

America's Heritage

Saving Our Historic Sites

(NAPSA)—The Civil War, many say, defined the United States as a nation. Now, many of the nation's most significant Civil War battlefields are in danger.

According to Brian Pohanka, Civil War author and preservationist, "Real people risked their lives at these battlefields for ideals they cherished above life itself. Allowing these sites to fall prey to development dishonors the memory of their courage and sacrifice."

Among the organizations fighting to protect these national treasures is the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), the largest non-profit battlefield preservation organization in the United States. CWPT recently released its annual report on America's most endangered battlefield sites.

CWPT's goal is to preserve battlefield land through outright purchases, conservation easements and partnerships with federal, state, and local governments. Among the historic properties CWPT has rescued from the bulldozer's blade are Brandy Station and Manassas in Virginia, Mansfield in Louisiana, Ft. Moultrie in South Carolina, and Shiloh in Tennessee. Over the years, CWPT has helped save more than 14,000 acres in 18 states.

Said James Lighthizer, president of CWPT, "Our Civil War history is disappearing at an alarming pace. Without decisive action, many of the sites listed in our report will be little more than a memory within a few years."

Among the sites the Trust hopes to preserve are:

- Franklin, Tennessee was one of the most agonizing



Keeping urban sprawl from wiping out historic civil war battlefields and similar sites is the work of a non-profit organization.

defeats suffered by the South during the entire Civil War. Today, another agonizing fight rages as local preservationists work tirelessly to save the remaining vestiges of this bloody battlefield, including the former Battleground Academy site.

- Chancellorsville, Virginia is recognized by most historians as General Robert E. Lee's greatest victory. Nevertheless, Chancellorsville has long been among the most threatened battlefields in the nation. Recently, the state announced plans for a bypass road that will cut very close to the battlefield.

- Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, is at the intersection of rivers and history. Harpers Ferry was a favorite haunt of Thomas Jefferson, the scene of John Brown's 1859 raid, the focus of Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's 1862 famous siege and the birthplace of the NAACP. Now, key parcels of the park are threatened with construction and development.

To learn how you can become part of efforts to preserve these and other historic sites, visit CWPT online at www.civilwar.org, or call 1-800-606-1400.