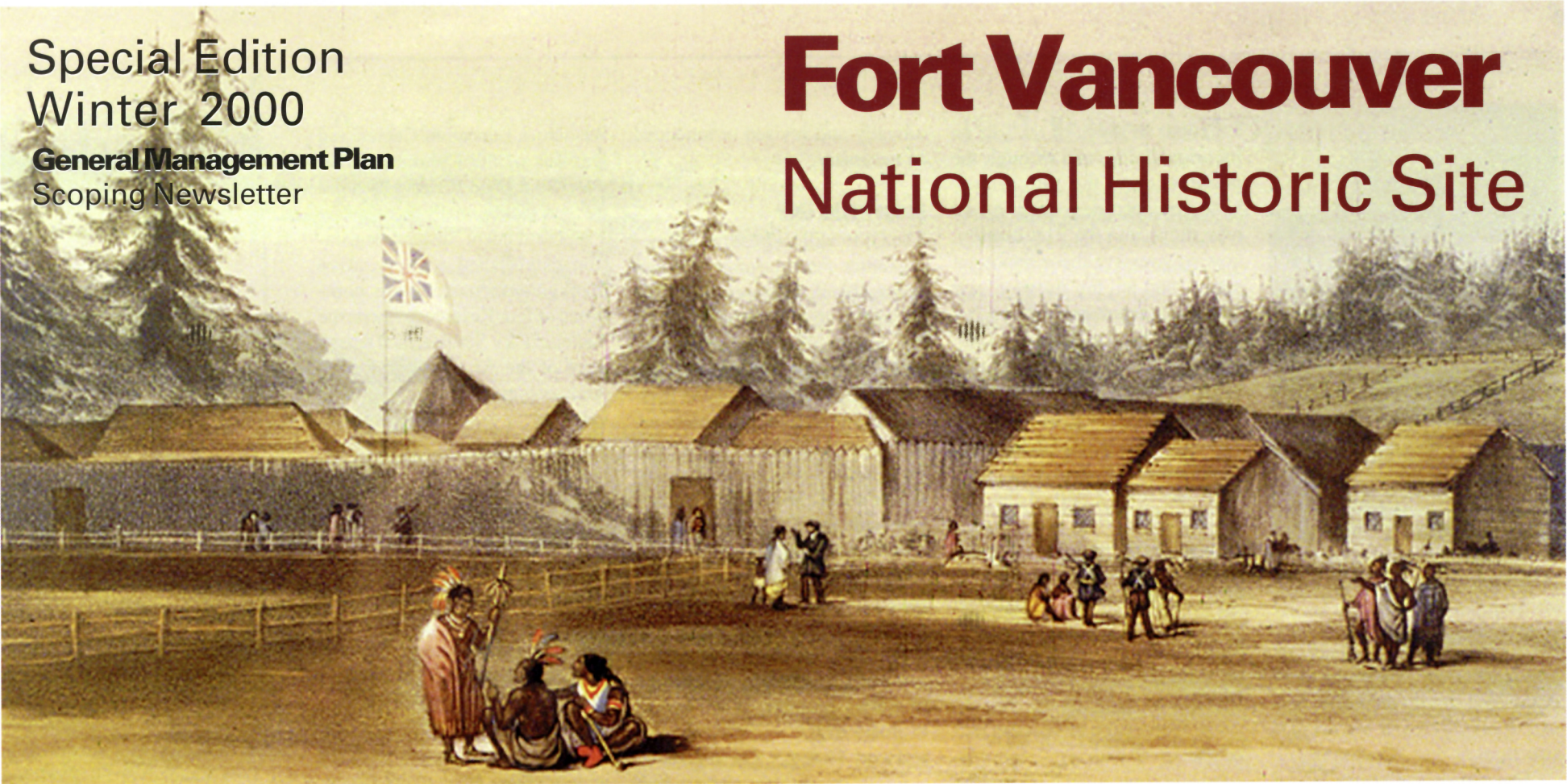




# Fort Vancouver

## National Historic Site

### A Message from the Superintendent



Dear Friends:

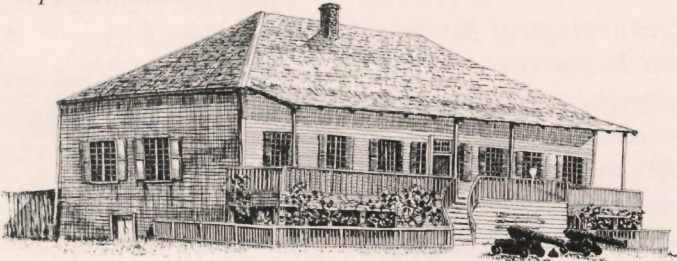
One hundred and seventy-five years ago, the Hudson's Bay Company established what was to become their Columbia District headquarters at Fort Vancouver. In 1948, with the advocacy and support of the local communities, Congress established Fort Vancouver as a unit of the National Park System to commemorate and interpret the important role of Fort Vancouver in the history of the Northwest. Through extensive archaeological excavations beginning in 1948, the National Park Service located the original fort along the Columbia River. Study of artifacts and documentary material formed the basis for the accurate reconstruction of much of the fort that is seen today by visitors from around the world.

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is one of 378 units of America's National Park System, a System that includes other familiar places such as Yellowstone, Gettysburg, and the Statue of Liberty. As part of this network of parks preserving the core of the nation's natural and cultural legacy, it is critical that we develop long-term plans for the protection, public use, and management of Fort Vancouver.

The separate Cooperative Management Plan for the broader Vancouver National Historic Reserve—recently completed jointly by the U.S. Army, State of Washington, City of Vancouver, and the National Park Service—will be a key document used during the development of the General Management Plan, which is specific to Fort Vancouver.

You, the public, are a crucial part of this effort. With your involvement, you can help ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy this important place. Your participation can help make Fort Vancouver National Historic Site a better place in which to learn about and enjoy this important chapter in the history of the American West. Please join us!

Tony Sisto  
Superintendent



### General Management Planning Begins

#### Background

As the 19th century dawned, the United States and Great Britain were locked in a struggle for control of North America's northern Pacific coast, a region rich in furs. By 1818 the two nations had agreed to share access to the Oregon Country, as they had come to call the region, until they could decide upon a boundary. Seven years later, in a move designed to maximize profits and to solidify Britain's claim to all of Oregon, the Hudson's Bay Company—the giant fur trading organization—moved its Columbia District headquarters to the newly established Fort Vancouver. For the next two decades, Fort Vancouver was directed by

strong-willed, capable people who built it into the fur trade capital of the Pacific Northwest. Primarily responsible for the post's leadership success was Dr. John McLoughlin, an energetic man and a genius at organization who served as chief factor during most of those years. With the help of a broad diversity of paid employees—a cultural mix including American, British, Canadian, French, Hawaiian, Irish, Metis, Scottish, and American Indian Tribes including the Cascades, Chehalis, Chinook, Clallam, Cowlitz, Iroquois, Klickitat, Nisqually, Shasta, Tillamook, and others—Fort Vancouver became the center of international trade

and power in the Pacific Northwest.

In the 1830s and 1840s, American settlers were attracted to the rich farmlands of Oregon's Willamette Valley. Dr. McLoughlin made supplies and credit available to the needy and trail-worn settlers arriving over the Oregon Trail. This influx of Americans resulted in a division of the Oregon Country in 1846 along the 49th parallel, a decision that left Fort Vancouver on American soil.

From that time on, and with the arrival in 1849 of the U.S. Army, the Hudson's Bay Company fur trade diminished. In 1860, they sold out their holdings and turned

(continued on page 2)

