

Harpers Ferry Center
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS—EAST

Fort Washington Park

Long-Range Interpretive Plan



NOVEMBER 2009

COVER IMAGE: Historic view with river, Fort Washington, April 1959

Fort Washington Park

Long-Range Interpretive Plan

Prepared by:

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Capital Parks–East
Fort Washington Park

Harpers Ferry Center
Interpretive Planning

November 2009



The Planning Process



This Long-Range Interpretive Plan outlines recommendations for future interpretive services, facilities, and media. Park staff, historians, partners, and stakeholders worked together to develop a comprehensive tool that will outline educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to develop intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural resources found within Fort Washington Park. Our goal is to promote Fort Washington Park's resource values through specially planned visitor experiences and excellence in interpretation.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) recommends actions that should occur over the next seven to 10 years. It identifies park themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide variety of personal and non-personal interpretive services and outreach activities

that will best communicate the park purpose, significance and themes. Developed in concert with the park Annual Implementation Plan and Interpretive Database, it completes the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for the park, as established in Director's Orders 6. In addition, this planning process has been customized to meet the needs for Fort Washington Park, as well as the conditions and special circumstances that exist there. The ultimate product is a cost-effective, tightly focused, high quality park interpretive program that achieves management goals, provides appropriate visitor opportunities, and facilitates desired visitor experiences.

The Project Agreement was signed in October 2004. A Foundations workshop was held in May 2005 and a Recommendations workshop was held in June 2007. Park staff, partners, regional NPS staff, and three media

Visitors depart via the fort's Main Gate.

Opposite: Infrared photo of Fort Washington Park. Photo credit: Zach Stern, flickr.com. Licensed under Creative Commons.

specialists from Harpers Ferry Center participated in the 2007 workshop. The original planner accepted another position so a new planner was assigned to the project in May 2008. A scoping trip was conducted on June 2008. Themes were reviewed and updated in July 2008. A Confirmation workshop was held at the park in September 2008 with 20 participants representing park staff, partners, local community groups, the cooperating association, tribal leaders, and other regional NPS staff in attendance.

Barring legislative changes or major new revelations, the foundational elements expressed in this LRIP—purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals—will remain constant over the life of the plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents must be produced to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.



Fort Washington Park is currently engaged in extensive restoration and renovation projects that should be completed early in the life of this plan. All planning participants recognized that each of these resource specific projects include interpretive elements. During the next 10 years Fort Washington Park interpretive services will provide visitors with opportunities to increase their understanding and appreciation for the park and its resources; to engage in local and regional educational opportunities; and to participate in nationally significant events.

Visitor Center / Commandant's House

- Develop and implement an exhibit plan.
- Continue to improve accessibility.

The Fort, Officer's Quarters and Enlisted Men's Barracks

- Develop and implement a historic furnishings plan.

Education Program

- Increase involvement with the Bridging the Watershed environmental education program.
- Initiate, implement, and evaluate a Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program

along with the development of local school curriculum-based programs including National Capital Parks–East and National Capital Region education specialists.

Civic Engagement and Marketing

- Identify and implement marketing strategies for park and programs.
- Increase civic engagement opportunities and community participation in programs.
- Increase web-based information about recreational opportunities and events.

Interpretive Media

- Develop and implement a wayside exhibit plan.
- Produce a new park orientation video.

Special Events

- Plan for and participate in 2011–2015 Civil War Sesquicentennial.
- Plan for and participate in 2012 War of 1812 Bicentennial.
- Plan for and participate in 2016 National Park Service Centennial.

