Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation

2026

Annual Report

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield FOUNDATION



PRESERVING OUR HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

President's Message – Gary Bishop



One of the foundation's most important roles is supporting educational programs at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. This year, the foundation expanded its investment in education by providing resources for a Homeschool Day, four Field Trip Days, and a weeklong summer camp. This support allowed the park to welcome more young people and provide engaging, hands-on learning experiences that bring the history of Wilson's Creek to life.

The foundation also remained active in strengthening the park's museum collection through artifact acquisition. This year, the foundation purchased several historical photographs that have been added to the collection. Photographs offer a powerful and personal glimpse into the lives of those who experienced the Civil War, helping preserve the human stories behind the history.

Donor support gives the foundation the flexibility to act quickly when park staff identify artifacts and other historical materials that would make meaningful additions to the museum collection. We are proud to help build a collection that preserves and shares the story of Wilson's Creek and the broader Trans-Mississippi Theater for future generations.

In partnership with the American Battlefield Trust, the foundation also contributed to the preservation of five additional acres on Bloody Hill. We look forward to publicly announcing and celebrating this important conservation achievement. The foundation will continue working closely with Wilson's Creek National Battlefield to seize opportunities to protect additional properties within the battlefield's legislative boundary and ensure these historic landscapes remain preserved for generations to come.

Executive Director's Message – Melissa Adler



We started the fiscal year with the wind at our backs.

The foundation received a grant from the National Park Foundation (NPF) as part of our ongoing participation in the Collective Campaign for National Parks.

The Campaign represents a nationwide movement to strengthen philanthropic support for our national parks and help ensure these iconic places thrive for generations to come.

This one-time, flexible grant is serving as a strategic catalyst for the foundation. It is helping us strengthen our fundraising capabilities, address current challenges, and invest in the future by giving us the flexibility to put resources where they are needed most.

With this support, we are better equipped to grow, innovate, and more effectively serve both Wilson's Creek National Battlefield and the visitors who deserve to enjoy and experience this special place—today and for generations to come.

How are we using the grant?

One goal we have already accomplished is increasing the foundation's visibility in the visitor center. Look for a new foundation sign as you enter the exhibits and be sure to pick up a rack card on your way out. Visitors may also notice a flyer featuring the foundation's commemorative coin. The capacity grant made it possible for us to design this beautiful challenge coin as a new source of revenue.

We are also working on a new website that will make it easier to plan a visit to the battlefield and learn more about supporting the foundation. And who doesn't like easier?

A portion of the grant was invested in the foundation's endowment fund—a way for us to pay it forward and provide resources for future foundation projects.

Finally, the foundation hired an outside accounting service. This provides additional financial expertise, strengthens our internal controls, and increases accountability. Most importantly, it gives our donors greater confidence that we are being responsible stewards of their generous financial gifts.

We are incredibly grateful to the National Park Foundation for this opportunity to grow, strengthen our organization, and build a stronger future for Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

Thank you, NPF, for helping us move forward with the wind at our backs!

Superintendent's Message – Sarah Cunningham



To our Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation family, partners, and friends:

Thank you for another year of steadfast support for Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. FY2026 was a year of steady progress at the park—maintaining operations, investing in visitor experience, and advancing stewardship across the landscape—supported by collaborative work with our partners.

This year, we remained focused on keeping the park open, accessible, and safe for all who visit. In calendar year 2025, Wilson's Creek saw over 370,000 visitors. Several spring storms brought heavy rain and localized flooding, resulting in minor trail damage in parts of the battlefield. Thanks to the steady work of our maintenance and resource staff, we were able to assess conditions quickly, make needed repairs, and reopen affected trails as soon as floodwaters receded. Our team's responsiveness ensured that visitors continued to enjoy the landscape and experience the story of Wilson's Creek with minimal disruption.

Partnerships continued to support our progress. Together with partners, we deepened support for education, collections, and landscape stewardship:

Collections & access. We finalized an agreement with The Library Center to continue digitizing photographs and documents—making Wilson's Creek's history more accessible to researchers, educators, and visitors. The foundation also donated several artifacts to the battlefield this year which will be digitized as well.

Youth & internships. Media Stewards and Next Generation Stewards interns contributed to publications, digital content, visitor services, and maintenance. We continued hosting "Homeschool Day", welcoming an estimated 300–500 students and chaperones. In Fiscal Year 2025, Wilson's Creek hosted nearly 8,000 students!

Summer camp & curriculum. In collaboration with the foundation, we aligned summer camp activities with curriculum standards and the America 250 theme, expanding the program to include four one-day field experiences alongside the traditional weeklong program which had the largest-ever youth participation.

