



# Fort Vancouver National Historic Site



Photo by Christopher Communications

## Experience the Park After Dark

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO EXPERIENCE FORT Vancouver National Historic Site in the daytime. Ranger-led tours, our self-guided audio tour, special programs and events all invite visitors to see the park during regular business hours. However, there is something special about seeing Fort Vancouver at night. By flickering candlelight, this frontier trading post comes to life, and it's easy to imagine yourself transported back in time.

Fortunately, there are two excellent opportunities to experience Fort Vancouver after dark: at our annual Campfires & Candlelight event, and through our very popular Lantern Tour program.

Campfires & Candlelight, which will take place this year on **September 12 from 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm**, is our largest living history event of the year, attracting thousands of visitors to this national park. Each year, hundreds of costumed living history reenactors, both from the Fort Vancouver NHS volunteer team and from local living history groups, gather together to present a candlelit evening of history.

Along the trail leading into the fort, living history camps interpret the site's military past - from World War II back in time to the earliest days of the post. These military camps feature historic weapons demonstrations, which truly light up the night! Just outside the gates, camps tell the story of the Oregon Trail settlers who stopped at Fort Vancouver on their way to new homesteads, and the story of the Hudson's Bay Company employees who lived in the fort's Village. Inside the fort, visitors are transported back in time to a specific night in history: September 13, 1846, when the U.S. Schooner *Shark* was wrecked on the Columbia River bar.

Lantern Tours are another excellent opportunity to see the fort by candlelight. Each adult attending the program carries their own candle lantern during this special ranger-led tour through the fort's Counting House, Fur Store, Chief Factor's House, Kitchen, and Bake House. In each building, costumed living history interpreters present short historical vignettes. The evening ends with hot cider in the fort's Kitchen.

To attend a Lantern Tour, you must make a reservation, and these tours can fill up fast! To find out how to join in the fun, see the box to the right.



### Hello, and welcome to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site!

The establishment of Fort Vancouver National Monument in 1948 was the product of decades of work. This park was the dream of citizen advocates, who wanted national recognition for the importance of Fort Vancouver and Vancouver Barracks to the history of the Pacific Northwest. Its expansion and redesignation as Fort Vancouver National Historic Site was due to the tireless efforts of a bold congresswoman - Representative Julia Butler Hansen - who, in the 1960s and 70s, ensured that the National Park Service was given the funding to conduct archaeological excavations and begin the reconstruction of the Hudson's Bay Company fort. This national park has been influenced by two iconic presidents: Harry S Truman, who signed legislation creating Fort Vancouver National Monument, and John F. Kennedy, who signed the law that transformed the national monument into a national historic site.

The legacy of these dreamers and thinkers, movers and shakers, is present at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site today. It is because of their work that we are here, proudly sharing the story of this place with hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Our newly renovated Visitor Center is a tribute to the long legacy of the National Park Service in our community. We have designed this facility to be a warm, welcoming space that will foster discovery, inspiration, and fun for all our visitors.

I hope you enjoy your visit, and create wonderful memories here at your local national park!

Tracy Fortmann  
Superintendent

### Make your reservations:

To learn more about upcoming Lantern Tour dates, ticket prices, and to reserve your spot, call (360) 816-6230 and visit <http://www.nps.gov/fova/> Not recommended for children under the age of 10.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

**Fort Vancouver National Historic Site**

brings together a national park, a premier archaeological site, the region's first military post, an international fur trade emporium, one of the oldest operating airfields, the first national historic site west of the Mississippi River, and a waterfront trail on the banks of the Columbia River.

**Superintendent**

Tracy Fortmann

**Park Visitor Center**

360-816-6230

**Mailing Address**

612 E Reserve St  
Vancouver, WA 98661

**Web and E-mail**

www.nps.gov/fova  
For email, click "Contact Us"

**Social Media**

instagram.com/FortVancouverNPS  
twitter.com/FtVancouverNPS  
facebook.com/FortVancouver

National Park Service employees care for America's 407 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities.

# What to See and Do

At Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, the history of the Pacific Northwest is told at four unique sites, through four unique stories.

**VISITOR CENTER**

Begin your visit by learning about all the park's venues through new exhibits and activities. Watch a short film about the history of the area, peruse the park's gift shop, and enjoy a display of artwork by American Indian artists (beginning in November).

