



KCBA THE BATTLEFIELD DISPATCH

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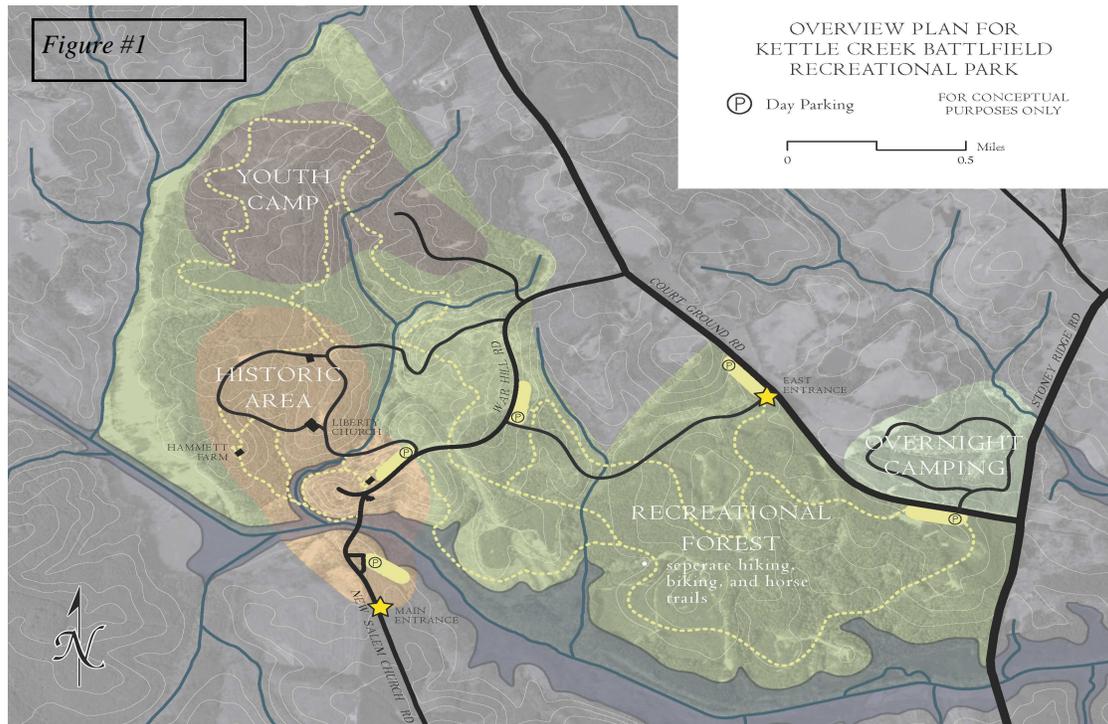
Kettle Creek Battlefield Conceptual Plan Published

The KCBA contracted with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government in 2013 to develop a conceptual plan for the historic battlefield and recreational park. The purpose of the plan was to put the vision of the park into a format which could be presented to the public. The final plan was produced in April 2015, and consisted of a 26 page booklet and poster size pictorial boards. The poster boards were placed in the Washington Wilkes Chamber of Commerce and businesses

around the Wilkes County area. The materials will also be used to help inform the public about the development of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Park. Several months of work in planning, visiting the site, and researching the battlefield went into the production of the final plan. Presentations have been conducted for several organizations, and the response has been extremely positive.

Following are some of the informational and pictorial displays that were included in the CVIOG plan.

Figure #1 is an overview of the plan for the Kettle Creek Battlefield Historic Park. This plan was designed based on research



and information gathered from various sources by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. The CVIQG booklet describes the park as having the historic battlefield area at its core, while the rest of the park would include an assortment of activities such as hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and overnight camping. A youth camp could be located independently to the north, adjacent to the historic area. Day parking would be provided along the main roads into the park, and foot or bicycle trails would connect all locations in the park.

Improved visitor access to the park area would be provided by improving the existing Salem Church Road. The road, which is along the line of retreat used by the Tory

forces after their defeat at the Battle of Kettle Creek, would connect to a new entrance on highway 44.

Figure #2 represents the concept for that entrance. This entrance would be in keeping with the National Park System design. The primary navigation sign off Highway 44 to the south of the park is conceived in the universally recognized National Park (NPS) style.

