

STATE
OF THE
PARKS®

June 2010

COWPENS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

A Resource Assessment



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

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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 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.

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 325,000 members
- * Twenty-three 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: G.D.S. Legacy Foundation, Ray Bingham, Ben and Ruth Hammett, Lee and Marty Talbot, and anonymous donors.

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Cover photo: The historic Green River Road at Cowpens National Battlefield. Photo courtesy of James Wellman.



INTRODUCTION



MARK CLIFTON

The American Revolution officially began on April 19, 1775, when shots were fired at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. The fighting reached the southern colonies by November 19, 1775, when 1,900 Loyalists attacked about 600 Patriot militiamen gathered at Ninety Six, South Carolina. After several days of fighting the two sides agreed to a truce. By 1778, the British had fought to a stalemate in the north and again turned their

attention to the southern colonies. The British were very successful in this campaign, and by summer 1780 they had captured Charleston, South Carolina, after virtually decimating the southern Continental Army.

The Battle of Cowpens was a pivotal victory for the Patriots and proved to be a major turning point in the Revolutionary War. The battle was fought on January 17, 1781, at a strategic crossroads in the remote backcountry

In 1980 the Park Service restored the Robert Scruggs House to resemble its 1850s appearance. Additional restoration work is now needed to address the wear and tear on the structure since that time.

battles fought in South Carolina. In 1880, Congress provided funding for a bronze statue of Brigadier General Daniel Morgan, which was placed in Spartanburg, South Carolina (14 miles southwest of the battlefield), due to the remoteness of the Cowpens battlefield and prior vandalism to the Washington Light Infantry Monument. Two separate pieces of legislation to establish a national military park—proposed in 1898 and 1899—failed in Congress. Several groups continued to work to establish a park at Cowpens throughout the early 20th century. Ultimately, Cowpens National Battlefield Site was established by an act of Congress in 1929 to commemorate the victory of Continental soldiers and militia over the British. Originally the battlefield site consisted of the U.S. Monument and one acre of land. Cowpens National Battlefield was officially redesignated as a national battlefield in 1972 and was authorized to expand by more than 800 acres. This expansion necessitated relocating two major highways (South Carolina Highways 11 and 110) outside of the new park, purchasing and removing approximately 50 homes and structures, and constructing a three-mile park loop road and visitor center.

In addition to the battlefield and resources associated with the battle, Cowpens contains 19th-century homestead resources, commemorative monuments, and a historic road trace.

The park also has important natural resources, including one of the world’s largest populations of the federally listed threatened dwarf-flowered heartleaf, as well as several other rare plants. Park habitats and ecosystems also support a variety of animals. In addition, the majority of its water resources are considered to be pristine. Park staff are working to restore the natural resources within the battlefield and to re-create the historic landscape by taking actions such as removing invasive non-native species and reseeding areas with native plants.

COWPENS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD AT A GLANCE

- **Cultural resources:** Cowpens National Battle contains a portion of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, which runs from South Carolina to Virginia; several 19th-century historic structures; a well-cataloged and well-maintained museum collection and archives; a cultural landscape that protects the Revolutionary War battlefield; a comprehensive interpretation program; and two commemorative markers, the Washington Light Infantry Monument and the U.S. Monument.
- **Natural resources:** Varied ecosystems and habitats within the park support native wildlife and plants. Some of the most important native species are the rare plants, including one of the largest concentrations of the federally listed threatened dwarf-flowered heartleaf, and two South Carolina species of concern—joe-pye weed and black huckleberry. Several of the park’s waters are considered to be in pristine condition and support aquatic species such as roside dace.
- **Recreational activities:** Many visitors experience the park by walking the battlefield trail—a 1.25-mile footpath where visitors can view the battlefield, wayside exhibits, the Washington Light Infantry Monument, and the U.S. Monument. The park also has a two-mile nature trail where horseback riding is permitted, and visitors can walk along two miles of the historic Green River Road, which is also a section of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. The park’s three-mile auto loop provides another opportunity for visitors to explore the perimeter of the battlefield, visit wayside exhibits, and access trails to the Green River Road, Robert Scruggs House, and a picnic area.

Cowpens National Battlefield	
Park location	Northwestern South Carolina
Park size (acres)	842 acres
Park establishment	1929; expanded and redesignated in 1972
Recreational visits (2009)	224,394

RATINGS

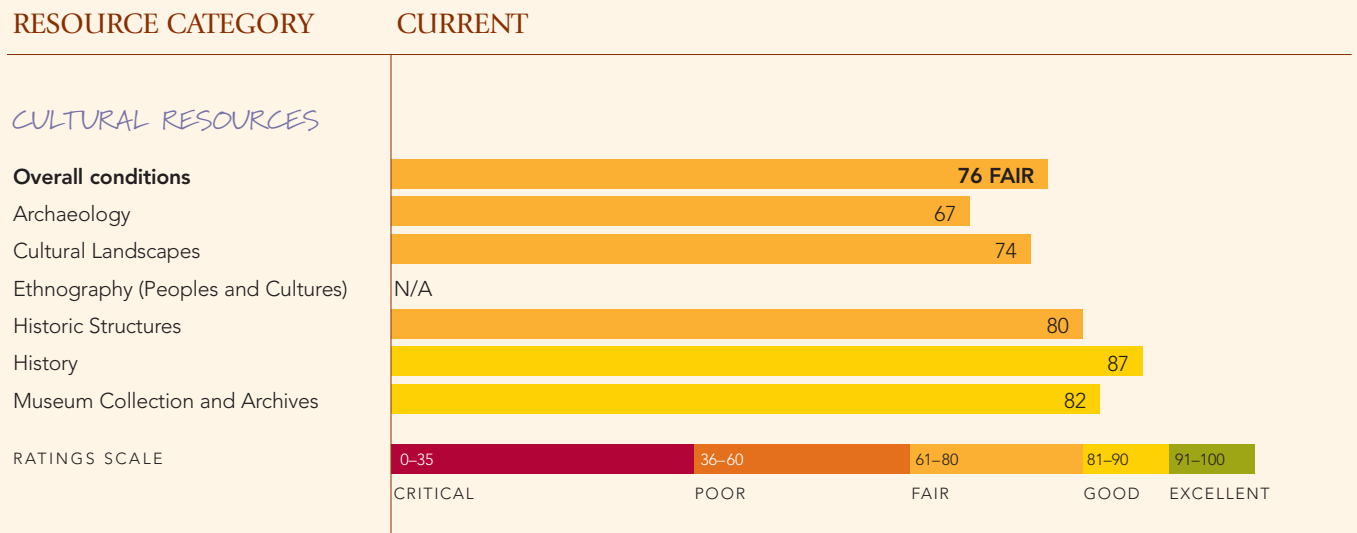
In recognition of the important historical and natural resources protected within Cowpens National Battlefield, the National Parks Conservation Association’s Center for State of the Parks conducted an assessment to determine current conditions of the park’s resources. Based on this assessment, overall conditions of the park’s known **cultural resources** rated a “fair” score of 76 out of 100. 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. Ethnography was not rated because the park does not have an ethnography program, and ethnography is not included in any of the park’s planning documents.

