

# San Juan Island National Historical Park

General Management Plan - Special Edition Fall 2003  
Analysis of Public Comments Newsletter

## A Message from the Superintendent



Dear Friends,

Greetings from San Juan Island National Historical Park. The American Camp and English Camp units of the park protect buildings, archeological remnants, and stories of the joint military occupation of San Juan Island by the United States and Great Britain from 1859 to 1872. That boundary dispute is perhaps the best-known period in the history of the island. But today we recognize that the park also encompasses a rich environment of prairie, forest, shoreline and sea that cannot be separated from the area's 3,000-year human history.

In the summer of 2002, the National Park Service began the process of writing a new general management plan (GMP) that will help guide management of San Juan Island National Historical Park for the next 15 to 20 years. That planning process is designed to include the general public, our island neighbors, and other interested groups.

Many of you attended public scoping meetings held in Friday Harbor and Seattle during April of 2003 and shared your views. Others sent written comments. We appreciate your participation. In this newsletter, we have summarized the many comments you provided in a way that we hope accurately reflects your ideas and concerns. Your thoughts will assist us in preparing a draft general management plan that will be available for review in the fall of 2004.

If you are reading about our planning process for the first time, we invite you to join us. National Parks have been called the best idea America ever had. The concept of protecting important natural and cultural resources for the public to enjoy is still strong, more than a century after it began in Yellowstone. There is no better way to continue that tradition than to join in deciding the future of this small but wonderful park.

I encourage you use the enclosed form to get on our mailing list. Additionally, you can email me at [peter\\_dederich@nps.gov](mailto:peter_dederich@nps.gov). You will receive future newsletters by mail and a copy of the draft GMP for review and comment.

Peter Dederich  
Superintendent

## NPS Receives Public Comment on Management Plan

In March of 2003, the National Park Service (NPS) published a public “scoping” newsletter announcing the beginning of the general management plan (GMP) planning process for San Juan Island National Historical Park (NHP). The purpose of the newsletter was to encourage the public’s participation and comments about the significance, purpose, and vision for the San Juan Island National Historical Park GMP. The newsletter provided relevant information about the establishment of the national historical park, need for the management plan, and a schedule of the planning steps. Dates, times, and locations for scoping workshops were also published. Approximately 216 copies of the newsletter were sent to people on the park’s mailing list. In addition, approximately 2,500 copies were distributed to libraries, civic buildings, businesses, churches, museums, universities, communities, dignitaries and elected officials.

## Public Participates in Meetings and Provides Written Comments

In April of 2003, the National Park Service hosted three public scoping workshops. Presentations were made about the National Park Service, the historic significance of both the American and English camps, an overview of current site conditions, and the planning process. Small group sessions helped people to present and discuss issues, experiences, and ideas for the park. Approximately thirty-nine people attended the two San Juan Island workshops in Friday Harbor, with another four attending the workshop in Seattle.

Eighteen written responses were collected. These included letters, e-mails, and newsletter questionnaires that were filled out and submitted. While most letters came from the local community in Friday Harbor and San Juan Island, several responses were received from nearby Anacortes, the Seattle metropolitan area, and one from out of state.

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*“The encampment is on the northwestern point in a returned bay, picturesque & serene. A parade ground, block house, pier, store & on the other side of a hill, overlooking the Bell tents & log cabins of the men, the officers quarters & mess room constituted the buildings establishment for the this detachment of some [...] men...”* - The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican Colonial Bishop George Hills

## Dates for GMP Planning Steps and Schedule

General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

PLANNING	ACTIVITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
1	Gather Data and Establish Goals and Vision	Spring 2003 Public Scoping Comments
2	Develop Alternatives	Fall 2003
3	Prepare and Publish a Draft GMP/EIS	Fall 2004 Comments on Draft
4	Revise Draft and Publish Final GMP/EIS	Winter 2005
5	Begin Implementation	Summer 2005

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# What We Heard From You...

We received input from a diverse group of people including former park historians, community leaders, American Indian groups, San Juan Island residents and organizations from the surrounding San Juan County community.

The comments covered a broad range of issues, concerns, personal experiences and recommendations for the park. When compiled, over 224 different comments or ideas were represented. Because various statements or ideas were mentioned repeatedly, groupings of similar comments appear once. Tabulations have been made on how often particular points were raised.

All of the public comments will be used in developing the draft alternatives of the general management plan. When possible, we have tried to use your words directly. For a complete listing of individual comments, please contact the National Park Service Planning Office in Seattle, Washington, at (206) 220-4109.

