

BATTLE OF BLADENSBURG ACTION PLAN



"The Battle of Bladensburg," by Richard Schlecht; Image used by MM/ATHA, courtesy of NPS.

**In response to:
Maryland State Highway Administration
Project Planning Division
Preliminary Battlefield Management Plan,
Battle of Bladensburg, War of 1812**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD PROTECTION PROGRAM
GRANT: P18AP00517**

**MARYLAND MILESTONES/
ANACOSTIA TRAILS HERITAGE AREA, INC (ATHA)**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABPP	American Battlefield Protection Program
AWS	Anacostia Watershed Society
BMP	“Battlefield Management Plan, Battle of Bladensburg, War of 1812, Bladensburg, Cottage City, Colmar Manor, Prince George’s County, Maryland.” Identified in this document as Battlefield Management Plan or BMP
HSR	Historic Structure Report
MIHP	Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
MD SHA	Maryland State Highway Association
MM/ATHA	Maryland Milestones, Anacostia Trail Heritage Area, Inc.
MNCPPC	Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NPS	National Park Service
RTCA	Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
SSBCMP	Star Spangled Banner Comprehensive Management Plan
SSBNHT	Star Spangled Banner National Heritage Trail
URS	URS Corporation
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
WSSC	Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

INTRODUCTION

In 2013 URS Corporation (URS) completed Preliminary Battlefield Management Plan GA 2287-11-009, “Battlefield Management Plan, Battle of Bladensburg, War of 1812, Bladensburg, Cottage City, Colmar Manor, Prince George’s County, Maryland,” identified in this document as Battlefield Management Plan or BMP. This document, Action Plan, is in response to the 2013 BMP.

The purpose of this Action Plan is to review recommendations presented in the BMP, to provide a record of what, if anything, has been completed and/or attempted since the completion of the BMP, to analyze what can be attempted in the future, and to make additional recommendations regarding the Battle of Bladensburg.

This Action Plan was developed by Maryland Milestones, Anacostia Trail Heritage Area (MM/ATHA) through a National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program Grant (Project No. P18AP00517).

SUMMARY OF THE BMP

In 2011 Maryland State Highway Association (MD SHA) was awarded National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program Grant (Project No. GA 2287-11-009), to “Oversee and manage a National Register Nomination, preliminary Management Plan, and additional archeological survey for Bladensburg Battlefield” (BMP 1-1). MD SHA then contacted with URS to complete a Preliminary Management Plan for the Battle of Bladensburg Battlefield, the BMP. URS subcontracted with New South Associates to complete the archeological survey. The nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) was drafted by URS, with revisions by MD SHA.¹

The timing of the BMP coincided with Maryland’s Bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812 and, most notably, the commemoration of the Battle of Bladensburg. Several local initiatives were underway to commemorate of the historically significant Battle of Bladensburg, including:

- Bladensburg Visitor Center at Bladensburg Waterfront Park, opened by Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) in 2012
- MM/ATHA developed a walking tour
- MM/ATHA produced and installed wayside exhibits and interpretive signs
- Prince George’s Heritage sponsored historical studies, signage design
- AMAN Memorial Trust, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization supporting historic preservation around Bladensburg, commissioned “Undaunted,” a sculptural memorial to Commodore Joshua Barney
- The Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail (SSBNHT) and the Star Spangled Banner Maryland Scenic Highway, which both run through Bladensburg, completed management plans

¹ Listing of the “Bladensburg Battlefield” National Register Nomination is still pending.

However, the purpose of the BMP was explicitly NOT the Bicentennial. Described as a “preliminary plan,” the intended purpose of BMP is:

to provide a management framework into the post-Bicentennial future. Many partners are involved in the Bicentennial events, and most of these organizations have objectives that are broader than the Bicentennial and the Battle of Bladensburg. Their futures will no doubt demand attention to these broader objectives. Before public interest and attention diminish, it is time to assess the potential for future identification, preservation and stewardship of the early 19th century “battlefield” that remains beneath the 20th century development that defines the present landscape. (URS 1-1)

Focusing on the Battle of Bladensburg battlefield, the BMP defines the project site as,

located on the banks of the Anacostia River progressing in a southwesterly direction up Bladensburg Road to the District line, passing through the early 20th century residential municipalities of Colmar Manor and Cottage City, and passing to the west by Fort Lincoln Cemetery. (URS 3-1)

The BMP also acknowledged that, in 2012,

“The battlefield [is] not in the same condition it was at the time of the battle. The area is now urbanized and the majority of the cultural and natural resources that were extant 198 years ago have been destroyed or altered.” (URS 5-1)

GENERAL STATEMENT REGARDING MM/ATHA REPOSIBILITY TO THE BMP

General statement regarding MM/ATHA's involvement in addressing the Action Items:

MM/ATHA played an instrumental role in the planning and implementation of efforts related to Maryland's Bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812 and, most notably, the commemoration of the Battle of Bladensburg.

Examples of projects MM/ATHA has led and/or provided key support include signage design and installation, development of brochures, key part of the Bostwick Stakeholders Group, and lead commemoration initiating the continuation of this grant.

MM/ATHA is committed to offering continued support to our partners and to endeavors related to the interpretation and education of the Battle of Bladensburg. MM/ATHA will continue to offer our relevant professional expertise, support development of local level events and programs, provide support in developing grant proposals, provide communications and marketing assistance, offer meeting space, and staff time. However, as of Spring 2021, the MM/ATHA Managing Board is does not have the capacity to lead in initiating the proposed Action Items.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

OVERVIEW

A primarily rural landscape during the Battle of Bladensburg, much of the historic battle site is currently medium density urban development. For the most part, the site is indistinguishable from the surrounding area. Located in close proximity to the nation's capital, the area has been severally altered and currently consists of commercial strips, light industrial development, mid-rise structures, and residential neighborhoods. Only a few structures, dating from the time of the battle, are still extant. (These buildings will be identified and discussed in the following section, Cultural and Natural Resources on and within the Battlefield.)

Additionally, many of the distinguishing topographical features present during the Battle of Bladensburg have been altered. The once prominent Bladensburg Port, for example, no longer exists and the course of the Anacostia River has been changed. The river has been channelized, and the depth is now greatly diminished. For context, the current Bladensburg Waterfront Park is located downriver from the site of the former Bladensburg Port.

Bladensburg Road, historically identified as Washington Pike, served as an important route between Annapolis and the United States Capital. This once prominent route has since been replaced by other vehicular access routes. Additionally, the once rural Bladensburg area is now part of the sprawling metropolis of Washington, DC. Today much of Bladensburg Road is bordered by primarily mixed-use commercial, strip malls and fast-food chains on the Colmar Manor side, and primarily cottage-style residential buildings on the Cottage City side.

Historically significant resources within the battlefield include individually listed National Register buildings and landscapes, and NRHP eligible archeological sites. This document will focus on extant buildings and landscapes. Numerous archeological investigations have been completed within the battle site. MD SHA has overseen several archeological investigations within the project site. There are also several identified areas where archeological investigations would be recommended, however, many of these sites are currently inaccessible. Existing urban development has disturbed many potential archeological sites.²

CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES ON AND WITHIN THE BATTLEFIELD

There are five resources within the battlefield individually listed on the NRHP. National Register resources include extant buildings and structures (Cultural Resources), landscapes (Natural Resources), and archeological sites (Sites). Several of the sites are part of the SSBNHT.

² See the Reference Section and the Annotated Bibliography included in this Action Plan for information on archeological investigations.

Cultural Resources

Following are the Cultural Resources extant during the Battle of Bladensburg. The table includes the location, date of construction, NRHP identification number, and the type of resource; all these resources are NRHP listed. Additionally, the table confirms that none of these resources are currently threatened.

