

Va. register lists Bristow battlefield

By STEVE DANIELS
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BRISTOW — The Virginia Historic Resources Board on Wednesday resolved the long-disputed status of a 1,162-acre Civil War battlefield in Bristow, voting unanimously to recognize it on the state's Landmarks Register.

The board recognized the area despite opposition from landowners, who have argued that historical recognition of the battlefield would harm their property values. The Prince William Board of County Supervisors also sent a memo to the board dated April 12 opposing recognition of the site because it is negotiating with landowners to set aside some land for a memorial area.

"The county is currently proposing a land-use sector plan for the area, which will consider the concept of a memorial area being dedicated in return for some nearby residential development," Board of Supervisors Chairman Terrence Spellane, I-Coles, wrote in the memo. "The county is not supporting the proposed nomination as it appears the memorializing of the site can be accomplished as a result of the above actions."

The opposition has continued despite assurances from the state Historic Resources Board that listing the site on the register does not stop the Board of County Supervisors from rezoning property there.

Placing the battlefield on the

state's Landmarks Register simply recognizes a site for its historical value and does not preclude developing the property in any way, said Margaret Peters, information director for the state Historic Resources Department.

The site, which straddles Bristow Road and borders the south side of Va. 28, was the scene of the Battle of Bristoe Station in October 1863, in which 1,900 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed or wounded. There reportedly still are Confederate soldiers buried at the site.

The land is marked in the county's recently adopted comprehensive plan for light-industrial development on the east side of Bristow Road and large-lot residential growth on the west side.

Landowners in the area have expressed concern that marking the land as historic will make it more difficult to rezone their property and sell to a developer.

GLM Corp., a Maryland development firm that owns 256 acres on the battlefield zoned for a 2.5 million-square-foot business park, apparently is having trouble keeping up with payments on the loan. The land was advertised this week in a local newspaper for a foreclosure sale on May 9.

Ernie Marcus, project manager for GLM, was unavailable for comment Wednesday.

The Save the Battlefield Coalition, a non-profit group based in Catharpin, nominated the Bristow Battlefield to the National Register of Historic Places and the state Landmarks Register last year.