*“The harbor of San Juan, formed by a deep indentation on the south east shore of the island, is according to statement of sea faring men, one of the best and safest on the whole sound, with good anchorage almost everywhere. Small vessels will find excellent harborage in the north west part of the harbor; larger vessels can anchor with perfect safety in the southeast part of it in soundings varying from five to fifteen fathoms. I endeavored to locate the harbor and its islands and rock more correctly than heretofore represented on the maps.”* —

Report of Henry Custer, Assistant, of a Reconnaissance of San Juan Island, and the Saturna Group [Addressed to Archibald Campbell, Esq., U. S. Comm. N. W. Boundary Survey, April, 1859]

## Come Join Us...

Do you want to be placed on the mailing list:

For future planning newsletters?

YES NO

For future park activities?

YES NO

Please print your name and address below if you wish to be added to the mailing list:

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Send to:

San Juan Island NHP General Management Plan  
National Park Service  
909 1st Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104



NPS Planning Team member discusses with the public a variety of topics related to park resources (NPS Photo)



NPS Planning Team visits the parade ground at English Camp (NPS Photo)

## Public Comments

The comments from the GMP scoping meetings can be broadly organized into four categories:

### Resource Preservation and Management

The following comments relate to the NPS’s management of cultural and natural resources such as the monitoring of sites of archeological significance, preservation activities on historic buildings and features, museum/artifact collection management, control of invasive vegetation, forest health, water quality, coordination of research and youth services projects, and ensuring compliance with laws enacted to preserve the park’s natural and cultural resources.

- Many commentors emphasized the importance of protecting the natural and cultural resources in American and English camps. The public was especially concerned with the preservation of the diverse landscapes and habitats in the park through various means of management and protection.

- A few people emphasized the need for resource protection from park operations and visitor activity. They believed that recreational activity on park property should remain “low key and low impact.” The high quality of natural habitat on the island was mentioned as valuable and should be spotlighted in the GMP.
- Use of prescribed fire to protect the Garry oak landscape was encouraged and could be used to interpret the American Indian cultural resource management story. Other cultural resources associated with American Indians should be protected.
- The protection of shoreline ecological areas was a large concern for many commentors.
- The protection of viewsheds and the “scenic assets” on NPS property was a concern expressed by many.
- A few commentors were concerned that, with the dissolution of the Crook Historical Society, the Crook House would not be protected as part of the encampment/military period story.

- The retention and display of artifacts found in the camps was recommended by many. Along with this recommendation, commentors also mentioned the need for a better display of artifacts at one of the camps or at the park’s Friday Harbor headquarters office.
- The preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures was encouraged by a few. Others expressed interest in interior rehabilitation within historic structures such as the Officer’s Quarters.
- Many commentors were supportive of some means to commemorate the historic military road that once connected the two camps. While they all recognized the difficulties in reconstructing an actual route, many felt that the significance of the road should be included in interpretive programs and potentially include historic markers or waysides along county roads.
- Several commentors said that they would like to see the NPS acquire Mitchell Hill and the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) property to protect resources

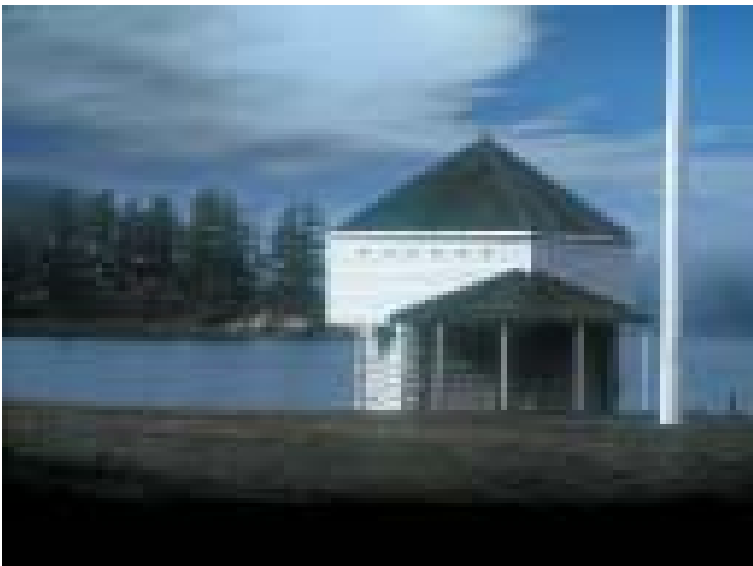
associated with English Camp. Additionally, a few commentors expressed support for the NPS to explore options of acquiring the DNR land near American Camp.

### Visitor Experience and Services

The following comments address issues related to staff and volunteers’ provision of on and off-site interpretive/educational programs, publications and exhibits, special events, visitor center operations, public safety patrols,

emergency response, and special use permits.