**FORT VANCOUVER**

At Fort Vancouver, discover the site's roots as a British fur trading post, built by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1825. Tour the fort's buildings on your own, or with our free audio guide. As



you approach the fort's gates, be sure to stroll through the garden, which is cared for by a team of dedicated National Park Service volunteers.

**PEARSON AIR MUSEUM**

Pearson Field is one of the nation's oldest operating air fields. Exhibits at Pearson Air Museum highlight early military and civilian aviators here, and the site's World War I Spruce Mill, which produced aviation-grade lumber for Allied planes.

**VANCOUVER BARRACKS**

Established in 1849, Vancouver Barracks was the Northwest's first U.S. Army post. Stroll among these historic buildings, which are marked with wayside exhibits interpreting their history. Though the buildings are

currently closed, the National Park Service is working to transform the barracks into a vibrant, public service campus.

**McLOUGHLIN HOUSE**

Dr. John McLoughlin, the Chief Factor of Fort Vancouver, moved to his home in Oregon City, Oregon, after his retirement in 1845. Free tours of this home - one of the oldest in Oregon - take place on Fridays and Saturdays. Call (503) 656-5146 for more information.

*Left: Visit Pearson Air Museum to learn about early aviation in Vancouver.*

*Center: At the McLoughlin House in Oregon City, costumed docents provide free tours of this historic home.*

*Right: Celebrate Christmas at Fort Vancouver with costumed living history volunteers.*



## Essential Information

**Dates and Hours of Operation**

The Visitor Center (temporarily relocated to Pearson Air Museum) and Pearson Air Museum are open Monday through Saturday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Sundays. Please call 360-816-6230 for more information. The newly rehabilitated Visitor Center will re-open in November 2015.

The reconstructed fort is open Monday through Saturday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and noon to 5:00 pm on Sundays. Please call 360-816-6230 for more information.

The park's McLoughlin House Unit in Oregon City is open Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Please call 503-656-5146 for more information.

**Fees**

The entrance fee to the reconstructed fort site is currently \$5.00 per person, and the receipt is valid for 7 days. Ages 15 years and under are free. Entrance to Pearson Air Museum is free. Entrance to the McLoughlin House Unit of Fort Vancouver NHS in Oregon City is free. America the Beautiful, and all other National Parks Passes, are honored.

An annual pass for entrance to Fort Vancouver NHS is available, and costs \$30.00. This pass grants entry to the pass holder and three additional adults for 12 months from the purchase date.

**Information Centers**

The park's Visitor Center is temporarily relocated to Pearson Air Museum during the facility's rehabilitation. Pearson Air Museum is located at 1115 E. Fifth St., Vancouver, WA 98661. Please call 360-816-6230 for more information. The newly rehabilitated Visitor Center will re-open in November 2015.

**Food & Water**

Snacks and drinks are available onsite at the AAFES Shoppette in Vancouver Barracks. Meals are available at the Grant House Restaurant on Officers Row and at a number of venues within walking distance of the park.

**Bicycles**

Cyclists must stay on designated roads and trails and yield to pedestrians. Travel at a safe speed and let others know when you are passing. Always wear a helmet and carry a patch kit and pump. If listening to music, ride with only one ear bud to be aware of your surroundings and other trail users.

**First Aid**

Onsite first aid is available inside the reconstructed fort at the Contact Station, and at Pearson Air Museum and the Visitor Center.

**Pets**

Dogs must be leashed at all times, and their waste must be collected and disposed of.

**Reservations & Permits**

If you are interested in holding a special event at Fort Vancouver NHS, visit the park website at [www.nps.gov/fova/planyourvisit/permits.htm](http://www.nps.gov/fova/planyourvisit/permits.htm) or contact our reservation coordinator Eva Dodd at 360-816-6241.

**Firearms**

As of February, 2010, a new federal law allows people who can legally possess firearms under applicable federal, state, and local laws, to legally possess firearms in this park. It is the responsibility of visitors to understand and comply with all applicable state, local, and federal firearms laws before entering this park. Federal law also prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those facilities are marked with signs at all public entrances.

