Proposed
*Cool Spring Battlefield Regional Park*
Operations and Facility Management Plan

Northern Virginia
Regional Park Authority
Table of Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 3
Goals and Objectives for Natural and Cultural Resources ................................................. 3
Operations & Uses for Passive Recreation Options ......................................................... 4
Park Management Staffing Structure ................................................................................. 5
Hours/Seasons of Operations .............................................................................................. 6
User Fees ............................................................................................................................... 6
Park Access .............................................................................................................................. 6
Parker Lane and Shenandoah Retreat Roads ................................................................. 7
Safety Issues and Concerns ................................................................................................. 7
Maintenance Standards ......................................................................................................... 7
Capital Improvements Program (CIP) ................................................................................ 8
Compliance with Law ............................................................................................................. 8
Rules and Regulations .......................................................................................................... 9
Modifications to the Plan ...................................................................................................... 9
Introduction

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) has been operating some of the finest public park facilities in the country for more than 50 years. The Authority has extensive experience in the management of historically significant sites and the operation of both passive and active recreation public parks. Currently, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority preserves more than 11,000 acres of land throughout Northern Virginia, each with their own unique challenges and purpose. The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority sees the addition of the Cool Spring Battlefield property into the NVRPA system as an opportunity to create a new and dynamic public space that offers both historic and natural interpretation along with a number of unique passive recreation options. Attached is a draft of the Operations and Facility Management Plan for the proposed Cool Spring Battlefield Regional Park. The intent of this plan is to provide the basic statement of policy and direction for the management of Cool Spring Battlefield Regional Park by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. With the historic significance of Cool Spring and its proximity to the Shenandoah River, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority believes this proposed public park will quickly become a popular destination throughout the region.

Goals and Objectives for Natural and Cultural Resources

Development of the park as it relates to the existing natural and cultural resources will create the fundamental foundation for this public space moving forward. Each of the goals and objectives listed below represent the long-term intent of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority to manage a successful battlefield park. Methods used to achieve these will come in the form of budgeted capital and operating funds, seeking out potential grant funding, exploration of partnership opportunities and the development of a vibrant volunteer program.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Placement of a conservation easement on the property, this easement will limit the amount and types of develop on the site preserving both the natural and cultural resources
- Manage the existing resources in such a way that the story of the battle is accurately told through tours, programming and exhibits
- Work to change the aesthetic appearance of the golf course, potentially maintaining a reasonable portion of the core battlefield as it would have appeared at the time of the battle in 1864
- Develop a complete interpretive plan for both natural and cultural resources with a focus on the use of technology to tell the story
Natural and Cultural Resources (Cont.)

- Work to minimize invasive plants, and replanting native species where appropriate
- Create a collection of objects either owned by or on loan to the park for public viewing
- Determine the appropriate use of the existing facilities to house collections or interpretive materials
- Develop guidelines and operational procedures for a potential reenactment event for 2014
- Determine if a comprehensive archaeological study is warranted
- Restore and enhance riparian buffers along the water
- Create where appropriate new and diverse habitat areas
- Identify areas of high sensitivity and protect as appropriate
- Provide quality outdoor interpretive programs
- Develop relationships with area school systems for annual field trip activities
- Work with local heritage organization
- Seek grant funding to expand interpretation of the site

Operations & Uses for Passive Recreation Options

While the main focus of this property will be as a battlefield park, there also exists the opportunity to provide the public with a number of unique passive recreation options. These uses will take into consideration the limitations and protection of the property and the available infrastructure already in place. Potable toilets will be available for use when the club house is not open.

- Creation of a trail network that will include both improved (paved/graveled) and natural surface trails. This network of trails would provide interpretive loop trails with signage and points of interest along the way, as well as exercise loops with defined distances and varied degrees of difficulty. This network will use parts of the existing cart path system and will accommodate walkers, runners and bicyclists both within the park and along the river. The installation of an equestrian loop is also planned
- Rental operations for kayaks and canoes
- Public boat launch operations: shore launch, carried craft only from existing beach area for the general public. Retreat residents will maintain their right to launch carried or trailered crafts from this same beach area. (no paved boat ramp) Retreat residents will also retain pedestrian access to the river.
- Use of the existing club house for a park office, small event rental space, office or community space or a visitor center. Portable restrooms will be made available if the club house building is closed
- Fishing both in the river and potentially in the existing ponds located on the golf course
- Family picnicking, using the existing shelter and additional picnic tables

