





# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*San Juan Island National Historical Park is a unit of the national park system and is managed by the National Park Service (NPS). It is located on San Juan Island, the second largest island in the San Juan archipelago. The archipelago is situated in northwestern Washington between the southern tip of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and the United States mainland. The park is within Washington's Second Legislative District in San Juan County, Washington.*

## BACKGROUND OF THE PARK

San Juan Island National Historical Park was established by Congress in 1966 for the purpose of “interpreting and preserving the sites of the American and English camps on the island, and of commemorating the historic events that occurred from 1852 to 1871 on the island in connection with the final settlement of the Oregon Territory boundary dispute, including the so-called Pig War of 1859” (80 Stat. 737) (Public Law 89-565). Among the national park system's nearly 400 units, San Juan Island National Historical Park is the only site that illustrates, in its dramatic and largely intact physical setting, how war can be averted and peace maintained through positive action by individuals and governments — a powerful message in unsettled times. (See Figure 1: Regional Context and Figure 2: The San Juan Islands at the end of this chapter.)

San Juan Island National Historical Park consists of two distinct units, American Camp (1223 acres) and English Camp (529 acres), which together comprise 1,752 acres (See Figure 3: San Juan Island). The boundary of English Camp includes an offshore island known as Guss Island. The marine ecosystems surrounding these units and their six miles of publicly accessible shoreline are renowned for their scenery. The natural assets and historical significance of the park attract more than 250,000 visitors each year — mostly during the summer months and on weekends.

San Juan Island sits in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains and is drier than other areas of western Washington. There is considerable variation in microclimate even within San Juan Island. This natural variability is reflected in the local vegetation, with grassy prairies in the dry American Camp area and western evergreens and deciduous trees in the English Camp area. Freshwater areas exist in the form of numerous small wetlands in each area. Marine waters of the park include Garrison and Westcott bays adjacent to English Camp, as well as more exposed

shorelines along Griffin Bay and the Strait of Juan de Fuca in American Camp, and three small lagoons on Griffin Bay (Klinger et. al., 2006).

English Camp is significant as the location of a British Royal Marines camp during the joint occupation. Following the military occupation, the site was the location of the Crook family homestead. The site is situated on Garrison Bay and comprises 1,400 feet of shoreline, a broad level bank, and surrounding hillsides. English Camp features significant historic resources, including four buildings from the military period, the historic landscape, extensive earthworks and masonry work, and numerous archaeological sites. Following the encampment era, the Crook family lived on and farmed the land of English Camp from 1875 until it was acquired by Washington State in 1963. The Crook House and two orchards exist from this period (See Figure 4: English Camp: Existing Conditions).

American Camp is significant as the location of the United States Army camp during the joint occupation of the island by British and American Troops from 1859 to 1874. The site occupies a portion of the southeast peninsula of San Juan Island and is comprised of a broad ridge overlooking Griffin Bay to the north and Haro Strait to the south, and includes scrub-prairie lands and Puget Sound shoreline. American Camp features significant historic resources including two of the original military buildings, the reconstructed military fence and flagpole, and numerous archaeological sites. The cultural landscape also includes the sites of the Hudson's Bay Company agricultural outpost, Belle Vue Sheep Farm, and San Juan Town (See Figure 5: American Camp: Existing Conditions).