**Collecting & Vandalism**

Metal detecting and any type of ground disturbance is prohibited. If you see an artifact on the ground, please leave it in place and notify a staff member or call the park's Cultural Resources Division at 360-816-6250.

# Suggested Tours of Fort Vancouver NHS

## If you have one hour...

If you have only one hour to visit the National Historic Site, we recommend that you see our namesake, of course: Fort Vancouver! After touring the Visitor Center to learn about the history of the site, proceed to the reconstructed fort located on the plain to the south.

Fort Vancouver was established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1825, and served as the headquarters and supply depot for a vast network of fur trading outposts in the West. By 1860, after the Pacific Northwest had become part of the United States, the British fort fell into decline and within a few

years burned to the ground. What you see today is a reconstruction of the fort, built on the original's archaeological footprint.

On your way into the fort, take a leisurely stroll through the fort's formal English-style garden - featuring plants that would have been grown at the historic post. Inside the fort, pick up a free audio guide that will lead you to each of the reconstructed buildings.

To see the only structure remaining of the original fort, be sure to take a look down the well in the northeast corner of the stockade!



## If you have two hours...

If you have two hours to visit Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, after you've toured the Visitor Center and Fort Vancouver (see above), take a walk along the Spruce Mill Trail to Pearson Air Museum.

The Spruce Mill Trail leads from the gates of Fort Vancouver towards the northeast. This area was once the site of a vast Spruce Mill - the largest in the world. Built in 1917 as part of the nationalization of the lumber industry that occurred during World War I, the mill processed wood brought in from logging camps throughout

the northwest. The lumber was shipped to airplane manufacturers in the eastern United States and Europe. This was part of a massive war effort that ensured that the Allies would be able to compete with German aviation technology.

At Pearson Air Museum, discover the history of flight in Vancouver. Pearson Field has been in constant use since the earliest days of the 20th century, and has been the site of fantastic and historic aviation events, including the landing of the world's first transpolar flight.



## Explore the history of the Hudson's Bay Company

The Hudson's Bay Company's establishment at Fort Vancouver was the heart of their fur trading empire in the Pacific Northwest. It is because they chose this spot on the north bank of the Columbia River that the modern-day cities of Vancouver and Portland are located where they are.

After touring Fort Vancouver, walk the Land Bridge Trail to the Village and Waterfront (see map on next page).

The two small, one-room cabins you will encounter are reconstructions of two houses

that were located in the Village - Vancouver's first neighborhood and the home of the fort's employees and their families.

Next, cross over the Land Bridge. This beautiful pedestrian bridge features indigenous plants, and artwork designed by American Indian artist Lillian Pitt. On the other side, you will encounter the northwest's oldest apple tree at the City of Vancouver's Old Apple Tree Park. Continue on to discover the Fort Vancouver waterfront, an area that was historically the site of boat and canoe landings.



