

STATE  
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PARKS®

October 2008



VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

A Resource Assessment



National Parks Conservation Association®  
*Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations*

# STATE ♦ OF THE ♦ PARKS®

Center for State of the Parks®

More than a century ago, Congress established Yellowstone as the world's first national park. That single act was the beginning of a remarkable and ongoing effort to protect this nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage.

Today, Americans are learning that national park designation alone cannot provide full resource protection. Many parks are compromised by development of adjacent lands, air and water pollution, invasive plants and animals, and rapid increases in motorized recreation. Park officials often lack adequate information on the status of and trends in conditions of critical resources.

The National Parks Conservation Association initiated the State of the Parks program in 2000 to assess the condition of natural and cultural resources in the parks, and determine how well equipped the National Park Service is to protect the parks—its stewardship capacity. The goal is to provide information that will help policymakers, the public, and the National Park Service improve conditions in national parks, celebrate successes as models for other parks, and ensure a lasting legacy for future generations.

For more information about the methodology and research used in preparing this report and to learn more about the Center for State of the Parks, visit [www.npca.org/stateoftheparks](http://www.npca.org/stateoftheparks) or contact: NPCA, Center for State of the Parks, P.O. Box 737, Fort Collins, CO 80522; phone: 970.493.2545; email: [stateoftheparks@npca.org](mailto:stateoftheparks@npca.org).

Since 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA, its members, and partners work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

- \* More than 340,000 members
- \* 25 regional and field offices
- \* More than 120,000 activists

A special note of appreciation goes to those whose generous grants and donations made this report possible: John Nau III, Dorothy Canter, Ben and Ruth Hammett, and anonymous donors.

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COVER PHOTO: More than 125 cannons are mounted in the fields at Vicksburg National Military Park. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service.





## INTRODUCTION



By 1862, both the Confederate and Union Armies understood that occupying and controlling the town of Vicksburg, Mississippi, was essential to winning the Civil War. By June of that year, Vicksburg was the final Confederate stronghold left along the Mississippi River.

The fighting came to the town that summer, when Union navy gunboats bombarded the Confederate bastion from mid-May to late July, to no avail. Perched high on a bluff above the

river, the town of Vicksburg was well defended against this naval attack. The area's topography played a large role in the outcome of this first assault and ultimately dictated how the later siege and battle would unfold. Aside from its elevation, impenetrable swamps to the north also protected the town; the farmlands bordering the town to the south and east were flat and open, with little vegetation to provide cover for Union forces; and the Mississippi River lay to

Vicksburg National Military Park commemorates the siege of Vicksburg and the ensuing battle, widely considered one of the most important campaigns of the Civil War.





The Park Service manages Vicksburg National Cemetery, the final resting place for more than 17,000 Union soldiers and sailors, as well as veterans from other wars and conflicts.

the west. With all these factors in place, the town was very difficult to approach with stealth.

Following the Union's initial failure, President Abraham Lincoln placed Major General Ulysses S. Grant in charge of the effort to capture the town. Grant relentlessly attempted to capture the town on several occasions, but was thwarted each time. Early in 1863, Grant went so far as to begin digging a canal across the base of De Soto Point, opposite Vicksburg, that could be used to transport his troops to the open areas south of town. Disease, exhaustion, and heat stroke took a heavy toll on the soldiers and African Americans from local plantations who were

digging the canal; then a dam broke during construction, flooding the canal and putting a stop to this strategy. Grant eventually succeeded in placing his troops around Vicksburg in the spring of 1863, after the navy was able to clear the river of Confederate gunboats and shuttle soldiers across. With his troops on the ground, Grant first marched east, winning battles at Port Gibson, Raymond, and Jackson, Mississippi. He then set his sights on capturing Vicksburg.

By mid-May of 1863, Grant had surrounded the town with more than 45,000 troops. On May 19, he ordered the soldiers to attack. Positioning was everything in this battle, and the city was well protected. Naval forces accompanied Grant's ground troops and bombarded the city from the river. The battle waged on for 47 grueling days and nights. During the siege, the Union Army had been able to cut rail service, and because they already controlled the river, effectively cut off supplies bound for the Confederates. With supplies running low after six weeks of fighting, Confederate leaders realized they could not outlast or turn back the Union forces. Confederate General John Pemberton, hoping the holiday would rouse Grant's patriotism and lead to more lenient surrender terms, waited until July 4, 1863, to officially accept defeat. The terms of the surrender stated that the Confederate soldiers would be exchanged for captured Union troops.

By the end of the fighting, heavy casualties had been sustained on both sides, with almost 20,000 servicemen killed, wounded, or missing. The victory at Vicksburg proved crucial to the Union's success in the Civil War as it secured complete control of the Mississippi River and geographically divided the Confederacy. The siege and battle of Vicksburg is widely considered one of the most important campaigns of the Civil War. Between December 1862 and July 1863, there were 13 major battles fought that are jointly known as the "Operations Against Vicksburg."

Vicksburg National Military Park was estab-

lished in 1899 as the fifth Civil War battlefield set aside by Congress. It was originally placed under the administration of the Department of War. The establishing legislation dictated that the park should commemorate the siege of the town and the battle that ensued during the summer of 1863. Congress mandated that a three-man commission of Vicksburg battle veterans be formed, which would be comprised of two Union soldiers and one Confederate soldier. This commission was asked to restore the nine major Confederate forts and mark the lines of fortification and battle. The Department of War managed the park until 1933, when it was placed under the purview of the National Park Service. Today the park encompasses about 1,728 acres, an increase of about 500 acres since the park was established, and includes five satellite locations measuring less than 1 acre apiece, except Grant's Canal, which is 2.56 acres: Louisiana Circle, Navy Circle, South Fort, Pemberton's Headquarters in downtown Vicksburg, and Grant's Canal, located across the Mississippi River in Louisiana. The additional acreage acquired by the park since its establishment was made possible when the park quitclaimed 154 acres of its area to the city of Vicksburg and 24 acres to Warren County in the mid-1960s. This allowed the park to acquire up to 544 acres of other lands. The core area of the park runs along the boundaries of the city of Vicksburg and includes the vast majority of the land fought on during the battle. The park also manages Vicksburg National Cemetery, a 118-acre parcel that is the final resting place for more than 17,000 Union soldiers and sailors, as well as veterans from the Mexican and Spanish-American Wars, World Wars I and II, and the Korean Conflict.

The park's preeminent cultural resource is the battlefield itself. In addition to this cultural landscape, the park contains impressive museum and archival collections, several historic structures, and hundreds of monu-

ments and markers. The park's museum collection includes the USS *Cairo*, a Union gunboat that sank just north of Vicksburg in the Yazoo River in 1862. The *Cairo* and its remaining contents were recovered from the bottom of the river in 1964. The boat and many items were cleaned and restored, and they are now on display at the park. The premier monument at the park is the Illinois State Memorial, which pays tribute to the 36,325 soldiers from Illinois who participated in the Vicksburg campaign. This large enclosed monument is based on the design of the Roman Pantheon and boasts an interior complete with marble floors as well as walls adorned with bronze tablets.