### GMP Planning Steps and Schedule

#### General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

| PLANNING ACTIVITY |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | PUBLIC PARTICIPATION                                                                                             |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>          | <b>Gather Data and Establish Goals</b><br>Reaffirm the legislative purposes of the park<br>Identify and study park's significant features<br>Determine issues and concerns<br>Conduct public scoping meetings<br>Winter 2000                                                                | <b>*We Are Here</b><br>Read this newsletter<br>Attend scheduled meetings<br>Submit comment sheet from newsletter |
| <b>2</b>          | <b>Develop a Park Vision and Develop Alternatives</b><br>Develop goals and objectives for park's future<br>Suggest a range of alternatives to achieve goals, address issues, and solve problems<br>Develop alternatives working with agencies, community members, and tribes<br>Summer 2000 |                                                                                                                  |
| <b>3</b>          | <b>Prepare and Publish a Draft GMP/EIS</b><br>Refine alternatives<br>Analyze environmental impacts associated with each alternative and identify a preferred alternative<br>Distribute draft GMP/EIS for public review and comment<br>Fall 2000                                             | Attend public meetings<br>Read second newsletter<br>Review draft GMP/EIS<br>Agency review                        |
| <b>4</b>          | <b>Revise Draft and Publish Final GMP/EIS</b><br>Develop final GMP/EIS based on public response to the draft GMP/EIS and other relevant information<br>Revise preferred alternative as appropriate<br>Final GMP/EIS distributed to public<br>Spring 2001                                    |                                                                                                                  |
| <b>5</b>          | <b>Begin Implementation</b><br>Work with agencies, community, and tribes on partnership activities<br>Request funding for major capital improvements and program initiatives<br>Develop any required legislative proposals<br>Summer 2001                                                   | Work with agencies, community members, and tribes on partnership activities                                      |





Dr. John McLoughlin contributed to the success of Fort Vancouver.

(continued from page 1)

Fort Vancouver over to the U. S. Army, and shortly thereafter fires and decay destroyed the original structures at Fort Vancouver.

These historic changes helped stimulate further settlement and growth in the region. As the U. S. Army presence grew, officer's houses were constructed in a row along the formal parade ground. These stately residences emphasized the post's status as the headquarters of the District of the Columbia.

Today, the story of the people of Fort Vancouver and the growth of America in the Pacific Northwest is preserved through recon-

structions of much of the fort on its original site, and through the preservation of the 19th century U.S. Army parade ground. As we now move into the 21st century, how we preserve these important places, and tell the stories of our history for future generations, is a critical task for us all.

### General Management Plan

This winter the park will begin to update and revise its 1978 master plan. Since 1948, Fort Vancouver NHS has been a unit of the National Park System. Many conditions within the park have changed since the last plan was written, or need to be re-evaluated based upon new information. The new General Management Plan (GMP) will set the management direction for Fort Vancouver NHS for the next 15 years. Preparation of this plan will be consistent with legislation creating Fort Vancouver NHS and the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, providing for protection of the park's natural and cultural resources while inviting appropriate visitor use and enjoyment of the park.

The GMP will serve as the lead planning document for Fort Vancouver NHS, with other park planning documents being consistent with it. To reflect new issues or changes in management goals, the GMP will be reviewed peri-

odically and revised or amended as necessary.

### Scope of the GMP

The GMP will address the following topics: resource protection and management, interpretation, visitor use, Native American activities, accessibility for visitors with disabilities, carrying capacities, cooperation with associated partners and interests, park operations, and physical developments. Also included will be a plan implementation schedule and preliminary cost estimates. Other elements that may be added to GMPs include a development concept plan, land suitability, and other issues.

