



At Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, past meets present in a working rural landscape. Created by Congress in 1978, the 17,572-acre Reserve integrates historic farms, a seaside town, native and pioneer land use traditions, and ecologically significant areas. A Trust Board manages this national park unit through creative conservation and sensitive planned development.

Whether you're a resident or visitor, we invite you to explore this memorable place as we chart the future while honoring the past.



Isaac Neff Ebey
ISLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Thomas Coupe
ISLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Maria Coupe
ISLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Samuel Black Crockett
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LIBRARIES



Chief Charlie Snakelum (1843–1943), pictured with his wife Katie Barlow Snakelum ca. 1910, was a prominent Skagit tribal leader. Descendants still live in the area.
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LIBRARIES



Chin Toy worked on a Whidbey Island farm owned by Charles Mitchell. Chinese immigrants of the late 1800s and early 1900s often worked seasonally on farms or in fisheries or canneries.
ISLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Stanley Lovejoy, 1900. Grandson of a sea captain and one of Coupeville's original settlers, Lovejoy became a ship's pilot on Puget Sound.
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"Almost a Paradise of Nature"

To the north down along Admiralty Inlet . . . the cultivating land is generally found confined to the valleys of streams with the exception of Whidbey's Island . . . which is almost a paradise of nature. Good land for cultivation is abundant on this island. . . . I have taken a claim on it and am now living on the same in order to avail myself of the provisions of the Donation Law. If Rebecca, the children, and you all were here, I think I could live and die here content.

—Colonel Isaac Ebey's letter to his brother, 1851

When settlers like the Ebeyes came to central Whidbey Island in the 1850s, they met the Skagit people living in shoreline villages. The Skagit had been here for centuries, living on salmon, bottom fish, shellfish, berries, small game, deer, and waterfowl. They cultivated island prairies by selective burning, transplanting, and mulching to encourage the growth of root crops like bracken fern and camas.

Capt. George Vancouver brought Whidbey Island to the attention of Europe and America

in 1792. White settlers, though, did not arrive in numbers until the Donation Land Law of 1850 offered free land in the Oregon Territory to any U.S. citizen who would homestead the claim.

Colonel Isaac Neff Ebey was among the first permanent settlers. Ebey and his friend Samuel Crockett came west from Missouri in search of land. Both filed donation claims on central Whidbey by spring 1851. Ebey's family soon followed. The simple home of Isaac's father Jacob and a blockhouse he erected to defend his claim still stand overlooking the prairie that bears the family name. Isaac became a prominent public figure, but his life was cut short in 1857. He was slain by coastal Indians in retaliation for the killing of one of their own tribal members.

Fertile farmland was not the only lure. Sea captains and merchants from New England took advantage of Penn Cove's protected harbor and the stands of tall trees perfect for

shipbuilding. One such seafarer was Capt. Thomas Coupe. In 1852 Coupe claimed 320 acres on Penn Cove, which later became the town of Coupeville. He was soon joined by his wife Maria and their children, who arrived by clipper ship via Cape Horn. Central Whidbey's successful farming and maritime trade made Coupeville into a busy seaport.

In the late 1890s the U.S. Army introduced another layer of history on the landscape with the construction of Fort Casey Military Reservation, part of a three-fort defense system protecting the entrance to Puget Sound. Fort Casey became a social center for the community, hosting ball games, dances, and other events. In the western part of the Reserve is the World War II-era Fort Ebey.

Central Whidbey abounds with place names—Coupeville, Crockett Prairie, Lovejoy Point, and Ebey's Landing—that honor people of the past. Their stewardship of the land continues in new ways by new generations.



Sam Hancock and unidentified Chinese worker with mule team, ca. 1900, getting ready to plow fields in the prairie.
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An 1854 artist's rendering depicts Skagit canoes coming ashore on Whidbey Island. For many centuries American Indian groups harvested food from the fertile island prairies.
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Front Street in Coupeville, 1890. The town was named for Capt. Thomas Coupe, who built the first frame house here in 1854. The house still stands in town.
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Gould Farm and surroundings ca. 1900 (above) and same view today (below).
ABOVE—UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LIBRARIES; BELOW—NPS / JANE S. HANNA

What is a National Historical Reserve?



The vistas, woodlands, and fertile prairies of the Reserve are much the same today as they were in the 1800s when New England sea captains came to Penn Cove and farmers to the land. Yet the Reserve is far more than a snapshot of another time. It is a working, changing community. Within the 17,572 acres are 18 operating farms. Farmers grow everything from alfalfa to zucchini, mostly for local markets and community-supported agriculture.

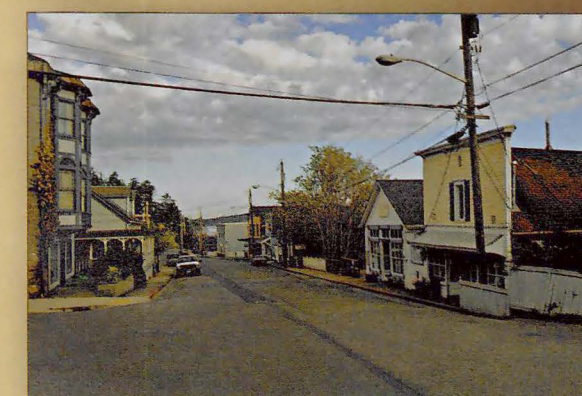
The Reserve is home-grown. In the 1970s citizens organized to halt a housing development slated for Ebey's Prairie. The effort became a balancing act—to preserve the cultural landscape with minimum disturbance

to private landowners. In 1978 Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve was created by Congress to "preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historic record from . . . 19th century exploration and settlement in Puget Sound to the present time."