Challenges facing the park’s cultural resources include invasive non-native species that have altered the Revolutionary War-era

appearance of the park’s only cultural landscape—the battlefield, and human-induced and natural changes to the battlefield (e.g., logging that followed the battle and the overgrowth of brush and understory plant species). Park successes include battlefield restoration efforts, historic structure restoration, high-quality interpretive materials, and museum storage upgrades.

This assessment did not rate the overall conditions of the park’s **natural resources** because only 46 percent of the information required by Center for State of the Parks assessment methodology was available. Based on what is known, challenges to the park’s natural resources include landscape changes that have resulted from agriculture and logging that took place before the establishment of the park, as well as from years of fire suppression; the entrenchment of invasive non-native species within park ecosystems; and degraded air quality due to high levels of ozone.

When interpreting the scores for resource conditions, sometimes critical information upon which the ratings are based is not available. This can limit data interpretation. However, for Cowpens National Battlefield, 100 percent of the cultural resources information required by the methodology was available for the categories that were rated.



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 pre-dating the park’s creation. In addition, some park resources can be affected by factors that are outside the park and beyond the National Park Service’s control. The intent of the Center for State of the Parks is not to evaluate National Park Service staff performance, but to document the present status of park resources and critical ongoing efforts to protect them.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Battlefield restoration under way.** Restoring the battlefield to its Revolutionary War appearance, which requires integrated cultural and natural resource management, is a priority at Cowpens National Battlefield. This includes the use of prescribed burns and mechanical reduction of overgrown vegetation and invasive non-native species that were not present during the battle. To help with ecosystem restoration and the prescribed burn program, the park has partnered with the Palmetto Conservation Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and promoting South Carolina's natural and cultural resources, and a fire use module crew stationed at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in Middlesboro, Kentucky. With the support of these partners, the park has burned more than 350 acres since 2002. Not only will this return the landscape to something similar to what soldiers saw in 1781, but these efforts will also reduce fuel loads—reducing the threat of catastrophic fire—and assist in the control of invasive plant species and promote and stimulate native plant species. In 2009, stems of native cane were transplanted to two sections of the battlefield area to reestablish cane breaks that were a historical component of the battle. Other native cane areas of the park have been “released” through the removal of overstory growth and by ending the annual mowing of the section of the battlefield where the cane still exists.
- **Park working to expand trail and get children outdoors.** The park is collaborating with the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, Kings Mountain National Military Park, Cherokee County, and others to establish a multiuse trail from Cowpens to Kings Mountain. In addition, along with Kings Mountain National Military Park, Cowpens is testing a program to encourage children to hike the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail by awarding them medals after they complete hikes of the sections of the trail that pass through Cowpens and Kings Mountain. This is currently a temporary program, but the park hopes to continue it with the support of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- **Museum facilities improved.** Cowpens recently updated museum exhibits and collection storage facilities according to recommendations from the 2005 museum collection management plan. Upgrades included new exhibit cases, air filters, ultraviolet light monitoring, a fire suppression system, and a climate-control system. Additionally, museum objects are no longer exposed to natural light that could damage them, and the park has completed an integrated pest management plan for the museum collections and facilities.
- **External groups provide support.** In addition to helping the park with battlefield restoration, the Palmetto Conservation Foundation is also working to raise funds to expand the park's visitor center. The visitor center was built in 1981 and is not suited to serve large groups, such as school groups or large crowds during special events. Cowpens also has a friends group, the Friends of Cowpens, which raises money for the park's annual 4th of July fireworks display and promotes the park throughout the region.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Key staff needed to complete various plans and research projects.** Cowpens National Battlefield has a very small but knowledgeable staff who receive assistance from the Cultural Resources Division of the Southeast Regional Office and archaeologists from the National Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida. Cultural resource managers also have access to several historians, including a former chief ranger who continues to lend his expertise to Cowpens, and Lawrence E. Babits, professor at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, who has done research on pension records and wrote *A Devil of a Whipping: The Battle of Cowpens* (1998). Despite this expertise, the park needs at the very least a permanent law enforcement position for stewardship and resource protection, a historian, a project-specific or regional archaeologist, a project-specific archivist to complete the needed work outlined in the following bullets, and a full-time museum technician who will be shared with Ninety Six National Historic Site, which is located about two hours south of Cowpens.
- **Additional historical research will enhance interpretation.** While the history of the battle is well documented, there are several gaps in research. Park staff have received funding to conduct additional historical research on the roles of African Americans, American Indians, and women during the Battle of Cowpens. Information gained through this research would enhance interpretation of the battle and its historical setting.
- **Updated interpretation plan needed.** Although the park offers excellent interpretive materials to visitors, the park's statement for interpretation was written in 1993 and does not reflect current research findings. A new plan for interpretation is needed to help park staff continue to update interpretive materials and present new research on the park's cultural resources.