The design of the Battlefield Historic Area was modeled after the features and amenities on the Ninety Six National Historic Site in South Carolina. The idea is to interpret the events that led up to the Battle of Kettle Creek on February 14th, 1779. The plan to accomplish this would include trails



Figure #2

Entrance from Highway 44

that would follow the assembly area of Col .Pickens' militia and their three prong advance on the position held by Col. Boyd and his Loyalist forces. This would include the areas of the first engagement, the area of Boyd's possible death, and the retreat of the Tory forces across Kettle Creek and surrender on Spurgen Hill.

A demonstration of Colonial frontier life would include the restoration of the

Hammett Farm complex and the Liberty Church and cemetery area. A visitor's Center, cookout pavilions and other amenities would be included to accommodate the visitors. See Figure #3.

To increase the sense of arrival and importance that Kettle Creek Battlefield deserves, the CVIQG purposes a Grand Entrance on Salem Church Road as you approach Kettle Creek. This entrance would

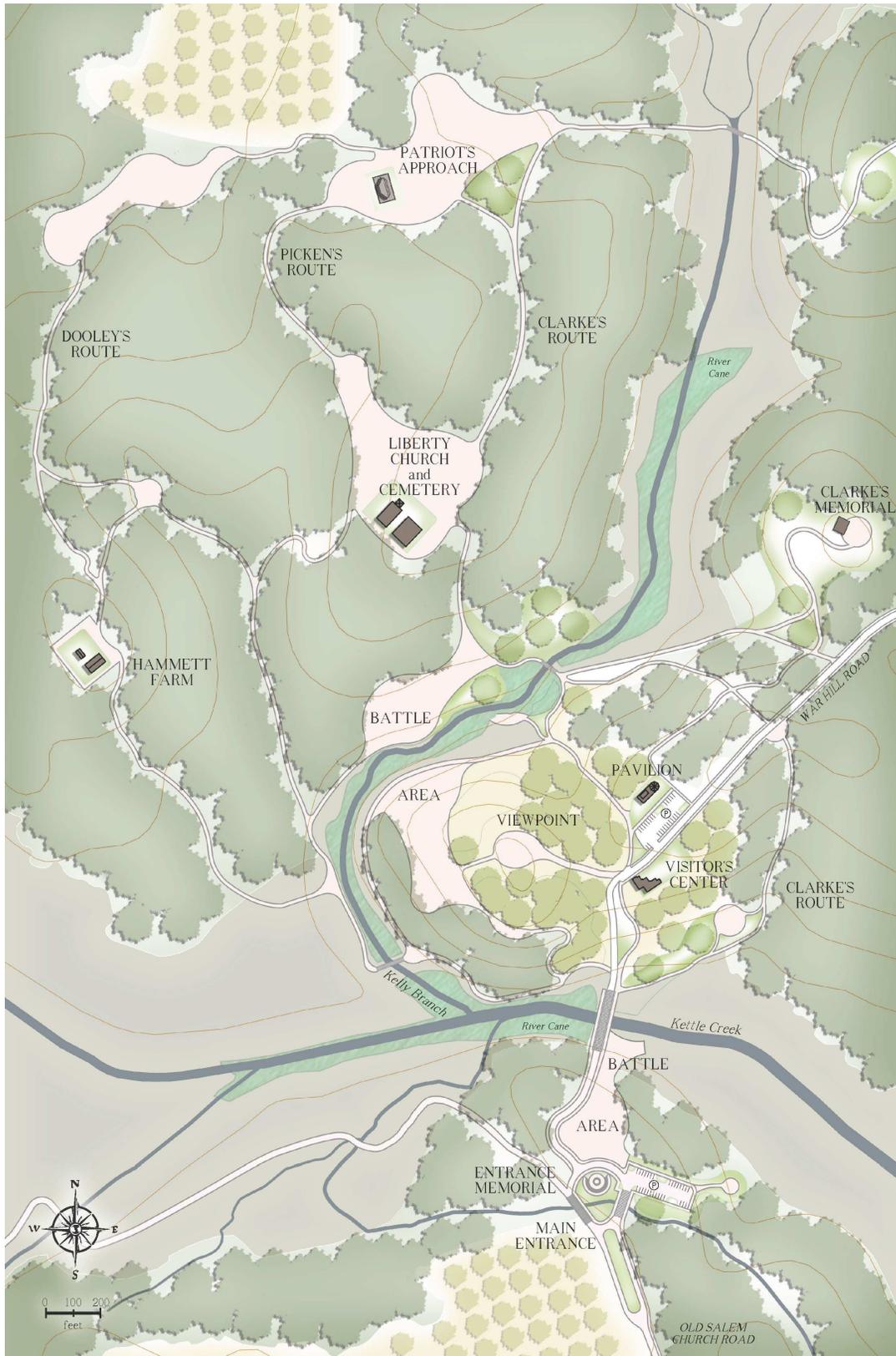


Figure #3

Conceptual Plan of Battlefield Historic Area

also give a view across the creek and of the Monument atop War Hill. This impressive view is patterned after other high-profile his-

toric parks throughout America. See Figure #4



Figure # 4

*Grand South Entrance
into the
Historic Kettle Creek
Battlefield Park
From Salem Church Road*

To further the visitor's experience, a visitor center would be located within the historic core of the park. It would be accessible from both the grand south entrance and the east gate entrance. The amenities available

would include a full museum, a small theater featuring a multi-media presentation, a gift shop, public restrooms and parking. Figure #5

Figure # 5



As part of the public use area, a large turf grass meadow would be provided across from War Hill Road and adjacent to the parking area. This would offer visitors day-use

facilities, such as covered barbecues and seating areas for small and large groups. This day park and covered pavilion would be located adjacent to the Visitor Center. See Figure # 6

