

## Battlefield on top 10 list of endangered

By TERRY KARNES  
Observer staff

The Civil War Preservation Trust recently named the Manassas National Battlefield Park as one of the 10 most endangered battlefields in the country. Noting that the battlefield is surrounded on three sides by sprawl and that commuters use the roads through the park, the group called the battlefield "a green island in a sea of sprawl."

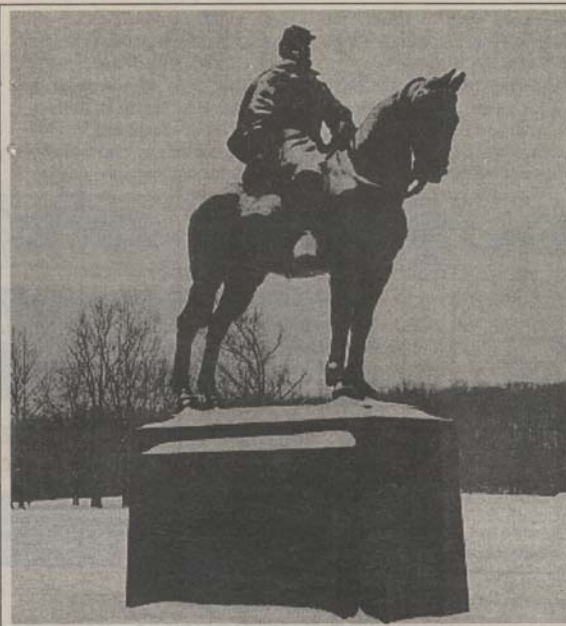
Superintendent of the park, Bob Sutton, said the report helps focus attention to the resource.

Sutton has been park superintendent for eight years.

"I feel we've been very successful, primarily in Prince William County, in working with developers," Sutton said. The battlefield worked with the Parkridge shopping center to keep Hoyt's theater under 45 feet so it would not be seen by the Chinn Ridge site. Cell towers have been at issue and one in the Fairfax County section that the park has fought for years will likely be approved soon with changes the park

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A familiar sight at Manassas National Battlefield Park is this statue of Stonewall Jackson and his horse  
Harry Leach / the Bull Run Observer

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can live with, he said.

Whenever there is planned development around the battlefield, Sutton said, Prince William will notify the park for input.

"They don't have to," Sutton said, and he's glad they do.

The legislative boundary of the park gives it 5,100 acres.

With current zoning as residential, especially on the north end of the park, the main issue facing Sutton now is roads.

The park receives between 750,000 to 1 million visitors a year. Because the tour of Second Manassas requires the use of a vehicle to view, many tourists get frustrated with the extra cars on the roads and quit, he said.

There is a current study about the placement of a bypass around the battlefield.

"It's something I'd like to see," he said. "I'd like to have it and there is a mandate from Congress" that we have it.

"It's a very, very popular place," Sutton said of the park. There are about 25 miles of horse trails and about 25 miles of walking trails through the park.

"I think people see us as a real asset," he said. "We do contribute a tremendous amount to the local economy" through tourism.

Changes have been made to draw in more visitors and provide more exhibits. The park will work on the Henry House, Thornberry House and Stone House this year. Before the projects begin, the first

step is archeological digs around the sites. During the digs around the VA 234 and US 29 intersection, evidence was found of slave quarters.

"You never know what you're going to find," he said.

A new aspect of the park is the new docu-drama at the Visitors Center which shows the stories behind the park. The movie is titled "Manassas: End of Innocence."

"People can see a story in the movie and walk to see where" the events took place, Sutton said.

There are several new items on display and an overhaul on the bookstore and Visitor's Center took place in recent history, he said. The bookstore at the Visitor's Center, Sutton said, has the best selection of books on the Civil War in the area.

Manassas (also known as Bull Run) was the site of two crucial battles fought during the summers of 1861 and 1862. The First Battle of Manassas held July 21 resulted in the rout of the Federal army back to Washington.

The Second Battle of Manassas was a far larger and costly affair. During the first two days of the battle, the Federal army under Gen. John Pope appeared on the verge of victory. However, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee decisively defeated Pope on the third day, paving the way for Lee's first invasion of the North.

Another event that takes place annually in the summer is Civil War days with demonstrations and re-enactments at the battlefields.

Besides Manassas, the top 10 endangered battlefields cited in the report are, in alphabetical order, Benton, N.C., Champion Hill, Miss., Chancellorsville, Va., Glori-eta Pass, N.M., Mansfield, La., Nashville, Tenn., Petersburg, Richmond, Ky., and Rocky Face Ridge, Ga.

For more information about the park, call 703-361-1339.