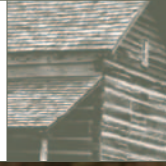
Interpretive waysides teach visitors about historical events as well as the park's natural and cultural resources.



- **Museum collection condition survey and on-staff technician needed.** The National Park Service's Southeast Regional Office inventoried the park's entire museum collection and archives in 2005. Inventorying is the first step toward preservation. Because of the lack of specialized in-house staff such as a curator or archivist, the park does not undertake an annual inventory but has requested funding to conduct a collection condition survey. Funds have also been requested to catalog the remainder of the archival collection, which will make information about this resource available to staff and researchers. In addition, park staff have noted the need for a museum technician.
- **Additional archaeological research awaiting funding.** Several archaeological surveys have been completed, but additional archaeological research would enhance interpretation. Park staff are currently waiting on funding to complete the necessary surveys to locate the intersection of the Green River Road and Island Ford Road, as well as the wolf pits (holes dug by humans to trap wolves) that were purportedly used to bury fallen soldiers. In addition, a recent survey conducted by the Applied Research Division of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina located 14 previously unidentified sites, including eight sites that represent domestic or agricultural life and six sites that contain prehistoric artifacts. Further work is needed to identify, evaluate, and record them in the Park Service's Archeological Sites Management Information System. Cowpens would also benefit from an archaeological overview and assessment to guide management, treatment, and

preservation of archaeological sites, and to identify gaps in archaeological research.

- **Historic structure preservation projects completed but additional work needed.** Park staff recognize the necessity of preserving, protecting, and restoring the park's historic structures, and they have completed a number of projects over the years. In the 1980s, the Park Service restored the 19th-century Robert Scruggs House to resemble its 1850s appearance. The chimney of Richard Scruggs' (Robert's father) 19th-century house, which itself is no longer standing, was restored by a National Park Service historical restoration team in 2008. Park staff have requested funding to do additional preservation work on these historic structures as well as funding for a study of the potential damage to park monuments from acidic precipitation. The park is also in need of a new management plan for historic structures to guide future projects.
- **Plan needed to address non-native plant species that threaten the landscape.** Of the 536 plant species documented within Cowpens National Battlefield, 151 species (28 percent) are not native. At least 34 species are considered to be highly aggressive or pose a significant danger to native species. A specific integrated pest management plan would help park staff manage these species. Cowpens also needs a natural resource management specialist to oversee natural resource and fire management. The park has successfully controlled kudzu near the park boundary using both mechanical and chemical treatments; mimosa has also been controlled within the park.



THE COWPENS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD ASSESSMENT



The park features new interpretive waysides and large iron cutouts of Revolutionary War soldiers with removable wooden replicas of firearms, which visitors can shoulder to get a feel for what the soldiers experienced during the battle.

CULTURAL RESOURCES— PIVOTAL REVOLUTIONARY WAR BATTLE INTERPRETED

In this assessment, Cowpens National Battlefield scored an overall 76 out of 100 for the condition of cultural resources, including history, historic structures, cultural landscapes, archaeology, and museum collection and archives. A score of 76 indicates that the park's

cultural resources are in “fair” condition. Issues that affected the ratings include the entrenchment of invasive non-native plant species within the battlefield, a lack of certain planning documents, and changes to the historical appearance of the battlefield due to activities such as agriculture and logging.

HISTORY—PIVOTAL REVOLUTIONARY WAR BATTLE INTERPRETED

Cowpens National Battlefield's enabling legislation focuses on the Revolutionary War battle and the events surrounding the fighting between Patriot and British troops on January 17, 1781. Accordingly, the park's interpretation centers on the battle and includes South Carolina's role in the American Revolution, the double-envelopment strategy that Brigadier General Daniel Morgan successfully deployed, the lives of the British and colonial forces during the American Revolution, and the commemorative features installed after the battle. The lives of South Carolina backcountry residents in the 19th century are also interpreted at Cowpens, as the park has several historic structures from this period that are considered locally significant, including homesteads of the two families that owned the battle-

field land following the war and throughout the 19th century. See "Resource Education" on page 22 to learn more about the variety of interpretive materials the park provides to educate visitors about the battle and its other historical themes.

The park received funding to research the sociocultural history of settlement of the battlefield area and the role of African Americans, American Indians, and women in the Battle of Cowpens, as well as to conduct further archaeological surveys of the battlefield and locate the wolf pits that were possibly used as burial sites during the battle. Information gained through these projects will be used to enhance interpretation at the park. Updating the park's statement for interpretation, which was last updated in 1993, or writing a comprehensive interpretation plan would also enhance the park's interpretation program.

WILLIAM N. SMITH III



The park's replica three-pound cannon, known as a "grasshopper" because the gun skipped after being fired, is fired during special events to demonstrate the weaponry and tactics used during the Revolutionary War.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES—
BATTLEFIELD RESTORATION EFFORTS
UNDER WAY

Cultural landscapes illustrate how people have shaped and been shaped by their surroundings over time. Cowpens National Battlefield includes one identified cultural landscape: the battlefield where Patriot and British forces squared off on January 17, 1781. This landscape helps visitors visualize the tactics and movements of the “double envelopment” strategy. The battlefield is further divided into three sections—the battlefield itself, the 19th-century homestead resources (i.e., the Robert Scruggs House, the Richard Scruggs Chimney, and the Byars-Ezell Cemetery), and the park’s commemorative features (i.e., the U.S. Monument and the Washington Light Infantry Monument).