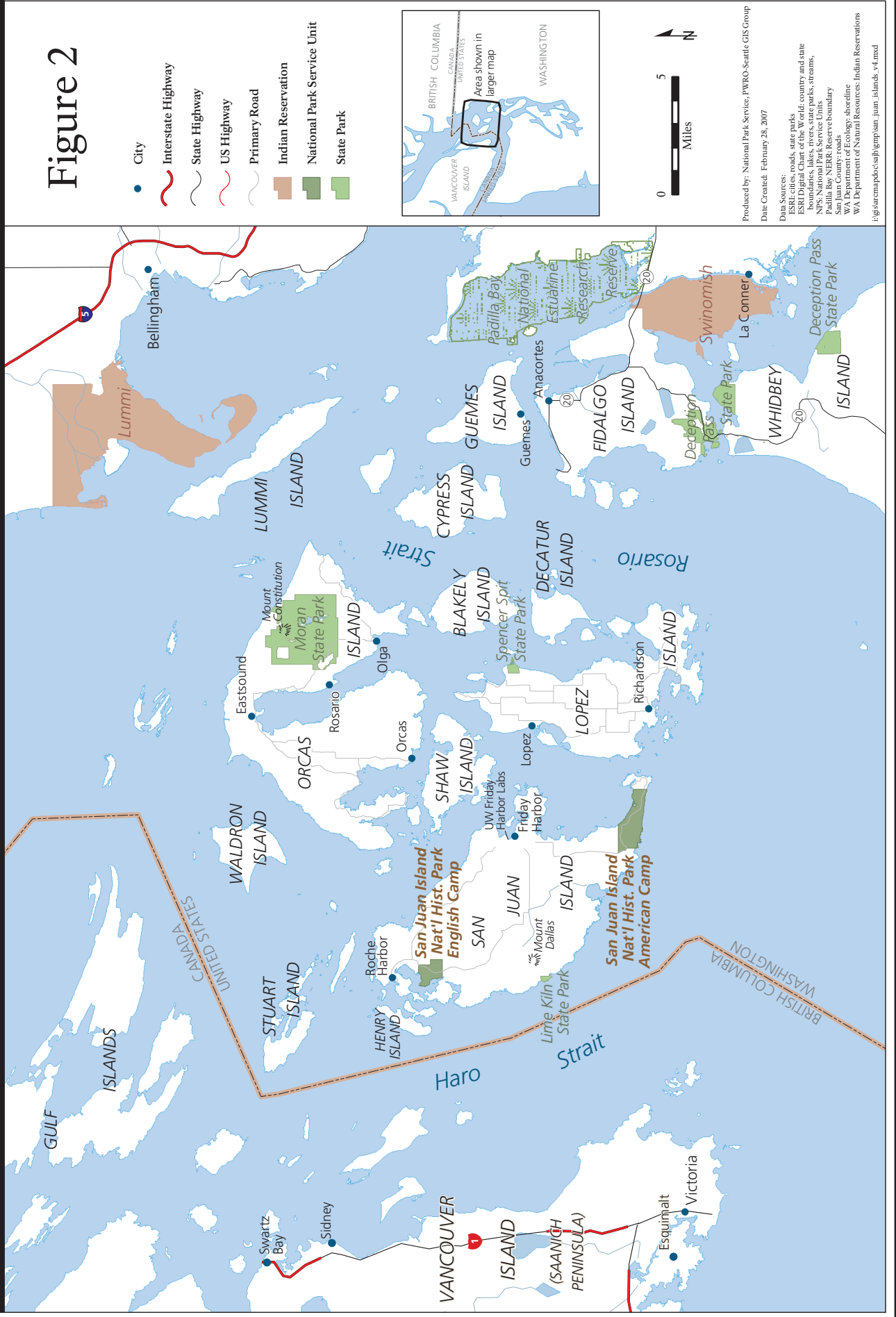
Archaeology at both camps reveals human occupation of San Juan Island dating back 9,000 years or more and illustrates how native peoples built a culture that utilized the abundant natural resources of the area. English and American camps both served as gathering places and the soil and vegetative communities of both had some influence in the settlement and use

# San Juan Island National Historical Park GMP/EIS



# San Juan Islands

San Juan Island National Historical Park GMP/EIS





# San Juan Island

San Juan Island National Historical Park GMP/EIS



- Town
- Roads
- National Park Service Unit
- State Park

0 1 2  
Miles



Produced by: National Park Service,  
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Date Created: February 28, 2007

## Figure 3

Data Sources:  
ESRI: towns, roads, state parks  
ESRI Digital Chart of the World: country and state  
boundaries, lakes, rivers, state parks, streams,  
NPS: National Park Service Units  
San Juan County: roads  
WA Department of Ecology: shoreline  
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# English Camp: Existing Conditions

San Juan Island National Historical Park GMP/EIS



- |  |                |  |           |
|--|----------------|--|-----------|
|  | Park Boundary  |  | Structure |
|  | Primary Road   |  | Parking   |
|  | Secondary Road |  | Parcel    |
|  | Trail          |  |           |

