
WILDERNESS BATTLEFIELD COALITION

December 10, 2008

Mr. Lee Scott, President and CEO
Walmart Stores, Inc.
702 SW 8th Street
Bentonville, Arkansas 72716-8611

Dear Mr. Scott:

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to pursue alternate building locations for the Walmart Supercenter proposed in Orange County, Virginia. The site currently under consideration lies within the historic boundary of the Wilderness Battlefield and only one quarter mile from the current boundary of the Wilderness Battlefield unit of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

The Battle of the Wilderness was among the most significant engagements of the Civil War. It marked the first time legendary generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant faced off against one another on the field of battle. During two days of desperate conflict in a harsh, unforgiving landscape tangled with underbrush, 4,000 Americans lost their lives and nearly 20,000 were wounded.

The proposed location will greatly increase traffic through the area and encourage further development to encroach upon and spoil the battlefield. This, in turn, will seriously degrade the experience for the many tens of thousands of heritage tourists who visit this National Park every year. The Wilderness Battlefield is easily the biggest tourist attraction in Orange County, with visitors coming from around the world to experience its serenity and contemplate its history and significance.

As a historian, I feel strongly that the Wilderness Battlefield is a unique historic and cultural treasure deserving careful stewardship. Currently only approximately 20 percent of the battlefield is protected by the National Park Service. If built, this Walmart would seriously undermine ongoing efforts to see more of this historic land preserved and deny future generations the opportunity to wander a landscape that has, until now, remained largely unchanged since 1864.

The Wilderness is an indelible part of our history, its very ground hallowed by the American blood spilled there, and it cannot be moved. Surely Walmart can identify a site that would meet its needs without changing the very character of the battlefield.

There are many places in central Virginia to build a commercial development, but there is only one Wilderness Battlefield. Please respect our great nation's history and move your store farther away from this historic site and National Park

Signed,
(Over)

Historian Letter Opposing Walmart at Wilderness Battlefield

December 10, 2008

Page 2 of 4

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Historian Letter Opposing Walmart at Wilderness Battlefield

December 10, 2008

Page 3 of 4

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Historian Letter Opposing Walmart at Wilderness Battlefield

December 10, 2008

Page 4 of 4

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