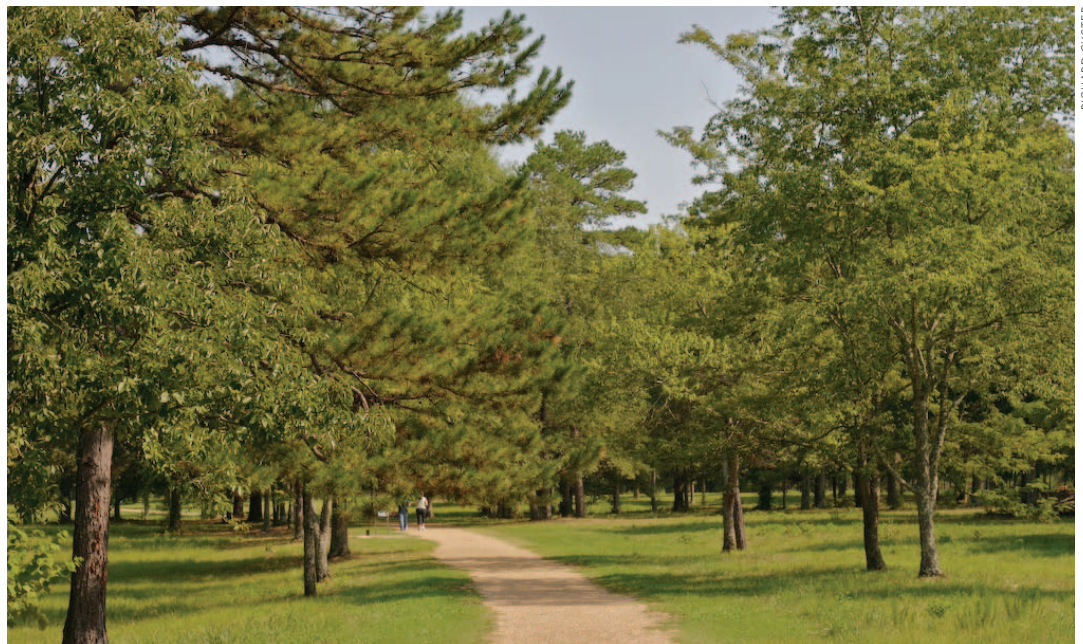
The appearance of the Cowpens battlefield has changed since the Revolutionary War. Invasive non-native plant species have replaced some of the native plants and altered the species composition as well as the lines of sight; fire suppression has led to denser understory growth; historic logging removed hardwood trees resulting in forests with more pine trees;

and canebrakes—dense thickets of giant cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*)—have disappeared with changes in the fire and grazing regimes. These changes make it difficult for visitors to imagine the troop placements and movements during the battle and make interpretation of the events more difficult. For example, the canebrakes that were present during the battle prevented the British forces from flanking Morgan’s troops. These natural barriers are no longer there.

Park staff are in the process of restoring the battlefield to better resemble its 1781 appearance—open fields with native vegetation and a healthy hardwood forest with an open understory. Restoring the battlefield is largely done through management of the area’s natural resources. Mowing and thinning vegetation, removing invasive species, seeding native plants, reestablishing canebrakes along the boundaries of the battlefield, and treating areas with prescribed burns in order to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires and control invasive non-native plant species are important components of cultural landscape restoration.

Restoration began in 1972 with the removal of nonhistoric buildings (e.g., private dwellings,

The park’s cultural landscape encompasses the Revolutionary War battlefield, which visitors can explore by walking along a 1.25-mile trail.



RICHARD CUSTER



JAMES D. NATIONS/NPCA

a service station, and a garage), which were not contributing to the park's interpretive messages, and continued in the mid-1980s with the thinning of pine tree stands that were injured from an infestation of pine bark beetle and created an extreme wildfire hazard. The park continues to remove debris and garbage sites associated with the nonhistoric structures that were left buried on site. In 2009, an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project funded a Student Conservation Association crew that removed over 60 tons of debris from the park.

The prescribed burns have taken place in several phases; the first phase took place in 2003 and treated 52 acres. Since then the park has burned more than 300 acres. The park continues to remove targeted invasive species—a regional

non-native species removal crew, park staff, seasonal youth crews, and volunteers treat approximately two acres annually. Additional restoration plans include rehabilitating the battlefield's drainage patterns and water courses, which have been altered over time by 200 years of agriculture and the construction of Highway 11. A landscape restoration plan produced in 2004 guides activities.

Cowpens National Battlefield works cooperatively with the Palmetto Conservation Foundation and the Park Service's Cultural Resources Division of the Southeast Regional Office on restoration issues, and receives an intern from the Student Conservation Association to assist with battlefield restoration.

In 2009 Cowpens hired a Student Conservation Association crew using funding from an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project to remove debris left throughout the park after many nonhistoric houses and outbuildings were removed during the establishment of the park in the 1970s.

The park's historic structures include the ruins of a cabin built by Richard Scruggs in 1811. A National Park Service historical restoration team restored and stabilized the cabin's chimney in 2008. Additional funds are now needed to prepare a preservation guide for the chimney.



BRUCE JOHNSON

HISTORIC STRUCTURES—PARK PRESERVES COMMEMORATIVE MONUMENTS AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Cowpens' historic structures consist of commemorative monuments (i.e., the Washington Light Infantry Monument and the U.S. Monument), structures associated with 19th-century South Carolina backcountry life (i.e., the Richard Scruggs House ruins and Chimney from 1811, the Robert Scruggs House from 1828, and the Byars-Ezell Cemetery), and the Green River Road, which is the park's only historic structure that dates from the Revolutionary War battle. Five of these structures are listed on the Park Service's list of classified structures as being in "good" condition. The Byars-Ezell Cemetery is not listed as is not considered a contributing element to the park, and is not interpreted.

A local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and members of the Washington Light Infantry from Charleston,

South Carolina, erected the Washington Light Infantry Monument to commemorate the Patriots at the Battle of Cowpens shortly after the 75th anniversary celebration of the battle in 1856. The U.S. Monument was installed in 1932 following the park's official designation as a national battlefield site. This 32-foot-tall obelisk is constructed of granite and displays the list of American forces (i.e., Continental and militia troops) that fought at the battle on one side and the list of British forces on another.

Richard Scruggs purchased 200 acres of the battlefield in 1803, and he built a modest cabin on his plot in 1811. Today this structure is in ruins but the cabin's chimney still stands. The Scruggs House, a one-room structure, was built by Richard's son, Robert Scruggs, sometime around 1828. The structure was originally designed as a cabin, which reflected frontier life in the area, but was later renovated and modernized by Robert Scruggs to accommodate his growing family. The Park Service restored the

Robert Scruggs House in 1980 to resemble its 1850s appearance; additional work is now needed to repair wear and tear that has occurred since then.

The Green River Road was originally a wagon and market trail leading from the Pacolet River in South Carolina to the Green River in western North Carolina. It was used by American Indians and settlers. Today the road serves as the footpath for a portion of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. This 330-mile trail stretches from Abingdon, Virginia, to Kings Mountain National Military Park in Blacksburg, South Carolina, retracing the route of Patriot militia as they pursued the British to a climactic victory at Kings Mountain in October 1780.

To better understand, interpret, and preserve the park's historic structures, park managers have requested funds to prepare preservation guides for the Robert Scruggs House and the Richard Scruggs Chimney; complete work on the Robert Scruggs House, including repairing or replacing deteriorated logs and the roof; and prepare a study of the potential damage to park monuments from acid rain.

The Park Service's Southeast Regional Office and Williamsport Preservation Training Center assist the park with monument preservation; Moretti Construction, Inc., of Charlotte, North Carolina, has provided preservation assistance for the Robert Scruggs House.

ARCHAEOLOGY—ADDITIONAL RESEARCH WOULD HELP STAFF INTERPRET BATTLE

Cowpens National Battlefield has several archaeological sites, including the battlefield, the Green River Road, and sites related to 19th-century life. Each site is listed in the Park Service's Archeological Sites Management Information System database as being in "good" condition. Staff from the Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center assist the park with archaeological research, planning, and site

stewardship, as the park lacks funds to employ its own archaeology staff.

The Applied Research Division of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina completed an intensive archaeological survey of Cowpens in 2004. The purpose of the survey was to locate, delineate, identify, and assess archaeological sites in areas not previously surveyed or where preservation efforts did not already exist. The survey revealed 14 previously unknown archaeological sites at Cowpens—eight sites that represent domestic or agricultural life and six sites that contain prehistoric artifacts. These sites have not yet been recorded or evaluated in the Archeological Sites Management Information System.

Archaeological surveys allow the park to validate the written record and help staff to interpret troop placement and movement, which is relayed to visitors via wayside interpretive materials and ranger-led programs. Two additional archaeological surveys are planned at Cowpens in the near future—one survey of the battlefield to identify the intersection of the Green River Road and Island Ford Road and another survey to locate the wolf pits that had purportedly been used to bury fallen soldiers following the battle. The park would also like to survey an area near the Richard Scruggs Chimney where slave quarters may have been located. These surveys would enhance understanding and interpretation of the battle, the participants involved in and affected by the fighting, and 19th-century life in the area after the battle. Once completed, the information could be used to create a maintenance plan to address the needs of all of the park's cultural resources, including archaeological ones.

Threats to the park's archaeological resources include erosion, artifact hunters, and adjacent development. Occasional heavy rains and decades of historic agricultural use of park lands have altered drainage patterns and created deep erosion channels. These channels continue to

The visitor center at Cowpens National Battlefield has been outfitted with exhibits featuring historic and replica artifacts, interpretive banners and panels, and interactive displays. It is too small to accommodate large groups (e.g., school outings), and the park is seeking funding to expand the structure.

erode and expose park lands that potentially contain archaeological artifacts. Park staff incorporate resource stewardship themes into educational programs in an effort to deter illegal collection of artifacts. Development near the park puts buried resources that are associated with the battle, but not located within the park's boundaries, at risk. To help mitigate this threat, the park works to keep South Carolina Highways 11 and 110 as State Scenic Highways in order to manage development and maintain open space along park boundaries.

MUSEUM COLLECTION AND ARCHIVES—PARK'S COLLECTION WELL CATALOGUED

Cowpens' museum collection and archives total 3,217 items. Collection highlights include a reproduction three-pounder cannon, rifles, musket balls, and uniforms, which are all exhibited within the park's visitor center. While some other items are also on display, the majority of the museum collection and archives is housed at the Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida. The park's chief ranger and another ranger are responsible for caring for items displayed and stored at the park. Adding a museum technician to the park's staff would allow the rangers to allocate more time to their other duties. This would be a full-time position shared with Ninety Six National Historic Site. Currently park staff devote about 5 percent of their time to this work.

Cowpens National Battlefield's archives include documents relating to park resources and management and materials pertaining to the USS *Cowpens* (a U.S. Navy ship named after the 1781 Battle of Cowpens). The park's archives were inventoried and assessed during the writing of the 2005 museum collections management plan and were found to be in "good" condition. Archival materials are stored primarily in fire-resistant filing cabinets in the basement of the visitor center and in offices throughout the park. While these storage facili-

ties are considered adequate at this time, the museum collections management plan recommends that the park install more storage space to allow the collection to grow without risking damage from overcrowding. Cowpens' archiving backlog is 28 percent and park staff have requested funds to support work to catalog the remainder of the archives.

The park completed several exhibit and storage area upgrades that were recommended in the museum collections management plan, including the installation of new exhibit cases, air filters, ultraviolet light monitoring, a fire suppression system, and improved climate controls; the removal of museum objects from direct natural light; and the creation of an integrated pest management plan.

ETHNOGRAPHY—PARK ETHNOGRAPHY PROGRAM A POSSIBILITY IN THE FUTURE

Ethnography is the area of anthropology that focuses on the study of individual human cultures. Cowpens National Battlefield does not currently have an ethnography program, and ethnography is not addressed in any of the park's planning documents. However, park staff have started to explore several ethnographic themes—the socio-cultural history of the settlement of the battlefield area and the roles of African Americans, American Indians, and women in the Battle of Cowpens. Once this research is completed it could be combined with what is known about Thomas Tyack, an American Indian who fought with the British in the battle, and the information already gathered on the possible slave quarters near the Richard Scruggs House ruins (staff would like to conduct further investigations into possible slave quarters in the park). Together, this information could form the foundation of a future ethnography program at the park.





