

G E O R G I A

BATTLEFIELDS

Published by Georgia Battlefields Association, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preservation of Georgia's Civil War history and sites. Contact newsletter editor by e-mail: info@georgiabattlefields.org

Most endangered site nominations

Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT: www.civilwar.org) annually chooses a list of endangered sites, normally including ten most endangered sites and fifteen additional sites at risk. CWPT accepts nominations through the Fall and announces the choices in March (see April newsletter). Since 2001, the most endangered and at-risk sites in Georgia have been:

	<u>Ten Most Endangered</u>	<u>At-Risk</u>
2001	Allatoona Pass	-
2002	Southwest Atlanta Federal line	-
2003	Rocky Face Ridge	Hell Hole
2004	Hell Hole (New Hope Ch, Pickett's Mill, Dallas)	Brown's Mill
2005	Kennesaw Mountain	Hell Hole
2006	Chattahoochee River Line	Kennesaw Mountain
2007	Marietta (Lost Mountain-Brushy Mountain Line)	Kennesaw Mtn, Lovejoy's Station
2008	Savannah Defenses	Kennesaw Mtn, Lovejoy's Station

While any individual or organization is welcome to nominate a site or sites, Georgia Battlefields Association has had success in this process; so please send us your ideas for the 2009 list. Mail us at 7 Camden Rd NE, Atlanta GA 30309, or e-mail us at info@georgiabattlefields.org.

Preservation in a down economy

The economic slump of the past few months—especially the housing downturn—has had both good and bad effects on preservation.

The good

Housing construction has slowed considerably and, in some areas, halted. This puts a lot less pressure on historic sites that are in the path of suburban growth. Over the past year, the number of rezoning hearings requiring GBA's attention has dropped dramatically.

Further, the high price of motor fuels has made suburban living less desirable, again reducing the pressure on historic sites, especially in the Chattanooga-Atlanta corridor, where so much of the Atlanta Campaign occurred.

The bad

The State Fiscal Year 2009 budget, which took effect on 1 July, is likely to be reconsidered because of a significant drop in state tax revenue. Governor Perdue has directed most state agencies to spend 6% less than their budget specifies. Media reporting indicates the Governor has also directed agencies to prepare proposals for spending 8% and 10% less.

While the approved budget doesn't contain much for preservation, affected programs might include historical marker maintenance, state historic site operating hours and maintenance, Georgia Civil War Commission operations, Sesquicentennial planning, etc. On 27 August, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) board voted unanimously to close six state parks and seven state historic sites, though the facility names were not revealed pending review by the Office of Planning & Budget. Historic sites likely to be closed include Alexander Stephens, Robert Toombs, Jefferson Davis, and Fort Morris (Revolutionary War). DNR also plans to reduce services at several other parks.

The uncertain

Development of the Resaca Battlefield as a state historic site would appear to be unaffected, since funding was to come through a bond issue rather than a budget appropriation. Still, the bond was set at \$3 million, as opposed to the \$5 million estimated for full development of the site as a park; so any supplemental funding that may have come from private sources may also be affected because a negative economy tends to reduce donations.

American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) 2008 grants

Each year, ABPP funds are awarded in response to grant applications, though the funds cannot be spent on land acquisition or capital improvements. The 2008 grants were announced in late July www.nps.gov/hps/abpp/grants/battlefieldgrants/2008grantawards.htm.

Of interest, the Civil War Preservation Trust (www.civilwar.org) was awarded \$95,000 to conduct Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of 30 battlefields in 13 states, including Georgia. Using the designations adopted by the 1993 Civil War Sites Advisory Commission report, the sites to be mapped are:

Dalton I – 24-25 February 1864 Federal attacks on Rocky Face Ridge.

Dalton II – 14-15 August 1864 attacks by Wheeler's cavalry on the Federal garrison.

Rocky Face Ridge – 7-13 May 1864 actions along Rocky Face Ridge and in Snake Creek Gap.

Resaca – 13-15 May 1864 battle.

For several years, Professor Bill Drummond of Georgia Tech has used GIS to map Civil War battles, including Ringgold, Resaca, and Peachtree Creek. Professor Drummond's web site www.civilwar.gatech.edu cites these reasons for using GIS to map a battlefield:

- Inventory and track battlefield features
- Assist in historical research
- Interpret the site by relating maps (modern and contemporary) and written accounts
- Manage the infrastructure of the site
- Provide a planning tool by identifying the most significant and endangered parcels
- Allow greater access to the site by making materials available on the internet

Since not all maps—especially those drawn during the Civil War—are entirely accurate and since terrain features (extent of woodlands, course of streams, height of hills, etc.) can change naturally and through human intervention (such as road or building construction), GIS mapping of a site can help reconcile conflicting information and provide more accurate and understandable supporting material when we argue for preservation.

Looters caught at Kennesaw Mountain National Park

Recently, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park rangers caught people attempting to remove artifacts from the park. Since an investigation that could lead to prosecution is ongoing, National Park Service representatives are constrained from commenting on the particulars of the incident. Still, this serves as a reminder that even preserved sites are vulnerable to damage. If you see anyone relic hunting at a federal, state, or local park or historic site, please report them to the relevant authorities. Relic hunting on private land is also illegal unless the landowner has granted permission.

Battle of Chickamauga reenactment

Reminder: The Battle of Chickamauga reenactment will be held 19-21 September 2008 in Walker County, Georgia, about a ten minute drive south of Chickamauga National Military Park. Information is available at www.battleofchickamauga.net or by calling 800 624 0281 x 327.

150 years ago this month

The Lincoln-Douglas debates continue. The third debate is on 15 September at Jonesboro, and the fourth at Charleston on 18 September.

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