

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Pulaski National Monument



Trail Guide



It's more than just a fort...

While visiting the park, don't limit yourself to exploring merely the fort itself. While it is the main attraction, adventures abound elsewhere on the island. Whether you enjoy history, nature, or both, you have an opportunity to experience all of Fort Pulaski National Monument.

Cockspur Island has been important since the founding of the Colony of Georgia, due to its location just inside the mouth of the Savannah River. With the exception of a low hammock near the south channel and one near the north channel, the island was regularly submerged by the spring tides that swept the island. Cockspur Island grew in recent years because of the sand added from the necessary dredging of the Savannah River. This was done to accommodate modern shipping using Savannah as a Port-of-Call.

The first military use of Cockspur was in 1761 with the construction of an earth and hewn log fort named Fort George. During the Revolutionary War, the Patriots, because of its exposed location, dismantled this fort to keep it away from the British. Once the Revolutionary War ended, the new United States built a fort on the site named for the Revolutionary War hero, General Nathaniel Greene. The life of Fort Greene would be short and tragic however. In September 1804, a hurricane swept across the island, washing away all remnants of the fort.

The nineteenth century would be dominated by the construction of Fort Pulaski. As a result of the War of 1812, the United States embarked on an ambitious national defense program. Fort Pulaski, named in honor of Polish hero Count Casimir Pulaski, who fought in the

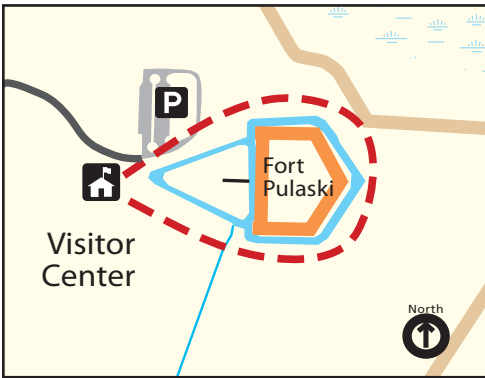
American Revolution, became part of a series of masonry fortifications built along the seacoast. These forts stood largely untested until the American Civil War. In April of 1862 Fort Pulaski found itself in the crosshairs of a new rifled gun. It was this battle that led to the downfall of masonry fortifications the world over.

The fort was abandoned by the military in the 1880s and the island was left to the keepers of the Cockspur Island lighthouse. It was during this period that the flora and fauna of the island began to reclaim the island.

Fort Pulaski was made a national monument in 1924 by Presidential Calvin Coolidge. With the arrival of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, work began to rehabilitate Fort Pulaski and the surrounding landscape. The west end of Cockspur Island saw further activity as a section base for the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Following the war, the Cockspur Island and historic Fort Pulaski have been under the watchful eye of the National Park Service. Today the island is maintained and open to visitors looking to explore pristine marsh land, historic military engineering, and a diverse collection of native flora and fauna. Don't limit yourselves within the walls of the fort. The island is waiting for you to explore all it has to offer.

Fort Perimeter Trail



Distance - 0.5 miles

The Fort Perimeter Trail is a loop trail measuring 0.5 miles and takes about 15 minutes to walk.

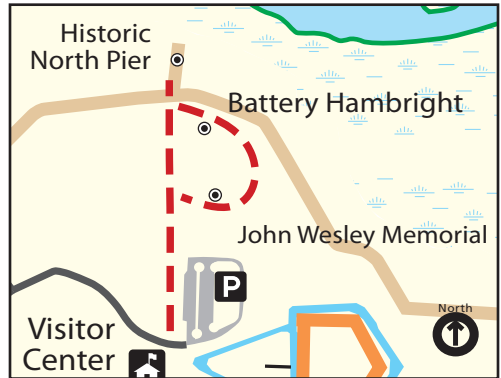
Begin at the Visitor Center and walk along the sidewalk towards the cemetery markers. Continue walking around the fort following the moat. Sandstone and masonry make up the wall that lines the outside of the moat. Watch out for striped mullet and turtles.

Battle scars mark the east side of the fort. There are several shells still imbedded in the walls from the April 1862 battle. After the breached wall continue around the fort past the south channel canal and fort entrance. Finish at the the Visitor Center straight ahead.



The damaged walls of Fort Pulaski are visible from the Fort Perimeter Trail.

North Pier Trail



Distance - 1.0 miles

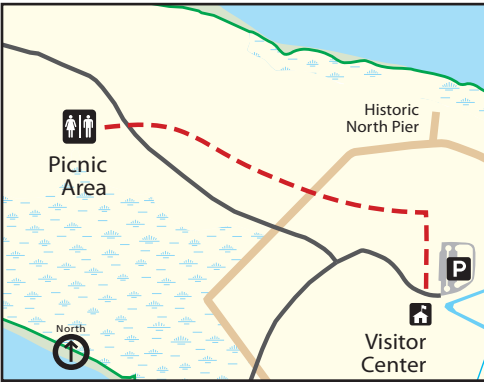
The North Pier Trail is a loop trail measuring 1.0 mile and takes about 30 minutes to walk.