Table of Contents

Foundations for Planning 9

Site Background	9
Park Enabling Legislation	10
National Capital Parks–East Vision Statement	11
Park Purpose	13
Park Significance	14
Interpretive Themes	14
Management Goals	16
Desired Visitor Experiences	18
Visitor and Audience Profiles	19
Issues and Influences Affecting Interpretation	21

Existing Conditions 23

Information and Orientation	23
On-Site Facilities	24
Interpretive Media	27
Interpretive Media Assets	31
Personal Services	31
Partnerships	32

Recommendations 35

Information and Orientation	36
On-Site Facilities	38
Interpretive Media	40
Interpretive Media Assets	45
Personal Services	46
Partnerships	47
Research and Evaluation Needs	48
Staffing and Training Needs	49
Implementation Priorities	52
Implementation Plan	52

Appendices 55

Appendix A: The Planning Team	55
Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines	57

Foundations for Planning



Site Background

For over 183 years, Fort Washington Park has been owned by the federal government, serving as a defensive outpost for Washington, D.C., a training facility for military and civilian forces and now as a provider of inspirational, educational, and recreational opportunities for hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. In 1930, 341 acres of land were designated to be the terminus for the Maryland side of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Nearly one-third of the park is devoted to outdoor recreation, and the remainder is designated as an historic natural area. Park grounds feature the historic fort; hiking and biking paths; and a view of the Potomac River that provides a scenic place for picnicking and fishing.

In 1794, President Washington planned for the original fort, Fort

Warburton, to be constructed to defend Washington, D.C. The fort was completed in 1809, and guarded the Nation's Capital until destroyed by its own garrison during the War of 1812. The present Fort Washington was constructed on the site between 1814 and 1824 and the first guns were mounted in 1846. With the exception of a few guns at the Washington Arsenal, Fort Washington was the only major coastal defense for the Nation's Capital until the Civil War. The end of the Civil War meant a lessening of threats to the city, and the post was abandoned for 20 years.

In 1870 a fog bell tower known as Light 80 was built on Digges Point. During the early 1900s a 6th order Fresnel lens was placed in the bell tower. After September 11, 2001 the tower was used by the military as an active radar station to again protect the Nation's Capital. In 2005 the

On March 3, 1943
the 67th WAAC
Detachment reported
to Fort Washington.
Photo credit: U.S. Army

National Park Service took possession of the light which is now being used as an active Potomac River aid to navigation.

In the 1880's, Secretary of War William Endicott established a new defensive system made of concrete and steel gun batteries that replaced the old masonry fort as the key coastal defense for the city. Eight Endicott batteries were built directly outside and around Fort Washington between 1895 and 1903.

In 1917, three of the large 10-inch guns were removed from the fort and sent to France for use by American forces during WWI. From 1921 until 1939 the site was used as housing for the 12th Infantry, which serves as the Honor Guard for Washington, DC.

In 1939, the property was transferred from the War Department to Interior under the Capper Cramton Act of 1930, for use as a terminus of the Maryland side of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. During a brief period in 1940–41, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Welfare and Recreational Association (WRA) used several of the buildings as housing and training facilities.

With the start of World War II, the War Department retook Fort Washington to create the Adjutant General Officer Candidate School (AG OCS). The Women's Army Auxiliary (WAAC), later known as the Women's Army Corps, was also stationed at the fort from 1942 until 1943. During this period more than 150 temporary buildings were erected to accommodate the more than 3,000

troops stationed at the fort. In 1946, after World War II ended Fort Washington was transferred back to the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service.

There are more than 5,000 acres of federal parklands within Fort Foote, Harmony Hall, Piscataway Park, Marshall Hall and the National Colonial Farm and all of these associated sites are located adjacent to or near Fort Washington Park. All of these units are under the administration of the Fort Washington Park Manager who reports to the National Capital Parks–East (NACE) Office of the Superintendent. The Accokeek and Alice Ferguson Foundations manage and provide cultural and environmental education programs at Piscataway Park in partnership with NPS. However, this Long-Range Interpretive Plan will focus specifically on Fort Washington Park.

Park Enabling Legislation

Fort Washington Park was established on May 29, 1930 through Congressional enactment of the Capper Cramton Act (46 Stat. 482).

“An Act for the acquisition, establishment, and development of the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac from Mount Vernon and Fort Washington to the Great Falls....”

The legislation authorized funding for the acquisition of lands in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia for the park and parkway system of the National Capital. Property acquisition included lands for the George

Washington Memorial Parkway; Stream Valley parks in Maryland and Virginia; and the park, parkway and playground system of the National Capital.

