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Battlefields Foundation

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The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields
Foundation is the managing entity of the
federally designated Shenandoah Valley
Battlefields National Historic District.

KEVEN M. WALKER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friend of American History,

If we act now, 72 acres of core battlefield can be saved at Cedar Creek. The guns have long been silent, but the fight must begin today.

These 72 acres are situated on the southern end of the battlefield, on the bluffs above the creek itself. It was on this land that the center of Confederate Gen. Joseph Kershaw's division slammed into the unsuspecting Federals of Gen. George Crook's Army of West Virginia. We've all recounted the story many times, and imagined that damp dark morning and the attack that came roaring out of the fog. Now we can save a massive piece of the rolling landscape across which this fighting raged. We have an opportunity that we can't allow to slip by. You and I must save this unbelievably important parcel.

The Battle of Cedar Creek, more than any other, secured Lincoln's reelection. It's the battle that featured one of the most daring surprise attacks of the war; represents a turning point in the Valley; and changed forever the course of American history.

Look at the map that I've included and read Terry's historic sketch about the property. You'll see just how important the target property is and why we must save it.

These 72 acres would be worth fighting for even if they stood alone, but saving this land is especially critical because it lies near the center of hundreds of acres that have already been preserved. Because this land sits along high ground in the middle of a much-preserved landscape, saving this property from future development protects much more than these 72 acres. **Saving this property protects the historic integrity of hundreds of acres** at the place battle began, and builds on the preservation efforts that many of you have been making for years. By preserving this property in the center of those previously-protected lands, we will create a continuous preserved corridor of over 530 acres! This opens the southern half of the battlefield to the public and creates opportunities for trails and interpretation that have never before been possible.

Now let me get into the nitty gritty of the deal with you – because this is going to be a tough project to fund and I want you to know what I'm signing us up for. First, none of this would be even remotely possible if it weren't for the extreme generosity and vision of the property's current owners. Byron Brill and Kathy Cantor have owned the property for many years. They're a fantastic couple, and community-

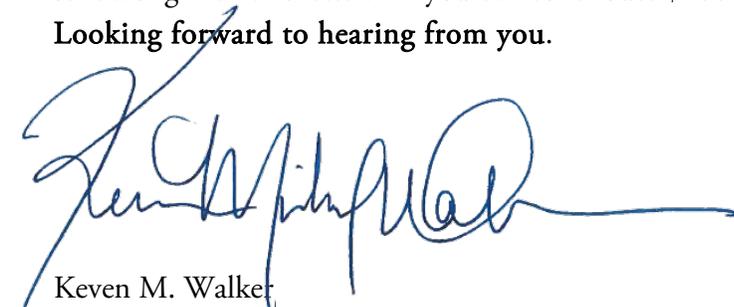
mindful entrepreneurs. When they aren't running their hardware store or seeing to their other business interests they are heavily involved in philanthropy; they often travel outside the country to provide dental care to those in need. And they have been amazing stewards of these 72 acres. They love the property and want to see it forever protected. They are so committed to making this happen that they have agreed to donate \$400,000 of the property's value. I need to say that again...the owners are willing to donate almost a half a million dollars to help us get this property preserved!

And that's the only thing that has made the project possible – because the Federal funds that we so often depend on cannot be used for this project. You see, Federal American Battlefield Protection Program dollars cannot be spent on land acquisition within the legislative boundary of a Unit of the National Park Service. So over half of the funds that we would typically rely on to close a deal are off the table. Without the generosity of the owners, this project simply would not be happening.

But, even with their help, and even if we are able to secure all the state funding that this project will be eligible for, we still need to raise \$300,000 to save this piece of our history and protect this hallowed ground.

This is a heavy lift. But we are confident in you and in all of our friends across the nation. You know that we must save this property and others like it before they are lost forever or become so expensive that they are forever out of our reach. I come to you often for help. That's because I need you to do all that you can to save the battlefields here in the Valley. Our tiny staff is working tirelessly to raise awareness; negotiate land deals; open preserved lands as parks; install new interpretation and educate, educate, educate . . . but it all begins with the land. We have to save the battlefields before we can ever use them to inspire future generations.

This is the project that we are opening 2020 with – saving these 72 amazing acres on Cedar Creek Battlefield. This is a \$1.4 million property that can be forever protected but we need to raise \$300,000 if we are going to make it happen. Please...I'm asking you to do all that you can. There are some who doubt that you and I have the capacity to pull this off. Let's prove them wrong. Don't forget that gifts can be made as pledges with payment schedules arranged. Just contact Kirsten at our office and she will work with you. Or you can just mail back the envelope that I've sent along with this letter. If you can contribute \$100 or \$10,000 – please do all that you can.
Looking forward to hearing from you.



Keven M. Walker
Chief Executive Officer