



Dear Friends,

Fort Pulaski National Monument (“the park”) is initiating a development concept plan and is seeking public input to inform early ideas for the future of the park’s facilities. The purpose of the development concept plan is to provide comprehensive guidance for addressing the park’s facility and infrastructure needs: Several aged facilities no longer meet functional visitor and operational demands, and recent storms and continued sea level rise have exacerbated the physical decline of some important park facilities.

In addition to staff and visitor use of the park, the US Coast Guard (USCG) and the park partners co-inhabit the island and rely on the park’s facilities and infrastructure to be operational. Without management guidance for sustainable facilities and infrastructure for continuing operations at Fort Pulaski, the park may fail to meet resource preservation obligations, visitor experience objectives, and legal commitments with partners.

This newsletter describes the purpose for the current planning effort, discusses park issues and provides draft strategies for addressing them, and explains how you can participate in this planning process. By sharing your ideas and opinions about how the park should approach these issues, you can help us shape its future.

The development concept plan will help guide the National Park Service to provide a quality visitor experience, ensure adequate and resilient facilities into the future, and support park, and park partners’ operations and access on Cockspur Island. While this plan focuses on new strategies for operational efficiency and resiliency, the park continues to preserve historic structures and improve visitor experiences.

Sincerely,

Melissa Memory, Superintendent



National Park Service Mission and Purpose of the Park

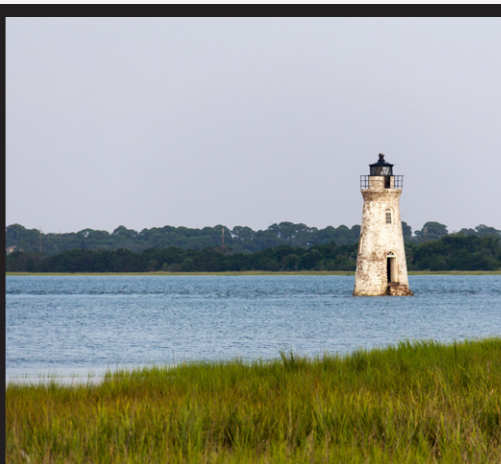
The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations. The purpose of Fort Pulaski National Monument is to preserve and interpret the 19th century masonry fort and associated landscape that illustrate the evolution of civil engineering and military technology, a continuum of history resources from colonial times to the present day, and approximately 5,000 acres of nearly pristine salt marsh on McQueen's and Cockspur Islands in Savannah, Georgia.

Goals of the Plan

The plan goals are to proactively re-envision facilities and operations on Cockspur Island to be sustainable and fiscally responsible, and to meet changing resource, visitor, and operational needs.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the development concept plan is to provide comprehensive guidance for addressing the park's facility and infrastructure deficiencies in the wake of recent storms and continued sea level rise. In addition, some facilities have outlived their life cycle and do not meet current codes and regulatory requirements or the evolving needs of the park.



Desired Conditions

Desired conditions outline the vision for resource conditions, visitor experiences and opportunities, and facilities and services that an agency strives to achieve and maintain in a particular area. Desired conditions help park managers answer the question, “What are we trying to achieve?” Desired conditions also articulate the kinds of experiences and opportunities that should be provided for specific areas of the park. Desired conditions build on previous planning and compliance documents such as the 2016 foundation document and the 2013 general management plan, wilderness study, and environmental impact statement.

Visitors will:

- Be able to physically experience Fort Pulaski to the greatest extent possible, count the projectiles embedded in the exterior from the battle, smell the gunpowder from cannon demonstrations, and see the fingerprints of the fort builders in the brick.
- Have access to experience the park regardless of ability.
- Be able to experience history come alive with demonstrations such as cannon firing that portray the sights and sounds of the period of significance at the fort.
- Have opportunities to see, hear, and feel predominantly natural environments with the park serving as an oasis from surrounding urban life.
- Be able to explore and find special places throughout the park for reflection and connection.