In 1939, the post was abandoned and turned over to the Director of Public Buildings for the National Capital Parks system for use as a terminal point for a bridge across the Potomac and a parkway to be built along the shore. Before the land transfer was completed the United States entered into World War II. With the start of the war, Fort Washington was returned to the army and became the home of the Adjutant General's School.

All of the buildings were still intact, so the Adjutant General's School moved to the abandoned post in January 1942. In August a Service Company was authorized to furnish janitorial services, military police, firemen and general post maintenance. Later, medical, clerical, communications and transportation functions were included. The Adjutant General's School graduated 300 students every two months and trained over 1,500 officers during their first six months of operation. The school also included an officer's candidate course that commissioned 200 new Lieutenants every six weeks. After the war the Veterans Administration managed the post hospital and other government agencies occupied some of the buildings.

On August 8, 1946, (60 Stat. 960) the land for Fort Washington Park was transferred from the War Department to the Department of Interior under

the conditions set forth in the Capper Cramton Act:

“Sec. 3. Whenever the use of the Forts Washington, Foote, and Hunt, or either of them, is no longer deemed necessary for military purposes they shall be turned over to the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, without cost, for administration and maintenance as a part of the said George Washington Memorial Parkway.”

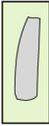
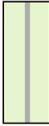
With the southern terminus planned for Fort Washington, the parkway in Maryland never became a reality due to its unpopularity with local citizens, Prince George's County officials, and Maryland State legislators. As of this date, plans for parkway access to Fort Washington have been tabled.

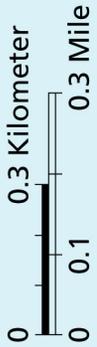
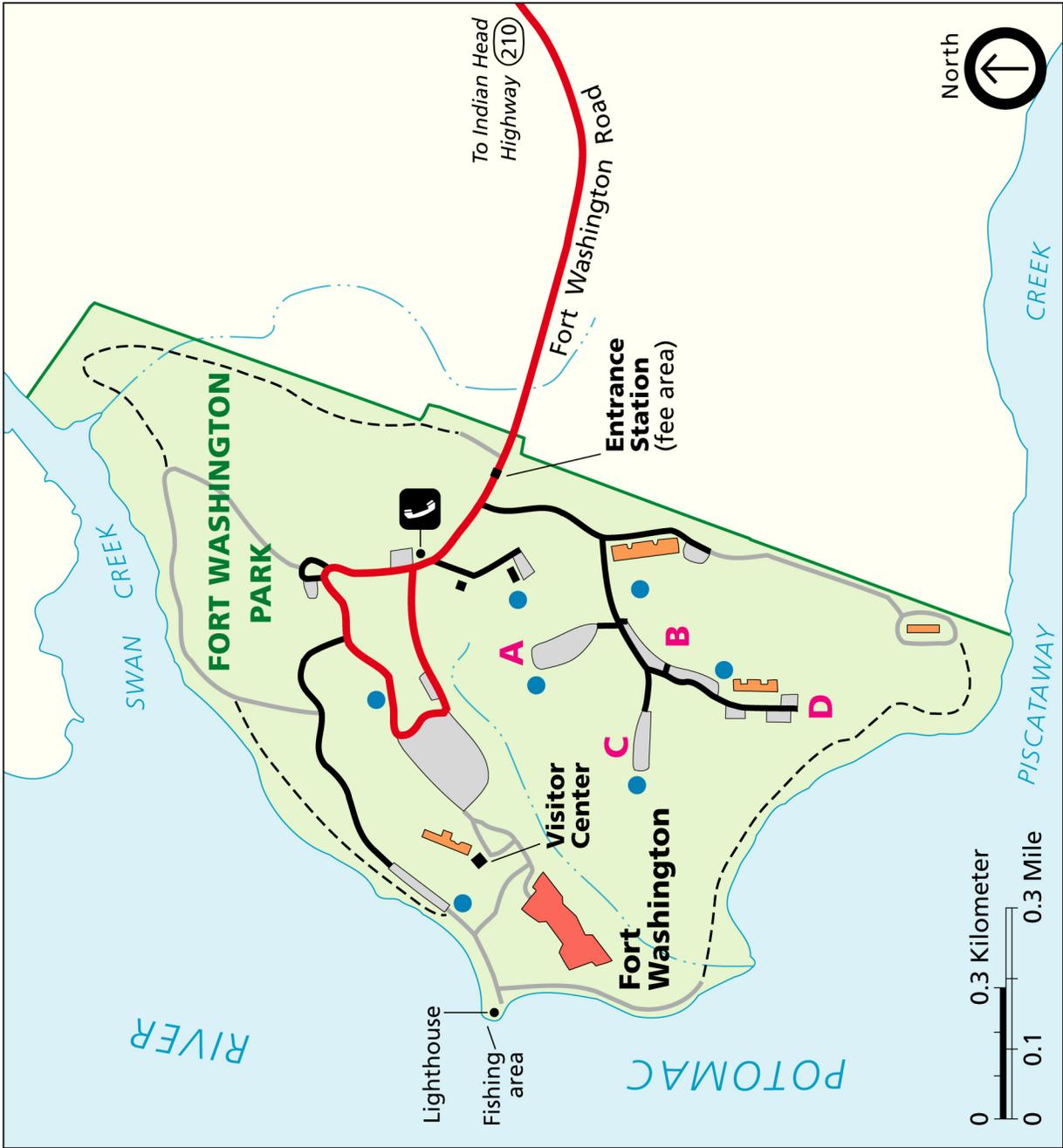
Fort Washington never was administered by the Superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. On May 24, 1965 National Capital Parks–East was established and the park became a part of this unit of the National Park System.

