal agencies, and community organizations throughout the four phases. Further public awareness was assured through extensive local and statewide print, television, and radio media coverage of the Commission's monthly business meetings, public meetings, and other activities.

Throughout the planning process, public suggestions led to often significant adjustments and changes in proposed alternatives. At the same time, the Commission's public outreach program served to raise public awareness of the fragile nature of the Valley's Civil War resources and the need for action to preserve them.

Ultimately, the Commission developed and then studied four alternatives for its Management Plan. One, the "no action" alternative, is required for any federally funded project and served as a baseline for analyzing the other alternatives. The other three were termed "action" alternatives and proposed varying levels of activity to fulfill the mandates of the Commission's legislation. (A summary of the four alternatives is provided in Appendix B while an in-depth description can be found in the Draft Management Plan/Special Resource Study/Environmental Impact Statement.) All four alternatives were organized around four principal topics:

- Battlefield and resource protection
- Interpretation
- Visitor services and tourism
- Management and partnerships

In developing each of the three action alternatives, the Commission determined that only one approach to battlefield and resource protection, interpretation, and management components would satisfy both the requirements of the legislation and the interests of the residents in the District. Therefore, the principal distinctions between the three action alternatives lay within the "visitor service" component. The plan of action is detailed in Chapter Three of this document.

In addition to preparing the Management Plan and EIS, the Commission initiated a Demonstration Projects Program in the spring of 1999. This program helped fund some 20 projects, including the restoration of several Civil War-related structures; installation of interpretive signage, a pedestrian walkway, and trails at Opequon (Third Winchester) and Tom's Brook battlefields; computer-based interpretive programs at the Hall of Valor in New Market; and preservation guides for owners of historic properties. A complete listing of these projects is included in the draft plan.

Created to stimulate “early action” activities while the Management Plan was under development, the Demonstration Projects Program also served as a means for testing different methods and projects for implementing the plan.

GOALS



The Commission adopted goals in November 1998 that have been used to help chart a future for the District and guide development of the plan. The goals are:

- **Preserving Civil War battlefields:** Protect Civil War battlefields in the Valley and interpret them in a consistent and meaningful way. A uniform approach to telling the story of the battlefields will create a cohesive District.
- **Celebrating our heritage:** Tell the full story of the Valley around the time of the Civil War by linking a wide range of public and private sites throughout the District.
- **Supporting economic development:** Stimulate the Valley’s economy by expanding heritage tourism, protecting productive farmland, and enhancing the quality of life in the Valley. The District will strive to balance preservation and economic development in the Valley.
- **Forging strong working partnerships:** Successful management of the District depends on the creation of strong working partnerships. Management of the District will focus on cooperation, consensus building, resource leveraging, and partnerships to preserve and interpret the region’s unique resources.
- **Inspiring community pride:** Increased awareness of the special role played by the Shenandoah Valley in our nation’s history will inspire local pride, creating excitement and interest. The District will encourage residents to get involved in telling the Valley’s story.
- **Creating a permanent management structure:** Develop an effective management structure with strong ties to local, state, and federal governments to ensure permanence and long-term funding for preservation and interpretation efforts.
- **Serving as a national model:** Become a national model for regional resource preservation.

PLANNING ISSUES



During public workshops and meetings and through consultation with local, state, and federal agencies, a number of important issues emerged that must be addressed in order to achieve the intentions of the federal legislation and the goals of the Commission. The task of addressing these issues is described in Chapter Three of this plan. The issues are grouped into four organizational topics.

- Battlefield and resource protection issues
- Interpretation issues
- Tourism and visitor services issues
- Management and partnership issues

BATTLEFIELD AND RESOURCE PROTECTION ISSUES

A recent analysis performed by the Commission concluded that, despite public and private preservation efforts, some 7,500 acres of core battlefield lands have lost their integrity due to non-compatible development. They can no longer convey their historical significance. Battlefield protection in particular as well as protection of the District as a whole have been issues of primary concern for the Commission and will continue to be for the Commission's successor, the Foundation. Key issues and concerns identified in this regard are outlined below.

- **Extent of Battlefields:** Core areas occupy more than 30,000 acres of the District; core and study areas together, more than 92,000 acres, accounting for approximately three percent of the District's overall land area. The aggregate size of the battlefields makes their protection a considerable challenge.