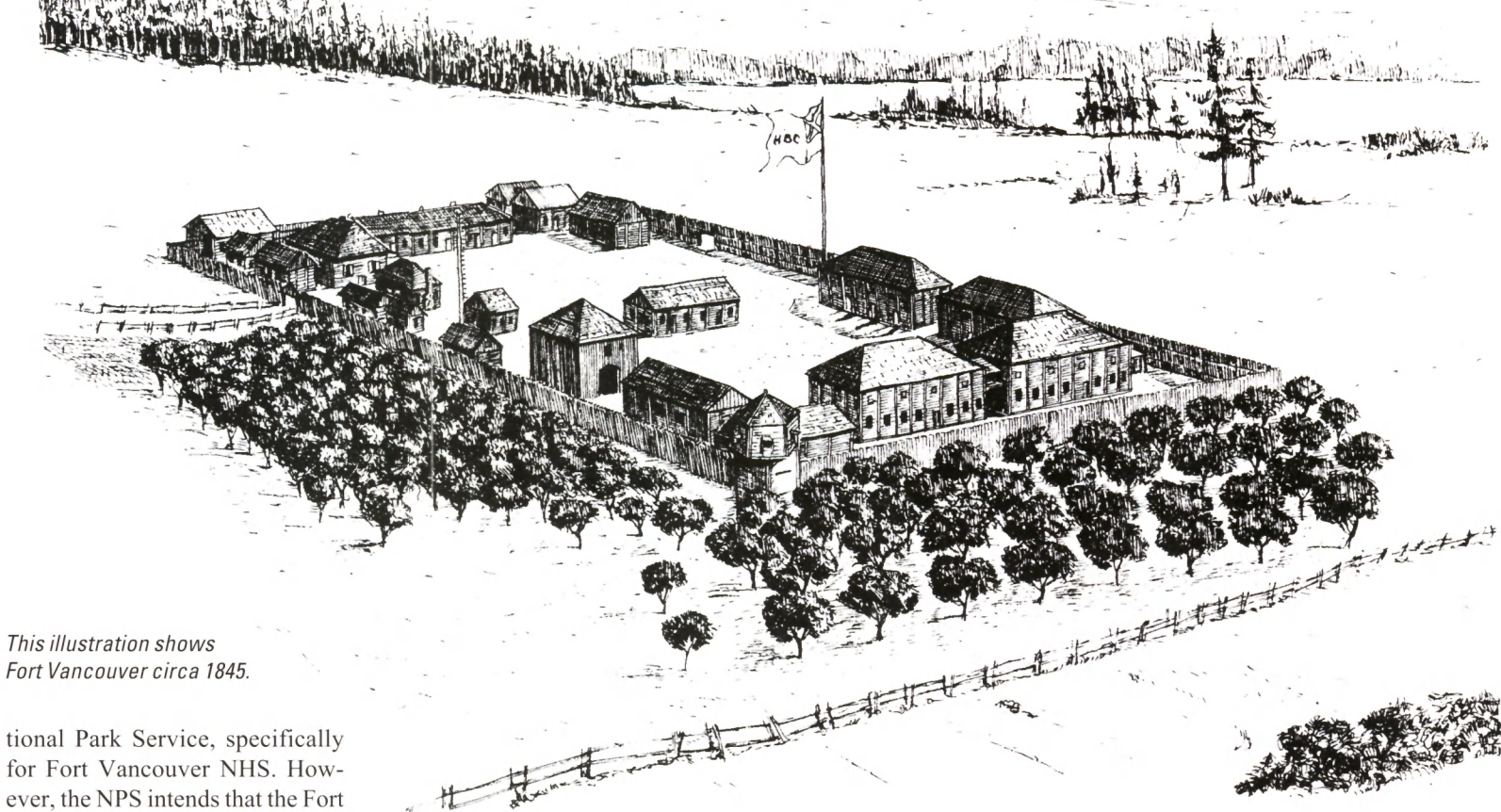
The NPS is also specifically directed by Congress to consider the adequacy of existing boundaries of Fort Vancouver NHS and to evaluate changes needed to protect Fort Vancouver resources.

### Relationship to the Vancouver National Historic Reserve Plan

In 1996, Congress established the Vancouver National Historic Reserve to provide for the coordinated preservation, public use, and management of historic sites within the Vancouver area. The 366-acre Reserve contains Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Vancouver Barracks, Officers Row, Pearson Field, the Water

Resources Education Center, and portions of the Columbia River waterfront. The Reserve is not a NPS unit traditionally managed by a superintendent. Instead, legislation established a cooperative management partnership composed of four Reserve partners: the National Park Service, the Department of the Army, the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation of the State of Washington, and the City of Vancouver, Washington. The Cooperative Management Plan for the Reserve is a statement of a shared vision emphasizing three principle goals: preservation of the historic structures and landscapes, education and interpretation of the area's history, and public use and access to Reserve resources. Fort Vancouver NHS at 209 acres is the largest landowner in the Reserve, and is an active partner working with the Reserve on many issues.

The Draft Cooperative Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Vancouver National Historic Reserve was produced in July 1999 and a final plan was submitted to the Secretary of the Interior and to the Secretary of the Army in November 1999. The GMP for Fort Vancouver NHS will be a separate, but complimentary, planning document produced by the Na-



This illustration shows Fort Vancouver circa 1845.

tional Park Service, specifically for Fort Vancouver NHS. However, the NPS intends that the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site GMP will fully complement, and be consistent with, the approved Reserve plan.