Name	Address	Date	NRHP ID#	Cultural or Natural Resource	Currently Threatened
Bostwick House	3901 48 th Street	1746	75001082	Cultural and Natural	No ³
Magruder House	4703 Annapolis Road	1742-1764	78003116	Cultural	No
Market Master's House	4006 48 th Street	1765	90000053	Cultural	No
George Washington House	Baltimore Avenue and Usher Street	1760s	74002198	Cultural	No
Civil War Fort Sites/Fort Lincoln Battery Jameson	4301 Bladensburg Road	1862	74000274	Natural	No

There are two additional cultural resources located within the project area that are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places but are included in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP). Both resources post-date the Battle of Bladensburg, although the Peace Cross is a major landmark and is surrounded by resources associated with the battle. The two extant MIHP resources have been recommended for and/or determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.⁴

Name	Address	Date	MIHP #	Currently Threatened
Peace Cross	MD 450 & US Route 1	1919	PG-69-16	No
Publick Playhouse	54445 Landover Road	1947	PG-69-28	No

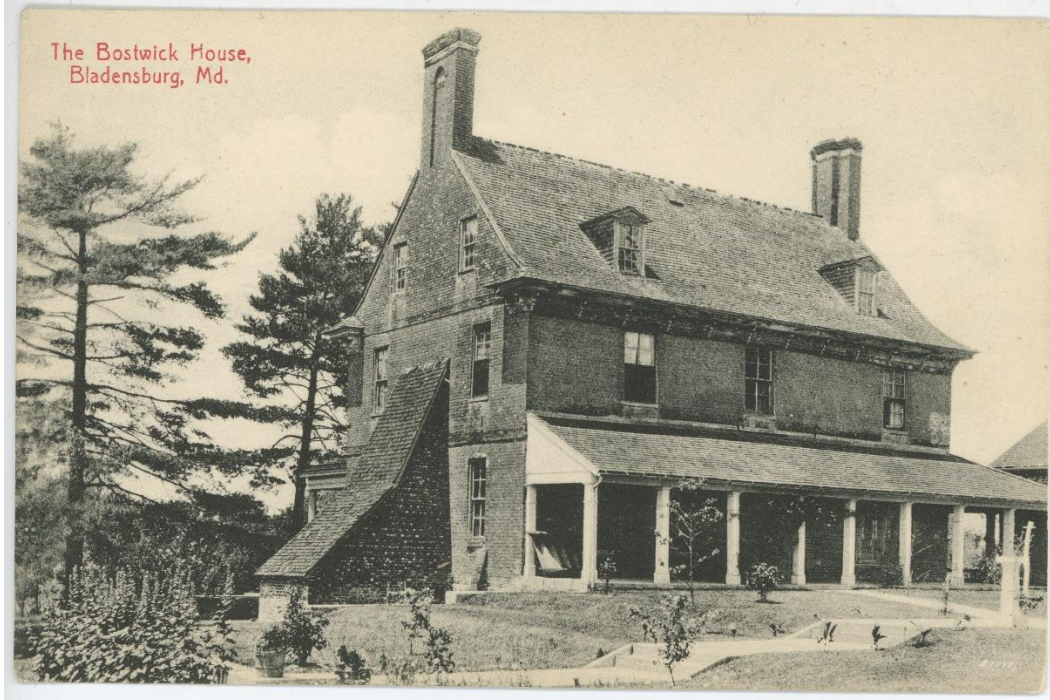
As noted, neither of these extant resources is currently threatened. Both are under the umbrella of MNCPPC sites and structures. The Peace Cross was threatened in 2017 with a legal case that gained national notoriety. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the use of public funds for the maintenance of the cross unconstitutional because it “excessively entangles the government in religion” because the cross is the “core symbol of Christianity” and “breaches” the wall separating church and state.⁵ However, in 2019 the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of maintaining the Peace Cross on public land with public funds.⁶ MNCPPC is currently seeking funding sources for the ongoing preservation of the Peace Cross.

³ See summary of Action Items, in following section, for additional information regarding the Bostwick House.

⁴ Three of the eight MIHP resources included in the BMP had been demolished prior to the writing of the BMP (Butler Davis House, Bladensburg Public School #1, Bladensburg High School, original building). Furthermore, three of the five extant MIHP resources identified in the BMP were determined not-eligible for listing on the NRHP. These determinations were made prior to the writing of the BMP. Previously demolished resources and resources previously determined not-eligible are not included in this table. (4-1)

⁵ AP. “Appeals court finds Bladensburg cross violates Constitution,” October 18, 2017, apnews.com.

⁶ US Supreme Court case, The American Legion vs. American Humanist Association. Ruling indicated that the Peace Cross does not violate the Establishment Clause of the US Constitution.



"The Bostwick House, Bladensburg, Md." Undated postcard.
<https://bostwickhouse.weebly.com>



Bostwick House
Historic American Building Survey, ca. 1936. HABS Collection, Library of Congress.

Natural Resources

In addition to the battlefield, two cultural landscapes have been identified in association with the Battle of Bladensburg. The Bostwick House property is identified as a Star Spangled Banner Comprehensive Management Plan (SSBCMP) Associated Cultural Landscape and Bladensburg Waterfront Park is an SSBCMP Evocative Landscape.⁷ There is currently no known threat to either of these resources.



Bladensburg Waterfront Park.
perceptivetravel.com

⁷ The SSBCMP Resource Stewardship and Visitor Experience Committee of the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission.

BICENTENNIAL ACTIONS

The 2011 timing of the Battle of Bladensburg, Bladensburg Battlefield, MD SHA grant, was significant as Maryland celebrated the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. As previously noted, the BMP identifies several local initiatives that were underway to commemorate the Bicentennial celebration of the Battle of Bladensburg.

Five of the six previously outlined initiatives continued through to completion and/or are ongoing.⁸ The only initiative that did not continue to completion, or is no longer ongoing, is the Bladensburg Visitor Center.⁹

The following table outlines each initiative, who was involved, what the current status is, and if applicable any recommendations. The recommendations associated with each initiative are made by MM/ATHA. Reached after careful analysis of the existing data, the recommendations are what MM/ATHA currently sees as possible ways to move forward.

TABLE OF BICENTENNIAL ACTIONS WITH CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Initiative	Partners	Current Status	Action Plan Recommendation
Battle of Bladensburg Visitor Center Bladensburg Waterfront Park	MNCPPC	Closed	Priority to reopen a Visitor Center – location to be determined
Battle of Bladensburg Walking Tour	MM/ATHA MNCPPC	MM/ATHA developed a walking tour; information is posted on the MM/ATHA website and a walking tour brochure is available at the Heritage Center MM/ATHA also developed an audio component to brochure, connecting information to wayside signage	Further trail development; including Dueling Creek Heritage Trail, connecting Bladensburg Waterfront Park to Colmar Manor MM/ATHA worked with NPS/RTCA to on preliminary plans Located on MNCPPC property;

⁸ See “Introduction: Summary of the BMP” in this Action Plan for reference.

⁹ See “Losses” section of the report for information regarding the Visitor’s Center.

			MNCPPC to approve and fund trail
Wayside Exhibits and Interpretive Signs	MM/ATHA	MM/ATHA produced and installed wayside exhibits and interpretive signs; Signs are maintained by MM/ATHA	MM/ATHA continue to maintain existing signage
Historical Studies, Signage Design	Prince George's Heritage (Sponsored) University of Maryland	Prince George's Heritage sponsored historical studies, signage design Prince George's Heritage also developed an exhibit at University of Maryland	Items and information included in the exhibit should be compiled into book or online
"Undaunted" Sculptural Memorial	AMAN Memorial Trust	AMAN Memorial Trust, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization supporting historic preservation around Bladensburg, commissioned "Undaunted," a sculptural memorial to Commodore Joshua Barney. Memorial installed; maintained by AMAN Memorial Trust in collaboration with MNCPPC	Maintain and further develop Balloon Park; address the access issues (pedestrian and vehicular) and address the need for additional lighting at night
Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail and the Star Spangled Banner Maryland Scenic Highway	National Park Service	SSBNHT and Star Spangled Banner Maryland Scenic Highway completed; both run through Bladensburg	NPS is currently working to develop a mobile visitor's center for the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail; MM/ATHA to work with NPS during the development of the mobile visitor's center. Once completed, schedule regular visits to the Bladensburg area, as the vehicle is available

PROPOSED BATTLEFIELD MANAGEMENT PLAN (BMP) ACTIONS

The BMP outlined 14 Prioritized Action Items, identified as “partnerships, strategies and actions to protect the battlefield” (BMP 14-1). The Action Items are divided into two sections, based upon geography; East of the Anacostia and West of the Anacostia. Following is analysis of each proposed Action Item.

