

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION, CONCERNING H. R. 298, TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY TO EVALUATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MILL SPRINGS BATTLEFIELD LOCATED IN PULASKI AND WAYNE COUNTIES, KENTUCKY, AND THE FEASIBILITY OF ITS INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

October 3, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 298, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate the significance of the Mill Springs Battlefield located in Pulaski and Wayne Counties, Kentucky, and the feasibility of its inclusion in the National Park System.

The Department supports enactment of H.R. 298 with a clarifying amendment described later in this statement. However, we believe that priority should be given to the 28 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that have not yet been transmitted to the Congress.

H.R. 298 authorizes a special resource study of the Mill Springs Battlefield. This study would determine whether this site meets the National Park Service's criteria for inclusion in the National Park System of national significance, suitability, and feasibility, and need for National Park Service management. The bill calls for the study to include, among other information, an analysis of opportunities for public education about the Civil War in Kentucky and of the economic, education, and other impacts the inclusion of the site into the National Park System would have on the surrounding communities in Pulaski and Wayne County. We estimate the cost of the study to range from \$200,000 to \$300,000, based on similar types of studies conducted in recent years.

The Battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky on January 19, 1862, was the battle that led to the total collapse of the eastern portion of the Confederate line designed to protect Kentucky and hopefully bring its allegiance to the South. Mill Springs is considered to be the first significant Union victory in the western theater of the Civil War; it permitted Federal troops to carry the war into Middle Tennessee a few weeks later. This Union victory, after a long line of defeats, reenergized the Northern war interests and directly led to the battles of Columbus, Fort Henry and Fort Donelson; the fall of Nashville; and battles at Shiloh and Corinth. Kentucky's importance to the Union has been demonstrated many ways, most significantly by President Abraham Lincoln's famous quote, "I hope to have God on my side, but I must have Kentucky." After Mill Springs, the Union held control of Kentucky throughout the war.

The battle also marked the end of the military career of Confederate Maj. Gen. George B. Crittenden, who had the responsibility of guarding the Cumberland Gap, the gateway to pro-Union East Tennessee. A Kentucky native and veteran of the Black Hawk and Mexican-American Wars, Crittenden was relieved of duty after his leadership was questioned at Mill Springs.

Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1993, Mill Springs Battlefield was recognized in the 1993 Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report as a Priority One battlefield, indicating it has the characteristics of high integrity, significance, and threats that warrant focused preservation action. A local non-profit group, the Mill Springs Battlefield Association, Inc. was formed in 1992 to preserve, maintain, and interpret this important battlefield.

The National Park Service has supported the association's efforts through technical assistance and grants from the American Battlefield Protection Program. The association has received 11 planning grants in the last 20 years totaling nearly \$180,000 for a preservation plan, interpretative plans, an archeological survey, and a National Historic Landmark/National Register boundary expansion. It has also been awarded five grants totaling over \$1.7 million from the Civil War Battlefield Land Acquisition program, leveraging an additional \$1.7 million, which has enabled the association to purchase and preserve 362 acres of the 1,700 estimated acres still maintaining historic integrity. The association's visitor center, which opened in 2006, includes a reference library and community room, and offers a variety of educational programs to generate public understanding of the significance of the site.

We recommend amending Section 1(f) to clarify the requirement for notifying private property owners of the study's commencement and scope. As written, the bill requires that all owners of property "connected" to the battlefield be notified, which could be subject to broad interpretation. We recommend changing that requirement to owners of property "adjacent" to the battlefield. In addition, the language should require the Secretary to endeavor to notify owners, rather than require notification, since it is not always possible to locate property owners. We would be happy to provide suggested language to the committee.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes our prepared statement.