

Battle lines go back and forth.
Victory is not assured until the end.
We've got them on the run!

Now They're Getting Desperate.

***Help us finish what we started ... and
have your gift DOUBLED to protect
Manassas and The Wilderness!***



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

Going to court to save battlefields is never my first choice.

I'd much prefer to invest your generous donations in purchasing hallowed ground from willing sellers, knowing it will be saved and protected forever.

But sometimes the courts are our last and best hope.

Over the past couple of years, the American Battlefield Trust has been engaged in **two major legal battles — both with the aim to stop massive, inappropriate developments from engulfing the Manassas and Wilderness battlefields.**

Each lawsuit is entering a critical phase. And our well-heeled opponents are doing everything they can to wear us down — legally, financially, and strategically.

But with local and public opinion on our side, the data center developers are resorting to desperation tactics to get their way.

Make no mistake — these battles are far from over. Legal fights can be long and costly, and your gift today will help keep us in the field. **Thanks to two incredibly generous members, every donation toward this advocacy work will be matched, up to \$130,000. In other words, if you give right now, your donation will be doubled dollar-for-dollar, helping us raise a quarter of a million dollars to defend these hallowed grounds.**

Please help us fight for our history by making your best gift today.



October 25, 2022. American Battlefield Trust hosted a town hall meeting with partners to discuss the Wilderness Crossing proposal early on in the process. There has been significant public opposition to the project from the outset.

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Along with your donation, I would be most grateful if you would please sign and return the enclosed petition urging Virginia’s new Governor, Abigail Spanberger, to prioritize protecting Virginia’s irreplaceable battlefields and their history — including the lands where the *Battle of The Wilderness and The Second Battle of Manassas* were fought!

Here’s where the lawsuits stand right now

Manassas (Prince William County):

We’re fighting to stop the *world’s largest data center campus* from being built immediately adjacent to — and mere steps away from — Manassas National Battlefield Park. A total of 37 industrial buildings with 12 substations and towering power lines have been proposed. This land includes historically significant sites, like Brawner Farm which opened the Second Battle of Manassas. One historian even described it as a “*whirlpool of death.*”



A rendering of the Manassas National Battlefield Park Pageland Lane entrance should the data center project move forward.
© American Battlefield Trust

Despite local opposition and expert objections, county officials voted 4-3 to rezone the land in a hasty and premature lame duck session, before the county chair was replaced by a data center skeptic. We sued over their mishandling of the public process. A local circuit court judge ruled against us on technical grounds. We appealed.

Now, our case is going before the Virginia Court of Appeals and is paired with a related lawsuit that already succeeded in circuit court. Developers are panicking. They’ve launched legal counterattacks, proposed legislation, and have tried to convince plaintiffs to abandon the suit. We are clearly making them nervous!

The Wilderness (Orange County):

This fight is just as serious. Developers plan to build a **2,600-acre “Wilderness Crossing” mixed-use project that includes much more than data centers.** We’re talking 5,000 housing units and 732 acres of commercial/industrial construction, all within sight of core battlefield land. The footprint for this project is **THREE** times the size of Disneyland.



Power lines already affect visitors’ historic viewshed at Manassas, and this development would require further extensive power line infrastructure to be built. © American Battlefield Trust

As you surely know, The Wilderness was a pivotal battle in May 1864, and a major turning point of the Civil War. More than 160,000 forces were engaged, and there were about 30,000 casualties!

We sued to stop the rezoning. While the circuit court dismissed some of our claims, it allowed our most powerful and persuasive arguments — over county authority, secret meetings, and tax authority — to move forward. This has the developers on the run, and looking for every opportunity to **delay, confuse, and stall our efforts.**

They're using obscure procedural gimmicks to frustrate the legal process and prolong the case, perhaps hoping that we'll eventually run out of the financial resources or the fortitude to continue the fight.

We can't and we won't. Not with your help.

My friend, we're a nonprofit organization, and two lawsuits at once is a massive expense for us to take on. Especially when the developers we're up against have such deep pockets, and complex legal battles like these can drag on for years ...

As I said earlier, we never wanted to go to court, but when elected officials blatantly ignored public opposition, rushed votes through in the dead of night, flouting legal requirements, and bowed to pressure from tech billionaires ... we were left with no choice.

**The good news is our cases are gaining momentum.
The legal arguments are on our side. And, as more of the public
learns about these cases, more become allies and join the fight.**

And we believe we have our opponents on the run.

... just like the Confederate soldiers were after the Union troops arrived in force at Matthews Hill during the First Battle of Bull Run ...

... or the Union troops were at Second Manassas when the Confederates exposed a Union flank on Chinn Ridge.

We firmly believe the law is on our side. It has become more and more clear through court proceedings that both counties failed to adequately notify local residents about their deliberations — *putting the interests of the data center developers above their communities — and rushed to approval.*

No wonder so many other organizations are joining us, including the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Piedmont Environmental Council, and the Coalition for America's National Parks.

And no wonder so many locals are up in arms! The more they learn about what their counties approved, the angrier they get.

We all know a heck of a lot more about the impact of data centers than we knew two years ago. In addition to being unsightly, data centers need an extraordinary amount of electricity — the proposed Manassas development would use enough electricity to power 750,000 homes — roughly five times the number of households in the county. And, to make matters worse, residents will be forced to live in the shadow of the transmission lines that power these behemoths, while footing the bill for excessive increases in electricity use. But the #1 reason we oppose these data centers is because they don't belong near or on hallowed ground.

Frankly, it never should have come to this. The tech companies, developers, and county officials could have worked with communities to find land in appropriate and existing industrial zones or other tracts far from the battlefields. They could have done their due diligence, reviewed the historical impacts, listened to their own advisors and their fellow residents.

They also could have listened to us when we told them their plans were a terrible idea that would be disrespectful to Virginia's and America's history!

In other words, they could have acted with honor, respected those who served and died, and moved their projects to areas where no battlefields would be destroyed or desecrated.

But that's not what they did. **That's why we filed our lawsuits, and that's why we're fighting today.** And we'll keep fighting — with your help. Please sign the petition and make your best gift now, while every dollar you give will go twice as far, to support our legal battles and all our crucial preservation efforts. Thank you!



'Til the battle is won,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David N. Duncan". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. The only thing that could stop us now is running out of resources. We're holding the line in the courts, in the press, and with the public, but we need you with us. **Please have your gift *MATCHED* now by mailing your donation in the envelope provided or give securely online at battlefields.org/advocate today.** I urgently need your support, and I'll be personally grateful for any contribution you can give. Thank you!



CASE INFORMATION

Lawsuit to protect Manassas Battlefield

2021

Deep-pocketed developer seeks rezoning for massive data center development called Prince William Digital Gateway. Potential 37 eight-story buildings next door to Manassas Battlefield.

Public and county pleas to deny the request include the Trust plus Prince William County professional staff, planning commission, hundreds of citizens, National Park Service, and historic preservation groups.

12/2023

Prince William County Board of Supervisors approves three rezonings despite public opposition and flawed public notice. Violation of Virginia Code.

Unfortunately, this is a local government decision.
No federal or state-wide oversight of historic properties.

11/2/2024

Trust joined nine local citizens to stop construction. Six other conservation organizations joined the case through a "friend of the court" filing.

10/31/2024

In our case, the judge held a hearing on the defendants' demurrers. Ruled in favor of the defendants while making determinations of fact that were not appropriate for a demurrer hearing.

8/7/2025

Oak Valley Homeowners Association parallel lawsuit was ruled in favor of the plaintiff, saying the Board of Supervisors improperly approved the rezoning. The judge cited insufficient review of the proposed development, inadequate notice given to public, and unlawful waivers of key analyses.



More to come....this isn't over!!



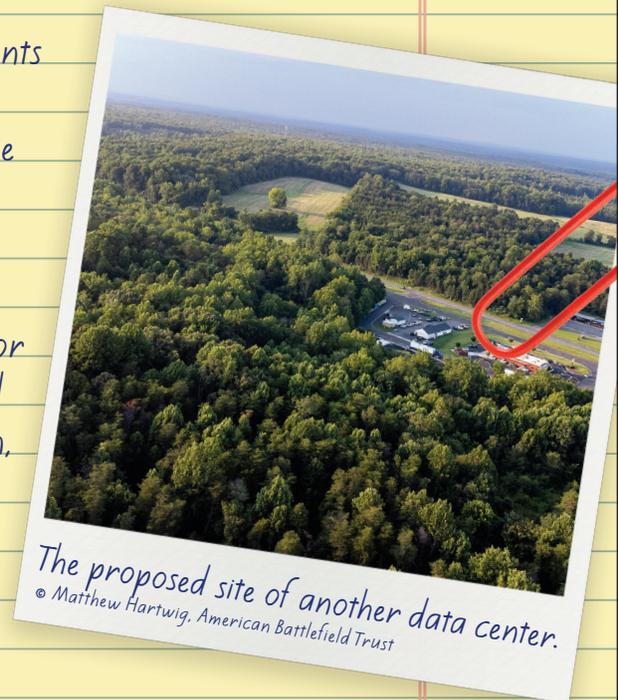
Lawsuit to save Wilderness Battlefield from being forever destroyed

5/24/2023 A rezoning is filed for thousands of acres of residential, commercial, and industrial development, including data centers and distribution warehouses at the gateway to the Wilderness Battlefield. This will forever mar the 1864 battlefield and its landscape.

5/2023 The Trust files suit, along with Central Virginia Battlefield Trust, Inc., Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, and nearby homeowners, over Orange County's secretive and unlawful zoning process.

3/21/25 Circuit Court of Orange County heard arguments surrounding a motion filed by Orange County, its Board of Supervisors, and the owners of the Wilderness Crossing site that sought to throw out the case.

The Judge ruled decisively in the plaintiffs' favor on the matter of two amicus curiae briefs filed by the National Parks Conservation Association, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, as well as the Piedmont Environmental Council, in support of the lawsuit. Both briefs will be admitted into the case's official record.



9/16/2025 VICTORY...for now!

Circuit court rejected the attempts by Orange County and the developers of the Wilderness Crossing project to throw out the case. Of the seven counts filed by the Trust and its partners, the judge dismissed three but allowed four to proceed. The remaining counts challenge the rezoning as having been approved in violation of Virginia law governing rezoning processes, public hearings, and the equal taxation of land.