## Explore the history of the US Army in Vancouver

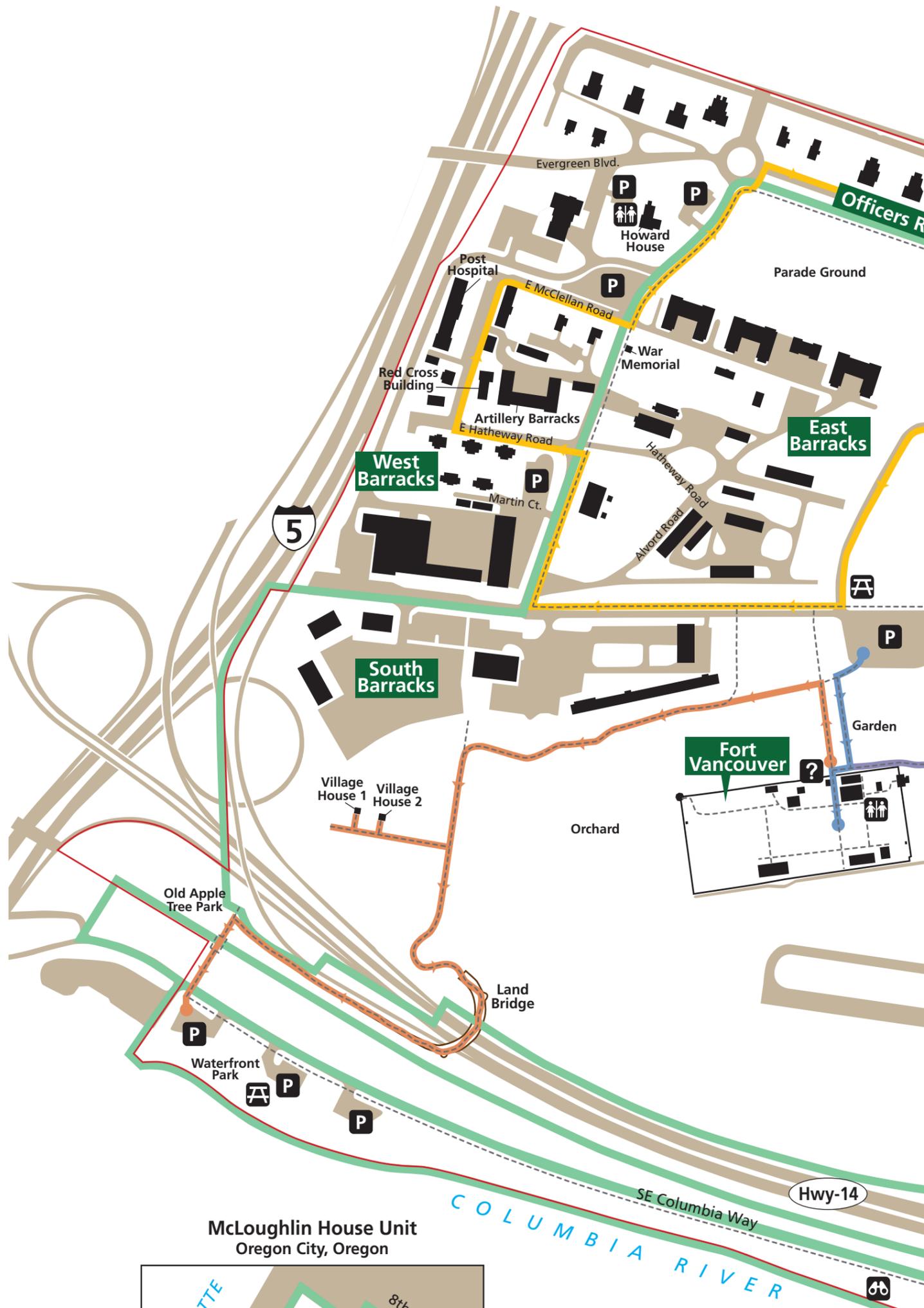
The US Army established Vancouver Barracks in 1849, the first military post in this part of the Pacific Northwest. The last US Army Reserve units were relocated in 2012. Today, the east and south sections of Vancouver Barracks are managed by the National Park Service, and the west section and Officers' Row are managed by the City of Vancouver.

After touring through the Visitor Center, walk down the Park Road towards the reconstructed fort. To your right, the Parade Ground is where troops drilled.

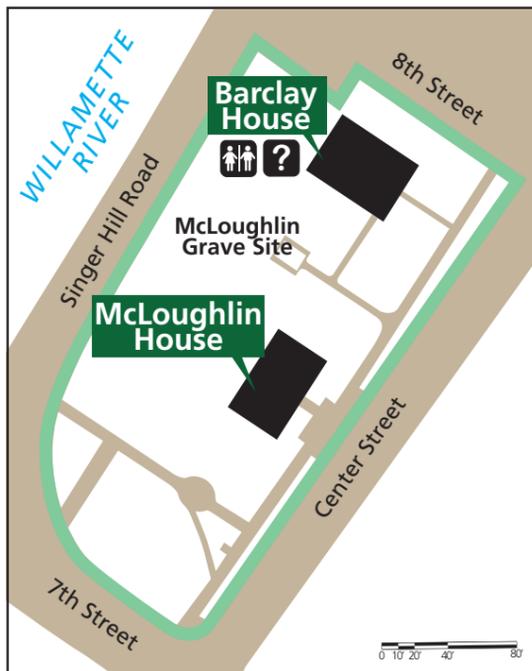
As you walk through the barracks (see map on next page), wayside exhibits will interpret the historic buildings, as well as buildings that are no longer standing, like the St. James Mission.

Be sure to see the beautiful Red Cross Building, the historic Post Hospital, charming Officers' Row, the Bandstand, and Pearson Air Museum, where you can discover the history of the 321st Observation Squadron, stationed at the post in the 1920s.





McLoughlin House Unit  
Oregon City, Oregon



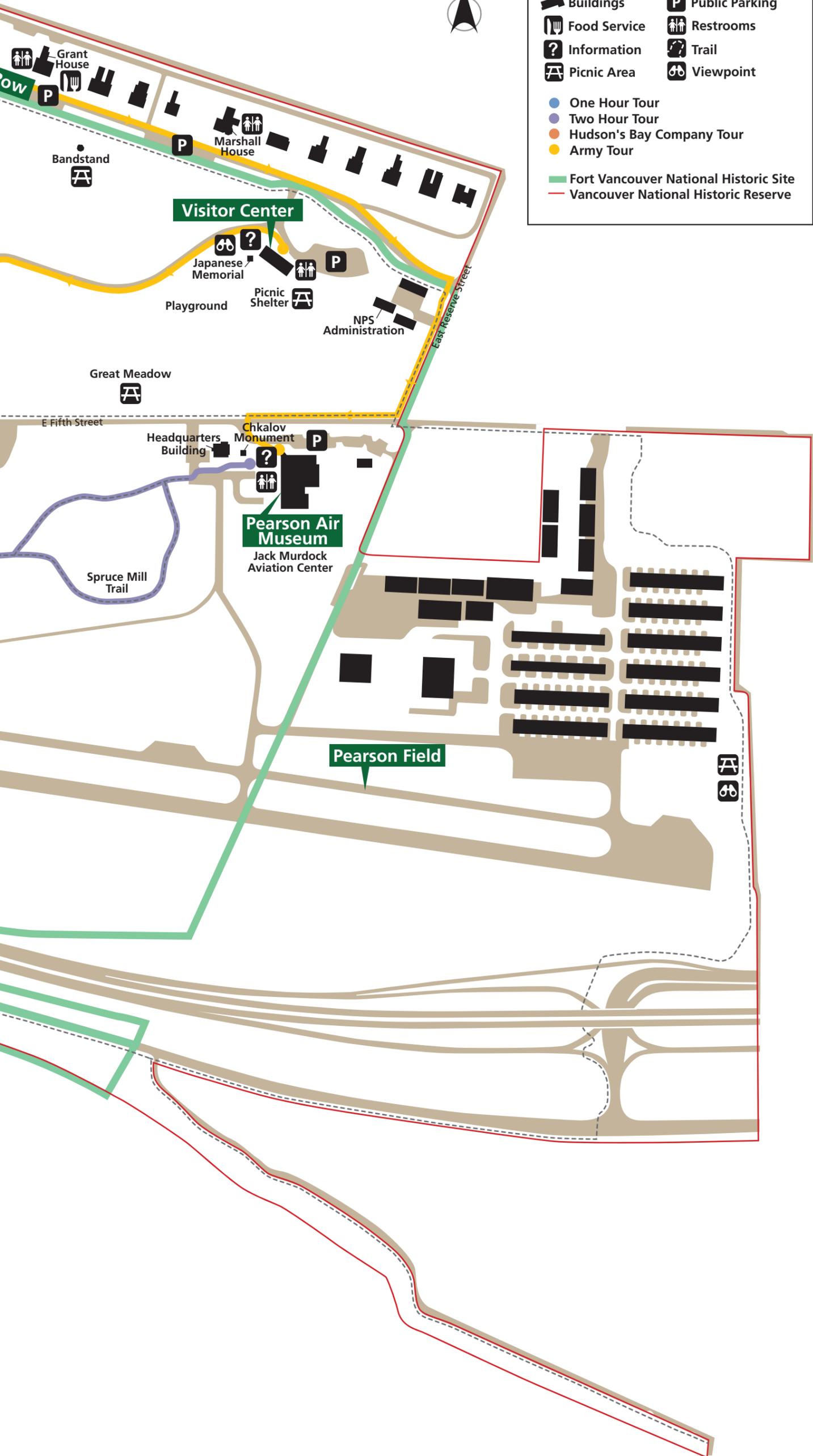


**LEGEND**

Buildings	Public Parking
Food Service	Restrooms
Information	Trail
Picnic Area	Viewpoint