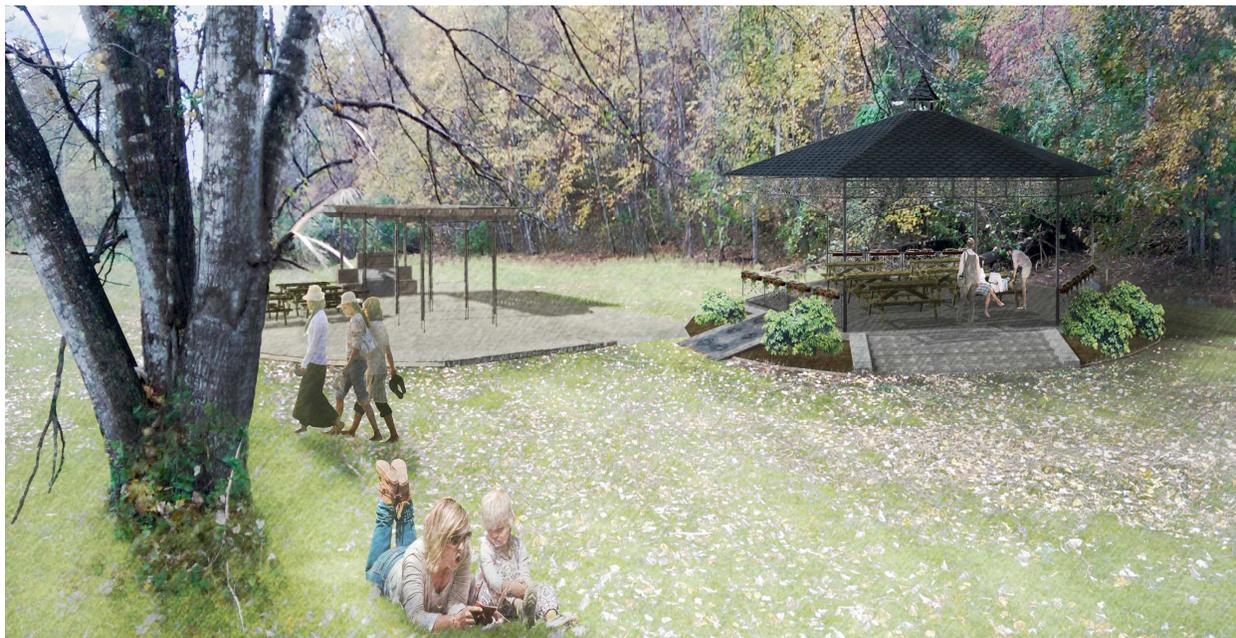


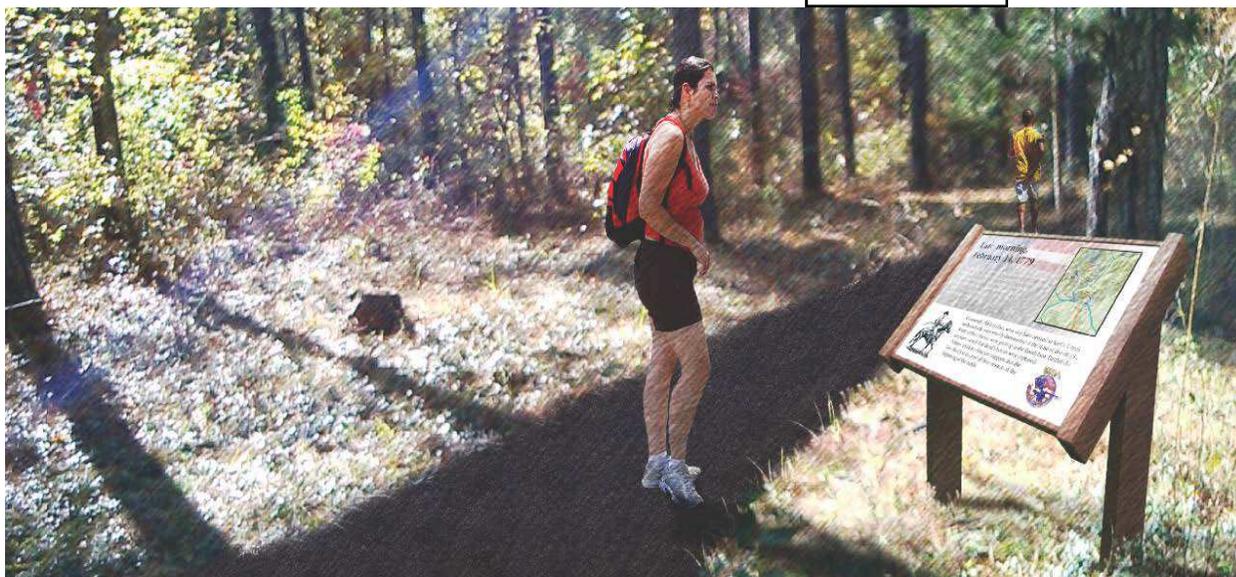
Figure # 6

Day Park & Covered Pavilion

Hiking trails are important to enhancing the visitor experience. A trail system is planned which would include the three routes of the Patriot advance, the Tory encampment, the Patriot assembly area, War Hill monument, the colonial road leading to Hammett Farm and to Liberty Church and cemetery.

This trail system will give the visitors a wide range of experience from the marshy area along Kettle Creek to the ridge line of the Piedmont. All of the area contains a variety of floral and geographic variations which would interest hikers. Figure # 7

Figure # 7



The effect of the American Revolution on the lives of local families is an important area of interest for visitors. The Battle of Kettle Creek represents a good example of how colonial families were involved in this struggle for independence. James Hammett and his family owned the land where this battle was fought. His home was located along the road that went from Carr's Fort to Wrightsborough, and this was the direction that Col. Boyd was traveling when the Battle of Kettle

Creek occurred .

The Hammett farmhouse and property played a key role during the events that preceded the Battle of Kettle Creek on February 14th, 1779. The re-creation of the farm house and surrounding area will permit visitors to feel the hardship and bravery that were common in colonial frontier life. Along with hunger, isolation, Indians, and now war, these frontier settlers struggled to survive. See figure #8



Figure # 8

Strong religious faith was a major part of colonial life in Wilkes County in 1779. The Georgia frontier had become a magnet for many who disagreed with the Anglican Church doctrine. The dispersed farms commonly banded together to build a common meeting place for religious activities. Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Combined Society members might have shared such a place until their numbers became large enough to warrant a meeting place of their

own.

Liberty Church may have been such a place, and its adjoining cemetery may have had added significance. With the death of Col. Boyd at the beginning of the battle the possibility that the Liberty Church Cemetery may be his final resting place presents a fascinating possibility. The reconstruction of Liberty Church will add an important part of early religious history to this historic park. See figure # 9.



Figure # 9

On the morning of February 14th, 1779, the patriot forces under command of Col. Pickens arrived at the northernmost point of the core areas of the battlefield. It was here that Dooley, Pickens, and Clarke divided their forces to advance southward and attack the loyalist camp. An appropriate memorial

at this point would recognize the patriot militia who used the element of surprise to overcome the superior number of Col. Boyd's provincial troops. See figure # 10

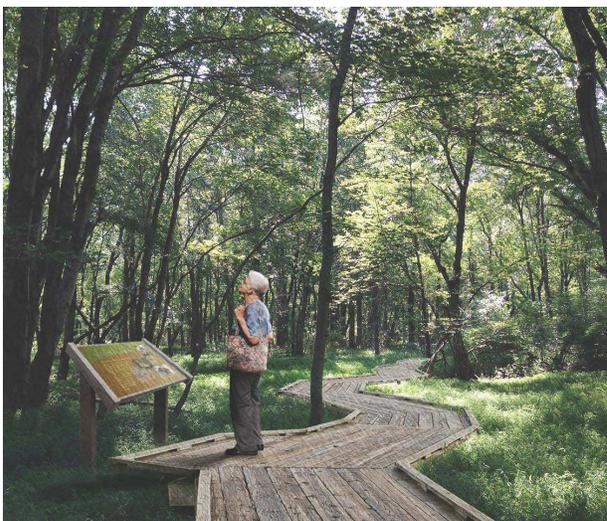


Figure # 10

Patriot's Approach Memorial

Parts of the trail system will traverse marshy areas, and these areas will benefit from raised walkways to protect the environment. All areas will have directional and in-

formational signage for bicycle trails, hiking trails , and horseback riding.



Marshy area raised walkway with information signage



Bicycle trails

Rotary Club **Conceptual Plan Presentation**



David Chestnut & Ruth Clements

Kettle Creek Battlefield Association members David Chesnut (left) and Ruthie Clements presented a program for the Washington Rotary Club on the KCBA conceptual plan as developed by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at UGA. Pointing out that the plan shows a vision of what might ultimately be developed at the site of the decisive Revolutionary War battle, Chesnut emphasized that the first steps still involve quite a bit of land acquisition. After that, significant site developments could include a grand entrance to the historical park, a welcome center, trailside signage, building reconstructions, memorials, and recreational areas.

Discussions continue at Kettle Creek concerning timber cutting, land use



Kettle Creek Battlefield Association and Plum Creek Timber Company representatives

including (l-r) Dan Lemke, Jim Rundorff, Nicki Price, Grady Britt, and Cliff Hargrove meet for discussion of timber harvesting on the historic battlefield site. The final timber cut on the Kettle Creek Battlefield Recreational Park historic core area was discussed by Jim Rundorff, Southeast Area Asset Manager and others representing the Plum Creek Timber Company, along with representatives of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association (KCBA).

The 60-acre site, now owned by Wilkes County, was purchased by KCBA in 2014, exclusive of timber rights. The site includes about half the historic core acreage identified in the Kettle Creek Battlefield Park Master Plan adopted by Wilkes County in 2013.

Aware of the historic value of old roads and other sites in the larger acreage, the timber company offered to protect new trails and significant areas from the harvesting operation with a 20-foot buffer on each side of roads and trails. Cliff Hargrove and Joe Harris, representing KCBA, discussed current and future plans with Plum Creek representatives including Rundorff, Senior Land Asset Manager Dan Lemke, Senior Resource Forester Grady Brit, and Nicki Price, an intern who actually flags the roads and trails.

Hargrove was particularly interested in saving a section of Plum Creek's current acreage for demonstration of forestry practices including the effects of burning, but the proposal seemed impossible due to restrictions on burning established for the site by Plum Creek.

