



2013 Superintendent's Annual Report



Photo courtesy of Sarah Silliman

Greetings from your national park!

Last year, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site turned 65 years old, and it was an incredibly busy and productive year. This year, we are as committed as ever to our mission of serving the public, providing educational programs and special events, while protecting the integrity of the resources of this national park for the many generations of Americans who will visit it in the future.

I feel privileged to work closely with park staff, volunteers, schools, public agencies, and many partners. As we look to the future, it is good to look to the last year, to review the statistics and accomplishments in this report, and know that we are reaching many people in positive ways.

Visitation to the park has climbed substantially. In 2000, our annual visitors numbered 376,688. We are currently at 788,795, an increase of over 100,000 visitors since just last year!

A recently released National Park Service report estimates that Fort Vancouver National Historic Site brings \$37.6 million in tourism to the community, and supports 613 local jobs. As the National Park Service nears its 100th anniversary, our staff will continue to seek ways to highlight this nationally significant site, connecting with and serving our community and all Americans across the nation.

National parks are not just reminders of our past, they speak to our present, providing opportunities

for contemplation, learning, and a sense of wonderment of our nation's most special people and places. In this sense, national parks reflect the spirit and direction of the nation.

As you examine some of our most important accomplishments of the past year, know that Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is a dedicated corps of staff, volunteers, and partners who will continue to adapt to remain relevant to each generation. We hope you will join us this year on a field trip, for a baseball game or lantern tour, on a stroll through the garden, or to see firsthand how the military post is beginning its new chapter... you are always welcome!

- Tracy Fortmann, Superintendent

Free Special Events Celebrate the Cultures and Resources of the Pacific Northwest

2013 was an exciting year for special events in the park. In addition to exhibit openings, the Children's Cultural Parade, Junior Ranger Day, the Nez Perce/ Chief Redheart Reconciliation Ceremony, the Constitution and Citizenship Day Naturalization Ceremony, Lantern Tours, Kids Digs, Summer's End Promenade, the Vancouver Land Bridge's 5th Anniversary, a special reenactment of the radio show "Captain Midnight," and our new bilingual program on the Chkalov landing at Pearson Field, the park hosted four signature community events.

- **788,795 visitors**
- **11,694 students from Oregon and Washington on field trips**
- **12 summer camps with 177 campers**
- **72 partner organizations**

In May, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site partnered with the Community Military Appreciation Committee (CMAC) and hosted the annual Memorial Day observance. An event highlight was the dedication of a new memorial flagpole, a partnership project with Eagle Scout Patrick Keller and his troop. The Soldiers' Bivouac event followed the ceremony, further connecting visitors to the site's rich military history.



June saw the return of Get Outdoors Day (GO Day), which promotes outdoor activities and recreation on public lands. The National Park Service (NPS) collaborated with a variety of partners, including state, local, and federal land management agencies and local businesses, to provide a day of outdoor fun for visitors! GO Day provides an important community opportunity to learn about the outdoors. For many, it was the first time they went on a hike, fished, and learned about camping in the Northwest. To share the connection between the past and present, GO Day coincides each year with the park's Brigade Encampment - the reenactment of

the return of the fur brigades from their trapping expeditions (*above*).

One of our most popular events, Campfires and Candlelight, brought thousands of visitors to the park for candlelit historical vignettes. Campfires and Candlelight has been a community tradition since 1983, so this year marked its 30th anniversary!

Our final big event of the year was our annual Christmas at Fort Vancouver event, during which visitors learn about the traditions of the holiday in the 19th century. This craft-making event remains very popular.

- **224,854 visitors attended cultural demonstrations, special events, and educational programs**
- **93,705 visitors attended facilitated interpretive programs**
- **51,153 hours were contributed to the park by 669 volunteers**
- **82 Special Use Permits were approved**

Camps and Training Programs Share the Park with the Next Generation

During 2013, we continued to offer programs which engage and enlighten younger generations. Overnight and day camps brought almost 200 area youth to the park; for the majority, it was their first trip to a national park. Over the summer, the park partnered with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) to present Fur to Fossil youth camps. After their time spent here, the campers traveled to John Day Fossil Beds National Monument to learn about paleontology.

We also continued our innovative, multi-year Dame and Engagé School programs. Students aged



10-18 attend day-long Saturday training sessions to learn the history of Fort Vancouver, 19th century handcrafts and skills, and how to share their knowledge with the public.

In addition, for the tenth year we welcomed students in the Ethnic American Rites of Passage Program, presented annually in partnership with the

Vancouver chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). After a discussion of the park's diverse heritage and a focus on the post's connection with the Buffalo Soldiers, students walked in the soldiers' footsteps on the park grounds, and learned how archaeology helps us better understand what happened on the site in the past.

Photo courtesy of Sarah Silliman

Park Contributes to National Research on Bumble Bee Population Decline

Last summer, Dr. James P. Strange, a Research Entomologist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service, visited the park to collect specimens for his research and host two public programs. His work focuses on bumble bee diversity and distribution.

The first program, a two-hour workshop, taught participants the basics of bumble bee biology, identification, and monitoring strategies, and will enable land managers, citizen scientists and biologists to evaluate the health of bumble bee populations. Registration for the program filled quickly. The second program was a public talk on the subject of bumble bee declines in North America, with a focus on local events affecting their populations.

Dr. Strange is collecting specimens at many national parks, and we thank him for offering this opportunity for community education and enrichment while he was at Fort Vancouver NHS.

Partnership Program Taught Historic Preservation on Iconic East Barracks Building

The National Park Service initiated a partnership project with Clatsop Community College's Historic Preservation and Restoration Program. From May 11 to May 12, students enrolled in the workshop developed skills to document, analyze, and restore historic wood windows in the Gymnasium/Auditorium building in the historic Vancouver Barracks at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

The collaborative project assisted the National Park Service in preserving the Gymnasium/Auditorium building while teaching students, including some National Park Service employees, about the preservation of historic buildings. The techniques learned at the workshop can be applied to wood windows throughout the historic Vancouver Barracks. The Clatsop Community College Historic Preservation Program is an award-winning program that has conducted hands-on workshops throughout Oregon and Washington.

Serving Others Through Partnership Projects

In 2013, many partners assisted us with our mission to share and preserve this site so it may be enjoyed by all in perpetuity. As a way of showing our appreciation for all that others do for us, we offer our assistance to the community in a variety of ways.

As a part of a partnership agreement with the City of Oregon City, the National Park Service maintains and preserves the charter park on which the McLoughlin and Barclay houses are located. NPS staff provides grounds maintenance around the historic homes and graves on the property, and provides for the preservation of resources at the site.

In partnership with the City of Vancouver and the U.S. Federal Highways Administration, the NPS installed a new fence around the Old Apple Tree (planted circa 1827) in Old Apple Tree Park. Representatives from the City of Vancouver and Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (including archaeologists, landscape experts and maintenance workers) collaborated to select the best type of fence, and ensure that its installation would not damage sensitive archaeological resources. The fence will help protect the tree so that the NPS, City of Vancouver, and other members of the Old Apple Tree Research Team can help this living treasure thrive for future generations.

In a related project, NPS staff updated and will be replacing waysides for the Confluence

- **3,526 Facebook followers of Fort Vancouver** (www.facebook.com/FtVancouver)
- **2,676 people follow us on Twitter** (@FtVancouverNPS)
- **85,306 visitors to our Flickr site**
- **700 downloads of the Fort Vancouver Mobile app**

Project's Land Bridge. The informational panels offer visitors to the site, which is managed by the Washington Department of Transportation and the City of Vancouver, the opportunity to learn about indigenous peoples of the area and the cultural and environmental change reflected in the bridge's design.

The Public Archaeology Field School continued its work in the City of Vancouver's Old City Cemetery, documenting headstones to help preserve both

the gravemarkers themselves and the information they hold.

