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Forum on War Hill discusses many future uses for pristine Revolutionary War battlefield park

By KIP BURKE
news editor



With state funding so tight, State Senator Bill Jackson encouraged

Leaders or their representatives from across Washington-Wilkes and the state of Georgia assembled at War Hill Friday to discuss with members of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association the future potential of the pristine Revolutionary War battle site.

Dr. Joseph Harris, chairman of the KCBA, welcomed the visitors and read a letter from Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal. "The history of Georgia is an important part of our identity," the governor wrote, "and I thank you for the work you do to

the KCBA to pursue the deep pockets of wealthy private donors to grow the planned Kettle Creek Battlefield Park.

protect a landmark of the independence of our nation and its history.”

Representing U.S. Rep. Paul Broun’s office, Jessica Hayes read a statement that Rep. Broun read into

the Congressional Record concerning Kettle Creek.

Wilkes County’s state senator spoke next. “It goes without saying that Kettle Creek Master Plan is such an important project for the county and for the city,” State Sen. Bill Jackson said. “The economic benefits we’d see if this materialized could be unheard-of.”

Jackson said that state funding would continue to be tight, but private donations hold promise. “I believe private commitments should be pursued,” he said. “There are people of great wealth who could help you tell the story of the beginning of this nation.”

Hannah Mullins, W-W Payroll Development Authority Marketing Director, addressed the park’s value to the community in economic development. “I have economic development in mind, and when I see this place, I see so much more than a park,” she said. “I see the history, but I see the jobs, the potential for growth, I see the potential for tourism on many different levels.”

“This is one of the most pristine battlefields in America today,” Tourism Director Erin Pollock said. “It looks very much like it did 200 years ago, and that’s valuable.”

“Georgia is in the top 10 states for heritage and cultural tourism,” said Georgia regional tourism director Mandy Barnhart, “and these travelers spend more money and stay longer and travel more often than most. We at Georgia Tourism want you to know that we stand ready to provide technical assistance and financial resources that could be helpful to bring your future plans to reality.”

Kettle Creek is a valuable part of the curriculum of Wilkes County schools, Curriculum Director Lisa Isham said. “The battle is specifically noted statewide in our Georgia history textbooks, so we can market it to other school systems in the surrounding area,” she said. “We need to take better advantage of what we have here.”



Forum participants toured War Hill and enjoyed a barbecue lunch on the grounds around the monument.

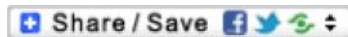
GRU history professor Allen Burton spoke on the historical importance of the battle within the American Revolution, while David Chesnut, president of the Washington-Wilkes Chapter of the SAR, addressed the impact of Kettle Creek on the liberty that modern Americans now enjoy.

Now that the Kettle Creek Battlefield Master Plan has been accepted by the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, said Harris, “KCBA is working on plans for the exact location and design of roads, trails, buildings, and other features which were beyond the scope of the master plan.”

The association will also be working with the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute on the next steps to take. “The KCBA is working with the Carl Vinson Institute to develop an 18-24 month strategic implementation plan that will identify the specific actions to be taken to move the project forward,” said Langford Holbrook of the CVIOG. “This will provide a step-by-step roadmap for the battlefield expansion project.”

Guests also enjoyed a barbecue lunch and tours of War Hill during the forum event.

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