

Property Management Policy
Signs on SVBF Property

Approved by the Property Management Committee on 27 June 2005

Amended by the Tourism Committee on 8 July 2005

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 5 November 2005

Purpose:

This policy establishes guidelines for the location of signs on property owned or managed by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF).

Scope:

This policy will be applied to properties and battlefields on a case-by-case basis. It governs the location of signs on Battlefields Foundation land, land under easements held by SVBF, and land managed by SVBF. It also provides guidance on the content of signs placed to aid in land management.

While this policy speaks to the location of signs placed on Battlefields Foundation land for other purposes, such as interpretive signs or visitor services signs, the content of such signs will be governed by the policies of the SVBF Interpretation and Education Committee and / or the SVBF Tourism Committee.

This policy will be revisited on a regular basis as we gain experience and detect areas that need revisions or additions.

Authority:

In Public Law 104-333, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District and Commission Act of 1996, Congress directed the Battlefields Foundation to provide “a uniform historical marker and wayside exhibit program in the [Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic] District including ... marking historic structures and properties that are contained within the historic core areas and contribute to the understanding of the District.”

The *Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Management Plan* notes that there is “little to no self-guided tour information available” in the District and that “visitors have too few opportunities to experience stories of the [Civil] War on the actual ground where it was fought” (page 19). The plan also notes that “A wide range of interpretive markers ... are scattered throughout the Valley, installed at various times by various organizations” (page 45) but that these markers lack uniformity and context.

“To provide public access and interpretation” the plan states “interpretive displays will be needed at each battlefield” (page 63). “Interpretive techniques ... employed throughout the Valley may include ... extensive outdoor interpretation along historic routes, at battlefields, and at related sites” (page 71). The plan calls for the Foundation to provide

“high-quality interpretation at District sites” through the design, installation, and maintenance of a “centralized sign program” (page 72).

Interpretation is to be provided to the visiting public through “on-site battlefield interpretation.” The Foundation is to provide “unobtrusive interpretation” on the battlefields “without detracting from the integrity of these lands” (page 73).

“In pursuing such development, the Foundation will follow the guidelines for site selection, design, development, environmental impacts, and other considerations” (page 63). The plan’s guidelines for development projects (adopted by the SVBF Board of Trustees in the Property Management Policy Infrastructure Improvements on SVBF Property) instruct the Foundation to “assure the need for development” of “interpretive and directional signs ... through planning and analysis” (Appendix I, page 51).

Based on this guidance provided in the management plan, the SVBF Board of Trustees adopts the following guidelines for the location of signs on Battlefields Foundation land, land under easements held by SVBF, and land managed by SVBF. .¹

General Guidelines and Provisions:

Every effort should be made to limit the number and size of signs on SVBF property so as to mitigate the impact of such signs on the historic character of the battlefields.

Where multiple signs are to be located on a property or battlefield, a sign plan shall be first undertaken to maximize their effectiveness while minimizing their number and impact on the historic integrity of the battlefields.

All signs will have a coordinated graphic design utilizing the SVBF logo and other aspects of SVBF’s “identity package.”

When creating sign plans and designing signs, the Battlefields Foundation will utilize its partnership with Virginia Civil War Trails, Inc. (VCWT) and implement its cooperative agreement with VCWT. This agreement is appended to this policy.

Off-premises advertising, including billboards, is prohibited on SVBF property and properties under SVBF easements. When advertising signs exist on land that is acquired by SVBF, sign owners shall be notified in writing that they have 30 days to remove such advertising, after which time SVBF shall remove and dispose of the same, excepting signs governed by an existing lease or contract. SVBF will seek to terminate all sign leases at the earliest possible date. Signs governed by lease will be removed when the lease terminates.

Implementation:

The Property Management Committee will evaluate each property to determine appropriate locations for each sign type (detailed below) in cooperation with the Interpretation and Education Committee and the Tourism Committee. The SVBF Board of Trustees will grant final approval for sign plans and signs.

¹ Additional guidance on sign locations may be found in the *US National Park Service Signs Manual* available at <http://www.nps.gov/npsigns>.

Types of Signs:

Welcome	Signs that introduce the public to the site. They assist visitors in way-finding and inform visitors they are visiting battlefield land owned by SVBF.
Orientation	Near entryways to sites, signs will provide relatively in depth information about the features of the site and the rules governing it.
Information	Cautionary, safety, or informational signs such as, “Stay off trenches” or “No hunting.”
Boundary	Signs delineating property boundaries will be installed near paths or trails on a spacing that enables people to realize when they are crossing said boundary. Staff will explore developing a family of boundary signs to delineate property corners, common borders, rights of way, and public and private areas within a site.
Directional	Signs leading visitors to a feature or along a trail.
Interpretive	Signs interpreting sites, events, features, themes, or views.