### Planning Team

The development of the GMP will be conducted by an interdisciplinary team of professionals from the NPS support office in Seattle, park staff, and the park superin-

tendent. Specialists, with expertise to address various park planning concerns, will be included on the team. In addition, consultants possessing specialized knowledge of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site or special expertise may serve as advisors to the planning team. Numerous agencies and organiza-

tions at the state and local level will be contacted for their valuable input and expertise.

### Environmental Impact Statement

The GMP will also contain an environmental impact statement (EIS) to evaluate the environmental consequences of implementing

the plan. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act a range of alternatives will be developed. With the help of public involvement and analysis of the potential affects, the EIS will evaluate distinct management approaches for dealing with park issues.

## Park Issues and Opportunities

The following topics describe some of the preliminary issues the GMP must address for the park to carry out its responsibilities of preserving the resources of Fort Vancouver NHS and providing for public use. Other concerns may be identified, defined, and clarified through public participation.

### Reconstruction of Fort and Cultural Landscape

Since 1966, Fort Vancouver's palisade and nine buildings have been reconstructed on their original locations. The plan needs to examine the purpose and extent of further reconstruction at the fort, including interior building treatment, phasing, and staffing among other considerations.

With the completion of the Pearson Air Museum, the city of Vancouver will remove the former aviation museum building, T-hangers, and associated taxiways from NPS property by the year 2003. This action would enable the NPS to restore portions of the cultural landscape using the 1992 *Cultural Landscape Report: Fort Vancouver National Historic Site* and the 1978 *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Master Plan* as guides. This would include re-examining circulation through the park, infrastructure needs, orchard, garden, and agricultural fields management. The NPS also

needs to address vehicle and pedestrian circulation and appropriate uses for the waterfront area and Company Village.

### Repository or Research Center

Fort Vancouver NHS is presently curating over 1 million artifacts. The vast majority of these came from archaeological excavations at the site, as well as from three other Hudson's Bay Company sites in the Pacific Northwest. With these unparalleled, site-specific resources, the park has the potential to be a major research and educational center, documenting the early historical development of the Pacific Northwest.

The management approach for this collection needs to be developed and documented. The NPS needs to determine whether Fort Vancouver NHS should function simply as a repository for the preservation, storage, and accountability of the collections, or whether it should fill the demanding functions of a Research Center. Factors to be taken into consideration include the following: accessibility and availability of collections, staffing, funding, interpretation, equipment and facility needs, among others. This determination may affect long and short-term planning for other activities and operations.

(continued on page 4)

## Building Blocks for Planning

The General Management Plan will be based on a number of elements, which need to be consistent with the legislation establishing the park. Your comments and thoughts about these items are welcome.

- ⊙ The **purpose** statement explains why the park was set aside by Congress.
- ⊙ The **significance** statements say why the site is important locally, nationally, and internationally.
- ⊙ The **primary interpretive themes** are those ideas about the resources of the park that are so important they should be told to all visitors. Interpretive programs and facilities will be designed to convey the themes to the public.
- ⊙ **Desired future condition** statements serve as mission goals for management and a guide for planning.

### Draft Purpose of Fort Vancouver NHS

The purpose of all units of the National Park System, as stated in the NPS Organic Act of 1916, is "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Specifically, the purpose of Fort Vancouver NHS is to preserve and interpret the site of the 19th century Hudson's Bay Company activities, settlement of the Oregon Territory, and the establishment of the U.S. Army's Vancouver Barracks.

### Draft Significance of Fort Vancouver NHS

- ⊙ From 1825 through 1849 Fort Vancouver was the site of the Hudson's Bay Company's administrative headquarters and principal supply depot west of the Rocky Mountains. As a result, Hudson's Bay Company greatly influenced the economic, political, and cultural development of the Pacific Northwest.
- ⊙ Fort Vancouver was the Pacific Northwest center for fur trade and other commerce, agriculture, and industry between 1825 and 1849.
- ⊙ Vancouver Barracks (originally established as Columbia Barracks in 1849), was the first military post in the Pacific Northwest. It served as headquarters for U.S. Army operations in the region into the 20th century.
- ⊙ Fort Vancouver was the first terminus of the Oregon Trail.
- ⊙ Fort Vancouver NHS contains extensive archaeological resources, both *in situ* (in place) and recovered, that

provides important information about the physical relationships and the cultural and economic operation of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver and the U.S. Army.