KAT BYERLY

NATURAL RESOURCES— PARK HABITATS SUPPORT A VARIETY OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The assessment did not rate the overall condition of natural resources at Cowpens National Battlefield because there was not enough information available to satisfy the requirements of NPCA’s Center for State of the Parks methodology. However, this does not mean that the park lacks important natural resources or that they are completely unknown. For example, Cowpens is a part of the Cumberland Piedmont Network of the National Park Service’s

Inventory and Monitoring Program. Through the network, the park now has completed species inventories of vascular plants, mammals (including bats), fish, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. Water quality is also monitored through the network, and air quality is monitored by South Carolina’s permanent air-quality monitoring station located in the park. The University of Georgia completed a two-year natural resource assessment project in 2010, which provides staff a snapshot view of the known condition of most of the park’s natural resources. These efforts are contributing important information to the park’s natural resource

Deciduous trees provide autumn color at Cowpens National Battlefield.

Park staff remove some trees by hand and with machines to help restore the battlefield to its Revolutionary War appearance.



JAMES D. NATIONS/NPCA

knowledge base, but additional information—including details about the impacts of habitat fragmentation, restoration, non-natives, and ozone, as well as any data on soils—is still needed to form a comprehensive understanding of the park's natural resources.

LAND USE HISTORY—AREA USED FOR
A NUMBER OF PURPOSES
THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Historically, several natural springs flowed in what is now park land, which kept the area open and meadowlike compared to the primeval forest that predominately surrounded it. Regular fires set by American Indians helped to perpetuate this landscape that soldiers saw during the 1781 Battle of Cowpens. The fires kept fields open, making it easier to plant crops (e.g., corn and squash) while providing new growth that attracted deer and elk. At the time of the battle, the area was largely undeveloped and used as a common cattle grazing area, or

cowpen. Following the battle, the area was settled by farmers who established small-scale farms. Cattle raising was the dominant agricultural activity during the colonial period but was later replaced by growing cotton, which was supplanted by peach orchards in the 1920s. Several ironworks were established in the area in the first half of the 19th century. The surrounding forests were logged to supply the timber to make the charcoal that the ironworks needed. These activities altered the natural habitats and ecosystems that were present during the battle, and have led to the entrenchment of non-native plant species and unnatural tree species composition.

Today park staff are using prescribed burns and mechanical reduction (i.e., removing trees and brush by hand or with machines) to restore the battlefield to its historic appearance. These burns will reduce undergrowth, which lessens the opportunity for catastrophic fire and will help control the spread of invasive non-native

plant species. A fire-use module crew from Cumberland Gap National Historical Park assists park staff with these burns.

From 1982 until 2008, the Park Service leased about 80 acres of park land to a local farmer for hay production, as a means of approximating the historical landscape. Today park staff mow the battlefield to maintain its openness. The Park Service has considered allowing cattle grazing on the battlefield, minimizing the mowing that needs to take place, while achieving a more historically accurate landscape. At the time of the battle, cattle grazing had created a distinctive browse line that provided clear lines of sight for the soldiers. While this option has been discussed, there are currently no plans to reintroduce cattle to Cowpens National Battlefield.

Adjacent development has had a large impact on the park's viewshed and the ability to interpret the battle for visitors. In an effort to provide historically accurate interpretation of the park's cultural landscape the park planted pine trees along most of the park boundary in order to shield the viewshed from adjacent residential development.

PARK HABITATS—VARIOUS ECOSYSTEMS FOUND WITHIN THE PARK

Cowpens National Battlefield contains a number of habitats and ecosystems, ranging from natural systems that have been relatively undisturbed by activities such as agriculture to areas that have been altered by farming and logging. One of the park's highest priority vegetation communities is formally called the Southern Piedmont Mesic Subacid Oak–Hickory Forest. It is characterized by native species such as white oak (*Quercus alba*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*), and ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*). This habitat type is one of the oldest in the park (i.e., greater than

50 years old) and contains prime habitat for the federally listed threatened dwarf-flowered heartleaf (*Hexastylis naniflora*).

Floodplain canebrake communities were common at Cowpens during the American Revolution battle, but are now rare within the park. Today there are no pure stands of cane left; the remaining areas are a mixture of native (*Arundinaria* spp.) and non-native (*Phylostachys* spp.) cane species. The canebrakes were once maintained by regular fires and grazing, activities that have both been eliminated. Cowpens established two areas of native cane in 2009 by transplanting native cane from other areas of the park. These areas will be monitored for survival rates and expansion in the future. Another area of the battlefield will not be mowed to allow the native cane that exists there to grow and expand. Continued canebrake restoration will require prescribed burning, seeding, and replanting native cane from adjacent land.

Cowpens harbors just over 13 acres of wetlands, which commonly contain species such as sedges (*Carex* spp.) and royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), but are also infested with invasive non-native plant species such as Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*).

PLANT COMMUNITIES—RARE SPECIES FORCED TO COMPETE WITH NON-NATIVE ONES

Cowpens National Battlefield contains a wide variety of both native and non-native plant species. A 2004 vascular plant inventory at Cowpens National Battlefield identified 536 species, including 151 that are not native to the area. Despite the presence of non-native species, Cowpens represents a refuge for native flora in an agricultural area that is experiencing increased residential development. Among these native species is the dwarf-flowered heartleaf, a long-lived perennial that grows in deciduous forests. A contracted survey of the park in 2006–2008 identified many popula-

tions of this species in riparian zones. These populations are much more extensive than was previously known, and constitute one of the largest known groupings of the plant in the United States. The dwarf-flowered heartleaf populations are threatened by a variety of factors: small size; location on steep, highly erodible slopes; competition from non-native plant species; and logging near the park, which can promote non-native plant species encroachment. The park also contains joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium fistulosum*) and black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), both of which are South Carolina species of concern.

