

Agency Official 106 Effect Report

*Installation of a Well, Chlorination and Septic System, and Restrooms at Ellwood on the
Wilderness Battlefield
Spotsylvania County, 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**

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 ... and together also with such additional land as the Secretary of War may deem necessary for monuments, markers, tablets, roads, highways, paths, approaches, and to carry out the general purposes of this Act.” By Executive Order 6166 in 1933 the park was transferred to the Department of the Interior to be administered by the National Park Service.

Ellwood Manor, the plantation house on the Wilderness Battlefield, was constructed c1799 and served as a domestic site for nearly 200 years. In 1971, Ellwood Manor was sold to the National Park Service. The site serves as a primary public orientation and tour stop for park visitors.

Need

Beginning in 1998, Ellwood Manor was opened to the public seasonally. The site is staffed by the Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB) annually between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Beginning in 2007, the interior of the building underwent extensive rehabilitation and both museum and interpretive exhibits were installed. In 2017, the public visitation to Ellwood was 6,530.

Since the late 1990s, Ellwood has not had potable water. The existing well supplies water for maintenance activities and the house’s fire suppression system only. Until 2015, restrooms consisted of a single portable facility on the Ellwood grounds. The park and FoWB recognized the need for more adequate facilities and in 2015 a restroom was framed out inside the Brooder Barn. The restroom operated off a small composting system, since the site did not have an adequate well or functioning drain field and septic system. After two years, that system has also proved inadequate.

The park now proposes to install a new well, chlorination and septic system, and a drain field. This will allow for potable water and the installation of appropriate and suitable restroom facilities.

Property Description

A. Major Physical Components - Ellwood sits on a 97.14-acre tract on the Wilderness Battlefield. The tract is predominantly a mixture of open fields and gently rolling wooded plateaus, bisected by numerous streams and swamps. Most of the open fields are under cultivation. The house itself is opened to the public seasonally.

B. Architectural Significance – Ellwood Manor, the plantation house, was constructed c1799 and served as a domestic site for nearly 200 years. Two other buildings are located on the property. The 1934 stone Farm Office and the c.1950 Brooder Barn. Ellwood and the Farm Office are contributing to the park’s National Register listing and are also on the park’s List of Classified Structures – LCS #07951 and #82111. The Brooder Barn is not a contributing structure and is not listed on the LCS.

C. Historic Landscape Significance – In 2010, Ellwood was the subject of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR). The Ellwood landscape is significant and contributes to the park’s National Register eligibility. That said, the CLR does identify the area behind (south) the Brooder Barn as an area for potential development to support park visitor services.

D. Archaeological Resources – Ellwood has been the subject of numerous archaeological surveys, the majority of which have focused on the area immediately inside the house grounds. More recently, a survey was conducted in the area to the rear (south) of the Brooder Barn. The results of this survey are embodied in a report entitled *Phase I Archeological Survey in Support of the Ellwood Well and Drain Field Project, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Orange County, Virginia* (2018). The survey found no significant resources.

Description of Alternatives

Alternative A – No Action

Under this alternative, the existing well will continue to be used for non-potable purposes. The park will continue to use a combination of temporary and composting restroom facilities, both of which combined prove inadequate to service the visitation received by the site.

Alternative B – Retain Existing Well and Add Larger Composting Restroom Facilities

Under this alternative, the existing well will continue to be used for non-potable purposes. The park would construct larger composting restroom facilities. This would require pit toilets, which could not be added to the interior of the existing Brooder Barn. Therefore, an additional restroom building would be constructed, which would work against the park’s goals to reduce the number of non-historic and non-contributing buildings at Ellwood.

Alternative C – Install a New Well, Chlorination and Septic System, and Restrooms at Ellwood

Under this alternative, the park would establish a new well, dug to a depth of 500 to 700 feet that would provide adequate water supply in accordance with Virginia Department of Health requirements. The well would be located off the northeast corner of the Brooder Barn. The well will tie into the fire pump and tank currently located inside the Farm Office. The well will also tie into a newly established drain field located to the rear (south) of the Brooder Barn. This will involve water and sewer lines that will be buried the length of the Brooder Barn along the east side of the building. The water and sewer lines will connect to an underground 2000 gallon septic tank buried in the field behind (south) of the barn. The septic tank will also connect to an underground distribution box, which will in turn connect to underground drain lines, all of which will be buried in the field behind (south) of the Brooder Barn. Inside the Brooder Barn, two

restrooms will be constructed in the northeast corner. The chlorination system will also be housed inside the Brooder Barn.

The area behind (south) of the Brooder Barn has been tested for archaeological resources, as has the site of the well and all connecting water and sewer lines. No significant resources were found. The drain field and septic system will be buried and there won't be any above ground infrastructure visible. The restroom construction will be confined to the interior of the Brooder Barn, which was determined to be not eligible for listing on the National Register nor is it a contributing structure.

Description of Mitigation Measures

1. Archeological testing of the selected for the drain field and all associated infrastructure took place and no significant resources were encountered.
2. The existing well will be abandoned. The raised concrete collar will be removed, clean fill added and graded.

Park Consultation

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

The proposal will go through a 30-day public comment and review period. During this time, the project will be posted on the National Park Service Planning, Environmental, and Public Comment System (PEPC) website. The park will contact, and solicit comments from, representatives of interested organizations such as the University of Mary Washington's Department of Historic Preservation, Spotsylvania County, the Friends of the Fredericksburg Area Battlefields, the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, and the Pamunkey Indian Tribe.

The proposal will be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (Virginia Department of Historic Resources) for a 30-day review.

Effect Analysis

The park's opinion is that Alternative C will have "no adverse effect" on significant historic resources.

Attachments

1. Photographs
2. Maps
3. Plans

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