● One Hour Tour  
● Two Hour Tour  
● Hudson's Bay Company Tour  
● Army Tour

— Fort Vancouver National Historic Site  
— Vancouver National Historic Reserve





# FIND YOUR PARK

Junelle Lawry began taking photographs at Fort Vancouver NHS six years ago, when her oldest daughter became a student in the fort's Dame School program. Over the years, her photography has evolved from "proud mom photos" to more artistically-inspired expressions. She has recently become a National Park Service volunteer, providing the park with photos to use on social media.

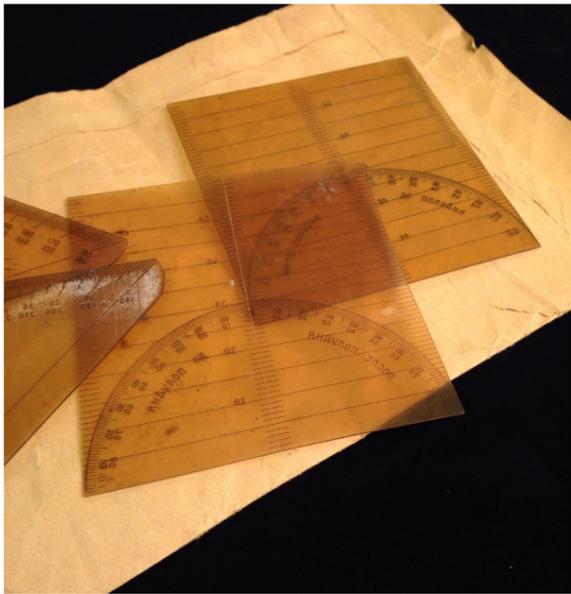
Junelle says, "Fort Vancouver NHS has a variety of locations that inspire my artistic imagination. There is a contrast between past and present with the historic buildings, the stockade and Columbia River bridge in the distance. Events at Fort Vancouver NHS are excellent for living history photography to step back in time and capture life as it once was. The Fort Garden has an amazing collection of plants. Bees are one of my most challenging and enjoyable subjects to photograph. I do feel like I am cheating when I take photos of bees in the Fort Garden because the garden has a multitude and variety of bees who happily pause on the many flowers. From Pearson to the Land Bridge, there are many opportunities for shots including landscape, nature, wildlife, macro and portrait. It is a great place to have a photo adventure."

Share your photos of Fort Vancouver NHS on social media with the hashtag [#FortVancouver](#)



# Recent Additions to the Museum Collection

The curatorial staff at Fort Vancouver NHS care for a museum collection of over 2 million artifacts. Together, these items tell the story of this site throughout history. If you have an item related to the history of Fort Vancouver, Vancouver Barracks, the McLoughlin House, or Pearson Field, and would like to donate it to the collection, contact Curator Tessa Langford at (360) 816-6252. All donations are tax deductible.



THESE NAVIGATIONAL TOOLS WERE used by Alexander Vasilyevich Belyakov, who served as navigator aboard the world's first transpolar flight. In June 1937, Belyakov, pilot Valery Chkalov and co-pilot Georgy Baidukov flew an ANT-25 from Moscow to Pearson Field. The three aviators had originally planned to land at San Francisco, but a dangerously low fuel supply forced them to touch down in Vancouver. At the field, they were met by a crowd of excited onlookers and post commander General George C. Marshall. Belyakov and his comrades received the Order of Lenin and were declared Heroes of the Soviet Union.

On one of these plastic instruments, Belyakov scratched his name.

*Donation, FOVA 230153*



DURING WORLD WAR I, THIS PLACE was the site of a massive spruce mill. Here, trees from the forests of the Pacific Northwest were milled and prepared for shipment to aircraft factories. Airplanes made from Sitka spruce milled at Vancouver were used as training planes, and overseas in Europe as fighters and bombers.

The *Straight Grain* was the official newspaper of the Spruce Production Division, a newly-formed branch of the US Army that oversaw the mill. These three issues from November 1918 were owned by Spruce Mill soldier Eugene O. Lyon and sent to his fiancée, Hilda Phelps of Denver. By June 1919, Lyon had been discharged and the two were married.

