

THE  
**FUTURE**  
OF  
**AMERICA'S**  
**NATIONAL**  
**PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: KEMO

Year: 2007

**Vision Statement**

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park contains the site of some of the fiercest fighting of the Civil War's Atlanta Campaign. The Battle of Kolb's Farm and the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain in June of 1864 represent the last major engagements before Confederate forces retreated to Atlanta. Sherman's capture of Atlanta in September secured a second term by President Lincoln and assured the war's prosecution to its end a few months later.

The park preserves portions of these battlefields for memorial and military study purposes. Kennesaw Mountain is where General Sherman's military strategy of breaking the will of opponents was first used, and set the course for military strategy used today. Kennesaw Mountain is the most intact site of the 1864 Atlanta Campaign, including over 11 miles of earthworks.

Kennesaw Mountain is the largest public greenspace in the metro-Atlanta area, and has become an island of green surrounded by development. The park receives intense recreational use, challenging its mission as a memorial historic site. Use of park roads by 160,000 daily commuter vehicles has pushed park visitation into the top two parks in the nation. Park roads are operating at 160% capacity and projected to be at gridlock by 2030.

The Centennial vision for the park and its partners is to improve non-vehicular access to the park by constructing bicycle/pedestrian trails linking the park to surrounding communities, replace the mountain road shuttle with an alternative fuel vehicle, and improve parking facilities to eliminate uncontrolled parking on road shoulders and fields. Other new facilities include trails to access the Union battle line, wayside exhibits for the trail system, trailside composting toilets, and trailhead kiosks and trail signage promoting minimum impact ethics for the 1 million annual trail users. Landscape treatments will include stabilizing earthworks, rehabilitation and management of forest and field cover, and relocating the Georgia monument to the Georgia troops' battle site. A short time-frame exists to implement land protection strategies for remaining undeveloped properties in the park's Land Protection Plan.

Kennesaw Mountain has tremendous support from numerous partners including Cobb County, Kennesaw Mountain Historical Association, and the Kennesaw Mountain Trail Club. Park partners attended the Listening Session in Atlanta, and have demonstrated willingness to donate matching funds for the Centennial Initiative.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Daniel R. Brown

Site: KEMO

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Visitor access to key park facilities and resources is extremely limited due to inadequate parking. Parking at the Pigeon Hill battle site, Cheatham Hill trailhead, and 24-Gun Battery consists of widened road shoulders, creating an unsafe and unsightly experience for visitors. The park will design parking facilities for each of these locations to provide safe access for cars and buses while minimizing impacts to the resources.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: KEMO

**STEWARDSHIP**

**Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

**Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

The aggressive invasive species garlic mustard was first spotted in the State of Georgia in 2003 at the top of Kennesaw Mountain. The park has been working with the Southeast Exotic Plant Management Team to map the extent of the infestation and spray it annually. The park has also partnered with the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council, University of Georgia, Trees Atlanta, and Hands-On Atlanta to conduct two volunteer weed pull days annually. The infestation is currently contained within approximately 30 acres. The park plans to eradicate this invasive from the park to prevent its spread to other locations in Georgia.

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**Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.**

Restore the battlefield landscape for the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, to include stabilizing and preserving the park's 11 miles of earthworks, rehabilitation and management of forest and field cover, and treatment for landscape features from the battle-period and later commemorative periods. Some fields that resulted from post-war agricultural practices will be released to succession, and some forested areas that need to be returned to open fields for interpretive purposes will be cleared. The uprooting and windthrow of large trees growing from earthworks has caused considerable damage. The earthworks management plan will be implemented for all 11 miles of earthworks to assure their stabilization and preservation. The Georgia monument installed during the Civil War centennial celebration in 1964 was improperly located at the foot of Kennesaw Mountain rather than at Pigeon Hill where the Georgia regiments fought. This monument will be moved to an appropriate location at Pigeon Hill and an access trail and interpretive wayside installed. The McCook marker will also be returned to its historic location at Cheatham Hill to mark the starting point of the Union attack.

