



Clover Bottom Mansion, THC Headquarters

Photo Credit: Theresa Montgomery

Tennessee Wars Commission Annual Report, December 2023



TENNESSEE WARS COMMISSION

The Tennessee General Assembly enacted legislation in April 1994, creating the Tennessee Wars Commission (TWC), as a part of the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC). Since its establishment 29 years ago—and with only one staff position--the TWC has helped acquire and permanently protect over 8,000 acres of historic properties, including Davis Bridge Battlefield in Hardeman County and Parkers Crossroads in Henderson County. To date, our grant funding has supported over one hundred different projects that preserve, protect, and interpret Tennessee’s military heritage. These projects have included funding archaeological excavations that pinpointed the location of Union fortifications in Franklin, publishing *A Survey of Sites Related to the American Revolution and War of 1812 in Tennessee*, and the creation of *A Path Divided: Tennessee’s Civil War Heritage Trail*, long-recognized as the most-requested brochure at Tennessee Welcome Centers.

The Tennessee Wars Commission helps coordinate planning efforts, preservation, and promotion of structures, buildings, sites, and battlefields in Tennessee from the French and Indian War (1754-1763), American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), War of 1812 (1812-1815), Mexican-American War (1846-1848) through the Civil War (1861-1865) era. The Tennessee Wars Commission is also charged with acquiring or providing funds for the acquisition of battlefields, cemeteries, Underground Railroad sites, and other properties associated with these conflicts. The Wars Commission’s mission is realized in part by funding grants for a wide variety of projects, through civic and governmental engagement, education and interpretation, and by way of conservation efforts.

The business of the Tennessee Wars Commission is conducted at the regular meetings of the Tennessee Historical Commission. One staff member, Ms. Nina Scall, works on behalf of the Wars Commission as Director of Programs, THC Executive Director, Patrick McIntyre, Jr., serves as the Executive Director of the TWC.

Accolades and Awards

The Wars Commission was honored with the American Battlefield Trust’s (ABT) preservation leadership award this spring at the culminating banquet of the Trust’s 2023 annual conference held this year in Franklin, Tennessee. Director Scall, and Executive Director McIntyre were presented with the Brian C. Pohanka Preservation Organization Award for the Wars Commission’s dedicated work in



helping to advance the study of military history, battlefield preservation, and interpretation efforts in Tennessee. Together, the Wars Commission and the Trust have preserved thousands of acres of battlefield property across the state and worked to administer grants related to interpretation and restoration efforts.

Brian C. Pohanka Preservation Organization Award presented to Director Scall and Executive Director McIntyre with David Duncan, President of the American Battlefield Trust.

Grant Funding

The administration of two grant funds, the Wars Commission Grant Fund (WCGF) and the Civil War Sites Preservation Grant Fund (CWSPF) support the Wars Commission’s preservation initiatives and help to preserve and promote the structures, buildings, sites, cemeteries, and battlefields of Tennessee.

Wars Commission Grant Fund:

This grant fund is available for various projects within Tennessee’s diverse communities relating to the aforementioned wars. Any individual, museum, educational institution, private organization, or local government body can apply. Although matching funds are not a requirement, additional contributions are favorable. This year’s grant funds totaling \$129,200.00 were awarded to five applicants during the 2023 fiscal year (FY). The successful applicants and their projects are as follows:

1. Andrew Jackson Foundation, Hermitage, Davidson County: “War of 1812 Living History Programming.”

The Andrew Jackson Foundation (AJF) was awarded \$17,500.00 in funds for the creation of two living history programs at the Hermitage focused on the War of 1812. The first, “Andrew Jackson and the Tennessee Militia” will explore the history, hardships, and challenges that the militiamen faced during the War of 1812. This 30-minute guided interpreted experience will include a structured presentation and will feature a question and answer session. This program will be available to the public several times a week from May to October. Funds will be used to purchase two period-appropriate uniforms, reproduction weaponry, and program supplies.



Sample Reproduction Weaponry for Living History Programming at Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage

The second project priority, “The War of 1812 Encampment,” will be a large-scale living history event working to bring together over 100 professional reenactors for an event-filled weekend focused on developing a broad and unique interpretation of the daily life of the militiamen. The Hermitage is the perfect location for such an event due to its outstanding preservation and the power of place. This program is scheduled for presentation every three years and will debut in early 2025.