Begin at the Visitor Center and walk along the sidewalk that borders the parking area. Continue along this walkway until you reach Battery Hambright. Named after Lieutenant Horace Hambright, U.S. Army, the concrete battery was constructed in the 1890s to mount two 3-inch guns that would cover the north channel minefield.

The historic north pier is just ahead and ends at the north channel of the Savannah River. Materials and supplies were brought here to construct and later supply Fort Pulaski. From this vantage point you can see Turtle Island, Daufuskie Island, Hilton Head, and the Atlantic ocean.

Return to the Visitor Center by following the concrete trail in-front of Battery Hambright that heads to the left. This part of the trail will lead you to the John Wesley Monument. Wesley, the founder of Methodism, landed on the island in 1733. Turn left where the trail intersects itself and return to the Visitor Center.

Picnic Area Trail



Distance - 1.1 miles

The Picnic Area Trail is an out and back trail measuring 1.1 miles and takes about 35 minutes to walk.

Begin at the Visitor Center and walk along the sidewalk that borders the parking area. After 0.1 mile turn left at the trail intersection. As you walk there will be foundations of the fort's construction village on your right.

Continue through the woods crossing the historic dike trail. When you cross the paved access road into the picnic area, there are benches, a shade pavilion, and restrooms available. Return to the Visitor Center via the way you came.



Following your walk, you can relax on a picnic bench underneath the trees.

Historic Dike Trail



Distance - 2.1 miles

The Historic Dike Trail is a loop trail measuring 2.1 mile and takes about an hour to walk.

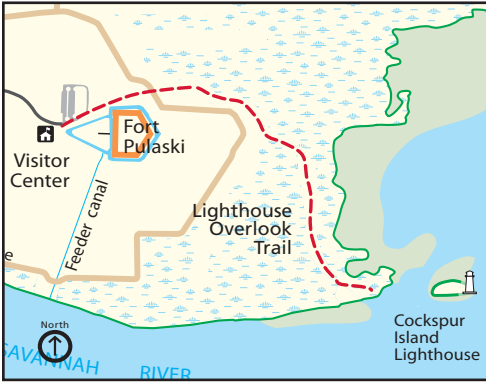
Designed by Lt. Robert E. Lee, the dike system allowed for tide control and drainage that aided in the construction of Fort Pulaski. Today the dike is twelve feet above sea level and helps protect Fort Pulaski from the tides.

Start at the Visitor Center and proceed north towards the Lighthouse Trail markers. Turn right when you reach the raised dike and continue to follow it around the fort. After 0.8 miles, you will reach the intersection on the feeder canal.

Continue walking along the dike crossing the paved access road adjacent to the bridge at 1.2 miles. Continue around the west side of the island crossing the paved access road that leads toward the picnic area at 1.4 miles.

Continue walking the dike, passing the north pier at 1.9 miles. Follow the trail until you have returned to the starting point and back to the Visitor Center.

Lighthouse Trail



Distance - 1.7 miles

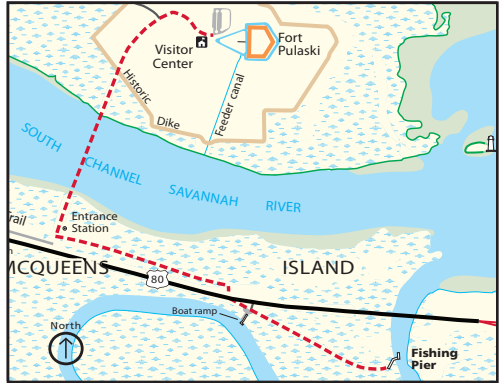
The Lighthouse Trail is an out and back trail measuring 1.7 mile and takes about 45 minutes to walk.

Begin at the Visitor Center and walk along the north side of the fort. Follow the signs for the trail and cross the historic dike. From the trail head there are lovely views of the marsh along the north channel.

Follow the trail as it winds along the east side of the island. There are benches along the way to use. Make sure to keep your eyes open for cabbage palms, red cedars, and even the small spiny back spider. Towards the end of the trail you will cross a small bridge. From here there is a great view of the lighthouse on one side and the damaged walls of Fort Pulaski on the other.

The trail will end with a close view of the Cockspur Island Lighthouse. Built in 1856, the light marked the entrance of the south channel of the river, and was an eyewitness to the battle for the fort in 1862. Other areas of interest seen from here include Tybee Island, Lazaretto Creek, and Hilton Head Island. Return to the Visitor Center via the way you came.

Fishing Pier Trail



Distance - 4.0 miles

The Fishing Pier Trail is an out and back trail measuring 4.0 mile and takes about an hour and a half to walk.

Begin at the Visitor Center and walk along the paved road back toward the park entrance. When you reach the entrance station, bear left across the grass and enter the trail between Hwy. 80, on your right, and the marsh on your left.