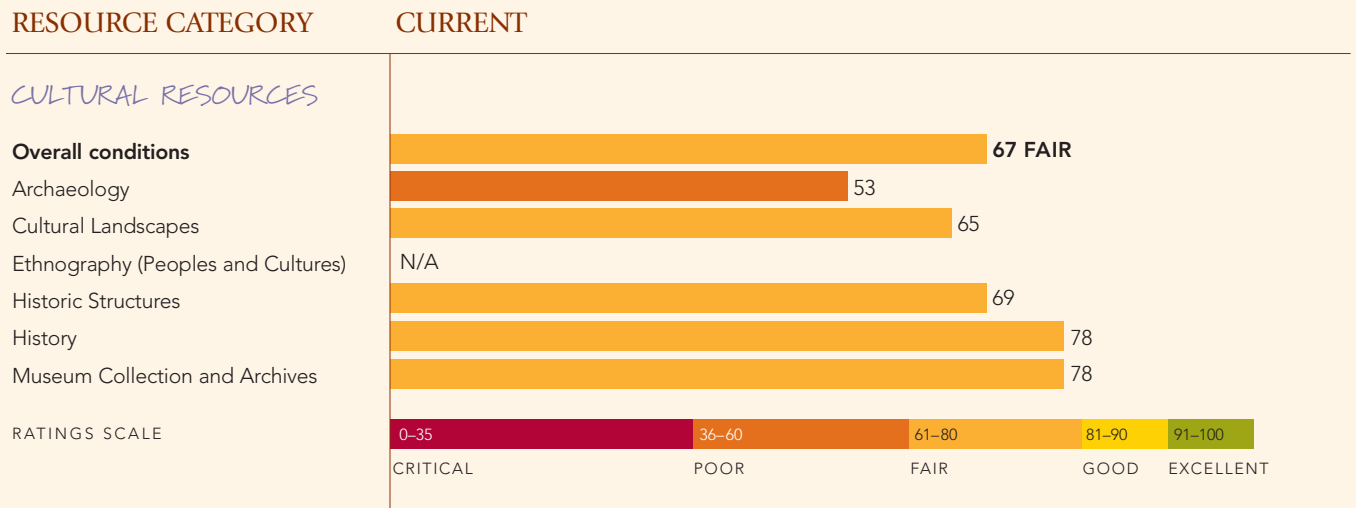
In addition to extensive cultural resources, Vicksburg National Military Park also contains natural resources that park staff manage and maintain. These natural resources, which include wooded areas and green spaces, are used by local Vicksburg residents as well as resident and migratory wildlife. Vicksburg's natural areas are becoming ever more important as development continues throughout the area and the entire Southeast. Park managers are now challenged with managing natural resources to serve both the park's cultural values and the interests of visitors.

The history associated with the Vicksburg campaign is an important aspect of not only Civil War history, but also national history. The siege and battle of Vicksburg was a turning point in the war, and it brought Major General Ulysses S. Grant to national attention. Furthermore, early commemorative efforts by the first commissioners of the park were important in the years following the war, as they facilitated reunification between the North and the South. Preserving the park's history is an important part of interpreting and understanding the history of the United States. In recognition of the importance of Vicksburg National Military Park's resources, NPCA's Center for State of the Parks completed an assessment to determine the conditions of those resources.

Major General Ulysses S. Grant led Union forces to victory at Vicksburg, securing control of the Mississippi River and geographically dividing the Confederacy.



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The findings in this report do not necessarily reflect past or current park management. Many factors that affect resource conditions are a result of both human and natural influences over long periods of times, in many cases before a park was established. The intent of the Center for State of the Parks is to document the present status of park resources and determine which actions can be taken to protect them in the future.

### RATINGS

Current overall conditions of the park’s known **cultural resources** rated a score of 67 out of 100, indicating “fair” conditions. The scores for cultural resources are based on the results of indicator questions that reflect the National Park Service’s own *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* and other policies related to cultural and historical resources. For this assessment of Vicksburg National Military Park, all of the information required by the cultural resources methodology was available. However, ethnography was not rated because the park does not have an ethnographic division, there are no documented traditionally associated peoples, and ethnography falls outside of the park’s interpretive framework.

Perhaps the most pressing cultural resource issue at the park concerns the trees that have become established on the battlefield and have obscured the historic landscape and important lines of sight. Park staff are considering various

management options to address this situation. Archaeological resources scored poorly as excavations and research cannot be completed due to a lack of staff and funds. These shortfalls are indicative of the overall staffing and funding environment at Vicksburg National Military Park, where deficiencies hinder planning and prevent full resource protection.

This assessment did not rate the overall conditions of Vicksburg National Military Park’s **natural resources**, because only 40 percent of the information required by the Center for State of the Parks assessment methodology was available. Based on available information, challenges to the park’s natural resources include the historical alterations to the natural landscape, adjacent land development, the overall diminutive size of the park (which makes the park a small island of habitat), and the fact that many of the park’s fields are dominated by invasive non-native species.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The park recently rehabilitated part of the landscape at the Railroad Redoubt, an earthwork built by Confederate soldiers to prevent access to the city via the railroad right-of-way. Because of these efforts, visitors are able to better understand the actions that took place there, as troops from Texas defended the redoubt in hand-to-hand combat with Union soldiers. This rehabilitation also incorporated protection of the area's natural resources by establishing a streamside management zone. Park managers are allowing low brush to grow and form a riparian buffer strip on either side of Two-Mile Creek, which runs below the redoubt. While this brush will improve the habitat by providing nesting areas and shade cover and reducing runoff and erosion, it will not grow tall enough to infringe upon the view of the redoubt.
- Vicksburg National Military Park has acquired new land and structures since it was established more than a century ago. Grant's Canal in Delta, Louisiana, was acquired in 1990, and Pemberton's Headquarters in downtown Vicksburg was added to the park in 2002. These acquisitions have helped the park to satisfy the new interpretive mandates dictated by Congress.
- Vicksburg National Military Park's museum collection includes a number of historic cannons and carriages. The wood and metal surfaces on the cannons and carriages are constantly threatened by the climate and weather conditions (e.g., heat, humidity, precipitation) at Vicksburg. The park repaints these surfaces on a three-year schedule, and for the items that are viewed as severely threatened, the park has constructed re-creations.
- Restoration of some of the park's larger state monuments, such as the Mississippi and Louisiana State Memorials, would not have been possible without public and private support. Community involvement has been crucial to the success of these projects. Under the guidance of their teacher, fourth-grade students from Madison, Mississippi, collected more than 200,000 recyclable aluminum cans, which raised more than \$2,100 for the restoration efforts. Additionally, the students embarked on a letter-writing campaign to state legislators, requesting further assistance. The legislature eventually appropriated \$250,000 for monument restoration.
- The park controls invasive non-native species as part of an effort to rehabilitate the landscape to its Civil War-era appearance. The park has targeted invasive plants such as kudzu, Chinese privet, and chinaberry with control treatments that include brush cutting, foliar and stump spraying, and prescribed fire. The park has progressed significantly in its control of these invasive species, with noticeable improvements in treated areas.
- Vicksburg National Military Park staff are currently planning for the centennial celebration of the National Park Service (2016), as well as the 150th anniversary of the Civil War (2011–2015). One of the primary goals for the park is to establish the Vicksburg Campaign Trail. The trail is intended to interpret and protect sites associated with the siege and battle at Vicksburg, and will entail establishing partnerships with different federal, state, and local agencies throughout the United States.



Community support has helped the Park Service restore historic monuments to the men who fought at Vicksburg.