National Capital Parks–East Vision Statement

National Capital Parks–East is one of the jewels of the National Park System that is managed and promoted by consummate professionals dedicated to conserving resources and providing safe and enjoyable experiences. We strive to inspire this and future generations to recognize, understand, conserve and protect our natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Map Legend:

-  Parking lot
-  Service road (motor vehicles prohibited)
-  Foot trail
-  Endicott battery
-  Telephone
-  Reserved picnic area
-  Restrooms



Fort Washington Park

Park Purpose

Park purpose statements describe why an area was set aside and what specific purposes exist for a park. Purpose statements are derived from legislation, legislative history, public participation, and public rule making. Purpose statements may reflect upon traditional purposes of preservation and enjoyment, the linkages between the management unit and its cultural and natural resources, connections with groups and areas external to the park, and language of the enabling legislation. Additional purposes may have emerged since this area was originally set aside.

The purpose of Fort Washington Park, as defined in the Capper Cramton Act is “to preserve the historic coastal defense fortification and to provide open space for recreational activities.”

The park’s 2005 *Statement for Management* states that “Fort Washington Park was created to provide an historic and aesthetically pleasing location for the southern terminus of the Maryland portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Today, the purpose of the park has evolved to encompass the preservation, interpretation, and protection of the historical and natural resources found within its boundaries. The management mandate for this park includes the

preservation, restoration and interpretation of the historic coastal defense fortifications including the fort, batteries and other historic structures. Furthermore it is a management mandate to protect the wildlife and to preserve the park’s natural areas including the scenic view shed of the Potomac River and to provide for public enjoyment by providing open green space for recreational activities.”

Fort Washington is the largest and only permanent masonry coastal fortification built prior to the Civil War to defend the Nation’s Capital.



Park Significance

Park significance statements describe the distinctiveness of the combined resources of a park. The statements can reflect upon natural, cultural, scientific, recreational, inspirational, and other resources. The statements embody the power of the place through a factual representation of what makes this place special. Usually stated as facts placed in relevant context, these statements summarize the essence of the importance of this park's resources to our natural and cultural heritage. Significances may evolve over time as a result of discoveries and updates to our knowledge about this place.

- Fort Washington is the largest and only permanent masonry fortification built prior to the Civil War to defend the Nation's Capital.
- The drastic changes and development of the architectural features and methodologies relating to the military components and their use within Fort Washington are unprecedented.
- The environmental impacts perpetuated by human habitation within the Potomac River Basin from prehistoric through contemporary times are evident and can be explored at Fort Washington.
- The variety of fortifications at Fort Washington illustrates the transitional advances in coastal defenses and weaponry between the 19th and 20th century including Battery Decatur, located adjacent to the Commandant's House (visitor center), which is one of the first two

Endicott period masonry batteries ever built.