Natural resources will:

- Be protected and preserved as much as possible from changing conditions and visitor impacts.
- Where opportunities allow, areas will be restored to allow for more functional natural systems and habitats.

Cultural resources will:

- Be proactively studied, protected, preserved, and rehabilitated as needed to the greatest extent from changing conditions and visitor impacts.
- Be preserved in perpetuity with documentation focused on digital access when preservation or adaptation is not possible.

Facilities and infrastructure will:

- Be sustainable and accessible, feasible to maintain, and meet visitor and operational needs in innovative and adaptive ways.
- Be evaluated for operations at alternative locations to correctly support park needs and eliminate inefficiencies of relocation during high-water events.
- Be adapted when feasible and reassessed or relocated when adaptation is not possible.
- Ensure that the park can recruit and retain a diverse workforce with adequate and accessible workspaces.

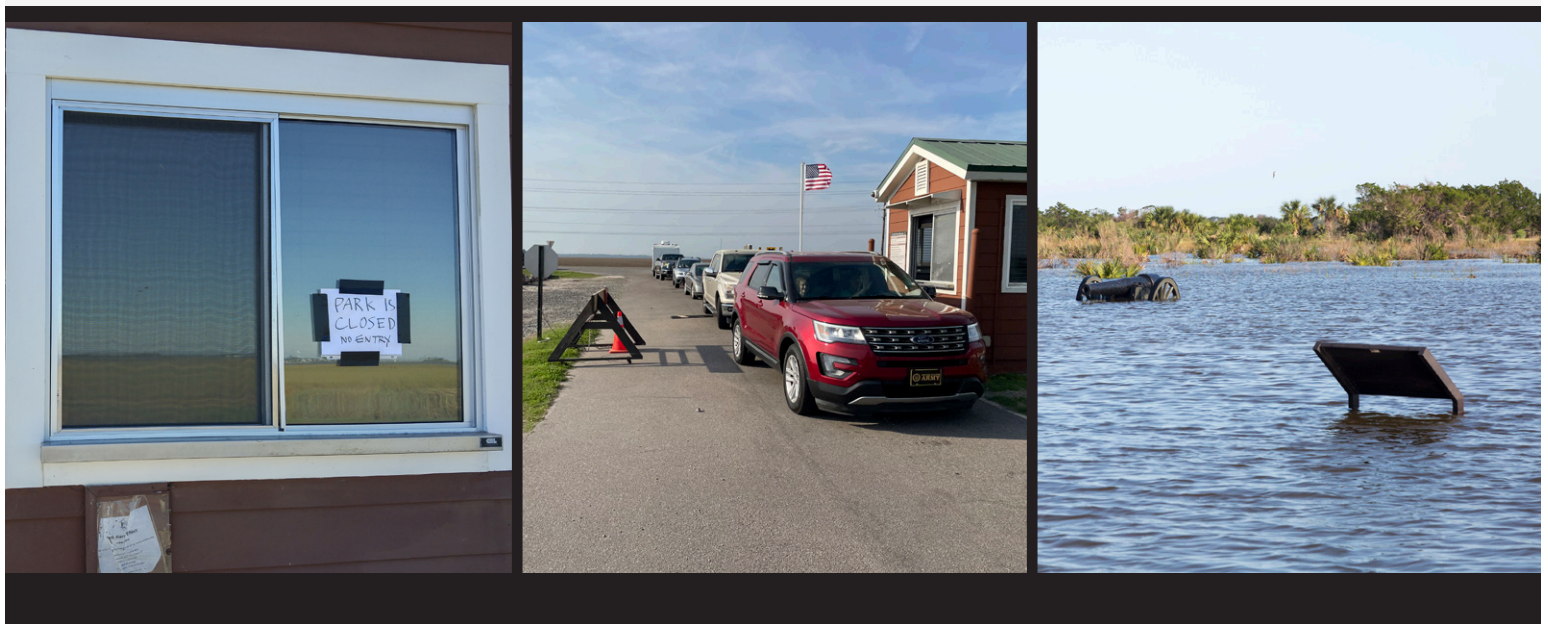
Primary Issues that this Plan will Address

