



Memorandum:

To: Larry Miller, Kimberly Abe
Cc: Advisory Committee Members (posted to web page)
From: Jim Klein
Date: 30 March 2011
Subject: Meeting Summary Advisory Committee Meeting #2 (**Draft**)
Meeting Date 3-16-11

The second meeting of the Rappahannock Station I and II Civil War Battlefield Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) was held March 16, 2011 at St. Luke's Parish Hall in Remington.

Ron Thompson, interpretive planning consultant to the project team facilitated a discussion of the potential stories associated with the site that can be interpreted, potential audiences that are envisioned that would benefit from that interpretation, and related issues that might shape the interpretation as it gets implemented.

The following is a transcript of the comments and suggestions made at the meeting in response to Ron's questions. A draft interpretive concept is also provided in response to the comments and suggestions from the meeting.

What Stories Should Be Told Here?

Civil War

Rappahannock River – achieved its distinction as the eastern theatre as much as Mississippi – equi-distant to confederate capital and Washington –

The site was a major gathering spot for troops and many important events started from Rappahannock Station – Clark Hall provided the following timeline (roughly) – **see paper** (to be posted on the web site)

- Ewell fortified the river with 10k troops, leaves in April '62 to Valley Campaign
- Cedar Mountain
- Confederates return here after Antietam
- Ambrose Burnside came to Rappahannock Station in Nov. '62
- gets defeated at Fredericksburg, Lee pulls back
- Feb '63 Confederate Cavalry crosses river
- Mar. '63 Kelly's Ford
- Gettysburg campaign starts here
- Feds follow to Gettysburg
- Confederates returns here after defeat
- Federals follow to river
- Federals cross river here, drive Lee out of Culpeper to Orange
- Sept 63 Federals come back to Fauquier
- Federals attack across river
- Army of the Potomac moves here using railroad
- Bristow Station campaign,
- Confederates fall back here fifth time
- Battle of Rapp stat – Confederates defeated and fall back
- Confederates leave
- Feds move to Rappahannock Station
- Mine Run campaign

- Winter encampment December '63 to May -64 – come back here
- March 7-May 6 1864 – then they all leave and the river no longer plays a role
- Once confederates lost river, they lost the war

Railroad

- Supply route by rail through Fredericksburg across Rappahannock
 - Orange and Alexandria
 - Shenandoah Valley
- This railroad was here to connect the Piedmont with Richmond and the Valley (John Barber and John Beckam)
- Two railroads and river. If they want to protect the railroad, then maneuvers are needed to east and west (Kelly's and Beverly's etc.). Fortifications protect the railroad

Role of the River

- Ability to ford the river – why it happened here
- East-west river that cuts the north from south – a demarcation point
- A barrier to the advance - it mattered which side of the river you were on

Evolving Land Use/Agriculture Over Time

- Land use from civil war to today – farming before and after the war (dairy farm up to the early 50's, and cows afterwards)
- Wheat grown on farm across the river
- Tobacco was big in Culpeper prior to the war
- Agriculture Story - mill

Transportation Up and Down the River?

- Canal Story (1848) not so important of a Civil War Story, but interesting nonetheless
- Railroad (1854) is important part of Civil War story

What about natural story – how does that fit in?

- Deep hole near the park – great fishing
- Landscape looks different over time
- The river could have been wider because of the mill dam – part of the canal system unloaded on the Culpeper side
- Flooding changes the level of the river, changes the shape – could have walked across during drought
- Protect the integrity of the stream for habitat where you can get it.
- Grassland species could be a real benefit (plus the integrity of the river banks)
- Conservation, restoration story? Historical open condition – more wildlife today, than then.
- Beyond historical, aesthetically pleasing place to be to emphasize habitat
- Areas of protected lands along the Rappahannock – City of Fredericksburg Watershed, Phelps WMA, then up to the SNP – wildlife connectivity helps the larger wildlife effort.
- Story of gauging the depth of the river may be of interest

Native American story is important – related to river (strong archaeology)

Audiences

Who are you trying to communicate with?