A large part of Plum Creek's 800 acres in the park area is now being thinned and other acreage clear cut. However, the conceptual plan for the Kettle Creek Battlefield Recreational Park includes about 600 acres in recreational forest, an acreage of which would be demonstration forest with hiking and biking trails and camping areas.

The timber company has been involved in development planning for the larger site for more than five years, including the pro-

duction of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Park Master Plan. The company owns nearly a million acres of production timber land in Georgia, the third largest holding in about twenty states. Plum Creek Foundation, a non-profit charitable foundation, has funded a Kettle Creek Battlefield project and local hospital projects as well.

\$77,000 grant will fund trail at Kettle Creek Battlefield



View of War Hill monument from trail

The War Hill obelisk can be seen from the Kettle Creek (south) side along the unfinished War Hill Loop Trail. Wilkes County has been awarded a \$77,000 grant to be used on the War Hill Loop Trail of the Kettle Creek Battlefield, according to an announcement made by Becky Kelley, director of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) State Parks and Historic Sites. Wilkes was one of 87 applicants for trail grants for recreation, of which 27 were funded. "The selected projects will provide new outdoor recreational opportunities for a variety of trail-user groups," Kelley said.

The War Hill Loop Trail is a priority improvement established in the 2013 Kettle Creek Battlefield Master Plan supported by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and CSRA Regional Commission and approved by the Wilkes County Commissioners.

The trail passes through the identified archeologically significant battlefield area. It

will circle War Hill with an entrance to the east side near the stone gate entrance to the hilltop. It follows the creek westward to Kelly Branch, then north and east. The creek-side section allows a continuing view of the obelisk monument.

Plans call for a 4-6-foot width of level crushed rock (crusher run) surface with culverts and erosion protection as needed. Seating will be provided at intervals along the trail and numbered posts will refer to a key for a description of the military, cultural, and natural history features of each site. The project will be under the direction of a licensed landscape architect in agreement with the terms of the project as identified by Anne Floyd, CSRA Regional Commission. Floyd and Dr. Joseph Harris prepared the proposal to the DNR.

Establishment of the trail route involved several individuals who know the site. The east and south sections were cleared by Allen Burton, historian, and Harris, who is a botanist; the north and west sections by Richard McAvoy and county personnel. The entire trail was reviewed and modified in part by Dr. Walter Cook, UGA retired forester. He is widely experienced in trail design both in Georgia and South Carolina.

A date for starting work on the trail is being established and depends upon the environmental review approval by DNR, coordination of the schedule of the architect, labor, and equipment for the job. Some of the project will be funded by an in-kind county match of state-federal dollars. Terms of the project include a schedule for completion.

Expert flags trails at Kettle Creek Battlefield

Walter Cook, forest trails specialist, and Kim Clements, visitor to the Kettle Creek Battlefield Recreational Park, study maps of the Revolutionary period Hammett farm area in preparation for trail flagging. The trail will connect the colonial farm site with the War

Hill Loop Trail. Trails in the Kettle Creek Battlefield Park which connect the War Hill Loop Trail with the Hammett farm site and with Liberty Church sites of the Revolutionary period were both recently flagged, providing informative additions to trails for experienced hikers.

“They are not ready for eighth--graders,” said Walter Cook, forester and expert in trails design. However, Kim Clements, a Washington visitor and woodlands lover, found the trails delightful.



Walter Cook (right) and Kim Clements

“I hiked nearly eight miles in the Liberty Church, Hammett farm, and Kelly Branch circle. The flagging is good,” she said. On a recent morning she assisted Cook in defining sections of the Hammett farm trail. It was a fortunate coincidence that trails were under development at a time when Clements was in the area.

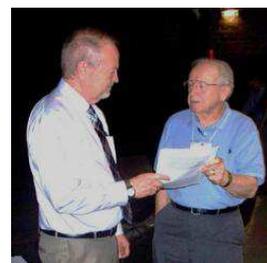
“From an ecological standpoint, the Hammett farm trail has a most exciting feature,” said Joe Harris of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association which scheduled the trail flagging. “A section of the flat land, cornered by Kelly Branch and Kettle Creek, is littered with rotting logs of mature pines under a canopy of immature hardwood. There is no better demonstration of the transition from an old field pine stand to mixed pine and hardwood forest,” Harris said.