The park recently restored the Mississippi State Memorial, which cost about \$1.2 million and required supplemental state and private funding.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The most significant impacts to the cultural resources at Vicksburg National Military Park are the changes that have occurred throughout the park's cultural landscape. Trees have taken root on the once cleared battlefield, the result of both natural forest succession and efforts to control erosion during the 1930s. These trees now veil the historical viewscape and obscure important lines of sight that were present during the battle. The park has removed some trees, and plans have been proposed to remove additional trees in an effort to rehabilitate key parts of the battlefield to their condition during the war. But this cultural landscape rehabilitation is costly, and some bird-watchers and Vicksburg residents oppose tree removal. If parts of the battlefield are rehabilitated, additional funds will be needed to fully incorporate this cultural landscape into the park's interpretive plan and to manage and maintain the rehabilitated battlefield areas.
- The USS *Cairo*, the Union gunboat that sank in 1862 in the Yazoo River north of Vicksburg, has been recovered, restored, and is now on display at the park. The gunboat is currently stored outdoors under a canvas tarpaulin, which does not fully protect the ship from the elements. The tarp provides some protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation, but the vessel is left vulnerable to Mississippi's heat and humidity, insect infestation, and nesting birds. The historic structure report for the USS *Cairo* needs to be updated to incorporate changes in the condition of the boat and to recognize future threats to the ship.
- To make informed management decisions, park staff need complete and up-to-date management plans, studies, and reports. Historic resource studies covering a host of topics are needed, including further investigations into the roles of women and African Americans in Vicksburg during the campaign; Union occupation of the town following the siege; and the town during Reconstruction. An archaeological overview and assessment that describes and assesses known and potential archaeological resources in the park would help managers make decisions about what projects might be needed in the future. The most recent plan relevant to natural resources is the fire management plan, which is being updated.
- Despite the fact that Vicksburg National Military Park was set aside to preserve historical and cultural resources, the park has only two full-time cultural resource staff: a historian and a museum curator. Hiring a landscape specialist to oversee the rehabilitation of the battlefield is essential for future protection of this resource. Employing an assistant historian would give the park the ability to complete additional research on a variety of topics, while a museum technician is needed to assist with cleaning, cataloging, and inventorying items as well as creating a finding aid for the museum collection and archives.
- The park's interpretive mandate has been expanded by Congress to include Union occupation of Vicksburg and the Reconstruction period, in addition to the battle and siege of the town. But this expansion of the park's interpretive mandate was not accompanied by a subsequent increase in staff or budget. Fully interpreting these additional themes will require completing historic resource studies, integrating these

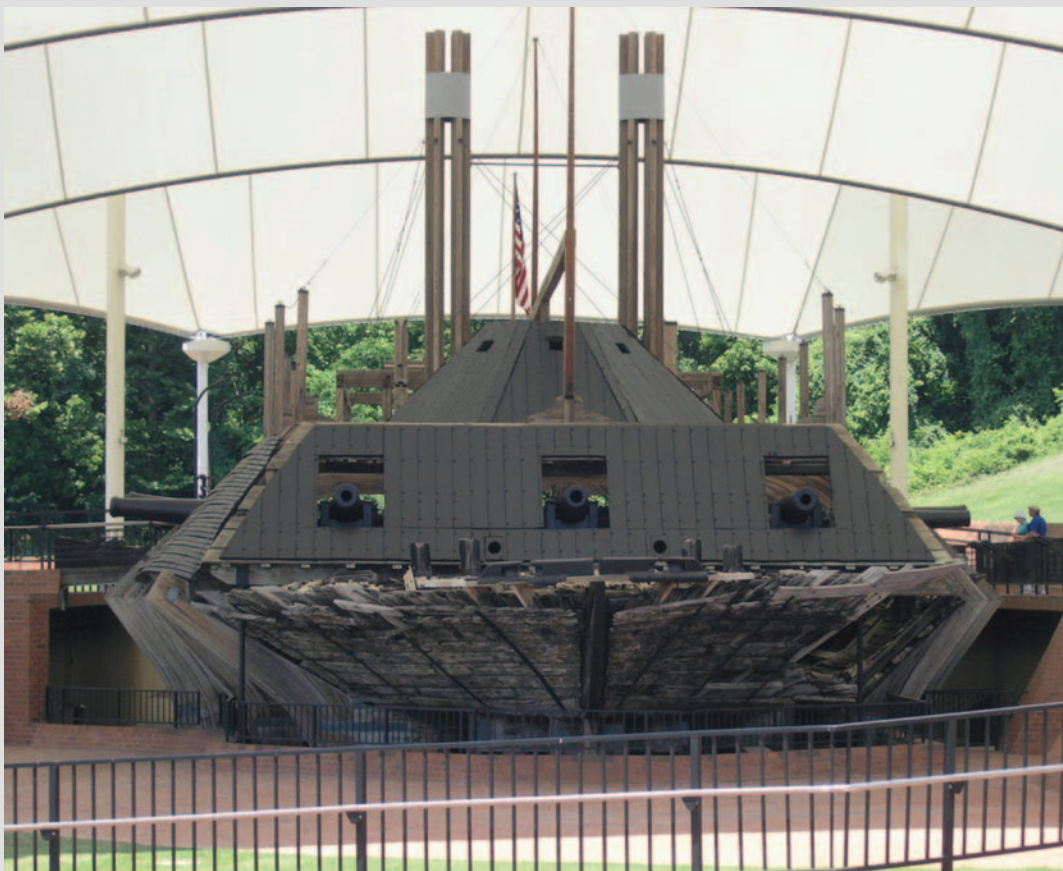


events into the park's interpretive program, and revisiting the plans for existing structures and new sites such as Grant's Canal and Pemberton's Headquarters. Already, the park has identified an immediate need for five additional rangers to protect resources and serve visitors at Pemberton's Headquarters.

- Vicksburg's interpretive staff consists of two interpreters, two guides, and one supervisory park ranger. The current level of interpretive staffing is insufficient to adequately serve the 700,000 people who visit the park each year. In addition to more interpretive rangers, the park needs more roadside interpretive exhibits to educate visitors about the park's significance.
- Establishing a formal maintenance and monitoring program would improve the

protection of historic structures, especially the myriad monuments that dot the landscape. The 600-plus monuments within the park's boundaries require annual maintenance and cleaning; some are also in need of restoration. Updating the list of classified structures—a listing of the park's historic and prehistoric structures—to include new structures that have been added to the park and to update the condition of existing structures would also improve protection by allowing the park to prioritize the needs of all buildings, monuments, and markers.

- Invasive plants, particularly kudzu, have infested some areas. Treatments focus on kudzu because it is very fast growing and can take over areas quickly. Repeated applications of herbicides are necessary to keep this vine under control.



The USS *Cairo*, the Union gunboat that sank in 1862 in the Yazoo River north of Vicksburg, was recovered, restored, and is now on display at the park. Its outdoor location does not fully protect it from weather extremes, insects, and birds; the park is considering other alternatives that would provide better protection.

## VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK AT A GLANCE

- Vicksburg National Military Park was established in 1899 to “commemorate the campaign, siege, and defense of Vicksburg, and to preserve the history of the battles and operations of the siege and defense on the ground where they were fought and were carried on.” Congress expanded the park’s interpretive mandate in 1990 to include Union occupation of Vicksburg following the surrender on July 4, 1863, as well as the Reconstruction period that lasted through 1877.
- The park’s premier cultural resources include several cultural landscapes, most notably the battlefield, numerous monuments that commemorate the soldiers from each state that sent men to fight, markers that denote the location of troops and illustrate troop movement, and historic structures that were occupied during the Civil War and Reconstruction.
- Each year, about 700,000 people visit the park. Visitors enjoy touring the park to visualize the positions of Union and Confederate forces and to envision the events of the siege and battle as it unfolded over 47 long days and nights. The park has attempted to better bring historic events to life by developing an interpretive program that uses a geographic positioning system (GPS) unit that visitors can rent and carry as they travel through the park. The unit automatically delivers recorded audio messages as the visitor approaches selected areas in the park.
- In addition to protecting and interpreting the site of one of the most important Civil War campaigns, the park offers valuable open space for people to exercise, trees that provide shade for visitors, and wildlife habitat that attracts nature lovers. These resources are becoming increasingly important to the area as urban development around the park reduces available open space and natural areas.

In addition to historical resources, the park includes wooded areas that attract nature lovers.

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# THE VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK ASSESSMENT

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Vicksburg National Military Park



The Mississippi River flows past Navy Circle, a small satellite site within Vicksburg National Military Park. Vicksburg's prime location along the river contributed significantly to its importance during the Civil War.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES— PARK PROTECTS IMPORTANT CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD

Vicksburg National Military Park scored an overall 67 out of 100 for the condition of cultural resources, including history, historic structures, cultural landscapes, archaeology, and museum collection and archives. A score of 67 indicates that the park's cultural

resources are in "fair" condition.

