

CIVIL WAR DEFENSES OF WASHINGTON FORT CIRCLE PARKS

Civil War Defenses of Washington Trail: an old idea with a green future

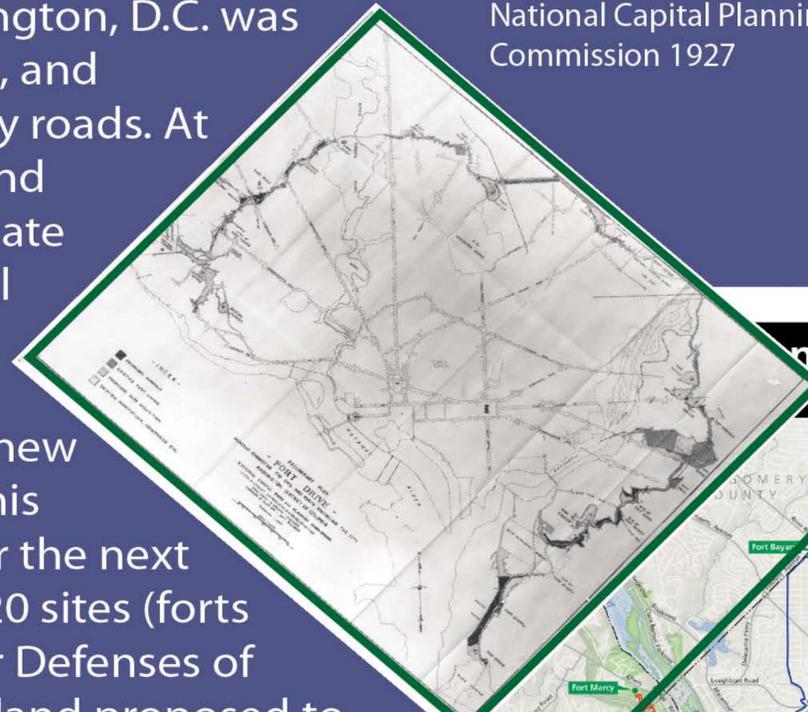
In 1861, President Lincoln ordered the construction of a ring of fortifications to protect the Union capital; by the end of the Civil War, Washington, D.C. was protected by 86 forts, 93 batteries, and encircled by 32 miles of connecting military roads. At the turn of the Twentieth Century, Union and Confederate veterans alike began to advocate for the preservation of battlefields and Civil War history. At the same time, the illustrious designers and planners of the McMillian Commission were formulating a new vision for the design for the Federal City. This propitious alignment was the impetus over the next half century for preserving a collection of 20 sites (forts and batteries) associated with the Civil War Defenses of Washington, D.C. as well as a linear ring of land proposed to become a connecting parkway.

In the late 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps brought new energy to the proposals, and two small sections of Fort Drive were constructed. However, as decades past, support for the parkway concept waned. By the 1960s, ring roads, while widely proposed, were costly and becoming controversial in what was now a dense urban setting. Ultimately, Fort Drive was reimagined as a green necklace of linear parkland offering recreational opportunities for the community. This winter the National Park Service and its partners will publish a new trail brochure highlighting hiking and biking routes to connect all of the publicly preserved forts and batteries surrounding the capital today.

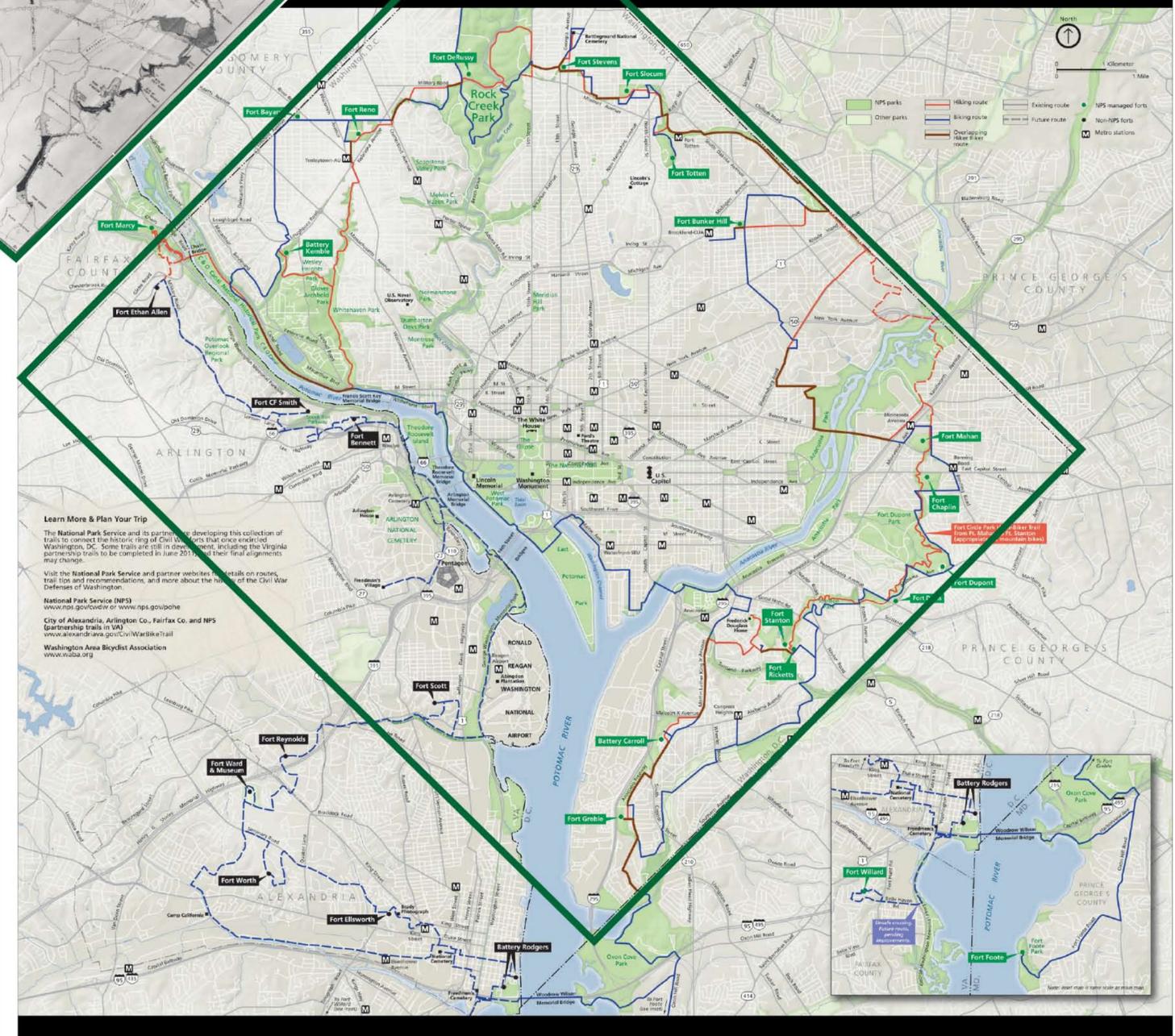
Plan for Fort Drive
National Capital Planning
Commission 1927



CWDW Trails Brochure
National Park Service (expected printing Dec 2010)



Defenses of Washington Trails



CWDW Trail Partnership:

