National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2022



Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield

Richmond National Battlefield Park

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name: Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield

Resource Classification: Component Landscape

CLI Identification Number: 300097

Parent Landscape: 300092

Inventory Status: Complete

Park Information

Park Name: Richmond National Battlefield Park

Alpha Code: RICH

Park Organization Code: 4800

Park District: RICH

Region: Northeast

Restricted: Yes

Landscape Description:

The Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit of Richmond National Battlefield Park is in Mechanicsville, about six miles northeast of Richmond, in southern Hanover County, Virginia. Richmond National Battlefield Park commemorates thirteen American Civil War sites around Richmond, Virginia, which served as the capital of the Confederate States of America for most of the war. The park connects certain features within the city with defensive fortifications and battle sites around it. In addition to the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, the park's sites include Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield, Cold Harbor Battlefield, Chickahominy Bluff, Gaines' Mill Battlefield, Chimborazo, Fort Harrison, Glendale Battlefield, Malvern Hill Battlefield, Drewry's Bluff, and Parker's Battery.

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield preserves the core site of the June 26, 1862 conflict between A.P. Hill's Confederate troops and the Union Fifth Corps under the command of Fitz John Porter. Known in the South as the Battle of Mechanicsville, or the Battle of Ellerson's Mill, the battle is recognized today for its connection with the rise of Robert E. Lee and the Confederate army in Virginia.

The Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield park unit today consists of 274 acres across five contiguous land tracts associated with the battle. Contributing characteristics and features include the topography of the steep wooded slopes of the creek ravine, the Ellerson millrace's long narrow trench, the earthen foundation depression of the former mill, and the swampy drainage bottoms of waterways. There are also three humanmade, but unidentified earthen features on the slope to the east of the mill site. Further research may reveal their origin. Contributing circulation is extant in the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. Contributing views include those from the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace to the site of Ellerson's Mill. Contributing small scale features include a Freeman Marker. Noncontributing features include a modern pedestrian bridge indicating the location of the creek crossing during the battle, the utility transmission line across the southern section of the park, and successional forest vegetation which has grown in areas historically open. Numerous non-contributing, but compatible, small-scale features are also located in the park, including NPS metal and Plexiglas waysides; small, painted metal interpretive markers; wooden split rail fencing; and metal gates and culverts.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Richmond National Battlefield Park is nationally significant under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A, B, C, and D as a collection of major Civil War battlefields and other period resources associated with the Union's attempts to take the Confederate capital city of Richmond. The battlefield associated with the Beaver Dam Creek unit is nationally significant under Criteria A in the area of Military History for the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, June 26, 1862, also known as the Battle of Ellerson's Mill or the Battle of Mechanicsville. The battlefield is one of six in the park associated with the Peninsula Campaign (March 20-August 16, 1862), during which Union Major General George B. McClellan devised a plan to lay siege to Richmond by water instead of over land. McClellan transported his Union Army of the Potomac in early April by boat to the tip of Virginia's Southeast Peninsula. After winning a series of battles on the peninsula, McClellan reached the outskirts of Richmond in late May and began to make preparations to lay siege to the city. Following the Battle of Seven Pines (May 31-June 1, 1862), Major General Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and began improving the city's defenses and making plans for taking the offensive. During the week of June 26–July 2, Lee launched a series of attacks that have since become known as the Seven Days' Battles. By June 26, the day of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, Union forces had fortified the strategic point where Cold Harbor Road (now the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace) crossed Beaver Dam Creek, near Ellerson's Mill. Earlier that month, troops felled trees to create obstacles and built earthen parapets to shelter men and cannons. The Union forces also incorporated Ellerson's mill pond and millrace into their defenses, which helped the two Union brigades above the east bank of Beaver Dam Creek thwart assaults by brigades from Confederate forces. Though the Union was victorious, the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek ultimately forced the withdrawal of the Army of the Potomac under McClellan and changed the fundamental nature of the conflict for both sides. The battlefield is also nationally significant under Criterion B for associations with the careers of the principal commanders of the opposing forces during the early stages of the Civil War: Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) and George B. McClellan (1826-1885).

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is nationally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Commemoration and Conservation for the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century efforts to memorialize and preserve the battlefield, which paralleled national trends in the veneration and protection of Civil War battle sites. The battlefield is also significant under Criterion D in the area of Historic (Non-Aboriginal) Archeology for above-ground and subsurface resources that have the potential to yield information about the battle and antebellum uses.

The period of significance for the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is within the period of significance for the larger Richmond National Battlefield Park, extending from 1800, the approximate construction date of the mill that existed during the Civil War, to 1944, the end of the initial park development under the guidance of the National Park Service.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The physical integrity of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1800 to 1944, with the existing conditions assessed in 2022. Characteristics and features that shaped land use and influenced the course of the battle remain, including the topography of the steep wooded slopes of the creek ravine, the Union's defensive earthen parapet, and the Ellerson millrace's long narrow trench and the swampy drainage bottoms of waterways. Historic circulation, evident in the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace, reveals the route used to move troops and armaments during the battle. The modern pedestrian bridge indicates the location of the creek crossing during the battle. Though the nineteenth-century mill building is gone, its square foundation depression and millrace helps visitors to understand the strategic importance of the battlefield's natural and humanmade topography. Views from the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace to the site of Ellerson's Mill evoke historic spatial relationships. Contributing small-scale features include a Freeman Marker.

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield retains integrity of location and design, revealing important spatial relationships between the existing historic roads and Ellerson's Mill foundation and millrace laid across the native topography's creek swales and river bottoms. The creek's deep swale and the remnant mill foundation, millrace, and Union earthworks convey historic feeling and association as Federal forces used these features for protection and entrenchment during the battle. Adjacent suburban development, visible from some locations at the site, the Old Dominion Energy Transmission line across the site's southern section and increased successional forest growth diminish integrity of setting. Except for information in archeological resources, including Federal earthworks, the mill foundation, and the millrace, the integrity of workmanship is diminished in the landscape.

Condition:
Overall, the condition of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield landscape is evaluated as "Good," with established vegetation patterns maintained by mowing and relatively stable native forest communities. Historic park roads, trails,

monuments, and facilities are well maintained. The landscape's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is a component landscape within the Richmond National Battlefield Landscape, which comprises the entire Richmond National Battlefield Park. In addition to Beaver Dam Creek, there are eight park units that function as component landscapes: Cold Harbor, Chickahominy Bluff, Drewry's Bluff, Fort Harrison and vicinity, Gaines' Mill, Glendale Battlefield, Malvern Hill Battlefield, Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains, and Parker's Battery.

Landscape Type:

Historic Site

Historic Vernacular Landscape

Other Names:

Other Name:	Beaver Dam Creek	**Other Name Type:**	Both Current And Historic
Other Name:	Ellerson's Mill Battlefield	**Other Name Type:**	Historic
Other Name:	Mechanicsville Battlefield	**Other Name Type:**	Historic

Site Plan



Site map for Beaver Dam Creek.

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 09/27/2022

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Level I field survey work was performed by N. J. Brown with summer interns A. Fowler and V. Ong in June, 1999. C. Sams completed additional research, writing and editing in February-March 2000 under the guidance of Brown. Sams entered the information into the CLAIMS database.

Stuart Hayden, Associate with the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, conducted field photographic documentation and historical research for this Cultural Landscape Inventory in summer and autumn 2021. Mapping was completed by Kelsey Little, GIS Specialist with the Olmsted Center, with contributions by Stuart Hayden and Robert Krick, Historian, Richmond NBP. Jennifer Hanna, Historical Landscape Architect, wrote the Cultural Landscape Inventory in July 2022, which was reviewed by Jeff Killion, Regional Cultural Landscape Inventory Coordinator with the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. The cultural resource contact for the park is Robert Krick, Historian, who may be reached at bob_krick@nps.gov or 804-226-1981 ext. 5021.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield
Richmond National Battlefield Park

Richmond National Battlefield Park concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is hereby approved and accepted.

MICHAEL FIASCO Digitally signed by MICHAEL FIASCO
Date: 2022.09.27 10:33:48 -04'00'

Superintendent, Richmond National Battlefield Park Date

Park Concurrence Form, September 27, 2022.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Virginia	Hanover County

Size (Acres): 274.36

Land Tract Number(s)

01-101, 240.53 acres
01-117, 15.081 acres
01-103, 14.042 acres
01-106, 0.41 acres

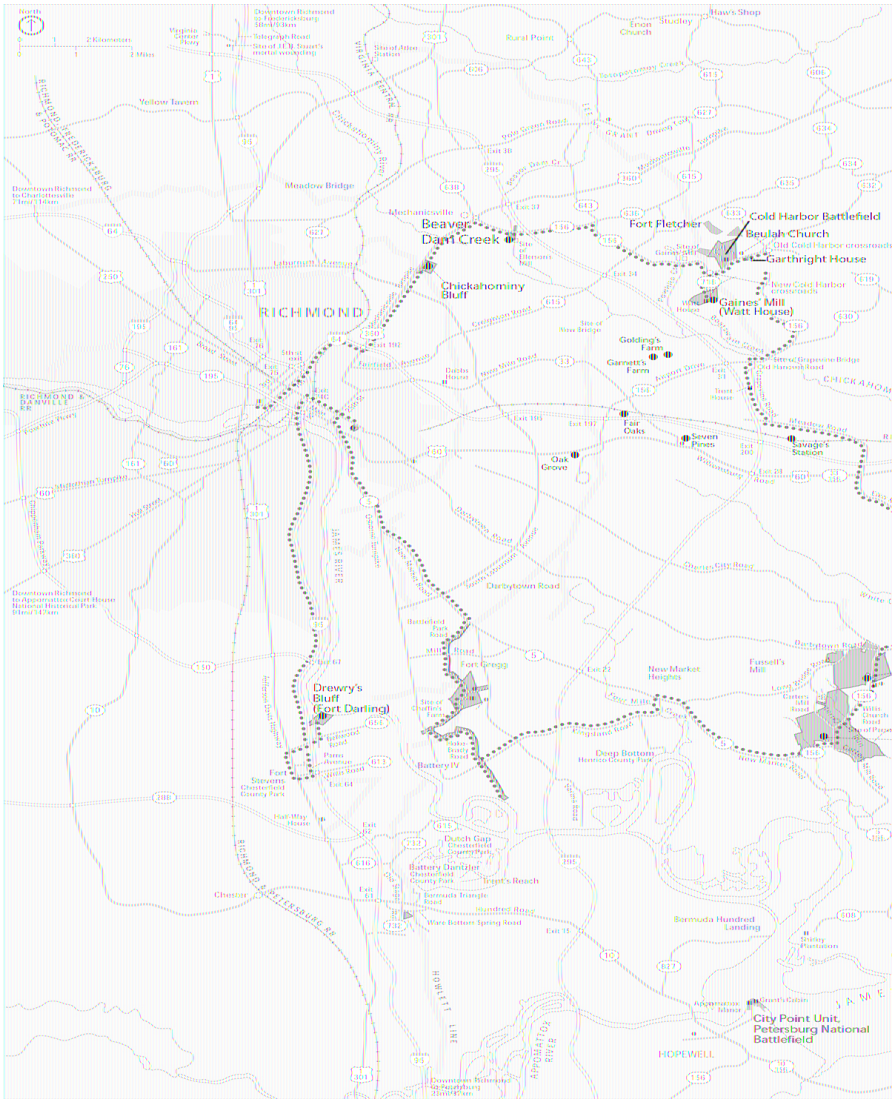
Boundary Description:

The Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield CLI boundary corresponds to the land within the authorized boundary of Richmond National Battlefield Park's Beaver Dam Creek Unit, owned in fee simple by the federal government. The boundary encompasses 274.36 contiguous acres, as shown on the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield existing conditions site plan and is most closely associated with the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek on June 26, 1862. Five contiguous land tracts comprise the 274.37-acre unit. Four are south of Cold Harbor Road (State Route 156), and one small narrow tract extends north from Cold Harbor Road. From Cold Harbor Road at the northern end, the irregularly shaped property extends 2,300 feet southward in a 500-foot-wide corridor along the east side of Beaver Dam Creek and then opens into a 2,500-ft.-wide swath following a southeastward turn in the stream. This broad portion of the tract continues for approximately 1.5 miles, along the Beaver Dam Creek floodplain to the swampy confluence with the Chickahominy River, which forms the unit's southern border. The tract adjoins Meadowview Park, a 557-acre property owned by Henrico County on the south bank of the Chickahominy River. Suburban residential subdivisions are to the unit's north, east, and west. (Shephard et.al. 2018: 27)

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
Aerial Photograph	Area	37.598343	-77.360529	
Aerial Photograph	Area	37.600571	-77.358021	
Aerial Photograph	Area	37.598017	-77.355562	
Aerial Photograph	Area	37.595926	-77.354826	
Aerial Photograph	Area	37.586586	-77.349496	
Aerial Photograph	Area	37.578281	-77.344485	
Aerial Photograph	Area	37.588848	-77.363519	

Location Map:



The Beaver Dam Creek unit of Richmond NBP is in Mechanicsville, approximately six miles northeast of downtown Richmond, on the south side of Cold Harbor Road/State Route 156. (Aveneza map, annotated by Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation--hereafter OCLP)

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

The park unit lies one mile southeast of the center of Mechanicsville, a sprawling suburban community with medium-density residential development adjoining the park unit to the west, north, and east. Interstate Highway 295, the express beltway around Richmond, is less than 300 yards north of the unit, and the busy commercial corridor of the Mechanicsville Turnpike is 0.8 miles to the northwest. The protected wetlands of the Chickahominy River stream valley within Meadowview Park, a 557-acre property owned by Henrico County on the south bank of the Chickahominy River, provide a buffer along the unit's southern border. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 27)

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

The Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield lies near the "fall line," roughly delineating the geological and topographical boundary between the Coastal Plain to the east and the Piedmont Plateau to the west. Waterfalls, rapids, and cataracts separate the lower, navigable, tidal portions of Virginia's major waterways, including the James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac Rivers, from their narrower, more swiftly flowing upper stretches to the northwest. Several small streams, including Beaver Dam Creek, meander through portions of the unit, draining into the Chickahominy River, a tributary of the James River. The Chickahominy River's nearly one-mile floodplain includes all of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. Swampy lowlands and forested riverine areas comprise most of the unit, with a small upland at the unit's northern end of loosely consolidated sedimentary rock, diatomaceous clays, and fine sands of the Calvert formation. Stands of wetland forest dominated by mixed oak species, ash and red maple grow along the Chickahominy River. (Taverna 2015: 20-21) The modified continental climate of the region generally affords warm summers and mild winters with high humidity. (NOAA 2021) Temperatures range from an average low of 28.8 degrees Fahrenheit in January to an average high of 89.5 degrees Fahrenheit in July, with an average annual precipitation of 45.5 inches. (NOAA 2021)

Type of Context: Political

Description:

All land parcels within the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit are owned in fee simple by the National Park Service and are zoned Agricultural (A-1) under land conservation according to the Hanover County Board of Supervisors. Lands adjacent to the property have a variety of zoning designations, including Agricultural (A-1), Residential (R-2), and Limited Industrial District (M-1) north of the southern section of the park. Suburban housing and light industrial development surround most of Richmond. Major transportation corridors, including US Interstates 95 and 295, have accelerated development in the area. (NR 2018, Sec.7: 6)

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/27/2022

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield meets the management category “Must be Preserved and Maintained” because the property relates to the park’s legislated significance. The March 2, 1936 enabling legislation for Richmond National Battlefield Park, amended in 1995, stipulates that when the United States acquired title to,
“all such lands, structures, and other property in the military battlefield area or areas in the city of Richmond, Virginia, or within five miles of the city limits of said city or within five miles of the boundary of the present Richmond Battlefield State Park…as necessary or desirable for national battlefield park purposes…provided, that such area or areas shall include, at least, the Richmond Battlefield Parks now belonging to the State of Virginia.” (Act of March 2, 1936, Chapter 113; 49 Stat. 1155, from NR 2018, Sec.8: 96)

Management Agreements:

Type of Agreement: None

Management Agreement Expiration Date:

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative: The boundary of the Beaver Dam Creek cultural landscape corresponds to the federally owned parcels.

Located in managed wilderness?: No

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Adjacent lands are lands outside the cultural landscape boundary, including lands inside or outside the park. The Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield park unit contains portions of the core area of conflict during the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek. However, much of the northern section of the battlefield, beyond the park boundary, has been lost to suburban development. Meadowview Park, a 575-acre Henrico County park adjacent to the unit's southern border, preserves open space and wetlands. The nonprofit organization, the Richmond Battlefields Association, owns an 8-acre residential parcel to the northwest of the Ellerson Mill site, across Cold Harbor Road, within the park's authorized boundary. Dense suburban housing subdivisions are east and west of the park unit.

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Entered Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is part of Richmond National Battlefield Park (NBP), which encompasses a series of non-contiguous sites authorized on March 2, 1936, “for the purpose of protecting, managing, and interpreting the resources associated with the Civil War battles in and around the City of Richmond, Virginia,” and established on July 14, 1944. The National Park Service acquired 11.95 acres at the northern end of the current Beaver Dam Creek property, including the site of Ellerson’s Mill and Millrace, from the State of Virginia in 1944. The NPS acquired an additional thirteen acres east of Ellerson’s millrace and 236 acres comprising the Beaver Dam Creek confluence with the Chickahominy River in 2004 and 2008, respectively.

Richmond NBP was administratively listed without documentation in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966, with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. Initial documentation of resources occurred on January 16, 1973, when the park was listed on the Virginia Landmark Register under the name “Richmond National Battlefield Park.” For this listing, a National Register form was prepared but was not approved by the Keeper of the National Register. The documentation accepted by the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) indicated that the site was significant under Criterion A in the areas of politics and social/humanitarian, Criterion C in the area of architecture, and Criterion D for archeology (historic-aboriginal). The documentation identified the “nineteenth century” as the period of significance but included no specific dates. The documentation itemized resources under four headings: earthworks (11 areas), monuments (approximately 80), Watt House, and Garthright House.

On February 18, 2000, the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) “The Civil War in Virginia, 1861-1865: Historic and Archeological Resources” was accepted by the Keeper. The MPDF identified property types and historic contexts to evaluate historic and archeological resources related to the Civil War. The six property types were battlefields, earthworks, campsites, military hospitals, military headquarters, and military prisons. The documentation categorized Richmond NHB under the battlefields, earthworks, military hospitals, and military headquarters property types under Criteria A, C, and D. The MPDF included the conflict at Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield (June 26, 1862) as part of the Peninsula Campaign.

On October 5, 2009, the Virginia SHPO concurred with the National Park Service on the eligibility of numerous resources at the park as part of an update to the List of Classified Structures (LCS). Three features at Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield park unit were evaluated as contributing features: Ellerson’s Mill Race, Old Cold Harbor Road Trace, and Freeman Marker #3.

On April 27, 2018 the Keeper accepted the first comprehensive park-wide National Register documentation for Richmond National Battlefield Park. According to the documentation, the park is primarily significant as the site of major Civil War battlefields and related properties associated with the Union's attempts to take the Confederate capital city of Richmond during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, the Overland Campaign of 1864, and the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign of 1864–1865. Significance for the 2,879.42-acre federally owned historic district was identified under criteria A, B, C, and D at the national level in the areas of Military, Ethnic Heritage-Black, Conservation, Other (Commemoration), Science, Engineering, Architecture, Archeology-Historic (Non-Aboriginal), and Archeology-Prehistoric. Robert E. Lee, George B. McClellan, and Ulysses S. Grant were identified as significant persons. The district's contributing commemorative monuments were evaluated as meeting Criteria Consideration F (Commemorative Properties) because they possess significance from their age, design, and symbolic values. The period of significance for the district was listed as c.1720-1944, beginning with the construction of the Garthright House and ending when the NPS officially accepted management of the park. For archeology, the period

of significance was listed as 1680-1865 for historic archeology and 8000 BCE-1600 CE for prehistoric archeology.

At Beaver Dam Creek, the 2018 documentation identified the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield and Ellerson's Mill as a contributing sites, as well as three contributing structures and objects: Ellerson's Millrace, Old Cold Harbor Road Trace, and Freeman Marker #3.

According to research conducted for the CLI documentation and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the areas and periods of significance at Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield are adequately documented based on the park-wide 2018 National Register documentation. Contributing resources are adequately described in the documentation. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, the property is considered "Entered-Documented."

Eligibility: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 04/27/2018

Concurrence Narrative:

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Contributing

Classification: Site

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

Richmond National Battlefield Park:
Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is a contributing site of the Richmond National Battlefield Park Historic District. Richmond NBP comprises 13 discontiguous administrative units encompassing slightly more than 3,600 acres in and around the cities of Richmond and Mechanicsville, within Henrico, Hanover, and Chesterfield counties. The district contains six sites associated with the Peninsula Campaign, including Beaver Dam Creek, Drewry's Bluff, Chickahominy Bluff, Gaines' Mill, Glendale, and Malvern Hill. Major General George B. McClellan, who orchestrated the Peninsula Campaign, transported his Union Army of the Potomac by boat to the tip of Virginia's Southeast Peninsula in early April 1862. After winning a series of battles on the peninsula, McClellan reached the outskirts of Richmond in late May and began preparing to lay siege to the city. After the Battle of Seven Pines (May 31–June 1, 1862), Major General Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and began to improve the defenses around Richmond while making plans to take the offensive. Between June 26 and July 2, Lee carried out a series of attacks that have since become known as the Seven Days' Battles. Though the Seven Days' Battles began with a loss at Beaver Dam Creek, General Lee convinced the cautious McClellan to abandon his goal of capturing Richmond. As the Union army marched away from Richmond and toward the relative safety of the James River, Confederate forces attacked the Union forces at strategic locations in a week-long series of battles. Richmond National Battlefield Park's Cold Harbor and Totopotomoy Creek battlefields are the locations of the last two battles of the Overland Campaign (May 4–June 15, 1864), during which Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant directed the operations of the Army of the Potomac against General Lee. Following a stalemate at Cold Harbor, Grant changed his war strategy to focus on the capture of Petersburg, a major transportation and supply hub 25 miles south of Richmond.

The district is nationally significant under Criteria A, B, C, and D in the areas of Military, Ethnic Heritage-Black, Conservation, Other (Commemoration), Engineering, Architecture, Archeology-Historic (Non-

Aboriginal), and Archeology-Prehistoric. The district is nationally significant for its associations with Robert E. Lee, George B. McClellan, and Ulysses S. Grant. The district's contributing commemorative monuments are evaluated as meeting Criteria Consideration F (Commemorative Properties) because they possess significance from their age, design, and symbolic values. The period of significance for the district is ca.1720-1944, beginning with the construction of the Garthright House (within the Cold Harbor unit) and ending with the year initial national park development was completed. The period of significance extends from 8000 BCE to 1600 CE in pre-contact archaeology and from 1680 to 1865 for historic archeology.

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield:
Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is nationally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Military History, Commemoration, and Conservation as the site of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, June 26, 1862, and for its association with the Civil War battlefield memorialization and preservation movement, which led to the establishment of Richmond National Battlefield Park in 1936. The battlefield is nationally significant under Criterion B in the area of Military History for associations with the careers of the principal commanders of the opposing forces during the early stages of the Civil War, namely Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) and George B. McClellan (1826-1885). Lastly, the battlefield is significant under Criterion D in the area of Historic (Non-Aboriginal) Archeology for both above ground and subsurface resources that have the potential to yield information about the battle and antebellum uses of the area.

The period of significance for Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, as part of the Richmond National Battlefield Park Historic District, is 1800-1944, from the approximate year by which the millrace was constructed to the end of the initial period of National Park Service development. The period of significance corresponds to June 26, 1862, the date of the battle at Beaver Dam Creek, which began the week of the Seven Days' Battles.

CRITERION A

Military History:
Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is nationally significant in the area of Military as the site of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, also known as the Battle of Mechanicsville or the Battle of Ellerson's Mill, which took place on June 26, 1862, in Hanover County, Virginia, about six miles from Richmond. Union forces staved off Confederate attacks at Beaver Dam Creek by incorporating Ellerson's millrace into makeshift entrenchments using the creek's steep sides to protect their position. Nevertheless, following the Battle at Beaver Dam Creek, the Union army began a retreat away from the Confederate capital city, a movement that resulted in the rest of the Seven Days' Battles.

Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, June 26, 1862.
As the sun was setting on June 25, 1862, General McClellan received intelligence that Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson was on his way to join General Lee. Worried that Jackson would attack the Union's vulnerable right flank, McClellan ordered Brigadier General Fitz John Porter and his men to move a few miles east from the small hamlet of Mechanicsville to a position on the high banks of Beaver Dam Creek. The creek flowed through swampy terrain and the soldiers could use its steep swales for defense. The Pennsylvania Reserves climbed up and held ground along the elevated east bank of the creek for one and a half miles. The Federal troops stretched between a wooded area north of Old Church Road south past Ellerson's Mill to where Old Cold Harbor Road (now the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace) crossed the Beaver Dam Creek. (NR 2018 Sec.8: 51-53, citing Burton 2001: 65-67; Krick 1999; Sears 2002: 200-202) In his report on the battle, McClellan described the position:
"[Brigadier General Truman] Seymour's brigade held the left of the line from the Chickahominy to beyond the [Ellerson's] mill, partly in woods and partly in clear ground, and [Brigadier General John] Reynolds' the right, principally in the woods and covering the upper road. The artillery occupied positions commanding the roads and the open ground across the [Beaver Dam] creek. Timber had been felled, rifle pits dug, and the position generally prepared with a care that greatly contributed to the success of the day. The passage of the creek was difficult along the whole front, and impracticable for artillery, except by the two roads where the main efforts of the enemy were directed." (NR 2018 Sec.8: 51,citing OCULUS, Vol.II, Pt.1: 54)

Though Lee worried about McClellan's preparations, he decided to move forward and attack on the Federal right the following day once Jackson and Brigadier General Lawrence O.B. Branch arrived with reinforcements. At about 3:00 p.m., with no sign of either Jackson or Branch, an impatient Major General

A.P. Hill decided to move forward on his own. Hill's skirmishers easily overcame the few Federals that Porter had stationed at Mechanicsville to monitor for a Confederate attack from the east. He opened Mechanicsville Bridge for Confederate troops to move toward Beaver Dam. From his vantage point on Chickahominy Bluff, Lee observed action and went to confer with A.P. Hill. Though he still had no word of Jackson's whereabouts, Lee decided to allow Hill to continue toward the Union position and ordered Major Generals James Longstreet and D.H. Hill to follow. Once the Confederates broke through the woods on the west side of Beaver Dam Creek, they had to descend its steep west bank and then ascend its east bank under direct fire from the Union troops. Hundreds of men died attempting to reach the top of the creek embankment. (Burton 2001: 64-65; Sears 2002: 203-204)

The Confederate assault then shifted to the Federal left along Old Cold Harbor Road, which crossed Beaver Dam Creek at Ellerson's Mill. As the troops approached the western bank of the creek, they came under heavy fire, as the Union troops took advantage of cover offered by the trench of Ellerson's millrace. The Confederates also became entangled in the abatis erected by the Union troops on the west side of the creek, along with the waist-deep creek that essentially served as a moat around the Federal position. The Confederate forces could not retreat. Lee sent in additional troops along Old Cold Harbor Road to help, but they too met with devastating loss. The Confederate soldiers took cover and waited until nightfall to slip away from the battlefront. The portion of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield that is preserved in the Richmond National Battlefield Park includes the area where Federal brigade repelled the Confederate attacks in the vicinity of Ellerson's Mill. More than 1,700 casualties resulted from the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, 1,400 of which were Confederates. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 53, citing Burton 2001: 74; Sears 2002: 204-206)

Though McClellan rightly claimed victory after the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, he still believed his army was far outnumbered. When he learned that General Jackson's large force never reached the battlefield, he became even more concerned about his ability to maintain his supply connection to White House Landing. He decided that night to shift his base of operations to the James River, where his supply line would be less vulnerable, and the navy's gunboats could protect his army. Although McClellan would not admit it, the decision meant abandoning the Union's offensive campaign against Richmond. Early on June 27, he notified Porter that his corps would serve as the army's rear guard during the retreat. His orders were to abandon the Beaver Dam Creek line and fall back to a plateau above the east bank of Boatswain's Swamp, about one mile southeast of the grist mill on Powhite Creek owned by Dr. William F. Gaines. (Sears 2002: 204-213) This action began the Union pivot away from Richmond, and the retreat led to the Battle of Gaines Mill and the remainder of the Seven Days' Battles.

Extant contributing features on the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield associated with the area of Military History include the remnant Ellerson's Mill foundation and millrace, the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace, and a stone wall, possibly associated with Old Cold Harbor Road. Natural systems and features include Beaver Dam Creek, the Brandy Branch, and the Chickahominy River, as well as the natural steep topography of the site.

Commemoration and Conservation:
Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is significant at the national level in the areas of Commemoration and Conservation for its association with the Civil War battlefield memorialization and preservation movement, which led to the establishment of Richmond National Battlefield Park in 1936. The 1862 and 1864 Civil War battlefield sites surrounding Richmond, including Beaver Dam Creek, did not initially benefit from the federal battlefield preservation efforts in the 1890s, which resulted in the country's first four national military parks. All were Civil War Battlefield sites managed under the War Department. Over the next few decades, however, numerous individuals and groups petitioned Congress for additional parks and memorials at other American battlefields. To assist in prioritizing these requests, in 1926 Congress authorized a study of all the nation's battlefields. At about the same time, Richmond journalist and historian Douglas Southall Freeman led a group of interested residents to form the Battlefield Markers Association. They raised money for the identification and erection of 59 commemorative markers at various battlefield sites in and around Richmond. The collection of "Freeman Markers", one of which is located on the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, is the country's earliest known series of non-governmental historical markers. The Freeman Markers each consist of a 2-foot by 3 feet by 3.5-foot cast iron inscription tablet set at an angle on a concrete capstone with a granite base. The cast iron tablets have raised lettering describing the portion of the battle commemorated, and each has a unique identifying number at

the lower left corner. The Battlefield Markers Association subsequently formed a local corporation to preserve portions of the Richmond battlefield lands through private land acquisition. Initially, the nonprofit group purchased the site of Ellerson's mill and millrace with slightly more than eleven acres of the Beaver Dam Creek battlefield in 1927 and 1928. In 1932, the Commonwealth of Virginia took ownership of the lands, establishing the Richmond Battlefield Park as its first state-managed public park.

The transfer of the country's national military parks from the War Department to the National Park Service in 1933 brought about significant changes in the direction of battlefield preservation and interpretation efforts. Congress passed legislation authorizing Richmond National Battlefield Park (NBP) on March 2, 1936. Virginia's government initiated the transfer of the Richmond Battlefield Park lands to the federal government in 1938. Following a lengthy legal process, the National Park Service officially accepted management responsibility for the park on July 14, 1944.

The Commonwealth of Virginia, together with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) under the supervision of the NPS, developed the battlefield park between 1927-1944 according to the prevailing principles of battlefield preservation and commemoration. Austerity measures associated with World War II curtailed NPS development at Richmond, as at most national parks, after 1944. The size and overall appearance of Richmond NBP remained relatively static for much of the second half of the twentieth century, even during the Mission 66 period (1956–1966) of infrastructure investments throughout the National Park System. The few visitor facilities constructed at Richmond during the 1950s and 1960s, such as the Cold Harbor Visitor Center, were removed or substantially altered later. New development at Richmond NBP began within the last two decades (ca.1995-2015), as the park acquired additional battlefield lands that have more than tripled the federally conserved acreage. In 2015, the National Park Service acquired 236 acres of wooded wetland south of the Ellerson mill site at Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. The Richmond NBP, established in 1936 and developed with state and federal assistance through 1944, remains an example of early NPS preservation work. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 78)

There are no documented resources created by the CCC at Beaver Dam Creek. However, the 1930s Master Plan for Richmond National Battlefield included a proposal to restore "Ellerson's Mill and dam" as a ranger station. World War II intervened, and park management did not proceed with the project. The CCC erected more than 400 markers throughout Richmond NBP, including the Beaver Dam Creek unit, primarily designation markers explaining the fortification remains. (Baril 1995: 12-16; Willett 1956: 57-63, as cited in NR 2018, Sec.8: 78-80) Extant features associated with the area of Commemoration at Beaver Dam Creek includes one Freeman Marker, and perhaps a small stone wall located near the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace that may date from CCC era improvements to the road.

CRITERION B

Military History:
Richmond NBP is significant at the national level in the area of Military History for its associations with defining moments in the military careers of the principal commanders of the opposing forces during the early stages of the Civil War, namely Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) and George B. McClellan (1826-1885). Please refer to the 2018 National Register documentation for detailed information on the roles of McClellan and Lee at Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 75-81)

CRITERION D

Historic (Non-Aboriginal) Archaeology:
According to the 2018 National Register, the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield may be significant at the national level in the area of Historic (Non-Aboriginal) Archaeology. While the Malvern Hill, Glendale, and Gaines' Mill units of Richmond NBP have undergone a systematic, unit-wide archeological review or survey, only smaller-scale, primarily compliance-related projects have been conducted at Cold Harbor, Drewry's Bluff, Totopotomoy Creek, Beaver Dam, and Fort Harrison. Most such projects have resulted in the identification of low-density pre- and post-contact artifact scatters without clear temporal or cultural affiliations. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 107)

Despite the lack of unit-wide systematic survey within the park, Beaver Dam Creek has the potential to yield substantive information about the bloody contest for the Confederate capital of Richmond that took

place during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862. The identified archeological resources and surviving aboveground elements of the military landscape at Malvern Hill, Glendale, and Gaines' Mill illustrate the organization, operation, and experiences of the Union and Confederate armies that can be extrapolated to archeologically unexplored portions of the park. Because the war was fought on a preexisting cultural landscape shaped by an agrarian economy dependent on slave labor, the district also has the potential to yield important information about the antebellum development of that landscape and the enslaved and free people who lived on it. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 108)

The 2018 National Register documentation does not specifically identify any archeological sites at Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. As such research and evaluation in this area of significance is beyond the scope of the CLI, please refer to the 2018 National Register documentation for more information and an extensive bibliography.