Operations & Uses for Passive Recreation Options (Cont.)
• Special events such as:
  o Living history weekends
  o Scouting activities
  o Geo-caching and orienteering
  o A reenactment event, scale to be determined, of the 1864 battle
  o Paddle trips and tours for both natural and historic interpretation
  o Group and charity walks
  o Community events
  o Training space for local high school cross country

Park Management Staffing Structure

The goal in developing the park management staffing structure is to provide a level of coverage for the property during not only peak operating days but also during off peak times, evening and overnight hours. This will discourage improper behavior on park property and its potential effects on the surrounding communities. This will be achieved through the effective use of a combination of full-time and seasonal management staff. Full time management oversight will come from an offsite Park Manager or Site Supervisor already in the NVRPA system. This Manager or Site Supervisor will spend some period of time on property providing direction and oversight to the operations but will not be exclusively assigned to the site full time. To supplement the full time management oversight of the property, a structure of seasonal management personnel and the potential use of volunteer park hosts will be utilized. This structure will provide consistent coverage of the property year round during both daylight and evening/overnight hours. The following positions are proposed to support the park operations:

Offsite Full-Time Park Manager or Site Supervisor
  o To provide complete management oversight of the property and direction to seasonal management staff

Seasonal Site Supervisor
  o Hours allotted to provide coverage during daylight hours year round.
    • Responsibilities include: Management oversight of the property at the direction and supervision of the full-time offsite manager. Supplement the evening and overnight hours as needed. Maintenance responsibilities as needed

Park Ranger/Night Watch
  o Hours dedicated to provide year round coverage after hours and overnight.
    • Responsibilities include: Assuming oversight of the property when the Seasonal Site Supervisor is not on site. Maintenance responsibilities as needed

Park Maintenance
  o Hours allotted for 6 months of dedicated maintenance operations (peak season).
    • Responsibilities include: Basic upkeep of the site, such as mowing, litter pickup and facility maintenance
Park Management Staffing Structure (Cont.)

Park Attendant
- Attendant(s) hours to cover 6 months of operations (peak season).
  - Responsibilities include: Assisting management staff with daily operations

Volunteer Park Host
- Will live temporarily on site and provide basic park oversight in the absence of park management staff.
  - Responsibilities include: Assisting management staff, after hours park coverage and basic park maintenance.

Hours/Seasons of Operations

The park will remain open to the general public during daylight hours year round. The typical operating season for any organized, staffed park activities would be based on weather and consistent visitation during the months of April - November. Examples of seasonal activities would include boat rental operations, picnic shelter rentals and guided interpretive tours.

User Fees
At this time, entrance into the park itself is proposed to be free. Additional amenities and services such as rentals (picnic shelter, building space, boat rentals and special programs) may have a fee associated with their use. Fees and charges are established each fall for the following year and are approved by the NVRPA Board.

Park Access

The vehicular traffic within the park and on roads leading to the park is a serious concern with respect to the safety of both visitors and the surrounding community residents. Measures will be taken to ensure that park traffic is properly directed into and out of the park. Once inside the park, visitors will be informed of park boundaries through signage and other methods.

Traffic and Transportation
- NVRPA will work with VDOT to sign access to the park only via Parker Lane
- All printed and on-line materials created by NVRPA will only reference Parker Lane as the entrance road
- NVRPA will clearly sign exit routes to lead exiting visitors to Parker Lane

Park Entrance
- NVRPA will create a defined entrance to the park property. This entrance will provide the first point of control to limit access to the park when needed and discourage entry after hours. This will be done using posted signage or a gate system that would still allow access to the property by Retreat residents
Park Access (Cont.)

Park Boundaries

- NVRPA will clearly mark all park boundaries to discourage trespass onto private property by park visitors

Parker Lane and Shenandoah Retreat Roads

NVRPA will contribute the annual established road maintenance fee to the Shenandoah Retreat Land Corporation. In addition, in accord with the Shenandoah Retreat Land Corporation letter dated July 18, 2000 from then president Richard Small, responsibility for patching Parker Lane with anything other than gravel will be done by NVRPA as the owner of the former golf course property. NVRPA also commits to contract the initial repairs to Parker Lane in 2012, subject to the Cool Spring property transfer to NVRPA and Shenandoah Retreat Land Corporation approval.

