

# How to Use This Document

This document contains portions of the *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Final General Management Plan* and the *McLoughlin House Unit Management Plan*. The McLoughlin House Unit (formerly McLoughlin House National Historic Site) was added to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in 2003 through Public Law 733, just as the general management plan was finalized. These two documents form the two leading planning documents for the park. In addition, a section was added to this document to incorporate the land bridge and interpretive trail, an action proposed in the general management plan to link the Fort Vancouver village with the waterfront.

This document is presented in three sections:

## I. Fort Vancouver National Historic Site General Management Plan

**Summary** provides a synopsis of the general management plan.

**Background of the Park** sets the stage by describing the establishment of the national historic site. It also provides the park's purpose, significance and desired future conditions that were developed with public involvement during the planning process.

**Purpose and Need for the Plan** describes the purpose and need for this general management plan.

**The Affected Environment** provides detailed information on the environment, which could be affected by the decisions contained in the individual management alternative.

**The General Management Plan** describes the proposed action of the National Park Service for the future management of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

**List of Preparers and Cooperating Entities** denotes the planning team and other consultants that prepared and contributed to the general management plan.

**Bibliography** provides a list of reference materials used in development of the general management plan.

**Appendices** include Fort Vancouver NHS legislation, Record of Decision for the final general management plan, and a list of acronyms used in the document.

## II. McLoughlin House Unit Management Plan

This management plan tiers off the general management plan and describes how the McLoughlin House Unit will be managed as part of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. It includes the following sections: Introduction, Purpose and Need, The Management Plan, The Affected Environment, List of Preparers, Bibliography, and Appendices.

## III. Land Bridge and Interpretive Trail

This section is a description of the land bridge and interpretive trail and is an implementation of one of the actions in the *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site General Management Plan*.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site  
612 East Reserve Street  
Vancouver, WA 98661



A34 (PWR-FOVA)

October 2008

Dear Friends of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site:

It is with great pleasure that we submit to you the final *General Management Plan for Fort Vancouver National Historic Site*. This plan is a vision for the next 15 – 20 years that will guide our management and protection of the National Historic Site. Many of you commented on the draft General Management Plan (GMP) several years ago and your comments helped shape the final GMP which was sent out in an abbreviated (strike-out and underlined) format. In June 2004, the Record of Decision on the GMP was signed by the NPS Regional Director.

This document – the final *General Management Plan for Fort Vancouver National Historic Site*, along with the *McLoughlin House Unit Management Plan*—becomes the lead planning document for the park. As many of you may recall, the McLoughlin House, which is located in Oregon City, Oregon, was added to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in 2003 through Public Law 108-63. Although not adjacent to the National Historic Site, it is now part of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. The *McLoughlin House Unit Management Plan* was completed in June 2007 when the Finding of No Significant Impact was signed by the NPS Regional Director.

Also included in this document is a small section on the Land Bridge and Interpretive Trail project. This project implements an action of the GMP recreating a physical link between the historic fort site and the Columbia River. The Land Bridge was designed by Native American architect Johnpaul Jones in collaboration with internationally renowned artist Maya Lin. We are very proud of the partnership created to implement this nationally recognized project, and therefore have added it to this document.

Since approval of the GMP in 2004, we have implemented many of the actions called for in the final GMP. I have already mentioned the design and implementation of the Land Bridge and the acquisition of the McLoughlin House. In addition, the following actions have occurred:

- The Counting House has been reconstructed.
- Due to decommissioning by the Army, the East and South Vancouver Barracks, which is already within the authorized boundary of the park, will transfer to the NPS in the near future.
- One village house has been reconstructed in the Village and another is in the process of being built. We plan for additional reconstructions in the coming years as funding and staffing become available.
- The New Orchard is in place and is flourishing.
- Trails, based on historic trails, are now in place inside and outside the fort, making it accessible.

The planning process for the GMP began in 1999 and much has been accomplished since that year. I've highlighted just some of the projects that have been accomplished. We look forward to future projects as we



continue to implement the vision from the 2004 *General Management Plan for Fort Vancouver National Historic Site* and the 2007 *McLoughlin House Unit Management Plan*. We also look forward to continuing to work with our partners, volunteers, and many of you in helping us to shape the future of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, which serves our community, our region and our nation.

