

Fort Vancouver  
National Historic Site  
612 East Reserve Street  
Vancouver, WA 98661

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Cover Photo Credit: Junelle Lawry







Fort Vancouver  
National Historic Site

# 2016

## Annual Report



PRESERVE

CONNECT

COLLABORATE

INSPIRE



Photo: Junelle Lawry





Former National Park Service Director Newton B. Drury once stated that national parks provide “a physical as well as spiritual linking of present-day Americans with the past of their country.” As the National Park Service enters its second century as an agency, this is what we at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site work to accomplish every day: to connect our community to its heritage, to provide a place for exploration and understanding, and to preserve our history for future generations.

In 2016, our staff, volunteers, and partners worked together to welcome over one million visitors to this national park – a new record! We held free public events that have become community traditions, like Campfires & Candlelight, National Get Outdoors Day, and Junior Ranger Day. We also featured new events, programs, and exhibits to draw in new visitors to our site.

As you read through this annual report, I hope that you will reflect on what our national park – and what all national parks – mean to you. As we enter a new year, we invite you to visit us and discover what Fort Vancouver National Historic Site – in Vancouver, Washington, and Oregon City, Oregon – has to offer as a place to connect to the past, and as a place where we can be empowered and inspired to learn and enjoy!



Tracy Fortmann, Superintendent  
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site





During the annual Public Archaeology Field School, university students use modern technology to record archaeological sites as they excavate. This year's field school uncovered an estimated 16,000 artifacts.

# Preserve

Our largest preservation project of the year was the rehabilitation of Building 987 — a century-old infantry barracks building in Vancouver Barracks. This building was revitalized, inside and out, with painstaking attention to historic detail. In early 2017, it became the headquarters of the U.S. Forest Service's Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

The Fort Vancouver palisade —one of the most iconic structures in the national park – also received attention this year. Through a partnership with the Oregon State University College of Forestry, careful sampling and data analysis identified posts with advanced rates of

decay. These posts, as well as the fort's gate, were removed and replaced.

Several buildings in the park were repainted, including the Barclay House and McLoughlin House in Oregon City, and four other buildings in Vancouver Barracks.

Over the summer, the park partnered with Portland State University and Washington State University, Vancouver, to host the annual Public Archaeology Field School. This year, undergraduate and graduate students conducted archaeological excavations at the site of the World War I Spruce Mill and along the historic Columbia River Waterfront.





At Building 987, contractors restored historic windows and doors, uncovered the building's original wood floors, removed lead paint, and installed seismic support systems and accessibility features.



The Barclay House was one of several buildings at the park to be repainted in 2016. The choice of color was based on a historic paint layer on the house.



For the past 30 years, the National Park Service has worked with the Oregon State University College of Forestry to monitor the condition of individual wooden posts in the fort palisade. In 2016, posts with advanced rates of decay, as well as the fort gate, were replaced.



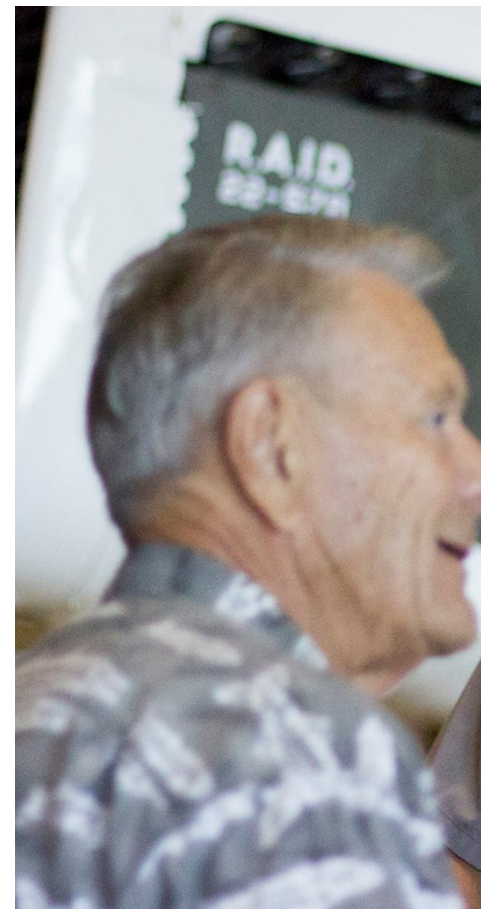


Photo: Troy Wayrynen

In 2016, as the National Park Service celebrated its Centennial year, staff, volunteers, and partners at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site sought new ways of connecting people to the past.

At Pearson Air Museum, two new exhibits were unveiled. A DH-4 Liberty Plane, restored by Century Aviation of Wenatchee, Washington, became a new centerpiece for the museum, and is one of only a handful like it in the world. A new exhibit on the world's first transpolar flight, which landed at Pearson Field in 1937, also debuted, featuring an interpretive blend of

artifacts, photographs, and an original mural by Yakama Nation artist Toma Villa.

2016 also marked the first year of the park's rehabilitated Visitor Center, which re-opened in late 2015. The "new" Visitor Center offers an open, welcoming place for orientation, education, and shopping. Over the course of the year, a large-scale, permanent art installation called Spirit Pole was installed and carved by Toma Villa, giving visitors a chance to talk with the artist as he worked and learn about the symbolism and meaning behind the sculpture. The Visitor Center also featured temporary exhibits by





Photo: Junelle Lawry

Warm Springs artist Lillian Pitt and Hawaiian artist Joy Po'maika'i Hau'oli O'Hearn.