Stewardship across the battlefield advanced on several fronts:

Historic viewsheds. This year we began laying the groundwork to restore several historic viewsheds across the battlefield. This provides opportunities for the landscape to more closely reflect how it appeared in 1861. Restoring these open vistas will allow visitors to better visualize troop movements, understand the terrain's influence on the conflict, and experience the battlefield in a way that more authentically connects past and present. This early planning work, supported by partners and donors, marks an important step toward enhancing the interpretive power of the landscape for future generations.

Prairie & habitat restoration. We continued work this year to re-establish portions of the battlefield as open prairie / savanna, reflecting the more expansive grassland character that existed here in 1861. Restoring these areas helps return the cultural landscape to a condition that more closely resembles what soldiers and civilians would have experienced at the time of the battle. These efforts also support healthy wildlife habitat and set the stage for continued restoration in the years ahead.

Conservation corps support. A twoweek conservation corps crew advanced viewshed and prairie / savanna work, complemented by Heartland Invasive Plant Management Team staff based at Wilson's Creek.

Battlefield preservation. This year we continued working closely with landowners, the foundation, and the American Battlefield Trust to advance longterm land preservation efforts around Wilson's Creek. Strengthening these relationships helps identify and protect historically significant properties as opportunities arise, ensuring that key portions of the battlefield landscape remain intact for future generations. Our shared commitment to collaborative preservation remains central to safeguarding the cultural resources that define Wilson's Creek.

As we look ahead, our priorities remain clear: protect the landscape, connect people to history through education and interpretation, and invest in the partnerships that make Wilson's Creek stronger. Thank you—to Melissa Adler and the foundation board and members, our volunteers, educators, researchers, donors, and neighbors—for the many ways you supported the park this year. Your collaboration magnifies our impact, and we're grateful to keep building this work together.

With appreciation,

Sarah Cunningham

Foundation Board of Directors and Staff

Foundation Officers

President - Gary Bishop

Vice-President - Nicholas Inman

Secretary - Michael Hampton

Treasurer - Brian Hickman

Board Members

Laurence Bryan
Sandra Byrd
David Jerome
Whitney Morrow
David K. Olive
Andy Scholz
Noah Snelson
Kara Turner
Mark Whisler

Staff

Executive Director - Melissa Adler

NPS Liaison

Superintendent - Sarah Cunningham

Committee Chairpersons

Bylaws
Gary Bishop

Events and Fundraising
Laurence Bryan

Website
Mark Whisler

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield FOUNDATION

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation Mission Statement

Support Wilson's Creek National Battlefield in partnership with the National Park Service by preserving Civil War history, acquiring and safeguarding relevant properties and materials, and promoting the park through fundraising, volunteerism, education, advocacy, and research.

Saving Bloody Hill

On the morning of August 10, 1861, Union and Southern troops clashed at Wilson's Creek in the second major battle of the Civil War. Some of the most pivotal and deadly moments of that day unfolded on a ridge that became known as Bloody Hill.

We had a rare and meaningful opportunity to protect a portion of this hallowed ground. The Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation partnered with the American Battlefield Trust to preserve five acres on Bloody Hill, committing $25,000 toward this critical effort. This pledge is part of a nationwide American Battlefield Trust campaign to save 141 acres of threatened battlefield land at Wilson's Creek, Shiloh, and Bentonville.

Preserving these five acres safeguards the historic character and integrity of the battlefield, allowing visitors to experience the terrain much as soldiers did in 1861.

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST
PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

New Historic Acquisitions

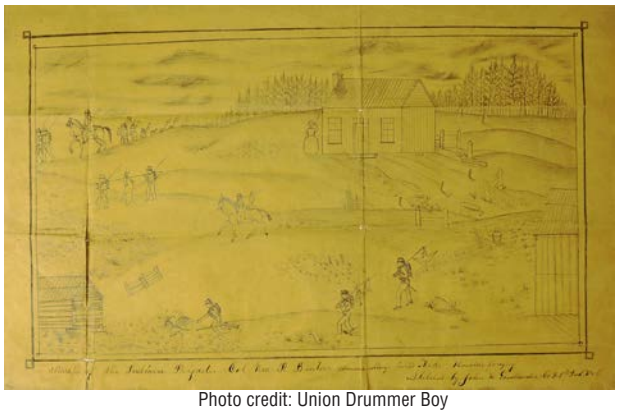


Photo credit: Union Drummer Boy

A hand-drawn sketch by John W. Goodlander of the 8th Indiana Infantry

Goodlander was mustered in as a private into Company F on September 5, 1861, and would rise to the rank of sergeant. He was listed as POW on July 28, 1864. The drawing is of the infantry foraging food in Arkansas. The 8th Indiana Infantry had engagements with the Springfield Expedition (MO), Milford (MO), Pea Ridge (AR), and Vicksburg (MS). The battlefield has three other drawings in the collection by Goodlander. This drawing will enhance the grouping of this collection, depicting relevant scenes.



