

2015 SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT



FORT VANCOUVER
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE





Greetings from your national park!

Oh, what a wonderful year it has been! I am fortunate to work side by side with capable, hard-working employees, exceedingly talented volunteers, and supportive partners. These annual reports are a wonderful time to reflect on our accomplishments, as well as prepare for the year ahead.

In a year of many great accomplishments, I am especially proud to report that the park increased curriculum-based educational programming. Providing free opportunities for young people is at the heart of what we do. These programs help us share history, and help our younger generation discover our nation's heritage.

I am also happy to share that we continued to host our free, signature events, including the Children's Cultural Parade, Soldiers' Bivouac, Get Outdoors Day, Brigade Encampment, and Christmas at Fort Vancouver. These events have become community staples that bring thousands of visitors to the national park. It is a privilege and a pleasure to see our communities come together to experience history here.

At Vancouver Barracks, 2015 saw tremendous positive changes. We prepared to welcome new partners, rehabilitated historic buildings, and hosted fabulous public events in partnership with the 1st Oregon Volunteer Cavalry.

In 2015, the McLoughlin House, a unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, received funding for a project to create

new drapes and window treatments. This project, which will be completed in early 2016, will bring new life and increased historical accuracy to one of Oregon's oldest homes.

At Pearson Air Museum, we made tremendous strides in exhibits, visitation, and events. In addition to a number of free public lectures and programs, the museum provided space for 35 private events, including weddings, celebrations of life, corporate events, meetings, and more. Under the leadership of Museum Manager Dr. Bob Cromwell and Event Coordinator Eva Dodd, the museum is not just a fantastic educational space, but also a center for our community.

Finally, in 2015 we entered into an innovative partnership with local health care providers: the National Park Prescription Program. This program encourages healthy, outdoor activities at outdoor spaces like Fort Vancouver NHS. As we enter 2016, I would like to invite you to come out and take a walk with us! Fort Vancouver - with our lovely walking trails and fascinating history - is a perfect place to exercise mind and body.

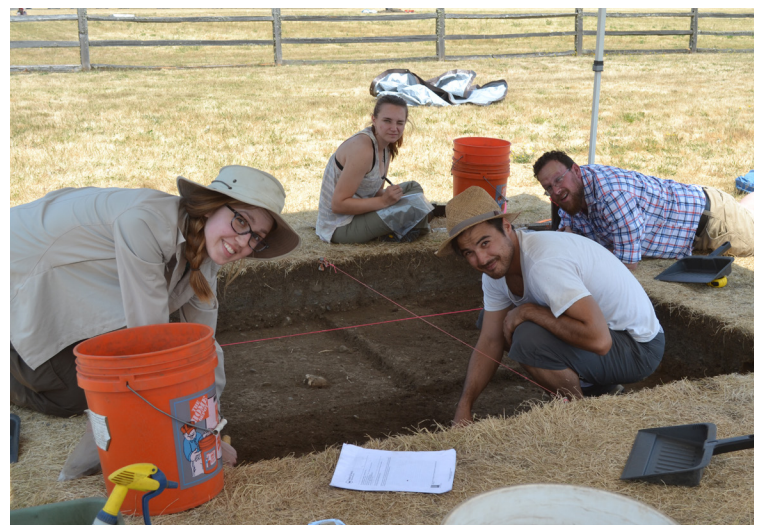
A place of preservation, sharing, collaboration, and inspiration, our national park is here for one and all. I hope to see you here soon, at this place where we can all discover the past, explore the present, and make progress into the future together.



Tracy Fortmann, Superintendent

PRESERVE

We are entrusted by the American people to preserve our nation's history. Through archaeology, the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and with our museum collection, we continue our mission of stewardship.



In the spring of 2015, the National Park Service awarded an \$11.28 million contract to begin the rehabilitation of several buildings and upgrade infrastructure in the east and south sections of Vancouver Barracks. Over the course of this year, huge strides were made in the renovation of **Building 987** - one of the post's large, iconic double barracks. This building, constructed in 1906, will become the headquarters of the U.S. Forest Service's Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Contract workers made improvements to the building's power, water, sewer, and storm systems. The historic features of the building have been painstakingly preserved - its original columns have undergone remediation for lead paint, and its beautiful tin ceiling tiles have been removed, carefully inventoried, and will be replaced after construction.

Throughout the project, National Park Service archaeologists have been on-hand, monitoring the construction activities to ensure that any archaeological artifacts or underground features are documented,

protected, and left in place when possible.

Over the summer, we held our annual **Public Archaeology Field School**. This partnership between Portland State University, Washington State University Vancouver, and the National Park Service brings students to the national park to work with professional archaeologists on a large-scale excavation. Students are taught all aspects of archaeology: field work, artifact analysis in the laboratory, and how to share archaeology with the park's many visitors. This summer, we excavated at the site of the Army's World War I Spruce Mill, and at the site of the Hudson's Bay Company's 19th century Cooper's Shop.

This year, our curators cataloged over 9,000 objects into the park's **museum collection**. They also managed incoming and outgoing loans and accepted donations of several historic objects. Over the summer, the museum collection of San Juan Island National Historical Park was relocated here, where it will be cared for by Fort Vancouver staff.



SHARE

The many stories we tell are like threads in a tapestry. The histories of Fort Vancouver, Vancouver Barracks, Pearson Field, and the McLoughlin House come together in this national park. It is an honor and a delight to share and explore this past with the public through programs and events.