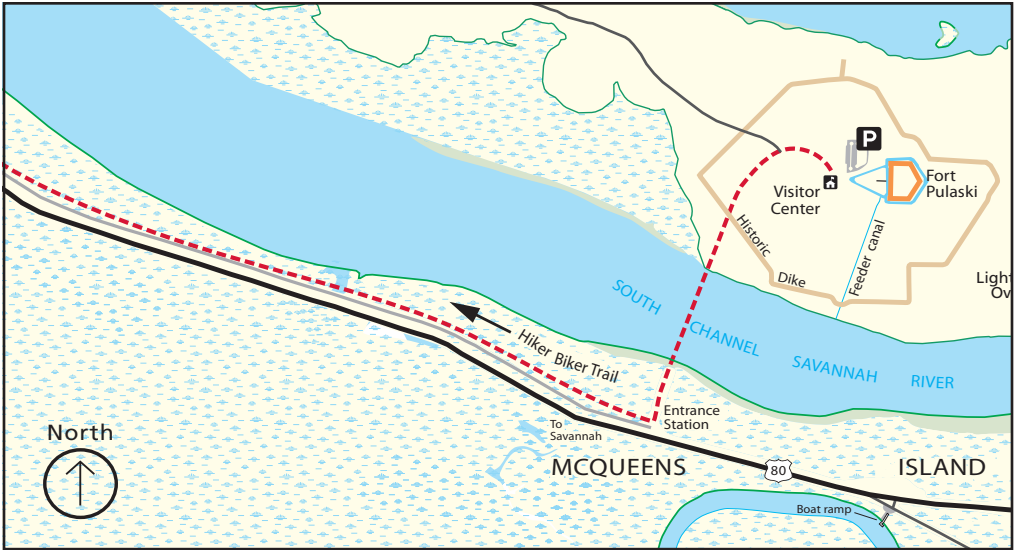
At the end of this path you will reach Hwy 80. Cross the highway, remembering to be safe and look for traffic, to the paved road on the other side. Follow this road until you reach the fishing pier. Return to the Visitor Center the way you came.



The waters of the south channel of the Savannah River offer a variety of marine life.

Hiker Biker Trail

(Chatham County Park Services Trail)



Distance - 13.0 miles

This Rails to Trails is an out and back trail measuring 13 miles and takes about five hours to walk.

Enjoy your excursion along this hiking and biking trail. Built in 1887, it follows a portion of the Central of Georgia Railway that once carried passengers from Savannah to Tybee Island.

Begin at the Visitor Center and walk along the paved road back toward the park entrance. When you reach the entrance station, turn right to the trail head which is marked with a sign, and proceed around the gate. The trail follows the south channel of the Savannah River with views of Cockspur Island across the channel.

There are benches approximately every 1/4 mile along the trail. When you reach the 3 mile point there are Port-A-Johns available for use. Located here is an alternate parking area off of Hwy 80.

At the 4.5 mile point there are 7 exercise stations that stretch over the next half mile. The trail ends with views of the western tip of Cockspur Island and in the distance the blue storage tanks on Elba Island. Return to the Visitor Center the way you came.

Since 1992, the Chatham County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs has managed the McQueens Island portion of this trail through an agreement with the National Park Service.



The growing popularity of the automobile caused the railway to close in the 1930s.

Think Safety First!

Staying safe is a smart way to keep the fun in your visit. Use the following tips to help you prepare for your next trail adventure.

- Know the weather and plan accordingly. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, a hat, sunglasses, and drinking water.
- Keep pets on leashes at all times.
- Place all trash in the garbage cans located in the parking lot.
- Lock valuables in the trunk of your car or take them with you.
- Georgia is the home to a variety of venomous creatures. If you are bitten or stung by an insect, bee, or spider, follow the aid tips below. If a severe reaction occurs contact 911 or go to the nearest hospital.
- If you are stung by a bee, wasp, hornet, yellow jacket, fire ant, or scorpion, gently remove the stinger, if present, by scraping it from the wound. Do not touch the stinger as this will only force more venom into the wound. Clean the area with an antiseptic. Ice packs can be applied.
- If you are bitten by a Brown Recluse or Brown Widow spider, seek medical attention promptly.
- A tick's bite is painless, but a small percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove the tick yourself with tweezers or seek medical assistance. Consider keeping the tick for testing in case you become ill or develop a target-shaped rash around the bite.
- There are Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnakes on the island. Stay a safe distance away. Most snake bites occur as a result of teasing or trying to handle snakes. Few people die from rattlesnake bites, but seek immediate medical attention if bitten.
- **In case of emergency call 911.**



Whether by bicycle or by foot, Fort Pulaski offers many trail opportunities.

Trail Adventures Certificate

Hit the trails and earn the Fort Pulaski National Monument Trail Adventure Certificate.

Once you have completed a trail, you can have a park ranger or staff member sign off on the completed trail. After the completion of all the trails you can receive the Fort Pulaski National Monument Trail Adventures Certificate.

Trail Adventures Tracking Log

Staff	Trail Completed
1. _____	Fort Perimeter Trail
2. _____	North Pier Trail
3. _____	Picnic Area Trail
4. _____	Historic Dike Trail
5. _____	Lighthouse Trail
6. _____	Fishing Pier Trail
7. _____	Hiker Biker Trail

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Cockspur Island Lighthouse

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