I hope you have the opportunity to visit Fort Vancouver and see first hand what's happening! Come spend time in your national park. I think you'll have a great time!

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Tracy A. Fortmann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "T".

Tracy A. Fortmann  
Superintendent

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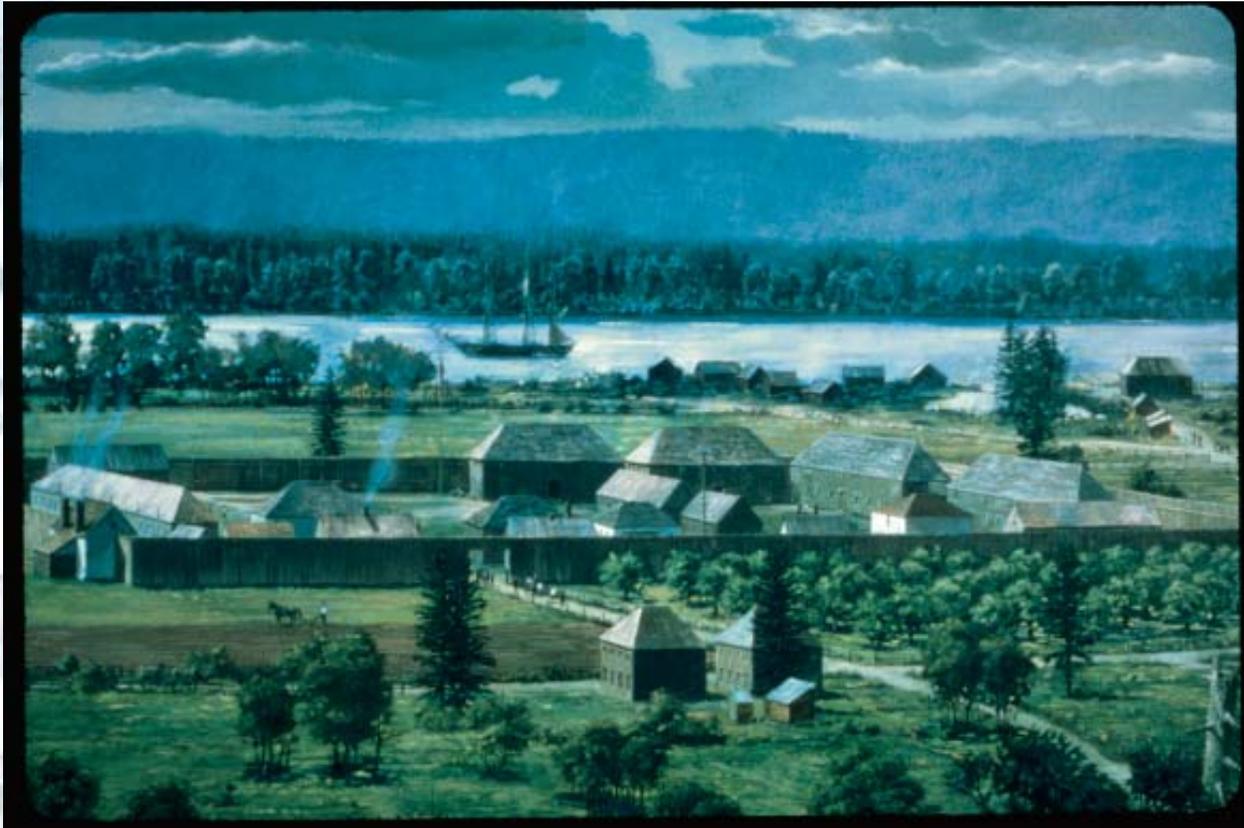
## III. Land Bridge and Interpretive Trail

