

Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program

The Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program (CWBPP) is a matching grants program that promotes preservation of the most historically important Civil War battlegrounds. The program, financed through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, encourages partnerships between local governments and the private sector.

In 1993, a blue-ribbon panel created by Congress recommended that an “emergency” matching grants program be established to protect high priority Civil War battlefields. This emergency program was first

funded in FY1999 through a Congressional earmark. In December 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the *Civil War Battlefield Preservation Act*, which authorized funding up to \$10 million a year for five years.

CWBPP matching grants are competitively awarded by the American Battlefield Protection Program, an arm of the National Park Service (NPS). Because only a small percentage of America’s Civil War battlefields are preserved within the Park Service, CWBPP is used to target hallowed ground outside NPS boundaries (and thus does not contribute to NPS maintenance costs).

CWBPP’s matching grants formula encourages both public and private sector investment in battlefield protection. The program preserves historic sites by working with willing sellers when properties become available. CWBPP matching grants can be used for both fee simple and easement acquisition.

CWBPP grants have been used to save nearly 15,000 acres of hallowed ground in 14 states. Among the sites saved as a result of this program are historic properties at Antietam and South Mountain, Md.; Champion Hill, Miss.; Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, and Manassas, Va.; Chattanooga and Fort Donelson, Tenn.; and Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

Since FY1999, Congress has appropriated \$36 million for CWBPP, including \$3 million in the FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act (PL 110-161). The White House included a \$4 million request for the program as part of its FY2009 budget announced on February 4 of this year.

Bipartisan legislation to reauthorize CWBPP is currently pending before the 110th Congress. Entitled the *Civil War Battlefield Preservation Act of 2007*, this legislation (H.R. 2933 and S. 1921) is currently cosponsored by 30 Senators and 100 House Members. As with the original 2002 authorization, the *Civil War Battlefield Preservation Act* calls for funding up to \$10 million a year for five years.

