

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



Fort Vancouver
National Historic Site

2017 Annual Report

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Cover Photo Credit: Christina Stolmeier



CONNECT PRESERVE PARTNER INSPIRE



Photo: Junelle Lawry



“National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst.” - Wallace Stegner

Perhaps more than ever, now is a time to reflect on the meaning and purpose of national parks to the American people. The National Park Service remains committed to our mission of preserving unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

And, in the early days of our second century, we know we need to do more: be proactive in welcoming a continually growing number of visitors to these special places, fully tell the stories and share the perspectives we hear, and help others explore the many reasons national parks have been called our “best idea.”

Here at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, we are continually striving to make our services and programs the best that they can be. Even as we celebrate our 2017 accomplishments in this Annual Report, we are challenging ourselves to make 2018 even better! I invite all of you to join us for the many events, programs, and exhibits on the slate for this year and to discover, personally, what national parks – and especially Fort Vancouver National Historic Site – mean to you.



Tracy Fortmann, Superintendent
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site



Connect

Photo: Junelle Lawry

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site provides a unique and immersive venue for visitors to connect to the past. This year, we launched new programs and exhibits to help foster these learning experiences.

At Pearson Air Museum, the National Park Service partnered with the City of Vancouver and the Clark County Historical Museum to develop an exhibit and short film on Vancouver's Kaiser Shipyard. The Vancouver shipyard is an important part of our community's World War II story, and this new exhibit will help bring this fascinating history to life.

A host of fun, family-friendly, community-centered events also provided links to the past. Volunteers working on a replica of Silas Christofferson's 1912 Curtiss Pusher aircraft invited the public

to learn more at special open house events. Volunteers involved with the national park's Youth Volunteer Program held an open house event that showcased the historic skills they have learned as part of the program, and inspired youth in our community to get involved. During the celebration of the National Park Service's 101st birthday in August, archaeologists and volunteer gardeners offered free tours of the site's current excavation and the historic Fort Vancouver garden.

At the Visitor Center, artwork by Joy Pomaika'i Hau'oli Ohearn, the Ke Kukui Foundation, and Travis Stewart of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde was displayed, providing a beautiful and tangible connection between contemporary art and cultural groups historically linked to this place.



The national park's new Bark Ranger Walking Tour program invited visitors and their dogs for walking tours of the site's trails. Participants learned about the history of the site, and how to responsibly visit the park with pets, all while enjoying a chance to connect with their pets and fellow pet owners.

Photo: Christina Stolmeier



In summer 2017, Survive and Thrive, a new public program, was launched. Taught by National Park Service staff and volunteers, this one-day workshop taught participants about survival skills used by fur trappers and traders in the 1800s.



In partnership with the Academia Duellatoria, the national park offered a series of training classes that safely taught 19th century saber skills. These programs were open to the public. Participants who successfully completed the program were offered the opportunity to demonstrate the historic skills they had learned at the park's living history events.

Photo: Junelle Lawry



Preserve

The preservation of historic and archaeological resources is of paramount importance at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. In 2017, we undertook several projects to ensure that the park's protected resources would be preserved.

In April, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and Gifford Pinchot National Forest received a 2017 Valerie Sivinski Awards for Outstanding Historic Building Rehabilitation for our work on the rehabilitation of Vancouver Barracks Building 987. This award is given by the Washington State Historic Preservation Office as a recognition of achievement in historic preservation through outstanding

rehabilitations of historic structures and buildings. Building 987 now serves as the headquarters of Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Over the summer, we partnered with Portland State University and Washington State University Vancouver on our 16th Public Archaeology Field School. This year, students worked with National Park Service archaeologists to excavate in the East Vancouver Barracks, in an area where Hudson's Bay Company and U.S. Army buildings were once located.

This year we also continued work on painting historic structures. In the last few years, 26 buildings have been painted throughout the park. In 2017,



we secured funding for the painting of 5 more buildings in Vancouver Barracks, to be completed in early 2018.

Also in Vancouver Barracks, the exterior rehabilitation of two historic double barracks buildings was completed. This project included repair and repainting of the buildings' exteriors, as well as roof replacement. The design process was completed for the rehabilitation of Building 728 in the East Vancouver Barracks, in preparation for issuing a construction contract in fiscal year 2018. Building 728 is planned for long-term re-use by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.



During this summer's Public Archaeology Field School, local university students participated in archaeological excavations in the East Vancouver Barracks.

Superintendent Tracy Fortmann (left) and Gifford Pinchot National Forest Supervisor Gina Owens (right) received the 2017 Valerie Sivinski Award for Outstanding Rehabilitation from State Historic Preservation Officer Dr. Allyson Brooks of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (center).

Work in Vancouver Barracks continued this year, including the repainting and exterior rehabilitation of several buildings.



Partner

Partnerships are vital to many aspects of this national park - from creating new programs and events, to historic preservation projects, to helping find new ways for our community to connect to this site.

