

Resolution to SAVE Staunton River Battlefield State Park

WHEREAS, the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc., through its scope, mission, and purpose of preserving, developing, and promoting the 1864 Battlefield at the Staunton River Battlefield State Park and the Staunton River, with its educational, archaeological, environmental and historical aspects, is dedicated, yet committed, to saving the Staunton River Battlefield State Park from closure under Governor McDonnell's proposed budget.

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Virginia is home to thirty-seven State Parks; one being our very own, Staunton River Battlefield State Park.

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth's economy is dependent on travel and tourism revenues, a large portion of which are derived from visitation to the State's unmatched State Park System.

WHEREAS, State parks are an important economic engine to the local communities in which they are located and studies have shown that every \$1 invested in the state park system returns \$2.35 to the state's General Fund, largely in the form of economic activity in local economies;

WHEREAS, The Governor's 2010-11 State Budget proposes an unprecedented closing of five state parks, one being our very own Staunton River Battlefield State Park.

WHEREAS, Such a proposal creates considerable harm for the localities in Southside Virginia that rely on heritage tourism, nature tourism, and economic development from the Staunton River Battlefield State Park and the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. for their community's livelihood and community identity.

WHEREAS, the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc., organized in 1994 by a group of local citizens who sought to preserve, develop, and promote the 1864 Battlefield along the Staunton River, which straddles the Counties of Charlotte and Halifax, is a nonprofit, private organization exempt under Section 501 (c) 3 under the Code of the Internal Revenue Service.

WHEREAS, the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. is headquartered in Randolph, Charlotte County, Virginia at P.O. Box 1, Randolph, Virginia 23962

WHEREAS, the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc., as an organization in "good standing," as affirmed by the Virginia State Corporation Commission, continues to be good stewards to the Commonwealth of Virginia by paying State Sales Tax from the proceeds of the sales in its gift shop located at the Clover Visitors Center, 1035 Fort Hill Trail, Randolph, Virginia 23962.

WHEREAS, Staunton River Battlefield State Parks today serves as a venue between the counties of Charlotte and Halifax physically, culturally, historically, genealogically, and symbolically, inscribing its place in the history and culture of Southside Virginia.

WHEREAS, in 1864 an urgent plea went out from Confederate Captain Benjamin Farinholt to defend the Staunton River Bridge from invasion and destruction from the Wilson-Katuz Union Raid and to maintain the Richmond & Danville Railway line that served as a vital supply line for the Confederacy. From that plea, 492 “Old Men & Young Boys” from the neighboring Counties of Charlotte, Halifax, and Mecklenburg answered the cry. On a hot summer day on June 25, 1864, the “Old Men & Young Boys,” together with 296 Confederate Reserves successfully repelled and defended the Staunton River Bridge from not one, but three advances of the 5,000-strong Union Calvary force. For the 492 local citizens that made up the “Old Men and Young Boys” Brigade, the fight was over, and an important supply line had been protected for General Robert E. Lee and his army in Petersburg. They had proudly answered the call to arms and, in the face of overwhelming odds, distinguished themselves on the field of battle. Over the years, the stories about their victory on that hot summer afternoon at the bridge have been retold countless times and have become an important part of the proud heritage of Southside Virginia. Today, the Staunton River Battlefield State Parks serves as the avenue to tell this story.

WHEREAS, Staunton River Battlefield State Park spans the Staunton, a State Scenic River in a pristine natural area.

WHEREAS, the Staunton River Battlefield State Park encompasses approximately 341 acres that spans across more than 3,000 years of North American, Native American, Colonial American, and Virginian history:

- **44CH62 Randy K. Wade Archaeological Site**, a 3,000 year-old Amerindian (Sappony Indian) settlement and burial ground, that is a collaborative-research project by and between Longwood University’s (Farmville, Virginia) Archaeology Field School, Virginia State Parks, and the Sappony Indian Nation;
- **Clover Visitors Center**, the central welcome center for visitors to the Staunton River Battlefield State Park, provides display and interactive exhibits on the nearby Clover Power Station (generation of and use of electrical energy); the Wilson-Kautz Raid, the 1864 Battle for Staunton River Bridge; home life in Southside Virginia during the War Between the States; the Battle of “Old Men & Young Boys;” and features a large relief map of the surrounding countryside that highlights features of this significant, but less-well-known battle;
- **Fort Hill or Staunton River Bridge Fortification**, an earthen fortification, forged at the hands of servant labor during the War Between the States; that told is a remarkable footnote to man’s genius and engineering ingenuity over the land to be used as an impregnable stronghold during the invasion of one’s homeland and they have been ranked as some of “the most well-preserved” earthworks in the Commonwealth;
- **Battleground and Killing Fields**: two components of the pivotal engagement that took place on this sacred soil between one established nation and one vying for independence;
- **Staunton River Bridge**, originally a wood-covered railroad bridge along the Richmond & Danville Railway, that served as the focal point of the 1864 Wilson-Kautz Raid that was successfully defended by 938 soldiers formed from Confederate Reserves and “Old Men & Young Boys;” the current iron structure spans 600 feet in length and was constructed in 1902 by the American Bridge Company;
- **Mulberry Hill Plantation** (ca. 1750’s), the ancestral home of Judge Paul Carrington, an Early American planter, lawyer, politician, which was used as headquarters for the Union forces during the Battle of Staunton River Bridge;

- **Roanoke Station Visitors Center**, a turn-of-the century, Victorian-era Depot that today serves as a welcome center on the Charlotte County side of the Park and houses a museum of Native American artifacts found from the nearby archaeological site; historically and culturally, it serves as a reminder of the trains, citizens, passengers, and soldiers that it once served from the rail lines of the Richmond & Danville Railway (1847-1894), Southern Railway (1884-1982), and Norfolk Southern Railway (1982-1984);
- **Walking Trails** and associated amenities (Picnic Shelter, etc.) provide visitors with more than one mile of connected walking/biking/hiking trails that emphasize wetland and wildlife education and awareness; key elements of the Walking Trails comprise of two Observation Towers that overlook the wetlands that are shown as a commitment between the owners of the Clover Power Station and the people of the community to provide a habitat for flora and fauna; full public access to the trail between Fort Hill and Randolph that was the former rail bed of Norfolk Southern Railway; and the Picnic Shelter, an ideal outdoor location for large gatherings (family reunions, corporate meetings, etc.) or intimate family outings; and
- **Wetlands**, Staunton River Battlefield State Park is home to one of the largest managed wetlands east of the Mississippi, which encompasses approximately 15 acres of park land.

WHEREAS, three segments within the Staunton River Battlefield State Park are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- 44CH62 Randy K. Wade Archaeological Site;
- Mulberry Hill; and
- Fort Hill or Staunton River Bridge Fortification.

WHEREAS, the Staunton River Battlefield State Park and its dependencies would not have been made possible without the support and donations from:

- The Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. and its members;
- The Butler Family, who donated Mulberry Hill Plantation and 40 acres
- Kathryn St. John, founder and former president of the Foundation;
- Ted Bennett, former House of Delegates member;
- Sappony Indian Nation;
- Halifax Chapter United Daughters of the Confederacy;
- John M. Jordan Chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans;
- Charlotte County Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities;
- Lynchburg Bird Club;
- South Central Virginia Genealogical Society;
- Longwood University's Archaeology Field School
- Dr. Brian Bates, Chair Longwood University's Archaeology Field School
- Descendants of Paul Carrington of Mulberry Hill Plantation
- Descendants of Nathaniel Dickerson, Overseer of Mulberry Hill;
- Descendants of the Battle of Staunton River Bridge;
- Norfolk Southern Railway;
- Dominion Resources (formerly, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, who originally donated 86 acres of land and constructed the Clover Visitors Center); and
- Commonwealth of Virginia.

WHEREAS, the preservation, development, and promotion of Staunton River Battlefield State Park can serve the interests of citizens of Southside Virginia and the Commonwealth as:

- A point of view and access to the Staunton Scenic River for people of all ages;
- An enduring monument to the history of engineering, transportation, architecture, and Southside Virginia;
- An important component of Virginia's Retreat, a region in South Central Virginia that offers travelers and visitors the Lee's Retreat and Wilson-Kautz Raid Civil War Driving Tours, the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail, and a wide variety of tourist attractions and abundant outdoor recreational opportunities; Lee's Retreat is comprised of 14 South Central Virginia localities that jointly promote these tourism products to the general product;
- A stop on a regional network of the Wilson-Kautz Driving Trail that is a cornerstone of the 17-county heritage driving tour within Virginia's Retreat: Civil War Driving Tours;
- An anchor attraction amidst others such as Red Hill, the last home and burial place of Patrick Henry and the South Boston/Halifax County Museum, and others;
- A stop on the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail from which to view birds and wildlife in their natural habitat; and
- An asset for heritage tourism, nature tourism, and economic development.

