

*Agency Official 106 Effect Report*

*Establishment of a Pedestrian Trail and Foot Bridge Linking Ellwood Manor with Wilderness  
Tavern on the Wilderness Battlefield, Spotsylvania, Virginia*

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park  
120 Chatham Lane  
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22405**

## Description and Purpose of Undertaking

### Purpose

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park was authorized by an act of Congress on February 14, 1927 (44 Stat. 1091). The purpose of the park, as stated in the act, is “to commemorate the Civil War battles of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Court House, Wilderness, and Chancellorsville, including Salem Church ... to survey, locate, and preserve the lines of the opposing armies in said battles, to open, construct, and repair such roads, highways, paths, and other approaches as may be necessary to make the historical points accessible to the public and to students of said battles ...” By Executive Order 6166 in 1933 the park was transferred to the Department of the Interior to be administered by the National Park Service.

### Need

In the recently completed *Cultural Landscape Report for Ellwood* (2010), one of the landscape issues raised by the report is the lack of access to the Ellwood landscape from adjoining battlefield sites. “There are no pedestrian or vehicular connections between Ellwood and the site of Wilderness Tavern and Orange Turnpike/Germanna Plank Road intersection to the east...” (p. 156). This lack of connection is seen as a deficiency in interpreting not only the Ellwood landscape, but the overall Wilderness Battlefield. The *Ellwood CLR* also acknowledges the park’s desire to create such connections between the landscapes. The report’s recommendations include:

*“It is recommended that the park consider rehabilitating the Old Orange Turnpike to return visitor use of the historic entrance to Ellwood, and to link Ellwood and the Wilderness Tavern site. This rehabilitated road would reestablish the abandoned alignment of the turnpike and reconstruct the crossing over the Wilderness Run.” (Ellwood CLR, p. 163)*

Under Alternative 2 (Park Trail) for this recommendation, the CLR suggests:

*“This alternative would restrict use of the rehabilitated Old Orange Turnpike to pedestrians, in part or entirely, as part of a trail linking Ellwood to the Wilderness Tavern site.” (Ellwood CLR, p.164)*

Currently, the park does not have the funding to rehabilitate the Old Orange Turnpike, but does propose to develop a pedestrian link, between Ellwood and Wilderness Tavern.

## **Description**

The park proposes to establish and construct a pedestrian trail linking Ellwood Manor and the site of the Wilderness Tavern. This trail would involve the construction of a bridge across Wilderness Run.

## **Property Description**

### **A. Major Physical Components**

1. Old Orange Turnpike – The area of the proposed project lies along the abandoned right-of-way of the Orange Turnpike. The portion of the old Orange Turnpike right-of-way to the west of Wilderness Run is known as old State Route 720 and is partially covered in an old asphalt overlay. The portion of the old Orange Turnpike right-of-way to the east of Wilderness is a gravel private road known as Lyons Lane.

### **B. Historical Significance**

1. Wilderness Battlefield – The area was the scene of troop movements by the Union Army during the 1864 Battle of the Wilderness. On May 5 and 6, the Orange Turnpike was a primary route through which the Union Army shuttled men and supplies to various sectors of the battlefield. The section of the Orange Turnpike within the project area was abandoned in the 1910s during a rerouting of State Routes 3 and 20. The park land in this area was acquired in the 1970s as part of Ellwood Manor and the site of the Wilderness Tavern.

## **Description of Alternatives**

### **Alternative A – No Action**

This alternative would maintain the current status of no connection between Ellwood and the Wilderness Tavern site. This would also impede the ability to better interpret the Ellwood landscape and overall Wilderness Battlefield.

### **Alternative B – Reopen Vehicular Use Along Historic Orange Turnpike**

Under this alternative, the desired connection between Ellwood and the Wilderness Tavern site would be made through the reopening of the historic Orange Turnpike to vehicular traffic. A bridge capable of carrying vehicles would be constructed over Wilderness Run and would connect the two abandoned segments of the historic Orange Turnpike. The abandoned road segments would need to be repaved or receive a gravel overlay. Lyons Lane, the eastern segment

of the Orange Turnpike as it runs from the Wilderness Tavern site down to Wilderness Run is a private road over which the NPS has no access or jurisdiction.

While this alternative would fulfill the desire and recommendation of re-establishing a connection between Ellwood and the Wilderness Tavern site, the impacts of constructing a bridge capable of carrying vehicles, the amount of vegetative clearing that would be needed and the improvements needed to the abandoned segments of the Orange Turnpike might heavily impact the cultural landscape.

#### **Alternative C – Open Pedestrian Use Along Historic Orange Turnpike (Preferred)**

Under this alternative, the park would develop a pedestrian trail and connection between Ellwood and the Wilderness Tavern site. This would entail:

1. Develop a pedestrian trail from the Wilderness Tavern site to the Wilderness Run. This would involve simply mowing a path from the tavern site to the stream. This trail would be located on park property, bordering Lyons Lane (old Orange Turnpike) to the south. The trail would cross Lyons Lane, although no surfacing or disturbance to the lane is necessary.
2. Installation of a pedestrian bridge over Wilderness Run is necessary. This will involve the installation of concrete footers, one on each side of the stream. These footers would be 8 feet wide and dug to a depth of 3 feet. An 8-foot wide by 56' long prefabricated wood bridge would span the stream and tie into the footers on either side of Wilderness Run. (See attached Foot Bridge Design Plan)
3. Develop a pedestrian trail from Wilderness Run to Ellwood. This would involve simply following the old abandoned section of the old State Route 720 (old Orange Turnpike), which retains its old asphalt surface, for about fifty yards before hooking into an existing established pedestrian trail that follows part of the original entrance to Ellwood and continues up to the front of the house.

#### **Description of Mitigation Measures**

A. By following the route of the original Orange Turnpike, the park is utilizing an existing area mostly cleared and already impacted by the roadway development.

B. The park's archaeological advisor has visited the site and noted that the installation of the concrete footers will occur in an area that contains a substantial amount of mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century trash deposits, thus limiting any chance of impacting significant archaeological resources.

#### **Park Consultation**

The proposal is being addressed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The park has consulted with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and as the foot bridge will span Wilderness Run and now fill of the stream is required, a USACE permit is needed.

The proposal will be circulated to the park's Section-106 advisors for archaeology and historic landscape architecture.

The proposal will go through a 30-day public comment and review period. During that time, the project will be posted on the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment website. The park will contact representatives of interested local organizations and municipalities, such as Mary Washington College's Department of Historic Preservation, Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield, the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, the Civil War Trust, and Spotsylvania County.

The project will undergo a 30-day comment and review period with the Virginia SHPO. A representative from the SHPO's office has visited the project site and was made aware of the various alternatives expressed no objection to the park's approach to this project.

### **Effect Analysis**

It is the park's opinion that this undertaking will have "no adverse effect" on historic resources.

### **Attached Supporting Documentation**

- A. Park Map
- B. Foot Bridge Design Plan
- C. Photos

### **Conclusion**

The development of a pedestrian link between Ellwood and the Wilderness Tavern site will help to improve interpretation and accessibility to the greater Ellwood and Wilderness Battlefield landscapes.

### **Report Prepared By**

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