CRITERION CONSIDERATION F: COMMEMORATIVE PROPERTIES

Contributing commemorative monuments at Cold Harbor Battlefield meet Criteria Consideration F because they possess significance from their age, design, and symbolic values. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 44)

National Register Significance Criteria:

A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

B - Associated with lives of persons significant in our past

D - Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history

National Register Criteria Consideration:

F -- A commemorative property

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1800 - CE 1944

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Shaping the Political Landscape	The Civil War	Battles In The North And South	
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Social and Humanitarian Movements	Historic Preservation Movement	
Transforming the Environment	Historic Preservation	The Federal Government Enters The Movement	

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Archeology

Area of Significance Subcategory: Historic-Non-Aboriginal

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Conservation

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Military

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Other

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative: Commemoration

NRIS Information:

NRIS Name:	Richmond National Battlefield Park
NRIS ID:	66000836
Primary Certification Date:	10/15/1966
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy
NRIS Name:	Richmond National Battlefield Park
NRIS ID:	66000836
Primary Certification Date:	04/27/2018

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number:	043-0033
Name:	Richmond National Battlefield Park
Listed Date:	01/16/1973

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
BCE 8000 - 1000	Inhabited	Groups of people inhabit the region, occupying small, seasonal camps, and subsisting by hunting, fishing, and gathering wild plants.
BCE 1000 - 200	Settled	Humans increasingly inhabit the Chickahominy River valley year-round. They cultivate a variety of vegetables on a patchwork of fields and woodlands surrounding more permanent dwellings. Village populations reach several hundred.
CE 200 - 1607	Settled	Several Algonquian-speaking tribes form a political alliance lead by the Powhatan.
CE 1607 - 1775	Colonized	Jamestown is settled in 1607 and English settlers colonize the region.
CE 1607 - 1612	Explored	John Smith explores several nearby rivers, including the Chickahominy River; Pocahontas, reportedly one of Chief Powhatan`s favorite children, begins visiting Jamestown with other children.
CE 1607 - 1609	Explored	Between 1607 and 1609, explorers led by Captain Christopher Newport, including Captain John Smith, leave Jamestown on an exploratory mission. They travel up Powhatan`s River, now known as the James River, stopping at what is now Osborne Landing.
CE 1611	Established	Sir Thomas Dale establishes Henricus, or Henrico Town, the colony`s second settlement.
CE 1630	Expanded	English colonists began considerable western expansion
CE 1634 - 1643	Established	Charles River Shire, one of the eight original shires (counties) of the Virginia Colony forms, and renamed York County in 1643.
CE 1720	Established	Hanover County is established from the west end of New Kent County.
CE 1737	Established	Richmond is established by William Byrd II.
CE 1720 - 1775	Built	Canals and roads are built to improve shipment of goods from the region.
CE 1720 - 1775	Farmed/Harvested	Agriculture in the area shifts from tobacco to grain production.
CE 1820 - 1825	Built	Ellerson’s Mill building is constructed between 1800-1825
CE 1800 - 1860	Built	A millrace at Beaver Dam Creek is likely constructed by 1800, running roughly north along the east bank of Beaver Dam Creek to the north side of Cold Harbor Road.
CE 1800	Built	In ca.1800 a road is constructed along Beaver Dam Creek from Mechanicsville to Cold Harbor.
CE 1862	Military Operation	Associated with the 1862 Seven Days’ Battles, fighting occurs at Beaver Dam Creek on June 26, 1862.
CE 1925	Memorialized	The Battlefield Markers Association erects “Freeman Marker #3” on the east side of Old Cold Harbor Road Trace as it parallels Beaver Dam Creek.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1927	Purchased/Sold	In the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield area, the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation (RBPC) buys 8.55 acres of land from Augustus Brooks “and wife” on December 2, 1927.
CE 1927	Purchased/Sold	RBPC buys 1.26 acres of land from George Knox Crutchfield “and wife” on December 12, 1927, described as “part of the Old Ellerson’s Mill site” and also including the “Ellerson’s Millrace or Canal.”
CE 1928	Purchased/Sold	RBPC buys 2.14 acres of land from John Thomas Scott “and wife” on January 18, 1928.
CE 1932	Land Transfer	Commonwealth of Virginia acquires 143.25 acres of land from RBPC, establishing Virginia's first state park, Richmond Battlefield Park.
CE 1935	Rehabilitated	The nineteenth-century alignment of Old Cold Harbor Road is rehabilitated to provide better access to Ellerson’s Mill by the CCC
CE 1936	Established	US Congress establishes Richmond National Battlefield Park (NBP), which includes Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield.
CE 1937	Planned	NPS prepares its first Master Plan for Richmond NBP, proposing the restoration of Ellerson’s Mill and dam as a contact and ranger station with maps and parking
CE 1943	Purchased/Sold	The Virginia Conservation Commission, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, conveys 11.95 acres including the three parcels they acquired in 1927-1928 containing the millrace and the site of Ellerson’s Mill to the federal government.
CE 1944	Established	Eight years of legal issues regarding the transfer of land titles, back taxes, right-of-way easements, and other issues are resolved, allowing the NPS to officially accept the park on July 14, 1944.
CE 1950 - 1959	Purchased/Sold	In the 1950s Old Dominion Energy Virginia acquires a right-of-way for a transmission line that crosses the southern section of the battlefield, which was privately owned at the time.
CE 1960	Planned	The park prepares a new master plan for Beaver Dam Creek. The plan includes maps interpreting troop movements on the battlefield to inform interpretative development and the visitor experience.
CE 1966	Built	An overlook is built at Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield as part of the1960 Master Plan.
CE 1972	Altered	The NPS and the Commonwealth of Virginia enter a cooperative agreement to realign State Route 156, then called Old Cold Harbor Road, from its nineteenth century alignment to an alignment along the northern boundary of Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. They rename the road “Route 156/Cold Harbor Road”. The northern section of the former alignment of Old Cold Harbor Road becomes the entrance road to the park. The eastern section of the former road becomes a pedestrian path across Beaver Dam Creek to the mill site.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1976	Built	A storm water sewer line is installed at Beaver Dam Creek in the vicinity of Ellerson's Mill.
CE 1992	Built	Beaver Dam Creek pedestrian foot bridge is built.
CE 1996	Purchased/Sold	The Conservation Fund acquires about 236 acres of land comprising the Beaver Dam Creek confluence with the Chickahominy River from Cold Harbor Associates.
CE 1997	Purchased/Sold	The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities acquires about 13 acres of land east of Ellerson's Millrace from B & F Limited Partnership.
CE 1999	Removed	The overlook at Beaver Dam Creek is removed.
CE 2004	Purchased/Sold	The NPS acquires about 13 acres of land west of Ellerson's Millrace from The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities
CE 2012 - 2008	Purchased/Sold	NPS acquires about 236 acres of land comprising the Beaver Dam Creek confluence with the Chickahominy River from the Conservation Fund
CE 2010	Removed	Hazardous trees are removed from Beaver Dam Creek near the trail.
CE 2013 - 2015	Repaired	The pedestrian foot bridge is repaired.
CE 2021 - 2022	Repaired	Surface treatment of the parking area is completed.

Physical History:

INTRODUCTION

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield organized by time periods. Portions of this section are based on the 2018 National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, Richmond National Battlefield Park; the 2019 Archaeological Overview and Assessment, Richmond National Battlefield, Virginia; and the 2017 Cultural Landscape Inventories for Glendale Battlefield, Malvern Hill, and Totopotomy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains. For detailed information about battle movements and strategy during the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek as part of the Seven Days' Battles and the larger Peninsula Campaign, see Brian Burton's 2001 "Extraordinary Circumstances: The Seven Days Battles," Stephen W. Sears's 1992 "To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign," and Glenn David Brasher's 2014 "The Peninsula Campaign and the Necessity of Emancipation: African Americans and the Fight for Freedom."

INDIGENOUS OCCUPATION AND LAND USE: 11,000 BCE to 1607 CE

Early human settlement in Virginia consisted of three periods differentiated by changes in Indigenous land-use patterns. Scholars traditionally divide this time into the Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland periods, which varied in human population distribution throughout the Tidewater region. During the Paleoindian period (c.11000 BCE to c.8000 BCE), the Laurentide ice sheet covered much of northern North America, depressing temperatures that supported the growth of boreal forests dominated by jack pine and spruce. (Pielou 1991: 108; Anderson and Sassaman 1996: 5) Paleoindian populations likely maintained seasonal base camps along the Atlantic Coast or major rivers where they could procure diverse food sources or obtain cryptocrystalline stone to make lithic tools. (Anderson and Sassaman 1996: 7)

As climate conditions improved and populations increased during the Archaic Period (8978 BCE-1199 BCE), settlements moved inland to upland and wetland locations. Later, during the Woodland Period (ca.1200 BCE to ca.1600 CE), Indigenous peoples moved to fertile inland river flood plains to maximize yields from farming and food gathering. (Anderson and Sassaman 1996: 24 -25; NPS 2017: 39-40) Increased agriculture supported sedentism and nucleation of societies, and populations began to consolidate into villages near arable soil which they would clear with “slash and burn” techniques. (Anderson and Mainfort 2002: 1-2) By 1000 CE, subsistence agriculture supported a relatively large population of approximately 207 persons per 100 square miles on the Atlantic coastal plain. (Turner 1976) Several Siouan-speaking tribes lived in the Piedmont, west of Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, and Algonquian-speaking tribes occupied the Virginia coastal plain. (Rountree 1989). By 1600, roughly thirty of the Algonquian-speaking tribes formed Tsenacomoco, a chiefdom centered around the watersheds of the James and York Rivers. (Wasselkov et.al. 2006: 215-216)

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AND EARLY COLONIAL VIRGINIA, 1607 to 1789

Although contact between Indigenous tribes and Europeans began in the 1500s, permanent European colonization of Virginia's coastal plain did not begin until 1607, when the English founded Jamestown on an island near the confluence of the James and Chickahominy Rivers, constructing cabins and a half-moon-shaped defensive barrier. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 13-15) At the time, Algonquian-speaking Indigenous groups lived throughout the Maryland and Virginia tidewaters and as far south as Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds in eastern North Carolina. Most aligned under the political influence of the Powhatan chiefdom. (Waselkov et.al. 2006: 215) Although Chief Powhatan was Pamunkey, his political influence extended over all Algonquian-speaking tribes in the Tidewater Virginia area. (Waselkov et.al. 2006: 218) During the first half of the seventeenth century, English settlement in Virginia did not extend further than what is now Providence Forge in New Kent County, south of Beaver Cam Creek. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 36, citing Haile 1998: 627)

As the colony's population grew, settlement extended northwestward up the James River and other waterways, which were easier to navigate than the early roads cut along Indigenous foot trails. By 1612, one principal village and five smaller settlements hugged the banks of the James River (Figure 1). As demand for tobacco increased, English colonists pushed further inland, clearing and taking cleared Indigenous land for cultivation. After establishing a representative government in 1619, the Virginia General Assembly ordered highways to be laid out "according as they might seem convenient" in 1633. One year later, the Assembly established Charles River Shire, renamed York County in 1643. Through the mid-seventeenth century, new counties formed. Churches, courthouses, ferries, and taverns became the focal points on the highways linking farm lanes. (WPA 1940: 1)

Following decades of periodic territorial conflict between the English and the Powhatan, a 1646 treaty opened the entire James-York Peninsula to English settlement. However, it forbade the settlers from encroaching on Powhatan territory elsewhere. Three years later, however, the Virginia Assembly modified the wording of the treaties and opened the Atlantic coastal plain to English settlement, including southeastern Hanover County, which encompasses the Beaver Dam Creek unit. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 116) Though most colonists settled east of the Fall Line through the 1600s, their diseases had widespread effects. By the time tobacco prices plummeted in the 1680s, the entire social fabric of Powhatan's Tsenacomoco had nearly disappeared, and many of the Indigenous people had been pushed westward by colonists or killed by disease. (Kulikoff 1986: 80-90)

Throughout the seventeenth century, under the headright land ownership system, wealthy investors sent or arranged for immigrants to work as indentured servants farming land owned by others. (Dunn 1894: 159) Under this system, a relatively few wealthy families of European ancestry accumulated vast tracts of prime land along the banks of the James River. As land value increased, landowners leveraged their holdings into wealth and influence. While retaining the best riverfront land for themselves, they sold off portions of land further from the river. In addition, their land was divided and bequeathed in wills, transferred through marriages, or traded. Along the winding riverbanks, small clusters of vernacular farm buildings and forts gave way to sprawling plantation seats, with grand houses overlooking the river bottoms. (JMA 2004: 37)

At the end of the seventeenth century, the falls of the James River began evolving as the commercial center of Piedmont as settlement moved west. In 1720, Hanover County formed from western New Kent County, between the Chickahominy and Pamunkey Rivers. (Kulikoff 1986: 95) In 1733, the town of Richmond was laid out into lots on land owned by William Byrd at the mouth of Shockoe Creek. Between 1742 and 1769, the population of Richmond rose from 250 to 574, and the town slowly emerged as a political center for Henrico County, which was just west of Beaver Dam Creek. (Manarin and Dowdey 1984: 114) From the mid-eighteenth century, wheat cultivation became more common and tobacco less dominant. By the time of the American Revolution, flour manufacturing was a well-established industry in Richmond, and numerous flour mills, including Ellerson's Mill, dotted the countryside. (Berry 1970: 387,389)

During the Revolutionary War, both British and American troops traversed Hanover County. Although

no known fighting occurred at the future Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, in 1781 the entire British army camped in the county and occupied Richmond twice, looting stores and causing extensive damage. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 16, citing Manarin and Dowdey 1984: 140)

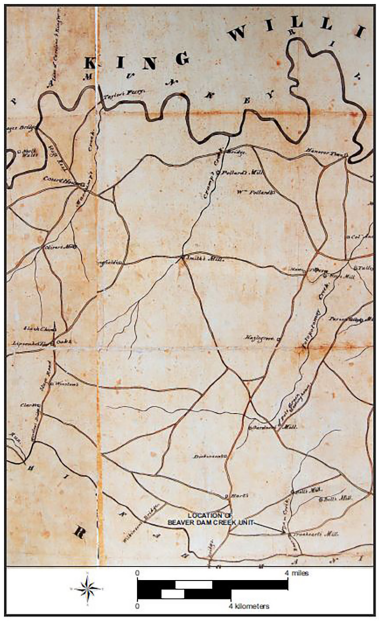


Figure 1. 1820 Map of Hanover County as included in the Richmond National Battlefield Archaeological Overview and Assessment, 2019. (Richmond National Battlefield Park--hereafter NBP--Archives)

POST REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND THE ANTEBELLUM PERIOD, 1790 to 1860

Soil fertility in Tidewater Virginia gradually declined from agricultural processes that did not provide for long term vitality. Farmers first cleared the richest land along river margins, then tilled and planted the fields continuously for years. After exhausting soils on the river's edge, farmers cleared the slopes rising from the river bottoms, where the topsoil was thinner. If slopes were not rich enough to grow tobacco, farmers planted them with corn for two to three years, decreasing planting frequency as productivity declined. During the years between corn crops, fields were "rested" under a crop of wheat. If the soil became too poor to produce wheat, farmers grazed animals on the land. Once the soil was exhausted, the land was left fallow to recover. After twenty to thirty years of successional growth, the field would be cleared by the farmer again and put under similar tillage. Soil fertility though declined much faster the second time. This practice led to a patchwork of cultivated fields, abandoned fields, and successional vegetative growth within Hanover County. While most of the land that comprises Richmond NBP's Beaver Dam Creek unit would have been too wet and steep for agriculture, it was suitable for milling. (Confederate Engineers Map of Hanover County, 1864; NPS 2017: 48). Indeed, by the late eighteenth century, mills, mill dams, and mill ponds dotted the region's rivers and streams. (JMA 2004: 45)

By the second half of the eighteenth century, a mill was located on Beaver Dam Creek in the approximate location of the mill that stood at the time of the 1862 battle. The earliest reference to a mill on the property found thus far is contained in a description within a suit brought before the Hanover County Chancery Court in 1769. The court documentation refers to the property as "White's Mill," later labeled as Trueheart's Mill (Shephard et.al. 2019: 36, citing Cocke 1940: 12; Druss et.al. 1977: 53; also Robert Krick, CLI comments, September 13, 2022).

Between 1819 and 1820, surveyor John Wood produced maps of Chesterfield, Hanover, and Henrico counties, as part of a larger commission from the Governor of Virginia to map every county in the state. Wood completed most of the project quickly, devoting himself to surveying the state's western counties and delegating the Tidewater and Eastern Shore surveys to his subordinates. While Wood's

maps exhibit a high degree of technical excellence by contemporary standards, the local maps only documented geographical features, major roads, and large farms and taverns as wayfinding points. The maps do not always include roads connecting east-west thoroughfares or less prominent buildings. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 17, citing Manarin and Dowdey 1984: 175) Wood's 1820 map of Hanover County identifies "Truehart's Mill" on the west side of Beaver Dam Creek, just south of the Old Cold Harbor Road crossing of the creek (see Figure 1). (Shephard et.al. 2019: 36)

As Richmond grew commercially following the Revolutionary War, residential development expanded along the region's roadways, not just its rivers. Small hamlets, including Mechanicsville to the west of Beaver Dam Creek, developed at crossroad communities where artisans plied their wares and services. By 1814, fifteen mills operated in the eastern half of Hanover County. (Peterson et.al. 1995: 19) With flour and grist mills dotting the countryside, local farmers had convenient access for grinding their wheat and corn. In the heavier clay of upper Hanover County, wheat and, to a lesser extent, tobacco dominated. In the lower half of the county, including the Beaver Dam Creek area, lighter, sandy soils amended with marl were best suited to growing corn, oats, and vegetables. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 38, citing McCartney 2009: 143,145) By 1850, grain production dominated the agricultural industry throughout Hanover County. At this time more than half of the county's 15,153 residents were enslaved. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 38)

Between 1840 and 1850, John H. Ellerson acquired the mill property on Beaver Dam Creek. Ellerson was born in 1802 and lived with his wife, Laura, and three children (ages 1, 5, and 15) by 1850. Ellerson may have rebuilt the previous mill. The 1820 Wood map indicates a mill on the west side of Beaver Dam Creek, south of Old Cold Harbor Road, while more detailed Civil War era military maps show Ellerson's Mill on the east side of the creek, north of the road. Further research may illuminate the possible discrepancy. By 1850, Ellerson was one of six mill owners in the southeastern district of Hanover County, with annual revenue of at least five hundred dollars. All were grist mills grinding corn meal except for one that ground an additional 500 bushels of wheat. Ellerson's investment in the mill buildings, equipment, and land was $1,500, and he ground 10,000 bushels of corn valued at $5,000 annually, which yielded $6000 of cornmeal. (US Bureau of the Census 1850) Although John Ellerson owned a mill, the 1850 census described him as a farmer with $10,000 worth of real estate. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 38, citing 1850 US Census) In 1860, according to the 1860 "Slave Census," Ellerson enslaved nine people, including three men, two women, and four girls. Further research is necessary to determine the identities of these individuals. In 1860, Ellerson (misspelled Ellyerson on the census) is described as a miller with real estate worth $12,000 and property worth $11,200.