Several issues affect the ratings, including the impaired condition of the park's cultural landscapes, most notably the battlefield, which has been significantly altered. A lack of planning documents and a limited number of staff to care for cultural resources are also key challenges at Vicksburg.

## HISTORY—NUMEROUS MANAGEMENT PLANS AND STUDIES NEEDED

The fertile banks of the Mississippi River have supported humans for millennia. The river attracted wildlife, supported agriculture, provided access to a bounty of fish, and facilitated trade—and it continues to do so today. While the park has not uncovered evidence that suggests American Indians settled within the present-day boundaries of the park, it is known that groups were present in the area up until just before European contact.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, newly arriving Europeans also prized the area's fertile land and prime location along the Mississippi River. These settlers significantly changed the lives of the area's American Indians by bringing diseases to which they had no immunity and by exposing them to manufactured goods that disrupted long-established American Indian trade patterns.

The French were the first to establish a strong presence in the area by building forts on the banks of the Mississippi during the 1600s. The British challenged France's dominance by the early 18th century, a struggle for land that was

eventually settled in 1763 with England's victory in the Seven Years War. The United States eventually gained control of the region after the Revolutionary War. Following the war, Americans rushed to settle the area and continued the trend of pushing American Indians westward, severing their ties to traditional lands. These settlers established the community of Walnut Hills, named for the abundance of walnut trees in the area. Walnut Hills was eventually renamed Vicksburg for Newitt Vick, a Methodist preacher who bought acreage along the river and sold these lots to new settlers. Vicksburg continued to grow and prosper until it became a hotly contested area during the Civil War. This struggle culminated in a siege and battle for occupation of the town and control of the Mississippi River.

Vicksburg National Military Park is mandated to preserve the historical, cultural, and natural resources as they were during a narrowly defined period—the siege and battle of Vicksburg, Union occupation of the town, and the Reconstruction period that lasted until 1877. To achieve these goals, the park has just



The Shirley family lived in this house in Vicksburg during the 1850s, before turning it over to the Union Army to use as a headquarters. Fighting damaged the home and the army abandoned it. To see what the house looks like today, turn to page 15.



two full-time staff responsible for managing cultural resources: a museum curator and a historian. The lack of additional staff means that the park must prioritize needs and rely on outside researchers and Park Service regional staff. Often, projects must be deferred due to staffing or funding shortfalls. For example, an administrative history has been completed for the cemetery at Vicksburg, but a full administrative history for the park has been under way for the last decade and is still not finished. The delay in finalizing this document is due to a lack of staff and funding. In an effort to complete this project, the park's historian works on the administrative history on his own time.

The park suffers from a considerable lack of historic resource studies, which are meant to provide overviews of a park's history and related cultural resources. They may also delve deeply into specific resources or themes. The park would like to complete two historic resource studies to explore the Union occupation of the town after the siege and the town of Vicksburg during the Reconstruction period that followed the war. These two periods were not included in the original legislation that created the park, but were added by an act of Congress in 1990. A

The park has planted Bermuda grass in some areas to approximate the historical landscape and restore lines of sight that were present during the fighting at Vicksburg.

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historic resource study that fully examines the role of General John Pemberton, Confederate leader of the battle, would also be beneficial as the park decides how to use his headquarters, which the park acquired in 2002. Additional historic resource studies about Vicksburg's women and the experiences of African Americans at Vicksburg would round out the park's interpretive program.

#### CULTURAL LANDSCAPES— BATTLEFIELD ITSELF IS A KEY RESOURCE

Cultural landscapes illustrate how people have used, changed, and adapted to their surroundings through time. The land surrounding the Mississippi River has a rich history of human use, and the topography of the area dictated how these cultural landscapes developed. Vicksburg's proximity to the river is a dominant feature, as are the elevation of the land and the habitats surrounding the town. Humans who settled the area took advantage of the resources they found, and they actively altered the environment to suit their needs, dramatically transforming Vicksburg's landscapes in the process.

The Civil War brought a period of rapid and dramatic change. The fighting came to the area because Vicksburg was the last town along the Mississippi River that was still held by the Confederacy, and controlling access to the river was of crucial importance to winning the war. The cultural and natural landscapes of Vicksburg played an enormous role in how the battle was fought, and these landscapes were drastically altered prior to the war and during the battle. Soldiers cleared remaining forests to expose the enemy, felled trees to construct abatis (barricades composed of sharpened tree branches) and other defenses, dug huge trenches, built earthen berms, destroyed entire blocks of houses by cannon fire, and trampled agricultural fields.

The park has identified three cultural landscapes at Vicksburg: the national military cemetery, former parklands that were turned over to





The park recently rehabilitated part of the landscape at the Railroad Redoubt, which included removing some trees that blocked important lines of sight.

the town of Vicksburg in the 1960s, and the Vicksburg battlefield. Vicksburg National Cemetery was established just after the Civil War and is the final resting place for more than 17,000 Union soldiers and sailors, although only about 5,000 are noted by name. Both an administrative history and a master plan have been prepared for the cemetery. The second recognized cultural landscape at the park consists of 125 acres that the park quitclaimed in the late 1960s to the city of Vicksburg. The city currently oversees and administers these acres to maintain a parklike character.

The battlefield is the preeminent cultural landscape at the park, and potential impacts to it are considered during the planning for any project. Prior to the Civil War, the battlefield was primarily used for agriculture and had few trees. After the war ended, area residents were anxious to revert the land back to its productive past. The battlefield was regularly cleared and retained its historical appearance into the 1930s, as farmers continued to grow crops on it. Management of the park changed in 1933 when the park was transferred from the Department of War to the National Park Service. Concerns about erosion prompted the National Park Service to allow the



Civilian Conservation Corps to plant hundreds of trees throughout the 1930s. Today, these trees cover two-thirds of the battlefield, altering the historical landscape and confusing visitors, as some important lines of sight are obscured and visualizing troop movement is made more difficult. In an attempt to restore key aspects of the unobstructed views that were present during the battle, the park has removed some trees and planted grasses, including Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), a non-native species that was historically present in the area.

The Illinois State Memorial features marble floors and bronze tablets that commemorate the more than 36,000 Illinois soldier who fought in the battle at Vicksburg. The park is seeking funds to relocate bats that have taken up residence in the memorial and are damaging it.

Fully rehabilitating the battlefield to its condition during the battle would entail additional clearing of vegetation and planting of historic species, as well as archaeological surveys, regular landscape maintenance and monitoring, and interpretation of the rehabilitation and resulting landscape. This would be an expensive undertaking. Recent rehabilitation work within the park at the Railroad Redoubt area cost nearly \$10,000 per acre. While this figure cannot be applied directly to the larger-scale battlefield rehabilitation project, it does give park managers a rough sense of what full battlefield rehabilitation would cost. An obstacle to removing trees from the battlefield is that Vicksburg residents value the shade and atmosphere that these trees provide, as well as the wildlife that they attract and support.

A cultural landscape report and environmental assessment currently under way will include careful evaluations of the battlefield to

identify the most significant areas, and it will propose several battlefield rehabilitation options and guide management of the battlefield into the future. Implementing the suggestions and recommendations within the cultural landscape report could be challenging, however, because the park does not have a cultural landscape architect or a cultural landscape specialist on staff.

#### HISTORIC STRUCTURES—PARK PRESERVES HEADQUARTERS, GUNBOAT, MONUMENTS, AND MARKERS

Vicksburg National Military Park contains a plethora of historical markers and monuments and several historic buildings. The park recognizes the vital importance of these structures to interpreting the Vicksburg campaign. The park's preeminent historic structures include the Shirley House, General Pemberton's Headquarters, the USS *Cairo*, and the Illinois State Memorial. Several of the park's historic structures need to be better studied and interpreted. The Shirley House, one of the park's most important historic structures, is in need of a comprehensive interpretation plan.