A summary table of the BMP follows. For reference, the tables inserted at the beginning of each section are reproduced directly from the BMP (as summarized below); this information is not necessarily representative of the recommendations included in this Action Plan.

BMP ACTION ITEM'S - SUMMARY TABLE

The following table is from the BMP (URS 14-9 and 14-10):
along with the inclusion of the last column to summarize the feasibility of additional action

Project	Action Item	Initiating Party	Potential Partners	Probable Cost	Lead Agency	Additional Action?
Per BMP						
BMP, Bladensburg Prioritized Actions, East of the Anacostia						
Annapolis Road, Baltimore Avenue, Route 1 Intersection	Contact MD SHA and state representative for status	MM/ATHA	Port Towns, MNCPPC	TBD	MD SHA	No, MD SHA
Bostwick House and Gardens	Cost estimate and scope of work for Historic Structure Report	City of Bladensburg, with MNCPPC Planning, Historic Resources Division	MM/ATHA, University of Maryland, Prince George's Heritage	\$150,000	MNCPPC	Yes, Town of Bladensburg
Kenilworth Avenue	Contact MD SHA and state representative for status	MM/ATHA, City of Bladensburg, MNCPPC	Port Towns, MNCPPC	TBD	MD SHA	No, MD SHA
Extend Waterfront North of Bridge	MNCPPC, Park and Planning	MM/ATHA	Port Towns, AWS	TBD	MNCPPC	No, MNCPPC
Hiker/Biker Trail Connecting	MNCPPC, Park and Planning	MM/ATHA	Port Towns, AWS	\$345,000 per mile	MNCPPC	No, multiple partners

Bladensburg Resources - Tunnel						
Access and Interpretation for Extant Historic Buildings	AMAN Trust, Prince George's Heritage, AWS	MM/ATHA	Port Towns, AWS, MNCPPC	TBD		Yes, joint partners
Re-zone Commercial Shopping Center	MNCPPC regarding justification for current zoning	MM/ATHA	Port Towns, AWS, MNCPPC	N/A	MNCPPC	Yes, MNCPPC
BMP Colmar Manor and Cottage City Prioritized Actions, West of the Anacostia						
Interpretive Waysides	Completed, MM/ATHA					Done
Ghost Building of Mill	Inquire about Dowden's Ordinary, Montgomery County MNCPPC	MM/ATHA, Cottage City, Port Towns	MNCPPC	TBD	MNCPPC	No, MNCPPC
Cottage City Trail extension, Dueling Creek re-zoning	Work with MNCPPC on potential ROW/alignment	MM/ATHA, Cottage City, Port Towns	MNCPPC	\$345,000 per mile	MNCPPC	Yes, MNCPPC
Colmar Manor Trail extension into Fort Lincoln Cemetery	Work with MNCPPC and Fort Lincoln Cemetery on potential ROW/alignment	MM/ATHA, Colmar Manor, Port Towns	MNCPPC, Fort Lincoln Cemetery	\$345,000 per mile	Fort Lincoln Cemetery	No, Fort Lincoln Cemetery
Restore Dueling Creek	AWS, needs to apply for MDNR program funds	AWS	MNCPPC, MM/ATHA	\$247,844 per mile	MDNR	No, AWS
Street art/paving	MM/ATHA find precedence in county/state Work with MD SHA	MM/ATHA	PG DOT, MC SHA, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, Port Towns	TBD	MD SHA	No, MD SHA
Gateway site development	MM/ATHA work with NPS to inquire about status of property	MM/ATHA	DC government, NPS, SSB NHT	TBD	NPS	No

ANNAPOLIS ROAD, BALTIMORE AVENUE, ROUTE 1 INTERSECTION AND KENILWORTH AVENUE

The BMP outlines the following two Action Items:

- Annapolis Road, Baltimore Avenue, Route 1 Intersection
- Kenilworth Avenue

There are so many similarities when addressing both Action Items for Annapolis Road, Baltimore Avenue, Route 1 Intersection and Kenilworth Avenue, including the adjacent geographic area. To simplify the overlapping information, these two items are addressed together in this section.

This area is generally identified by the large vehicular traffic circle that surrounds the Peace Cross and, as previously noted, is central to resources associated with the Battle of Bladensburg. A cross-section for commuters, the area is dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Within their planning documents for the Town of Bladensburg, MNCPPC has emphasized connections between the waterfront and the town center. The town has acknowledged the need for modifications to the existing street network resulting in improvements to the pedestrian environment with the incorporating pedestrian crossings and improving visual connections upon entering the town.¹⁰



Bladensburg Cross, located in the middle of the traffic circle. Photograph by Adelle M. Banks, 2019. Religious News Service, <http://religionnews.com>

¹⁰ MNCPPC, Approved Bladensburg Town Center Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment, June 2007.

Context

The BMP states, “The Peace Cross intersection is still a major pedestrian obstacle that functions more like a freeway intersection than a space for pedestrians” (BMP 6-1). While moving at a fast speed, drivers are focused on merging in and out of the traffic circle. Furthermore,

For the War of 1812 Battle of Bladensburg resources to be incorporated into a meaningful visitor destination, action items should focus first on addressing and removing transportation/circulation obstacles... The area needs to be pedestrian and bike friendly. (BMP 14-1)

Four of the five identified cultural resources, National Register listed, Colonial era buildings, are located within the vicinity of the Peace Cross. Although geographically close, Bostwick House, Magruder House, Market Master’s House, and George Washington House are isolated from one another by heavily traveled vehicular roads and overhead bridges.

Because of the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and effectively lighting, it is currently unsafe to walk within certain areas associated with the Battle of Bladensburg. The area associated with the Peace Cross is notoriously unsafe for pedestrians. The large vehicular circle does not include any crosswalks or sidewalks. Although sometimes necessary, walking around the vehicular circle is considered a dangerous endeavor.

As an example, walking from Balloon Park to Bostwick, would involve crossing four busy vehicular roads with high-speed traffic, including a five-lane road, and going under the bridges for Kenilworth Avenue and the elevated railroad tracks, which includes a dimly lit pedestrian tunnel. Considering there is only one drop-off and pick up point for the public bus system, this is a realistic travel scenario.

The elevated Kenilworth Avenue serves as a visual and literal division segmenting the Town of Bladensburg. The BMP states the existing pedestrian tunnel, located on the southern side of the road, “looks like a linear crime-pit in which a person could be very easily assaulted and no one would see” (BMP 14-1). Furthermore, the BMP states,

A dramatic improvement that would provide a sense of greater connectivity between the town and the waterfront would be replacing the existing Kenilworth Avenue Bridge with a new structure that is more open, providing larger views of the area on both sides of the structure. (BMP 7-5)

In addition to the safety issues, resolution of the proposed Action Items would create a visual and accessible connection between the existing colonial resources.

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

The BMP gives specific recommendations regarding the redesign of the Annapolis Road, Baltimore Avenue and Route 1 intersection, as well as the recommendation of lowering and reworking of Kenilworth Avenue.

MM/ATHA realizes that the support of MD SHA would be necessary in order for either of these Action Items to move forward. MD SHA would need to function as the lead agency, with the Town of Bladensburg serving as an essential partner. Additional partners could include adjacent property

owners, including but not limited to MNCPPC, Prince George’s Heritage, and Anacostia Watershed Society.

MM/ATHA has reached out to MD SHA to confirm the status of any projects associated with this area. MD SHA provided the following response regarding the Annapolis Road, Baltimore Avenue and Route 1 intersection:

Our MDOT SHA District 3 Engineering Systems’ Team received funding to explore concepts to improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility through the “Peace Cross” intersection. At this time, exploration of additional steps are on hold because of funding restrictions.

MD SHA provided the following response specifically regarding Kenilworth Avenue:

MDOT SHA has no plans to reconstruct the MD 201 structure over MD 450 or the adjoining pedestrian tunnel at this time.

Without the leadership and/or active participation of MD SHA there is no resolution for these two Action Items. However, MM/ATHA is not alone in feeling strongly that these are critical components contributing to a safe and enjoyable visitor experience. All the partners who participated in the stakeholder process concur that these Action Items need to be addressed and resolved.



George Washington House (AWS).
The building abuts a major vehicular roadway.

BOSTWICK HOUSE AND GARDENS

Bostwick house has a direct, documented, association with the Battle of Bladensburg. Temporarily serving as the British Headquarters, Bostwick had an important role in the battle.¹¹ Considerably intact, Bostwick retains a high level of integrity, contributing to its significance.

