

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

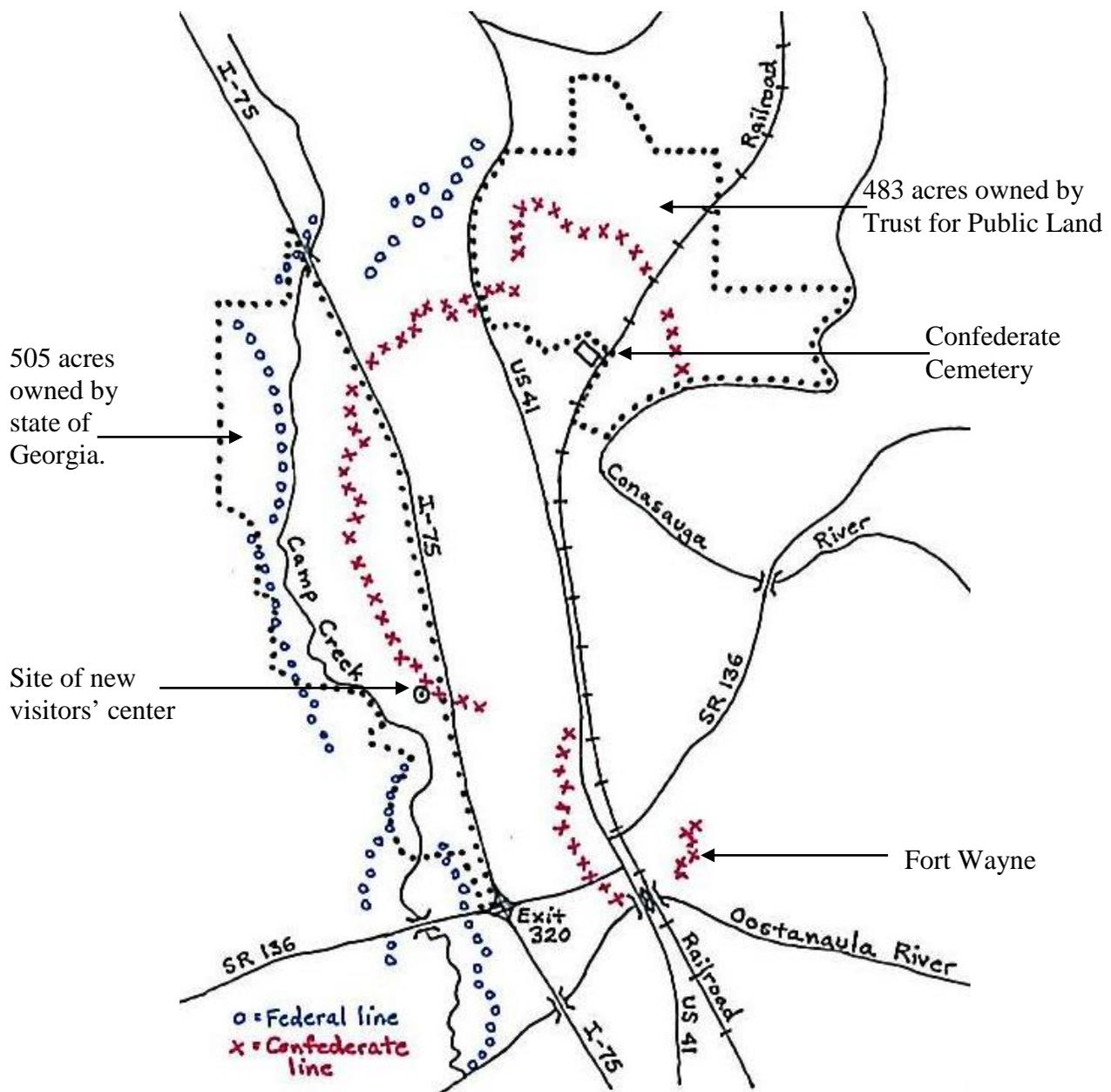
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Land for sale at Resaca

The Resaca battlefield, site of a 13-15 May 1864 battle and subsequent engagements in August and October 1864, is split by I-75 (see map). The state of Georgia owns 505 acres to the west of I-75 (see following article), but the rest of the battlefield remains largely in private hands. Early in 2008, a bank was about to foreclose on 483 acres that had been used as collateral for a loan. Since this land—east of I-75—is historically significant, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) bought the property. TPL typically holds land only until it can be sold to a preservation-minded buyer, such as the National Park Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), etc.

Earlier this year, TPL contacted Georgia Battlefields Association (GBA) about contributing to the cost of a conservation easement on the property, which GBA agreed to do; but the bulk of the easement cost was to come from the Civil War Preservation Trust, which was counting on funds from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP). When the federal budget was passed in May, funds for ABPP were insufficient to include the Resaca property. Thus, the plan to purchase a conservation easement fell through.

Since TPL must sell the land to restock its revolving purchase fund, it has put the 483 acres up for sale, and several people contacted GBA to report the appearance of “for sale” signs on battlefield land. TPL is asking \$2,150,000. GBA does not have that amount on hand. While we're confident that TPL will sell only to a preservation-minded buyer, we're contacting other organizations that might be able to buy the land, and we'll monitor the situation in any case.



Resaca visitors' center status

In 2000, the state of Georgia purchased 505 acres of the Resaca battlefield to the west of I-75, but plans to interpret the site were put on hold because of the economic downturn that began in 2001. In 2008, the legislature authorized a \$3 million bond issue to build a visitors center and an access road. The estimated cost for all improvements—interpretive markers, directional signs, walking trails, etc.—is \$5 million, but the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) felt the funds resulting from the bond issue would allow the project to get started. Thus, a ground breaking ceremony for the visitors' center was held last October (November 2008 newsletter). In November, Georgia Battlefields Association and Friends of Resaca representatives provided a battlefield tour to the visitors' center display designer.

As state revenues plunged over the course of 2009, DNR decided to defer construction of the visitors' center for fear of sending the wrong signal about state spending, even though construction was to be funded from a bond issue rather than an appropriation. Consequently, completion date for the visitors' center is unknown, and it almost certainly will not serve as a centerpiece for the state's Civil War Sesquicentennial efforts.

Historian Bill Scaife dies

We're sad to report that Bill Scaife, Civil War historian and great friend to Georgia Battlefields Association, died on 17 August 2009. Bill wrote concise volumes on the Atlanta Campaign, the March to the Sea, and Hood's Tennessee Campaign, all supplemented with invaluable maps. Bill also wrote a Johnston's River Line monograph that was used by GBA and others to support efforts to save remaining evidence of both the Confederate and Federal lines. Bill was perhaps most closely associated with the Allatoona Pass battlefield. He not only wrote a book about the battle, but he lived in a house at the southern entrance to the Pass. Bill was a U.S. Army veteran and a past president of the Civil War Round Table of Atlanta. GBA has lost a friend, and everyone interested in the Civil War in Georgia has lost an irreplaceable historical resource.



Bill Scaife recounting the Battle of Allatoona Pass for the GBA annual tour in March 2005.



Bill Scaife explaining the concept of Johnston's River Line: February 2003.

Georgia Battlefields Association
7 Camden Rd NE
Atlanta GA 30309

www.georgiabattlefields.org

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