“It is precisely as described on old local maps of the Revolutionary Period,” he added. The site had been discovered earlier by Walker Chewning, KCBA president, and

Harris as they had attempted a trail route in the area.

Cook is retired from the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry. He has designed more than 100 woodland trails throughout Georgia and South Carolina. He flagged the Summit Trail of the battlefield park and rerouted sections of the War Hill Loop Trail, originally flagged by Allen Burton and Harris. Cook emphasizes the dimensions, grade, and sites of interest along the trails. The War Hill Loop Trail was recently funded for surfacing by the Department of Natural Resources.

Preservation meeting enlightening to attendees



James Real & Joe Harris

At a recent historic preservation meeting in Dahlonega, Joe Harris (right) gets advice from James Reap, an attorney who spent a month in Wilkes County studying historic architecture for the Historic Preservation Division. At a recent historic preservation meeting in Dahlonega, Anne Floyd, CSRA Regional Commission Historic Preservation Planner, and Joe Harris, Kettle Creek Battlefield Association chairman, were in attendance. Floyd was a speaker on the program, describing her work in more than a dozen counties.

The Friday and Saturday sessions were organized by the Historic Preservation Division of the DNR and the Georgia Alliance of Preservation Commissions. They were held in the historic Holly Theater and Smith House. Dr. David Crass, HPD director, and Ken Kocher, Georgia Alliance of Preservation Commissions president, welcomed

nearly 100 attendees from around the state.

Crass briefly described the role of historic preservation in Georgia. He knows Wilkes County well, having made two survey trips to the Kettle Creek Battlefield site alone and having been responsible for funding of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Park Master Plan through the Department of Community Affairs.

Dahlonega Mayor Pro-Tem Bruce Hoffman spoke briefly on the economic value of historic tourism and mentioned that it brings \$54 million in tourism to Dahlonega every year. Dahlonega is a town of less than 6,000 but supports nearly two dozen restaurants for tourist traffic.

The program opened with a session on historic preservation law by UGA professor James Reap, Graduate Coordinator of the Master of Historic Preservation Program. Reap was the first historic preservation planner for Georgia, providing services for ten northeast Georgia counties. Over the years, he has provided service for many domestic and foreign agencies on preservation issues.

In conversation with Harris, he recalled an early experience in his career, the year

1977, when he spent a month in Washington-Wilkes as consultant for the Historic Preservation Division, DNR. Living in Washington, he conducted the first architectural survey in Wilkes County. "I met some fantastic people who were always helpful to me, and I learned a lot," he said.

Ken Kocher, of the Madison Preservation Commission, described "Design Guidelines Beyond the Basics" which included requirements from building foundations to roof structure including texture and color preservation criteria. Barry Brown of the Georgia Department of Economic Development spoke on "Destination Georgia: Historic Tourism and Selling Southern History." As with others in conversation, he showed great interest in Washington Wilkes. "Greatly undersold," he said, and offered to help "in any way that I can."

"The program was well worth the time," Harris commented, "a real learning experience." There were two dozen presenters with many references to HPD resources including Jeanne Cyriac on African American Programs and Anne Floyd, with others, on Small Town Challenges.

Kettle Creek Battlefield Trail Protection Efforts



Walker Chewning, Grady Britt, Nikie Price, & Walter Cook

Recently KCBA President Walker Chewning, Trail Specialist Walter Cook, Plum Creek Timber Manager Grady Britt, and employee Nikie Price visited the Kettle Creek Battlefield for a look at the proposed trail system for the historic battlefield park.

The team walked the marked trails of the routes taken by the Patriot Militia, the Patriot assembly area, the Liberty Church site, the Hammett farm, the Tory encampment area, and the proposed pedestrian bridges which will cross Kelly Branch.

The Plum Creek Timber Company is planning to harvest the timber with a twenty year growth life. It is working with the KCBA to preserve as much of the trail system timber as possible, and protect historic sites and the natural environment along the creek system within the battlefield. Most of the timber harvesting will be taking place on property owned by Plum Creek Timber and is in the area which the KCBA is currently raising funds to purchase.