A CDV (carte de visite) of Colonel Patrick Burke

Colonel Burke fought at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, first serving in the 1st Missouri Regiment, Company K, and later in the 66th Illinois, part of the renowned Western Sharpshooters. He was wounded at the Battle of Rome Cross Road and later died from his injuries.

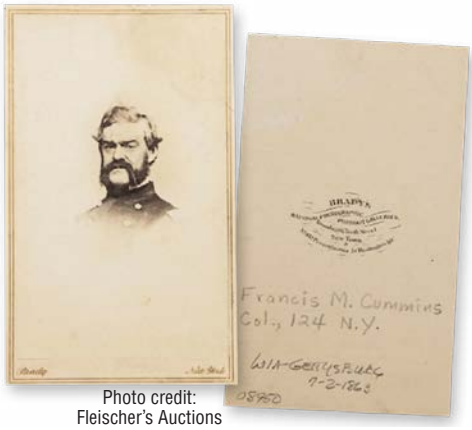


Photo credit: Fleischer's Auctions

A CDV (carte de visite) of Col. Francis M. Cummins

Cummins was a member of the First Iowa Infantry and a Wilson's Creek battle participant. He later served at Shiloh as a member of the Sixth Iowa Infantry and at Gettysburg with the 124th New York Infantry.



A CDV (carte de visite) of General Franz Sigel

Sigel remains one of the more controversial figures connected to the Battle of Wilson's Creek. His failure to properly picket his position at the Joseph Sharp farm played a significant role in the Union defeat. Yet he later proved far more effective at the Battle of Pea Ridge, where he directed Union artillery against General Van Dorn's Confederates with notable success.



A CDV (carte de visite) of Lt. Col. William H. Stark

Lt. Col. Stark served with the 24th Missouri at the Battle of Pea Ridge and was a member of General Samuel Curtis's staff. The Battlefield already holds a remarkable grouping of Stark-related objects in its museum collection, and this historic photograph will add to that story.

2025-2026 Annual Campaign Donors

We deeply appreciate the generous individuals, businesses, and foundations who supported the foundation this year. Their commitment strengthens the foundation's capacity to support programs, acquire valuable artifacts, advocate for the park, and contribute to vital land preservation efforts, especially during these challenging times for our national parks.

Below, you will find a listing of our esteemed donors for the fiscal year spanning August 2025 to July 2026. It is through the unwavering financial support of these dedicated patrons that we can make the greatest contribution to Wilson's Creek National Battlefield and continue preserving this hallowed ground for future generations.

PLATINUM

(gifts of $5,000 and above)

National Park Foundation

Hulston Family Foundation Fund

John Harris

John L. Nau, III

Senator Roy D. Blunt

GOLD

(gifts of $2,500 to $4,999)

Bass Pro Shops

Karen Sweeney

Central Bank MEMBER FDIC
Central Trust

Tal and Rosalie O'Reilly Wooten Family Foundation

SILVER

(gifts of $1,000 to $2,499)

GREAT SOUTHERN BANK

Guaranty Bank
Your Life. Your Money. Your Bank.

Bob and Susan Beine

Cameron and Gayle Collins

Charlie & Mary Beth O'Reilly Family Foundation

Christina Moore

Kelly Farner
(In Memory of Bruce Farner)

Marianne D Dosch

Mary Abroe

BRONZE

(gifts of $500 to $999)

Carl Cantrell
(In Memory of Lois Jean Cantrell)

Jack and Cynthia Muench

Jane Ann Johnson

Mark and Sharon Cunningham

Robert and Barbara Kipfer

Susan Croce Kelly

The McQueary Family

William and Nancy Piston

Worldwide Promotional Products

COPPER

(gifts of $250 to $499)

Brian and Brandy Hickman
Christopher and Susan Jones
Civil War Roundtable of the Ozarks
Crystal Sharp
David and Mary Christiano
David and Sandra Byrd
David Snoke
Dennis Hood
Gary and Jennifer Bishop
Hadley and Jacqueline Ford
James McKay
Johnnie Jenkens
Laurence and Diana Bryan
Loren and Elaine Cook
Phillip Toon
Steve and Corine Ross
Thomas Doneker
William and Louise Jackson
William Truman Wayne

