

Issue 5. *Access to privately owned sites must be secured.*

The majority of the property covered by this report is in private ownership. There are efforts underway to purchase key parcels of the battlefields in this campaign. Since these are private land acquisitions for the purpose of preservation, it would be inappropriate to comment before purchase agreements are announced. Still a lot of battlefield property will remain in private hands.

Our society has made lawsuit abuse a way of life. For private property owners there is a real risk in permitting access to battlefield lands they own. If an accident were to occur, a well-intentioned owner could face a financially ruinous lawsuit. If the state is going to encourage battlefield tourism, appropriate tort protection must be guaranteed by legislative action.

An integral part of any agreement on access will be the issue of routine maintenance of artifacts and housekeeping at the site. All points must be clearly spelled out in any agreement.

The issue of historic or conservation easements is another point of concern. Much of the current resistance to battlefield preservation stems from owners' concern they will lose control over the future use or appearance of the site. Recent congressional action has sought to indemnify owners from financial loss if the land is restricted in its future use. Officials must understand property owners' rights and accept that unless they are willing to acquire the sites some will be lost. Good faith negotiations must include incentives to encourage land owners to conserve their property in a historically authentic condition. More information on various options is contained in **The Conservation Fund** publication "*Dollar\$ and Sense of Battlefield Preservation*." A copy of this book was provided to each attendee.

Recommendation #15. State and county officials should enact zoning ordinances, tax relief, and preservation/recreational easements to encourage cooperating property owners to permit limited heritage development of key sites.

Recommendation #16. State and local officials should provide liability protection for private land owners on property which is being used for Heritage tourism.

Recommendation #17. Requirements for the maintenance of the sites must be clearly stated in any agreements between property owners and the state.

Issue #6. Safe off-road parking does not exist at most sites.

The State's publication, "*A Guide to the Vicksburg Campaign*," is punctuated by disclaimers about respecting private property and warnings to be alert to traffic. In fact, there is no traffic plan to support the recommended tour stops. Several stops are located on heavily-traveled roads most notably SR 18.

Following the Conference, a Vicksburg Campaign seminar was co-sponsored by MDAH and the **Blue and Gray Education Society**. The bus tours had few places to pull off, usually on the grass or partially off the road. Several stops were in impromptu parking areas in which the grass had been worn down by previous vehicles which had used the site.

These realities are both inconvenient and dangerous. Buses are too often forced to dismount riders to cross a busy road which is sometimes blind for the oncoming driver. Tour buses are forced to discharge passengers and then drive down the road to a point in which they can safely turn around.

Recommendation #18. MDOT examine the need for parking at least 1 tour bus and 5 cars at each tour site.

Recommendation #19. Warning signs should be constructed and speed limits reduced on either side of the road where pull offs have been established.

Issue #7. Many non government groups are working independently on various elements of the Vicksburg Campaign.

The number of agencies involved in Civil War related activities in Mississippi is amazing. Two Civil War Roundtables, **The Conservation Fund, APCWS, BGES, The Civil War Trust, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, The Siege of Corinth Committee**, and numerous preservation associations in the affected communities are all working on "pet projects."

These groups are nearly matched by the number of State and Federal agencies which share an interest. These include **NPS, MDAH, Mississippi Civil War Battlefield Commission, The Grand Gulf Military Monument Commission, The Mississippi Department of Economic Development, the Mississippi Army National Guard, The American Battlefield Protection Program**, the

Senate Majority Whip, and local congressman. Equally interested are a number of former mayors, governors and surrounding states.

The good news is most are working very hard to present or preserve their part of the puzzle. The bad news is that most are working with only nominal awareness of what else may be happening in the state. Currently there is a large push towards Corinth and Natchez. However, there is no real effort to further develop the Vicksburg Campaign. The cumulative result of all these wonderful efforts is duplication and frustration as various groups compete with one another for available resources.

Clearly, the historical resources of the state are numerous and significant. The flow of heritage tourists is not likely to abate. Some people predicted the national fascination with the Civil War would peak after the Centenary celebration in 1961-1965--it hasn't and, if anything, is growing at a phenomenal rate. If Mississippi is to continue to enjoy the economic fruits of this interest it will be in its interest to establish and maintain an active and powerful Governor's Blue Chip Panel with adequate funding to oversee all elements of planning and presentation of Civil War resources. The potential impact of a vibrant Civil War Heritage Tourism program demands a well-paid, competent leader with strong history and managerial credentials.

This Blue Chip Panel should have the authority to hire an individual to serve as the state's single point of contact (SPOC). The SPOC would be required to keep the state and its partner agencies focused on the state's long term plan for the resources. It is important to realize this agent would be the trustee for some of the most significant historic sites in the country. It is not appropriate to suggest a salary structure; however, this person should be relatively high in the state structure with direct reporting responsibility to the Governor and a requirement to report annually to the appropriate legislative committees.