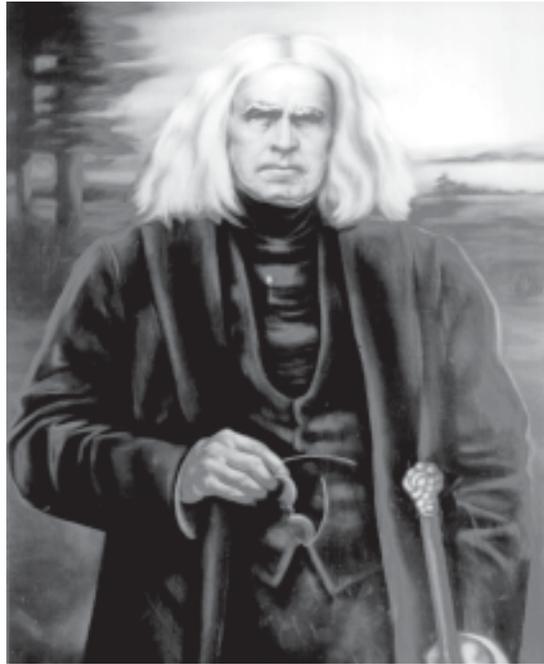
This section is a description of the land bridge and interpretive trail and is an implementation of one of the actions in the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site General Management Plan.

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# I. Fort Vancouver National Historic Site General Management Plan

*Painting of Fort Vancouver in 1845 by Richard Schlecht.  
Commissioned by the NPS in 1975.*





**Dr. John McLoughlin**

*Chief Factor, Fort Vancouver  
Hudson's Bay Company, Columbia Department  
1784-1857*

*"Father of Oregon"*

*September 16th, 1836*

*Doct McLoughlin promises to loan us enough to make a beginning, and all the return he asks is that we supply other settlers in the same way. He appears desirous to afford us every facility for living in his power. No person could have received a more hearty welcome or be treated with greater kindness than we have been since our arrival.*

*Narcissa Whitman, My Journal*

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**General Management Plan**  
**for**  
**Fort Vancouver National Historic Site**

Prepared by  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

This final *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site General Management Plan* (GMP) is the proposed action of the National Park Service and was derived from three draft alternatives presented to the public during the GMP planning process. (Refer to the *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, October 2002 and the *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, published in abbreviated format in November 2003.) With the signing of the Record of Decision on June 2, 2004, the preferred alternative, Alternative B, became the general management plan for the national historic site.

This GMP responds to National Park Service (NPS) planning requirements and to issues identified during the public scoping process. It emphasizes visitor use and the preservation of cultural and natural resources that provide the unique environment in which the Fort Vancouver story is presented to the public. The GMP expands opportunities for the visitor to appreciate the broad sense of history that occurred at Fort Vancouver and in the Pacific Northwest. Specific NPS actions relating to the Hudson's Bay Company and early U.S. Army period include: additional reconstruction and delineation of historic structures; the establishment of wayside exhibits at the Fort, Village, Parade Ground, and Waterfront; additional educational outreach programs; and a new research facility. On July 29, 2003, with the passage of H.R. 733, the McLoughlin House National Historic Site in Oregon City became a unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site administered by Fort Vancouver National Historic Site staff, an action proposed in the draft GMP.

The national historic site will undertake specific actions in cooperation with the Vancouver National Historic Reserve Partners and others. These will include: sharing of administrative, maintenance, and visitor facilities; remodeling the existing Fort Vancouver visitor center as the Vancouver National Historic Reserve visitor center; construction of a landbridge to link the Fort Vancouver Waterfront and the City of Vancouver's Old Apple Tree Park with the Fort and Village area; and the implementation of a shuttle system by C-TRAN, the regional transportation authority. Included in this GMP are development concept plans delineating enhancements to the Village, Fort, and Waterfront.

The document includes the results of public involvement, consultation, and coordination. On November 21, 2002 the draft became available for public review. Public meetings were held in Vancouver, Washington and Oregon City, Oregon during December 2002. The 60-day comment period ended on February 8, 2003 and a total of 135 pieces of correspondence were received.

For copies of this document, contact the Administrative Assistant at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, 612 East Reserve Street, Vancouver, Washington 98661, or by phone at (360) 816-6212. For further information, contact the Superintendent at the address above, or by phone at (360) 816-6205. This document can be accessed through the Internet at [www.nps.gov/fova](http://www.nps.gov/fova).