Other Donors

(gifts of $100 to $249)

Alan Kloehn
Caroline Butler
Cynthia Schowengerdt
Daughters of Union Veterans
David Jerome
Florence Thompson
James and Patricia Haas
Johnny Vaughn
Kaarie Roberts
Leslie and Allen Cantrell
Linda Kolze
Louie and Whitney Morrow
Mark and Karen Perreault
Mark Whisler
Maurice Joe Martinez
Noah and Laura Snelson
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Randy and Cindy McGinnis
Richard L. Harding, Jr.
Robert and Patricia Baker
Roberta Rozell
Scott Sherrow
Steven Kintz
Thomas and Debbie Haynes
Tim and Roberta Montgomery

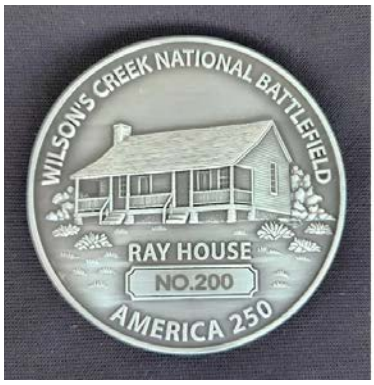
Mistakes and omissions are sincerely regrettable and can be reported to madler@wilsonscreek.com.

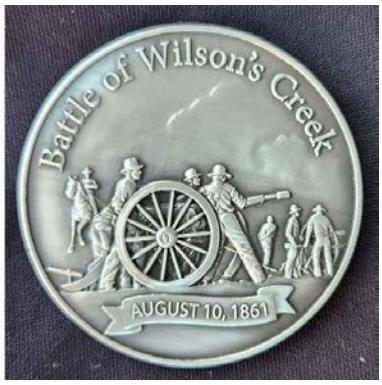
A Historic Year. A Lasting Tribute.

In 2026, America marks its 250th anniversary, while Wilson's Creek National Battlefield commemorates the 165th anniversary of the Battle of Wilson's Creek. These milestones are powerful reminders of why preservation matters. To honor these milestones, the foundation is offering a limited-edition commemorative coin with a $250 donation. Proceeds support preservation and education at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

Only 250 coins are available, each individually numbered and inspired by the artwork of Greg Harlin.

Reserve yours today at ***wilsonscreek.com/coin*** and help preserve this historic landscape for future generations.





Supporting Education



Field Trip Days



Summer Camp



Homeschool Days

Raising Awareness



Melissa Adler and Rep. Eric Burlison

The foundation participated in the National Park Foundation Park Hill Day. We attended six meetings with Missouri lawmakers. In addition to providing updates on Wilson's Creek and Newtonia, the foundation asked lawmakers to support the America the Beautiful Act, a bipartisan bill that provides $2 billion annually to address the severe deferred maintenance in parks and public land.



Missouri Cherry Blossom Festival

The foundation participated in the Missouri Cherry Blossom Festival and hosted a program by author Tim Pletkovich featuring interviews with grandchildren of Union Army veterans and the stories passed down through generations.

Financial Report

Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements - Year Ended July 31, 2026

Receipts

Donations: $64,441
Memberships: $3,735
Book and Print Sales: $951
Fundraising Events: $17,907
Investment Income: $28,243

Total Receipts: $115,277

Disbursements

Salaries and Payroll Taxes: $53,921
Office Expenses and Insurance: $9,559
Printing and Postage: $730
Special Events: $389

Total Disbursements: $64,599

Cash and Investments

Current Assets (Cash and investments), beginning of year: $558,485
Current Assets (Cash, investments and prepaid payroll), end of year: $599,807
Net change in Current Assets (Cash, investments and prepaid payroll): . . .$41,322

Summary – Cash, Investments and prepaid payroll

Current assets end of year: $599,807
Current Liabilities: $1,004
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions: $335,201
Net Assets with Board Designations: $219,999

Cash available for General Operations: $43,603

Artifacts purchased out of other funds: $6,864
Grant to American Battlefield Trust for land preservation: $25,000



Wilson's Creek
National Battlefield
FOUNDATION

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instagram.com/wilsonscreekfoundation
WilsonsCreekNationalBattlefield

Front Cover: Edwards Cabin Above: Wilson's Creek at Sunset

Preserving Our History for Future Generations.