0 500 1,000  
Feet



## Figure 4

Produced by: National Park Service  
PWRO-Seattle GIS Group

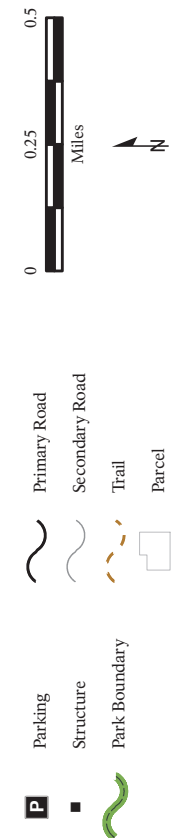
Date Created: February 28, 2007

Data Sources: NPS - lakes, park boundary, roads,  
shoreline, structures, trails  
San Juan County - parcels  
USGS - shaded relief

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# American Camp: Existing Conditions

San Juan Island National Historical Park GMP/EIS



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 Date Created: February 28, 2007  
 Data Sources: NPS - lakes, park boundary, roads, shoreline, structures, trails  
 San Juan County - parcels  
 USGS - shaded relief

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Figure 5

of the area. The prairies at American Camp provided important planting areas while Garrison Bay offered a protected living area for gathering shellfish and other marine resources.

Captain Vancouver was the first explorer to visit the region in 1792. Europeans began to settle the region in the 1830s, and by the 1850s, both Britain and the United States had sent troops to the area as part of their efforts to claim these lands as part of their respective empires. While the Oregon Treaty of 1846 gave the United States undisputed possession of the Pacific Northwest south of the 49th parallel and settled the larger boundary question of the Oregon Territory, its wording left unclear who owned San Juan Island.

On June 15, 1859, an American settler named Lyman Cutlar shot and killed a pig belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company because it was rooting in his garden. When British authorities threatened to arrest Cutlar, American citizens drew up a petition requesting U.S. military protection. Twelve years of military occupation by American and British troops followed and both sides settled into peaceful joint occupation of the island. The dispute culminated in third-party arbitration by Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany and in 1872, the Kaiser ruled in favor of the United States, awarding the San Juan Islands to the United States and determining the final boundary between the U.S. and Canada. On November 25, 1872, the Royal Marines withdrew from English Camp and by July 1874, the last of the U.S. troops had left American Camp. This resolution was a triumph for peacefully settling a dispute between nations.

Following the military occupation, the island was settled by homesteaders, who were farmers, fishermen, and laborers. At American Camp, land was thrown open to settlement by presidential proclamation and homesteaders made use of the site for farming and grazing, gradually altering the historic landscape of the camp. In 1951, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission acquired the core five acres of the historic camp to preserve it from further alteration. At English Camp, the homesteading family of William Crook settled in the abandoned buildings of the camp and began to cultivate the land. For two generations, the Crook family worked and shaped the landscape, making practical use of the historic structures as well as erecting new ones. The site was purchased by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission in 1963, and both American and English camps were transferred to the National Park Service in 1966.

Today, San Juan Island National Historical Park provides a glimpse of life on the island in the mid-1800s, with stunning vistas and a variety of plant communities, including rare prairie at American Camp and Garry oak woodlands at English Camp. The pastoral landscape and low level of development around the park play a key role in preserving the historic character of the park. The demand for preserved landscapes and open space for outdoor recreation is expected to continue to grow in the future. While much of park management focuses on historic preservation and interpretation, the diverse natural and scenic resources offer increasingly significant opportunities for research, interpretation, and recreation. Management of cultural resources in conjunction with natural resources is paramount to preserving the integrity of the park and providing appropriate recreation opportunities.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF SAN JUAN ISLAND NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

From 1951 through 1963, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission purchased lands to create a state park centered on the historic sites. In 1959, the camps were surveyed by the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings and later in 1961 by the NPS Western Region staff. At this time, the two camps were approved for National Historic Landmark Status. In September 1966, the park came into national stewardship when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the park's enabling legislation into law. San Juan Island National Historical Park was, and still is, the largest area of public land to be created on the island.

