

III. Foundation Planning

The statements of purpose and significance for a unit of the National Park System are considered part of the “building blocks” for national park planning. All the actions proposed in a plan must take into account the park’s purpose, or why the park was established by Congress. For the McLoughlin House Unit, Congressional intent is examined in both the original 1941 secretarial authorization for the McLoughlin House National Historic Site and the subsequent Congressional legislation signed by President George W. Bush on July 29, 2003, which added the McLoughlin House as a unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. The plan must also take into account the park’s significance, or the attributes of a park which state the reasons a site is important from both a local and national perspective.

Foundation planning elements, which include purpose and significance, were recently adopted for the Fort Vancouver Unit through the Fort Vancouver General Management Plan (GMP)/ Environmental Impact Statement (NPS 2003). Since the McLoughlin House Unit Management Plan is being prepared subsequent to the completion of the GMP, the additional foundation planning elements specific to McLoughlin House found below are considered an addition to the Fort Vancouver GMP.

The purpose and significance statements for the McLoughlin House site, coupled with the primary interpretive themes and desired future condition statements that follow, provide the foundation for planning for the McLoughlin House Unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

A. Purpose of McLoughlin House Unit

The purpose of the McLoughlin House Unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is to preserve the historic home of Dr. John McLoughlin and to interpret his transition from Chief Factor of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Fort Vancouver and Columbia Department operations to his role as a distinguished, influential, and humanitarian leader in the settlement of the Oregon Territory. He became known by many as the “Father of Oregon” due to his role in assisting American immigrants and pioneers arriving at the end of the Oregon Trail.

In addition, the purpose of the McLoughlin House Unit is to preserve the historic home of Dr. Forbes Barclay and to interpret his transition from Fort Vancouver physician to his many contributions to the early development of Oregon City, Oregon where he served as Mayor, Superintendent of Schools, and prominent citizen of the community for the remainder of his life.

B. Significance of the McLoughlin House Unit

The McLoughlin House site is nationally significant for the following reasons:

- McLoughlin House is the original residence of Dr. John McLoughlin, who was the Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver and was a distinguished, influential, and humanitarian leader in the settlement of the Oregon Territory. Dr. John McLoughlin is known as the “Father of Oregon.”
- McLoughlin House and Barclay House are two of the oldest houses associated with the early settlement period of the Oregon Territory. The architectural styles are representative of mid-nineteenth century high style residences constructed of milled lumber. Both houses maintain a high degree of architectural historic integrity. The McLoughlin House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Barclay House has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register.
- McLoughlin Park, established in 1851, is one of the oldest public parks in the Pacific Northwest.
- Established in 1909, the McLoughlin Memorial Association is one of the earliest historic preservation organizations in the Pacific Northwest. The Association’s efforts over the last 100 years have ensured the preservation and stewardship of the historic houses, site, and

collections. The Association has conducted interpretive and educational programs about early Oregon history since its founding.

- The establishment of the McLoughlin House National Historic Site in 1941 set a preservation precedent as the first national historic site created west of the Rocky Mountains. It was the eleventh National Historic Site to be officially designated in the nation's history. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.

C. Desired Future Conditions

The following are the desired future conditions or goals that NPS management of the McLoughlin House Unit would strive toward:

- Through preservation, park resources are protected, restored, and maintained in accordance with NPS policies. These resources include the McLoughlin and Barclay Houses, collections, the historic landscape, and recovered and *in situ* archaeological resources.
- Park visitors are provided with effective interpretation, education, and orientation about the history and significance of McLoughlin House, resulting in a greater understanding and support for preservation efforts at the site.
- Park visitors are able to safely enjoy park facilities and services.
- Formal partnership programs are established to assist in education, interpretation, and in the conservation and preservation of park resources related to the McLoughlin and early Oregon Country periods.
- The most current management practices, systems, and technologies are used to accomplish these desired future conditions.

D. Primary Interpretive Themes

The following themes are critical for visitor understanding and appreciation of the McLoughlin House Unit's purpose and significance. Interpretive themes are the key concepts that every visitor to the site should have the opportunity to learn. The following themes are not presented in priority order. They are interrelated and are intended to provide a broad framework for interpretive programming and services.

Theme A

Dr. John McLoughlin helped to shape the Oregon Country's destiny through his civic, economic, and humanitarian activities at Fort Vancouver and in Oregon City; his wife Marguerite and children provided support through their presence, hospitality, and household and business activities.