WHEREAS, the Staunton River Battlefield State Park hosted nearly 19,000+ visitors in 2009 and fashioned a residual economic impact of \$303,584.00 in the rural localities of Southside Virginia.

WHEREAS, the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. is supported and maintained through the generosity of its members and volunteers; which together logged an average of 1,730 recorded volunteers hours from 2007-09. For these three years alone, the Foundation and its dedicated staff of volunteers, with their volunteer hours, have provided the Commonwealth of Virginia with an estimated cost savings of \$102,346.80 (calculated at \$19.72/volunteer hour times 5,190 recorded volunteer hours from '07, '08, and '09).

WHEREAS, the proposed budget from the Office of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia has neglected to observe the following in relation to the financial support and donations of the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. to Staunton River Battlefield State Park:

- Financial Support and Donations
 - Event Financing/Underwriting/Sponsoring , Organizing/Planning, and Publicity for:
 - **Easter Egg Hunt**
 - **Civil War Fashion Show** at Mulberry Hill Plantation
 - **Commemoration of the Battle of Staunton River Bridge**
 - **Annual Meeting** of the Foundation Members
 - **Volunteer Recognition Program**
 - **Sappony Indian River Festival**
 - **Haunted Harvest Hayride**
 - **Antebellum Christmas Open House** at Mulberry Hill Plantation
 - **Open House & Recognition for the Archaeological Field School**
 - **Hosted a Tour** for the Cadets of the **Tactical Field School of the United States Military Academy at West Point**
 - Numerous **Interpretive and Educational Programs** throughout the year
 - Funding for **Outdoor Portable Toilet facilities** to serve the Walking Trail and Fort Hill areas, and Special Events;
 - Through a donation, the Foundation secured a **parcel of land** in downtown Randolph adjacent to the U.S. Post Office;
 - Provided Funding for the **purchase of a Bus** to serve as a shuttle between the Clover Visitors Center and Roanoke Station;

- Through the generosity of Foundation members, secured an **authentic Southern Railway Push Cart** that is on permanent display on the Foundation's property in downtown Randolph;
- Funding and Maintenance of the Foundation and Park's website: **www.stauntonriverbattlefield.org**;
- Provides information to visitors, guests, and Foundation members through a quarterly newsletter, *The Sentinel*;
- **Supportive and Dedicated base of Volunteers; and**
- **And ready and willing to do MORE....**

WHEREAS, Board of Trustees for the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. concurs with the Plan of Action as set forth by the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. in saving and preserving the Staunton River Battlefield State Park indefinitely.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Staunton River Foundation hereby affirms and supports this Plan of Action to SAVE Staunton River Battlefield State Park and, like the great cry that went forth in 1864 from the Staunton River Railroad Bridge to the "Old Men & Young Boys" from within the Counties of Charlotte, Halifax, and Mecklenburg to defend the it from a band of invaders, so too does the Foundation cry out and plea to the Legislatures of the Commonwealth to amend the budget proposal to close Staunton River Battlefield State Park and identify funding to enable all of the Commonwealth's State Parks to remain open for the public's access, recreation, and enjoyment.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Board of Trustees for the Historic Staunton River Foundation do hereby adopt this resolution this, the **Fourth day of March in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Ten** and in the **Two Hundredth and Thirty Fourth Year of the Commonwealth**.

Copies of this resolution will be transmitted to the Board of Supervisors in Charlotte and Halifax Counties, the Governor's Office, the Director of State Parks, the Senate Finance Committee, the House of Delegates Appropriations Committee, local delegations, and statewide legislators.

Signed the Board of Trustees of the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc.:

Joey Bane

John Butler

Mary Butler

James Caknipe, Jr.

Grace Elliott

Ronald Epps

Darlene Foster

Stanley Foster

Jean Geoghegan

Patt Graves

Helen Gregory

Janet Johnson

J. Shane Newcombe

Cindy Nichols

Holly Owen

Korey R. Snead

Tom Ward

Otis Martin