



THE TRAIL GUIDE



Sign Procedures



Civil War Trails, Inc.
P.O. Box 1862
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CivilWarTrails.org

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Civil War Trails, Inc., is a 501(3)(c)
not-for-profit educational corporation.

Adding a Site to the Civil War Trails (CWT) Program

STEP 1: Submitting Your Application

Please submit the following:

- ☐ **Text** – Proposed text of **no more than 275 words**.
This should include captions and citations for submitted media.
(Please carefully read the style guide on page 5.)
- ☐ **Images/Media** – Photographs, Illustrations, draft maps, etc. to be included on the sign. (See page 5.) Submit as separate images, not inside a document.
- ☐ **Explanation of Significance** – A brief description of the significance of the proposed site. Why is the visitor standing there?
- ☐ **On-Site Photograph** – A photograph of someone in the sign's planned location, with the person standing as if reading the sign.
- ☐ **Stakeholder List** – A list of community stakeholders that contributed to the text (including contact information).
- ☐ **Completed Membership Form** – Page 3
- ☐ **Completed Property Owner Form** – Page 4

Check the boxes to confirm that each part has been completed and include this page with your application. Submit the application to Drew Gruber, Executive Director of Civil War Trails, at executivedirector@civilwartrails.org.

Best Practices

Civil War Trails puts the traveler in the footsteps of history. Is the reader standing where the event took place?

With a limit of 275 words, detailed troop movements can be streamlined by drafting them onto a map. Please include a rough draft of any maps that might be necessary for your panel.

STEP 2: Review by CWT Staff and Board

- CWT reviews the proposed content and media.
- The CWT team returns an edited text to the applicant and stakeholders.
- After applicant and stakeholders approve the final text, the CWT team will move to design.
- The final design/layout is provided to the applicant and stakeholders as a PDF file for minor feedback/edits.

STEP 3: Final Steps

- Once the PDF is approved, the CWT team schedules the installation.
- Prior to the installation, the applicant calls in utilities marking at the proposed site.
- CWT installs and coordinates any DOT work necessary.
- CWT updates all relevant fulfillment pieces to reflect the new site.
- CWT helps coordinate a press release after the installation.

Maintenance Procedures

STEP 1: Partner informs the Civil War Trails (CWT) team of needed maintenance

- Partner provides a current image of the CWT sign/site in question, as well as a description of the needed work.
- For signs needing revised content, partner provides suggested new text, including:
 - Proposed new text of **no more than 275 words** or line edits to current text.
 - New media to be included.
 - List of community stakeholders consulted, including contact info.
- Partners update sponsor and property owner forms, pages 3 and 4.

STEP 2: Content Review

- The CWT team reviews the proposed updates.
- The CWT team returns comments to partner.
- After partner approves revised text, the CWT team designs the new panel.
- The final design/layout is provided to the applicant and stakeholders as a PDF file for minor feedback/edits.

Perks of Membership

The annual CWT membership fee covers both maintenance and marketing.

Maintenance requests cover both the interpretive and directional signage.

STEP 3: Final Steps

- Once the PDF has been approved, the CWT team schedules maintenance.
- Prior to the site visit, the partner calls in utilities marking at the proposed site (if the sign is being moved).
- CWT performs required maintenance.
- CWT updates all relevant fulfillment pieces to reflect any changes.
- CWT helps coordinate a press release after the work is complete.

Membership Form

(Please type or print neatly)

LOCATION INFORMATION

Name of Proposed Sign(s): _____

Proposed Sign Location (physical address, GPS, and/or landmarks): _____

ORGANIZATION COVERING INITIAL COSTS (\$3,500)

INITIATING ORGANIZATION

PRIMARY CONTACT (NAME)

ADDRESS

PHONE

EMAIL

SIGNATURE

DATE

ORGANIZATION COVERING THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (\$300)

MEMBER ORGANIZATION

PRIMARY CONTACT (NAME)

ADDRESS

PHONE

EMAIL

SIGNATURE

DATE

I understand that should membership lapse, Civil War Trails, Inc. retains the right to remove/edit infrastructure associated with this project.

Property Owner Agreement

(Please type or print neatly)

Permission is hereby granted this _____ day of _____, 20____, by:

NAME

APPLICABLE COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION NAME

to *Civil War Trails, Inc.*, and its contractors to enter upon that portion of my/our land to install and/or maintain sign(s) as part of the Civil War Trails program. I/we understand that I/we will be contacted prior to said installation and that I/we will have the final authority as to the marker's placement and location.

I/we understand that *Civil War Trails, Inc.*, or its contractors will maintain those sign(s) as long as it remains on my/our property, is sponsored, and that the sign(s) will be moved or removed by the *Civil War Trails* team at any time in the future if so requested by me/us or my/our successors or *Civil War Trails* should the sign sponsor/membership lapse.

PROPOSED TITLE OF SIGN

PHYSICAL ADDRESS

PROPERTY OWNER SIGNATURE

DATE

PROPERTY OWNER ADDRESS

PROPERTY OWNER PHONE

EMAIL

INITIATING ORGANIZATION SIGNATURE

DATE

INITIATING ORGANIZATION ADDRESS

INITIATING ORGANIZATION PHONE

EMAIL

SIGNATURE OF SPONSOR/MEMBER

DATE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CIVIL WAR TRAILS

DATE



WHAT MAKES A GOOD CIVIL WAR TRAILS SITE/SIGN

- Are you standing where the event took place? If not, can you see the historic location from the proposed site?
- Why is the visitor standing here?
- Is the site welcoming?

TEXT SPECIFICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS.

- Sign text should be **275 words maximum**, including main text and any captions, sidebars, or quotes. Submitted in Microsoft Word.
- Whenever possible, start with a sentence that places the sign in context for the reader: e.g., "You are standing in the heart of 19th-century Staunton ..." or "Early in the afternoon of November 23, 1862, the river in front of you was filled with celebrating Union sailors."
- Use active voice: For example: "The cavalrymen charged the artillery battery." is preferable to: "The artillery battery was charged by the cavalrymen."

Best Practices

Does the sign fuel your imagination?

Does it make you care about the story?

Does it give the reader a sense of place? Does it make you look up?

Does the stakeholder group who helped write the sign represent your entire community?

Is the site ADA compliant?

Text Guidelines

Civil War

(not War Between the States, etc.)

African American and Black

are both acceptable

Battle of Gettysburg, etc.

(Capitalize "B")

Siege of Chattanooga, etc.

(Capitalize "S")

Capt., Col., Lt., Maj., Pvt., Lt. Col.

are the proper use

Gen. is the proper use for any rank of general

Eastern Theater, Western Theater, etc.

C.S., Confederate, Southern

(not Rebel, unless in a quote)

U.S., Union, Federal, Northern

(not Yankee, unless in a quote)

U.S. Colored Troops first reference, **USCT** thereafter

MEDIA, IMAGES, LOGOS

- Images should be 300ppi or better.
- Civil War Trails does not pay for image rights.
- Images that are not from a public domain source may be used with permission of the owner.
- Credits for images should be included: e.g., "Courtesy Library of Congress" or "Courtesy Dana B. Shoaf Collection."
- No logos, other than trademarked CWT logos, are allowed.

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

- Applicants may request up to two QR codes on sign panels.
- Codes can be requested as part of new site applications or routine maintenance.
- Codes will direct visitors to additional information approved by the CWT staff.
- A single code can be placed on the top left of the sign banner and will not impact sign content.
- Choosing two codes will reduce historic media and word count.
- No other URLs, apps, or other digital links are permitted.