Recognizing the importance of restoring the building, the BMP identifies a cost estimate and scope of work for Historic Structure Report for Bostwick House and Gardens as an Action Item.

Historical Context

Owned by the Town of Bladensburg, Bostwick is a large historic house and property located at 3901 48th Street, Bladensburg, MD. Purchased by Bladensburg in 1998, the property was previously owned by Susanne Christophane. The daughter of a former mayor, her family had lived in the house for a period of time.

Built for Christopher Lowndes, Bostwick was completed by 1746. The five-bay residence includes colonial revival features added in the early 20th century. Lowndes, a wealthy merchant, initially purchased four acres of the Bostwick property in 1742, when the town was founded as a tobacco port. Eventually expanded to the current 7.7 acres, the site was never a large agricultural operation, rather the gardens, grazing fields, and an orchard were cultivated to support the house and the many people, both free and enslaved, living there. A sloped site, from high on the hill, Lowndes could oversee his shipbuilding and rope making enterprises on the banks of the Anacostia River while conducting business in the front parlor of the house. Identified today as an urban plantation, this kind of city house was common in Colonial American ports such as Charleston and Richmond.

In addition to the Lowndes family, the property may have been home for up to thirty-seven enslaved people and indentured workers who tended the gardens, livestock, and outbuildings. It is likely a large percentage of these individuals also worked at Lowndes shipbuilding and mercantile. In the 19th century, the second family to own Bostwick, the Stephens, had 17 enslaved workers living on the property ranging in age from newborn to 75 years old. These workers tended the small gardens and orchard, and provided the labor to run the household. By the 20th century the property had become a rural retreat amid the growing metropolis of Washington, DC. Still a private residence, Bostwick included a small kitchen garden, horses, and a few cattle. Family members and hired hands cared for the grounds, the animals, and the management of the house.

One additional noteworthy feature of Bostwick House is the side buttress. An early addition to the eastern exterior wall, the buttress was constructed to add necessary structural support. The buttress has drawn a high level of attention because of concerns related to the stability of the building. University of Maryland is currently involved in an ongoing project to document, remove, and repair the buttress.

¹¹ Documentation indicates that in 1814 Colonel Thomas Barclay, British Commissioner for the Exchange of Prisoners, briefly occupied Bostwick.

Landscape

The most prominent manmade feature of the landscape is the wide west lawn that is divided into four broad terraces leading up to the main house. The lower three were constructed with the house in 1746, and the upper-most terrace was added in the early 20th century as part of a major renovation. A historic orchard and windmill stand on the eastern portion of the site, elevated above the house. Undulating ground connects the orchard with two small ponds fed by a spring, and a meadow, now the site of a nursery for trees and plants used to restore the Anacostia River ecosystem (through Anacostia Watershed Society, AWS). South of the main house and adjacent to the chicken coop, is a kitchen and house garden, where some of the historic boxwood hedges remain intact.

Extant Buildings and Structures

Surrounding the house are several outbuildings, a kitchen, barn, and garage. Currently the grounds are more typical of an early 20th century formal landscape. When purchasing the property, the Town of Bladensburg also purchased the adjacent property (considered "Plot A"). Although historically part of the Bostwick property, the adjacent "Plot A" once housed a bowling alley known as the "Parthenon."

Extant buildings on the property:

- Main House and attached ell
- Original brick kitchen building; converted into a one-bedroom apartment, the kitchen building is currently utilized as a residence by the University of Maryland
- Barn; currently utilized, primarily for equipment storage, by Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS)
- Carriage House
- Garage
- Partial spring house

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

A Historic Structure Report (HSR) is a necessary next step for Bostwick House and the report should include a detailed cost estimate along with a well-defined scope of work. Additionally, because of the importance of the associated grounds, it is recommended that a Historic Landscape Report accompany, or be incorporated with, the HSR.

MM/ATHA is currently participating in the Bostwick House Stakeholders Group. The stakeholders committed to joining a series of meetings to determine the best strategy for how Bostwick will be used to embrace the Bladensburg community. The meetings are facilitated by an associate of Neighborhood Design Center, a non-profit organization that focuses on community-engaged design and planning services. The Stakeholders Group includes the mayor of Bladensburg as well as representatives from AMAN Memorial Trust, University of Maryland, Anacostia Watershed Society, MM/ATHA, other local non-profit organizations, Prince George's County personnel, MNCPPC Park and Planning, area business owners, and interested community members.¹²

MM/ATHA has been advocating for an interpretive aspect to the property, including a space for community programming with a visitor's center component. The closing of the former Battle of Bladensburg Visitor's Center is a loss that needs to be replaced.

¹² University of Maryland and Anacostia Watershed Society are currently utilizing the buildings and/or the grounds of Bostwick House and property.

Following the series of stakeholder meetings, planned through the summer of 2021, Neighborhood Design Center will present recommendations for the preservation and reuse of Bostwick house and associated property.

As the property owner, the Town of Bladensburg will need to initiate the completion of this Action Item and act as the lead agency. Potential partners should include participants in the Stakeholders Group.



“The Bostwick House.” Undated photograph.
<https://bostwickhouse.weebly.com>

EXTEND WATERFRONT NORTH OF BRIDGE

The BMP includes “Extend Waterfront North of Bridge” as one of the Prioritized Action Items for east of the Anacostia. Included to provide context for the Waterfront Park and the Battlefield, this Action Item is intended to create a protective buffer between existing development and the river.

Being beside the river creates a strong impression of the historic battlefield. This area provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a portion of the historic battlefield, imagine the historic port, while in an area dominated by natural resources. Part of this area was utilized for the Battle of Bladensburg commemoration. Additionally, there is a large area, land on the Colmar Manor side of the river, which remains open and primarily undeveloped; currently utilized for ballfields.

Context

The land, adjacent to the Anacostia River, north of the bridge is owned by MNCPPC and is currently utilized as parkland. Zoned as ROS, Reserved Open Space,

Provides for permanent maintenance of certain areas of land in an undeveloped state, with the consent of the property owners; encourages preservation of large areas of trees and open space; designed to protect scenic and environmentally sensitive areas and ensure retention of land for nonintensive [sic] active or passive recreational uses; provides for very low density residential development and a limited range of public, recreational, and agricultural uses. (MNCPPC).

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

It is recommended MNCPPC Park and Planning do a full analysis of all their land around the river near Waterfront Park to see how it can be utilized and evaluate the feasibility of improvements in this area.

An extension of Bladensburg Waterfront Park is at the discretion of the property owner. Located on land owned by MNCPPC, their leadership would be necessary in order for this Action Item to be completed.

MNCPPC is not currently interested in pursuing this Action Item. Without their leadership and/or active participation this Action Item will not move forward. However, if another entity were to take a leadership role this Action Item could move forward.

HIKER/BIKER TRAIL CONNECTING BLADENSBURG RESOURCES

There are two primary components to this Action Item, but they all focus on creating a safe, pleasant way for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel between Waterfront Park and the historic Battle of Bladensburg resources.

Three historic resources, George Washington House, Magruder House, and Market Masters House are all located in close proximity to each other and to Waterfront Park. However, due to vehicular traffic, lack of sidewalks and pedestrian crossing points, walking between sites is unsafe. This issue is discussed in detail below. (This Action Item also involves the existing, dimly lit pedestrian tunnel under the elevated railroad tracks, discussed in detail in a prior Action Item.)

Context

Improving the existing pedestrian tunnel has been proposed to create a safe, pleasant way for pedestrians to walk from Waterfront Park to adjacent Battle of Bladensburg historic resources.

Primary considerations for this Action Item include developing a physical trail, a pedestrian/bicycle pathway to:

- Address pedestrian safety issues
- Build a connection between sites and recreational resources by extending the trail system out into Bladensburg
 - Connect Waterfront Park to the Route 1 sidewalk
 - Connect the three historic resources to each other (George Washington House, Magruder House, and Market Masters House) and to Waterfront Park

Once connections are established and it is safe to travel from one site to another, additional opportunities exist for interpretation, as discussed in the following section.