### Draft Primary Interpretive Themes

- ⊙ **Crossroads**—The Fort Vancouver area lies at the junction of the Columbia River and the Cascade Mountain range. The area is rich in natural resources that provided abundant sustenance for American Indians and immigrants. The river served as a primary route of exploration, travel, and trade, and the fertile land has supported major agricultural production.
- ⊙ **Fur Trade and Commerce**—Fort Vancouver's diverse and extensive operations and advantageous location on the Columbia River enabled it to be the center for Northwest fur trade and international commerce.
- ⊙ **A Mix of Cultures**—Fort Vancouver was a "melting-pot" of diverse human cultures of many American Indian and European peoples. This mix of cultures, and how people lived and worked together, is an important story in the life of the fort and in the development of the region.



Voyageurs at Fort Vancouver

- ⊙ **Settlement**—Fort Vancouver was the commercial, agricultural, and social center of the Pacific Northwest. The resources in the area supported further settlement. Fort Vancouver also served as the first terminus of the Oregon Trail and provided large amounts of provisions and supplies to thousands of American settlers.
- ⊙ **Military**—Vancouver Barracks was the first U.S. Army post in the Pacific Northwest and served as the headquarters for the vast Department of the Columbia. Vancouver Barracks was a center for United States military operations in the region for the last half of the 19th century and into the 20th century.
- ⊙ **Archaeological Research and Resources**—Through research, archaeological resources at Fort Vancouver NHS enable us to learn about the past and tell an accurate story about Fort Vancouver.

### Draft Desired Future Conditions and Mission Goals

- ⊙ In preservation, cultural resources are protected, restored or maintained, both as recovered and *in-situ* archaeological resources.
- ⊙ Park visitors are provided effective interpretation, education, and orientation about the history and significance of the park that results in understanding park resources and support for preservation.
- ⊙ Park visitors are able to safely enjoy and are satisfied with park facilities and services.
- ⊙ Formal partnership programs are established to assist in education, interpretation and in the conservation and preservation of cultural resources.
- ⊙ The most current management practices, systems, and technologies are used to accomplish this mission.

## What Are Your Concerns?

### Send Us Your Comments

The National Park Service invites you to share your thoughts regarding the future of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. What are your concerns? How would you like to see the park managed? Do you have any creative or innovative solutions to pressing park issues?

Information you may have will help to determine the types of issues the NPS will need to address in the General Management Plan. Subsequently, alternative management actions will be developed to address these issues. During the fall of 2000, the Draft Fort Vancouver National Historic Site General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to be published. The NPS hopes that you will take the opportunity to read and comment on the draft plan when it becomes available for public review.

To mail, please fold this form in half, enclose additional sheets of comments if necessary, seal it with tape (do not staple), and mail to the pre-printed address. Please send any comments you may have by March 30, 2000.

Please contact Tony Sisto, Superintendent (360) 696-7655 for additional information.

Do you want to remain on the mailing list?

|                                  |     |    |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|
| For future planning newsletters? | Yes | No |
| For future park activities?      | Yes | No |

Please print your name and address below if you wish to be added to the mailing list:

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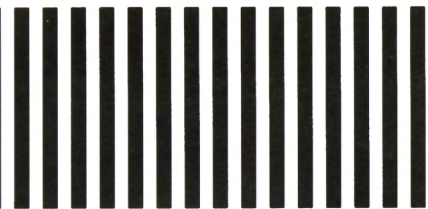
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Please include a separate sheet for additional comments.

All comments received will become part of the public record and copies of comments, including names, addresses, and telephone numbers provided by respondents, may be released for public inspection.