We also offered thematic tours to many groups, including those with historic ties to the site such as the Ke Kukui Foundation (*below*).

Besides working with our city and state partners, the park also provided assistance to our regional office and other national park units, including Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, San Juan Island National Historical Park, and Cabrillo National Monument.



Pearson Air Museum Updates

This year, the National Park Service welcomed more than 15,000 visitors to Pearson Air Museum, not including those attending permitted events or using the grounds. Staff worked with members of the public, local businesses, schools, air museums, and other partners to develop interim exhibits; volunteers helped NPS rangers operate the museum and put on free public events.

The national park also permitted numerous special events at the museum, including weddings, community emergency response trainings, military promotion events, public talks, and retirement celebrations. Many of these events took place in the historic hangar, a unique setting, which was well received and did not interrupt public access to the museum's regular hours of operation. Through this combination of private activities and public programs and museum access, the National Park Service was able to serve multiple interests. As the mother of one bride shared, "We couldn't have asked for a more remarkable, peaceful setting than in the historic hangar. The park rangers made our dreams come true!"

The National Park Service also installed electronic, energy efficient hand dryers and a state-of-the-art drinking fountain and bottle refilling station designed to promote the wise use of water. As another efficiency measure, the NPS upgraded the museum's thermostats. Finally, park staff developed and competed for nationwide funding to re-paint



the exterior of the modern museum hangar. This important maintenance project has now been funded and will be conducted in 2014. This will ensure a crisp, welcoming appearance for museum visitors.

"Captain Midnight Flies Again!" was a special, free radio show reenactment, inspired by the nightly radio broadcast of the adventures of ace pilot Captain Midnight. Park staff, students from the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, and volunteers worked side-by-side to bring to life a surviving script from this 1930s radio show at a free public event at Pearson Air Museum. Over 150 members of the public were in attendance.

In June, the National Park Service commemorated the anniversary of the Chkalov Transpolar Flight,

working with the Chkalov Cultural Exchange Committee on this special event (*below*). NPS staff and committee members solemnly laid flowers at the park's Chkalov Monument and hosted a public event to commemorate the 76th anniversary of Valery Chkalov's landmark flight. Park Guide Luda Leksunkin presented the event's keynote address to city, state, and Russian Consulate dignitaries, and over 100 members of the public. In both Russian and English, Luda shared her perspective of the Chkalov story. As Luda stated, "Chkalov's story shows that people can work together and everything is possible if we choose to be supportive of each other." She also stated that she was proud to "offer her talk in multiple languages as a way of demonstrating that all community members are welcome and included in this national park."



Conservation Treatment and New Donations are Highlights for Museum Collection

Fort Vancouver NHS is home to a collection of two million archaeological and historic objects. Every year, ongoing archaeological excavations and donations from members of the public expand this unique collection.

The museum staff spends many hours cataloging artifacts, recording important data, and working to preserve these "pieces of the past". This year alone, 68,469 artifacts were cataloged. Also, our curation facility welcomed 349 visitors and researchers during 2013.

An important project undertaken this year was the conservation of a number of vulnerable paper artifacts in the museum collection. Conservator Theresa Voellinger of the National Park Service's Harper's Ferry Center treated delicate, mid-19th century sketches of Fort Vancouver, and documents that were owned by the McLoughlin family, including a papal bull dating to 1847.

This year also saw the continuation of the popular Saturday Museum Collections Open House program, which brings visitors behind the scenes into the park's curation facility. This year's tours featured artifacts on a variety of themes, including Faith at Fort Vancouver, Women of Vancouver Barracks, and Health and Hygiene.

Donations to the Museum Collection

Each year, the park receives generous donations of historic items from members of the community. These artifacts are stored in our climate-



controlled curation facility, and shared with the public through exhibits, behind the scenes tours, publications, and social media. All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

If you are interested in donating historical items within the park's scope, please go to www.nps.gov/fova/ and follow the links to the museum collection page.

