MILL SPRINGS BATTLEFIELD ASSOCIATION, INC.
Mill Springs Battlefield Visitor Center • Zollicoffer Park • Historic Brown-Lanier House • Historic West-Metcalfe House
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

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...dedicated to the preservation, protection, interpretation, and maintenance of the Mill Springs Battlefield...

Statement of William R. Neikirk
Founder, Mill Springs Battlefield Association

H.R. 298
Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation
United States House of Representatives

October 3, 2013

INTRODUCTION

The Mill Springs Battlefield, a National Historic Landmark, is located on both sides of Lake Cumberland in Pulaski and Wayne counties, Kentucky. The Mill Springs Battlefield Association, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation was founded in 1992 by Association President William R. Neikirk and 20 other concerned individuals for the purpose of preserving, protecting, maintaining and interpreting the Mill Springs Battlefield.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MILL SPRINGS BATTLEFIELD, NATIONALLY

The Battle of Mill Springs, fought on January 19, 1862, resulted in a decisive Union victory that ultimately drove the Confederates from Kentucky and enabled the Federal advance into Middle Tennessee in February of 1862.

The defeat of the Confederates at this battle helped secure Kentucky for the Union, a vital achievement, and was the first major Union victory of the war following the disastrous defeat at First Manassas on July 21, 1861. The defeat of Confederate Brigadier General Felix K. Zollicoffer, who died during the battle, was a first of many victories for Union General George H. Thomas.

In 1992, the National Park Service identified Mill Springs Battlefield as one of the 25 most endangered battlefields. Under the guidance of the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), the protected area of the battlefield has been able to grow from ½ acre to over 600 acres.

The National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program published a *Draft update to the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields, August, 2013.* The report states the Mill Springs Battlefield of Kentucky condition as *"portions altered, most essential features remain. Previous CWSAC priority 1, new priority 1."* (See NPS publication *Civil War Battlefields Update,* August, 2013).

MILL SPRINGS BATTLEFIELD TODAY

Today the Mill Springs Battlefield Association is comprised of a fifteen-member board of directors, whose main purpose is to preserve and interpret the battlefield for future generations of Americans. The board owns and administers over 600 acres of battlefield land, along with a 10,000 square foot visitor's center built in 2006, which is located adjacent to the Mill Springs National Cemetery.

PROPOSAL

The Mill Springs Battlefield Association, in recognition of the National Park Service's ability and expertise to generate tourism, is asking this committee to support Congressman Harold Rogers' H.R. 298, which would direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate the significance of the Mill Springs Battlefield located in Pulaski and Wayne Counties, Kentucky, and the feasibility of its addition to the National Park System as part of the Cumberland Gap National Park.

MSBA is unique in that we are not asking the Park Service to take over undeveloped battlefield land. In contrast, we are offering the NPS 600 acres with miles of well-kept interpretive trails, a marked driving tour, and a visitor's center/museum. MSBA has spent $12 million to preserve and interpret the battlefield for future generations. The Mill Springs Battlefield Association will continue as a "friends group" in support of the battlefield. Our dedication to preserving & protecting the battlefield will not change when this becomes a National Park.

Mill Springs
National Cemetery

BATTLEFIELD LOOP TRAIL
TRAIL DIFFICULTY LEVEL: MODERATE TO DIFFICULT (UNEVEN TRAIL) DISTANCE: 1/2 MILE
Zollicoffer Park
1 - Scene of the Battle
2 - General George Thomas
3 - Ninth Ohio Charge
4 - Battle on Sabbath Morn
5 - Union Line at Fence
6 - Lt. Bale Peyton, Jr.
7 - Archaeology
8 - The Ravine
9 - Blacksmith Shop
10 - Confederate Retreat
11 - Rutledge Artillery
12 - Union Advance

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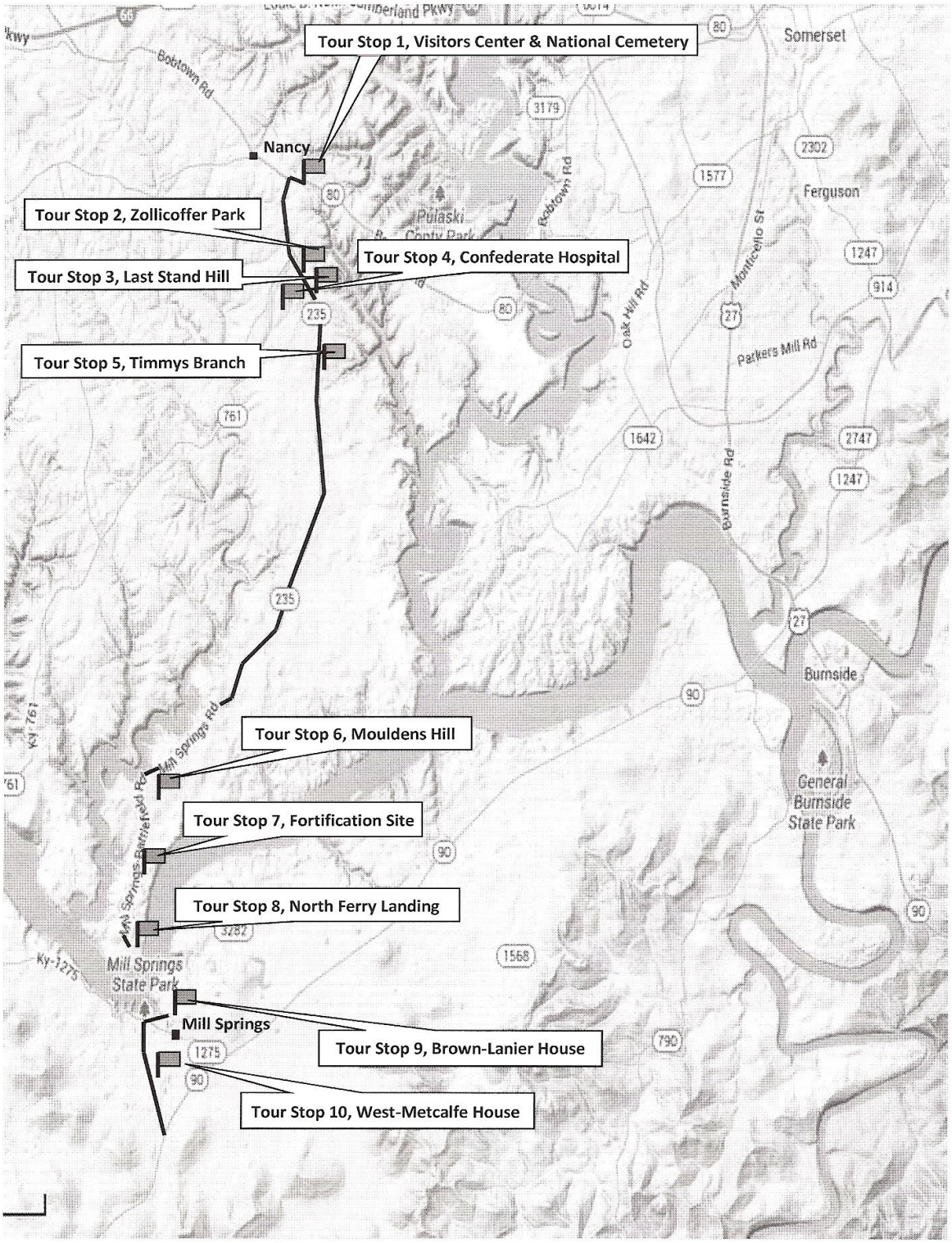
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