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

A sidewalk needs to be constructed allowing safe, easy pedestrian and bicycle access into Waterfront Park and to adjacent sites. Additionally, it is recommended MNCPPC Park and Planning analyze how to get the existing trail out to Bladensburg and assess the probable cost for this project. As the landowner, their leadership would be necessary for this Action Item to be completed.

ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION FOR GEORGE WASHINGTON HOUSE, MAGRUDER AND MARKET MASTERS

The BMP identifies the need to create links between historic and recreational sites. Three of the historic sites identified as needing a stronger connection to each other are the George Washington House, Magruder House, and Market Masters House. Connecting these three colonial-era buildings, which are all located in close proximity to each other, would help to create a greater sense of place and provide a tangible way to interpret and communicate the history of Bladensburg. Additionally, these resources need to connect sites to the adjacent recreational area of Waterfront Park.

Context

The George Washington House, Magruder House, and Market Masters House are all identified as Star Spangled Banner Trail sites along the NPS SSBNHT. Although each building has its own history, as the only extant colonial buildings in an area once full of colonial buildings, the three former residences are often grouped together.

The George Washington House, also referred to as the Indian Queen Tavern, was acquired by Anacostia Watershed Society in 2003. A local non-profit organization that focuses on the restoration of the Anacostia River and its tributaries, AWS continues to use the building as its primary office location. Magruder House is the oldest extant colonial-era building in Bladensburg. Significant as “the only extant stone house executed in the Tidewater style in Prince George's County” (HABS 1), The Magruder House is owned by the non-profit Prince George's Heritage Inc., the former residence primarily functions as offices for a preservation services company. Market Masters House,

of the four 18th century buildings, the Market Master's House is the only one which illustrates the minimum type of structure required by ordinance in order for a property owner to retain ownership of a lot in the newly formed town. (King 1987)

The Market Masters House is privately owned and currently used as a residence. All three buildings are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A 2007 report identifies the George Washington House, Magruder House, and Market Masters House as “rare remnants of the initial settlement and early growth of Bladensburg” (Goodwin 111).

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

Providing public access to the George Washington House, Magruder House, and Market Masters House all at once and presenting a united interpretation of all three historic sites would involve a coordinated effort of the property owners.

Local citizens have expressed support of this Action Item and they could contribute to the success of this project. To aid in the interpretation, all three buildings are well documented. In addition to historical documentation, there are numerous contemporary reports assessing and analyzing the buildings. Several of the contemporary reports even focus on the three resources together.

The official listing of the Bladensburg Battlefield National Register Nomination (currently pending) would be a huge step forward in providing a coordinated interpretation for all three buildings and help to link the resources together.

In summary, completion of this Action Item is straight-forward and feasible. Although the effort would involve the coordination of the property owners, it could be spearheaded by any one owner or even an outside, interested, party.



George Washington House.

Historic American Building Survey, ca. 1933. HABS Collection, Library of Congress.



Magruder House.

Historic American Building Survey, ca. 1933. HABS Collection, Library of Congress.



Market Masters House.

Historic American Building Survey. HABS Collection, Library of Congress.

RE-ZONE COMMERCIAL SHOPPING CENTER BETWEEN WATERFRONT PARK AND ELEVATED RAIL TRACKS

The land located between Bladensburg Waterfront Park and the elevated train tracks over Annapolis Road is currently zoned Commercial Shopping Center.

Context

Currently this strip of land between the park and the train tracks, is zoned Commercial Shopping Center which allows for the development of retail and service commercial activities. MNCPPC is the owner of this property which is located beside Bladensburg Waterfront Park.

For multiple reasons, the BMP recommended that the zoning of this area be changed to Open Space (BMP 7-3). Rational for recommending a zoning change includes the location of the land beside a public park, the desire to expand the park-like setting for the benefit of the adjacent historic buildings, and consideration that under the current zoning designation the property is not realistically buildable.

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

Prince George's County is currently going through the process of reevaluating and reclassifying existing zoning. According to MNCPPC zoning, a change to the current zoning has been proposed, identifying the current zoning as, "completely at odds with the recommendation to preserve the Bladensburg Waterfront Park for park and recreation uses" (MNCPPC). The proposed recommendation is to change the zoning from Commercial Shopping Center to Parks and Open Space.

If approved, the proposed zoning change to Open Space would resolve this Action Item.

INTERPRETIVE WAYSIDES

Status of Action Item

MM/ATHA has completed this project.

Interpretive signage for the Battle of Bladensburg has been placed throughout the historic battlefield area. Signage is currently at Bostwick House, Waterfront Park, Balloon Park, and within Colmar Manor.

Additionally, artistic interpretations of British and American soldiers installed at each end of the Bladensburg Road bridge, on Route 1, connecting both Colmar Manor and Cottage City with Bladensburg.

MM/ATHA can continue to communicate with MNCPPC Park and Planning about the potential for further interpretive opportunities.



Battle of Bladensburg Soldier.
Image courtesy of William Johns, photographer.

GHOST BUILDING OF MILL

Changes over time make it challenging for a visitor to understand how the now severely altered Battle of Bladensburg area would have looked and functioned historically. A ghost structure creates a visual outline of a former mass, providing an immediate historical point of reference.

Context

Constructing a ghost structure representative of the former mill would help communicate how the area has changed from its historical appearance and function. Providing a to-scale, visual of an historical structure would easily communicate history to the visitor.

A ghost structure of the mill along the banks of the Anacostia would be more than commemorative – it would enhance a visitor’s ability to view a vista or watershed of the battle sites and function as a feature that could help provide orientation to the sequence of events. (BMP 14-5)



Graphic representation, MM/ATHA.

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

Located on land owned by MNCPPC, their support would be necessary in order for this Action Item to be completed. Ideally, MNCPPC would function as the lead agency. At the least, their role would be as an active, supportive participant. Additional partners could include adjacent Colmar Manor as well as other members of the Port Towns. Local citizens have also expressed support of this project and could contribute to its success.

Although MNCPPC representatives have acknowledged that the construction of a ghost structure is a good idea, they felt that it would need to be part of a larger project in order to move forward. In general, MNCPPC is not currently interested in pursuing this Action Item. Without their leadership and/or active participation it is unlikely there will be resolution for this Action Item.

However, if another entity were to take a leadership role this Action Item could move forward. The leader would need to organize partnerships and form a coalition to include the participation of MNCPPC. MM/ATHA would work with MNCPPC Park and Planning and partners to develop a design concept. Additional steps would involve the development of structural plans, obtaining the necessary permits, identifying associated project costs, and finally, securing the necessary funding.

TRAIL EXTENSIONS AND RE-ZONING

Trail extensions and rezoning combines the following two BMP Action Items:

- Cottage Trail extension, Dueling Creek rezoning
- Colmar Manor Trail extension into Fort Lincoln Cemetery

Existing trails do not sufficiently connect to Battle of Bladensburg sites in Colmar Manor and Cottage City. In addition to extending existing and proposed trails, rezoning would help to preserve naturalized areas.

Context

In addition to the notoriety associated with the famous duels occurring near the creek, Dueling Creek was a key site during the Battle of Bladensburg. This is where American troops came toward the hill, creating the 2nd and 3rd line of the battlefield.

A trail could extend across the street into the Cottage City side. Dueling Creek, on Cottage City side, remains the most naturalized portion of the Battle of Bladensburg site. Rezoning this area could help to protect it. Additionally, developing a trail would allow people can experience this naturalized area.

An extension of the trail system into Lincoln Cemetery would help in the interpretation of the Battle of Bladensburg. Biking or walking through the cemetery provides the visitor with a better understanding of what the area would have been like historically.

Lincoln Cemetery, also a significant portion of Battle of Bladensburg battlefield, the land is part of the NPS SSBNHT. The southern anchor for the interpretation of the Battle of Bladensburg, because of its function the landscape of Lincoln Cemetery is largely unaltered from the time of the battle.¹³ National Register listed, Lincoln Cemetery is a Congressional Chartered Cemetery and, therefore, will remain a cemetery in perpetuity.

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

Cottage City could work with partners to develop a trail extension to the proposed Dueling Creek Heritage Trail. The town could also implement rezoning of the naturalized area to ensure future protection.