The park's enabling legislation states that the park will be known as "the San Juan Island National Historical Park and shall commemorate the final settlement by arbitration of the Oregon boundary dispute and the peaceful relationship which has existed between the United States and Canada for generations." The Secretary of the Interior will "administer, protect, and develop the park" in accordance with the provisions of the Organic Act (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.) and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

The legislation further calls for the Secretary to "enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Washington, political subdivisions thereof, corporations, associations, or individuals, for the preservation of nationally significant historic sites



and structures and for the interpretation of significant events which occurred on San Juan Island, in Puget Sound, and on the nearby mainland, and he may erect and maintain tablets or markers at appropriate sites in accordance with the provisions of the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).” (See Appendix A, San Juan Island National Historical Park Enabling Legislation.)

## Events Affecting the Park after Enabling Legislation

### American Camp By-Pass Road

The original road through American Camp lies just north of the redoubt, affecting not only the historic scene but also contributing to incompatible use and erosion. To preserve the redoubt, the park constructed a new by-pass road with the intention of exchanging the new by-pass road with San Juan County for a portion of the county road. The old road was to be restored to the conditions of the historic setting. In 1974, the road was completed and opened to the public. Both the by-pass road and the county road remained open and available for use for many years. However, in 1990, the county vacated 1.3 miles of road, which allowed the park to close the road and begin restoration work (Cannon, 1997).

### Cattle Point Road Environmental Impact Statement

Cattle Point Road traverses a portion of the park including the southern tip of San Juan Island at American Camp. The area of concern is a failing 1,750 foot section of Cattle Point Road that crosses land managed by the National Park Service and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DNR portion is designated a Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA). Natural Resource Conservation Areas in Washington State are lands designated to maintain, enhance or restore ecological systems and habitat for threatened, endangered, sensitive plants and animals while providing opportunities for education and low-impact public use.

The failing section of the Cattle Point Road is located on a slope that rises from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the edge of a bluff approximately 50 feet from the existing roadway. The road traverses the slope at an approximate elevation of 150 feet above sea level. Coastal wind and wave action has been eroding the base of the slope that supports the Cattle Point Road.

As erosion continues, the roadway will eventually fail and curtail vehicular and non-motorized access to the southeastern portion of the island. The project has identified five alternative routes for public review. The one with the most advantages and the least environmental effects will eventually replace the affected roadbed.

This project is a separate planning process, and is separately funded from the current general management plan. It is managed by the Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The role of this general management plan is to affirm the need of continued access for the 250 residents who live in Cape San Juan subdivision and Cattle Point Estates and whose interests are represented by county government. The draft EIS for the road replacement is expected to be released shortly after the San Juan Island National Historical Park draft GMP/EIS.

## PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

### Purpose of the Plan

The new general management plan will set the basic management philosophy for San Juan Island National Historical Park for the next 15 to 20 years. The purposes of this GMP are as follows:

- to develop the purpose, significance, and primary interpretive themes of the park,
- to describe any special mandates of the park,
- to clearly define resource conditions and visitor uses and experiences to be achieved in the park,
- to provide a framework for park managers to use when making decisions about how to best protect park resources, how to provide quality visitor experiences, how to manage visitor use, and what kinds of facilities, if any, to develop in or near the park,
- to ensure that this foundation for decision-making has been developed in consultation with interested stakeholders and adopted by the NPS leadership after an adequate analysis of the benefits, impacts, and economic costs of alternative courses of action.

Legislation establishing the National Park Service as an agency (Organic Act of 1916) and governing its management provides the fundamental direction for the administration of San Juan Island National Historical Park (and other units and programs of the national park system). This GMP is intended to build on these

laws and the legislation that established San Juan Island National Historical Park to provide a vision for the park's future. (See Appendix A: San Juan Island National Historical Park Enabling Legislation.)

For more detail on the law and policy directing management actions, see Appendix B: Pertinent Laws, Policies, and Procedures. The alternatives in this general management plan address desired future conditions not already mandated by law and policy which must be determined through a planning process.

One purpose of this general management plan is to identify strategies to protect significant resources and manage visitor use at San Juan Island National Historical Park. Successful implementation of the GMP would result in the long-term preservation of natural and cultural resources and an enhanced visitor experience. Where law, regulations, or policy do not provide clear guidance, management decisions will be based on the park's purpose, public concerns, and analysis of impacts of alternative courses of action, including long-term operational costs.

