

## NPS Tourism Office Participates in Brainstorm with Civil War Trails

On September 9, 2009, staff from the Tourism Office as well as representatives from the Civil War Trails organization met at the Potomac Point Winery in Stafford, Virginia. The meeting was held, with various partners, to discuss the formation of a cohesive marketing plan and develop a set of principle ideas to be presented at a state tourism directors meeting in November. The developed principles would be put in place for marketers as well as Civil War sites to use during the observance of the Sesquicentennial (CW150).

The current board of directors of Civil War Trails organized this meeting and participants included representatives from the five states where the Civil War Trails program is located. Meeting participants included representatives from the NPS including Richmond National Battlefield and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. State sites, museums, and non-profit organizations throughout the Mid-Atlantic region were also in attendance.

Civil War Trails is a non-profit organization currently operating in the states of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. Currently, there are 971 trail sites that cover topics such as the Overland Campaign in Virginia, John Wilkes Booth's escape route after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and one that traces the route the armies took to and from the battle of Gettysburg.

The group at the meeting agreed that one of the strengths of the program is that it takes visitors across state and county boundaries to various sites as well as vividly describing actions and events that occurred at the spot where the signs are located. The program reaches a large audience and one of its assets is that it tells the stories of soldiers and civilians, slave and free who were impacted by the American Civil War. The group wants to work with participating state travel offices to ensure that a consistent message is provided to the visitors who will visit Civil War sites during the Sesquicentennial from 2009 to 2015.

Civil War Trails is slated to be one of the key members in the marketing coalition that the Tourism Office is constructing at this time. Civil War Trails is one of the many partners that have embraced the theme: "Civil War to Civil Rights: Experience Your America, 2009-2015." The CW150 project has been identified as a demonstration project highlighting strategic principles in the NPS National Tourism Strategic Plan. These include building capacity through partnerships, launch of a national branding platform, highlighting lesser known parks and promoting economic growth through visitor spending on travel.

To find out more about the Office of Tourism, the National Tourism Strategic Plan and their activities pertaining to CW150 please visit our website:

<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?lv=2&prg=58>

For more information about Civil War Trails, please visit: [www.civilwartrails.org](http://www.civilwartrails.org)