2. Camp Blount Historic Site Association, Fayetteville, Lincoln County: “Foundation Document.”



Initial Foundation Document Meeting
Former WC Director, Fred Prouty, Director Scall, Ms. Dirksen, Executive Director McIntyre, Jillian Rael with TVAR, and Stakeholders

The Camp Blount Historic Site encompasses the last 40 undeveloped acres that held the significant mustering site of Tennessee’s volunteers during the War of 1812. Named for Governor William Blount, this site hosted notable figures such as Andrew Jackson and David Crockett. Ultimately, the thousands of citizen-soldiers who gathered at Camp Blount followed General Jackson to victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and the Battle of New Orleans. The overwhelming response to Blount’s rally cry created the moniker the “Volunteer State.”

The State purchased Camp Blount in 2016, and since has partnered with the City of Fayetteville and the Camp Blount Historic Site Association (CBHSA) to preserve, protect, and interpret the site. Due to the successful planning and execution of the site’s development and its preliminary projects, Camp Blount is ready for its next phase in planning, the creation of a National Park Service (NPS)-level foundation document. The Camp Blount Historic Site Association was awarded \$16,976.24 in grant funds to hire historic preservation professionals to coordinate efforts, compile information, draft, print, and distribute the foundation document.

On October 25, 2023, stakeholders gathered in Fayetteville to kick off the official planning process. This meeting was an opportunity for Jillian Rael, historic preservationist with Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research (TVAR), to introduce the group to the concepts, ideas, layout, and process for completing the foundation document. The brainstorming sessions were successful, leaving the foundation document committee with numerous ideas, notes, and comments. In addition, new partnerships were made for future endeavors.

3. Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Rutherford County: “LiDAR of Fort Negley.”

Although professional archaeological investigations have been conducted at Fort Negley since 1993, these investigations have been focused around and within the fortification structure. However, recent archaeological investigations at the site have identified cultural landscape features and archaeological deposits elsewhere on the slopes of St. Cloud Hill including in areas where development previously occurred.

Middle Tennessee State University’s (MTSU) Geosciences Department was awarded \$18,502.00 in grant funds to hire an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) consultant to conduct a LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) and orthoimagery remote sensing survey of Fort Negley Park. The objective of the survey is to collect geospatial data to create three-dimensional data products that can be used for:

- identifying cultural landscape features at the site;
- to develop a geographic platform for an administrative record of the archaeological excavations in the park and repair treatments on the fortification's stone walls; and
- to develop reference material for researchers, the Metro Historical Commission, Metro Parks Department, and their contractors for developing Fort Negley Park as outlined in the 2022 Fort Negley Master Plan.

In addition to the survey, this project will also provide an MTSU graduate student with the experience of deriving data products (digital terrain model, digital elevation model, digital surface model, and one-foot contours) from a LiDAR point cloud and will provide the opportunity to develop work-force ready skills.

4. Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center, Chattanooga, Hamilton County: “Phase II Archaeological Survey.”

Since 2021, the THC has held the conservation easement on the 300-acre Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center due to its association with the Lookout Mountain Battlefield. Archaeology has helped inform development decisions up to this point, and naturally, is being called upon to help guide the gentle development of the property to accommodate the future needs of the arboretum as well as to ensure the proper preservation and conservation of in situ archaeology and any material culture removed from the ground. Additionally, archaeology will help expand interpretation at Reflection Riding to include the Civil War.

Reflection Riding was awarded \$29,000.00 in grant funds to hire an archaeological firm to conduct a Phase I and Phase II archaeological survey to better understand the historical conditions of the property, to preserve the historic record, and to help inform their development approach to work in the area of potential effect (APE). Funds will also be used to support the creation of an internal plan to incorporate new findings into programming and interpretation.

The Arboretum has begun leveraging this grant opportunity to engage the staff and top supporters about the historical relevance of the property. Jim Ogden, Staff Historian at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, has visited Reflection Riding more frequently than ever to do tours.



Jim Ogden Giving Civil War Tours at Reflection Riding

5. Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Davidson County: “Geophysical Work, Mapping the Battle of Nashville.”

The Battle of Nashville was the culminating event of the Civil War in the West that was both the final destruction of the Confederate Army of Tennessee and the last major engagement of the American Civil War in the Western Theater. Despite the historical significance of this event, newer, cutting-edge historical and archaeological tools such as comprehensive geographic information system (GIS) analysis, georeferenced historic maps, high-resolution digital scanning, landscape modelling,



Vanderbilt Graduate Student
Conducting GPR at Fort Negley

magnetometry, and ground penetrating radar (GPR) have not been extensively used to characterize this battlespace. This project has combined the traditional humanistic approach to the study of this monumental event with these modern digital tools, integrating all the varying sources of data with other historical and technical information to create a digital ESRI StoryMap of the Battle allowing for a deeper insight into this battlespace than has been possible before. Ultimately, users will be able to journey through the battlespace, past and present.