To date only 2,163 acres of core battlefield lands have been protected, a mere seven percent of the battlefields' aggregate core areas (see Figure 3 on page 39). The rest remain unprotected and under potential threat of loss.

The extent of these lands poses significant challenges to preservation efforts. Most are, and will remain, in the hands of private owners. While it makes sense to concentrate on core land for purchase by public-trust owners, preserving only

these areas and excluding the surrounding “study areas” would ultimately result in the loss of an important sense of scale and context. Protection of privately held lands will demand extensive owner outreach, encouraging private stewardship with a variety of incentive-based and technical assistance programs.

- **Growth Pressures:** Most of the battlefields, located on predominantly level ground near major transportation routes, are vulnerable to development, with those located in or around cities and towns facing the greatest threats. The problem is most acute in those areas closest to metropolitan Washington, D.C. Both Front Royal and First Winchester battlefields have already suffered such severe loss of integrity that neither was included in the legislation; of the battlefields included, Opequon (Third Winchester) was identified in the 1992 NPS study as being at greatest risk of losing its integrity. Even rural areas, however, are not immune from threat; incremental, low-density residential development here erodes the character of historic open space.

No consensus exists among preservationists, landowners, and individual jurisdictions within the District as to the most appropriate way to preserve battlefields and resources. These opinions and preferences must be respected. Simply determining what to protect, and how, remains a substantial challenge.

- **Limited Local Protection Policies:** Despite the growing interest in preservation, battlefield lands and related resources are perched precariously between public appreciation for the Civil War and demand for growth and development. Local governments often lack the tools—and in some cases, the will—to protect battlefields. Of the sixteen local governments that have comprehensive plans, only six plans currently mention the battlefields as a resource, and only one of these six lists specific preservation strategies.⁷



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⁷ The town of Strasburg, and Frederick, Shenandoah, Page, and Augusta counties have growth management plans in place. Warren County has made growth management a goal of its community plan, and Frederick County has developed battlefield preservation goals as part of its comprehensive plan.

Local governments are unable to effectively prohibit growth on battlefields due to concerns about limiting the ability of property owners to use their land as the market dictates. Only Cross Keys and Port Republic battlefields are zoned solely for agriculture. The other eight are a mixture of commercial, residential, and agricultural zoning. Even agricultural zoning, as it is generally practiced in the District, allows residential and other development on farmland. Cross Keys, for example, has recently seen the development of large-lot residential subdivisions.

- **Loss of Agricultural Lands:** Agriculture has been the defining feature of the Valley’s culture for over three centuries, and was one of the reasons the Valley was so fiercely contested during the Civil War. The mostly agricultural use of the lands has serendipitously protected many of the Valley’s Civil War battlefields from other development, and allowed them to survive into the 21st century substantially intact.

However, while still robust, the Valley’s farming economy—and thus its agricultural lands—is threatened. Low-density residential, light industry, and highway-oriented commercial development raise the value of farmland and hence property taxes. The nationwide decline in family-farm ownership, driven by a

range of cultural and economic factors, is mirrored here in the Valley. As the number and economic strength of farmers wane, so too does their voice in local, state, and national politics. It becomes more difficult to assure that government policies support farming and the preservation of agricultural lands.

Though Virginia has no comprehensive program for purchase of agricultural conservation easements (or “development rights”), the state’s Agricultural and Forestal Districts program to protect farmlands is widely used in the District. Tens of thousands of acres of

agricultural land, including thousands of acres in and around District battlefields, now are protected voluntarily through this program. These represent only a small portion of all the agricultural lands in the District, however, and none of the counties within the District have developed agricultural preservation or development plans.



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- **Interstate 81 Expansion:** The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is proposing to widen I-81 to a minimum of six lanes, with eight-lane sections in some urban areas. I-81 travels the length of the District and bisects the Third Winchester, Cedar Creek, Fisher’s Hill, Tom’s Brook, and New Market battlefields. Proposed changes to this interstate threaten potential harm to these battlefields in particular, and to the District as a whole. Impacts will be especially acute around interchanges, where additional land for ramps will be required and access roads and businesses may have to be relocated. Efforts to limit the extent of land condemnation by keeping the widened roadway within the existing right-of-way may mean the loss of the road’s wide median and scenic, rural character.⁸
- **Other Major Road Improvements:** Growing traffic demands in the region have led to proposals for a number of road improvements that will affect historic routes and battlefields. At least three major road improvements are currently under discussion or study. Virginia Route 37 bypasses Winchester to the west, cutting through Second Winchester and Second (and First) Kernstown battlefields. Plans are now underway to extend the bypass around the east side of the city. The proposed extension would bisect the Third Winchester battlefield as well as damage other Civil War-era resources. In Harrisonburg, a circumferential bypass of the city has been proposed that could affect Cross Keys and Port Republic battlefields. Finally, improvements are under study for U.S. 340 which could significantly alter the landscape of the Page Valley corridor much used during the War for troop movements.