The park's popular Lantern Tour series, which highlights fur trade and military history, continued, and featured a new tour at the park's McLoughlin House Unit, located in Oregon City, Oregon.



A centerpiece of the Centennial year was the rehabilitation of the historic Visitor Center, which now offers an open, welcoming space for orientation, education, and shopping.

The 1919 DH-4 Liberty Plane now on exhibit at Pearson Air Museum is one of only a handful like it in the world, and helps interpreters tell the story of early aviation at Pearson Field.

Lantern Tours at Fort Vancouver, Vancouver Barracks, and the McLoughlin House offer visitors a unique way to experience the park: after dark!



To help produce our large living history events, the national park partners with other local living history groups, like Living History NorthWest, which produces World War II-era re-enactments.

# Collaborate

Photo: Monroe Photography

Partnerships helped provide visitor services, put on special events, and bring new programs and exhibits to the park.

In the spring, the park hosted a BioBlitz event in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife, and many other agency and community partners. This event cataloged species of plants, mammals, and insects at the national park.

The park worked with SOLVE Oregon, a local nonprofit that encourages environment-focused volunteering, to host multiple events picking up trash and removing invasive plant species along the Columbia River Waterfront.

In the summer, the park partnered with Northwest Youth Corps to replace cedar split-rail fences throughout the park.

A partnership with local artists produced "Art & Artifacts," an exhibit inspired by the park's history, landscapes, and museum collection.

The park continues its strong partnership with the Friends of Fort Vancouver, who supported educational programs at the park, hosted the annual Sweetheart Hangar Dance, operated the Visitor Center bookstore, and provided support at numerous events.





In 2016, the Visitor Center became an orientation space not just for the national park, but also for Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Park rangers work alongside forest rangers to welcome the public and share all that our region's public lands have to offer.



Volunteers recruited by SOLVE Oregon helped clean up the Columbia River Waterfront at multiple events. During one cleanup in May, volunteers removed over 1,000 pounds of trash!



At BioBlitz, park rangers, specialists from the scientific community, and representatives from multiple agencies came together to help the public document and learn about biodiversity at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

Photo: Junelle Lawry





Photo: Junelle Lawry

As part of the Centennial mission to inspire a new generation of park stewards, new programs at Fort Vancouver were designed to reach out to young people in our community.

Middle school students from Vancouver's iTech Preparatory worked with the park's curators and interpreters to produce a virtual tour of Fort Vancouver, complete with images and captions produced by the students. This program brought students to the national park, and provides a digital experience for a wider audience online.

Fort Vancouver staff also worked with students from the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics and Thomas Jefferson Middle School to produce an art exhibit based on artifacts chosen from the nearly 3 million in the park's museum collection. Students





received a tour of the site and got up close to archaeological artifacts. Students then made prints that were displayed at Pearson Air Museum from April to June.

National park staff also worked with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) to bring campers to Fort Vancouver and John Day Fossil Beds National Monument to learn about the past through the lenses of archeology and paleontology. The recurring week long camp features a wide variety of activities designed to introduce participants to exploration and appreciation of the outdoors.

As part of a continuing partnership with Bike Clark County, the park hosted multiple day camps for children focused on bike skills and safety, with special presentations by park rangers and archaeologists.

Park Rangers introduced campers to the history of the fur trade and archaeology at Fur to Fossil camps.

Fort Vancouver's dedicated volunteers are key to providing great, curriculum-based field trip experiences for thousands of children.



# 2016 by the Numbers



1,019,239

visitors visited  
Fort Vancouver  
National Historic Site

12,774

local students visited  
the national park on  
field trips

5,000+

visitors attended  
Campfires &  
Candlelight

7,000+

visitors attended  
National Get  
Outdoors Day

5,417

visitors attended  
the park's Historic  
Weapons program

1,100

Lantern Tour  
attendees





Photo: Junelle Lawry

**742**

volunteers  
donated  
57,233 hours

**100+**

permitted events  
accommodated  
90,127 people

**6,960**

people followed  
us on Facebook

**7,179**

people followed  
us on Twitter

**5,626**

people followed  
us on Instagram

**37,494**

artifacts cataloged  
and ongoing care  
of a museum  
collection of 2.8  
million objects



# Look Towards the Future

2017 will bring even more exciting new projects to Fort Vancouver NHS. The national park and its support organization, the Friends of Fort Vancouver, received a \$9,000 grant from the National Park Foundation to make field trips more accessible to local students. This spring, newly redesigned curriculum-based educational programs will provide even more depth to the park's existing programs.

Improvement work in East Vancouver Barracks continues, with upgrades to infrastructure, painting of the large buildings along "Barracks Row," the addition of a new tenant to Vancouver Barracks with offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the return of the Post Flagstaff to the Parade Ground. A new aircraft will also go on exhibit at Pearson Air Museum: a full size replica of a Curtiss Pusher, which is being meticulously crafted by park volunteers. 2017 is shaping up to be another wonderful year at your national park!







Photo: Junelle Lawry