

## **Preservation By Fire Richmond National Battlefield Park, Virginia National Fire Plan – Fuels Reduction**

On March 21, 2005, Richmond National Battlefield Park (VA) successfully conducted a prescribed burn of approximately one-half acre of non-forested Civil War earthworks at Fort Harrison. The primary objective was to maintain the interpreted earthworks by promoting native tall grasses that impede erosion of these historic resources. Native grasses also require less herbicide and less physical intervention on the earthworks than non-native grasses.

To preserve as much duff as possible and minimize the potential for erosion, a fast moving fire was the key. The grass was ignited by lighting the ridgeline of the earthworks followed by igniting the base, allowing the fire to run quickly upslope. The burn was experimental, at the end of this growing season the vegetative cover in the burned section will be compared to an unburned section of earthwork to determine if the objectives were met.

Firefighters came from Richmond NBP, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and Shenandoah National Park. Prior to the burn, park neighbors and assisting agencies were notified in person. They also received a site bulletin describing the proposed burn.

Richmond National Battlefield Park commemorates more than 30 Civil War battles around the city, the former capital of the Confederacy.

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*Scenes from the Fort Harrison Prescribed Fire.  
Photos by Barb Stewart.*