

**The Battle of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville
Staff Ride
-and-
National Fire Management Strategic Workshop
Fredericksburg, VA**

March 22-23, 2016

**March 21, 24-25,
2016**



Hello, you are receiving this notice as you have been identified as a participant for the 2016 National Fire Management Strategic Workshop and staff ride. The attendee list includes field fire staff, regional fire staff and Coordinators, NFLT Line Officer Team members, Regional Chiefs and Refuge Supervisors, Branch staff, and headquarters staff.

The Wildland Fire Management Strategic workshop will bring together U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildland Fire Program leaders and subject matter experts to build a framework for implementing the *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Strategic Plan for Managing Wildland Fire* (2015) and address major obstacles that challenge the program. The staff ride will be a central element of this workshop and allow participants to build a shared vision using historical analogs of leadership and decision making.

STAFF RIDE INFORMATION

Staff rides represent a unique and persuasive method of conveying the lessons of the past... for current application. Properly conducted, these exercises bring to life, on the very terrain where historic encounters took place, examples, applicable today as in the past, of leadership, tactics and strategy, communications... This historical study, particularly with personal reconnaissance, offers valuable opportunities to develop professional leadership (Robertson 1944)

A staff ride consists of three distinct phases: 1) Preliminary Study Phase - a systematic preliminary study of a selected incident; 2) Field Study Phase - an extensive visit and evaluation of the actual incident landscape, significant leadership-decision timelines, and associated learning sites or stands; and 3) Integration Phase - an opportunity for the group to integrate and share lessons derived from the SR.

The preliminary study phase for this staff ride will require significant initiative and diligence by all participants. Thoughtful pre-reading and preparation prior to the SR, will ensure that one is ready and organized to contribute helpful discussion and analysis during the SR. The primary resources for your preliminary study are the following books:

Fredericksburg:

[The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock,](#)
[by Francis O'Reilly](#)



Chancellorsville:

[Chancellorsville,](#) by Stephen Sears



Participants are required to acquire and read the two books prior to the staff ride. You will be receiving additional preliminary reading/study information in the coming weeks, however it is recommended participants begin reading the books now. It is paramount, to make this opportunity a meaningful learning experience, that you read and understand the preliminary study materials prior to your arrival. It is usually apparent when one has not read or prepared sufficiently. These words of advice are not to discourage participants. Rather, the intent is to invoke professionalism to enhance the overall experience for all attendees and the Service.

Additional Background Reading:

["Bayonet! Forward"; My Civil War Reminiscences, by Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain](#)

[Gods and Generals: A Novel of the Civil War \(The Civil War: 1861-1865\), by Jeff Shaara](#)

Battle of Fredericksburg

The Battle of Fredericksburg was fought December 11–15, 1862, in and around [Fredericksburg, Virginia](#), between General [Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia](#) and the [Union Army of the Potomac](#), commanded by [Major General Ambrose Burnside](#). The Union Army's futile frontal attacks on December 13 against entrenched Confederate defenders on the heights behind the city is remembered as one of the most one-sided battles of the [American Civil War](#), with Union casualties more than twice as heavy as those suffered by the Confederates. (Wikipedia 2015)

Battle of Chancellorsville

The Battle of Chancellorsville was a major battle of the [American Civil War](#), and the principal engagement of the Chancellorsville Campaign.^[a] It was fought from April 30 to May 6, 1863, in [Spotsylvania County, Virginia](#), near the village of [Chancellorsville](#). Two related battles were fought nearby on May 3 in the vicinity of [Fredericksburg](#). The campaign pitted [Union Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker's Army of the Potomac](#) against an army less than half its size, [Gen. Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia](#). Chancellorsville is known as Lee's "perfect battle" because his risky decision to divide his army in the presence of a much larger enemy force resulted in a significant Confederate victory. The victory, a product of Lee's audacity and Hooker's timid decision making, was tempered by heavy casualties and the mortal wounding of [Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson](#) by [friendly fire](#), a loss that Lee likened to "losing my right arm."

Questions

Questions and/or comments should be directed to Russ Babiak at russ_babiak@fws.gov or (208) 387-5986.

References

Battle of Fredericksburg. (2015, October 20). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 12:00, November 2, 2015, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Fredericksburg

Battle of Chancellorsville. (2015, October 6). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 12:00, November 2, 2015, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Chancellorsville.

Robertson, William Glenn. 1944. The Staff Ride; Prepared for the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washinton, D.C.