

Date: May 18, 2009

**Wilderness Battlefield Named One of Virginia's Most Endangered Places**  
**Preservation Virginia Issues Annual "Virginia's Most Endangered Historical Sites List"**

Preservation Virginia (PV) on May 18 named the Wilderness Battlefield as one of nine most endangered historical sites in the Commonwealth. In simultaneous press conferences at historic Ellwood Manor and three other locations around the state, PV unveiled its annual "Virginia's Most Endangered Historical Sites" list. This is the second time in as many months that Wilderness Battlefield has been placed on the endangered list of a prominent preservation organization.

Preservation Virginia Executive Director Elizabeth Kostelny made the announcement against the backdrop of historic Ellwood, the 18<sup>th</sup> century manor and only structure still standing from the Battle of the Wilderness. The PV list identifies the Commonwealth's most threatened places, buildings and archeological sites. The group issues the list annually to raise awareness of at-risk sites and advocate for their protection and preservation.

In making the announcement, Kostelny cited the proposed 140,000 square foot Walmart as a crucial element in the inclusion of the Wilderness Battlefield on its list. "Walmart's site lies within the historic boundaries of the battlefield," she said. "Preservation Virginia urges Orange County officials to carefully consider the full implications of permitting this excessively sized retail center in its proposed location. We urge Walmart to relocate to another site in Orange County."

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park Superintendent Russ Smith also spoke at the news conference. "When you live near historical resources, it's easy to take them for granted," Smith said. "We are very pleased to see this list at this hour of crisis in the future of the Wilderness Battlefield."

FoWB supports the position of the National Park Service that the Walmart should reconsider its plan to locate near the intersection of Routes 3 and 20. FoWB is part of a coalition of preservation groups that has consistently urged both Walmart and Orange County officials to find a more appropriate site for the commercial development. The coalition has offered since January to fund a planning study for the area, but has been rebuffed by the county.

“For the record, I would like to repeat we are not opposed to free enterprise or to Walmart building a new store in Orange County,” stated FoWB President Zann Miner. “Our request is simple: Walmart executives, join us in our effort to protect our nation’s heritage and the story of thousands of Americans whose descendants may shop at Walmart. Support this national treasure by finding a more suitable location for the new store.”

In March, the Wilderness Battlefield was placed on the Civil War Preservation Trust’s (CWPT) 2009 list of endangered sites. In its report, “History Under Siege: A Guide to America’s most Endangered Civil War Battlefields,” CWPT named the location of the proposed Walmart as the primary reason for its inclusion of Wilderness Battlefield on the list.

The permit process for the proposed Walmart is moving forward, with a public hearing before the Orange County Planning Commission scheduled for Thursday, May 21, at 7:00 p.m. at Prospect Heights Middle School in Orange.

Preservation Virginia, a private non-profit organization and statewide historic preservation leader founded in 1889, is dedicated to perpetuating and revitalizing Virginia's cultural, architectural and historic heritage thereby ensuring that historic places are integral parts of the lives of present and future generations. Our mission is directly consistent with and supportive of Article XI of the Constitution of Virginia, benefiting both the Commonwealth and the nation. Preservation Virginia provides leadership, experience, influence, and services to the public and special audiences by saving, managing, and protecting historic places, and developing preservation policy, programs, and strategies with individuals, organizations, and local, state, and national partners. To learn more visit [www.preservationvirginia.org](http://www.preservationvirginia.org).

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield is a non-profit, all volunteer organization devoted to assisting the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in efforts to preserve the Wilderness Battlefield in Orange and Spotsylvania Counties. With more than 230 members, the Friends provide advocacy, educational programs and service projects for the battlefield. Visit [www.fowb.org](http://www.fowb.org) for more information.

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**SIDEBAR:**

In addition to the Wilderness, the eight other sites included in the Preservation Virginia report are:

Selma, Loudoun County.

Konnarock Girl's School, Troutdale

The Obici House, Suffolk

Former Home of Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Colonial Heights

Wolftrap, Isle of Wight County

McIntire Park, Charlottesville

Historic Barns of Pittsylvania County

Marion Schoolhouse, Smythe County