Lincoln Cemetery is currently owned by a company based out of state. To date efforts to involve representatives from the cemetery have not been successful. At the present time, it is highly unlikely that the cemetery will participate in resolving this Action Item. However, it is possible to connect a trail to the entrance of Lincoln Cemetery, at which point the visitor could use the existing roadways within the cemetery. This connection would still enable visitors to experience the battle sites and views within the cemetery.

¹³ Bostwick House is the northern anchor for interpretation of the Battle of Bladensburg.

Connecting a trail to the entrance of Lincoln Cemetery would involve the coordination of multiple outside parties, including MNCPPC and Colmar Manor. Partners would need to work together on potential ROW/alignment. Although not responsible for initiating the project, ideally representatives of Lincoln Cemetery would be open to participating in the process.

The extension would tie into the proposed Dueling Creek Heritage Trail (see Appendix). MM/ATHA strongly recommends, through MNCPPC Park and Planning, the implementation of the RTCA Dueling Creek Heritage Trail plans.¹⁴



MM/ATHA trail image.

¹⁴ See following section focusing on Dueling Creek Heritage Trail. Also see Appendix for RTCA report.

RESTORE DUELING CREEK

Channelized during the 20th century, Dueling Creek and is now lined with a cement culvert and much of the creek is surrounded by chain link fencing. Restoration of Dueling Creek would involve removing the concrete channelization and the metal fencing returning the creek to a more historically appropriate appearance.

Context

In addition the geographic relevance to the Battle of Bladensburg, Dueling Creek is significant for numerous duels fought along its shores. There is documentary evidence for 28 duels, although it is likely that many more occurred beside Dueling Creek.

In the 1700s and 1800s, it was illegal to conduct a duel in Washington, DC. People would travel from DC into Maryland on the Anacostia River. Shortly after crossing into Maryland, they would travel north on the Anacostia tributary that is currently known as Dueling Creek.

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

AWS supports the restoration of waterways, with a mission “to protect and restore the Anacostia River by bringing partners and communities together to achieve a clean and safe Anacostia River for the benefit of all living in its watershed and for future generations” (AWS website). Currently, AWS is focused on existing and planned projects, including ongoing restoration projects with US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

In addition MNCPPC, the property owner, AWS will continue to work with USACE to advocate for the restoration of the Anacostia River and its tributaries.

STREET ART/PAVING

This Action Item involves visually identifying the Battle of Bladensburg on Bladensburg Road. A repetitively painted object or theme can be used to for general information about the historic battlefield site and/or specific elements of interpretation. However, simply making the existing asphalt road brown, to resemble a dirt road, could create a desirable visual historic reference.

Context

Bladensburg Road currently serves as the dividing line for the adjacent towns of Colmar Manor and Cottage City. As a primary portion of the historic battlefield, the BMP recommended that the roadway could be used to provide a visual reference to the battle. By incorporating some form of street art onto the pavement, the road could serve to “convey a strong sense of place” (BMP 14-8).

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

The BMP gives specific recommendations regarding the redesign of the Annapolis Road, Baltimore Avenue and Route 1 intersection, as well as the recommendation of lowering and reworking of Kenilworth Avenue.

The support of MD SHA would be necessary in order for this Action Item to move forward. MD SHA would need to function as the lead agency, with both Colmar Manor and Cottage City serving as essential partners. Additional partners could include art related organizations.

When inquiries were made, asking MD SHA to confirm the status of any art related roadway projects, the following response was received:

In 2019, Maryland officially became a Vision Zero state. Our overall goal is to improve traffic safety in Maryland and eliminate roadway fatalities and injuries. As part of this initiative, continental crosswalk markings are being installed at intersections along state route, these markings are more visible than the decorative markings.

Without the leadership and/or active participation of MD SHA there is no resolution for this Action Item.

GATEWAY SITE DEVELOPMENT

Although this Action Item specifically focuses on one approach to the Battle of Bladensburg battlefield, there are multiple ways of accessing the site.

Context

In the BMP, gateway site development specifically focuses on the western gateway into Bladensburg and includes recommendations for improvements. Recommendations include:

- Realignment of Baltimore Avenue, creating a continuous park space
- Incorporating George Washington Inn/Indian Queen Tavern and Balloon Park (along with the Undaunted Memorial)
- Development of riverfront recreation and retail district; utilize the strength related to the existing publicly owned land
- Improved links between Anacostia waterfront and the Town of Bladensburg
- Increased visibility and accessibility of historic sites

In summary, relevant to this Action Item and the Battle of Bladensburg project in general,

A combination of streetscape and pedestrian enhancements could not only strengthen physical connections to the town center but also greatly enhance the aesthetics of the area (BMP 7-6).

Gateway considerations should also involve the surrounding communities. The historic battle site is currently located in multiple towns (Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, and Cottage City). These communities, along with neighboring Edmonston, have formed a coalition organization identified as Port Towns.

The Port Towns Sector Plan identifies the Anacostia River, near Waterfront Park, as the “People’s Harbor” stating plans to:

Promote the Anacostia River as the “Port Towns People’s Harbor” by establishing strong links between the four Port Towns and the waterfront and by potentially developing key sites such as the People’s Harbor projects, Riverview on the Anacostia, and the Watershed Education Facility. (MNCPPC, 3)

Status of Action Item and Further Recommendation(s)

No known work has occurred to further address or advance this Action Item.

This specific Action Item incorporates many of the other proposed Actions. Any work to further this Action Item would be a major undertaking and involve the agreement of multiple partners, including the Town of Bladensburg, MNCPPC, MD SHA and the adjacent property owners. Additionally, given the scope of work, a large period of time would need to be dedicated to the extensive planning that would be necessary before any implementation. Finally, the large cost, which will be associated with the necessary work, would need to be budgeted in advance.

Considering the coordination of partners, the extent of the work involved, and the large expense, it is highly unlikely that this Action Item will move forward at this time. However, the MNCPPC Sector Plan for the Port Towns could be utilized to bring the four communities, Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston, together. In addition to addressing Gateway issues, the communities could work to enhance Waterfront Park and the surrounding area (as discussed in relation to other Action Items).

However, in addition to the Gateways outlined in the BMP, a full analysis of all Gateways into the Battle of Bladensburg area is recommended. For example, there are two parcels of land owned by NPS; consideration could be given to how those two properties can be utilized to create a better gateway into battlefield. Additionally, entrance points from the District of Columbia should be considered. MM/ATHA is limited to operating within the state of Maryland and cannot make recommendations for DC. MM/ATHA can identify this as an important issue but could not lead the initiative.

INTERPRETIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the 2014 bicentennial of the battle, MM/ATHA has been involved in several initiatives to help educate and or acknowledge the Battle of Bladensburg. A summary of these targeted projects follows.

DUELING CREEK HERITAGE TRAIL

The cultural landscape of the Dueling Creek has witnessed major historical moments in colonial and early American life as well as significant environmental and cultural changes to the region. Today, Dueling Creek refers to a 60 acre natural area, currently located within the Town of Colmar Manor, and owned by MNCPPC. Evident in historical documents, Dueling Creek is one of the few intact natural features from the time of the Battle of Bladensburg.¹⁵

In 2001 MM/ATHA Management Plan identified several preservation and interpretation strategies related to the Battle of Bladensburg. One recommendation was the development of a loop trail from the Bladensburg Waterfront Park to Colmar Manor. Ideally, this loop trail would be part of the existing countywide trail network. The idea of developing Dueling Creek Heritage Trail was first introduced in the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan in 2012. Then, in 2019, ATHA applied for and received a technical assistance grant from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS RTCA) for the development of a concept plan for the trail.

NPS RTCA assisted with the development of a plan and was instrumental in efforts to engage interested parties and build broad consensus. In addition to town governments and the Colmar Manor community, MM/ATHA and NPS RTCA have communicated with county agencies and individuals from MNCPPC Park and Planning. Additional project partners included representatives from Anacostia Watershed Society, the Battle of Bladensburg Task Force, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

Key themes of the Dueling Creek Heritage Trail were identified, and include:

1. Major Historical Moment (Dueling)
2. Major Historical Moment (Battle of Bladensburg)
3. Environmental Changes (Anacostia River Tributary)
4. Environmental Changes (Channelization/Levees)
5. Cultural Changes (Washington Turnpike)
6. Cultural Changes (Colmar Manor Growth)

As part of the technical assistance grant, NPS RTCA has completed a Concept Plan and a Cost Estimate. The total project cost is identified as \$604,859. In October of 2020, MM/ATHA forwarded a formal request to the Prince George's County Planning Board for consideration of the development of the Dueling Creek Heritage Trail. The request noted that Dueling Creek Heritage Trail would connect community amenities, such as the community garden and community park and playground, with the

¹⁵ Dueling Creek is evident in *Pictorial Field Book from War of 1812*, Benson John Lossing.