Secondary development stemming from road improvements is a concern throughout the District. Greater access to the lands along these routes will result in increased development pressure.
- **Threats to Historic Roads and Corridors:** Although they have been updated, widened, and covered with asphalt, many of the District’s historical roads still


⁸ Present and future traffic volumes—especially heavy truck traffic on I-81—remain a major issue throughout the Shenandoah Valley. On September 7, 2000, the VDOT released the Virginia Intermodal Feasibility Study pursuant to House Joint Resolution 704 that considers the use of intermodal transfer of heavy truck traffic to rail. Additional studies of this concept are now proposed.

follow their original alignments, and many retain a level of integrity that makes it possible to interpret troop movements and 19th-century landscapes. All these roads are threatened by incremental residential, commercial, and industrial development. Few have any protections to retain their scenic or historic qualities and no state or county road maintenance policies are in place to maintain the rural character of these roads. The loss of character of the District's historic routes would affect visitors' ability to understand the linkages and landscape between the battlefields.

Protection of these routes is encouraged by P.L. 104-333. Some would likely qualify for state scenic byway designation and others might qualify under the federal program.

- **Use and Modernization of Rail Routes:** During the Civil War the Virginia Central and B&O railroad lines in the Shenandoah Valley were of major strategic importance to both the Union and Confederate armies. Today, contemporary lines extend the length of the Valley, serving freight traffic but offering no passenger service. Two proposals exist to reintroduce passenger rail and transport tourists through the Valley. One line would run only in Shenandoah County, while the other would extend from at least Winchester to Staunton.⁹ These proposals are appealing but likely to face challenges. Ownership of lines is fragmented throughout the Valley, and freight lines generally consider passenger use to be disruptive to their operations and discourage re-establishment of passenger operations.

Although scenic issues are less of a concern with rail lines, increasing pressure for freight use may lead to replacement of historic overpass bridges to accommodate the additional height demanded by modern freight trains. Heavier, longer, and more frequent freight trains may also disrupt communities and the many at-grade crossings along their routes.



Communities throughout the Valley now face the difficult challenge of balancing preservation with growth.

⁹ An agreement has been reached for Valley Trains and Tours, Inc. to purchase the Norfolk Southern corporation rail line between Strasburg Junction and Shenandoah Caverns on which to run excursion trains.

- **Loss of Historic Resources:** While private owners, community groups and institutions, and public agencies have preserved a number of the District’s historic resources—its structures, sites, and cultural landscapes—the future of others is threatened by changing cultural and economic forces. The cultural landscape is particularly fragile and difficult to define.

Preservation tools are employed unevenly in the District, and only rarely outside settled areas. A small number of battlefields or cultural landscapes are protected by local preservation initiatives.¹⁰ In addition, a number of battlefield-related historic resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places or designated National Historic Landmarks, providing a recognition of significance but affording little direct protection for the resources. Because most of the lands within the District are privately owned, actions affecting them are generally not subject to state or federal historic preservation protections. However, local controls and incentives are generally more effective anyway in promoting respectful treatment and preservation of resources. The Shenandoah Preservation League was created in 1999 to provide Valley-wide preservation leadership in addition to community-based preservation organizations.

- **Threats to Archaeological Resources:** There are nearly 500 known archaeological sites on the District’s ten battlefields alone, and hundreds more throughout the Valley. A number of federal laws (see Appendix D) protect these resources when a federal project or funds are involved in alterations to a site. However, no local ordinances in the District require private developers to include archaeological testing or address issues of protection or recovery. Development throughout the District poses a threat to many documented archaeological sites.

Tourists, residents, workers, and reenactors all can degrade the historical value of archaeological sites by leaving behind trash and other modern-day objects. Reenactors may pose a special threat in this regard because of their use of replica and actual relics on the battlefields.

