

Salazar announces land acquisition at Gettysburg

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GETTYSBURG, Pa. – Interior Secretary Ken Salazar on Friday announced the addition of a 95-acre parcel at Gettysburg National Military Park, saying it caps nearly two decades of efforts to acquire the property.

What had most recently been a nine-hole golf course at the former Gettysburg Country Club will henceforth be known by its historical name — the Emanuel Harman Farm. Major fighting occurred there July 1, 1863, the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War and a key victory for the Union forces.

"Gettysburg will always have a sacred place in the America's heritage for the pivotal role it played in our nation's history and for the enormity of the sacrifice that took place here," Salazar said in a visit to the central Pennsylvania park. With the latest acquisition, "we are able to include another important chapter in the story that helped shape our country."

The National Park Service, which is part of the Interior Department, tried unsuccessfully for nearly 20 years to acquire property, which lies within the boundaries of the 6,000-acre park.

The property was part of a larger tract that was developed as a country club in the 1950s, but went out of business in 2008.

Salazar thanked The Conservation Fund and The Civil War Trust for helping make the acquisition possible.

"Visitors who are now free to explore this hallowed ground can give thanks for the contributions of both of these organizations to preserving our national heritage," he said.

The Virginia-based Conservation Fund purchased the land in February from a Maryland developer for \$1.4 million. The developer retained the remaining 14 acres — including two clubhouses, two swimming pools, tennis courts and parking lots — and donated a height restriction easement for that parcel.

The golf course will be removed and the land restored to its original 1863 condition.

Civil War Trust president James Lighthizer said his organization is still pursuing the purchase of three other privately-held properties that are part of the battle site.

"We have been presented with the incredible opportunity to set aside some of the most blood-soaked ground still unprotected at Gettysburg," Lighthizer said.

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