Operational efficiency and resilience

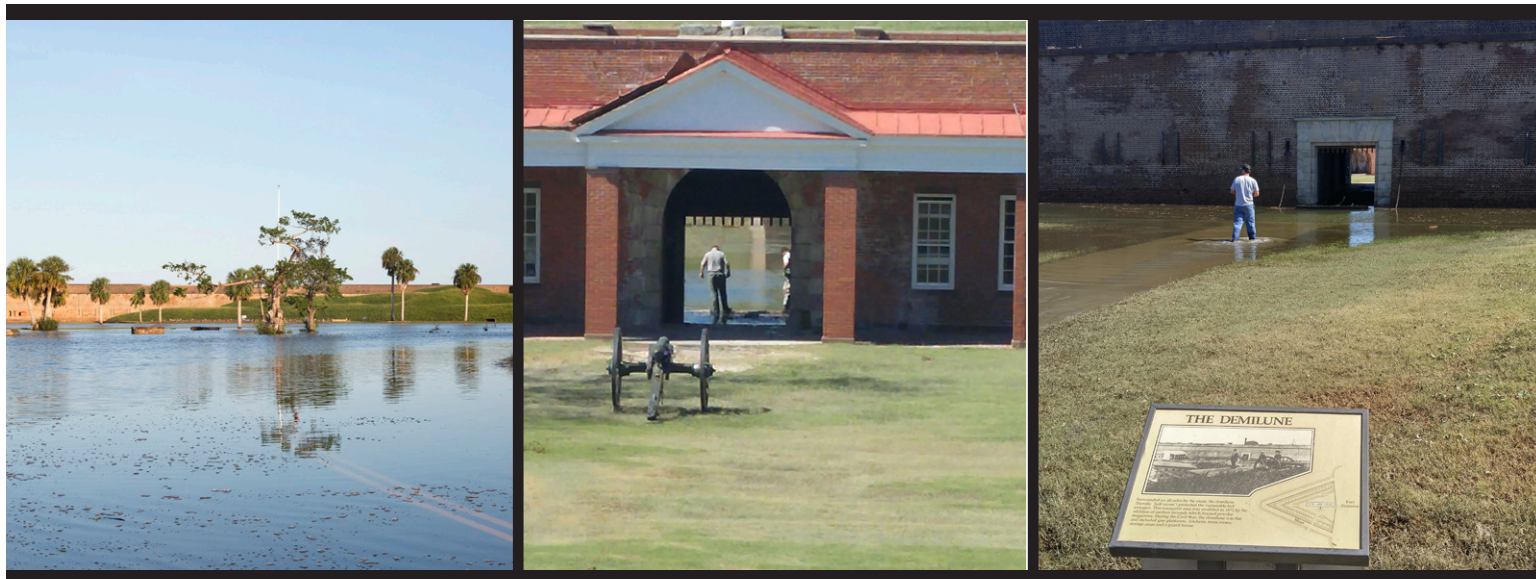
- Prior to storm events, park staff spend two to four days moving equipment out of storm-vulnerable locations and relocating offsite. The park typically undergoes two to five storms per year.
- Facilities do not support current operational needs, with staff and equipment located in undersized and makeshift locations.
- Restroom facilities are nonexistent at some staffed park locations.
- Septic fields are not built to support current building occupancy.
- Some park communication systems are outdated, and radio communications need to be evaluated to ensure operational efficiency and prudent investment.
- Some staff work in temporary trailer facilities that are not resilient to storm surges.
- There is a shortage of bus/RV/oversized parking.
- A timely response after storm events is challenging when equipment and supplies are stored in makeshift locations around the island. Cleanup and reopening to the public are negatively impacted, as well as ensuring that the USCG and park partners have access to their facilities.