The Shirley House has a fascinating history, which was recently documented in a 2004 historic structure report. The Shirley family, who bought the house in 1851, supported the Union despite living in the Deep South. Like many Vicksburg residents, the Shirleys refused to evacuate the town when fighting first broke out. They eventually turned their home over to the Union Army, which used the house as the headquarters for the 45th Illinois Infantry. The fighting at Vicksburg badly damaged the house, and the Shirley family then abandoned it. The Union Army briefly set up a small pox hospital there, but it was short-lived and the home was soon abandoned again, remaining vacant for most of the Union occupation and the Reconstruction. The house served as shelter for African Americans when a race riot broke out in



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Renovations during the 1960s altered the Shirley House from its original design, and considerable work is needed to restore it. The park has taken some steps to protect the house from the elements, but significant funds are needed before additional work can be done.

the town in 1874, though seven African Americans lost their lives when a group of whites stormed the dwelling.

Restoration efforts on the Shirley House began shortly after the Park Service began managing the park in 1933. These efforts were expanded in the 1960s, under the supervision of the park's superintendent, who wanted to turn the Shirley House into a comfortable residence. He oversaw renovations to the structure that defied the Park Service's orders to restore the residence to its original design and construction. As a result of this work, the exterior of the structure has been altered to such a degree that it no longer resembles the original.

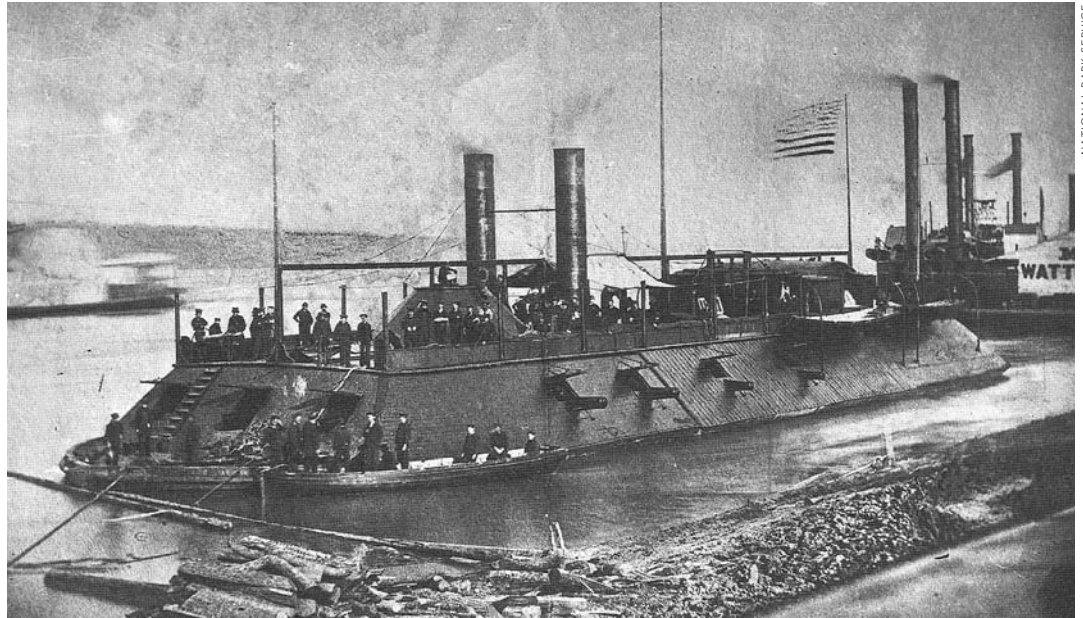
The work required to return the Shirley House to a semblance of its original condition and interpret the interesting history of the structure for visitors is considerable. Funding requests for 2007 totaled close to \$2 million; however, no funds have been awarded yet. As a first step toward restoration, the park has

replaced the roof and siding to protect the house from the elements. Restoring the home and using it in some official park capacity would increase the visibility of the building and could help the park gain support for further restoration work. Vandals frequently target the house, and security at the structure is in need of improvement. Installing a security system would help to protect the house when staff are not present.

General Pemberton's Headquarters is a detached unit of the park located in downtown Vicksburg. The park acquired this national historic landmark in 2002. Confederate General John Pemberton and members of his staff stayed in the house during the siege of Vicksburg, and it was within this building that the general decided to surrender the town to the Union. The structure remains unoccupied as the Park Service waits for adequate funding and determines how it will be used in the future. Options include using Pemberton's



The USS *Cairo* was an impressive Union gunboat before it sank in the Yazoo River in 1862. Its remains were recovered a century later and are now displayed at the park.



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Headquarters to interpret military decisionmaking; the building may also be used to house the park's administrative offices. While the building remains unused, vandalism is a threat and security needs to be improved.

The USS *Cairo* is an outstanding resource that is considered both a historic structure and a museum item. The ironclad Union gunboat sank in the Yazoo River during the Civil War, and it remained at the bottom of the river until it was recovered in 1964. The gunboat is now on display to visitors, who can board it and closely inspect the vessel and replica cannons. Along with the ship, the recovery produced a wealth of items, including guns, gun carriages, machinery, personal items from the crew (combs, clothing, toiletries), and cookware. These artifacts were cleaned, cataloged, and are now stored next to the boat in an adjoining museum space. The USS *Cairo* is displayed outside under a canopy that was designed to protect the ship against the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Unfortunately, this canopy does not fully protect the boat from Mississippi's heat and humidity, insect infestations, or birds that wish to build their nests on the vessel. Building an enclosed, climate-controlled exhibit large enough to house the

gunboat would be costly, so the park is considering other alternatives that would provide additional protection. The historic structure report for the USS *Cairo*, written to guide treatment and use of the boat, was completed in 1981 and is now outdated. This report needs to be updated to take into consideration the gunboat's current condition and the future threats it faces.

In addition to historic buildings, the park includes hundreds of markers that denote the location of troops and their movements as well as monuments that commemorate the soldiers from each state that sent men to fight. In sum, the park contains 661 markers and monuments, along with hundreds of cast-iron tablets and more than 125 cannons mounted in the field. Caring for such a large number of markers and monuments is a monumental task that requires significant funds and staff time.

The original managers of the park—two Union soldiers and one Confederate soldier, as mandated by Congress—were veterans of the battle who were intimately familiar with troop location and movements, events during the battle, how the physical landscape appeared at the time, and how it was altered. These managers were asked to restore the forts, lines of

fortifications, and battle lines. The commissioners also placed markers throughout the park, which visitors could follow to walk in the footsteps of the soldiers. About 145 of these markers were removed during World War II to be melted down and used in the war effort. Few were ever replaced.

The Illinois State Memorial is the largest of the park's enclosed monuments and arguably the most grand. Modeled after the Roman Pantheon, the Illinois State Memorial features an interior with marble floors, and walls adorned with bronze tablets commemorating each of the 36,325 Illinois soldiers who fought in the battle. The monument faces a significant threat from bats that enter the monument through an opening in the ceiling that was designed to illuminate the interior. The bats live inside the monument and stain the floors and walls with their guano. The park has submitted a request for funds to relocate the bats and is awaiting a decision.

