



# ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

## Annual Meeting Focuses on the Action in Fredericksburg

**D**uring the weekend of April 24/25, members of CVBT gathered in Fredericksburg for tours, camaraderie, and our annual meeting. We were able to take advantage of a new Courtyard Marriott, recently constructed in downtown Fredericksburg for both accommodations as well as meeting space. On Saturday, two walking tours left from the hotel. The first one, led by Park Historian Greg Mertz, followed the street fighting that occurred on December 11th, 1862. Although the town was bombarded and fought through, a remarkable number of houses and other buildings survived and remain homes and places of business today. The second tour, led by Park Historian John Hennessy, examined the role of hospitals in Fredericksburg in the aftermath of nearby battles.

The evidence of battle damage is usually hidden to the casual observer, but numerous buildings in Fredericksburg, still have shattered rafters from the 1862 bombardment.



New or repaired roofing covers up this damage, but it is still there. Similarly, property owners undertaking interior repairs have sometimes peeled off old wallpaper and found the walls underneath to be riddled with bullet holes. In a war ravaged economy, wallpaper proved to be a quick (and affordable) fix.

That evening, we met for dinner and our meeting. In the run up to dinner, though, CVBT held a silent auction as a fundraiser. Folks bid on books, weaponry, dinner with historians, framed prints, and more. This event went rather well and we will do it again. Thanks are due to Lisa and Tom Van Winkle and to Linda Wandres for setting up this popular event.

During our meeting, we reviewed the CVBT activities during 2009, reported on the Trust finances, and held an election for the Board of Directors. Board member

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# New Donor Panels at the Slaughter Pen Farm

The Civil War Preservation Trust has recently erected a panel at the Slaughter Pen Farm recognizing those CVBT members who contributed \$250 or more towards our \$1 million pledge for that property. Support of this acquisition has been overwhelming and because of your efforts and generosity, we have been able to pay \$850,000 of this obligation. That is an astonishingly good job for a small organization such as ours because during that time we were also preserving the Braehead mansion and its 18 acre site on the Fredericksburg battlefield and moved ahead and preserved another 93 acres at the Wilderness (while so many were simply talking). Thank you for your ongoing support. When the lands we have saved are eventually included in the National Park, you will be able to say with pride: "I was there when these lands were threatened and helped save them for all time." **SL**



**ON THE SKIRMISH LINE** is published for the CVBT membership at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402. Contact CVBT at 540-374-0900 or [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org). The CVBT is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. A financial statement is available, upon request, from the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs.

## The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors

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*Contributing Authors  
This Issue:*  
Erik Nelson  
*Photographs:*  
Tom Van Winkle  
Alan Zirkle

# CVBT CONTINUES TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE WILDERNESS CROSSROADS

In our last newsletter, we reported on the contributions we had assembled to pay down the Wilderness Crossroads property. The purchase price for this 93 acres came to \$952,322, which includes various closing costs. The Commonwealth of Virginia has since provided \$316,667 and the Civil War Preservation Trust sent us \$95,000. The American Battlefield Protection Program has funded another \$328,668, which brings the total outside funding for this project to \$740,335. The remaining amount of \$211,987 is being met from member donations.

This high percentage of funding from outside our membership is no doubt due to the attention brought to the Wilderness battlefield by an outcry against Walmart. A coalition of preservation groups has filed a lawsuit challenging the decision to allow Walmart to develop its land and national organizations have listed the Wilderness as an endangered site. This battlefield is certainly getting squeezed by the modern world (and our collective desire for consumer goods), but the surest way to protect battlefields is to acquire them. At the Wilderness, the CVBT already holds 19 acres on the west side of Route 20 (between Sheetz and National Park property), the area we call Grant's Knoll. We have now acquired another 93 acres east of Route 20, which we call Wilderness Crossroads.

As some called on Walmart to find another place to build, we bought one of those alternate sites. The 93 acres we recently purchased is part of the Wilderness battlefield and will be part of the preserved landscape no matter what Walmart decides to do. We still need to close the gap in funding, though, so please consider a donation for this important (undeveloped) site. We have already heard from



CVBT Board member Rob Hodge (Federal) and CVBT member Sam Harrelson (Confederate) listen at the press conference at Elwood, announcing the Wilderness battlefield as one of the nation's most endangered historic sites.

many of our members and you have responded generously. We have garnered as much outside support as we are likely to receive, though. The rest is up to us.

What makes the Wilderness Crossroads property so compelling is that it was the nerve center of the Union command during the two day battle. From that location, troops were hurried to trouble spots, such as

the Brock Road/Orange Plank Road intersection, on the morning of May 5th, 1864. Remnants of Civil War infrastructure in its original form are somewhat rare on these battlefields because the major roads that were part of the contested terrain remain in use and have been paved over as modern highways. There are certainly portions of old roads throughout Spotsylvania County, but very few within preserved battlefield land.