Visitor experience

- Multiple restroom facilities are currently closed or close unexpectedly during high water or use that exceeds system capacity.
- The current entrance station location can cause traffic to back up onto the highway, causing visitor safety concerns.
- Adequate accessible parking is limited in various locations throughout the park.
- Parking is inadequate for current visitation levels.
- Key picnic areas do not meet Architectural Barrier Act (ABA) requirements and are in low-lying areas.



CONCEPT		DESCRIPTION
1	Relocate the entrance station closer to the visitor center and provide a queueing lane for entry.	A new entrance station would be built north of the current station, past the Cockspur Island bridge and near the fork in the park road, within the ditch and dike system. The park entrance road would be widened between the bridge and the fork in the road in order to provide queueing and an emergency and USCG bypass lane leading up to the station.
2	Construct a new building near the USCG station to house park maintenance, cultural and natural resources, and law enforcement staff and equipment.	A new facility would be constructed for the shared use of National Park Service maintenance, cultural and natural resources, and law enforcement staff and equipment. The current building and associated structures that serve these uses would be phased out, with some storage facilities being retained.
3	Add a third tier of parking and a large vehicle turnaround at the visitor center parking area.	The third tier of parking would be paved and striped to match the two tiers in the existing area and would be able to accommodate bus turnaround. Designated bus drop-off zones would be provided near the visitor center, improving visitor safety. Bus and RV parking would be provided east of the parking lots. Both would occur parallel to the current road alignment.
4	Modify fort parking entrance road to use the original alignment and use a one-way loop.	Modify the fort parking area entrance road to use the original alignment that joined the north end of the parking area. This would eliminate the current entrance road that crosses in front of the visitor center and restrooms and which also cuts off areas of the historic Worker's Village. This would improve safety for visitors by allowing them to access and explore this area without having to cross a roadway.
5	Ensure that ABA standards are met by improving the picnic area and restrooms.	Additional accessible parking spaces with connections to an accessible route would be provided. This improved lot can also be used as visitor center overflow and event parking. Restrooms and picnic tables would be located closer to the road.
6	Relocate the Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) campsites to the field across from the maintenance yard.	The new facilities/resources/law enforcement complex would be constructed in the footprint of what is currently VIP campsites. New VIP campsites would be constructed in the location formerly used as a Boy Scout camp. The same amenities would be provided: RV parking spaces with electrical hookups, tables, and grills.



Related Planning Efforts

Ditch and dike system rehabilitation. This separate but concurrent and connected planning effort will rehabilitate the ditch and dike system that is currently not functioning, in order to create better flood resilience and protect the heavy masonry fort. This effort will address issues related to protecting the park's fundamental resources and values. This project is being led by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Improve wastewater treatment. This separate but concurrent and connected planning effort will improve wastewater treatment for Fort Pulaski and make the bathrooms operational again. The restrooms do not currently meet ABA standards and this project will ensure that the park follows federal law by making the bathrooms accessible.

Resource stewardship strategy. This separate but concurrent and connected planning effort is being used to set stewardship goals and to track progress in achieving and maintaining desired natural and cultural resource conditions. Resource stewardship goals are based on science, law, National Park Service management policies, and the long-term public interest.

Proposed Management Concepts and Strategies and Actions

Several preliminary management concepts are being explored in order to address the issues described in this newsletter. We welcome your comments on these concepts and any additional suggestions that may help us address the issues.

Any concept selected to move forward in the plan will be subject to available funding, financial viability, sustainability, safety and operational assessments, and technological capabilities.



Planning Timeline

WINTER-SPRING 2022-2023.

Park staff identified the issues and developed preliminary strategies to address the issues.

SUMMER 2023.

