

# Fort San Gerónimo

## Special Resource Study

Newsletter 1

January 2011

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



### *Letter from the National Park Service*

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Dear Friends,

The National Park Service is conducting a special resource study involving Fort San Gerónimo and related sites in San Juan, Puerto Rico. These sites were part of the Advance Defensive Line constructed in the late eighteenth century for the Spanish Colonial capital of San Juan. The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has managed Fort San Gerónimo since 1942. Other associated sites are under private or public ownership. In 2009, Congress passed legislation directing the National Park Service to conduct a special resource study of these sites to determine whether they meet the criteria for inclusion in the national park system as part of the San Juan National Historic Site. The study will also evaluate other potential management options and will include an environmental assessment.



Please join us for one of two meetings to be held on February 1 and 3, 2011 in San Juan. At these meetings, study team members will provide general information about the sites, explain the study process, answer your questions, and gather your ideas for the study. The meetings will have an open house format and will include a short presentation, followed by an opportunity for public comment and feedback. Both meetings will offer a public tour of Fort San Gerónimo before the meetings begin. Please see page 3 of this newsletter for details about the meetings and tours.

This special resource study will take place over the next two years in coordination with the National Park Service San Juan National Historic Site. During this time, the study will assess local support by providing you several opportunities for your comment. After the study is completed, the findings will be reported to the Secretary of the Interior and to Congress.

We would like to hear from you about the study. You may provide your thoughts at one of the public meetings or online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sero>. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Romero Nelson,  
Project Manager  
Denver Service Center, Planning Division  
National Park Service

## What is a Special Resource Study?

The National Park Service was created to conserve unimpaired outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The treasures in this system have been set aside by the American people to protect, preserve, and share our nation's greatest stories. Usually a new unit of the national park system is established by an act of Congress. Before passing such legislation, Congress requires reliable

information about the quality of resources in the area under consideration and the potential for visitor enjoyment and efficient management. The National Park Service collects this information and reports its findings to Congress through special resource studies. This process ensures that only those candidate sites that are most deserving of designation are included within the national park system.

## What are the Study Sites?

Congress' Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 ordered the completion of a special resource study on "Fort San Gerónimo and other related resources." In addition to Fort San Gerónimo, agency stakeholders along with the National Park Service study team, identified 15 other historical sites in San Juan that are associated with Old San Juan's Advance Defensive Line.

San Juan's Advance Defensive Line is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its role during the 1797 British attack on San Juan during the Napoleonic War of 1796-1802 between France, Britain, and Spain. The Advance Defensive Line is a series of masonry walls and other defensive structures the Spanish Military constructed at the eastern end of the San Juan islet as a military blockade to protect the Spanish colonial capital city of San Juan at the islet's western end.

Spanish engineers completed construction on Fort San Gerónimo in 1788 on Point Boquerón, the easternmost end of the San Juan islet. The Spanish occupied the fort during the Spanish-American War, and the U.S. acquired it when it took possession of Puerto Rico in 1898. Fort San Gerónimo, also known as Redoubt San Gerónimo, has been managed by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico since 1942. The fort is currently in poor condition and is closed to public access.

The 15 other study resources are individual sites that were also part of San Juan's Advance Defensive Line. These sites are scattered throughout San Juan, and include portions of the San Juan's City Wall, remnants of fortifications, and two former powderhouses.

## What are the Steps in Developing a Special Resource Study?

Study Process	Key Steps and Outcomes
<p>Information Gathering and Public Scoping</p> <p><b>WE ARE HERE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research available data on Fort San Gerónimo, other related resources, and historic/socioeconomic context.</li> <li>• Meet with key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Public scoping to gather public input.</li> </ul>
Prepare Draft Study	<p>The <i>Draft Special Resource Study</i> will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resource description and historical background;</li> <li>• evaluation of suitability and feasibility for inclusion in the national park system;</li> <li>• a range of management alternatives; and</li> <li>• an environmental assessment that will evaluate the impacts of each potential management alternative.</li> </ul>
Public Review of Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite local discussion and solicit feedback on the draft study.</li> </ul>
Congressional Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transmit study report, summary of public comments, and NPS recommendation to Congress.</li> </ul>

## We Want to Hear From You

Your input is very important to us. As the study unfolds we will provide several opportunities for you to comment. Here are some of the ways that you may contribute.

### Project Website

The following website will contain updates and other information about the special resource study. Please check in and post a comment to the website anytime you like: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sero>

### Public Scoping

Public scoping meetings for the study are currently scheduled to take place in San Juan on February 1 and 3, 2011. Please drop by and provide input directly to NPS officials. See Open House Meetings information at right for details.

### Progress Reports

Keep up to date on the project by reading our progress reports. Two brief reports will be issued — one following public scoping and one following the development of draft alternatives. You may sign up for the mailing list on the project website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sero>

### Draft Study Review

Once the draft study is ready, it will be made available on the project website. Please take some time to review the draft and provide comments directly on the project website. Public meetings will also be held to discuss the draft.

*Thank you for your participation!*



## You're Invited to an Open House and Site Tour

- Learn about the Study Sites
- Participate in a tour of Fort San Gerónimo and the NPS San Juan National Historic Site restoration facility
- Learn about the Special Resource Study process
- Discuss your ideas and questions about the study

### Open House Meetings:

Tuesday, February 1, 2011

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Castillo San Cristobal

Building 213, Audio Visual Room

San Juan, PR

Thursday, February 3, 2011

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Building Luis A. Ferré

Paseo Covadonga (in front of south side of Capitol)

Samuel R. Quiñones Room, 5th Level

Puerto de Tierra

San Juan, PR

#### Tour Information:

If you would like to take the tour of Fort San Geronimo and the NPS San Juan National Historic Site, you must RSVP by January 21, 2011 to [fortsangeronimo@nps.gov](mailto:fortsangeronimo@nps.gov), or by calling 787-729-6777, attn. Leonor Perez. NPS trams will transport visitors to the fort from the Fort San Cristobal visitor parking lot. Safety waivers will be provided at the start of the tour.

#### Tours will occur on:

Tuesday, February 1, 2011

3:00-5:30 pm

Thursday, February 3, 2011

3:00-5:30 pm

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**Thank you for your interest in  
the Fort San Gerónimo  
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