The park recently restored the Mississippi State Memorial, which cost approximately \$1.2 million and required supplemental state and private funding. Many of the park's other historic structures also require extensive restoration, and all require regular monitoring and maintenance. Threats to these structures include heat and humidity, erosion, vandalism, insect infestation, vegetation overgrowth, acid rain, lack of fire suppression systems, and neglect that has resulted from years of funding shortages. The park does not have the resources to inspect structures annually and update the list of classified structures with current condition assessments, and deferred maintenance costs for historic structures currently total more than \$5 million. A more comprehensive and proactive monitoring and maintenance program will require additional funding and staff.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY—PARK HARBORS LIMITED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The siege and battle of Vicksburg lasted 47 days, engaging more than 100,000 soldiers and sizeable naval forces on both sides of the conflict. The lands within Vicksburg National Military Park were abuzz with activity. One would expect that evidence of this activity—in the form of spent ammunition, daily personal items of the soldiers, and other effects—would be abundant within the park today. Yet, Vicksburg National Military Park has identified few archaeological resources. Several explanations offer insight into why a large amount of archaeological resources related to the battle have not been uncovered. Following the battle, the Union quartermaster instructed soldiers to walk the fields searching for reusable items, such as unspent shells, weapons, and clothing. Soon after the battle, much of the battlefield was reverted back to agriculture, and farmers typically removed any found items. When the military monument was established in 1899, veterans again walked the battlefield to assist with the placing of markers to indicate troop placement and movement, giving them the opportunity to discover and

After the fighting at Vicksburg ceased, much of the battlefield reverted back to agricultural uses. Farmers removed any remaining battle related artifacts, which is part of the reason why few archaeological resources remain today.



possibly remove artifacts. Finally, men from the Civilian Conservation Corps who participated in tree-planting efforts in the 1930s were also ordered to remove any man-made objects they encountered.

Today, just 15 archaeological sites have been identified within the park, and ten of these are prehistoric sites that fall outside the park's interpretive time frame (the siege and battle of Vicksburg in 1863, Union occupation of the town, and the Reconstruction period that lasted until 1877). The five sites that fit within the mandated interpretive period are the battlefield, the Shirley House, the Museum Complex, the Superintendent's Lodge, and Pemberton's Headquarters. All 15 of the sites have been listed in the Park Service's Archeological Sites Management Information System (a database of archaeological sites) as being in "good" condition, though the park has not yet fully documented, researched, or interpreted all of them. A comprehensive archaeological overview and assessment would address these deficiencies, and it would help the park identify site protection needs and determine possibilities for interpretation, but this will require adequate funding and support from external staff.

While the park is not required to interpret all archaeological resources, such as prehistoric sites that do not relate to the park's period of significance, these resources must be protected from natural and anthropogenic threats. In an effort to recognize and protect these resources, staff have conducted limited archaeological explorations that uncovered a few pottery shards and arrowheads, as well as bullets and shell fragments.

Vicksburg does not have an archaeologist on staff and must rely on assistance from the Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center. While hiring a full-time archaeologist is probably not necessary considering more pressing staff shortfalls, additional archaeological research and exploration by the Southeast Archeological Center would help the park identify potentially

significant sites and their resources. The cultural landscape report currently under way will also identify additional possible archaeological sites and recommend plans for future protection.

#### MUSEUM COLLECTION AND ARCHIVES—LARGIE COLLECTION WELL CATALOGED

Vicksburg National Military Park has a robust museum collection and archives, totaling more than 312,000 items between the two. At about 285,000 pieces, the archives contain the bulk of the park's holdings, including letters written by soldiers, documents pertaining to land acquisition and road construction, monument dedications, and historical photos. The items that were recovered from the USS *Cairo*, such as guns, gun carriages, machinery, personal items from the crew (combs, clothing, toiletries), and cookware, constitute the bulk of the museum collection. Items that directly relate to the battle and siege of Vicksburg consist of weapons, uniforms, personal belongings of soldiers, flags, military equipment, tools, and a limited number of rare books and manuscripts. Two of the park's historic structures, the Shirley House and Pemberton's Headquarters, have their own associated historic artifacts, including paintings, photographs, and manuscripts.

The park does not have the storage capacity to house the entire archives and museum collection. The visitor center that was constructed in 1970 was considerably smaller than the previous building, and as a result the park's collections were partially deaccessioned. Historical items were sent to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson; the National Archives Southeast Region in Atlanta, Georgia; the National Archives in Washington, D.C.; and to the University of Iowa in Iowa City. A modern, climate-controlled storage facility was constructed for the park in 1999, but it is not large enough to house all of the park's remaining artifacts and documents either. While this building provides good protection against heat



and humidity, items stored there are still at risk from water damage. The fire suppression system at the collections building is comprised of overhead water sprinklers, and if there was a fire or these were accidentally set off, water damage to items stored in cardboard boxes and on exposed shelves would be considerable, and many irreplaceable items would be lost. Items stored at the park in locations outside of the collections building (e.g., the basement of the USS *Cairo* museum and the *Cairo* restoration shop building) are also threatened by a lack of proper temperature and humidity control.

Perhaps the item in most danger of degradation is the USS *Cairo*, which is considered both a historic structure and part of the museum collection. As previously discussed, the Civil War-era gunboat is threatened by the region's climate, insect infestation and damage, and vandalism. Additionally, while there is fire detection at the adjoining display, there is no fire suppression system. The option that would

offer the most complete protection for the USS *Cairo* would be moving the gunboat into an indoor display with the proper climate and fire suppression systems.

Vicksburg has a wealth of historical artifacts that warrant further exploration and interpretation, including correspondence among the veteran commissioners, soldiers' journals, and objects from the USS *Cairo*, but a shortage of museum staff hinders further research. The park has a museum curator but no support staff to assist with cleaning, cataloging, and inventorying historical items. Support staff such as a museum technician are also needed to make the finding aid for the museum collection and archives available online for researchers and staff. Currently there are only two hard copies of the finding aid and both reside at the park.

Despite a chronic shortage of staff and funding, the park has cataloged more than 99 percent of its holdings, and its collections management report was updated in 2006.



This 10-inch mortar, manufactured at the Ft. Pitt Foundry in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is on display in the park's visitor center.



The park provides valuable open space and wildlife habitat.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES— PARK PROVIDES REFUGE FOR WILDLIFE AND LOCAL RESIDENTS

This assessment did not assign scores for the condition of natural resources at Vicksburg National Military Park because of an overall lack of data, though natural resource conditions were explored to the extent possible. Available information indicates that the most prominent factors influencing the natural resources are the landscape changes that occurred during the Civil War, which completely denuded much of the area's natural landscape. The park provides habitat for many birds and other wildlife, but its

small size means that it does not support extensive habitat for larger wildlife species. In addition, invasive non-native species dominate in the park's open fields.

*PARK HABITATS—INITIAL VEGETATION MAPPING COMPLETE; REHABILITATION OF HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE UNDER WAY*  
Vicksburg National Military Park protects about 1,728 acres, including five detached units (four of them consist of less than 1 acre, while the fifth is 2.56 acres). Though small, the park contains several important habitats, such as upland forest, maintained fields, and streams with riverine habitat. The Park Service, in



conjunction with the U.S. Geological Survey, recently mapped Vicksburg—part of an effort to classify and quantify the park’s vegetation, which will help staff plan for, monitor, and manage resources. However, the studies supporting the vegetation map are not yet complete, and the plant communities have not yet been fully delineated or confirmed with on-the-ground studies. The most prevalent habitats within the park are the forests, which account for about two-thirds of the area. The loess bluff hardwood forests within the park, although differing somewhat in composition from the historic forests of the area, are particularly important, as they represent some of the last few tracts of this habitat left on public land in the United States. Loess is a fine soil that is very fertile, but highly erodible. The remaining one-third of the park is made up mainly of fields that are regularly mowed by staff. These fields contain locally abundant populations of prairienymph (*Herbertia lahue*), a state-listed plant species of special concern.

As described in the “Cultural Landscapes” section on page 12, the landscape and habitat currently at Vicksburg differ widely from what soldiers saw during the siege and battle. The Civil War brought severe environmental changes to the area: Trenches were dug, earthen berms were built, and trees were cut to provide better views and to be used to construct defensive barricades. The entire landscape also suffered destruction from cannon fire that rained projectiles down on it for more than six weeks. Immediately following the war, the majority of the land was put back into production and remained cleared for some time. But when the Park Service assumed management responsibility for Vicksburg, the agency allowed the Civilian Conservation Corps to plant vegetation to curb erosion, a decision that dramatically reshaped the natural resources of the park and altered the historical viewscape and landscape of the battlefield. As a result of these efforts and the natural succession that occurred

after agricultural activities and grazing gradually ceased during the first three decades of the 20th century, the majority of Vicksburg National Military Park is now forested. Southern red oak (*Quercus falcata*) and white oak (*Quercus alba*) are the dominant trees.