Park staff will host public and stakeholder listening sessions and request feedback during the public comment period.

FALL-WINTER 2023-2024.

Park staff will summarize and incorporate public feedback and develop management alternatives.

SPRING 2024.

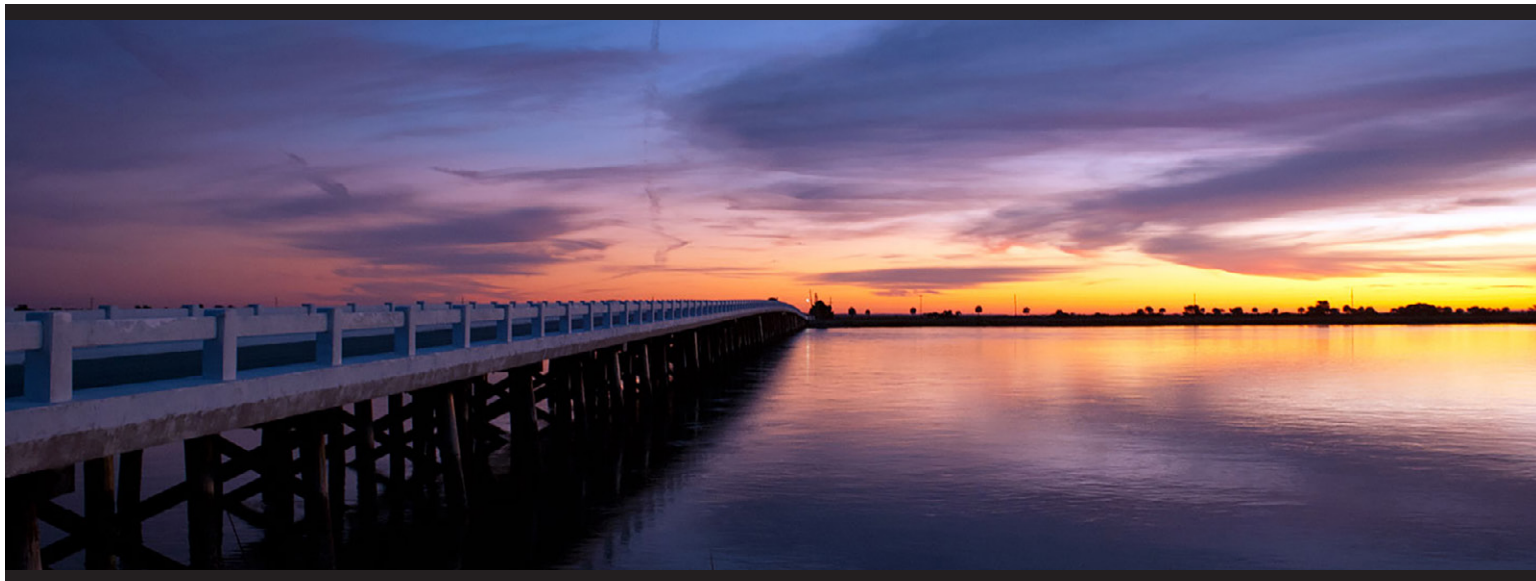
Park staff will prepare the development concept plan and associated environmental compliance.

SUMMER 2024.

Park staff will request public review of the development concept plan and associated compliance.

FALL-WINTER 2024.

Decision document.



Invitation to Meetings

The National Park Service will host one in-person public meeting on Thursday, June 22 from 5 pm to 7 pm at the park visitor center. The purpose of this meeting is to share information about the development concept plan and planning process, gather input, and answer questions from the public. Please consider attending and sharing your ideas.

Key Park Contacts

If you have questions about this planning effort or upcoming public meetings, please send an email to Superintendent Melissa Memory at melissa_memory@nps.gov.

How to Comment

To review the project documents and provide feedback please visit <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/fortpulaskidcp>. Public comments are invited from 6/12/2023 - 7/12/2023.

