

Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman
Hearing Memorandum

July 15, 2018

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Committee Staff— Terry Camp and Holly Baker
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on **H.R. 5979 (Rep. Harold Rogers)**, To establish the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument in the State of Kentucky as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.
July 17, 2018, 10:00 AM; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 5979, “Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument Act”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 5979, introduced by Representative Harold Rogers (R-KY-05), establishes the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument in the State of Kentucky as a unit of the National Park System.

Witnesses

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Member of Congress, Kentucky’s 5th district

Mr. Bill Neikirk
Founder
Mill Springs Battlefield Association
Somerset, KY

Background

The battle of Mill Springs, one of the Kentucky’s largest Civil War clashes, occurred on January 19, 1862. Kentucky held high strategic importance for both the Confederacy and the Union. The Confederacy needed to hold the Cumberland Gap and the Union saw southern Kentucky as an entrance to Confederate strongholds in Tennessee.¹

In October 1861, Confederate troops set up winter camp on the banks of the Cumberland River in south central Kentucky. In January 1862, three Union regiments arrived with the intention of driving the Confederate troops from their position. After a series of attacks, the

¹ “Disaster on the Cumberland”. Experience Mill Springs Battlefield. Mill Springs Battlefield Association website.
<http://www.millsprings.net/index.php/2013-10-01-18-24-22/battle-of-mill-springs>

Confederate forces finally retreated, leaving behind equipment, horses, and artillery.² The battle resulted in the loss of 155 Confederate troops and 55 Union troops.

The Battle of Mill Springs bolstered the Union's morale as it was the first major victory of the war following the disastrous defeat at First Manassas. Winning the battle enabled the Union to push all Confederate powers out of Kentucky by February 1862 and advance into middle Tennessee.³

Mill Springs Battlefield was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994. The boundary was expanded in 2008 and now encompasses over 1,500 acres. The nonprofit Mill Springs Battlefield Association currently owns over 900 acres of battlefield land and operates a visitor center at the site.⁴ At the direction of Congress, the National Park Service initiated a special resource study of the Mill Springs Battlefield for potential inclusion as a unit of the National Park System (Public Law 113-291).⁵

H.R. 5979 establishes the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument as a unit of the National Park System. The proposed Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument would be approximately 1,500 acres. The Mill Springs Battlefield Association will donate 900 acres within the proposed boundary to the National Park Service and will continue to support preservation of the battlefield as a friends group.

A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate as S. 3176, by Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY).

Major Provisions of H.R. 5979

- Establishes the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument as a unit of the National Park System.
- The Secretary may acquire land located within the boundary of the Monument by donation, purchase with donated funds, or exchange.
- No Private property will be managed as part of the Monument without written consent of the owner of the property.
- This legislation does not create a buffer zone outside the Monument.
- The proposed Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument would be approximately 1,500 acres.

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ Mudpuppy & Waterdog, Inc. (2010). "Interpretive Plan for Mill Springs Battlefield, Pulaski and Wayne Counties, Kentucky—Part 1". Prepared for the Mill Springs Battlefield Association.

http://www.millsprings.net/images/PDF/Interpretive%20Plan%20for%20the%20Mill%20Springs%20Battlefield_Draft_Part%201.pdf

⁵ "Mill Springs Battlefield Special Resource Study". National Park Service.

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=58557>

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.