Today, these forests provide habitat for a variety of plants and animals. Vicksburg residents are also drawn to the trees, appreciating the shade they provide while jogging and walking through the park. The forested landscape also provides opportunities for bird-watching. Nevertheless, the trees affect the park’s ability to preserve the area as it looked during the Civil War and interpret it. In an effort to satisfy its directive, the park has removed some trees to restore some of the historic lines of sight and is in the process of refining its plans for future landscape management.

Vicksburg National Military Park is home to populations of prairienymph, a state-listed species of special concern.





More than 185 species of resident and migratory birds use habitats within Vicksburg National Military Park, including the great egret.

#### WILDLIFE—LIMITED STUDIES REVEAL NUMEROUS SPECIES

The habitat that the park provides supports an array of wildlife, and while exact numbers of species are not known, several studies have been conducted that offer a glimpse of the variety. A 2006 study of park mammals found 37 species ranging from tiny shrews and mice to white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and bobcats (*Lynx rufus*). A 2002 survey of amphibians and reptiles found nine turtle species, four species of lizards, five salamander species, 12 frog and toad species, and 14 species of snakes. Vicksburg provides the necessary habitat to support even more species of amphibians and reptiles than were detected in this study, so additional surveys may be warranted. Researchers from

Mississippi State University inventoried fish and aquatic macroinvertebrate species within the park from 1995 to 2003 as part of their work to measure water quality, and 18 species were identified. Work is currently under way on a mussel survey within the park's streams, along with a wetlands delineation project. Both of these projects will provide valuable information on the health of the park's ecosystems.

Vicksburg National Military Park provides habitat for more than 185 resident and migrating bird species, such as northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), pileated woodpeckers (*Dryocopus pileatus*), indigo buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), Mississippi kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*), and great egrets (*Ardea alba*). The importance of the park to these birds has grown as development around the town and throughout the South continues. The park's location along the Mississippi River, which comprises much of the North American Mississippi Flyway, makes it a particularly important area for many migrating birds. In recognition of the area's significance to migrating songbirds, the National Audubon Society has designated the Vicksburg area, including the park, as an Important Bird Area.

The park does not have any federally listed threatened or endangered species residing within its borders, but it is home to several state species of concern: oldfield mouse (*Peromyscus polionotus*), Mississippi map turtle (*Graptemys pseudogeographica kohnii*), alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*), and the previously mentioned prairienymph.



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The park aggressively treats kudzu, an invasive vine. These efforts have reduced the infested park acreage from 25 down to 10 acres.

#### NON-NATIVE SPECIES—INVASIVE PLANTS THREATEN PARK RESOURCES

Non-native, invasive species are a concern at Vicksburg National Military Park because of their detrimental effects on native species. Of the 299 vascular plant species identified within the park, more than 80 of them are non-native species and 12 of these are considered to be invasive.

The most widespread and detrimental invasive plant is kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*), an aggressive perennial vine that can grow as much as 1 foot per day. Problematic throughout much of the southeastern United States, fast-growing kudzu quickly colonizes areas and it is difficult to control once it is established. Although kudzu adds vegetation to an area it actually exacerbates erosion, because while the leaves of the vine cover the ground, the soil beneath is left bare. Kudzu was first identified in the Vicksburg area in the 1930s. In the 1990s, kudzu began spreading in the park, perhaps because clearing and mowing were scaled back

in some areas during the 1980s and '90s in response to reduced maintenance funding and staff. From 1992 to 1997 the park documented the spread of kudzu from about 15 acres to about 25 acres, and an attempt to control the plant on a 10-acre plot with a combination of herbicides and prescribed fire was only partially successful. Staff continued to identify additional acres of kudzu throughout the late 1990s. Since then, staff have aggressively tried to control the spread of kudzu by applying approved herbicides to the leaves and stems of the plants at least two times per year. These treatments are showing some success. The area infested with kudzu has been reduced from 25 down to 10 acres. The other 11 invasive non-native plant species at the park are also of concern, but they do not pose as much of a threat as kudzu to the park's cultural landscape because they do not grow as fast.

In addition to non-native plants, the park also harbors the non-native fathead minnow (*Pimephales promelas*) and red fire ant (*Solenopsis*



Research indicates that water quality in the park's streams is generally good, though it can be affected by sedimentation caused by increasing development around the park.

*invicta*). Fathead minnows reproduce prolifically, displacing native fish and taking over habitat and food resources, as they have done in Mint Spring Bayou. The park began a fathead minnow control program in 2007 that uses electroshocking and chemical treatments to remove the fish. Fire ants are aggressive toward other species and frequently outcompete native ants. They attack the eggs and young of many birds and reptiles. In addition, their stings are harmful to people, especially those with severe allergies. The park applies chemical treatments to fire ant mounds. Neither of these two species currently poses a significant threat to the park's resources because they are being controlled.



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#### AIR AND WATER QUALITY—PARK WATERS IN GOOD CONDITION; AIR QUALITY REMAINS UNKNOWN

Water quality within Vicksburg National Military Park has been relatively well studied in recent years. Between 1997 and 2003, researchers from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at Mississippi State University collected more than 300 samples from park streams. Their research found that the park's creeks are generally in good condition, though a warming trend was discovered, which might have been caused by increased sedimentation of the streams and possibly by overall increases in annual air temperatures during the study period. The sedimentation is linked to the increasing development of the surrounding area, including the construction of a new school and hospital, and logging that has occurred outside of the park. During construction and logging, soil is disturbed and vegetation that anchors soil is lost. As a result, rain washes soil into streams and rivers. There are several consequences of this stream warming, including decreases in habitat for fish that require cooler temperatures. The sedimentation itself will affect the physical characteristics of the waterway such as pool depth.

A portion of the Yazoo Diversion Canal, which was listed as "impaired" under the Clean Water Act in 2002, is located within the park's boundaries. The causes of this impairment are fertilizers and pesticides applied by farms upstream that likely enter the park through the canal.

To date, the air quality at Vicksburg National Military Park has not been tested or monitored. Monitoring stations in nearby national parks have collected data that show flat or slightly declining trends for nitrogen and sulfur oxides. Numerous pollution sources near the park include industrial areas, power plants, agricultural operations, and motor vehicles. Emissions from these and other sources likely degrade the air quality to some degree, but with very limited air-quality data, the park cannot quantify the extent of potential or existing threats.





## STEWARDSHIP CAPACITY

### FUNDING AND STAFFING—SHORTFALLS AFFECT PARK OPERATIONS AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

The most significant factor affecting a park's ability to protect its resources is the funding it receives from Congress and the administration. In fiscal year 2007, Vicksburg National Military Park had an operating budget of \$2.61 million to support staff and fund resource protection projects. This represents a small increase over the previous year, but it is still not adequate to fully cover the park's operating costs. The park has identified three areas in need of additional

funding and staff: operation of Pemberton's Headquarters, protection of historic and cultural resources, and maintenance of the historic battlefield. These three areas need an additional 9.4 full-time employees and about \$716,000 in funds. In addition, the park would like to hire a budget analyst, park guide, supervisory park ranger, maintenance supervisor, and several equipment operators.

A host of cultural and natural resource protection projects await funds. Several of the most important and most costly projects include revamping existing wayside interpretive panels and developing new ones, writing management plans for Pemberton's

During the summer months, park staff and volunteers dress in Civil War-era costumes and give presentations, including demonstrations of historic weapons.

Headquarters, making improvements to the USS *Cairo* museum exhibits, and researching and writing the park's administrative history.