Colmar Manor Community Park, the Bladensburg Waterfront Park, and the regional network of the Anacostia River Trail.

Dueling Creek Heritage Trail *Colmar Manor, MD*



Dueling Creek Heritage Trail Graphic, NPS-RTCA and MM/ATHA.

BATTLE OF BLADENSBURG INTERPRETAION

MM/ATHA has worked with various partners to commemorate the Battle of Bladensburg with signage, trails, and tours.

Prior to 2012, there was little to no recognition of this battle. However, between 2010 and 2014, the Prince George's County Committee on the War of 1812 and the Battle of Bladensburg Task Force worked to tell the story of the military actions and civilian life that preceded, surrounded, and followed the march across the county, the Battle of Bladensburg on August 24, 1814, and the burning of Washington D.C. Through interpretation at Bladensburg Waterfront Park, walking and bike tours, sites, events and signage, the Task Force continues to work with partners to ensure a complete visitor experience. Maryland Milestones/ATHA Inc. has provided staff support for this program.

MM/ATHA Initiatives

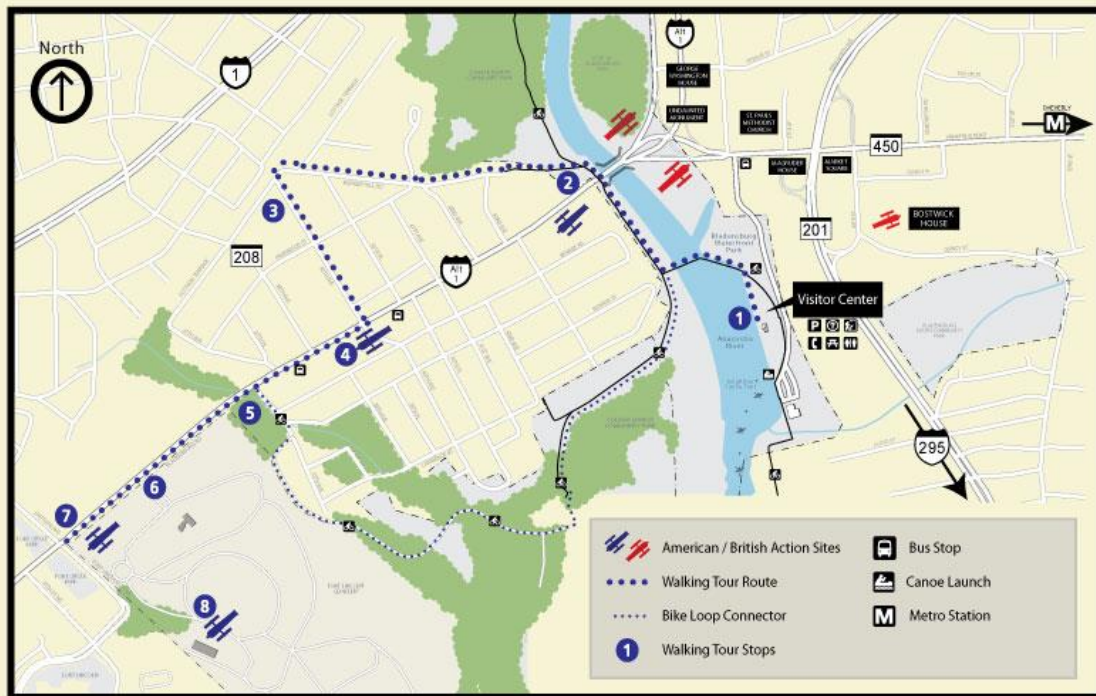
- Battle of Bladensburg brochure has been reprinted with expanded text. The revised brochure is available at the Heritage Center and online at: https://www.princegeorges1812.org/battlemap_revised_2019.pdf
- An audio tour was developed. To explore the history of the Battle of Bladensburg, walking or biking the remains of the battlefield is recommended. Although, with modern development, there is not much left of the landscape, the first and third line do have remnants that evoke the landscape of the time.

The audio tour starts at Bladensburg Waterfront Park, where parking and restrooms are available. There are fifteen stops on the tour. The tour is available online at: [Battle of Bladensburg Audio Walking Tour | Your Audio Tour](#) or <https://youaudiotour.com/tours/210/>

- Developed a website, Prince Georges 1812. Working in cooperation with MNCPPC, local governments, county agencies, and private citizens, War of 1812 related internet interpretation in Prince George's County has been coordinated through the offices of MM/ATHA.

The website is available online at: [Battle of Bladensburg – Prince Georges County in the War of 1812\(princegeorges1812.org\)](#) or princegeorges1812.org

Battle of Bladensburg Walking Tour War of 1812



Map of Walking Tour, MM/ATHA.

Partnership Initiatives

MM/ATHA, along with other partners, contributed to the initiative by NPS to develop the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The trail, information about the Star Spangled Banner, general 1812 history, information about specific trail sites, and activity suggestions for children can all be accessed online at: [Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/star-spangled-banner-national-historic-trail)

RIVERSDALE 1812 ANNUAL REENACTMENT

MM/ATHA has also been involved in supporting the annual (pre-COVID) Riversdale 1812 Reenactment. It is strongly recommended that this program which engages the community and interprets the Battle of Bladensburg with a battle reenactment, continue (post-COVID).

The reenactment is operated by MNCPPC at Riversdale Mansion, which MNCPPC owns and interprets as a historic house museum, in the Town of Riverdale. MM/ATHA is currently engaged in meetings to discuss War of 1812 commemoration activities, and determine what will be feasible during/post-covid in August 2021. Lead by MNCPPC, several interested parties have been invited to join the discussion.

If the reenactment program were to be discontinued at Riversdale Mansion, it is recommended that a group be established to ensure that it continues in some capacity in the future.



Riversdale Reenactment. MM/ATHA Image.

BLADENSBURG BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

The Bladensburg Battlefield, National Register of Historic Places nomination is currently pending.¹⁶ Completed in 2016, the nomination is scheduled for review during the next meeting of the Maryland State Review Board, which will take place in October 2021.

Listing of the Bladensburg Battlefield on the National Register would assist in providing a coordinated interpretation for all three buildings and help to link the resources together. MM/ATHA is very supportive of this initiative and will work with Maryland Historical Trust and Richard Ervin (author of the final revisions to the nomination form) through the review process.

¹⁶ Schwarz, Bryana and Jeff Winstel [URS], with revisions by Richard G. Ervin [MD SHA]. "Bladensburg Battlefield, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form." URS and Maryland State Highway Administration, 2012 and 2016.

BLADENSBURG INTERPRATIVE PLAN

MM/ATHA commissioned AEON Preservation Services to complete a review of existing interpretive endeavors withing Bladensburg and make recommendations regarding additional incentives. A copy of the plan is included in the Appendix.

In summary, of the Bladensburg Interpretive Plan:

This document is intended to serve as The Bladensburg Interpretive Plan, written as a complement to the Maryland Milestones larger Battle of 1812 Interpretive Plan. Currently, the town of Bladensburg is home to several historic sites, which are interpreted with varying levels of success. Aeon believes that all of Bladensburg's historic sites can be developed further, with an emphasis on improving visitor experience and creating more cohesive historical narratives. The Bladensburg Interpretive Plan seeks to bolster the town's historic sites, as well as solidify their connection to each other.

Five of the major Bladensburg sites were surveyed by Aeon Preservation to assess the existing interpretive elements. The surveyed sites were:

1. The Bladensburg Waterfront Park
2. Bostwick House
3. George Washington/Indian Queen Tavern
4. Market Master House
5. Hilleary-Magruder House

Upon completion of the field surveys, Aeon evaluated how well the existing interpretive elements fit into the larger goals of Bladensburg's interpretive plan. Aeon then identified strategies to improve the visitor experience at these sites. This document surveys the existing signs and additional interpretive elements around Bladensburg, and analyzes how each Bladensburg Historic Site addresses one of seven major themes, as defined by Maryland Milestones. (AEON, 1)

LOSSES

BATTLE OF BLADENSBURG VISITOR'S CENTER AT WATERFRONT PARK

Visitors need orientation, a place to go. That is why the Battle of Bladensburg Visitor's Center is so important.