Highlights from this year's donations included:

- An 1844 edition of Charles' Wilkes atlas
- The autobiography of Civilian Conservation Corps enrollee Eldon Naffziger



- Welding gear owned by Betty Jane Budd, who worked at the Vancouver Kaiser Shipyards during World War II
- A 1910 edition of the "Special Orders of the Department of the Columbia"
- A 1920s tinted photograph of Vancouver's Old Apple Tree

- Two commemorative booklets and a photograph owned by Fred Mayhew, a soldier in the 113th Squadron Engineers, Spruce Production Division, stationed at Vancouver's Spruce Mill
- Two photographs of Valery Chkalov's ANT-25 aircraft at Pearson Field, taken by Eldred Pottinger Walker (*lower left*)
- A cannon believed to be from the Hudson's Bay Company schooner *Cadboro* (*below*)
- Panoramic photograph of K Company, 7th Infantry, at Vancouver Barracks in 1937
- A National Park Service uniform hat worn by Leveritt Goss Richards
- Documents related to the Spruce Production Division service of Grover Bunting
- Panoramic photographs of the 7th Infantry at Vancouver Barracks in 1928
- A first edition of the *Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, published 1885-1886



New Exhibits Highlight History Throughout the Park

This year, 12 temporary exhibits debuted throughout the park.

At Pearson Air Museum, *Army Boots & Army Wings* tells the story of Vancouver Barracks and the birth of Pearson Field as an army airfield. *Straight-Grained Soldiers* focuses on the history of the Spruce Mill, which produced aviation-grade lumber for the World War I war effort. Additionally, new exhibits on DH-4 Liberty Planes, the Douglas World Cruisers' visit to Vancouver Barracks, the Army Air Corps, and the Curtiss JN-4 aircraft help to interpret the history of the airfield and its importance to Northwest history.

In the Fort Vancouver Visitor Center, *Stronger Forests, Stronger Communities* focused on the

Archaeological Excavations Uncover the Past and Spark New Connections

This summer, the 12th annual Public Archaeology Field School, a partnership between the National Park Service, Portland State University, and Washington State University Vancouver, conducted archaeological excavations in the Fort Vancouver Village, focusing on the house sites of HBC employee Little Proulx and William Kaulehelehe, a Hawaiian educator and minister who was brought to Fort Vancouver to support the fort's Hawaiian population.



Civilian Conservation Corps' use of Vancouver Barracks during the 1930s. It was presented from January through August 2013 in conjunction with a traveling exhibit from the Washington State Historical Society titled *Putting People to Work: The WPA in Washington, 1935-1943*.

In November, *A New Birth of Freedom: Vancouver Barracks During the Civil War* opened in the Visitor Center. This exhibit is presented in partnership with Clark College and Gettysburg National

Military Park, and features artifacts loaned from Gettysburg NMP.

Inside Fort Vancouver, *Bad Medicine* told the story of patent medicines using archaeological artifacts, and at the McLoughlin House, an exhibit on 1860s quilts was featured this year.

At Vancouver's City Hall, a small exhibit curated by NPS staff showcases recent finds from the attic of the Post Hospital building: photographs and documents from the U.S. Army Medical Corps



The students participating in the excavations also tested the area where the World War I Spruce Mill once stood.

The dig site was open to the public from June to August. Information on the project is available on our website, including a blog kept by director Dr. Doug Wilson. The

park's mobile app features a wealth of supplemental information, such as a reenactment of Kaulehelehe being evicted from his home by the U.S. Army in 1860.

Recent finds from the Kaulehelehe house site are currently featured in GRIT, an exhibit at the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle.

Improvements at Historic East and South Vancouver Barracks

This year, significant strides were made in the rehabilitation of the East and South Vancouver Barracks, with the ultimate goal of creating a lively, sustainable campus for public service.

As a part of efforts to replace the post's failing infrastructure, underground water leaks and heating systems were repaired. We were able to reduce water loss and energy consumption by more than 50%. To prepare for future utility upgrades, cultural resource compliance work was begun, and is now halfway complete.