In addition to the geophysical work, the team plans to conduct 3D high-resolution scans of relevant items on the surface including statues, buildings, microtopography of the site, and other features so that they are preserved in digital format for future study and inclusion in the project’s portfolio. Vanderbilt has been chosen to present this exciting project in March at the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities highlighting works in progress in Public History. Vanderbilt University was awarded \$47,184.00 in grant funds to complete this complex project.

The application process for the 2023-2024 Wars Commission grant cycle concluded on November 19, 2023. Projects will be scored and will be presented to the Tennessee Historical Commission board for final approval during the upcoming February 2024 meeting. The Wars Commission Grant Fund has budgeted \$111,200.00 for grants in this cycle.

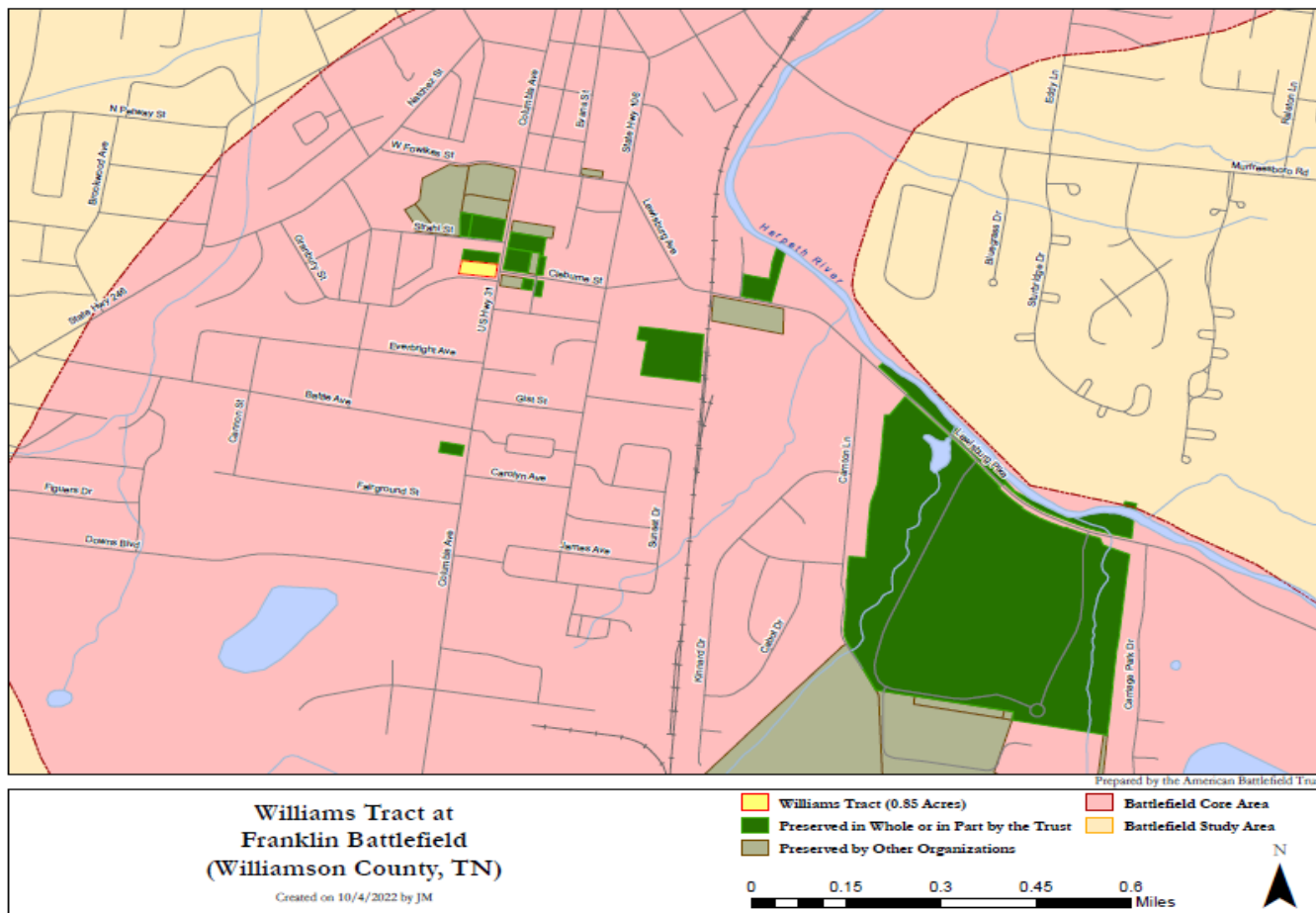
Civil War Sites Preservation Fund:

The Civil War Sites Preservation Fund provides matching funds for the acquisition and preservation of Civil War battlefields. Properties must be associated with the 38 most significant Civil War sites in Tennessee, as defined by the National Park Service. Funds can also assist in the acquisition and protection of Underground Railroad sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark. Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) and this grant fund does require a 1:1 match of nonstate funds. Since its conception in 2013, this grant fund has preserved over 930 acres of battlefield land. In the fiscal year 2023, this grant fund awarded \$5,055,000.00 for the acquisition of the following two tracts of land:

1. Franklin’s Charge, Inc., The Williams Tract at the Franklin Battlefield, Williamson County:

The Williams Tract was preserved with the help of Franklin’s Charge and the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP). The approximately 0.85-acre Williams Tract is in the core area of the Franklin Battlefield. This parcel is adjacent to the Spivey Tract, preserved in 2019, and is among a cluster of preserved battlefield property near the Carter House State Historic Site. Franklin’s Charge intends to incorporate this parcel into the Carter Hill Battlefield Park. The Tennessee Historical Commission will hold the conservation easement on this property.

The Williams Tract was once part of the farm belonging to F. B. Carter, whose house became the headquarters for the Union 23rd Corps during the battle that took place on November 30, 1864. This tract was the scene of heavy casualties as Confederate General John Brown’s Division, chiefly the brigades commanded by General George W. Gordon and General Otho F. Strahl, swept north toward the Federal earthworks, which were manned by some of General Thomas Ruger’s men. Brown’s men also pursued broken pieces of Federal General George Wagner’s Division across this ground after the latter was routed from a position further south. The Williams Tract was also pounded by artillery fire from two directions, killing and wounding scores of Confederate soldiers. Dozens were buried after the battle before being exhumed and moved to Carnton. After the war, the Williams Tract returned to the Carter family. Franklin’s Charge was awarded \$1,725,000.00 in grant funds towards this acquisition.