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Site: KEMO

STEWARDSHIP

**Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

**Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Complete acquisition of the Hensley property which contains infantry trenches that supported Sherman's 24-gun battery (#1 in the park's Land Protection Plan). Work with Congress on legislation to revise the park boundary to accept the donation of the Wallis house and signal hill, General O.O. Howard's headquarters (#2 in the park's Land Protection Plan). Work with Cobb County in the purchase and donation of the CSX Railroad property, to interpret the role of the railroad in the Atlanta campaign (#3 in Land Protection Plan). Pursue Kolb's Farm battlefield property, Battle of Bald Knob property, Johnston's River Line property, and other land protection/acquisition strategies for remaining undeveloped properties identified in the park's Land Protection Plan.

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Site: KEMO

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.**

**Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.**

The park has partnered with Cobb County to incorporate bicycle/pedestrian trails paralleling park roads to link the park with adjoining communities. These trails will become part of the County's multi-use trail network, enabling citizens to bicycle or walk to parks, commercial complexes and to work rather than drive. The County has already constructed the Mountain to River Trail within the park that will link Kennesaw Mountain NBP to Chattahoochee River NRA. The Noonday Creek Trail is in the planning and design stage, with construction slated to start in 2008. Other planned bicycle/pedestrian Trails include the Cheatham Hill Trail - Phases 1 & 2, Burnt Hickory Trail, Stilesboro Trail, Old Mountain, and Dallas Trails. Park roads are currently operating at 160% capacity with over 160,000 cars per day. The Mountain to River Trail is already regularly used, and the other bicycle/pedestrian trails will continue to encourage visitors to ride or walk rather than drive.

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**Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.**

The park will replace its aging diesel engine school bus used for the mountain road shuttle service with a diesel/hybrid bus that operates on biodiesel fuel, or other alternative fuel vehicle as recommended by the park's Alternative Transportation Plan. More than 34,000 visitors/year use the shuttle bus in lieu of private vehicles to get to the top of Kennesaw Mountain.

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Site: KEMO

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

The park will construct 9.5 miles of new trail along the west side of the park to access and interpret the Union battle line. These new trails will be both pedestrian and equestrian accessible. The trail will closely parallel battle features, and strategically located wayside exhibits will interpret key battle events. The park will partner with volunteers from the Kennesaw Trail Club for construction and maintenance of these and other park trails. The trail to the top of Kennesaw Mountain will be rerouted to reduce its grade and enable it to be surfaced to make it accessible. This is critical to providing safe stroller access for parents who currently push their strollers up the mountain road, sharing that narrow road with vehicles and bicycles. The park will also partner with Cobb County in the construction of bicycle/pedestrian trails along Old 41 Hwy, Cheatham Hill Road, Powder Springs Road, John Ward Road, Burnt Hickory Road, Stilesboro Road, Dallas Hwy and Old Mountain Road. These trails will link the park to surrounding communities and also enable park visitors to safely ride/walk throughout the park without having to drive.

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Site: KEMO

RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

The park will implement a Trail Ambassador program for volunteers to assist the park with trail patrol. Trail Ambassadors will contact trail users sharing Leave No Trace minimum impact messaging, and serving as additional eyes and ears for the park staff, notifying park staff when they observe violations, resource damage, or safety concerns.

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Site: KEMO

**EDUCATION**

**Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.**

**Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.**

The park will implement a Leave No Trace minimum impact ethics program in the park, targeted at the park's 1 million annual trail users, in partnership with the Kennesaw Mountain Trail Club. The Leave No Trace Program will include trailhead kiosks, trail signage, and a new trail map that all incorporate Leave No Trace minimum impact messaging. The Leave No Trace Program will include initiating a Trail Ambassador program, training volunteers to hike the park trails contacting other hikers with park information and minimum impact ethics. The park will also install 3 trailside composting toilets strategically located to reduce the impacts of human waste deposited along the trail system.

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**Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The park will install approximately 40 wayside exhibits on the trail system, strategically located at battlefield features along the Confederate and Union lines to interpret key battle events. The waysides will reach over 1 million trail users annually.

The park will also create a new park film and an entry panel for the visitor center exhibits that put the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain and the Civil War in context, addressing causes of the war, slavery, and the national impacts of the capture of Atlanta by Union forces to the re-election of Lincoln to a second term and the prosecution of the war to its conclusion.

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