

Newsletter format change

Welcome to the new format for the Georgia Battlefields newsletter.

In 2000, almost all Georgia Battlefields Association newsletters were distributed via the US Postal Service. Consequently, the newsletter was prepared and printed on 8½ by 14 (legal size) paper, so that if it was folded twice and taped shut, one of the visible sides had a return address, the month, year, and space for an address label or hand written address. When bulk rate mailing proved too cumbersome since the Postal Service required that we pre-sort the mailings by zip code and deliver them only to the downtown Atlanta post office, we resorted to affixing a first-class stamp and then dropping the newsletters into any mail box. This added to the cost since we also paid to have the newsletter printed.

In February 2001, we introduced distribution via e-mail and encouraged recipients to switch to that delivery method. It took about ten years, but e-mail distribution overcame the printed and mailed method, whereupon we printed the newsletter in house but still had the cost of stamps. Today, 98% of distribution is via e-mail, so printing and postage costs are minimal. Consequently, we think it's time to abandon the old format and print on 8½ by 11 (standard letter size) paper. With some decrease in the masthead and margins, we still have the same amount of content space.

GBA represented at American Battlefield Trust conference

As has been true since 1996, Georgia Battlefields Association (GBA) was represented at the annual [American Battlefield Trust](#) (ABT) meeting, held this year 5-7 June in Chantilly, Virginia, and now known as the Color Bearer conference. GBA has worked closely with ABT (and its previous incarnations: Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, Civil War Preservation Trust, Civil War Trust) because of our common interests in preservation and education. Because ABT's staff excels at the process of acquiring land (raising the funds, negotiating the agreements, and preparing the legal documents), GBA focuses on discovering properties for sale, initial contact with the owners, and contributing towards the purchase price. Our newsletters since January 2025 have reported on the successful acquisition of properties in Georgia at Ringgold Gap, Rocky Face Ridge/Mill Creek Gap, and Kennesaw Mountain. ABT is currently in the process of acquiring land at Resaca.

At the June 2026 Color Bearer conference, ABT reported on its cumulative preservation accomplishments since establishment of its predecessor organizations in 1987: 62,941 acres saved at 160 battlefield sites in 25 states. Since preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 sites was added to ABT's mission about ten years ago at the request of the National Park Service, 2,332 acres of Revolutionary War sites have been preserved.

Regarding ABT's education mission, it has expanded production of curriculum materials, including videos that were especially appreciated by teachers during the pandemic years, when field trips were severely curtailed. These videos are also available on [ABT's YouTube channel](#). In 2025, ABT released 140 new videos and updated almost 400 web site pages.

About 30,000 of the 62,941 acres have been preserved using matching grants approved by the [American Battlefield Protection Program](#) (ABPP), funded by federal appropriations and administered through the National Park Service. ABT has received \$34,000,000 from ABPP over the last 18 months. On 3 June, just before the ABT conference, the House of Representatives reauthorized (by a vote of 404-13) the [ABPP through 2036](#). If current ABPP funding levels continue, ABT estimates \$162,000,000 will be available for matching grants. If ABT (with the help of GBA and other preservation organizations) can raise the matching funds, the total would be \$324,000,000 available for battlefield acquisition, restoration, and interpretation over the next ten years.

ABT believes it can raise the necessary matching funds because of its performance over the last 22 years. ABT's first capital campaign (2004-2006) set a goal of \$19 million but realized \$21 million. Its second capital campaign (2011-2015) set a goal of \$40 million but raised \$52 million. Its current capital campaign has a goal of raising \$125 million by the 250th anniversary of the British surrender at Yorktown (19 October 2031) and has already raised over \$124 million.

Battlefield Trust releases fifth survey of preservation's economic impact

[American Battlefield Trust](#) and its predecessor organizations have periodically hired research firms to estimate how preserved battlefield sites impact the economies of the towns, counties, and states where the sites are located. Previous assessments were released in 1994, 2003, 2012, and 2015. The most recent assessment was released 11 June. The purpose of the assessments is to provide preservationists with the information needed to argue that preserved battlefields are not only good for educating people about the nation's history but also good for the economies of the surrounding areas.

The methodologies have been improved because of the proliferation of mobile devices and apps that depend on location, such as GPS, mapping, and weather forecasts. The companies that control the apps "anonymize" the data by removing personally identifiable information (PII) and then sell the data. Research companies (among other groups) buy the data and can make estimates of, in this case, the number of battlefield visits.

As an example, I spent five hours at the Antietam Battlefield on 6 June 2026 and checked the weather forecast and Google maps. The research company can determine that a mobile device was used for an extended period within the confines of the battlefield by someone whose device is normally associated with Atlanta, Georgia. The logical conclusion is that someone is a non-local visiting the battlefield.

In addition to using National Park Service estimates of battlefield visits during the year 2024, the research company selected 15 battlefield parks (13 national and 2 state) for closer examination. Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (KMNBP) was one of the sites chosen. For this latest assessment, KMNBP was the third most visited battlefield overall. In Georgia, we're aware that KMNBP is the most visited *Civil War* battlefield park. We also know the great majority of visitors are local and use the park for recreation rather than historical education because it is the largest greenspace in a metropolitan area with a population over five million. For KMNBP, the proportion of local visitors in 2024 was 92%. In contrast, Gettysburg National Military Park has fewer visitors, but the majority are non-local, and the park is not proximate to a large metropolitan area.

Logically enough, since we are in the midst of celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution, the Boston area sites (Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Boston Massacre) had the second greatest number of visitors and a lower proportion of local visitors.

Before scrolling down farther, if you're curious about the National Park Service battle site with the greatest number of visitors and the greatest proportion of non-local visitors, the answer is below the next article that relates to our 2027 tour.

GBA 2027 tour: Will be 8-11 April and will cover three weeks that followed the Battle of Resaca, including actions at Rome Crossroads, Rome, Adairsville, Cassville, New Hope Church, Pickett's Mill, and Dallas.

Answer: Pearl Harbor National Memorial.