

## Department of Historic Resources

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### **VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS PRESERVATION CONFERENCE SLATED FOR APRIL 17 & 18**

***– Conference in Prince William County is open to citizens, elected officials, local government staff, battlefield friends groups; elected state officials, and anyone interested in battlefield preservation–***

RICHMOND – Virginia has 122 nationally significant Civil War battlefields—the largest number of any state in the country—and nearly every county in Virginia witnessed at close hand the bloody conflict that redefined this nation.

The Commonwealth's ground zero status makes efforts to preserve battlefields as a testament to our nation's story particularly compelling. That challenge also presents an opportunity for Virginia's localities and communities to enhance education, recreation and tourism, while also protecting agricultural and timber lands, wildlife habitat and water quality as benefits of open space conservation.

While Virginia has made great strides in preserving much of our national treasure in recent years during the run up to the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War, conserving battlefields and all that entails depend on local leadership.

Recognizing that effective battlefield preservation must happen at the community level, Virginia's Department of Historic Resources (DHR) has partnered with Prince William County to present a two-day Virginia Battlefield Preservation Conference, April 17 and 18, at the Four Points Sheraton in Manassas.

The conference will showcase the conservation tools—some of the best in the nation—the Commonwealth has to offer localities, and highlight success stories that point the way to successful battlefield conservation. It is intended especially for local leaders, representatives and members of community organizations, and individual citizens interested in playing a role in battlefield preservation.

“The challenge of battlefield preservation must be met at the community level. We have the tools necessary for preservation and are eager to put them in the hands of local government leaders so that they can use them for community benefit,” said Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, director of the Department of Historic Resources.

Titled “Taking the Lead in Preserving Virginia’s Battlefields,” the conference is the result of a collaboration between DHR, Prince William County, the National Park Service, the American Battlefield Protection Program, Preservation Virginia’s Northern Virginia Chapter, the Prince William-Manassas Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Prince William County Sesquicentennial Committee.

Featured conference speakers will include Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Douglas W. Domenech, whose secretariat includes DHR, and Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates William J. Howell, who is chairman of the Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission.

“I am excited about this conference and look forward to meeting with community representatives and conservation partners from around Virginia and talk about how we can work together to meet an extraordinary challenge and opportunity,” said Secretary Domenech.

The conference kicks off on Sunday, April 17, beginning at 3:30 p.m., with a combined tour of First and Second Manassas battlefields led by historians with Manassas National Battlefield Park. Following the tour, there will be a reception and dinner, featuring keynote remarks by Speaker Howell, on the urgency of preserving Virginia’s Civil War battlefields. Civil War Trails director Mitch Bowman will also speak on the economic benefits of heritage tourism.

On Monday, April 18, the morning session will be primarily devoted to exploring all the tools and resources that are currently available to localities through state and federal programs and initiatives to preserve battlefields. These include the latest survey and assessment information from the 2009 Civil War Sites Advisory Commission’s Report on Virginia’s Civil War Battlefields, American Battlefield Protection Program grants, federal land acquisition funds, state battlefield easements and grants, tax incentives for land conservation, and purchase of development rights. The session will also examine the role that battlefield trusts and friends groups play in working with local governments and others to conserve battlefield land.

Secretary Domenech will give keynote remarks on the Commonwealth’s stake in battlefield preservation during Monday’s morning session. Representatives of Prince William County and the National Park Service will also provide welcome remarks, including Corey A. Stewart, chairman of the Prince William County Board of Supervisors, and Ed Clark, superintendent of Manassas National Battlefield Park.

The remainder of the day will consist of training sessions offering examples and discussions of how local governments and battlefield preservation advocates are working successfully with battlefield property owners and various organizations to put preservation tools to use in Virginia communities and jurisdictions.

These afternoon sessions will cover various topics, including--

- Successful preservation partnerships in the Shenandoah Valley;

- How local governments can play a leading role in preservation;
- How “friends groups” can partner with businesses and other groups to support battlefield preservation;
- How to effectively work with private land owners and understand their needs and concerns; and
- How developers, local governments and battlefield preservation groups can work cooperatively together.

Panelists offering a range of professional expertise and experience will include representatives of --

- Virginia’s Department of Historic Resources and the Department of Conservation and Recreation;
- Private preservation organizations including the Civil War Preservation Trust, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, Kernstown Battlefield Association, Unison Preservation Society, Richmond Battlefields Association, Buckland Preservation Society, and Piedmont Environmental Council;
- Local officials from the counties of Fauquier, Frederick, Fredericksburg, Hanover, Prince William, Spotsylvania and Stafford; and
- the National Park Service.

The training sessions will inform participants about how they can tap agencies such as DHR and the Department of Conservation and Recreation to accomplish battlefield preservation as a lasting legacy.

The conference registration fee is \$50. The fee for Sunday’s optional reception and dinner is an additional \$25. The \$50 fee covers a continental breakfast, beverage service throughout the day, and lunch and afternoon snack on Monday, the only full day of the conference.

To learn more about the conference, see the agenda, or to register online, visit the website of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources ([www.dhr.virginia.gov](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov).) and look under “Recent News” on the agency’s homepage for information about the battlefield conference or contact Ann Andrus at DHR at (804) 367-2323 or by email at [ann.andrus@dhr.virginia.us](mailto:ann.andrus@dhr.virginia.us).

Information can also be found on Prince William County’s website ([www.pwcgov.org](http://www.pwcgov.org)) by typing “Virginia Battlefield Preservation Conference” in the search engine or by contacting John Lassiter, Department of Planning, Prince William County, at (703) 792-7359 or by email at [jlassiter@pwcgov.org](mailto:jlassiter@pwcgov.org).

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