Another untapped volunteer resource for the Vicksburg Campaign are the **JCWRT and various camps of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV)**. While many programs will involve the expenditure of funds, there is still a large and important volunteer pool which needs leadership. Civil War Roundtables spring from the communities and are a tremendous source of networking to get things done. In any locality where a Civil War resource has high potential impact on the surrounding community, the leadership of that roundtable should work closely with the community and other public service agencies to preserve and interpret that resource.

The significance of the Vicksburg Campaign resource demands constant discussion, commitment, and fine tuning. The state has a leadership role in this task. **ABPP** has shown a marked interest in supporting activist communities which are trying to preserve and interpret Civil War resources. A recurring conference with all the players could provide a forum to move ahead with a master plan. Conferences should be held at intervals of no more than a year and sooner if activity warrants it.

Recommendation #20. MDAH sponsor state funding for a single point of contact (SPOC) for liaison on all issues relating to the Vicksburg Campaign. The SPOC would maintain an active liaison with private property owners, and national groups interested in executing a portion of the comprehensive master plan for the Vicksburg Campaign.

Recommendation #21. The Jackson Civil War Roundtable and or local SCV Camps should establish a working group to provide a pool of manpower to coordinate and execute voluntary taskings such as battlefield cleanup. Local Boy Scout troops could be a solid source of support. Some projects might be suitable for Eagle Scout Projects.

Recommendation #22. MDAH should host a recurring conference to review the status of master plan programs and to allow interested parties to raise areas of particular interest. The frequency of the conference should be no less than annually and maybe during critical periods as frequent as quarterly.

Issue #8. The relevance of the Vicksburg Campaign to the African-American Experience must be developed and conveyed to the Black community.

The prevailing attitude of the African-American community concerning the Civil War seems to range from contempt to apathy. The stereotypic images of the war as irrelevant to the African-American experience belittles the relevance of the social change which reached a boiling point in the mid nineteenth century. The fact is the successful resolution of the Vicksburg Campaign facilitated the political objective of emancipation. Slavery in Mississippi effectively ended with the Union occupation of the state. This was a milestone in the emerging Civil Rights struggles of the ensuing 125 years.

Another common misconception is that the Civil War was fought to perpetuate slavery. The modern day party line from the African-

American Civil Rights movement is that efforts to "Preserve Southern heritage" are merely a euphemism for perpetuating the old attitudes of African-American enslavement.

Not a single African-American participated in the conference. Commissioners and key African-American property owners were invited; however, they didn't respond. In a community which has a large African-American population, and several traditional Black universities/colleges, this is a notable deficiency. *Without African-American support the potential of this entire heritage tourism proposal is severely compromised.*

The distinction between myth and reality is noticeable. Fortunately, there are a number of professional African-American historians, and living historians who are actively seeking to debunk the stereotypic myths. The communities surrounding the affected sites could benefit from a concerted effort to present the reality of their heritage. This could foster pride of ownership and stimulate entrepreneurial opportunities.

Opportunities exist for the local universities to secure Federal grant money for any number of related educational events to include interpretation of key sites, and educational seminars. There are also opportunities for multi-cultural programs which involve colleges and universities in surrounding states.

The state should examine how the Mississippi history block of instruction is presented. **ABPP** and the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** have programs such as "*Teaching with Historic Places*," to develop modules of instruction using the resources of the battlefields.

There are a number of African-American leaders in the community. We believe some have specific interest areas relating to the Civil War, for example one expressed, at a separate meeting, his desire to learn more about the African-American experience at the Battle of Milliken's Bend. There are other stories from the large contingent of Black soldiers in the US Colored Volunteers--over 130,000 were enrolled by war's end. Grant changed his line of march when advised of a short cut by a local Black man. There are free Black men who owned slaves and there are instances of the political debate in the Confederate government over emancipation versus employment of slaves in the army. A recent edition of the award winning "**Journal of Confederate Military History**" was devoted to African-Americans in the Confederacy, it was eye opening. The point is there is a large realm of untapped African-American heritage relating to the Civil War.

Cooperative relationships concerning Civil War interpretation and the African-American community have succeeded in dramatic ways. The community of Petersburg, Virginia, is a model of historians and community planners working together. This historic community has problems to be sure; however, the resources are not being ignored and the opportunities are being expanded. The consortium which put together "Lee's Retreat" is a successful model and should be examined further.

Recommendation #23. MDAH should seek noteworthy black historians such as Professors Edward C. Smith, Ervin Jordan Jr., Barbara Fields, and John Hope Franklin to present programs which focus on the events and significance of the Vicksburg Campaign to the African American experience.

Recommendation #24. MDAH should work with the black reenactment group, the legendary 54th Massachusetts of Glory fame, to present living history at reenactments within the Vicksburg Campaign area. Costs could and should be absorbed by the local chambers of commerce.

Recommendation #25. Local Black University Departments of History such as Alcorn State, and Jackson State should become involved in all elements of the interpretive experience.