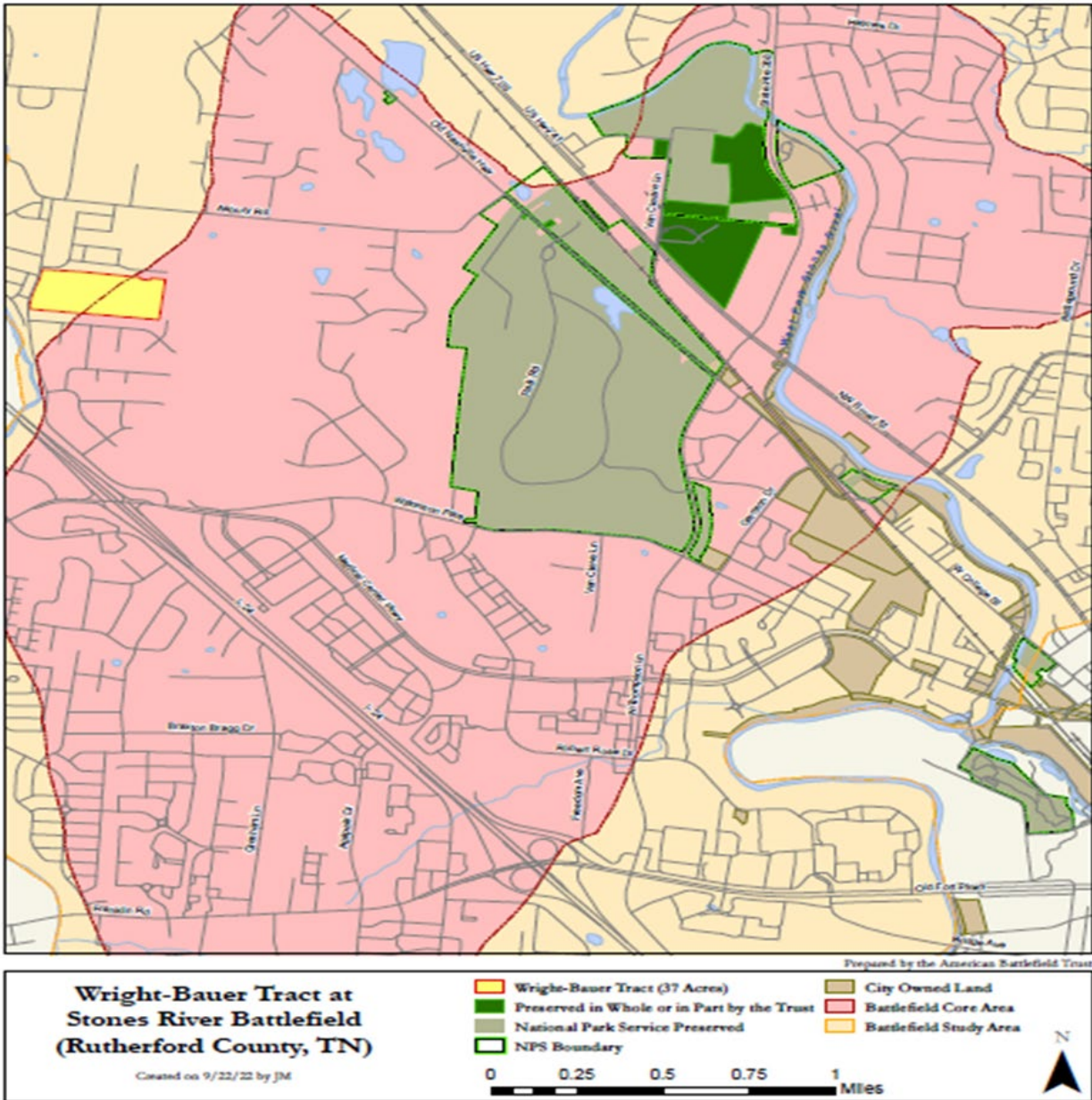


2. The American Battlefield Trust, The Wright Tract at the Stones River Battlefield, Murfreesboro, Rutherford County:

The American Battlefield Trust is leading the charge to preserve the 37-acre Wright Tract with the help of the ABPP. Although this parcel is not adjacent to other protected lands, it is situated approximately three-quarters of a mile west of the legislated boundary of the Stones River Battlefield. The Tract is also within two miles of both the 2020 acquisitions, the 42-acre O'Reilly Tract and the 6.17-acre Van Cleve Tract. Preservation of the Wright Tract would be a significant contribution to an area of the Stones River battlefield that has not been previously preserved and is experiencing significant development pressure. ABT hopes to transfer the property to the Stones River National Battlefield for incorporation into the military park.

On December 26, 1862, Major General William S. Rosecrans initiated a winter campaign and his Army of the Cumberland departed Nashville to engage General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. After several days of maneuvering, the armies faced one another near Murfreesboro. Both commanders planned to attack on New Year's Eve, each deciding to assault the other's right flank.

At dawn on December 31, the Confederates struck the Union line, driving it back to Rosecrans' supply line. Later that day, Confederate Brigadier General St. John Liddell's brigade advanced over the Wright Tract. The 4th, 5th, and consolidated 6th and 7th Arkansas regiments moved through the eastern section of the property to engage Colonel Charles Harker's brigade, but Union forces retained control of the turnpike. Following a relatively quiet New Year's Day, General Bragg launched another assault against the Union left on January 2, 1863, but Rosecrans' troops held fast. Faced with Union reinforcements, Bragg decided to abandon the field on the night of January 3. Ultimately, Rosecrans' victory at Stones River was an important boost for Union morale and added military weight to the recently issued Emancipation Proclamation. ABT was awarded \$3,330,000.00 in grant funds for this acquisition.



Civic and Government Engagement

In addition to grants, the Wars Commission’s mission is in part realized through civic and government engagement. Director Scall has been serving as a historic preservation advocate to city, county, and local governments as well as to various nonprofit historical associations and historic sites throughout Tennessee. Additionally, she serves as a board member and advises several boards and organizations on historic preservation and archaeology.

Through education and preservation support, the Wars Commission has expanded historic interests and preservation participation by formulating new and strengthening existing relationships with

historic sites and battlefield parks, historical societies, and heritage groups throughout Tennessee and neighboring states.