By 1862, the year of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, Ellerson's mill was likely still operational, as a Philadelphia journalist accompanying Union General George McClellan's staff described the mill as though it was still operable. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 38, citing Cook 1862) Another account mentions Union soldiers grinding corn at the mill before the battle. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 41, citing R. E. L. [Robert] Krick, personal communication, 2018) On Civil War era maps, Ellerson's mill pond, along with an impoundment upstream where Brandy Run flows into Beaver Dam Creek, appear intact. According to Civil War maps a road extended northeast from Lee's Bridge on the Chickahominy River across the southern section of the Beaver Dam Creek unit to meet with a road leading south from Ellerson's mill. Two structures are indicated at the junction of the two roads. No physical evidence of these buildings or roads has been found in the field thus far (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Map of Hanover County, Virginia, 186-, annoted with boundary of Beaver Dam Creek unit in yellow by OCLP. (Library of Congress)

THE CIVIL WAR, 1861 to 1865

The Peninsula Campaign (March 20–August 16, 1862):
On July 26, 1861, less than one week after the humiliating Union defeat at the Battle of First Manassas (July 21), President Abraham Lincoln named George B. McClellan commander of the Military Division of Washington. McClellan was a genius of military logistics but an unproven field commander. He spent the next six months strengthening the defenses around the Union capital and training troops into a formidable force he named the Army of the Potomac. In November 1861, Lincoln promoted him to general-in-chief of all the Union armies. While the army's condition improved considerably, McClellan did not address the Confederate presence around Washington. During the fall of 1861, Major General Joseph E. Johnston positioned the Confederate forces behind a fortified line around Centreville, Virginia, only 25 miles southwest of Washington. Confederate artillery batteries on the lower Potomac River effectively blocked shipping to Washington. McClellan's lack of action toward the Confederate threat eventually drew the ire of President Lincoln and members of his cabinet. In response to the mounting pressure, McClellan finally wrote Lincoln on February 3, 1862, to describe his plan for an offensive designed to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond. Rather than a direct assault on Johnston, whose strength he grossly overestimated, he proposed to march his 100,000-man army to Annapolis, Maryland, and take them by ship to Urbanna, Virginia, on the southern shore of the Rappahannock River. From there, the army would march fifty miles west and take a relatively defenseless Richmond before Johnston could intervene. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 45, citing Sears 1992: 5-6)

McClellan's plan had merit but required the Union troops to move quickly to prevent Johnston from having time to respond. Lincoln was skeptical of the timing, some in his party questioned McClellan's loyalty to the Union cause, and some argued the plan would leave Washington D.C. exposed to Confederate attack. To assuage doubts, McClellan put his plan up for a vote at a council of war with his general staff on March 7, 1862, where eight of the twelve generals in attendance voted in favor. Lincoln approved the plan but with several conditions, including a reorganization of the Army of the Potomac into four corps, two of which would remain behind to protect Washington until the

Confederate batteries on the Potomac were destroyed. McClellan also had to begin his Peninsula campaign within ten days. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 46, citing Sears 1992: 6-9,17–18) Only two days later, on March 9, the newly completed Confederate ironclad ship, the Virginia, engaged the first ironclad Union ship, the Monitor, in an inconclusive naval battle off Hampton Roads, Virginia. Afterward, the Monitor could protect the US gunboat fleet and supply ships while McClellan moved his troops forward. At the same time, however, Johnston's Confederates unexpectedly evacuated Centreville and withdrew to the Rappahannock River, where he could better meet the Union's planned overland assault on Richmond. McClellan was concerned that the Confederates had learned of his battle plan, so he selected a safer landing point for the Union troops, the Union-held Fort Monroe on the southeastern tip of the peninsula. At the time, this was the most significant movement of American troops via water ever attempted. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 47, citing Sears 2002: 18)

On April 4, 1862, before all the troops and equipment had arrived, McClellan began his advance from Fort Monroe up the Virginia Peninsula. About 66,700 men followed him, about half the force he would eventually command at the height of the campaign. With the Confederate ship, the Virginia, patrolling the mouth of the James River, McClellan chose to hug the York River under the protection of the navy's gunboats. His first objective was to take Yorktown, a critical Confederate river port. On April 5, McClellan's men advanced on the Confederate Army, about 11,000 men entrenched in a strong defensive position behind the Warwick River near Yorktown. Believing the Confederate forces were more extensive than they were, McClellan prepared to siege instead of battle. The delay allowed the Confederates to send reinforcements from Johnston's army and consolidate forces around Richmond into the Army of Northern Virginia under Johnston's command. The Confederate and Union forces constantly fired at each other from across their increasingly fortified lines for a month. Finally, the superior Union artillery convinced Johnston to abandon Yorktown, and the infantry slipped away on the night of May 3. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 45, citing Sears 2002: 34,46,60-62)

On May 5, pursuing Union forces caught up to the Confederates near Williamsburg, Virginia. Though the Union suffered more loss of life, they claimed victory as the Confederates continued their retreat to the outskirts of Richmond, taking a position on the north side of the Virginia Peninsula, near White House Landing on the Pamunkey River. With the Union's advance, the Confederates could no longer hold Norfolk. They abandoned the city and destroyed the ironclad, the Virginia. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 46; Robinson 1961: 170; Sears 2002: 90-92)

Until the US Navy's rebuff at Drewry's Bluff on May 15, 1862, the Union experienced an almost unbroken string of military successes in all theaters of war, giving Lincoln and his administration hope that the war might end soon. Eager to press the advantage, Lincoln urged McClellan to attack Richmond immediately. However, once again, the general moved too cautiously out of fear that the Confederates defending Richmond greatly outnumbered his force. By the end of May, McClellan reached the Chickahominy River and began making plans to put Richmond under siege.

Confederate General Johnston watched the Union army take up positions on both sides of the Chickahominy River whose swampy river bottom was swelled with recent rains, making communication between the two Union sides difficult. Johnston also learned that the Union forces would not receive reinforcements, for General Irvin McDowell was heading to battle General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. So, he attacked the Union lines near the hamlet of Seven Pines south of the Chickahominy River in the late morning of May 31. Fighting at Seven Pines resulted in more than 10,000 casualties, including General Johnston, but little changed in the military situation for either side. Following the loss of General Johnston, Confederate President Jefferson Davis placed General Robert E. Lee in command of the Army of Northern Virginia. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 46, citing Sears 2002: 119–147)

The Seven Days' Battles:
Fighting around Richmond paused for several weeks after the Battle of Seven Pines. Beginning on June 26, Lee launched a series of costly attacks known as the Seven Days' Battles. Although difficulties in coordination prevented him from delivering a knockout blow to the Army of the Potomac, the offensive maneuvers cowed McClellan into retreat, ending the Peninsula Campaign. Until the war's end, the Confederates retained control of Richmond and the peninsula as far east as the outskirts of Williamsburg. Although McClellan attempted an offensive action in the opening Battle of

Oak Grove, Lee's aggressive but often poorly coordinated maneuvers led the week's fighting. After the Battles of Oak Grove, Beaver Dam Creek, and Gaines' Mill, McClellan gave up hope of capturing Richmond and retreated toward Harrison's Landing on the James River. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 50, citing Salmon 1999: E-23)

Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, June 26, 1862:
On the evening of June 25, McClellan received intelligence that Jackson was on his way to join Lee. Guessing that the vulnerable right flank of the Union's Fifth Corps would be the target of the planned Confederate attack, McClellan ordered Brigadier General Fitz John Porter to pull his men eastward from the hamlet of Mechanicsville to a more easily defended position on the ridge above Beaver Dam Creek. The creek, which was high with recent rains, flowed through a swampy valley with steep sloping sides as high as sixty feet. Hoping the creek would serve as a moat protecting the Federal position, Porter focused most of his infantry on defending the two bridge crossings over the creek. The Pennsylvania Reserves occupied Porter's new front, which extended about a mile and a half along the elevated east bank of the creek, from a wooded area north of Old Church Road south to Ellerson's Mill where Old Cold Harbor Road (now the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace) crossed the creek. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 51, citing Burton 2001: 65-67; Krick 1999; Sears 2002: 200-202) As the Federal troops waited, they felled trees and dug small entrenchments (Figures 3, 4, 5).

In his report on the battle, McClellan described the position:
"Brigadier General Truman Seymour's brigade held the left of the line from the Chickahominy to beyond the mill, partly in woods and partly in clear ground, and [Brigadier General John] Reynolds' the right, principally in the woods and covering the upper road. The artillery occupied positions commanding the roads and the open ground across the creek. Timber had been felled, rifle pits dug, and the position generally prepared with a care that greatly contributed to the success of the day. The passage of the creek was difficult along the whole front, and impracticable for artillery, except by the two roads where the main efforts of the enemy were directed. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 50-52, citing OCULUS, Vol.II, Part 1: 54)

Although Lee worried that McClellan's orders to fall back to Beaver Dam Creek indicated that he knew of Lee's battleplans, Lee decided to move forward with his attack. His success depended on the rapid and coordinated movements of four separate troop units through miles of thick forest. Lee expected Jackson to arrive and attack sometime between 8:00 and 9:00 am, so Lee moved to Chickahominy Bluff, where Major Generals James Longstreet and D.H. Hill had assembled their troops, to observe and direct what he could of the battle. The fortified bluff was part of the Outer Line of Richmond's defenses. They waited as Jackson and Brigadier General Lawrence O. B. Branch's Confederate units slowly marched toward Mechanicsville and Beaver Dam Creek. (Krick 1999; Sears 2002: 196,200-204) About 3:00 pm, with no sign of either Jackson or Branch, an impatient Major General A.P. Hill decided to move forward on his own. After crossing the Meadow Bridge near Mechanicsville, Hill's skirmishers easily drove away the Federal troops Porter had stationed there to monitor for a Confederate attack from the east. They then cleared the way for Longstreet and D.H. Hill to cross the bridge and head towards Beaver Dam Creek. From his vantage point on Chickahominy Bluff, Lee observed the action and went to confer with A.P. Hill. Though he still had no word of Jackson's whereabouts, Lee decided to allow Hill to continue toward the Union position at Beaver Dam Creek and ordered Longstreet and D.H. Hill to follow him. As the Confederate troops emerged from the woods at the edge of the creek, they had to descend the west bank and ascend the east under direct fire from Union forces, and suffered heavy casualties. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 51, citing Burton 2001: 64-65; Sears 2002: 203-204)

After the deadly first assault, the Confederates shifted their attack to Old Cold Harbor Road near Ellerson's Mill, where Brigadier General Dorsey Pender led his brigade. As the Confederates approached the western bank of the creek, Union troops took cover in the trench of Ellerson's millrace and aimed at the men climbing the creek's western bank. Some of Pender's men became trapped in the Union's abatis of downed trees. Confederate reinforcements also met with the Union's destructive force, took cover, and retreated once night fell. The portion of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield preserved within the Richmond National Battlefield Park includes the area where the Union forces repelled the ill-conceived Confederate attacks in the vicinity of Ellerson's Mill (Figure 6). The attacks cost Pender's and Ripley's Confederate brigades 851 men. (Burton 2001: 74; Sears 2002:

204-206)

McClellan claimed victory after the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek because Union soldiers held the Federal position and bore only 300 casualties to the Confederate's 1,500. Nevertheless, McClellan still believed the Confederate army was far larger than his. When he learned that Jackson's troops never reached the battlefield, his concern about the security of his supply connection to White House Landing grew. McClellan decided that night to shift his base of operations to the James River, where his supply line would be less vulnerable, and the navy's gunboats could protect his army. Although he would not admit it, the decision meant abandoning the Union's offensive campaign against Richmond. Early on June 27, McClellan ordered the Union troops to abandon the Beaver Dam Creek line and fall back to a plateau above the east bank of Boatswain's Swamp, about one mile southeast of a grist mill on Powhite Creek owned by Dr. William F. Gaines. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 53, citing Sears 2002: 204-213) The Battle of Gaines' Mill would ensue the next day.

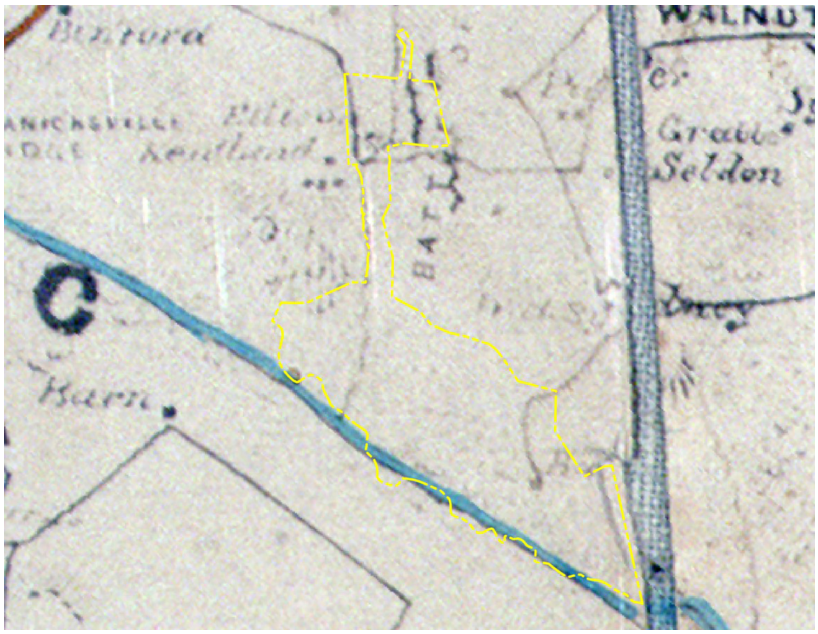


Figure 3. 1864 Campbell Map indicating extensive earthworks (through the dark line) on the hillside above Ellerson's Mill, annotated with boudaries of Beaver Dam Creek unit in yellow, by OCLP. (Library of Congress)

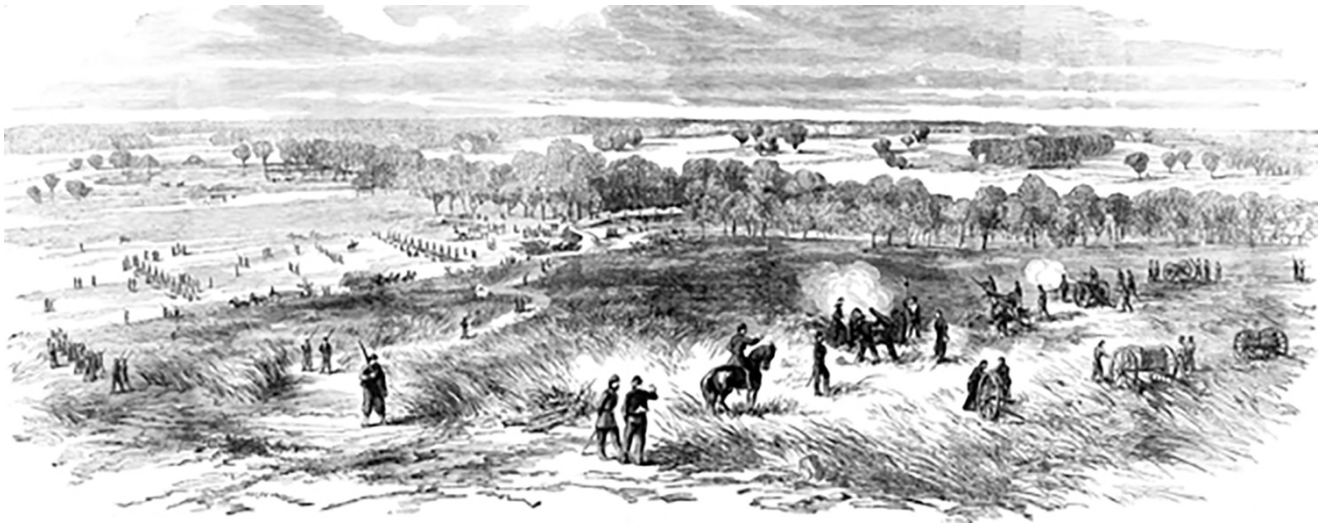


Figure 4. Battle of Beaver Dam Creek in Harpers Illustrated, 1866 illustrates the open fields and forested ravines of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. (Library of Congress)