*Richard Covington, 1855 Illustration of Fort Vancouver*

# Summary

The story of Fort Vancouver is intertwined with the history of Pacific Northwest trade and settlement. It was here in present day Vancouver, Washington that several great nations, among them Great Britain, the United States, Spain and Russia, laid claim to the rich natural resources and economic opportunities of this scenic corner of the world.

It was certainly no accident then, that Great Britain and their “economic ambassador,” the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC), chose the broad fertile river plain along the north bank of the Columbia River as the location for a fort. Fort Vancouver would grow into a thriving commercial operation of several thousand acres in size and from which the vast territory of the Columbia Department was managed.

Many in Great Britain felt that the international boundary between British Canada and the United States would be the Columbia River. However, after the 1846 Treaty of Oregon set the boundary at the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, the United States Army immediately established a presence in the Northwest at Vancouver Barracks, and Fort Vancouver was soon abandoned.

It is these compelling stories that the National Park Service (NPS) tells at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (NHS). These stories are evident by the archaeological resources and historical documents, by the cultural landscape that remains and is being restored, through reconstruction of certain documented structures within and outside the fort palisade, and through living history interpretation and educational programs.

This document is the general management plan (GMP) for Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

The GMP provides NPS management with the necessary framework to guide the management of the NHS for the next 15 years. The plan is intended to be a useful long-term decision-making tool, providing NPS managers with a logical and traceable rationale for decisions about the protection and public use of park resources.

At the beginning of the planning process, a series of public scoping meetings were held in January 2000 to present the park’s purpose and significance, primary interpretive themes, and desired future conditions, and to define issues that would be addressed in the plan. Ideas and comments were solicited from the public and other governmental agencies to discern if there were other issues that were not initially listed. A draft GMP including an environmental impact statement (EIS) was released for public comment in November 2002, followed by a 60-day public review period. Public meetings were held in December 2002 in conjunction with this public review.

The GMP was prepared with the understanding that this unit of the National Park System plays a vital role in its urban setting, tells a significant story in our nation’s history, protects important resources associated with that history, and fully participates with our partners in the Vancouver National Historic Reserve (Reserve) in conveying these stories to visitors from the region, from across the nation, and around the world.

The GMP contains several new elements for implementation that will result in expanded opportunities for the visitor to appreciate the broad sense of history that occurred at Fort Vancouver and its

place in Northwest history. Specific actions include the reconstruction of nine Hudson's Bay Company period structures within the fort palisade and two at the Village. A research and education center will be developed within the Fort. Interpretive components will be added, including wayside exhibits and delineation of structures in certain locations. Much of the historic landscape will be restored. The NPS staff will develop an interpretive area at the Waterfront by partially reconstructing the Salmon Store as an interpretive shed, and delineating several other historic HBC structures. The original location of the wharf will be simulated and the historic pond delineated with plants. A portion of Columbia Way will be realigned to better accommodate visitor circulation and interpretation.

In cooperation with the City of Vancouver and the Washington State Department of Transportation, a land bridge will be constructed to link the Fort and Village areas with the Waterfront. The design will allow for interpretation devices and the use of vegetation as transitional elements. A local transit authority, in cooperation with NPS and other Reserve Partners, will implement a shuttle system to facilitate visitation. Other cooperative sharing measures will include administrative, maintenance, and the development and operation of visitor facilities with Reserve Partners. The NPS will recommend that one of the four buildings fronting the historic Parade Ground, as determined excess by the Secretary of the Army, be renovated as the joint administrative headquarters for the park and other Reserve offices. Maximum use will be made of existing structures including renovation of the existing Fort Vancouver visitor center as the Vancouver National Historic Reserve visitor center jointly managed by the Reserve Partners, including the NPS.

Implementation of the GMP will result in the development of additional educational outreach programs and new research facilities related to the Hudson's Bay Company and early U.S. Army period. In addition, on July 29, 2003, President Bush signed into law H.R. 733, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the McLoughlin House in Oregon City, Oregon for inclusion in Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.



*Hudson's Bay Company's operations in western North America*

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