

*Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park  
Park Advisory Commission Meeting*

June 17, 2010

Middletown Town Hall  
Middletown, Virginia

- I) General Introduction
- II) Review of Minutes from March 18, 2010
- III) Updates and Status Reports
  - General Management Plan
  - Status of Commission nominations
  - New Positions
  - New Employees
  - Interpretive Program
- IV) Meeting Schedule 2010-2011: Dates, Time, Location
- V) Presentation: *Building Public Support for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP*, Gary Adelman, Director of History and Education, CWPT
- VI) Old Business
- VII) New Business

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Diann Jacox, Designated Federal Official (DFO); Fred Andreae; Mary Bowser; Patrick Farris, chair; Sarah Mauck; Elizabeth McClung; Pam Sheets; and Jim Smalls.

Commission members absent: Roy Downey, Gary Rinkerman, Dan Stickley, Kris Tierney

Others in attendance: Gary Adelman, Civil War Preservation Trust; John Adamson, Belle Grove board member; Carl Bernhards Jr., Middletown council member; Eric Campbell,

NPS; Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer; Stanley M. Hirschberg, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation; Tonia Horton, NPS; Stephanie Pendleton, National Trust for Historic Preservation member; Cameron Seals, U.S. Forest Service; Jonathan Steplyk, NPS; and Elizabeth Stern, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

Chair Patrick Farris opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. Everyone at the meeting gave their names and affiliation. The meeting notes from March 18, 2010, were approved as written. Farris announced that though there was not a quorum present the meeting could proceed and any item requiring a vote would be held over until the next meeting.

Diann Jacox reported that the General Management Plan is at the printer. The park is committed to having the document printed and in the public's hands before the end of the year.

Jacox reported that nominations to fill the expired terms on the Commission are in the Washington Office but have not yet been approved. The holdovers on the commission will be Patrick Farris, Diann Jacox, Sarah Mauck, Pam Sheets, and Jim Smalls. Jacox is waiting to hear from the state government about the representative for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Two new full-time positions—facilities manager and administrative assistant—will be advertised within the month. Both will be advertised all-sources and government-wide. The park has hired two seasonals—Jonathan Steplyk and Shannon Moeck—who will present interpretive programs throughout the summer season.

Jacox reported that the aim of the programs will be to tie all park stories together showing how various topics are related—geology, settlement, American Indian stories, the Civil War, the Valley's recovery, and growth in the 20th and 21st centuries. The stories and interpretation are not confined by park boundaries and real estate lines. It is exciting to see people began to react to the emerging public fact of the park.

John Adamson, Belle Grove board member, reported that one of Eric Campbell's programs occurred while the Belle Grove board was meeting. The board adjourned to attend the program. Adamson reported that he "learned more in one hour than I had learned in the previous ten years about the area." Everyone is hopeful that these interpretive programs will make people curious about other aspects of the area's story.

Jacox stressed that these are pilot programs, and that the park will be assessing all aspects of their impact. She voiced the hope that Belle Grove would benefit from the NPS interpretive programs and that visitors would not think the NPS programs were the only opportunities to learn about the plantation. Passport stamps at Belle Grove, the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation and the park are all slightly different; their popularity should be a draw as well as the programs.

The commission discussed that meeting schedule for the next twelve months. The consensus among those present was that the rotation among the sites should continue, and that meetings will be four times a year and on the third Thursday at 8:30 a.m. Diann Jacox will submit the times and locations and that information will be published in the Federal Register. Meeting dates are:

September 16, 2010 Warren County Government Center  
December 16, 2010 Strasburg Town Hall  
March 17, 2011 Middletown Town Hall  
June 16, 2011 Warren Country Government Center

Gary Adelman, Civil War Preservation Trust, spoke on how interpretation can be used to build public support for a park. Interest and commitments to a park begin with visitors wanting to learn more. Interpretation leads to understanding, to support, and finally to preservation. Park Days, when visitors can help with clean-up and projects to spruce up an area, inevitably lead to commitment. Trails lead to less mischief; those who use them come to have a sense of ownership. Seldom will visitors be interested in who owns the land, for they want to see all areas that they consider to be the park look well cared for and parklike. Interpretation, along with bringing the site and the stories to life, makes people care. And interpretation is good for the partners; it inevitably draws them together as they respond to visitors' perceptions.

#### Old Business

None

#### New Business

On July 15 William Barker will be at Belle Grove as Thomas Jefferson. The occasion is the Hite Family Days, \$100 per person, black tie, and period food of 1815 will be on the menu.

Belle Grove will host the finals of the National Sheep Dog Trials on September 18-26, 2010.

Warren Heritage Society will be honoring the 75th Anniversary of Shenandoah National Park and of the NPS and CCC in Warren Country.

Planning for the train pull for the Memorial Day 2011 weekend continues. This will commemorate Stonewall Jackson's move of locomotive and boxcars from Martinsburg to Strasburg in 1861.

The Route 11 yard sale, from Stephens City to New Market will take place Saturday, August 14, 2010.

Planning at Fishers Hill by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation continues apace with the hope that the work be completed during the fall of this year.

Next Meeting

The commission will meet September 16, 2010, at the Warren County Government Center at 8:30 a.m.

Handouts

1. Agenda
2. Press Release announcing interpretive programs
3. Meeting Notes from March 18, 2010.

Chair Patrick Farris adjourned the meeting at 9:44 a.m.