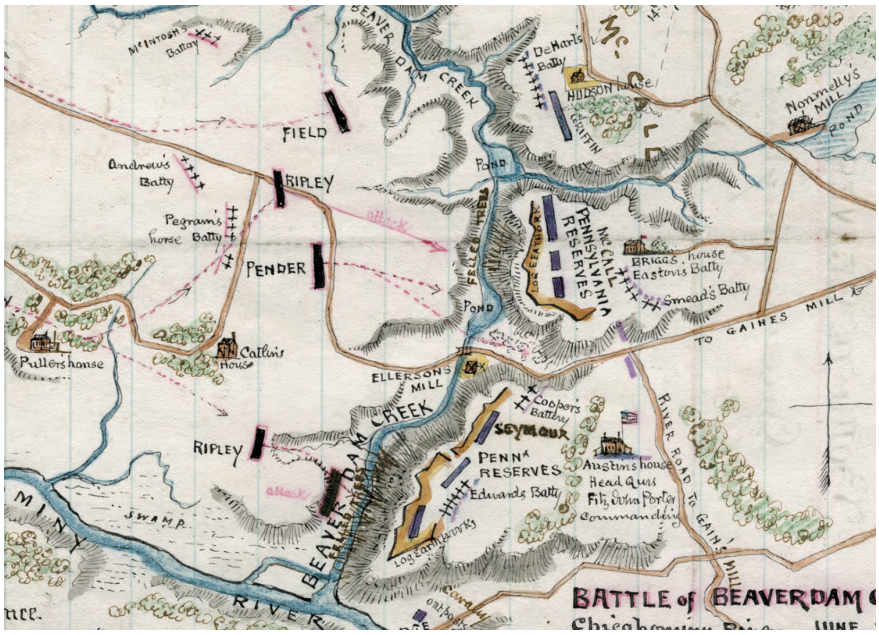


Figure 5. Map of Beaverdam Creek, Virginia 1862, Battle of Beaverdam Creek Va., Chickahominy River, June 27th 1862 [June 26th] by Robert Knox Sneden. (Library of Congress)



Figure 6. 1864 Gilmer Map, clearly indicating roads and a barn within the southern portion of the Beaver Dam Creek boundaries, annotated by OCLP with Beaver Dam Creek unit boundaries. (Library of Congress)

COMMEMORATION AND PRESERVATION, 1865 to 1927

The Civil War left Richmond, and the watershed of Chickahominy River and Beaver Dam Creek, irrevocably altered. Large expanses of farmland were left fallow as agricultural land values in central Virginia fell from an antebellum average of $10 per acre to $1 per acre. (O'Donnell 2009: 19) The waterworks at Ellerson's Mill, the mill pond, and upstream impoundment where Brandy Run flows into Beaver Dam Creek, were intact according to Union and Confederate Engineers' maps produced in the last years of the Civil War (Figure 7). An 1865 photograph of Ellerson's Mill captures the dilapidated building set in an open meadow with small trees growing out of its foundation and a windrow of pines on the horizon (Figure 8).

According to photographic evidence of the period, the mill building was rebuilt as a taller structure sometime before the early 1880s (Figure 9). A sketch of the battlefield published in 1882 and based on an unidentified late nineteenth-century photograph, shows the mill in an open landscape that recalls the battlefield setting described in Civil War-era accounts (Figure 10). (Shephard et.al. 2019: 41) Yet, by the time of an 1884 veterans' reunion on the site of the battle, a journalist noted that the mill was in ruins. (Richmond Dispatch, June 28, 1884) An 1892 advertisement for the sale of the former Ellerson's Mill property mentions a house but no operational mill, only "a good mill site, where a good mill formerly existed and would now be well patronized." (Hanover County 1894: 2) A 1894 USGS map, however, documents a mill on the west side of the millrace, just east of Cold Harbor Road, called Branche's Mill (Figure 11).

Twenty years after the end of the war, Virginia's southeast Hanover County was described as a "labyrinth of battlefields…destitute of small hamlets and villages" with a "scarcity of population" and "a pervading sense of loneliness," by Elizabeth Bladen, a northern woman who wrote for Taggart's Philadelphia Sunday Times during her visit to Richmond. In an article entitled, "Our Battlefields" she described Ellerson's Mill as "a picturesque feature in the landscape on Beaver Dam Creek…with trumpet-vine…the rifle-pits the men dug are still there." (Bladen 1886) By this time, farmers sold timber, and some shifted from growing grains and tobacco, which required extensive land holdings, to market gardening of fruit, vegetables, dairy, and poultry. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 49, citing McCartney 2009: 250,278)

During the 1890s, interest in preserving battlefields for future generations from Civil War veterans' and many veterans in Congress, led to legislation that created five military parks. Vast areas of Shiloh, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Vicksburg, Antietam, and Gettysburg came under federal protection. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 23, citing Smith 2012) Despite the national attention paid to battlefield preservation and the large number of battlefields located near Richmond, Congress did not propose the preservation of any Civil War battlefields in the area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first proposal for a public commemorative effort was a road to link important sites associated with the 1862 Peninsula and 1864 Overland Campaigns in 1914. The proposal languished, however, due to the onset of World War I. Other Civil War commemorative initiatives involved reunions of Civil War veterans and the establishment of individual monuments and commemorative and interpretive signage on privately-owned land. (Willett 1956: 27)

Battlefield preservation around Richmond gathered momentum through the efforts of the first generation of descendants of Civil War veterans. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 23) Richmond's prosperous post-World War I era provided a more fertile environment to lay the groundwork for modern battlefield tourism. The Richmond Rotary Club led weekly excursions to local battlefields. On Labor Day, 1921, a caravan of twenty-one cars traversed an intricate network of old turnpikes and cart paths to visit battlefields. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 90) After drawing battlefield maps on bedsheets to aid on-site tour interpretation, the Rotary Club incorporated the Battlefield Markers Association (BMA) in 1924 to raise funds to erect commemorative battlefield monuments (NR 2018, Sec.8: 91) The BMA designed concrete capstones on granite-masonry bases to support two-feet-three-inch-by-three-feet-five-inch cast-iron inscription tablets at an angle such that visitors need not exit their automobile to read them. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 91) The inscriptions emphasized troop movements, combat valor, and heroism, particularly of Confederate troops. With local donations supporting their manufacture, beginning in 1925 the BMA erected fifty-nine markers (colloquially called "Freeman Markers" after their leading proponent, author, and historian, Douglas S. Freeman) across the Richmond area. There is one marker at Beaver Dam Creek near the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 91-93)

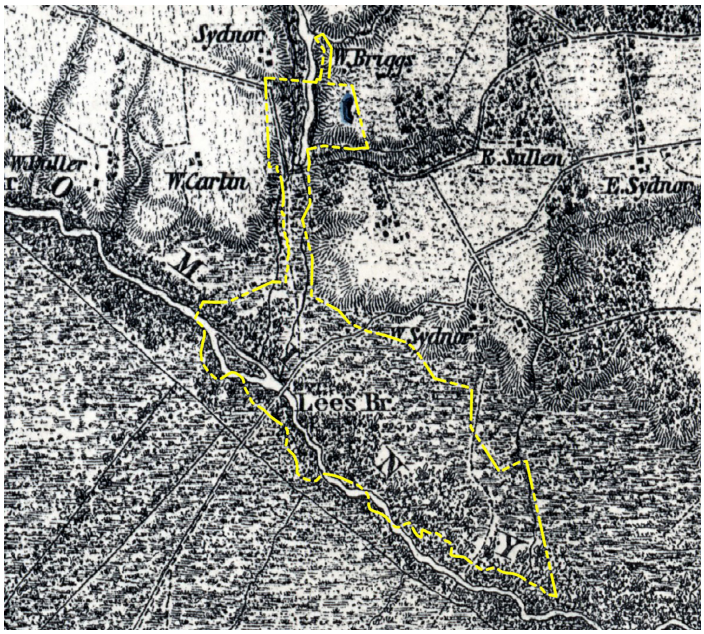


Figure 7. 1867 Michler Map annotated by OCLP with Beaver Dam Creek unit boundaries in yellow. (Library of Congress)

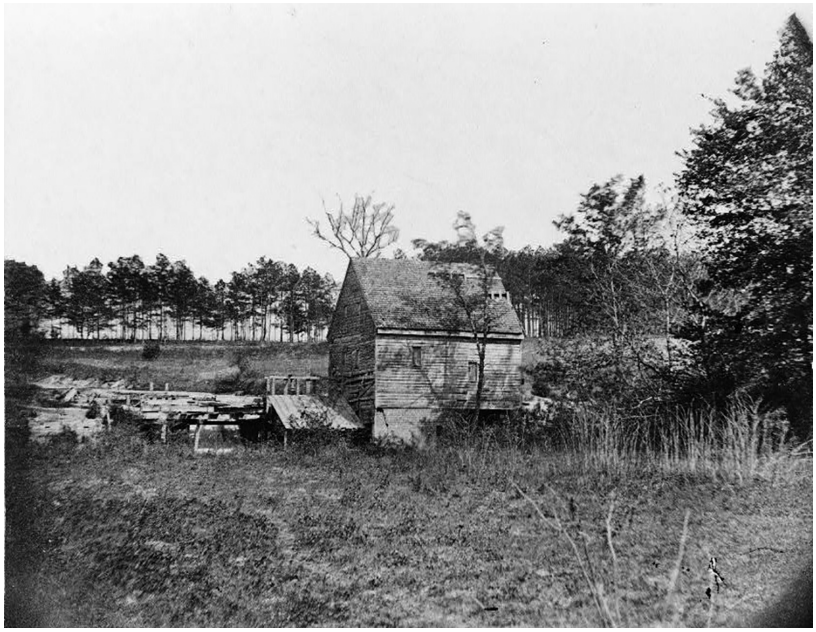


Figure 8. Ellerson's Mill from Stereoscope image, 1865. Union artillery was located within the line of evergreen pine trees marking the ridge in the background of the photograph. (Library of Congress)

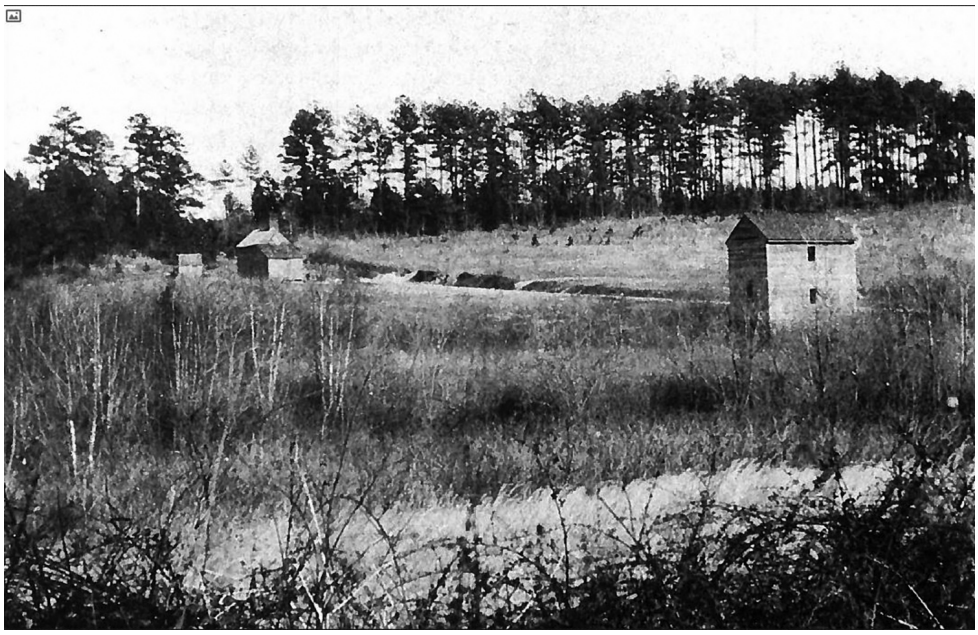


Figure 9. This circa 1880s photograph of the mill at the site of Ellerson's Mill shows a taller structure than the one present at the time of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, though the exact location of this mill is unknown. (Richmond NBP Archives)



Figure 10. Sketch of Ellerson's Mill and the surrounding landscape of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield in the late nineteenth century. (The Century Magazine 1885: 301)

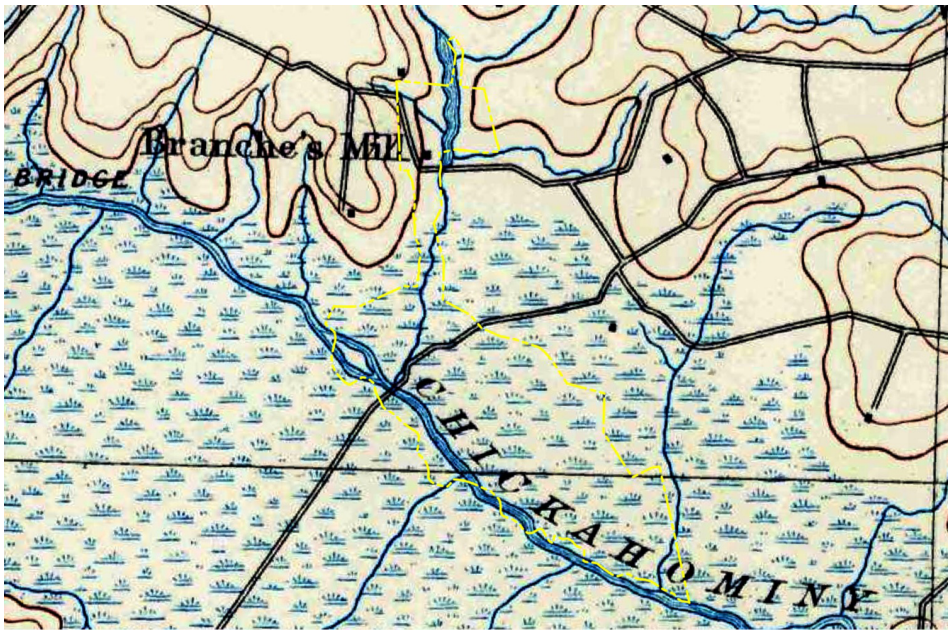


Figure 11. 1894 USGS Map annotated by OCLP with Beaver Dam Creek unit boundaries in yellow. (Library of Congress)

EARLY BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION AND PARK DEVELOPMENT, 1927 to 1944

Richmond's tremendous growth and development following World War I threatened battlefield lands. Recognizing potential development threats, the members of the BMA joined with some of those involved in the 1914 tour road discussions to buy a 200-acre parcel of land at Fort Harrison that had been put up for sale to settle an estate in the fall of 1927. The group harvested lumber from the site's trees to defray the $18,000 purchase price. After acquiring an additional large tract at Cold Harbor, the members organized as the non-profit Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation (RBPC) "to preserve and make accessible the battlefields around Richmond." (quoted in RBA 2010). Within a year, the RBPC raised $50,000 and purchased or received donations of land at Beaver Dam Creek, Gaines' Mill, Malvern Hill, Drewry's Bluff, Parker's Battery, and Fort Harrison totaling approximately 550 acres. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 92-93) Lands purchased as part of Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield included 8.55 acres near the former Ellerson's Mill from "Augustus Brooks and wife" on December 2, 1927. A few days later, the RBPC purchased 1.26 acres, described as "part of the Old Ellerson's Mill site" and including the "Ellerson's Millrace or Canal" from "George Knox Crutchfield and wife." In January 1928, they purchased an additional 2.14 acres of land "from John Thomas Scott and wife."

The RBPC also renewed the idea of connecting the battlefield sites via a system of tour roads. The corporation convinced Hanover, Henrico, and Chesterfield counties to donate the annual proceeds from the 1929 gas tax toward the project. A dedication ceremony on September 28, 1930, marked the opening of the new route as part of the State Highway System. The 38.25-mile network of improved roadways began near Beaver Dam Creek and followed the course of the Seven Days' Battle to Malvern Hill via Cold Harbor and Gaines' Mill, past Fair Oaks, Savage's Station, and White Oak Swamp. From Malvern Hill, the tour route ran west along State Route 41 (now State Route 5) to Battery Alexander and then southwest to Osborne Turnpike. It followed some existing roads such as Cold Harbor Road and Willis Church Road—with new roadbeds constructed of "sand-clay with an oil dressing" replacing hard-packed dirt or gravel—and included 19 miles of new roads such as the Battlefield Park Road. The RBPC published an auto tour guide to accompany the route and had ambitious plans for developing and interpreting the park lands, including the creation of a small memorial park at Beaver Dam Creek and a battle museum at the Watt House; the restoration of the forts at Fort Harrison and Drewry's Bluff; and the provision of ferry access to Drewry's Bluff.