Most of the park's 151 documented non-native plant species are not known to greatly affect native species and ecosystems; however, at least 34 species are considered invasive and can significantly alter ecosystems and harm native species, making them a concern for park managers. Some of the most prevalent invasive non-native species within Cowpens National Battlefield include kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*), Japanese honeysuckle, Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*), Chinese silvergrass (*Miscanthus sinensis*), mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), oriental ladythumb (*Polygonum caespitosum* var. *longisetum*), privet (*Ligustrum* spp.), golden bamboo (*Phyllostachys aurea*), and silverberry (*Elaeagnus umbellata*). Past land use and current adjacent development are two factors that have resulted in the presence of these non-native plant species; past agriculture fields often become entrenched with non-natives, and adjacent land can serve as a continuing source of non-native plants. Additionally, invasive non-native plants are often some of the first plants to return and colonize areas after fuel reduction and tree thinning takes place. Efforts to replant native plants and grasses after the removal of trees and underbrush are needed to combat invasive species.

Pine beetles have taken a toll on the park's

native loblolly pines (*Pinus taeda*), and the damage to these trees has allowed non-native plant species (e.g., Chinese lespedeza and Japanese honeysuckle) to thrive.

Park staff have been successful in controlling kudzu near the park boundary using mechanical and chemical treatments. Staff have also had success in managing mimosa, but they have not been able to make headway with Japanese honeysuckle and multiflora rose as these species are more difficult to eliminate. A regional non-native species removal crew targets certain populations at the park periodically. Cowpens National Battlefield needs a specific integrated pest management plan to guide staff in controlling of the spread of invasive non-native plants.

PARK WILDLIFE—PARK SUPPORTS SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

A 2007 survey of terrestrial mammals found seven species, including white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), white-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*), opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), and gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*). White-tailed deer populations have increased over the past 50 years as habitat improved, food availability increased, and hunting in the area waned. White-tailed deer are not considered to be overpopulated at this time, but park staff are looking for signs of overpopulation—browse lines and increased human/deer incidents—as a large population of white-tailed deer could hinder the park's battlefield restoration efforts. The park also provides habitat that supports at least 96 bird species, including 23 species of conservation concern, as well as seven fish, four bat, and 33 reptile and amphibian species.

AIR AND WATER QUALITY—AIR QUALITY A CONCERN; WATER QUALITY CONSIDERED GOOD

According to data collected by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, ozone levels at Cowpens National Battlefield are cause for



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concern. The agency installed air-quality monitoring equipment in the park in 1990. In 1998, Cowpens had the eighth highest average levels of ozone among 35 national parks throughout the United States, as documented in the park's resource management plan. (These 35 parks were chosen because of their historic air-quality records and permanent air-quality monitoring stations, and provide a cross section of national parks throughout the United States.) The plan also indicates that the levels of ozone within the park had exceeded federal health and human safety standards on several occasions during previous years. Sources of this ozone include automobile and truck traffic from the Interstate 85 corridor and a coal-burning power plant located seven miles from the park. High levels of ozone have been linked to foliar injury, which can damage plants and trees. Ozone

effects on human health include decreased lung function and increased severity of asthma.

Water resources at the park include four creeks whose headwaters are within the park, which ultimately drain into the Broad River; there is no recreational access to water resources at Cowpens. Water quality (e.g., temperature, specific conductance, pH, dissolved oxygen, E. coli, and acid neutralizing capacity) is monitored within the four creeks. Measurements are taken four times a year, every other year. Based on the data collected, overall water quality at the park is considered to be good. Three of the park's bodies of water—the Suck Creek tributaries and Little Buck Creek—are considered to be pristine; the long branch of Island Creek is potentially degraded because it drains the nature trail and picnic grounds areas.

The park has been working to restore the historic battlefield scene to its 1780s appearance in part to better understand the dynamics of the battle strategy. This picture of the restored forest represents the open understory of the mature hardwoods at the time of the battle, which would have allowed the cavalry to ride through it.



Park Superintendent Tim Stone works to engage and train volunteers for Ninety Six National Historic Site during events like the National Parks American Tour.

STEWARDSHIP CAPACITY

FUNDING AND STAFFING—ADDITIONS NEEDED TO SUPPLEMENT SMALL STAFF

For fiscal year 2010, Cowpens National Battlefield's operational budget is \$864,000. While this funding allows the park to maintain a certain level of protection, it does not support a law enforcement presence, which puts the protection of the park's cultural and natural resources at risk.

Cowpens National Battlefield has a staff

comprised of six full-time employees and two half-time employees who are shared with Ninety Six National Historic Site—the superintendent and the administrative officer. This small but knowledgeable staff receives assistance from the Cultural Resources Division of the Southeast Regional Office and archaeologists from the National Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida. A former chief ranger from the park continues to share his knowledge with current staff, as does Lawrence E. Babits, a professor at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. To further boost the park's ability to fully research,

protect, and interpret resources, several key staff positions are needed. These include a permanent law enforcement position for stewardship and resource protection; a historian to complete new research on topics such as the roles of African Americans, American Indians, and women during the Battle of Cowpens; a project-specific or regional archaeologist to complete an archaeological overview and assessment, locate the wolf pits, and prepare a maintenance plan; and a project-specific archivist to process the relatively small archival backlog. None of this work can be completed until funds are obtained and appropriate staff are in place.

The current visitor center lacks the space to accommodate large school groups or present special programs. A project to expand the visitor center with an auditorium has been entered into National Park Service databases for funding.