This general management plan will not describe how particular programs or projects will be implemented or prioritized. Those decisions will be deferred to more detailed implementation planning, which will follow the broad, comprehensive plan presented in this document.

## Need for the Plan

Many conditions on San Juan Island and within the park have changed since the last general management plan was produced in 1979. Patterns and types of visitor use have changed. San Juan County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state. Over 250,000 annual park visitors have been recorded at American and English camps. This growth in local population and visitation has implications for management of the park's resources.

### National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978

The National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-625), requires the preparation and timely revision of general management plans for each unit of the national park system. The National Park Service management policies call for each GMP to "...set forth a management concept for the park [and] establish a role for the unit within the context of regional trends and plans for conservation, recreation, transportation,

economic development, and other regional issues. . . ." Congress has also specifically directed (16 U.S.C. 1a-7[b]) the NPS to consider, as part of the planning process the following elements:  
"General management plans for each unit shall include, but not be limited to:

- measures for the preservation of the area's resources;
- indications of types and general intensities of development (including visitor circulation and transportation patterns, systems and modes) associated with public enjoyment and use of the area, including general locations, timing of implementation, and anticipated costs;
- identification of an implementation commitment for visitor carrying capacities for all areas of the unit; and
- indications of potential modifications to the external boundaries of the unit, and the reasons therefore."

A further discussion of these and other issues can be found in Chapter 3 "Planning Issues and Concerns." The proposed GMP is accompanied by an environmental impact statement, which identifies and evaluates the effects or impacts of various alternative approaches to the protection and appropriate uses of San Juan Island National Historical Park.

## OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS

### The Planning Process and Public Scoping

Planning provides an opportunity to create a vision and to define the park's role in relation to its national, natural, historic, and community settings. The planning process is designed to provide decision makers with adequate information about resources, impacts, and costs. Decisions made within this planning context are more likely to be successful over time and promote a more efficient use of public funds.

A general management plan is a logical decision-making process, in which relevant information is gathered and used to make a series of related decisions. The process of creating a GMP ensures that park managers and stakeholders share a clearly defined understanding of the resource conditions, opportunities for visitor experiences, and general kinds of management, access, and development that will best achieve the park's purpose and conserve its



resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

An interdisciplinary planning team was assembled in the spring of 2003. It was comprised of the park's superintendent and staff and Pacific West Region specialists. The planning team met several times during 2003 and 2004 to gather background information, identify the purpose and significance and interpretive themes of the park, examine resources, identify issues, and formulate alternative management concepts. Throughout the planning process, public participation efforts played a large part in helping to focus the plan, identify issues, and formulate alternatives. Many meetings were held, newsletters were distributed, and public open houses were conducted in Friday Harbor and Seattle. A detailed account of the public scoping process and public input received during the planning process for the park is provided in the "Public Involvement" chapter of this draft GMP/EIS.

## Next Steps

After distribution of the draft GMP/EIS, there will be a 60-day public review and comment period after which the NPS planning team will evaluate comments from other federal agencies, tribes, organizations, businesses, and individuals regarding the draft plan and incorporate appropriate changes to produce a Final San Juan Island National Historical Park General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.

The final plan will include letters from governmental agencies, any substantive comments on the draft document, and NPS responses to those comments. Following distribution of the Final GMP/EIS and a 30-day no-action period, a record of decision approving the final plan will be signed by the NPS regional director. The record of decision documents the NPS selection of an alternative for implementation. With the signing of the record of decision, the plan can then be implemented.