The RBPC, a relatively small, private, volunteer-led organization, could not afford to maintain the

684.4 total acres of land they had acquired between 1927 and 1932, let alone develop park infrastructure and battlefield interpretation. Rather than turn over the battlefield land to the US War Department, as had been done in other areas of Virginia, the RBPC conveyed its battlefield properties to the Virginia Conservation and Development Commission in January 1932. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 93, citing Willett 1956: 42) At the time, Virginia's State Historian H.J. Eckenrode was sharply critical of the War Department's work at the Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg Battlefields, believing that the War Department was deeply invested in the "traditions of the Union Army" and would not fairly represent the position of the Confederacy. Therefore, Eckenrode strongly encouraged state ownership and management. (Devlin 2022: 24) The RBPC entered into negotiations with the Commonwealth of Virginia that ended with the transfer of 684.44 acres of battlefield lands to the state in January 1932. The formal dedication of Virginia's first state park, named Richmond Battlefield Park, occurred on June 22, 1932, at Fort Harrison, in conjunction with the 42nd Reunion of United Confederate Veterans. (McLean 1998: 182; Willett 1956: 41-44)

The Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development was responsible for park development and maintenance. By 1933, however, it was clear that the state would be unable to raise funds to support the individual parks and the broader park system. State officials then began to lobby the Federal government to accept ownership of the Richmond Battlefield Park land under the stewardship of the National Park Service (NPS). (Devlin 2022: 31) The turnabout regarding federal management became more palatable to state officials when Executive Order 6166 (issued June 10, effective August 10, 1933) that transferred all parks administered by the War Department to the Department of the Interior. While many had doubted the War Department could present a sufficiently positive view of the Confederacy in its public interpretation of the battlefields, they did not have the same reservations about the Department of the Interior. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 26)

Accordingly, in 1934 an Act of the General Assembly approved the transfer of the Richmond Battlefield Park to the federal government. Two years later, on March 2, 1936, President Roosevelt signed an Act of Congress that authorized the federal government to accept the properties to establish the Richmond National Battlefield Park (NBP). (Willett 1956: 45-46) On March 2, 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt signed enabling legislation establishing Richmond NBP "to set [the lands] apart as a public park for the benefit and inspiration of the people and to protect the Civil War battlefield resources associated with the struggle for the capital of the Confederacy and to interpret these resources so as to foster an understanding of their larger significance." Richmond NBP became the seventeenth unit of the national park system to commemorate the events of the Civil War. Eight years of legal issues regarding the transfer of land titles, back taxes, right-of-way easements, and other issues would pass before the NPS officially accepted the park on July 14, 1944. (JMA 2004: 154)

CCC Work:
The Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development oversaw the initial management of the Richmond Battlefield Park. The state conducted preliminary studies on development plans, prioritizing "the preservation of remaining fortifications, locating troop movements and positions, marking these, and making the whole group of areas available to the student and tourist." (NR 2018, Sec.8: 95, as quoted in JMA 2004: 154) During the period when land transfer issues were underway, the commission turned to President Roosevelt's New Deal relief and funding programs—specifically, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) created by the Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933—which enabled the commission to begin maintenance and development work. The CCC was composed mainly of unskilled laborers, to perform clearing, grading, and other activities at national parks throughout the country. Most of the funding for CCC construction projects came through the Public Works Administration. Although the Richmond Battlefield Park did not belong to the national park system, the federal government established a CCC camp near Fort Harrison in 1933 to provide the state with a means to accomplish some interpretive and administrative improvements. The NPS quickly produced a master plan for the development of each park unit. Within the Beaver Dam Creek unit, the plan mapped existing Federal earthworks, the location of Ellerson's Mill site, and the millrace (Figure 12). The plan proposed the restoration of "the mill and dam as a contact and ranger station with maps and parking." USGS maps from the 1930s indicate that much of what would become the Beaver Dam Creek park unit was forested (Figure 13). The NPS supervised the CCC's work in Richmond from 1933 to 1941, first under the auspices of the state and after 1936 as part of its

national parks system. Consequently, the development of the Richmond park closely conformed to the contemporary development of the nearby national military parks at Fredericksburg and Petersburg. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 94, citing JMA 2004: 154) At Beaver Dam Creek, the CCC rehabilitated Cold Harbor Road (currently the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace) in 1935 within the boundaries of park, to provide better visitor access to the Ellerson's Mill site. Additional research is recommended to determine whether the CCC undertook additional work at Beaver Dam Creek.

The NPS struggled to recruit new CCC members as the economy improved. Additionally, some local administrators thought the men of Colored Company 1375 did not make suitable interpretive guides for a Civil War battlefield site. In 1938, the federal government acquiesced to local segregation laws and relocated the Black men to Virginia Beach to make way for 25 to 40 white World War I veterans. The smaller CCC company added some cannons to the landscape and took care of general park maintenance through 1941. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 95, citing Willett 1956: 66-67) The CCC program was discontinued and camps were closed in 1941 with the onset of World War II.

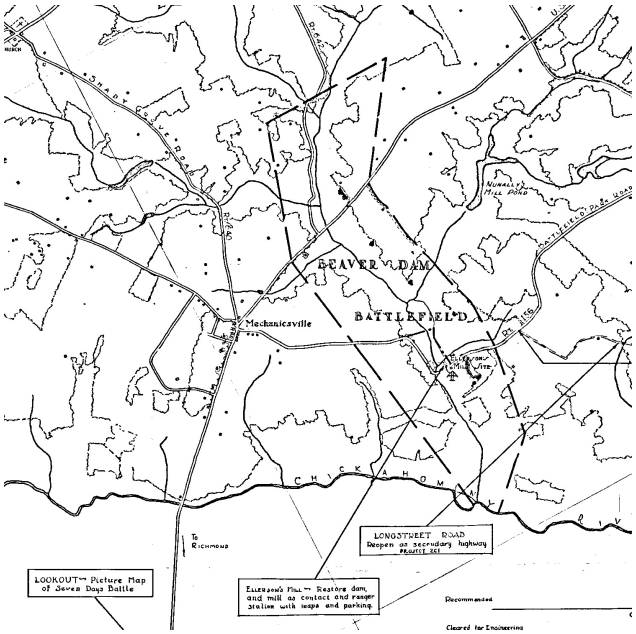


Figure 12. 1937 Topopotomoy and Cold Harbor Page from the RICH NPS Master Plan, Detail. (Richmond NBP Archives)

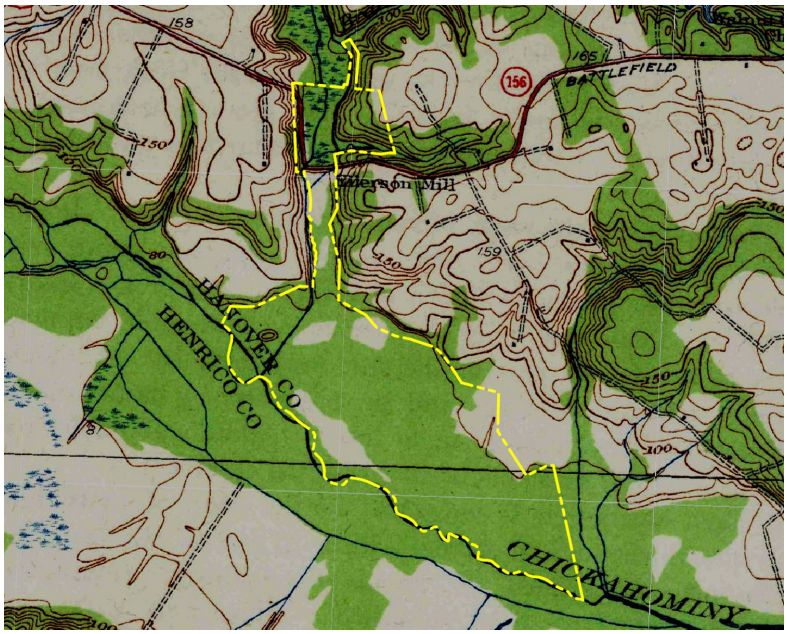


Figure 13. 1938 USGS Map annotated by OCLP with Beaver Dam Creek unit boundaries in yellow. (Library of Congress)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, 1944 to 2022

When the NPS officially began managing Richmond NBP in 1944, World War II consumed national attention, the federal budget, and much of the traditional paid labor pool. NPS funding decreased dramatically, and there were few resources for maintenance at parks nationwide. These drastic budget cuts remained in place through the first half of the 1950s, which coincided with the post–World War II prosperity boom and its attendant surge in tourism to national parks. During this time, Old Dominion Energy Virginia, which owns the transmission line that stretches through the southern portion of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, acquired land easements for their utility right of ways. (Old Dominion Energy Virginia, 2019: 83)

The centennial anniversary of the Civil War in 1961 and the NPS Mission 66 program, however, sparked intensive development throughout the National Park System from 1956 to 1966, with particular emphasis on many Civil War sites. Mission 66 was an ambitious ten-year NPS development program aimed at improving visitor facilities in time for the agency's 50th anniversary. The Mission 66 program at Richmond NBP primarily focused on adding interpretive exhibits, such as gun emplacements and waysides, to the existing park resources. Overall, the changes at Richmond during this period were minimal compared to other parks. Few infrastructure changes were made to Beaver Dam Creek.

As part of the 1960 Master Plan created for Richmond NBP, Edwin Bearss, Historian, in collaboration with the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, created a detailed map interpreting troop movements on the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield to inform battlefield interpretative development and the visitor experience. The map illustrated land conditions at the time of the battle, as understood by 1960s NPS staff, based on their knowledge of Civil War era documentation (Figure 14). For example, the map describes an open area west of the millrace, labeled as a mill pond, as a hay field. The map also shows a barn and a roadway within the wetlands parcel acquired in 2012. Further field investigation is necessary to determine whether evidence of these features remains (Shephard et.al. 2019: 54-55)

There have been relatively few infrastructure changes to Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield in the last fifty years, though a few were impactful. In implementing the 1960 Master Plan, the NPS constructed a pedestrian overlook with an audio tour, wayside, and parking adjacent to Route 156 (Old Cold Harbor Road) in 1966 at Beaver Dam Creek, west of the southern end of the millrace (Figure 15). The park removed this overlook entirely in 1999. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 96; Shephard et.al. 2019: 51) In the early 1970s, the NPS entered a cooperative agreement with the Commonwealth of Virginia to realign the nineteenth-century Route 156 (Cold Harbor Road). Vehicular access to Cold Harbor Road was terminated at the existing bridge, just west of the mill site. This portion of Cold Harbor Road is now the entrance road to the park, and part of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. Cold Harbor Road was rerouted onto a new alignment along the northern boundary of the park property. This realignment removed traffic crossing through the park and converted the former roadway to a pedestrian path, also part of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. (Development and Land Classification Plan, 1972) In 1977 the NPS installed a sewer line in the vicinity of Ellerson's Mill. In 1992 the NPS constructed a 63-foot long by 6-foot-wide arched structural steel footbridge. This bridge is in the approximate location of the antebellum bridge and the replacement built after Union troops burned the earlier bridge during the 1862 battle. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 31)

Park Expansion:
A collaborative partnership of landowners, local governments, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the NPS produced a report in 1990 on the conservation status of Richmond's Civil War sites. At that time, Richmond NBP consisted of 732 acres, with just over 50 acres added from its establishment in 1936. The report identified opportunities for further land acquisition through partnerships and laid the foundation for the park's dramatic expansion in the following decades. Since 2000, when Congress revised the park's authorized boundary (Public Law 106-511, 114 Stat. 2373), the NPS has almost tripled its size, gaining the sites at Glendale, Turkey Hill, and Totopotomoy Creek. Cold Harbor, Malvern Hill, Gaines' Mill, and Beaver Dam Creek also gained additional acreage. (NR 2018, Sec.8: 97) In 2004 the NPS acquired an additional thirteen acres east of Ellerson's Millrace from the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. In 2012 the NPS acquired a 236-acre parcel south of Ellerson Mill from the Conservation Fund, comprised mostly of wooded and shrubby wetlands interlaced with tributaries to the Chickahominy River and Beaver Dam Creek.

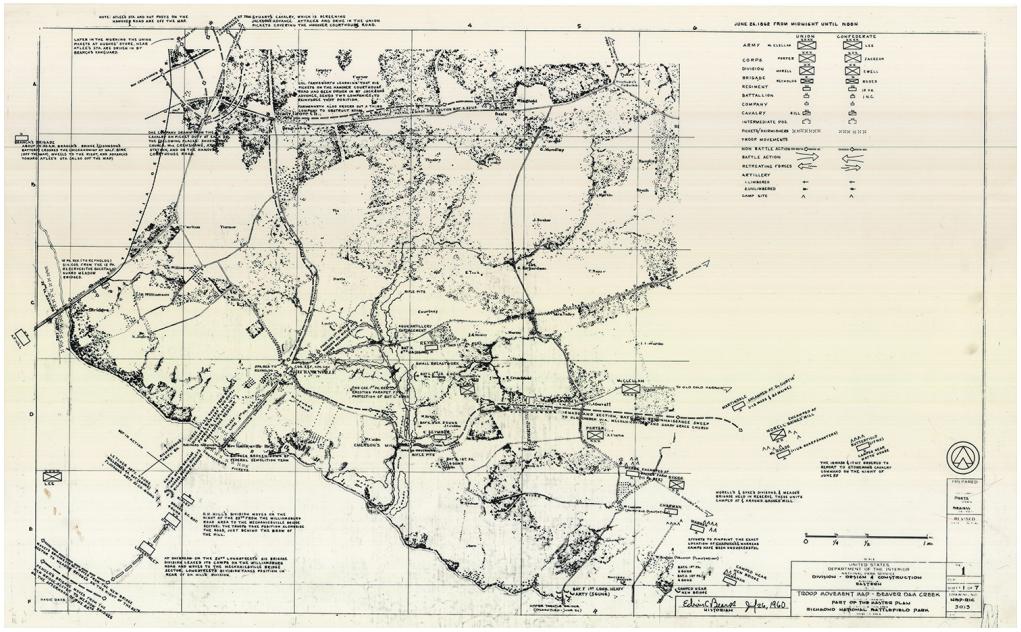


Figure 14a. 1960 Interpretative Map, Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. (National Park Service, eTIC)

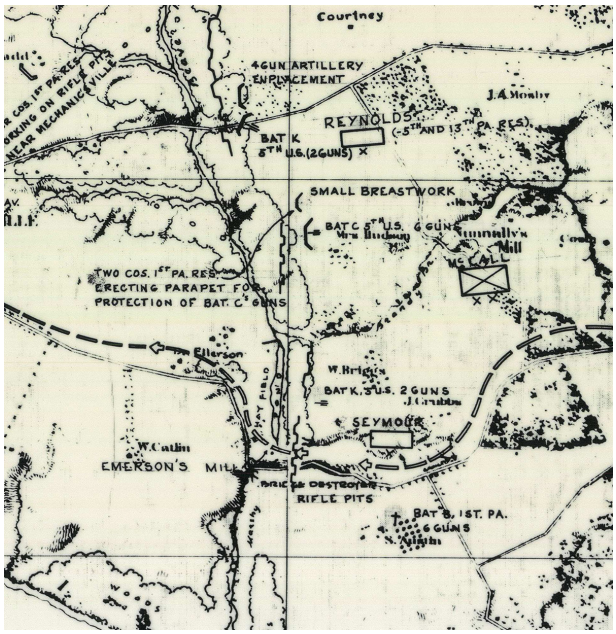


Figure 14b. 1960 Interpretative Map, detail, Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. (National Park Service, eTIC)

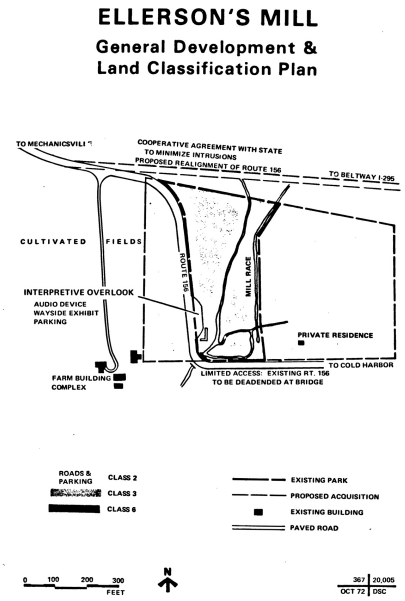


Figure 15. 1972 Development and Land Classification Plan, indicating the location of the 1960s overlook. (National Park Service, eTIC)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Agriculture/Subsistence	Agricultural Outbuilding	Barn	Yes	No	No
Defense	Battle Site		Yes	No	Yes
Landscape	Leisure-Passive (Park)		No	Yes	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Monument (Marker, Plaque)		No	Yes	No
Education	Interpretive Landscape		No	No	No
Industrial/Processing/Extraction	Manufacturing Facility (Mill)	Manufacturing Facility (Mill) - Other	No	No	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative:

Richmond National Battlefield Park's battlefields are officially closed from sunset to sunrise daily and all day on Thanksgiving Day, December 25th, and January 1st, but there are no gates, fences, or admission fees restricting public access to public roads, parking lot, and the trail system.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

Authors of this CLI consulted with David Goldstein, Ph.D., Tribal and Cultural Affairs Lead, National Park Service, DOI-Region 1. No ethnographic study of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, nor the Richmond National Battlefield Park, has been conducted. The Park currently consults with following Federally Recognized tribes: Delaware Nation, Catawba, Chickahominy East and Pamunkey.

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The Battle of Beaver Dam Creek represents an integral component of the Peninsula Campaign, marking General McClellan's retreat from Richmond and the beginning of the Seven Days' Battles. The historic integrity of Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1800-1944, with the existing conditions assessed in 2022. Patterns of natural systems and features that guided settlement and land use and influenced the course of the battle remain, including the natural topography of the mill site's uplands and the steep creek ravine, and the swampy drainage bottoms and along Beaver Dam Creek and the Chickahominy River. The extant historic circulation, including the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace, was crucial for troop and equipment movement during the battle. The mill site, marked by a sizeable square earthen depression, and the remnant linear millrace, help visitors understand the troops' placement and the conflict sequence. The historic Freeman marker illustrates early twentieth-century efforts to commemorate and interpret the events of the Civil War in Virginia.