The Reserve is the first unit of its kind in the National Park System. Land within the authorized boundary benefits from federal support while maintaining local autonomy. Policy oversight is carried out by the nine-member Trust Board composed of local volunteers and representatives from the Town of Coupeville, Island County, Washington State Parks, and the National Park Service.

Congress intended Reserve lands to remain largely under private ownership, although there are also federal, state, and county lands within the boundary. Some of the techniques used to preserve open space, farmland, and historic sites include purchase of scenic easements, land donations, tax incentives, zoning, local design review, and purchase or exchange of development rights.

Through ever-evolving strategies like these, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve is a model for sustainable development, respecting the community's need to grow and change while protecting a nationally significant heritage landscape.



Front Street in Coupeville today.
© M. DENIS HILL



Lavender, cauliflower, kale, potatoes, garlic, carrots, squash, and many other kinds of produce are grown in the Reserve today.
NPS / JANE S. HANNA

Things to See and Do

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve is a different kind of national park. It does not have general operating hours or admission fees. It is always open and you can visit year-round. Places of interest within the Reserve are independently operated. They have varying hours depending upon the season, and some charge a fee.

Town of Coupeville

At the heart of the Reserve is the well-preserved seaport town of Coupeville, just off Wash. S. R. 20. To see the colorful Victorian architecture, take the self-guiding walking tour. Explore the shops and eateries along Front Street. Stroll out on the wharf, a reminder that travel and trade were mostly by water in the 1800s. The annual Penn Cove Water Festival celebrates Northwest Coast Indian culture.

Stop at the Island County Historical Museum to learn about the town, Reserve, Coupeville, and Whidbey Island. Museum hours vary—call 360-678-3310.

Trails

The Bluff Trail overlooking Ebey's Landing has the most wide-ranging views in the Reserve: look north toward the mainland and Mt. Baker; west toward the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Olympic Mountains; south toward Mt. Rainier; and east over historic farmland and prairie. Trailheads are by the parking area at Ebey's Landing and at the Prairie Overlook near Sunnyside Cemetery. The Kettles Trail, popular with cyclists and walkers, parallels Wash. S. R. 20 south of Penn Cove.

Working Farms

Many 1800s and 1900s farmsteads are still working farms. Roads, fences, and hedgerows often follow the boundaries of these original donation land claims. Some farms are open to the public and sell eggs, Hubbard squash, garlic and other homegrown produce and hand-made items.

Crockett Lake

At least 238 species of birds—resident and migratory—have been recorded in this marshy wetland. Look for ducks nesting and raptors on the hunt for prey. In fall, this is a gathering place on the Pacific Flyway for migratory shorebirds.

For a Safe Visit

No beach fires are permitted within the boundaries of Island County. High tides can be dangerous to beach hikers. Use extreme caution to avoid being trapped by headlands, and watch carefully for beach logs moved by sudden high waves. Please avoid stopping your vehicle in the middle of narrow country roads. Pullouts are provided for wayside exhibits and other viewpoints.

Good Stewardship Begins With You

Most of the Reserve is private property. Please respect the property rights of the residents of historic homes and farmsteads, and remember to hike only on designated trails. Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times. Please leave driftwood, plants, rocks, and other natural features within the Reserve undisturbed for others to enjoy.

More Information

For information about historic bed-and-breakfasts and other lodging and services, contact the Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce, 360-678-5434, www.centralwhidbeychamber.com. Camping on Whidbey Island is limited, with sites most readily available in the spring and fall. To find out more about camping at the two state parks within the Reserve, call Fort Casey State Park at 360-678-4519 or Fort Ebey State Park at 360-678-4636.

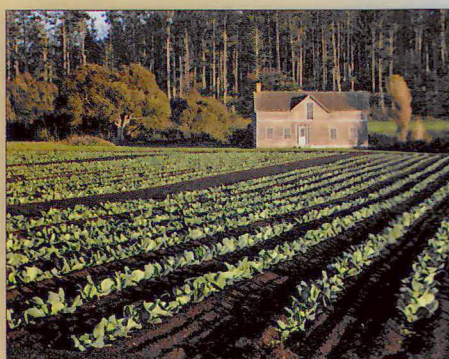
Ebey's Landing is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. For more information visit www.nps.gov.

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Blockhouse and Jacob Ebey House
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Cabbage field and historic ferry house
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Racers at Penn Cove Water Festival
© M. DENIS HILL



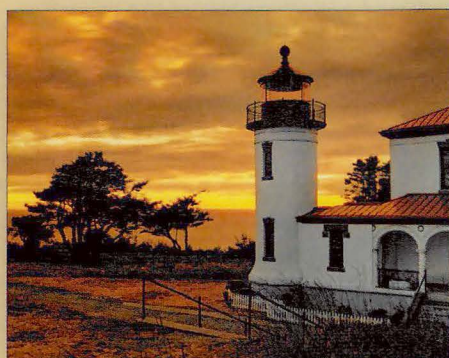
Farmer working land on Ebey's Prairie
MITCH RICHARDS



Female northern harrier at Crockett Lake
© CRAIG JOHNSON



Bluff Trail above Ebey's Landing
MITCH RICHARDS



Admiralty Head Lighthouse
© BARBARA LUTER



Getting to the Reserve

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve is on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. The island is easily accessible from the mainland by vehicle via Wash. S. R. 20 from Burlington. The Washington State Ferry system provides year-round foot-passenger, bicycle, and vehicle service to the island from Mukilteo and Port Townsend. In the summer season, ferry lines can be quite long, and travel delays should be expected. *Caution: The Port Townsend ferry may be cancelled due to tide or weather conditions.* For the ferry schedule, call 1-800-843-3779 or visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries.