Recent examples of engagement and collaboration are as follows:

- Director Scall serves on the Fort Negley Technical Advisory Committee and provided consultation with Fort Negley stakeholders and Nashville Metro Parks and Recreation. She met with invested parties throughout the master planning process for the historic site.
- Director Scall and Executive Director McIntyre have been in consultation with Mayor Moore and the City of Franklin's Parks Department working towards creating a walking trail at Ropers Knob, one of the best preserved Civil War sites in Tennessee, which will also facilitate further connectivity to other trails and local green space. The project was approved in December 2023, with work scheduled to begin this winter.
- Director Scall, members of THC Historic Sites staff, and Executive Director McIntyre met with Mr. Hobart Aiken, Cultural Resources and Exhibit Specialist for TN State Parks, as well as other stakeholders for a day of collaboration and consultation on the upcoming Tennessee State Parks Project, working to expand and invest further in the parks system.
- With the help of Ms. Miranda Christy, Senior Historic Preservation Attorney, Director Scall has successfully revived the unfulfilled Fort Redmond project from 2011. Partially owned by the State of Tennessee and located in Adams, Fort Redmond retains its archaeological integrity as a circular earthenwork fortification manned by the U.S. Colored Troops. Their mission was to protect the Union Railways ensuring open supply lines to the Western Theater during the Civil War. The Wars Commission has secured a lease offer from the property owners, CSX, to allow for visitation to the unowned portion of the historic site, a huge win for historic preservation.

Interpretation and Education

Interpretation and education efforts help to further advance the Wars Commission's mission throughout Tennessee. Recently, educational opportunities have come in the form of technical support and project collaboration. These include:

- Ongoing consultation over the last year with the American Battlefield Trust during the planning phase of the *Road to Freedom* project, a Wars Commission Grant Funded project. The project will deliver a comprehensive resource supporting education and heritage tourism centered on historic sites located throughout Tennessee that tell little-known histories of African American contributions, agency, and sacrifice in the cause of freedom during the broadly defined Civil War-era (1830-1890). Driven by place-based historical significance, topical and chronological coverage, and geographical distribution, ABT will present 40 sites in the digital app and physical map brochure slated for release this spring.

Road to Freedom Application Mockup



- Supporting and coaching Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research on the technical aspects of the foundation document, and collaborating with them, the Camp Blount Historic Site Association, the City of Fayetteville, and stakeholders through the ongoing foundation document planning process.

Conservation Efforts

Conservation efforts have been a priority for the Wars Commission. In 2023, Director Scall’s work has focused on the expansion and strengthening of the conservation easement program. The expanded program is slated to launch in the new year and to contain a volunteer component where Tennessee’s citizens can collaborate with the Wars Commission to monitor protected battlefields across the state. She has developed and executed a conservation easement monitoring strategy that features both a boots-on-the-ground and an “eyes-in-the-skies” approach to easement monitoring. The aerial strategy was made possible through the application of LENS software which is designed to harness satellite technology and through the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology.

The use of GIS technology is the result of the ongoing collaboration between the Wars Commission and The Department of Environment and Conservation GIS staff. Through the creation of a series of map layers identifying state-owned war-related properties and properties held under easement, the Wars Commission can monitor those sites more closely. Site visits and property inspections ensure that the preservation clauses and conditions of these conservation easements are being met by the property owners, as well as provide an opportunity to photograph baseline conditions at some of the more recently acquired easement tracts.

Additionally, state ownership signs have been fabricated, designating the properties as protected by the State and the Tennessee Historical and Wars Commissions. The Wars Commission continues the extensive process of signage installation throughout Tennessee. Conservation easement and state ownership signs have been installed at properties in Hamilton, Henderson, Lincoln, Madison, Maury, Stewart, and Williamson Counties with the final counties Hardin and Rutherford, to follow over the



next year. Currently, the Historical Commission holds conservation easements on approximately 1,200 acres of battlefield property in nine counties throughout Tennessee.

Conservation Easement Sign Installation at Rippavilla Plantation, Spring Hill

This last year has been eventful with several very successful preservation projects funded by the Wars Commission Grant Fund, acres of hallowed ground protected in perpetuity with funding assistance from the Civil War Sites Preservation Fund, and a strengthened conservation easement program. In fiscal year 24, the Wars Commission will continue working diligently to meet the mission of preserving Tennessee’s military heritage.



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Photo Credit: Theresa Montgomery