One of the year's largest (literally!) partnership projects came with the reconstruction of the Vancouver Barracks garrison flagstaff. Placed on the site of the historic flagstaff used by troops at the U.S. Army post, this project was made possible through a number of community partners, including the Fort Vancouver Lions, the Vancouver Metro Sunset Rotary Club, the Community Military Appreciation Committee, the Friends of Fort Vancouver,

and the City of Vancouver. The flagstaff was dedicated on Memorial Day, when the large garrison flag was raised for the first time. The flagstaff will serve as a centerpiece of the Parade Ground, and a new national park venue for community gatherings and events.

Confluence, a local nonprofit with offices located at the national park, hosted monthly walking tours of the Vancouver Land Bridge, which connects the Fort Vancouver Village to the Columbia River waterfront. Led by Grand Ronde Lifeways Instructor Greg Archuleta, these programs highlighted the ethnobotany and Indigenous history of this area.



In 2017, the nonprofit Friends of Fort Vancouver hosted numerous educational and fun events at the national park, including several popular talks given by local authors, and a felting workshop with artist Juneko Martinson, pictured here.

Photo: Junelle Lawry



In spring 2017, naturalist and author Jack Nisbet hosted two outdoor classes at Fort Vancouver, which highlighted the natural and cultural history of Southwest Washington, and the story of famed naturalist David Douglas.

Photo: Christina Stolmeier



Vancouver Barracks Building 410 was once again the location of Bike Camps, hosted by Bike Clark County and Vancouver Parks and Recreation. These camps taught kids ages 6 to 14 about bike safety and skills as they toured the national park. Campers also learned about the history of Fort Vancouver, Pearson Field, and archaeology at special ranger-led talks.

Photo: Jonathon E. Kraft



Inspire

Photo: Junelle Lawry

As stewards of one of America's national parks, one of our most important jobs is inspiring the next generation of park stewards. This year, we worked to make meaningful experiences for young people at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

In summer 2017, we partnered with Wind and Oar Boat School to offer a free, hands-on boat building workshop exploring maritime history for youth ages 10 to 15. Participants applied math and science skills to build a simple skiff, all while discovering the history of Fort Vancouver. This project was supported by the Washington State Historical Society with funds provided by the James B. Castles Endowment.

In August 2017, our national park served as a gathering place for thousands of visitors as they watched a rare annular eclipse. In the hours leading up to the eclipse, national park rangers handed out over 800 free souvenir eclipse viewing glasses and Junior Ranger booklets.



Photo: Ordella Reynolds

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is a destination for thousands of schoolchildren every year. National park staff and volunteers provide field trip groups with curriculum-based programming. In the 2016 to 2017 school year, grants from the National Park Foundation's Every Kid in a Park program allowed us to reimburse nineteen separate 4th grade classes from Title I schools for the cost of their transportation to Fort Vancouver. In the 2017 to 2018 school year, we have again received this grant and can offer reimbursed transportation to Title I schools. This wonderful program allows students who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to take a field trip to Fort Vancouver to experience their local history in person.

Instructors from Wind and Oar Boat School work with students in this summer's boat building workshops, which took place at the Pearson Air Museum Historic Hangar.

Fourth grade students from César Chávez K-8 School were among those who benefited from the National Park Foundation's Every Kid in a Park grant program in the 2016-2017 school year.

2017 by the Numbers



Photo: Jonathon E. Kraft

1,120,577

visitors visited
Fort Vancouver
National Historic
Site

11,000

local students
visited the
national park on
field trips

5,000

visitors attended
Campfires &
Candlelight

620

volunteers
donated
36,044 hours

59,045

people were
accommodated
at 80 permitted
events

8,069

people followed
us on Facebook

3,000

visitors attended
National Get
Outdoors Day

13,500

visitors attended
the park's Historic
Weapons program

1,160

Lantern Tour
attendees

7,879

people followed
us on Twitter

7,883

people followed
us on Instagram

33,599

artifacts cataloged
and ongoing care
of a museum
collection of 2.8
million objects

Look Towards the Future

In summer 2018, a full scale replica Curtiss Pusher aircraft, based on an aircraft flown by Silas Christofferson in 1912, will become part of the permanent exhibits at Pearson Air Museum. For the past two years, a dedicated team of National Park Service volunteers has been working on this fantastic aircraft, which will help us share the story of early aviation at Pearson Field.

In 2018, rehabilitation work on Vancouver Barracks Building 728 will begin. Constructed in 1941 as a Finance Office for the U.S. Army, next year it will house offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The rehabilitation will preserve the building and its unique historic features while updating utility systems and improving the interior spaces for modern use.

At the McLoughlin House in Oregon City, big changes are also coming! The historic house will soon have an accessible entrance and new window treatments. Also, we are purchasing historic reproduction carpet and wallpaper for future installation, which will refresh the interior and make it look even more authentic to the time period when the McLoughlin family was in residence.

2018 is shaping up to be another wonderful year at your national park!



Photo: Junelle Lawry