- Commentors wanted to see “pockets of learning” throughout the park, including information focusing on the natural and cultural history of English and American camps.
- Many commentors were concerned about the recent trend and pressures toward privatization within the National Park Service and did not want to see their access to the park compromised. Many commentors were specifically concerned about being



The blockhouse at English Camp is one of the many cultural resources the public would like to see protected (NPS Photo)

(cut along line)

- charged a fee to visit the park.
- The public wanted to see the connection between the natural and cultural resources in the park emphasized in the interpretive programs. A commentor stated that “historic connections lead to natural connections” throughout the island and that these connections should be interpreted.
- Many also wanted the interpretive program of the park expanded to include American Indian history and cultural practices, which would add some “historic realism and interpretive balance” to park programs. If the NPS chose to use the “historic period” of the encampment as a base for preservation, many suggested that a broader historic period be considered, highlighting the change over time on San Juan Island. Additionally, commentors wanted interpretation to educate the public on the geology and ecology of the park.
- A few commentors expressed their desire to see the NPS presence in Friday Harbor maintained, and to some degree, expanded, to help orient visitors to the island. They wanted a larger, more pedestrian-friendly office, which was more visible and provided more services than are present now. Artifact displays and other exhibits were encouraged. One commentor suggested moving the receptionist to the front of the office, which would greatly improve visibility. Other commentors suggested an alternative to locate administrative offices at the camps. Others suggested exploring partnership opportunities to establish offices in Friday Harbor with other organizations, such as the historical museum, county agencies, and Washington State Department of Transportation.
- Another commentor suggested more energetic interpretation of park resources. They felt that the historical reenactments

- were a great idea and should be continued.
- Several commentors suggested an increased level of interpretive signage be included in the park. They wanted to know some of the details, such as where the pig was killed that started the tension between the United States and Great Britain or the exact location of Jakle’s Lagoon.
- Suggestions for off-site interpretive efforts focused on the development of partnerships with local businesses and organizations. Bed and breakfasts, moped rentals, and Elderhostel groups were a few mentioned as potential areas to focus efforts.
- A few commentors were concerned about visitor safety. Traffic control along Cattle Point Road, the removal of creosote timber from the coastal areas, glass, and other litter, and the occurrence of Red Tide in the summer were a few of the concerns mentioned.

### Park Facilities, Operations, Management, and Maintenance

The following comments relate to preventive and routine maintenance on historic structures, historic/cultural landscapes, and a wide array of support facilities and infrastructure, including water treatment, a network of trails, park roads, picnic areas, grounds, and support facilities.

- Many commentors were concerned with trail use and potential trail connections to other recreation areas on San Juan Island. Access from Roche Harbor, Cattle Point and Young Hill were emphasized. Suggestions for trail location focused on the protection of natural and cultural resources from trail use and the separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic where possible.
- Many commentors wanted the NPS to recognize that park open space is large in relation to the total

- amount of recreation and open space on San Juan Island. A few commentors wanted to see a balance between providing public access and resource protection. One commentor suggested that the provision of recreation activities on NPS property protected other sensitive areas on the island by limiting recreational activity there.
- Resource degradation through visitor activities, such as the removal of driftwood and artifacts, was a major concern expressed by many commentors. While they valued the recreational activities afforded them at the park, they also saw the value in the diverse natural and cultural resources at the camps. They felt that the park property provided island residents with a “sense of place” and needed to be protected.
- Enforcement of regulations and activities was also a concern. Clamming in closed coastal areas, the disturbance of archeological sites, and other undesired visitor activities were discouraged. Monitoring unwanted activities and environmental degradation, as well as the development of protective regulations through federal, state, or county agencies, was encouraged as a long-term solution for resource protection. While many emphasized this point, a few respondents wanted to retain the ability to beach comb and collect driftwood.
- If new facilities were to be provided, these should not impair the natural and cultural resources, viewsheds, and ecologically sensitive areas of the park.
- Control of exotic flora and fauna, including in marine and tidal areas, was suggested. Non-native foxes, rabbits, and invasive species of marine plants should be removed. Additionally, the survey and protection of endangered or threatened species was encouraged.
- Another concern expressed by commentors was the level of accessibility to park property by the elderly and disabled. While some felt new parking areas were needed, others felt that a higher level of construction was not preferred. Several commentors suggested the need for an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible trail to the parade ground from the current



Map of San Juan Island showing the locations of English and American camps which comprise San Juan Island National Historical Park

- English Camp parking lot.
- The provision of mass transit and the exploration of non-motorized means of moving visitors around the island were encouraged.
- Point after Cattle Point Road is realigned.
- Additional concerns regarding funding for resource protection and park operations were expressed by several respondents.

