



Journal photo by Martin B. Cherry

The National Park Service wants to expand Jackson's Right Flank Battlefield in Harpers Ferry National Park. Part of the battlefield is pictured on Wednesday.

# Park chief: Development is 'desecration'

## A 638-acre project near Harpers Ferry would disturb 'hallowed ground,' he says

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**HARPERS FERRY** — The development of 638 acres at an abandoned quarry would damage Harpers Ferry National Historic Park, the park superintendent said this week.

"I think it would be a desecration of the national park," said park Superintendent Don Campbell, who called the site of the proposed development "hallowed ground."

Campbell said he did not trust the developers to respect the historic integrity of the battlefield site near the Old Standard Quar-

ry. He said other developments near Harpers Ferry suggest that developers in the county were "heavy-handed."

"(In other developments) darn near every tree and every blade of grass is cut down. ... They practice pretty heavy-handed development," he said.

Because of the battles fought in the area, Campbell said environmental and historical concerns were paramount and that certain artifacts might still be within the proposed annexation site.

"That is certainly a concern," he said, adding that several conservation groups have shown great interest in preserving the land because of Civil War battles fought there.

The Civil War Preservation Trust earlier this month declared the national park at Harpers Ferry one of the top 13 most endangered battlefields in the country and said residential and commercial development were among the biggest threats to the park.

The request to annex the property was brought before the Charles Town Planning Commission on March 21, but action was delayed because of an issue with the petition, according to City Clerk Joe Cosentini.

Cosentini said a description of the site in the petition was outdated and had to be revised before the commission could act on it.

The Charles Town Planning Commission will meet at 6 p.m. Monday at Zion Episcopal Church in Charles Town to discuss the proposed annexation. A regularly scheduled City Council meeting will follow.

Cosentini said the city has received a revised petition from the developer and that the Planning Commission would likely act on the petition.

The annexation request drew much opposition during a meeting on March 21.

Charles Town Mayor Peggy Smith said the site is too far away from the city to

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# Park

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make it a good choice for annexation, despite the fact that it would generate much-needed revenue and job opportunities for area residents.

Jim Campbell, an attorney representing the developer of the property, said the possible development could bring thousands of jobs to the area. Developing the land also provided the opportunity to remediate the quarry grounds, which Campbell described as unsightly and "moon-like."

In a presentation on the Harpers Ferry National Historic Park Web site, the Old Standard Quarry is listed as comprising 25 percent of the proposed annexation, with the remaining 75 percent being a relatively untouched Civil War battlefield.

Park superintendent Campbell said the possible development threatened the core of the national park, which belongs to the American people.

"I think (the annexation) would desecrate the park, which was set aside for the American public," he said.