



Battle Acre considered a priority in 1812 restoration

Site needs major facelift, says official

by Sara Blumberg

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Battle Acre is considered a priority site in restoration plans for the War of 1812 bicentennial.
photo by Sara Blumberg

In the ongoing effort to restore major landmarks for the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, the historic site known as Battle Acre is among sites seeking priority.

Members of the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission updated the Greater Dundalk Community Council (GDCC) last Thursday on their progress in restoration planning.

“Plans for the Battle Acre are moving along,” said Jay Doyle, a member of the commission and its capital improvements committee.

It’s their task to explore sites related to the celebration and determine how to get them ready for the bicentennial.

Battle Acre, located off North Point Road, played a significant role in the war. It served as a site where Maryland militiamen successfully defended the Baltimore Harbor from British takeover.

In 1839, the site was dedicated as a memorial. In 1914, a monument was erected on the one-acre site.

Since then, the memorial has fallen into disarray, said member Patricia Paul.

Paul, who is working as a liaison between county officials and historians, is hoping to generate support to improve the site.

“It played an important part in history, people come by to see it and sometimes can’t find it,” she said.

Currently the site has no seating area and overgrown bushes, and it is hard to get to.

In addition, portions of a fence around the site is missing, as are markers that tell the history of the site.

The Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks took control of the site 50 years ago.

Plans to restore the site are still ongoing and have been under way for the last few years, said Neal Magnuss, the department’s southeast area coordinator.

“There has been a push to get it ready for the anniversary, and we are working on ways to do that,” he said

Magnuss said that some of the proposed renovations include improving access, since there is no parking lot.

In addition, the site’s drainage issues need to be addressed. There is also talk of erecting a statue to enhance the site’s significance.

“We are talking a major facelift to the park; it’s going to be expensive,” Magnuss added.

The plans also call for attention to the fence surrounding the site.

Restorations for Battle Acre come as part of a state initiative to restore sites that were significant to the War of 1812.

Upgrades to Battle Acre could also lead to attention to other sites around the Bear Creek area, Paul said.

“There is just so much history to preserve,” she added.

Battle Acre is just one of many sites in the Dundalk area looking for improvements.

Members of the committee are looking at feasible ways to upgrade certain sites through donations and grants.

Another thing they discussed were ways to garner support from local residents to ensure their input is heard in the planning process.

While plans are in the early stages, the capital improvements committee continues to study sites that are important for the bicentennial.