On November 14, 2015, the park's **Visitor Center** opened after nearly two years of renovation. This building, first opened in 1961, now features hands-on, interactive exhibits, new visitor amenities, more efficient utility systems, and a bookstore operated by the Friends of Fort Vancouver. This warm, welcoming center is the heart of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site - a place where the site's many stories come together. As we enter the second century of the National Park Service, our Visitor Center will be a primary location where the history of this place can be shared with generations of visitors to come.

Providing our community with free, educational, and fun **events and programs** is a hallmark of our mission at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Campfires & Candlelight and Christmas at Fort Vancouver bring thousands of visitors to the park. Junior Ranger Day in April invites both young people and the young-at-heart to learn about history and science while earning

their Junior Ranger badge. Free demonstrations provided by National Park Service staff and volunteers and the 1st Oregon Volunteer Cavalry share the story of the historic military post. At the McLoughlin House in Oregon City, free tours lead visitors on a journey back in time to the birth of the American Northwest.

2015 also saw the continuation of our very popular **Lantern Tour** series. These tours take visitors through the fort by candlelight, where they experience atmospheric historical vignettes, presented by costumed volunteers from the park's youth interpretive programs: the Dame and Engagé Schools.

The **Dame and Engagé Schools** provide training in historical interpretation to young people ages 10 to 18. These youth volunteers then put their skills to service at the park's living history events, where they learn the value of sharing history with our community.



COLLABORATE



2015 was a year of strengthening established partnerships and forging new ones. Working with other national parks, federal agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, schools, and local businesses strengthens and revitalizes our national park, allowing us to better serve the public.



This year, we formally began a partnership with the **Friends of Fort Vancouver**, a newly formed nonprofit created to support this national park. In addition to providing services at park events, and organizing the wildly popular annual Sweetheart Dance, the Friends are also the operators of the new bookstore at the Fort Vancouver Visitor Center.

We also partnered with local organizations to provide services to young people. With the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, we hosted **summer youth camps** that taught young people about the past of the Pacific Northwest through the sciences of archaeology and paleontology.

Also during the summer, the City of Vancouver Parks and Recreation and Bike Clark County operated a series of popular **bicycling camps** for young people out of a building in the South Vancouver Barracks. These youthful cyclists learned bike safety skills, visited our Public Archaeology Field School, and learned about history,

conservation and recreation in our beautiful national park.

For our largest partnership event of the year, National Get Outdoors Day, we work closely with the **U.S. Forest Service**. This popular annual event brings together representatives from a variety of public agencies, nonprofits, and recreation-themed businesses. From all these outlets, visitors can explore many opportunities for outdoor recreation in the Northwest.

We are committed to offering our technical assistance to other **national parks** and **heritage preservation organizations**. Some of the partners we assisted this year include: Kalaupapa National Historical Park, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, North Cascades National Park Complex, San Juan Island National Historical Park, the National Park Service Southeast and Midwest Regional Offices, Haleakala National Park, Virgin Islands National Park, and the Pacific Northwest Historic Preservation Field School.

INSPIRE

A rustic frontier outpost.
A powerful military legacy.
The magic of flight.
The origin of Oregon.
The stories that we tell at
this national park have
the power to spark our
imaginations. We are
committed to providing
experiences that excite,
provoke, and touch visitors
of all ages and backgrounds.



In the summer of 2015, Fort Vancouver hosted the **Discover Washington: Youth Heritage Project**. This program - a partnership between the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service - engages high school students and teachers in historic preservation projects by connecting them with local professionals and resources.

Our staff spent four days working with the group on preservation projects, including developing an infographic on reconstructing historic buildings, living history presentations, and exhibit concepts for historic sites. For a grand finale, the students presented their projects at a public meeting at the Vancouver Community Library.

This year, celebrations began for the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. Nationwide, there will be many ways you can join in on the fun! In 2015, President Obama announced

the **Every Kid in a Park** initiative: fourth graders, or age equivalent free-choice learners, and their families can receive a pass that will give them free access to hundreds of parks, public lands and waters for an entire year! For more information, visit www.everykidinapark.gov

Here at Fort Vancouver NHS, your local national park, we are celebrating the **National Park Service Centennial** in a variety of exciting ways. The kick off in 2015 focused on the rehabilitation of the park's Visitor Center, and its new exhibits and amenities. We also laid the groundwork for all of the special programs and events that will take place in 2016, including art exhibits by middle school students and professional artists inspired by the park and artifacts in our museum collection, virtual tours of the buildings inside the fur trade fort, and a BioBlitz where citizen scientists can help us document (the sometimes surprising) species in this urban national park.

2015 BY THE NUMBERS

861,182 visitors visited Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

11,160 local students visited the national park on field trips

7,000+ visitors attended Campfires & Candlelight

6,000+ visitors attended National Get Outdoors Day

4,872 visitors attended the park's Historic Weapons program

742 volunteers donated **76,555** hours

81 permitted events accommodated **78,728** people

4,365 people followed us on Facebook

3,520 people followed us on Twitter

1,864 people followed us on Instagram





CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

"I went here last May when a relative was in town & wondered why I had never been here before! This Historic Site and Park is a true treasure for Vancouver and the greater Metro area. It is a joy to see how well the National Park Service has maintained this treasured site."

- YueYou
TripAdvisor review, December 5, 2015

"Fabulous, great walking (or running, biking), fun things for kids, great views, just love this place."

- Carol
Facebook review, December 16, 2015

"The Pearson Air Museum was so much fun... The people who worked there made learning about planes really cool...I had such a great time there and I hope I can go there again sometime."

- McKenzie
Local elementary school teacher

"Thank you for such an amazing field trip! It was so educational, interesting, and fun to learn about! You made it come alive and really made me believe that I was back at the fort. This was such a great experience."

- Cassie
Student

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