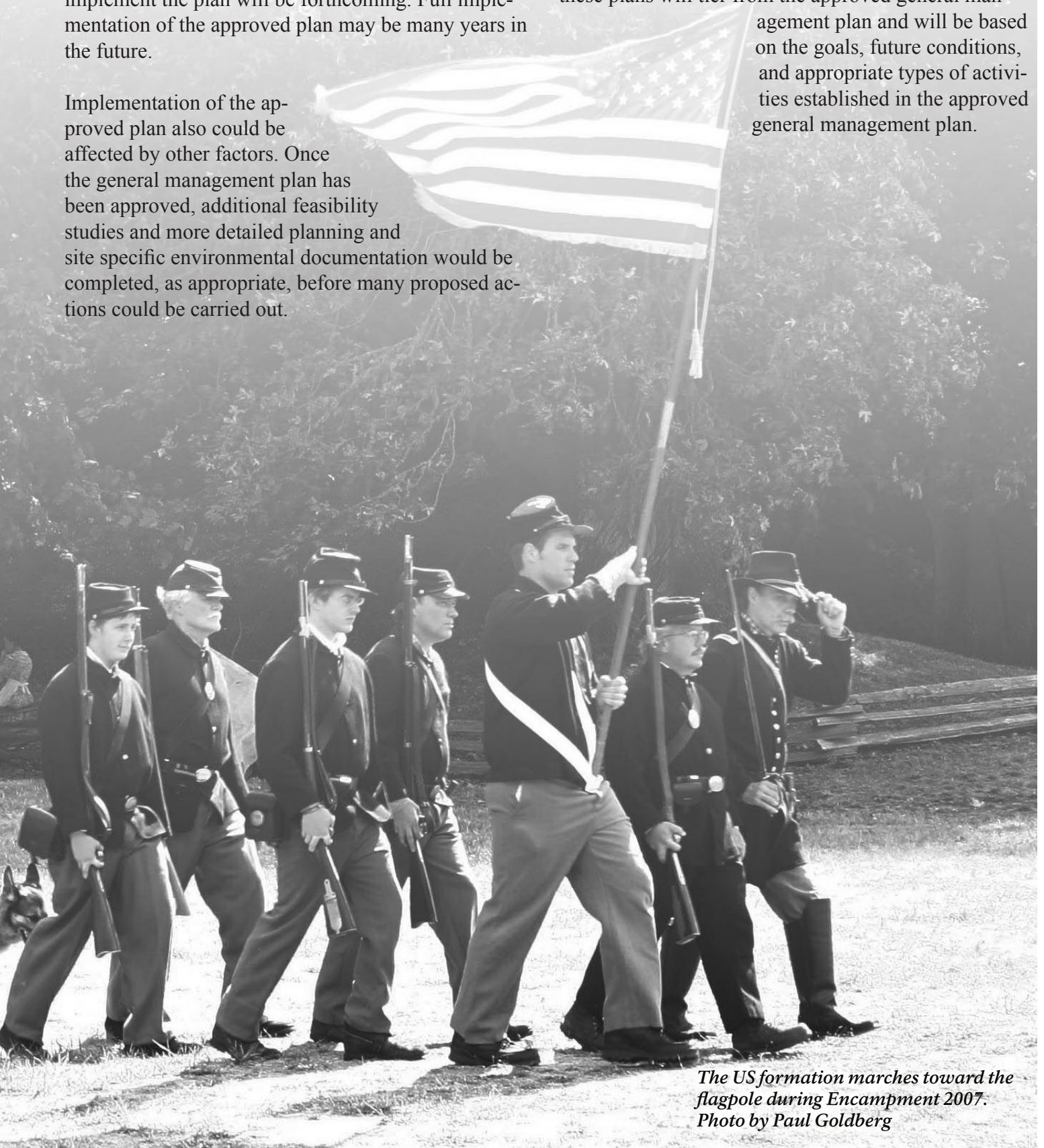


## Implementation of the GMP

Implementation of the approved GMP will depend on future funding. The approval of a plan does not necessarily guarantee that the funding and staffing needed to implement the plan will be forthcoming. Full implementation of the approved plan may be many years in the future.

Implementation of the approved plan also could be affected by other factors. Once the general management plan has been approved, additional feasibility studies and more detailed planning and site specific environmental documentation would be completed, as appropriate, before many proposed actions could be carried out.

The general management plan does not describe how particular programs or projects should be prioritized or implemented. Those decisions will be addressed during the more detailed planning associated with strategic plans, implementation plans, or other plans. All of these plans will tier from the approved general management plan and will be based on the goals, future conditions, and appropriate types of activities established in the approved general management plan.



*The US formation marches toward the flagpole during Encampment 2007.  
Photo by Paul Goldberg*