The Wilderness Crossroads has one of the most exciting wartime intersections in the region. It is the place where Grant turned south, and set the course for the rest of the war.

With the acreage already owned by the National Park Service, this gateway to the Wilderness is taking shape as a tangible destination. By patiently preserving various tracts, a cohesive whole is beginning to emerge, which will add immeasurably to the visitor experience. Our members were able to walk this site during our annual meeting weekend, and could readily see that preservation of this tract is not only important to the battlefield, but is also a solid step to mitigating any development that will occur at the modern intersection where Walmart is threatening to build. If we had not stepped in, this historic ground could have easily accommodated a huge development footprint. Help us to complete this purchase so we can move on the other threatened ground. **sl**



J. Michael Greenfield was voted in for a third term, Robert Lee Hodge for a fourth term, and Tom Van Winkle for his second term. Jim Pates, the original CVBT founder, was also brought back on to the Board of Directors after a hiatus of several years. The evening concluded with a presentation by Park Historian Eric Mink of rare early photos of the area battlefields.

On Sunday morning, Eric Mink also led a tour of the CVBT's newest acquisition on the Wilderness battlefield.

We met for a catered breakfast and then tramped across the land we call Wilderness Crossroads. The tour not only focused on its Civil War importance, but Eric Mink also shared his research into the 1921 Marine Corps maneuvers on that site, including a visit from President Warren G. Harding.

The weekend was great fun and we look forward to seeing everyone again next year. SL

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## A Special Fund Raising Event Will Visit Historic Moss Neck Plantation

**O**n September 18th, 2010, Logan Creek Designs is presenting a tour of the 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg and a rare



Colonel Gibson's tour of the Fredericksburg battlefield will include stops at some lesser known and visited areas and Frank O'Reilly will conduct a rare tour and program at Moss

trip to Moss Neck, led by the Virginia Military Institute's Colonel Keith Gibson and NPS Historian Frank O'Reilly. Tour includes a box lunch, snacks, beverages on the bus as well as dinner and festivities (including prize give-a-ways) at Amy's Cafe in Historic Falmouth.

Yes you read correctly, full motor coach tour, lunch and dinner with free gifts and more!

Logan Creek Designs, of Abingdon VA, craft high quality and highly accurate Civil War campaign furniture, as seen in the movie *God's and Generals*. The "Stonewall" Jackson Field Desk and Robert E. Lee Camp Chest are but two of their extraordinary works. Joe Cress, owner of Logan Creek, is a long time historian and educator. He and his wife Margaret support battlefield preservation with great passion and they will donate all profits from the tour to the CVBT, for the continued acquisition of dirt and grass.

Neck, headquarters of General Jackson after the Fredericksburg Campaign. We will visit the family cemetery for a very special part of the tour.

Your contribution for this one-of-a-kind event (including motor coach tour with lunch, and Saturday evening dinner gala) is \$125.00 per seat, with all proceeds, after actual expenses, to be donated to the CVBT. Logan Creek's goal is to raise a donation of \$2,000 to benefit the battlefield preservation work carried on by the CVBT. Please make your checks payable to: Logan Creek's Special Events, 10347 Lindell Road, Abingdon, VA 24210. Address questions or comments to: 1-276-944-3511 or e-mail to: [jc2va69@hotmail.com](mailto:jc2va69@hotmail.com) and feel free to call anytime for updates. Seats are limited so reserve today!

Please see the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust web site for more information and tour schedule as well as accommodations at [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org). SL

# Civil War Reenactors Raise Funds for Wilderness Crossroads

CVBT board member Rob Hodge organized a group of reenactors to support fund raising for the Wilderness battlefield. Modern sepia tone photos show them on the Wilderness Crossroads property.



Wet-plate photographs by Terry Thomann, The Civil War Life Museum.

## Stay on the Skirmish Line!



Take a look at the mailing label on your latest Skirmish Line newsletter. You will see that it includes your CVBT membership expiration date. As a dirt and grass outfit, members can help us save on mailing costs by checking that expiration date and sending in their renewal on their own. If the date is highlighted, your membership has expired. While we would like to share the Skirmish Line with everyone, we can only afford to send it to current members. So please renew your membership at the appropriate time (we are not like magazines that like to get renewals six months in advance of expiration). You might also consider upgrading your membership level, to increase our capability to save hallowed ground in central Virginia.



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 The Trust's mission is to purchase Civil War battlefield terrain and to advocate for battlefield protection at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

For information on membership, please write to the Trust at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402; call our office at (540) 374-0900; or visit our website at [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org).

Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

**Membership Categories**

Annual Member	\$ 35	Patron	\$ 500	Life Patron	\$10,000
Active Member	\$ 135	Benefactor	\$ 1,000	Corporate Member	\$ 500
Sustaining Member	\$ 250	Life Member	\$ 5,000	Corporate Patron	\$ 1,000

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 Fredericksburg, VA 22402  
 540-374-0900  
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