One of the most visible accomplishments this year was the rehabilitation of Building 991. This historic structure, formerly the army's post headquarters, now has new structural roof sheathing and roof, repaired wooden exterior components and crowning cupola, and new exterior paint.

Building 991, which was built in 1906, was selected as the first building for rehabilitation because, of the five large signature buildings within East Vancouver Barracks, it was in the worst condition, with a leaking roof and gutters and extensive water damage. The building is also the smallest of the five, and allowed the National Park Service to test estimating accuracy before moving on to larger projects. At its completion in November 2013, the rehabilitation of Building 991 had come in under-budget and on-schedule!



Building 991 prior to rehabilitation



Building 991 during the project, September, 2013



Building 991 at the completion of the project, November, 2013

Land Bridge Anniversary Brings Partners Together at Fort Vancouver NHS



On August 24th, The Confluence Project and Fort Vancouver NHS hosted a community celebration marking the Vancouver Land Bridge's 5th anniversary! The Land Bridge was conceptualized by Maya Lin and designed by John Paul Jones, architect of the National Museum of the American Indian. It was built as an interpretive installation that explores the unique environmental and cultural heritage of the site. The celebration included family friendly activities and events, including American Indian dancing by the N'chi Wanapum Canoe Family, traditional storytelling by Ed Edmo, and a presentation by

Pacific Northwest artist Lillian Pitt, designer of the Land Bridge's Welcome Gate. National Park Service staff and volunteers helped visitors explore the Fort's Village, the former home of over 35 ethnic and tribal groups that lived and worked at the fort from 1829 to 1860; visitors also toured the fort's current archaeological sites, including the house site of William Kaulehelehe, a Hawaiian educator who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company.

All in attendance were invited to a Circle Ceremony to honor the place and the people who are tied to it, and contribute individual stories. Like the creation of the Land Bridge, the event was an extraordinary example of a successful, complex partnership, that includes the Confluence Project, the City of Vancouver, the National Park Service, American Indian tribes, the State of Washington, the Federal Highways Administration, the Washington Department of Transportation, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Photo courtesy of The Confluence Project

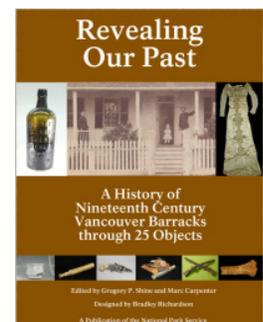
Busy Year at the McLoughlin House

It has been a full year at the McLoughlin House Unit of Fort Vancouver NHS! Promoting local heritage and working with other sites to expand visitor opportunities during community events, opening doors to conference attendees, and creating exhibits that dovetail with local events and interests have all been important parts of the park's presence in Oregon City. From monthly cultural demonstrations to annual special events, the McLoughlin House aims to be a place for visitors to enjoy while in town and local community members to visit again and again.

The National Park Service works closely in partnership with the McLoughlin Memorial Association (MMA) to continue our preservation efforts and outreach in the community. The MMA, our dedicated partner, has provided over \$100,000 in direct financial support over the last five years. Superintendent Fortmann shared, "We are incredibly fortunate to have the MMA. Year in and year out they exhibit almost limitless energy in working with park staff. We are indebted to the MMA - their donations in services and funds make an extraordinary difference!"

History of Vancouver Barracks Shared in New eBook

In partnership with Portland State University's Public History Field School, taught by our Chief Ranger and Historian Greg Shine, we produced *Revealing Our Past: A History of Nineteenth Century Vancouver Barracks through 25 Objects*.



This interactive publication, written and produced by PSU graduate students in consultation with National Park Service curatorial staff, explores the history of Vancouver Barracks using twenty-five artifacts from our museum collections as a lens. The book was launched on June 25 at McMenamins Edgefield, during a History Pub program sponsored by the Oregon Encyclopedia and the Oregon Historical Society. The book is available as a free download on iTunes.

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Photo courtesy of Sarah Silliman