- Civil War Buffs -
- Descendents of people that fought here
- Soft launch will attract river recreation (anglers, birders, paddlers) – right in the middle of the birding and wildlife trail
- Cycling – two of the loops go past the park over the truss bridge
- Leisure walking with or without dogs
- Elementary school kids nearby - school districts are limited for field trips. Site could be conducive to environmental education – just make it easy (shelter, with picnic tables underneath, trails, school bus access and turnaround, bathrooms. Fourth graders have to have a “meaningful watershed experience” (local teachers may use it)
- Soil and water conservation district may have programs,
- DEQ may have earth day program
- Schools in northern part of county use bigger parks – close enough to several schools for potential use
- Excursion trips for older age students – college students hiking and paddling down to the bay – would love to know about this site
- Extreme Journey (summer camp sponsored by Journey Through Hallowed Ground)
- Richmond teacher takes kids out to battlefields every month – takes groups of students (unique in that he was footing the bill)
- Neighbors, Town of Remington, - (60% renters adjoining park, commuting residents not involved much in the community). Suggested that involving this group in some way would be a good idea
- “Friends of” group would be a positive – both an audience and potential caretaker

What kind of audiences do you want? –

- For community goals, see Comprehensive Plan for Remington – not a bedroom community, want to have a place
- Visions get at some of that (see vision cards from first meeting);
- Does not have to be a comprehensive site for all things

Are there things that could be done that could attract certain groups?

- Wildlife and Birding Trail –
- Journey Through Hallowed Ground
- Reason to acquire park – civil war and river access (will encourage visitation)

Web audiences?

- County tourism / Remington website,
- Virginia Civil War Trails
- Journey Through Hallowed Ground
- NPS

Interpretive Issues

- Protection in future of defining features where the story is being told.
- Visitation has become local attraction at Phelps/Kelly’s Ford – Hispanic audience Revenue stream needs might result in a charge/fee to WMA’s causing a change in pattern of use to this park
- Zone below Kelly’s on Rappahannock is very unique habitat
- Buckland and Remington at gateways of County – can tell the whole history of the County. The story is nationally significant – that national story may be important story with both sites (Gateway Program for Fauquier County)

- National impact of audience – Brandy Station has small interpretive center at Graffiti House (up tick in attendance noted with Sesquicentennial have increased visitation, website hits, international visitors)
- This park embraces a huge portion of the November 7th battle. Confederate officer report describing the enemy advance (ravine, the federals resting on the river they destroyed ... accounts that Clark Hall has) Confederate flank on the left that is this site

What about activities?

- Will trail system allow you to see the river?
- In the ground interpretation – maybe a map – Washington Roeblings map showing how the events unfolded – recreate the battle by looking down at your feet – maybe a nice way to do it. Sculptural, but not visible, you are part of it while standing on it.
- Views – connect and see the river. SW corner view – if you are a federal attacker from the 6th Corps that is the direction of attack
- Connections to historical photographs and current views. Hard to see across the river now.
- Walking, river access (non motorized boats), parking at upland end
- Recent DOJ ruling about disabilities – implies accessible facilities required

What do you want to do with the landscape?

- Currently maintain the open fields – interpretation could explain the difference between then (completely open) and now (more trees and neighboring homes)

Make connections

- Interpretively to other stories/places nearby – railroad museum at Norfolk Southern – cultural/recreational/historical end of town – this is the nexus –
- At Brandy station visitors come from another place and then go on to another As a group, the sites become a destination (campaign), Lee's retreat in context – putting the stories in context.
- Rich body of information about the Civil War (accounts, photographs, maps) how to connect to the information – using the site as a portal to the more detailed information

Other Perspectives -

- Put a human face on the story – there is not really story about the town during the Civil War since the area was not populated.
- Tell the story from more than one perspective - slaves freeing themselves across the river; US Colored troops joining the federals
- Both sides had some humanity – took breaks and socially interacted (did that happen here?)

Additional comments –

- Earth Day events – opportunity coming up with Governor? – group decided that it is too soon to bring people to the site, but next year may be appropriate
- Commemorative events of March 2012 coming soon
- Roger Corbin white water book – the site provides access to a stretch of good water downstream
- Safety is also an interpretive message
- Next steps

- Create the blueprint for interpretation, and decide what tools are going to work to best communicate the stories to the desired audiences
- Interpretive concept paper will be posted for comment to the web site http://www.lardnerklein.com/rapp_index.html
- The next meeting will take place on May 18th from 5-7pm at the St. Luke's Parish Hall in Remington (same location). John Hutchinson and Elizabeth Paradis Stern will bring their expertise on Battlefield Preservation and Management to discuss and develop preservation and management concepts for the park.