Safety Issues and Concerns

NVRPA will work closely with local sheriff and fire officials to establish appropriate plans for the operation of a safe public park. These plans will include best practices with regard to emergencies within the park and on the water. Part of this process could include the creation of a safety audit program that would involve local officials, park staff, residents and user groups. This group would look at safety issues in the park and recommend improvements and also be involved in the design process of new features and development.

Fire Safety

- With an understanding of the potential fire risk to the Shenandoah Retreat, Cool Spring Battlefield Regional Park will have the following fire safety policies:
  - No brush burning will be done on site, unless it is coordinated with the Shenandoah Retreat and local fire officials. It may only be done in an area that is at least 250 feet from any wooded area, with park staff and fire suppression on hand
  - No regular overnight camping will be allowed. For any special event camping, fires will only be allowed in designated sites within metal fire rings. Such designated sites will not be within 250 feet of wooded areas. No special event camping with fires will be permitted during drought conditions
  - No prescribed burns will be permitted.

Maintenance Standards

NVRPA will establish a park maintenance manual for the park that ties together all elements of the park’s maintenance needs. As part of this manual, a schedule of tasks and a calendar for completion of each task will be developed. Along with this, a system of replacement or repair will also be created.
Maintenance Standards (Cont.)

Initial areas of focus include:

- Proper inspection and repair of property septic systems and drain fields
- Determine the location of off-site septic systems located on park property and ensure that future development has no impact
- Gain a complete understanding of the existing wells and well systems
  - It is understood that one of the Retreat wells is on the golf course property next to the existing maintenance shop and an existing Retreat well is used to supply water to the current golf course maintenance shop with some restrictions on water usage. The well system that supplies the current club house is owned by the current golf course owners.
- Inspection of bridges and culverts throughout the property
- Inspection of internal systems (HVAC, Plumbing)
- Any existing safety hazards for park visitors
- Location of any underground holding tanks, such as heating oil or propane
- Complete electrical inspections of existing buildings
- Overall evaluation of existing structures
- Establishment of a litter and trash control system
- Complete general cleanup of site from previous owners

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

Design and construction projects are implemented through NVRPA's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in order to provide sufficient Regional Park lands and facilities to meet the growing needs of Northern Virginians. Typically, the CIP involves a five-year plan for development projects throughout the Regional Park system. Additional elements of the CIP include land acquisition, development of interpretive and educational displays, and providing park features to meet the needs of the disabled.

Citizen input from within the NVRPA's member jurisdictions regarding future development at all parks in the system is obtained through multiple public hearings. The hearings are completed prior to the adoption of a CIP. The conservation easement to be placed on the battlefield property will preclude the development of new permanent buildings.

Compliance with Law

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority requires full compliance with all federal, state and local laws and all regulations and orders of the Park Authority affecting events and activities at Cool Spring Battlefield Regional Park. Accordingly, no one may be excluded from participating in, nor denied the benefits of those activities and opportunities afforded by the park, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination because of a person's race, color, sex, religion or national origin. All programs and facilities at the park will provide reasonable accommodation for persons.
Rules and Regulations

Cool Spring Battlefield Regional Park will be governed by the official Park Authority Regulations and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Rules (full copy available upon request). A violation of any of these regulations or rules is punishable as a Class 4 misdemeanor pursuant to the Code of Virginia §15.2-5705. Within these rules and regulations are provisions that address fire safety for the general public stating that: No person shall start or use a fire within a park except in facilities provided or approved by the Park Authority for this purpose. At this time NVRPA does not foresee that we would permit fires by the general public within the park.

Cool Spring Battlefield Regional Park will operate as a No Alcohol park which will be strictly enforced by staff and local law enforcement.

Modifications to the Plan

The Cool Spring Battlefield Regional Park Operations and Facility Management Plan is subject to review and fine tuning as park conditions and needs change with time and use. The Park Authority will continue to review and amend the plan to better serve public and community interests. Modifications of significance will only be made after consultation with Clarke County staff.