Since the end of the historic period in 1944, notable changes that have altered the landscape's character include the reduction in agricultural land and subsequent reforesting of farm fields and wetlands. During the period of significance, much of the landscape was open and devoid of trees, with only narrow strips of woods along the southern boundary of the Beaver Dam Creek unit along the Chickahominy River and east of Beaver Dam Creek along the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. The loss of the mill structure also impacts the visual record of the 1862 landscape. Despite these changes, the landscape retains enough of its historic characteristics and features to convey its significance for both the Civil War period and the commemoration period.

INTEGRITY
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The National Register of Historic Places defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey its significance through physical resources. The National Register program identifies seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Retention of these qualities is necessary for a property to convey its significance; however, not all seven aspects must be present to retain integrity. The following evaluation is based on an 1800-1944 period of significance for Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield.

Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield retains integrity of location and design, revealing important spatial relationships between the existing historic roads, earthworks, and Ellerson's Mill foundation and millrace laid across the native topography's creek swales and river bottoms. The creek's deep swale and the remnant mill foundation and millrace, convey historic feeling and association as Federal forces used these features for protection and entrenchment during the battle. Adjacent suburban development, visible from areas of the site, the Old Dominion Energy Transmission line across the site's southern section and increased successional forest growth diminish integrity of setting. Except for information in archeological resources, including the mill foundation, and the millrace, the integrity of workmanship is diminished in the landscape.

The next section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding Historic Structures Inventory (HSI) and FMSS names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1800-1944), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource. If a feature is non-contributing, it is evaluated as "compatible" (visually congruent with the historic character of the landscape) or "incompatible" (visually incongruent with the historic character of the landscape).

Landscape Characteristic: Archeological Sites

This section identifies archeological resources that are part of the cultural landscape such as ruins, traces, or artifacts evidenced by the presence of surface and subsurface features. Those features listed below as contributing have been designated as such under the National Register of Historic Places Criteria A, B, or C by the List of Classified Structures. These resources have not been evaluated under Criterion D and must be considered potentially contributing under Criterion D at this time. The list below contains resources identified in previous archeological research, the List of Classified Structures, and cultural landscape field investigations. This list will be updated upon completion of an Archeological Overview and Assessment.

Ellerson's Mill and mill race were critical features during the battle in 1862. According to Park Historian Robert E. L. Krick, little is known about the mill, and further research is needed. Photographs show that at least two different mill buildings existed on the site, one at the time of the battle and another in the 1880s.

According to OCULUS, the mill race at the time of the battle was "a large impoundment stretching about six hundred yards north to south" along the length of the creek. The mill race still exists but its integrity has been severely impacted by the Route 156 highway bridge. In 1862, a mill pond and dam also existed upstream from the mill (OCULUS 1996, Vol. II: 6-8). They are not visible due to overgrown vegetation.

At the time of the field survey in June 1999, a new view had been cleared through underbrush and trees, so that the foundation of Ellerson's Mill was visible from an interpretive marker at the east end of the walking path. The eastern bank of the creek is only accessible via the walking path at the southern edge of the park. The mill and mill race sites are not accessible to the public as they are located on swampy ground and are largely obscured by the dense vegetation cover of trees and vines.

The Old Cold Harbor Road trace is also considered an archeological site. It is addressed in the section on Circulation.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Ellerson's Mill	93430	Undetermined					No
Mill race	93431	Contributing	06761		Location	15557	Yes

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



View to Ellerson's Mill foundation.



Current pedestrian bridge crosses creek where Old Cold Harbor Road bridge probably stood.



Parking area (overlook terrace removed in 1999).



Paving ends at edge of parking lot, causing visitors to walk across grass to bridge.



Old Cold Harbor Road trace is used as pedestrian path.



Current use of the site as a park.



Trees inundated by raised water level south of pedestrian bridge.



Use of riprap to stabilize embankment.



Freeman Marker #3 along Beaver Dam Creek entrance road.



Example of interpretive wayside at site.



Examples of use of split rail fence and directional signage.



Embankment along the edge of Old Cold Harbor Road.



Variety of wetland vegetation in basin.



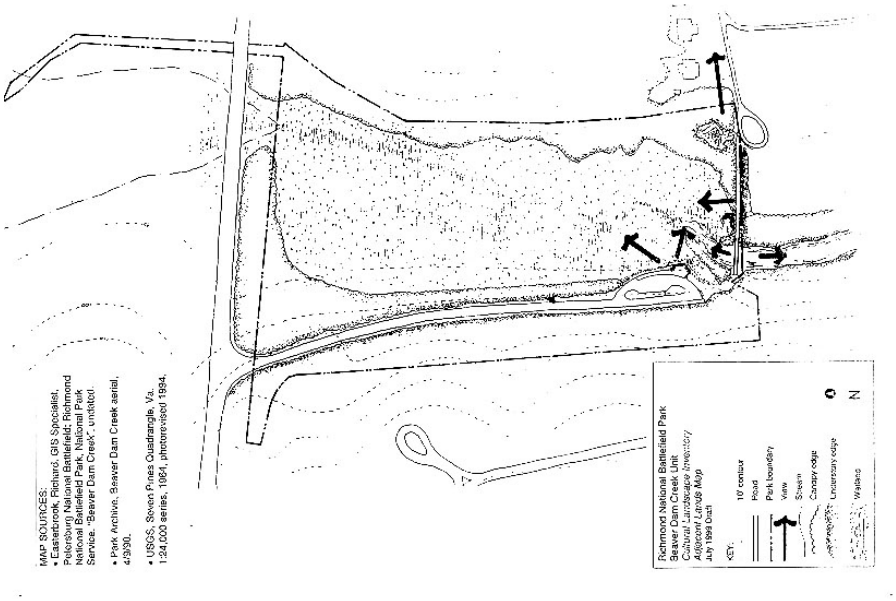
View to wetland basin from pedestrian bridge.



Sight line cut from wayside to mill ruin.



View to neighboring cul-de-sac and development from end of Old Cold Harbor Road trace.



This graphic demonstrates where views are located.

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Buildings are elements constructed primarily for sheltering any form of human activity in a landscape, while structures are elements constructed for functional purposes other than sheltering human activity.

Historic Condition:
No buildings known to have existed on the land within the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield park unit during the Civil War remain today. Ellerson's Mill, listed as a contributing site in the National Register documentation, is marked by an earthen depression surrounding a sizeable square foundation remnant of the circa 1800-1862 mill building (Figure 28). (NR 2018, Sec.7: 13) The Battle of Beaver Dam Creek is also known as the Battle of Ellerson's Mill due to the proximity of the mill structure to the fighting. According to a historic photograph taken shortly after the Civil War, Ellerson's mill was a single-story wood frame structure with a steep gable roof, clad in unpainted wood siding and set on a stone foundation (see Figure 8). The original mill was altered or demolished sometime between 1865 and the early 1880s.

According to Civil War era military maps, a barn was located near what is now the southeastern boundary of the Beaver Dam Creek park unit. In addition, some Civil War era maps show a bridge over the Chickahominy River (see Figure 2). Further investigation is necessary to determine if evidence of these structures remains in the landscape.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
In addition to the remnant foundation of Ellerson's Mill, the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit has a noncontributing structure, the Beaver Dam Creek Pedestrian Foot Bridge. In 1992, the National Park Service constructed the 63-foot long by 6-foot-wide arched structural steel footbridge in 1992. The bridge is in the approximate location of an antebellum vehicular bridge and its replacement, built after Union troops burned the earlier bridge during the 1862 battle (see Figures 18 and 19). (Shephard et.al. 2019: 31)

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Ellerson's Mill Site	196378	Contributing			Asset	1442957	No
Pedestrian Bridge	196379	Noncontributing – Compatible			Asset	1426226	No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 28. Foundation area at Ellerson's Mill Site. (OCLP, 2021)

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Circulation refers to the spaces, features, and applied material finishes that constitute systems of movement in a landscape.

Historic Condition:
The Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit contains one known circulation route present during the Civil War: the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. The early nineteenth-century road ran from Mechanicsville in the west, east to the hamlet of Cold Harbor. The frontline of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek extended about 1.5 miles along the elevated east bank of the creek, from a wooded area north of Old Church Road crossing south to where Old Cold Harbor Road crossed Beaver Dam Creek near Ellerson's Mill. During the battle, the Federal forces concentrated most of their infantry on defending these two strategic bridge crossings of Beaver Dam Creek.

In addition, Civil War era maps indicate a few roads traversing the southern section of what is now the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit, near the confluence of Beaver Dam Creek and the Chickahominy River. A ford and bridge, on some maps labeled as Lee Bridge, extends across the Chickahominy River. A road led north from the bridge to meet Old Cold Harbor Road. At least two additional farm lanes connected structures once located on lands within the unit to those outside the unit's boundaries (see Figures 2 and 6).

In 1935, the Civilian Conservation Corp made improvements to Cold Harbor Road (now the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace) in the vicinity of Beaver Dam Creek and Ellerson's Mill Site. Further research is necessary to determine whether the existing stone wall near the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace dates to this period.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Today, the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace runs south from Cold Harbor Road (Route 156) along the west side of Beaver Dam Creek, past visitor parking, and across a narrow pedestrian bridge over the creek, to the southeastern edge of the unit. The existing Cold Harbor Road, which forms the northern boundary of the unit except for a narrow strip of land surrounding the remnant millrace, was constructed in the early 1970s as a bypass to the historic mill site.

The northern end of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace functions as a paved park entrance road (tour road), extending south from Cold Harbor Road approximately 400 yards through the woods to an oval-shaped vehicular turn-around loop. Parking is on the east side of the turn-around loop, separated from the drive by a central grassy median. South of the parking lot, the historic road trace becomes an unpaved pedestrian route, separated from vehicles by a split rail fence. The unpaved earthen path with wide green verges to indicate the alignment of the historic road continues over a gently arching, noncontributing pedestrian bridge (see Buildings and Structures) to the former location of Ellerson's Mill. Park maps label the portion of the historic road trace between the split rail fence and the former mill site as the Beaver Dam Creek Trail. A stone wall near the millrace may be a remnant retaining wall associated with the road on the north side of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. A gate (see Small-Scale Features) marks the east end of the park unit's path just beyond the ruins. Old Cold Harbor Road Trace continues through the adjacent suburban development. The National Park Service constructed the small parking lot in the 1960s as part of an overlook and removed the overlook in the 1990s. A noncontributing social trail is located along the east bank of Beaver Dam Creek, south of the pedestrian bridge. Further investigation is necessary to determine if evidence of the historic farm road traces within the wetlands near the confluence of the Chickahominy River and Beaver Dam Creek remains (Figures 25, 26, 27).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Old Cold Harbor Road Trace	196373	Contributing	081629		Location	15522	No
Tour Road (Old Cold Harbor Road Trace)	196374	Contributing	081629		Location	15522	No
Beaver Dam Creek Trail (Old Cold Harbor Road Trace)	196375	Contributing	081629		Location	15537	No
Parking Lot	196376	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	102625	No
Beaver Dam Creek East Bank (Social) Trail	196377	Noncontributing – Incompatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 25. Northeastward view of Tour Road, parking lot, and Freeman Marker #3. (OCLP, 2021)



Figure 26. Southeastward view of Tour Road entry/exit at State Route 156/Cold Harbor Road with Harbor Hill Drive in distance. (OCLP, 2021)



Figure 27. Beaver Dam Creek Trail. (OCLP, 2021)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Land uses are the principal activities in a landscape that form, shape, and organize the landscape as a result of human interaction.

Historic Condition:
The primary historic land use of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit was for milling and agriculture, including crops and livestock grazing. Land cultivation for food began before the seventeenth century and continued through the Civil War to the end of the historic period. From the mid-eighteenth century, wheat and corn cultivation expanded, supporting the milling industry. Flour and corn meal manufacturing was well-established in Richmond by the time of the American Revolution. Numerous mills, including a mill on the site of Ellerson's Mill, dotted the countryside. (Berry 1970: 387,389) The historic milling use of the land is demonstrated in the northern portion of the unit by the Ellerson's mill foundation and the remnant millrace or impoundment that powered the grist mill during the nineteenth century and at the time of the battle. During the period of significance, mid-nineteenth-century maps and photographs suggest that the landscape was almost entirely open in fields and grazing land surrounding the mill and open for grazing in undeveloped wetlands in the southern section of the unit, near the Chickahominy River. The Union and Confederate forces used the landscape for military purposes during the period of significance at the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek in 1862. Federal earthworks dug prior to and during the battle relate to this use. Finally, the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit served commemorative, educational, and recreational uses for its role in Civil War commemoration and the creation of Richmond National Battlefield Park.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
By the end of the period of significance in 1944, agricultural and milling use of the unit had ended. The commemorative use remains a contributing land use characteristic of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield cultural landscape. Visitors also use the park unit for recreation.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
	93437	Undetermined					No

Landscape Characteristic: Natural Systems and Features

Natural systems and features are the natural aspects that have influenced the development and physical form of the landscape, and can include geology, geomorphology, hydrology, ecology, climate, and native vegetation.

Historic Conditions:
The Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield park unit is within the Virginia Tidewater region, characterized by flat to gently sloping land cut by dendritic stream corridors. Tributaries of the Chickahominy River, including Beaver Dam Creek, which flows almost due south, and the east-west Brandy Branch, which forms a confluence with Beaver Dam Creek just south of present-day Cold Harbor Road, form the unit's hydrology. The Chickahominy River's watershed contributed to the thriving milling industry of the antebellum period and the outcome of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek. The property south of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace has poorly drained soils on flats and along watercourses, with a variable depth organic horizon overlying sandy or silt clay loam soils.

Before European settlement of coastal Virginia, the Beaver Dam Creek area was likely forested with a mature mix of hardwoods and pine, dominated by wetland vegetation in the stream drainages of the watershed of the Chickahominy River. Indigenous people may have cleared portions of forested land to facilitate travel, improve game habitat, or cultivate food. By the early eighteenth century, Europeans practiced intensive commercial tobacco cultivation in the region, supported by comparatively mild winters and abundant rainfall. However, tobacco cultivation without proper crop rotation practices quickly depleted the soil of essential nutrients. By the late eighteenth century, an unstable tobacco market and infertile soils caused many farmers to diversify their crops as they responded to Richmond's burgeoning urban markets. Grains and corn gained prominence, and small and regional mills like Ellerson's Mill became common, especially where topography facilitated waterpower.

The stretch of Beaver Dam Creek from its confluence with the Brandy Branch, just south of Cold Harbor Road, to Ellerson's Mill was the scene of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek's most intense combat. Union brigades on the ridge above the east bank of creek thwarted assaults by Confederate brigade divisions. The existing mill dam and race created an impoundment that channeled and stored water to power Ellerson's Mill. Confederate forces struggled to cross the impoundment, millrace, and the swampy lowlands around Beaver Dam Creek during the battle. Much of the land was open, except for the ridges and steep natural ravines of the creeks and rivers that remained forested. Narrow strips of forest grew along the Chickahominy River and along the road to Cold Harbor, east of the creek, south of Ellerson's Mill. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 30) On the bank of Beaver Dam Creek, Union soldiers felled trees to create obstacles for attacking Confederate soldiers.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Forest cover on the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield has fluctuated over the years since the battle but has generally been more abundant than in 1862. Most of the park unit is currently forested with forest communities characterized as Coastal Plain/Piedmont Floodplain Swamp Forests. (Taverna 2015: 32) These wetland forests are dominated by green ash (Fraxinus pennsylvanica), red maple (Acer rubrum), and mixed oaks species (Quercus spp.), as well as sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua) and tulip tree (Liriodendron tulipfera) on slightly higher topography. The Ellerson Mill site and millrace are forested. Only the wetlands west of Beaver Dam Creek and north of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace remain open. South of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace, almost the entire park is forested, except for the straight swaths of utility rights of way, kept clear of tall woody vegetation to facilitate maintenance on the transmission lines. While Beaver Dam Creek remains roughly in the location it was during the battle; the creek is wider and swampier than it was in 1862. Dense suburban development in the second half of the twentieth century may have altered the region's hydrology by increasing the water levels in Beaver Dam Creek and the portion of the Chickahominy River watershed within the park unit (Figures 16, 17).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Beaver Dam Creek	196362	Contributing					No
Chickahominy River	196363	Contributing					No
Brandy Run	196364	Contributing					No
	93438	Undetermined					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 16. Southwestward view of Beaver Dam Creek with Tour Road in Distance from near Cold Harbor Road Beaver Dam Creek Bridge. (OCLP, 2021)



Figure 17. Southeastward view of Brandy Branch with Ellison's Millrace in background from the northernmost site boundary. (OCLP, 2021)

Landscape Characteristic: **Small Scale Features**

Small-scale features are elements that provide detail and diversity for both functional needs and aesthetic concerns in the landscape.