### Park Administration and Planning

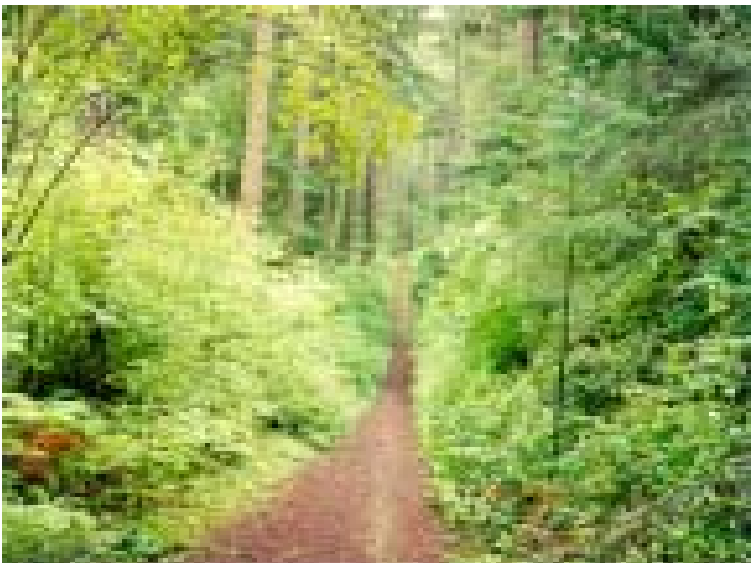
The following comments relate to the general oversight of all park operations, including resource management, visitor and resource protection, interpretation, maintenance, partnership development, long-range planning, external programs, and community relations.

- Partnerships for stewardship with various state and county agencies were encouraged. Trails groups, San Juan County and state land management agencies, and American Indian tribes from the area were enthusiastic about an increased level of participation in the park planning process. The creation of a friends group for the park was encouraged by a few commentors.
- Increased opportunities for partnerships with Parks Canada were mentioned.
- Commentors encouraged the inclusion of the public in the planning process.
- A few commentors were concerned about the need to continue access to Cattle

### Next Steps

The general management planning process for San Juan Island National Historical Park continued in October of this year. The planning team conducted a workshop to develop a range of draft alternatives for the GMP. This GMP will set the basic management philosophy for managing San Juan Island National Historical Park for the next 15 to 20 years. It will provide strategies for addressing issues and achieving management objectives for the park. This will help to guide the protection and management of cultural and natural resources, visitor use and services, educational and interpretive programs, administration and operations, and American Indian activities and traditional use. Preparation of this plan will be consistent with legislation creating the park and the National Park Service’s Organic Act of 1916, providing for protection of the park’s

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Trail connectivity was one of the concerns raised during scoping (NPS Photo)



Prescribed fire management and the preservation of Garry oak habitat on Young Hill was a concern expressed by several commentors (NPS Photo)

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natural and cultural resources while inviting appropriate visitor use and enjoyment of the park. An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be produced in conjunction with the GMP.

Many conditions on San Juan Island and in the park have changed since the last plan was produced. According to the latest population census, San Juan County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state. More than 250,000 park visitors experience American and English camps each year. This growth in local population and visitation has implications for management of the park's resources.

The production of the draft GMP will continue through the summer of 2004, and will be available for public review in October of 2004.

### Cattle Point Road Realignment EIS Update

Cattle Point Road, located along the eastern portion of American Camp, is currently threatened by coastal erosion. As a result, the NPS is partnering with the San Juan County Public Works Department to address this problem. Most recently, approximately \$300,000 was earmarked through the Public Lands Highway Program to complete

scoping, produce a preliminary design for road realignment, and to produce an EIS. Some scoping work had previously been done, but the NPS determined that additional design concepts needed incorporating to adequately protect the park's natural, cultural, and scenic resources.

Expanded scoping will consider lower speed limits and other design elements to minimize impact on the park's resources. The Western Federal Lands Division of the Federal Highways Administration is preparing a project agreement, schedule for scoping, and preliminary design alternatives, which will be available for public review shortly.

Comments received from individuals and organizations under the earlier scoping process will be incorporated into the expanded scoping. It is not necessary for people who commented to resubmit their comments; however, a public meeting is planned for late 2003 or early 2004 to update interested parties and to solicit further public input.



Coastal erosion threatens Cattle Point Road along the eastern edge of American Camp (NPS Photo)



Reenactments and other interpretive programs were encouraged by the public (NPS Photo)

*“I was offer kindly, by Captain Robson & accepted, a passage to San Juan Island in H.M.G.B. Forward, We left Esquimalt at eight, and reached the encampment of the Royal Marines at twelve. The day was fine & the track through the windings of the islands, as usual, pleasing to the eye.”* - The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican Colonial Bishop George Hills

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Friday Harbor, WA 98250

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### Analysis of Public Comments Newsletter