

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Gettysburg National Military Park Environmental Factors



(C. DAVIS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE)

A box turtle attempts to cross a park avenue. Increasing traffic on park roads puts park wildlife at risk.

With almost 2 million visitors a year, the natural resources of Gettysburg National Military Park are prone to stresses from pollution, traffic, and nearby development. It is the mission of the park *"to preserve and protect the resources associated with the Battle of Gettysburg..."*. Many features park managers strive to preserve are natural features such as topography, wooded areas, thickets and wetlands; which were all present during the battle. At the time of the battle these features provided cover and concealment for attack and retreat.

Today the park faces a different kind of battle. With the increased mobility of our advancing society, the park is experiencing ecological changes. Changes range from the introduction of invasive exotic plant species to the developing of lands surrounding the battlefield. Park managers are taking an active role in addressing these changes with an adaptive management strategy. As scientific research provides protocols for monitoring the parks present state, we are able to deduce areas of concern that need assistance. Using research as tools, park managers can make decisions based on sound ecological or historical facts to ensure park resources are being protected. Volunteers, local organizations, and university researchers

provide additional assistance in identifying environmental concerns and making management decisions.



Did You Know?

John Burns, a 72 year old veteran of the War of 1812 and resident of Gettysburg, fought side by side with Union soldiers in the first day of the battle of Gettysburg in 1863 and was wounded several times. His service is commemorated by a battlefield statue at Gettysburg National Military Park.

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