¹⁰ Changes to resources within designated historic districts are subject to architectural review in Berryville, Front Royal, Monterey, Staunton, Strasburg, Winchester, and Clarke County. Page and Frederick counties use local advisory boards, while Warren County uses, and Augusta County suggests use of, preservation overlay zoning. The Luray comprehensive plan recommends designation of historic districts.

Relic hunters who excavate and remove archaeological artifacts can cause the loss not only of the objects themselves, but also of important information about the location and context of these objects—information that could enhance the accuracy of the historical record. Although illegal on most public-trust-owned land, relic hunting is difficult to police even on these properties; the Valley's many non-publicly held battlefield lands are even more vulnerable to this damage.

- **Threats to Community Character:** The pace and scale of modern development are eroding the distinctive regional character of the District's many towns and villages, replacing neighborhood shops and quiet, tree-lined streets with an anonymous parade of national chain stores, strip malls, and multi-lane, high-speed roadways. In New Market, for example, visitors traveling U.S. Route 211 to the town's National Register-listed Historic District must negotiate a sprawl of modern services, power lines, and towering signs visible from I-81, which line the entrance to the historic district and obscure its historic character.

Communities throughout the Valley now face the difficult challenge of balancing preservation with growth. Modern development is inevitable and necessary; the challenge facing the District is how to balance development with preservation of the Valley's traditional character.

- **Threats to Natural Resources:** The same forces threatening cultural resources also threaten open space, wildlife habitat, rivers, and other natural resources. The Valley's natural heritage is an essential element of the District's character, and played an important role in its history.

INTERPRETATION ISSUES

More than 30 museums, preservation organizations, heritage societies, and tourism organizations provide interpretation of the Valley's Civil War history. These interpretive sites range in size from small commemorative exhibits and volunteer organizations to large, well-funded and staffed facilities. Operating largely independently of each other, they present a variety of challenges and opportunities.

- **Uneven and Limited Battlefield Interpretation:** Efforts to interpret Civil War battlefields are unevenly scattered throughout the District, and available

interpretation is limited.¹¹ There is no general organization of battlefield interpretation among the Valley battlefields, nor is there a regional group coordinating interpretation of all the battlefields or even all of one campaign. The quality of interpretation ranges from simple historical markers and wayside signs to the staffed visitor centers at Cedar Creek and New Market. Guided tours are available for special groups, but little to no self-guided tour information is available, and most existing brochures do not cover the battles broadly or deeply. Finally, because public battlefield access is limited, visitors have too few opportunities to experience stories of the War on the actual ground where they took place.

- **Narrow Interpretation of Civil War History:** Most Civil War museums in the District contain private or small publicly owned collections, consisting largely of military artifacts and providing information limited almost entirely to three aspects of Civil War history: (a) military leaders (Jackson, Sheridan, Early, Ashby, Mosby, and others); (b) Jackson's 1862 Campaign; and (c) "soldier's life" artifacts.

Except for the Virginia Civil War Trails driving tour, which has significantly enhanced Civil War interpretation in the Valley, there is no comprehensive interpretation demonstrating the relationship between the different battlefields nor the significance or strategic importance of individual battles in relation to the larger War. Also needed is information concerning the impact of topography, timing, and climatic conditions, comprehensive coverage of campaigns other than Jackson's, and interpretation of civilian life before, during, and after the War.

- **Limited Museum Operations:** Many of the District's museums and interpretive sites operate on very small budgets, with limited hours and staffing. Some depend entirely on volunteer support. Under such constraints there are considerable challenges to effective marketing and to coordinating hours and interpretation with other sites. As a result, most of these sites suffer low visitation rates.

¹¹ Only Cedar Creek and New Market have staffed visitor centers. Other battlefields are interpreted mainly through wayside signs. The Virginia Civil War Trails' "Avenue of Invasion" tour links some battlefields and other sites and provides basic interpretive information.