PLANNING—SEVERAL PLANS AWAITING FUNDING

Park staff rely on numerous planning documents to guide resource management and interpretation. Some of the most recently completed plans used to guide park activities include a 2003 cultural landscape report, a 2004 landscape restoration plan, and a 2005 museum collections management plan. The park needs several additional plans, such as a historic structures plan to guide future projects, a maintenance plan to address the needs of all of the park's cultural resources, and a plan to address treatment of non-native plants. In addition, a new plan for interpretation is needed to help park staff continue to update interpretive materials and present new research on the park's cultural resources. The most recent statement for interpretation was written in 1993 and does not reflect current research findings.

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Cowpens National Battlefield's auto-loop tour meanders four miles around the perimeter of the battlefield, providing access to short walking trails, cultural resources such as the U.S. Monument and Robert Scruggs House, and a picnic area.

RESOURCE EDUCATION—
PARK OFFERS MANY WAYS TO LEARN
ABOUT HISTORY

The park offers numerous interpretive exhibits, educational materials, and presentations to teach visitors about the Battle of Cowpens and related park themes. The 1.25-mile battlefield trail features recently installed interpretive waysides such as large iron cutouts describing the positions and roles of participants on both sides of the battle as well as information about women and African Americans in the battle; other waysides present information on the park's prescribed burning treatments and how they are being used to restore the historical appearance of the landscape to help visitors better visualize the battle. The auto-loop tour features new interpretive waysides as well and takes visitors around the perimeter of the battlefield and past the historic Green River Road.

The park's new interpretive movie, *Cowpens: A Battle Remembered*, tells the story of the battle from the viewpoint of one Patriot militiaman who fought under General Morgan and is shown at the visitor center. The film won a 2008 special jury award at the Houston International Film Festival. The visitor center also contains new interactive displays that allow visitors to flip through different information panels, a

fiber-optic display that depicts the double envelopment strategy employed by Brigadier General Daniel Morgan at Cowpens, as well as hands-on exhibits for children such as the interactive battlefield map with cutout figures that children can move along the lines of the battle. A revised Junior Ranger booklet has proved very successful in bringing children and parents to the park to gain a Junior Ranger badge.

Cowpens also hosts several reenactments, living-history programs, firing demonstrations, and guided history tours. Past living-history events at the Robert Scruggs house have included storytelling about life in the Carolina backcountry, writing with quills, making sachets, needlework, and making corn husk dolls.

Cowpens National Battlefield presents two large programs every year—the Cowpens Battle anniversary in January and period authors discussing the history of the American Revolution in the south. The Cowpens Battle anniversary is a two-day event that draws over 5,000 visitors and includes living-history and Revolutionary War demonstrations, guided ranger walks, and special children's programs. The park also has an Independence Day program, which features a day of living-history and military demonstrations, ranger guided walks, and other programs for families. The

Park staff and volunteers dressed in replica period clothing give a demonstration of historic weapons.



WILLIAM MACLEOD

event culminates in a large fireworks display, which is enjoyed by about 10,000 people.

Together these interpretive resources make the park's cultural resources and history accessible to visitors. The park lacks the staff to adequately and routinely present off-site programs to area schools and groups. This limits the park's ability to reach the large populations of Spartanburg and Greenville, South Carolina.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT—GROUPS PROVIDE VALUABLE ASSISTANCE

Assistance from outside organizations is critical in helping park staff protect and interpret resources. The Palmetto Conservation Foundation, an organization with a stated mission to “conserve South Carolina’s natural and cultural resources, preserve historic landmarks, and promote outdoor recreation through trails and greenways,” assists the park with restoring battlefield vegetation to its Revolutionary War-era appearance. The group is also working to raise funds to expand the park’s visitor center, which was built in 1981 and is not suited to serve large groups. The park has a partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), a national nonprofit organization that provides training and internships to young people. In 2009 SCA interns at Cowpens performed habitat restoration, including repairing two miles of trail, rebuilding bridges, and removing roots and hazard trees. Cowpens also offers summer jobs to teenagers through their Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program. Previous YCC projects have included removing debris from nonhistoric home sites and businesses, building bridges and split rail fences, pruning trees, removing non-native plant species, helping to prepare for the park’s fireworks program, and providing environmental education to visitors.

Cowpens also has a friends group, the Friends of Cowpens, which raises money for the park’s annual 4th of July fireworks display and works to promote the park throughout the region.



KAT BYERLY

Cowpens National Battlefield relies on dedicated volunteers and partner organizations to assist staff with many projects and duties, including providing assistance to park patrons at the visitor center.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- **Support or become a member of a group helping to protect the park**, such as the Friends of Cowpens National Battlefield, c/o Cowpens National Battlefield, the Palmetto Conservation Foundation (www.palmettoconservation.org), or NPCA (www.npca.org/support_npca).
- **Volunteer.** Many parks are looking for dedicated people who can lend a helping hand. To learn about opportunities at Cowpens National Battlefield, contact the park at 864.461.2828.
- **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.



APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

To determine the condition of known cultural and natural resources at Cowpens National Battlefield 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.

Researchers gather available information from a variety of research, monitoring, and background sources in a number of critical categories. For natural resources, more than 120 discrete elements associated with environmental quality, biotic health, and ecosystem integrity are assessed. Environmental quality and biotic health measures address air, water, soil, 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. For Cowpens National Battlefield, only 46 percent of the information required by the methodology was available, so natural resource conditions were not rated.

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.

For this report, researchers collected data and prepared technical documents that



JIM BURKE

The U.S. Monument was erected in 1932 to commemorate the soldiers who fought at the Battle of Cowpens. The park is seeking funding to study of the potential damage to this and other monuments from normal wear and acid rain.

summarized the results. The technical documents were used to construct this report, which underwent peer review and was also reviewed by staff at Cowpens National Battlefield prior to publication.

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
Center for State of the Parks®
and this and other program reports, contact:

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Lake Clark National Park and Preserve (AK)
Lassen Volcanic National Park (CA)
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)
Pea Ridge National Military Park (AR)
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (MI)
Point Reyes National Seashore (CA)
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San Juan Island National Historical Park (WA)
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (CA)
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