A major loss to the interpretation of the Battle of Bladensburg was the closing of the Visitor's Center at Waterfront Park. Opened in 2012, housed in a MNCPPC building and staffed by MNCPPC Park and Planning employees, the center was closed around 2019. Several web-based resources still reference the Visitor's Center as a starting point for information and walking trail brochures.

The location of the center at Waterfront Park, property geographically relevant to the Battle of Bladensburg, on the shore of the Anacostia River, with ample parking, and public amenities, was an ideal starting point for understanding and exploring the former battlefield.

Brochures are available at the Annelie and Soren Ebbeler Maryland Milestones Heritage Center. Centrally located within the MM/ATHA area, the Heritage Center is not located on the battlefield, or even in Bladensburg; it is in adjacent Hyattsville.

The closing of the Battle of Bladensburg Visitor's Center was a loss to the interpretive potential of the battle.



"New Bladensburg Center to Kick Off Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Celebration,"
The Patch, by Donna Walker, 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The proceeding recommendations could be summarized by the following key points:

- Goal setting
- Vision development
- Management, provide leadership
- Form partnerships, work together
- Find funding

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTNERS

Throughout the process of addressing the recommendations in the BMP, and through numerous interviews with various interested parties, several straight-forward, and relatively simple recommendations:

- Establish vision and set goals
- Address need for ongoing management
- Provide a visitor's center; as outlined in the prior section regarding Losses, visitors need orientation
- Address pedestrian access
- Establish a more direct connection with Fort McHenry; step one, utilize NPS rangers and the planned Mobile Museum
- Preservation of Bostwick; use this historic property as an anchor for the battlefield
- Establish stronger connection between historic resources; step one, Bladensburg Battlefield National Register Nomination
- Engage the community, find ways to present the history in a way that community members can relate to; reach children through the schools ("museum in a box", connect with PTA leaders), reach adults through evening and weekend programs
- Establish connection between Waterfront Park and the battlefield; install an interpretive a kiosk at Waterfront Park

BATTLEFIELD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Continued engagement with the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) is recommended. Grants from ABPP funded the initial 2013 BMP (URS) and this Action Plan.

ABPP has determined that the protection and/or development of historically significant battlefields are most frequently initiated by local landowners and communities, not federal or state government entities. Likewise, ABPP has found that locally elected officials have the greatest influence for the preservation of historical battlefields and associated sites through land use policies administered by locally elected officials.

The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) promotes the preservation of significant historic battlefields associated with wars on American soil. The goals of the program are 1) to protect battlefields and sites associated with armed conflicts that influenced the course of our history, 2) to encourage and assist all Americans in planning for the preservation, management, and interpretation of these sites, and 3) to raise awareness of the importance of preserving battlefields and related sites for future generations. The ABPP focuses primarily on land use, cultural resource and site management planning, and public education. (ABPP website)

Additional information about ABPP can be found at: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/2287/index.htm>

INTERPRETAION AND EDUCATION

Creating a Visitors Center, identifying something to visit, is key element for the interpretation of and education about the Battle of Bladensburg.

In order for the visitors to experience some sense of the sites associated with the Battle of Bladensburg they must be physically connected. (URS 11-2)

Interpretation is important, MM/ATHA strongly encourages following AEON's recommendations for the interpretation of Bladensburg (see Appendix). Additionally, effort should be given to engage with community members and educate the public about the significance of the Battle of Bladensburg.

TABLE OF BICENTENNIAL ACTIONS WITH CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, as outlined at the beginning of this Action Plan, the following table summarizes each bicentennial initiative, who was involved, and provides recommendations. The recommendations are made by MM/ATHA after careful analysis of the existing data and are seen as possible ways to move forward.

Initiative	Partners	Action Plan Recommendation
Battle of Bladensburg Visitor Center Bladensburg Waterfront Park	MNCPPC	Priority to reopen a Visitor Center – location to be determined
Battle of Bladensburg Walking Tour	MM/ATHA MNCPPC	Further trail development; including Dueling Creek Heritage Trail, connecting Bladensburg Waterfront Park to Colmar Manor MM/ATHA worked with NPS/RTCA to on preliminary plans Located on MNCPPC property; MNCPPC to approve and fund trail
Wayside Exhibits and Interpretive Signs	MM/ATHA	MM/ATHA continue to maintain existing signage
Historical Studies, Signage Design	Prince George’s Heritage (Sponsored) University of Maryland	Items and information included in the exhibit should be compiled into book or online
“Undaunted” Sculptural Memorial	AMAN Memorial Trust	Maintain and further develop Balloon Park; address the access issues (pedestrian and vehicular) and address the need for additional lighting at night
Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail and the Star Spangled Banner Maryland Scenic Highway	National Park Service	NPS is currently working to develop a mobile visitor’s center for the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail; MM/ATHA to work with NPS during the development of the mobile visitor’s center. Once completed, schedule regular visits to the Bladensburg area, as the vehicle is available

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APPENDICES

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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This joint venture by Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. and EHT Tracerics, provides an extremely in-depth historical narrative of three of Bladensburg's major pre-Revolutionary extent structures. In addition to information about the structures themselves, this report gives detailed bibliographical information on owners, renters, and occupants of the houses, starting from the founding of Bladensburg in the 16th century and continuing through the 20th century. The report also details relevant historic instances that occurred on or near the houses and evaluates some of the mythology surrounding these sites.

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PRE-BICENTENNIAL ACTIONS

Separate from the BMP, in 2001 (prior to the Bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812) the MM/ATHA Management Plan identified several preservation and interpretation strategies related to the Battle of Bladensburg.

A summary of the recommendations and current status follows:

Identified Strategy for Preservation and Interpretation	Current Status + Pros - Cons
Develop Battle of Bladensburg Visitor/Interpretive Center, in Bladensburg	+ MNCPPC opened a Visitor Center at Bladensburg Waterfront Park - Unfortunately, the Visitor Center was closed
Focus battlefield reservation in Fort Lincoln and Anacostia Waterfront Park	- Lincoln Cemetery is currently owned by a company based out of state; to date efforts to involve representatives from the cemetery have not been successful + MNCPPC has incorporated Battle of Bladensburg programming into Waterfront Park (boat tours, with historic narrative, for example) + Interpretive signage is located at Waterfront Park - MNCPPC programming (boat tours, for example) are not ongoing
Complete MD SHA-led archeological and cultural landscape survey	+ MD SHA has completed additional archeological work - Cultural Landscape survey needs to be completed
Design and install extensive system of outdoor wayside interpretive signage integrated with statewide network	+ Multiple interpretive signs for the Battle of Bladensburg have been installed + Signage is connected to the SSBNHT
Complete façade, sidewalk, roadway and streetscape improvements along battle routes, e.g. Bladensburg Road, Annapolis Road, Kenilworth Avenue, and Alternate Route 1	- Discussed in detail in the Action Plan
Contribute to the Anacostia River restoration	+ Positive working relationship with AWS + Dueling Creek Heritage Trail*
Design and install public art throughout Port Towns	+ MM/ATHA works to support the installation of public art through state administered grant funding programs + MM/ATHA actively seeks partnerships with artist in the Port Towns area
Install a memorial in the Waterfront Park	+ “Undaunted” memorial, commemorating the Battle of Bladensburg, installed at Balloon Park
Stage and sustain a regular series of programming and events	+ Annual events commemorating the Battle of Bladensburg, the dominant event being, the Battle of Bladensburg reenactment at Riversdale Mansion, with narration by MM/ATHA Executive Director

	- All events are currently paused, due to restrictions and complications related to COVID-19
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*One recommendation was regarding the development of a loop trail from the Bladensburg Waterfront Park to the Dueling Creek site, in Colmar Manor. Ideally, this loop trail would be part of the existing countywide trail network. This recommendation was addressed in the Dueling Creek Heritage Trail project (See separate Appendix).

BLADENSBURG INTERPRETIVE PLAN

(See Attachment)

DUELING CREEK HERITAGE TRAIL REPORT

(See Attachment)