*Donation*



MANY OF THE ARTIFACTS IN our museum collection come from archaeological excavations. While some artifacts are impressively large, many are very small, like this tiny rim fragment from a plate. This artifact was excavated in the summer of 2015 by our Public Archaeology Field School, during which students from Portland State University and Washington State University Vancouver work with National Park Service archaeologists to learn archaeology through hands-on science at the national park.

This artifact was found at the site of Fort Vancouver's Cooper's Shop, outside the southeast corner of the stockade. The cooper, who lived in a home near the shop, was responsible for making barrels and packing materials for the fort's exports.

*Field Collection, FOVA-03282*

## Upcoming Events at Fort Vancouver NHS

Event	Date & Time	Location
<b>Campfires &amp; Candlelight</b> Experience the history of the park by candlelight at our largest living history event of the year.	September 12	Reconstructed fort
<b>Citizenship Ceremony</b> Welcome new American citizens at this special, annual ceremony performed by the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services.	September 18	Parade Ground
<b>Summer's End Promenade</b> Take a stroll with costumed interpreters representing fashions from many decades.	September 26	Officer's Row
<b>Veteran's Day Parade</b> Honor our nation's veterans at the annual City of Vancouver Veteran's Day Parade.	November 7	Officer's Row
<b>Heritage Holidays at the McLoughlin House</b> Celebrate the season 1850s-style at the historic McLoughlin House in Oregon City.	December 5	McLoughlin House in Oregon City
<b>Christmas at Fort Vancouver</b> Join us for holiday-themed crafts, caroling, and living history demonstrations.	December 12	Reconstructed fort

For more information, visit [www.nps.gov/fova](http://www.nps.gov/fova) or call (360) 816-6230



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site  
612 E Reserve St  
Vancouver, WA 98661

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City, State  
Permit Number

# 2016 | FIND YOUR PARK

National Park Service  
CENTENNIAL

The National Park Service turns 100 on August 25, 2016, and you're invited to take part in the celebration! The centennial will kick off a second century of stewardship of America's national parks and engaging communities through recreation, conservation, and historic preservation programs. Learn more at [findyourpark.com](http://findyourpark.com)

## What Makes Fort Vancouver NHS Special?

### Fort Vancouver, of course!

Fort Vancouver, established in 1825, was the capitol of the British Hudson's Bay Company's fur trading empire in the northwest. Fort Vancouver NHS tells this story of the early days of this region, both before and after European settlement.

### An American Legacy

This national park also tells the story of the transition between two nations, which occurred here. This was a place where Oregon Trail pioneers rested before starting the last leg of their journey. Vancouver Barracks, established here in 1849, served as the earliest military post in the Pacific Northwest.

### Cultural Landscapes

Today, we see the past in historic buildings, in heritage trees, in the preservation and interpretation of this land so many have called home.

### A Dense and Layered Archaeological Record

Fort Vancouver NHS is one of the northwest's premier archaeological sites. Excavations have taken place here since 1947 and continue today, resulting in a museum collection of over 2 million artifacts.

### A Place for Play

With our wide open green spaces, Fort Vancouver NHS is ideal for afternoon picnics, playdates, and special family and community events.

### Connections to our Community

This land has been a gathering place for thousands of years, and Fort Vancouver NHS is proud to be a part of our local community today. The presence of the National Park contributes millions of dollars to our local economy. Fort Vancouver NHS also hosts many free community events.

## Become a Junior Ranger!

Anyone can become a Junior Ranger if they are ready to learn about Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and have fun! As a Junior Ranger, your responsibility is to enjoy and protect all the national park sites you visit.

The Junior Ranger booklet, available at the fort, Pearson Air Museum, and the Visitor Center, has activities for children ages 6 to 12, but younger children can complete it with help. Older kids and adults are welcome to participate as

well. Once you complete your booklet, Junior Rangers will be officially "sworn in" and receive their Junior Ranger badge!

The booklet can also be printed at home before your visit from our webpage at <http://go.usa.gov/3H2aY>

For kids with access to the internet, the National Park Service also has an exciting new WebRanger program that kids can complete online at [www.nps.gov/webrangers/](http://www.nps.gov/webrangers/)