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(continued from page 3)

### McLoughlin House NHS in Oregon City, Oregon

In 1941, the McLoughlin House NHS (home of John McLoughlin, chief factor at Fort Vancouver) in Oregon City, Oregon was established as a national historic site. It is an affiliated unit of the National Park System, and is owned by Oregon City. The site helps to tell the important contributions that John McLoughlin made in the early settlement and development of the Oregon Country. The superintendent of Fort Vancouver NHS serves as a liaison for the Department of Interior with the McLoughlin Memorial Association which manages the site. The NPS needs to determine the extent of outreach and education between the two sites, along with other affiliated sites in the region.

### Outreach

There are numerous opportunities to expand upon media and outreach programs to the schools and on the Internet. The NPS needs to decide which opportunities should be explored further and their financial and staffing implications.

### Fort Vancouver NHS as a Reserve Partner

As part of the planning process, Fort Vancouver NHS needs to address its continuing role as a partner in the Vancouver National Historic Reserve. The NPS has been identified as the lead agency for

interpretation of the Reserve. Issues such as staffing, administrative, and budget demands on the park need to be explored, along with identifying specific implementation measures.

### Adjacent U.S. Army Property

The U.S. Army at Ft. Lewis, Washington, has completed an Environmental Assessment on a proposed action to declare portions of Vancouver Barracks excess to their needs. Surplus Army land may become available near the fort entrance in the future that would further help the park meet its mission. This could include land that may be available for parking near the fort entrance, interpretive activities, and the protection of historic barracks structures along the parade grounds. It is important that the NPS work with adjacent landowners on protecting historic scenic views and cooperating with land use needs of other partners.

### Staffing

Actions recommended within the different alternatives developed in the draft GMP may impact existing staffing levels. Some staffing considerations that need to be addressed in the GMP include the disciplines of natural resource management, archaeology and research, interpretation, and administration to help in the additional activities within the Reserve. Future staffing needs will need to be compared with the existing permanent and seasonal workforce.

### Facility Location

The GMP planning process will examine the location of facilities and the relationship between them. For example, additional storage is needed for equipment and materials at the maintenance shop and administrative building. Multi-functions occurring in the same work spaces create crowding and safety issues. The visitor center's theater is small and awkward, and the relationship of the visitor center to the reconstructed fort needs to be evaluated. The work space at the fort for staff and volunteers is inadequate. The location and adequacy of public and park operational spaces need to be addressed as part of the planning process.

### Interpretation and Education

The Fort Vancouver NHS interpretive program goes beyond the walls of the reconstructed fort. Many significant stories remain to be told involving the additional activities of the Hudson's Bay Company beyond the fur trade. The lifestyles of the workers, in particular those living in the Company Village west of the fort, are important stories, as is the significant connection with the Columbia River. In addition, the interpretive program should in some fashion be more inclusive of 19<sup>th</sup> century military interpretive themes to comply with legislation and park purpose. How and where should this occur?

## How Can You Participate?

*It is important to involve the public at the earliest possible stages, before planning decisions are made. The NPS invites you (private citizens, agencies, private organizations, businesses and other interested parties), at the beginning of this project, to voice your concerns and share your vision for the future of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.*



*Your thoughts and comments will help identify the scope of issues to be addressed in the GMP. These ideas will help form the foundation for developing a plan to guide the management of Fort Vancouver NHS for the next fifteen years.*

*Opportunities for public participation will include attending public workshops and meetings during public scoping and the release of the draft plan, and reviewing and submitting written comment on the future draft GMP/EIS. The NPS will keep you informed by providing periodic newsletter updates.*

*Two public scoping meetings are scheduled with the National Park Service in January 2000. If you are unable to attend and wish to provide written comments, please write your comments on the enclosed pre-addressed form (enclose additional comments if necessary) and return it by March 1, 2000.*

*Thank you for your help!*

### Public Meetings

Water Resources Education Center  
Wednesday, January 12, 2000 from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.  
4600 S.E. Columbia Way  
Vancouver, Washington 98668

McLoughlin House National Historic Site/Barclay House  
719 Center Street  
Thursday, January 13, 2000 from 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
Oregon City, Oregon 97045

Superintendent  
**Fort Vancouver  
National Historic Site**  
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# Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

General Management Plan  
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