

Executive Summary

The McLoughlin House Unit was added to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site on July 29, 2003, when President George W. Bush signed Public Law 108-63 authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the McLoughlin House National Historic Site. Until acquisition by the National Park Service, the McLoughlin House was managed by the non-profit McLoughlin Memorial Association.

In 1941, the Secretary of the Interior, under the Historic Sites Act of 1935, designated the McLoughlin House as the first National Historic Site in the west. Later (1948) establishment of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site led to its connection with the McLoughlin House to provide technical assistance and support for applicable funding as this nationally significant site continued to be managed by the McLoughlin Memorial Association.

This Environmental Assessment has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of the *National Environmental Policy Act* of 1969 as amended as well as other laws and regulations pertaining to the management of units within the National Park System regarding the transfer and redesignation of the McLoughlin House National Historic Site as the McLoughlin House Unit, part of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

The purpose of this Environmental Assessment is to identify, evaluate and document the potential effects of the proposed management of the McLoughlin House Unit by the National Park Service. Existing conditions, under management by the McLoughlin Memorial Association, constitute the baseline for evaluating the effects of the proposed alternatives. Existing conditions are presented as part of the no action alternative (Alternative A), while proposed management modifications are presented as part of Alternative B (preferred).

Alternative A: No Action (Continue Current Management) would result in the continuation of current management practices, however, small changes would be made based on the change in ownership from the McLoughlin Memorial Association to the National Park Service. Alternative B: Implementation of McLoughlin House Unit Management Plan is the preferred alternative. Alternative B emphasizes additional cultural resources strategies that would ensure the long-term preservation of the houses, historic site, and collections; increased opportunities for visitor education and interpretation; and improved visitor and NPS facilities.

In addition to interdisciplinary planning by National Park Service and McLoughlin Memorial Association staff, public comments during scoping for the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site General Management Plan (2003) were used to develop the Alternatives.

Public comments are invited on the plan and environmental assessment (see *Public Involvement and Consultation* section). Background information is presented in the *Introduction*, general site description information is presented in *Affected Environment*, while the proposals for managing the site are presented in *Alternatives* and their likely impacts are found in *Environmental Consequences*.