Subtheme

As Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company Columbia Department headquarters at Fort Vancouver, Dr. John McLoughlin oversaw company operations for the entire Columbia Department (from Mexican California to Russian Alaska, and from the Continental Divide to the Pacific Ocean) and encouraged American settlement to the south of the Columbia River in the Willamette River Valley. His influence is evident to this day.

Subtheme

Through his extending credit for food, seeds, and farm tools to American emigrants arriving on the Oregon Trail, Dr. John McLoughlin defied Hudson's Bay Company orders to discourage American settlement. Although this support was provided for humanitarian reasons and to maintain peaceful relations with American immigrants, it also helped to tip the balance of power and strengthening American claims to the Oregon Country. He and his wife Marguerite saved lives through their care for injured, sick, and orphaned trail travelers.

Subtheme

After moving to Oregon City in 1845, Dr. John McLoughlin served as a community booster through his financial support for numerous commercial ventures, his holding of public offices, and his philanthropy, including donation of lands for churches, schools, and parks.

Subtheme

Despite his adoption of American citizenship, civic involvement, and years of assistance offered to Oregon Trail emigrants, in his later years, Dr. John McLoughlin suffered from ill treatment, discrimination, distrust, and legal challenges by some of his fellow Americans. He later earned the title “Father of Oregon” many years after his death.

Subtheme

Known for his obstinacy and raging temper, Dr. John McLoughlin’s fallibilities sometimes affected his professional life and overshadowed his many achievements.

Theme B

The McLoughlin House, setting, and contents owe their survival to almost 100 years of vision and site stewardship by the McLoughlin Memorial Association.

Subtheme

Saved from demolition in 1909 and moved to its present site, the McLoughlin House is an example of early private and public preservation efforts leading to national historic site and affiliated NPS site (1941), National Register of Historic Places (1966), and National Park System (2003) designations.

Subtheme

The restored McLoughlin House with its household goods and personal possessions associated with the McLoughlin family offer visitors a connection to one of Oregon’s most memorable families.

Theme C

The McLoughlin House and Barclay House are sited on park land donated to Oregon City by Dr. John McLoughlin; the site and surrounding Historic Conservation District comprise part of McLoughlin’s 1845 plat, with his business and personal connections woven throughout.

Subtheme

Luxurious, substantial, and built of finished lumber, the McLoughlin House reflected Dr. John McLoughlin’s wealth and position in frontier Oregon City.

Subtheme

The McLoughlin House, with its large parlor, dining room, guest rooms, and detached kitchens, supported John and his wife Marguerite, daughter Eloisa’s family, their servants, and their ability to offer hospitality to travelers, business associates, and people in need, which resulted in his home becoming known as the “house of many beds.”

Subtheme

Dr. Forbes Barclay’s life work complemented that of Dr. John McLoughlin’s in his medical training, his association with the Hudson’s’ Bay Company at Fort Vancouver, and in his Oregon City boosterism; he was McLoughlin’s colleague, neighbor, and friend.

Subtheme

A city park since 1851, and one of the first public parks in the Northwest, the grounds surrounding the McLoughlin and Barclay homes reflect more than 150 years of an evolving designed landscape.

Theme D

Established for reasons of economic diversification by Dr. John McLoughlin for the Hudson's Bay Company, the town of Oregon City with its waterfalls, power mills, and shipment of manufactured goods and agricultural products on the Willamette River reflected the commercial and agricultural growth of the Oregon Country under American settlement and influence.

Subtheme

The Clackamas lived at and shared fishery and trading sites with the Kalapuya in the Willamette Falls area; these tribal people, together with the Molallans of the Cascade Mountain foothills, were forced off their lands in the mid-1800s to make way for the incoming settlers.

Subtheme

Located at the western terminus of the Oregon Trail, the fertile Willamette River Valley offered a chance for a new life to hopeful farming families of the Middle West; thousands of American emigrants flowed through Oregon City via the Barlow Road.

Subtheme

Oregon City, with its growth and early incorporation served as the first territorial capital and dominated Oregon's political and economic life until surpassed by Salem and Portland.

Subtheme

Dr. John McLoughlin's house, in its original location near the Willamette River, was surrounded by a cluster of McLoughlin-owned businesses that successfully capitalized upon local resources as well as his world-wide business contacts.