- **Overlooked Commemorative Sites:** Commemorative markers and Civil War cemeteries throughout the Valley vary considerably in terms of accessibility, visibility, and quality of interpretive information. There are no policies regulating new or existing markers or monuments, and in some cases several may be found at the same site commemorating the same individual or event, leading to interpretive and visual confusion.
- **Unrealized Educational Opportunities:** Today, only New Market among the District's battlefields is regularly visited by school groups. Few of the ten battlefields offer age-appropriate interpretation for school children. Furthermore, existing interpretive information does not provide students with a comprehensive picture of the War, its relevance to the nation's history, the Valley's strategic significance within the War, or the relationship between the Valley's battlefields.¹²

TOURISM AND VISITOR SERVICES ISSUES

Protecting the District's battlefields and related resources is vital. Making them available to the public is equally important. Moreover, support for preservation efforts is built upon a continued and growing public interest in these sites and the history they tell.

- **Coordinating Visitor Services:** Among the District's wide variety of public, private, and non-profit attractions, hospitality providers, tourism representatives, and regional destination-marketing organizations (DMOs), there is little coordination of visitor services to meet the demands of an increasingly

¹² Several District colleges and universities, including the McCormick Civil War Institute at Shenandoah University, the Virginia Military Institute, and James Madison University, offer undergraduate and/or graduate programs in Civil War research and education. Blue Ridge Community College, Bridgewater College, and Lord Fairfax Community College could offer similar programs. During the 1999-2000 academic year a senior information technology class at Lord Fairfax used the Commission as a case study, developing recommendations for the use of electronic technology to connect battlefields and sites and provide basic visitor information.

sophisticated traveling public.¹³ There is also a need for an increased level of hospitality training throughout the District, especially as it relates to Civil War sites and resources.

- **Encouraging Government Commitment and Support:** The District lacks significant government support for systematic development of both public and private visitor services. Because it is difficult to compare the economic benefits of heritage tourism with other development proposals, many area governments have not yet recognized the economic development value of historic preservation. While many of the counties promote tourism, only the Winchester-Frederick County Economic Development Commission and the Page County Department of Economic Development provide direct support to tourist sites.
- **Balancing Tourism with Preservation:** While some tourism is desirable, too much can be detrimental, and finding the proper balance will be important for the District's future. Increased tourism may lead to more traffic, greater wear and tear on fragile historic resources, and more pressure for development of facilities and services—such as hotels and fast-food restaurants—that encroach upon the region's character and sense of community. Several communities in the District have already expressed concern over these possibilities.
- **Protecting Battlefields from Recreational Development:** As the population in the District grows and demand increases for recreational facilities, preserved battlefield lands may come under greater pressure for use as parks, threatening these lands with loss of integrity through inappropriate recreational development.

¹³ The Shenandoah Valley Travel Association (SVTA) promotes the Valley and its individual member sites, but does not coordinate actions between them. The SVTA and other DMOs generally provide regional marketing and promotion, not coordination or tourism planning and development. The "Visit the Valley" Coalition, an informal network of organizations in the northern end of the District, coordinates schedules and activities and shares a web page.

MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP ISSUES

A cooperative relationship between many public, private, non-profit, and government entities throughout the Valley will be necessary for the successful protection and stewardship of battlefield lands. The number of groups involved and a general tradition of independent operation means significant challenges face any effort to build such a relationship.

- **Limited Experience in Regional Cooperation:** The District is a new regional concept in an area where currently there is little actual regional cooperation. While some individual areas of the District have shown recent interest in increased collaboration, cooperation across the entire eight counties has been extremely limited. The District's communities include both one of Virginia's fastest-growing counties as well as its least populous one, with widely disparate priorities, challenges, economies, and interests to be considered. Successful fulfillment of the vision of the legislation and the Commission requires that the new Foundation find ways to forge successful working partnerships between the Valley's communities, governments, and organizations.
- **Limited Experience with Cross-Disciplinary Cooperation:** The Commission represented the first-ever effort to bring together a coalition of the area's many specific interest groups to act on behalf of the entire Valley region. Distinct and sometimes conflicting agendas, concerns, priorities, philosophies, means of operating, and even professional jargon make cross-disciplinary collaboration between these many groups a significant challenge, yet afford the opportunity for new perspectives and unique approaches.
- **Local Resistance to State and Federal Involvement:** In the Shenandoah Valley, the familiar American populist tradition of distrust for outside government agencies is compounded by a lingering resentment over the establishment of the Shenandoah National Park and a feeling of long-standing neglect at the hands of state government. Yet successful implementation of the Management Plan will require the assistance and expertise of state and federal agencies. Building trust between local communities and state and federal representatives will be essential if the new Foundation is to fulfill its mission.