Historic Condition:
Little is known about the specific location of small-scale features on what became the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield landscape prior to the Civil War. The site of Ellerson's Mill contained the mill and mill waterpower system of the millrace, impound, and impound dam, and may have contained small-scale features such as fencing and retaining walls.
Agricultural and domestic development on the landscape was limited. Where farming did occur, such as near the non-extant nineteenth-century barn in the southern section of the unit, fencing would have enclosed fields and lined roadways.
In the 1920s, commemorative markers were erected in and around Richmond to interpret the Civil War sites in the area. In 1925, the Battlefield Markers Association erected historical markers, also known as Freeman markers. Each marker was comprised of a concrete and granite base with an inscribed iron plaque briefly describing the location's association with the Civil War. There was one erected marker on the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield on the east side of what was then Cold Harbor Road, northwest of the Ellerson's Mill site. (NR 2018, Sec.7: 13)

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Freeman Marker #3 erected at Beaver Dam Creek remains and stands in its original location, to the west of what was historically Cold Harbor Road and is now the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace.
During the 1950s, Dominion Energy Virginia acquired a right-of-way to allow for the construction of a utility transmission line. This noncontributing transmission line crosses the southern section of the park from east to west and includes four transmission line towers. Numerous non-historic interpretative signs are also located in the park, including NPS metal and Plexiglas waysides; small, painted metal interpretive markers; wooden split rail fencing; and metal gates and culverts (Figure 30).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Freeman Marker #3	196381	Contributing	081630		Location	15583	Yes
Small Stone Wall near Old Cold Harbor Road Trace	196382	Undetermined					No
Interpretative Metal Signs	196383	Undetermined			Location	15537	No
Waysides	196384	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	15522	No
Transmission Line	196385	Noncontributing – Incompatible					No
Gates	196386	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	15522	No
Culverts	196387	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Split Rail Fence	196388	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	15598	No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 30. Eastward view of Freeman Marker #3 from Tour Road. (OCLP, 2021)

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

Topography is the three-dimensional configuration of the landscape surface characterized by features (such as slope and articulation) and orientation (such as elevation and solar aspect).

Historic, Post-Historic, and Existing Conditions:
Much of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is representative of the landform patterns characteristic of the Atlantic Coastal Plain physiographic province: large, relatively level alluvial terraces divided by the steeply sloped banks of perennial and intermittent drainages. The natural topography of Beaver Dam Creek's narrow swampy ravine surrounded by high, steep slopes evokes the battle landscape, where the creek valley defined by 60-foot-high bluffs proved an effective defensive barrier to the Confederate attack on Federal forces. Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield ranges from approximately 75 feet above sea level in the lowest elevation of the wetlands at the southern end of the unit to about 165 feet above sea level at the unit's northeast corner, on the ridge above Ellerson's Mill. Human-made terrain overlays this natural topography. The flat plain of the historic road cut of Old Cold Harbor Road Trace (see Circulation) runs parallel with the north-south section of Beaver Dam Creek before curving to the east across the creek and past Ellerson's Mill. The millrace (see Constructed Water Features) appears as a swale running approximately 300 feet north from the earthen depression of the former Ellerson's Mill site along the east bank of the Beaver Dam Creek to the north of Cold Harbor Road. In addition, there are three humanmade, but unidentified earthen features on the western facing slope to the east of the mill site. Further research may reveal their origin (Figure 22).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Topography of Ravine and Watershed of Beaver Dam Creek near Ellerson's Mill	196367	Contributing					No
Three humanmade unidentified earthen features on the western facing slope east of the mill site	196368	Undetermined					No
	93442	Undetermined					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 22. One of the unidentified, human-made earthen features. (OCLP, 2021)

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Vegetation includes deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous plants and plant communities, whether indigenous or introduced in the landscape.

Historic Condition:
Before European settlement, Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield would have been almost entirely

forested with mixed deciduous and coniferous species reliant on the hydrology of the Chickahominy River's watershed. Dominant tree species included numerous species of oak, including white oak (Quercus alba), red oak (Quercus rubra), black oak (Quercus nigra), willow oak (Quercus phellos), scarlet oak (Quercus coccinea), pin oak (Quercus palustris), and blackjack oak (Quercus marilandica). Other common trees were the American chestnut (Castanea dentata), yellow poplar (Liriodendron tulipifera), American beech (Fagus grandifolia), sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua), and hickory (Carya spp.). Red maple (Acer rubrum), American holly (Ilex opaca), black gum (Nyssa sylvatica), ash (Fraxinus spp.), and sycamore (Platanus occidentalis) were significant components of local woodland cover. Conifers were represented by various pine species, including loblolly (Pinus taeda) and Virginia (Pinus virginiana).

Settlers began clearing forests in the seventeenth century for lumber, fuel, and crop production. Initially, tobacco was the predominant crop grown in Tidewater, Virginia. However, the nutrient-intensive crop quickly depleted soils, and after a few growing seasons, farmers had to clear additional land to maintain production, accelerating the rate of deforestation. Once tobacco cultivation had depleted land, farmers planted it with grains, which required less fertile soil, or left the fields fallow. Gradually wheat and corn replaced tobacco, which spurred the construction of flour and grist mills in the region. Civil War era maps and accounts of the battle depict the Beaver Dam Creek battlefield that falls within the boundaries of the park unit, as almost devoid of forest except for narrow swaths along the eastern bank of the Chickahominy River and along what was then, Cold Harbor Road near Beaver Dam Creek. During the battle, Union soldiers cut down many remaining trees on the east bank of Beaver Dam Creek to make obstacles for the attacking Confederate forces. A historic Civil War era photograph, likely northeast from Cold Harbor Road, captures Ellerson's Mill surrounded by rough fields left fallow and growing up in successional vegetation. A windbreak of large pines grew on the crest of the ridge east of the mill site. A similar view is captured almost twenty years later. By the late 1930s, much of the landscape that now comprises the Beaver Dam Creek unit was forested.

Post Historic and Existing Conditions:
Today, most of the unit is forested with deciduous trees interspersed with occasional Loblolly pine. The only open areas occur in the northern section of the unit in small, turfed areas near the pedestrian bridge and parking lot and along Beaver Dam Creek near the mill site. South of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace, the unit is almost entirely forested, laced with the tributaries of the Chickahominy River. Existing forest communities are primarily composed of the Coastal Plain/Piedmont Floodplain Swamp Forest (Green-Ash/Red Maple Type) and the (Mixed Oak-Red Maple Type) in the southern portion of the unit in the flood plain of the Chickahominy River. Just south of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace, which is at a slightly higher elevation that lands bordering the Chickahominy River, vegetation is primarily comprised of Coastal Plain/Piedmont Small-Stream Floodplain Forest. In riverine areas along Beaver Dam Creek, the Beaver Wetland Complex vegetative community is common. (Taverna 2015: 20-23)

The Coastal Plain/Piedmont Floodplain Swamp Forest occurs in backswamps and topographic depressions within alluvial floodplains of large streams and small rivers. Along smaller headwater streams, it may occur in low, poorly drained floodplains with braided channels and depressions. The overstory is dominated by variable mixtures of willow oak (Quercus phellos), pin oak (Quercus palustris), swamp chestnut oak (Quercus michauxii), red maple (Acer rubrum), and ash (Fraxus spp.). Within the slightly less damp Small-Stream Floodplain forest, sweetgum, (Liquidambar styraciflua), and tulip popular (Liriodendron tulipifera) are more common. The understory of both forest types is commonly quite open and contains young red maple (Acer rubrum), several climbing vines, American hornbeam (Carpinus caroliniana), American holly (Ilex opaca var. opaca), pawpaw (Asimina triloba), southern arrowwood (Viburnum dentatum), common winterberry (Ilex verticillata), and other species. The herb layer is usually well-developed, with a prominent graminoid component. Common herbaceous patch-dominants include sweet woodreed (Cinna arundinacea), white edge sedge (Carex debilis var. debilis), greater bladder sedge (Carex intumescens), fowl mannagrass (Glyceria striata), and blunt broom sedge (Carex tribuloides) (Figures 23, 24).

The Beaver Wetland Complex is dominated by wetland vegetation of shrubs and small trees, with herbaceous openings and often with standing dead trees; typical species include red maple (Acer

rubrum), hazel alder (Alnus serrulate), common buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis), and black willow (Salix nigra). Other trees can include river birch (Betula nigra), sweetgum (Liquidambar sytraciflua), and American sycamore (Platanus occidentalis) (see Figure 19).

There are no known individual vegetation specimens or vegetation communities that contribute to National Register significance at the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield. Successional vegetation growth in areas that were open during the Civil War period of significance, have altered the broad patterns of field and forest within the unit.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Beaver Wetland Complex	196369	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Floodplain Swamp Forest	196370	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Small-Stream Floodplain Forest	196371	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Turfgrass	196372	Noncontributing – Compatible			Asset	1442979	No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 23. Southward view of Beaver Dam Creek and Beaver Wetland Complex from State Route 156/Cold Harbor Road Bridge. (OCLP, 2021)



Figure 24. Southeastward view of the small-stream floodplain forest south of Old Cold Harbor Road Trace and east of Beaver Dam Creek. (OCLP, 2021)

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

A view is the expansive and/or panoramic prospect of a broad range of vision that may be naturally occurring or deliberately contrived. A vista is a controlled prospect of a discrete, linear range of vision, which is deliberately contrived.

Historic, Post-Historic, and Existing Conditions:
Before the war, the view eastward from Cold Harbor Road (now the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace) across Beaver Dam Creek to Ellerson's Mill and millrace likely served as a waypoint for area residents. During the Civil War, this view became crucial to locating strategic military points for the Federal and Confederate forces. During the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, nearly the entire landscape of what became the Beaver Dam Creek park unit comprised open fields and wetlands. According to Civil War era military maps, a narrow strip of woodland grew along the Chickahominy River and another thin strip along the road to Cold Harbor (currently the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace) and east of Beaver Dam Creek. The artillery of the Federal forces, perched on the high ground east of the millrace, benefitted from clear lines of fire westward down the slope to Beaver Dam Creek below. The character of the broader landscape through the historic period was rural and agricultural, a patchwork of fields and forest dotted will mills and agricultural building clusters. Historic photographs of Ellerson's Mill from 1865 and of a mill at the site in the early 1880s reveal open fields slowly growing up in successional growth.

Today, most of the unit's landscape has grown up in woodland. The view northeastward of the Ellerson's Mill Site and millrace from Old Cold Harbor Road remains. Though altered from the period of significance by the growth of successional vegetation and the loss of the mill building, the topography reveals the undulations of the millrace and Federal earthworks (Figure 29). A small grassy slope is located east of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace near the pedestrian bridge (see Figure 18). Linear clearings are cut through the wetland forest in the park's southern section to support utility transmission lines. The area to the north, east, and west of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield unit has dense suburban residential development. Land south of the unit and north of the southern section of the unit is preserved greenspace. Thick vegetation in the watershed of Beaver Dam Creek and the Chickahominy River screens some private homes at the park's boundary.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Vista of Ellerson's Mill Site and Millrace from Old Cold Harbor Road Trace	196380	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 29. Northeastward view of Ellerson's Mill Site and Millrace from Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. (OCLP, 2021)

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Spatial organization is the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in a landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces.

Historic, Post-Historic, and Existing Conditions:
The spatial organization of the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield is defined primarily by the unit's natural and human-made terrain and was critical to the outcome of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek in 1862. The steep valley of Beaver Dam Creek, defined by 60-foot-high bluffs that proved an effective defensive barrier during the battle, remains today. Federal troops incorporated the steep valley and the swale of Ellerson's long impoundment or race into their defensive position, using the natural topography of the unit and the nineteenth-century industrial earthworks as entrenchments. The low-lying swampy creek bed, which lays between the millrace and Old Cold Harbor Road (now the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace) along the western boundary of the unit, provided an additional barrier to the attacking Confederate forces during the battle.

The southern two-thirds of the unit, which does not have visitor access, is comprised primarily of wooded and shrubby wetland interlaced with tributaries of the Chickahominy River and Beaver Dam Creek. At the time of the battle, this area was open, with only a narrow strip of woodland along the Chickahominy River. Over the past thirty years, the surrounding region has developed into dense suburbs which has increased the volume of runoff water into the Chickahominy River. In turn the watershed of the Chickahominy is wetter, causing erosion to the banks of the tributary creeks, including Beaver Dam Creek (Figures 18, 19).

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 18. Northwestward view of Beaver Dam Creek Trail, Beaver Dam Creek Trail Bridge, Beaver Dam Creek, Tour Road and parking lot from Old Cold Harbor Road Trace near Beaver Dam Creek East Bank (Social) Trail. (OCLP, 2021)



Figure 19. Southwestward view of Beaver Dam Creek, Beaver Wetland Complex vegetation community, Beaver Dam Creek Trail Bridge, and Old Cold Harbor Road Trace from between Ellerson's Mill Site and the parking lot. (OCLP, 2021)

Landscape Characteristic: Constructed Water Features

Constructed water features are built features and elements that utilize water for aesthetic or utilitarian functions in the landscape.

Historic Condition:
As Civil War-era military maps differ in their graphic portrayal of Ellerson's millrace or pond, further research is necessary to determine its detailed design. By the second half of the eighteenth century, a mill stood on Beaver Dam Creek in the same place as the mill during the 1862 battle. (Shephard et.al. 2019: 36, citing Cocke 1940: 12; Druss et.al. 1977: 53) An 1820 map of Hanover County, however, indicates a "Truehart's Mill" on the south side of what was then Cold Harbor Road, west of the creek (see Figure 1). Most Civil War era military maps place the mill on the east side of Beaver Dam Creek, north of the road to Cold Harbor. Some Civil War era maps label the millrace as a "mill pond" and indicate an impoundment upstream where Brandy Run flows into Beaver Dam Creek. Typical nineteenth-century mill design consisted of a water wheel erected beside or beneath a mill structure, and an upstream dam that controlled water flow into the headrace. The dam for Ellerson's Mill was north of what is now Cold Harbor Road. The dam held water in an impoundment to store the nighttime water flow when the mill was not running. An earthen canal called a millrace or headrace carried water from the dam to the mill, ideally with minimal elevation change. A penstock, or sluice with a gate to control water flow, conveyed water to the wheel. Once the water discharged from the wheel, a tail race carried the water with energy largely spent back to the creek below the mill. Such a waterpower system at Ellerson's Mill had three functions; it delivered large amounts of water to the water wheel, removed the energy from the water through the action of the water wheel, and returned the used water to the stream below the mill.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Two remnants of Ellerson's millrace are extant and divided by Cold Harbor Road. The section south of Cold Harbor Road is approximately three hundred feet long by four feet wide. The remnant millrace north of Cold Harbor Road is approximately one hundred feet long by four feet wide and leads north and west from the road to slightly beyond the Brandy Branch. The millrace was initially built into the side of a hill, with a dike constructed along the lower side. It runs roughly north from an earthen depression that marks the former site of Ellerson's Mill along the east bank of Beaver Dam Creek and continues north from Cold Harbor Road (Figure 20). (NR 2018, Sec.7: 13) In 1976 two concrete lined storm sewer ditches were installed near the Ellerson's Mill site (Figure 21). One above ground concrete culvert from this storm sewer is visible south of the Old Cold Harbor Road Trace. Another concrete culvert is visible from the pedestrian bridge over Beaver Dam Creek.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Ellerson's Millrace	196365	Contributing	006761		Asset	155557	Yes
Storm Water Conveyance Ditches	196366	Noncontributing – Incompatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 20. Northwestward view of Ellerson's Mill Race from sewer utility corridor. (OCLP, 2021)



Figure 21. Northward view of stormwater conveyance ditch near northwest side of Beaver Dam Creek Trail Bridge. (OCLP, 2021)

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 8

Next Assessment Due Date: 09/27/2030

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/27/2022

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Overall, the condition of the Beaver Dam landscape is evaluated as “Good,” with established vegetation patterns maintained by mowing and relatively stable native forest communities. Historic park roads, trails, parking lots, interpretive signs, and monuments are well maintained. Soil disturbance resulting from increased adjacent residential and commercial development and increased runoff from increased impervious surface areas in the region have increased siltation and erosion along the stream bed of Beaver Dam Creek, altering the basic appearance of the stream corridor. The landscape’s cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain the landscape’s current condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Adjacent Lands

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Federally controlled or otherwise protected land of Beaver Dam Creek comprises the core of the battlefield, including the primary Union and Confederate lines. Much of the battlefield, however, remains in private ownership and adjacent development continues to threaten the integrity of views and vistas, as well as the integrity of the stream corridors of Beaver Dam Creek and the Chickahominy River.

Date Identified: 09/23/2022

Type of Impact: Erosion

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Increased adjacent development has led to increased levels of runoff and water infiltration, which has changed the hydrology of the unit and more specifically, is eroding the banks of Beaver Dam Creek.

Date Identified: 09/23/2022

Type of Impact: Release To Succession

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Though much of the battlefield was historically open, including the earthworks associated with the millrace, mill site, and Federal entrenchments erected as part of the Battle of Beaver Dam Creek, much of the landscape is reverting to forest, diminishing the capacity of the landscape to convey important aspects of the battle.

Date Identified: 09/23/2022

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Undetermined

Treatment Completed: No

Document Type: General Management Plan

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

There is no approved treatment for Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield as no approved Cultural Landscape Report exists for the park unit. The General Management Plan for Richmond National Battlefield Park (1996), recommended a resource-based interpretation at the park which would explain the military action during the major campaigns, relate the military action to the significance of the Confederate capital to both sides, and place the battles for Richmond in the context of the rest of the Civil War. Though the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield, which at the time was less than thirty acres in size, was not prioritized as a landscape requiring an approved landscape treatment, the Richmond National Battlefield Park Foundation Document reaffirmed that the Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield landscape is a fundamental resource that merits primary consideration during planning and management processes.

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

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