Recommendation #26. Mississippi Department of Education should reevaluate the way the Civil War and the Vicksburg Campaign is presented. The ABPP and The National Trust for Historic Preservation may be able to assist them in developing modules of instruction which use the Campaign's battlefields.

Recommendation #27. MDAH should work with the Mississippi NGB through Congressman Parker's office to conduct a VIP tour of the Vicksburg sites for planners from the affected counties.

Recommendation #28. MDAH should coordinate with Mr. Chris Calkins at the Petersburg National Battlefield Park to discuss the challenges of earning African American support.

Issue #9. *Funding sources for these enhancements must be identified and tapped.*

If there were a limitless source of funds, there would be few decisions to make. Realistically, whatever plan is adopted will have to

be implemented in consideration of the available money. Currently, there are a number of Federal subsidies which can reduce some of the burden on the local populace.

The **ABPP** and **ISTEA** initiatives are two programs which can provide planning and execution funds. Where these funds fall short, the state and local communities need funding plans which result in timely completion of the agreed upon programs.

Other sources of possible funds include state legislatures in sister states. While the vast majority of monumentation was done many years ago, some preservation groups have been successful in finding sponsorship for troop markers and so forth. The recently formed multi-state Vicksburg Campaign Heritage Trail Committee may prove to be a conduit through which state funding may be sought.

Battle reenactments have enjoyed tremendous popularity and have proven to be a prominent source of revenue for preservation. The **Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation** in Middletown, Virginia, has raised tens of thousands of dollars with an annual reenactment. Reenactors are receptive to engagements on the actual scene of the battle when the profits will be used for a nonprofit, preservation or education purpose. **APCWS** has been the beneficiary of "Marches for Preservation" which raised tens of thousands of dollars.

Several nonprofit groups and private foundations are extremely interested in meaningful, well-planned interpretive plans. Effective planning by the state could result in considerable financial support from these groups. The number of major corporations which have philanthropic arms is considerable. Finally, the power of the individual tax deductible donation combined with matching grant programs is potent. Where there is a will....

Recommendation #29. MDAH incorporate this as an action item in working group conferences.

Recommendation #30. MDOT should evaluate the current priorities for ISTEA funding and elevate the development of a Vicksburg Campaign trail as a vital economic interest of the state.

Recommendation #31. MDAH should canvas national nonprofit groups to determine their willingness to provide funding for all or some of these projects.

Recommendation #32. The Mississippi Civil War Commission should work with the MDAH and legislators to develop a funding plan for these projects.

Recommendation #33. Local corporate sponsorship should be solicited.

Recommendation #34. Liaison with surrounding states which were represented in the Campaign should focus on the possibility of appropriations to commemorate their participation.

Recommendation #36. External funding may be raised and local awareness improved by sponsoring an annual reenactment at the various battlefield sites.

Issue #10. The economic impact of this project should be monitored to determine if the return justifies expanding it to other Civil War projects in the state.

The state provided a report of the *cost per inquiry* from advertising for the Civil War. That report is at tab 6. The data from surveys like this help the state determine if a program is worth the expenditure. We believe if the investment in a Vicksburg Campaign trail is prudent and meaningful the word will rapidly spread to people who are interested in heritage tourism and the results will reflect.

There are established economic models which can and should be conducted by experts at either the universities or in the private sector. Related studies are available from sister states and should be canvassed.

The massive fields of maneuver of this campaign involved the entire length and width of the state and the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee. It is entirely possible to run a Heritage Trail throughout the entire region. This would certainly benefit locations from Corinth, to Natchez, Lake Providence and Meridian.

Recommendation #37. Contact the state of Virginia to determine how they are monitoring the return on investment from the Lee's Retreat project.

Recommendation #38. If a decision is made to tie in the northern Mississippi and west bank Louisiana sites, include representatives of the Vicksburg Campaign Heritage Trail Committee, Corinth project and the state of Louisiana in the entire planning process.

Summary

Over the past 10 years, it became obvious that heritage minded citizens would have to carry the flag to save individual battlefields. After years of acting on instinct, quantitative and qualitative data shows that Americans can and will include heritage tourism on their itinerary during vacation periods.

Mississippi has the distinct honor to be the custodian of the national trust of the shrines of valor which compose the Vicksburg Campaign. Here in the gentle hills of loess soil the past has been preserved within easy reach of all who wish to visit it. There are serious students of the war who have the drive to ferret out old roads and abandoned sites; however, these treasures can and should be made available to all.

There doesn't appear to be an immediate threat to the preservation of key sites relating to this campaign. This will allow officials to develop a well considered, integrated plan. A strong community and state commitment could earn considerable external support to assist in funding and executing the plan. This could result in the proverbial "Win-Win" situation--preservationists would achieve their goal of saving key battlefields, and communities would be rewarded in economic terms for their vision and investment.

Even the most considered plan will take time to develop, promulgate, adopt, fund, and execute; therefore, we recommend this report be given widest circulation and earliest evaluation to ensure the efforts of this working conference are not wasted.