#### RESOURCE EDUCATION—LIVING HISTORY PROGRAMS EDUCATE AND ENTERTAIN VISITORS

Vicksburg National Military Park offers visitors a variety of educational and interpretive programs, including living history programs and interpretive guided tours of the park and historic structures. The park focuses on cultural and historical events in these interpretive programs, although natural resources topics are also occasionally addressed. Starting the first week of June and running until the first week of August, the park presents living history programs five days a week, in which rangers and volunteers don Civil War-era costumes and present a variety of demonstrations, including the firing of historic weapons. In addition to these regular events, the park also hosts Civil War reenactment groups that perform special programs during the year. In 2007, about 40,000 visitors attended the park's interpretive programs.

Vicksburg's interpretive staff consists of two interpreters, two guides, and one supervisory park ranger. The current level of interpretive staffing enables the park to provide only minimal visitor services. The park rarely has the staff available to present special programs to visiting school groups or commercial tour groups; instead, these groups must hire a licensed guide to provide interpretation. And from August through May, the park provides interpretive programs and educational services only upon request, as staffing permits. Providing these programs and services draws personnel away from other park functions (e.g., law enforcement, fee collection, and resources management) to cover information desks while interpretive staff provide programming. Most visitors will not encounter a park ranger, except within the confines of the visitor center or the USS *Cairo* museum. Plans to add Pemberton's

Headquarters into the park's interpretive program will further stress the program and increase the need for additional interpretive staff. But Congress did not provide the park with additional staff or funding when the headquarters was added to the park.

The park's visitor center is in need of an assessment to determine how the space can be better organized to serve guests. Currently, more than half of the space is used for the park's bookstore. Many of the interpretive exhibits in the visitor center were installed in the 1970s and have been rehabilitated within the last two years, although they are essentially the same exhibits. In March 2008, three new interpretive panels and a fiber-optic map were installed at the visitor center. In addition, park staff are working with the Harpers Ferry Design Center and a contractor to develop a new visitor center orientation film, which should be completed in fiscal year 2009.

To meet the needs and desires of today's technologically savvy visitors, the park offers audio units that incorporate geographic positioning system (GPS) technology. Visitors rent these units, which provide interpretive information as visitors travel among various significant locations in the park. Although these audio units provide a wealth of information to users, those visitors who choose not to rent them do not enjoy the same opportunities to learn about the park's history because there are few interpretive signs throughout the park. This dearth of signage is further exacerbated by the lack of interpretive rangers at Vicksburg. The park has requested \$250,000 to improve and install new roadside exhibits in an effort to improve the availability of interpretive information for visitors.

#### PLANNING—MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS NEED UPDATING

Vicksburg National Military Park has an overall lack of management plans to guide day-to-day decisionmaking and long-range planning. The park's general management plan



was written nearly 30 years ago and needs to be updated. Before updates can be completed, however, the park must finish work on a cultural landscape report that was initiated in 2006. The cultural landscape plan will help staff move forward with battlefield rehabilitation and monument protection. Park staff are currently working with the Harpers Ferry Design Center to complete a long-range interpretive plan, which will guide the park in future interpretive endeavors. In addition to these two plans, the park needs a wayside and visitor center plan and several plans for Pemberton's Headquarters (a development concept plan and historic furnishing plan).

#### EXTERNAL SUPPORT—VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE INVALUABLE SERVICES

Faced with significant funding and staffing shortfalls, the park increasingly relies on partners and volunteers to bridge the gap between what is needed and what the park can afford. In fiscal year 2007, 337 volunteers contributed 9,760 hours of service, helping with interpretation duties, curatorial and administrative tasks, and to a lesser degree, maintenance chores. The park doubled its normal volunteer hours in 2007 thanks to a greater number of special events.

The park receives assistance from outside agencies and organizations, including the Friends of the Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign, Friends of Raymond, and Friends of the Vicksburg Campaign and Historic Trail. Friends of the Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign secures donations to help fund maintenance of the park's hundreds of historic features, such as monuments and battle markers. Raymond Battlefield is located near the park and allows the park access to the battlefield for tour groups. The Friends of the Vicksburg Campaign and Historic Trail is in the process of developing a new driving guide and map for the Vicksburg campaign.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- **Support or become a member of a group helping to protect the park**, such as Friends of the Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign ([www.friendsofvicksburg.org](http://www.friendsofvicksburg.org)), Friends of Raymond ([www.friendsofraymond.org](http://www.friendsofraymond.org)), or NPCA ([www.npca.org/support\\_npca](http://www.npca.org/support_npca)).
- **Volunteer.** Vicksburg National Military Park is looking for dedicated people who can lend a helping hand. To learn about opportunities, contact the park at 601.636.0583.
- **Become an NPCA activist** and learn about legislative initiatives affecting parks. When you join our activist network, you will receive *Park Lines*, a monthly electronic newsletter with the latest park news and ways you can help. Join by visiting [www.npca.org/takeaction](http://www.npca.org/takeaction).



An intern from the Student Conservation Association shows school kids an example of the kinds of weapons used during the Civil War.



## APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

To determine the condition of known natural and cultural resources at Vicksburg National Military Park and other national parks, the National Parks Conservation Association developed a resource assessment and ratings process. The assessment methodology can be found online at NPCA's Center for State of the Parks website: [www.npca.org/stateoftheparks](http://www.npca.org/stateoftheparks).

Researchers gather available information from a variety of sources in a number of critical categories. The natural resources rating reflects assessment of more than 120 discrete elements associated with environmental quality, biotic health, and ecosystem integrity. Environmental quality and biotic health measures address air, water, soils, and climatic change conditions as well as their influences and human-related influences on plants and animals. Ecosystems measures address the extent, species composition, and interrelationships of organisms with each other and the physical environment.

The scores for cultural resources are determined based on the results of indicator questions that reflect the National Park Service's own *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* and other Park Service resource management policies.

Stewardship capacity refers to the Park Service's ability to protect park resources, and includes discussion of funding and staffing levels, park planning documents, resource education, and external support.

For this report, researchers collected data and prepared a paper that summarized the



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There are more than 125 cannons mounted in the fields at Vicksburg National Military Park.

results. The draft underwent peer review and was also reviewed by staff at Vicksburg National Military Park.

NPCA's Center for State of the Parks represents the first time that such assessments have been undertaken for units of the National Park System. Comments on the program's methods are welcome.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For more information about the  
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## OTHER REPORTS AVAILABLE

Adams National Historical Park (MA)  
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Andrew Johnson National Historic Site (TN)  
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (WI)  
Assateague Island National Seashore (MD, VA)  
Big Bend National Park (TX)  
Big Hole National Battlefield (MT)  
Big Thicket National Preserve (TX)  
Biscayne National Park (FL)  
Bryce Canyon National Park (UT)  
Cabrillo National Monument (CA)  
Canyonlands National Park (UT)  
Catoclin Mountain Park (MD)  
Channel Islands National Park (CA)  
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (DC/MD/WV)  
Death Valley National Park (CA)  
Denali National Park and Preserve (AK)  
Fort Laramie National Historic Site (WY)  
Fort Necessity National Battlefield (PA)  
Fort Pulaski National Monument (GA)  
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site (ND)  
Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (DC)  
Gateway National Recreation Area (NY)  
Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (AK)  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (TN/NC)  
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park  
Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site (PA)  
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (IN)  
Isle Royale National Park (MI)  
Joshua Tree National Park (CA)  
Keweenaw National Historical Park (MI)  
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site (ND)  
Lewis and Clark National Historical Park (OR)  
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (various)  
Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument (MT)  
Longfellow National Historic Site (MA)  
Missouri National Recreational River (NE)  
Mojave National Preserve (CA)  
Nez Perce National Historical Park (WA, ID, MT, OR)  
Olympic National Park (WA)  
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (MI)  
Point Reyes National Seashore (CA)  
Rocky Mountain National Park (CO)  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site (NH)  
San Juan Island National Historical Park (WA)  
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (CA)  
Shenandoah National Park (VA)  
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (TX)  
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (MI)  
Virgin Islands National Park  
Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument  
Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park (MT-Alberta)  
Zion National Park (UT)

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