- Fort Washington was home to an active unit of both the Women's Army Auxiliary and the Women's Army Corps. The units were established by Congress to "relieve the men from doing work at the fort that could be handled by women and in turn allowing the men to be assigned to battle during World War II".
- The economic and social status of the civilians living near Fort Washington was influenced by the military presence.
- As the pressures of urbanization and development within the metropolitan area of the Nation's Capital increase, the value of Fort Washington Park as one of the largest public open green spaces in Prince Georges County, Maryland increases.
- The scenic view of the Potomac River from the bluff at Fort Washington is unprecedented. One can see from Mount Vernon, Virginia to the skyline of the Nation's Capital.

Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas or concepts about Fort Washington Park that are keys to helping visitors gain an understanding of the park's significance and resources. The themes, which are based on the park's purpose and significance, provide the foundation for interpretive programs and media in the park. The themes do not include everything that may be interpreted, but they do address the ideas that are critical to a visitor's



The scenic view of the area from the second floor porch of the visitor center provides a great opportunity to help visitors understand the significance of park resources.

understanding and appreciating of the park's significance. Effective interpretation is achieved when visitors are able to associate resources and their values and consequently derive something meaningful from their experiences.

1. Fort Washington has evolved to meet the changing defensive needs of the nation.

- Fort Warburton—2nd system
- Fort Washington—2nd to 3rd system transition
- Endicott System
- Adjutant General's Training school
- Radar air defense system—set up in response to 9/11 attacks
- Continual call to service
- WAACs
- African-Americans who served at the fort
- Lighthouse protects the shipping interests.
- Changing needs from water defense to air defense
- Changes in military technology/warfare signaled changes in the physical structures at Fort Washington
- George Washington's recommendation for use as a defensive position
- Protected not only the US but also tribal interests (seat of government for Piscataway Indian Nation)
- River and the fort system (why/what is a coastal defense?)
- The Digges family who owned the land before the fort was built and were friends with George Washington

2. *The water and land that makes Fort Washington an ideal defensive position now provide a wide range of recreational opportunities.*

- Picnic
- Exercise
- Walking trails
- Solitude
- Fishing
- Sports
- Lighthouse—aid to navigation
- Exploration—topography of site

3. *The nation is now charged with defending Fort Washington Park from environmental impacts.*

- Water quality
- Living Classroom
- Bridging the Watershed
- Shore cleanup
- How environment has/does affect the Fort
- Changed landscape by decimating natural environment in order to live/survive (trees, wood, river)
- Viewshed protection
- Wildlife habitat

4. *The military presence at Fort Washington influenced and was influenced by the local community.*

- Civilian Conservation CBaseball
- Who lived at the fort?
- Who lived outside the fort?
- How the local economy and the agrarian community benefitted from and affected the fort life
- How the Alexandria market was used in context to FOWA operations (trading/supplies/services)
- Garrison life (discipline) “Life as a Common Soldier”
- Who worked (military/civilian) here?
- Diversity of Fort Washington’s (fort/ community) people
- Social activities
- Transportation and commerce
- Women at fort
- American Indians at fort
- Who built the fort?

Management Goals

Park Mission Goals identified in the 2005 Statement for Management:

- Provide ongoing stabilization, rehabilitation and/or restoration of the Old Fort and associated structures in order to protect and maintain the historic resources.

- To explore methods and means of more effectively controlling the visitor use patterns within the park to the point that use does not exceed the absorptive capacity of the resources.
- Provide interpretive programs using exhibits, audio-visual programs, structured tours and living history demonstrations that present the historical story of the Fort and associated ecological features of the park.
- Provide more opportunities for group and family recreational activities designed to protect the natural, cultural and historical resources in the park.

2009–2013 Strategic Plans

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, National Capital Parks–East (NACE), of which Fort Washington is a unit, developed a strategic plan and management goals through 2013. The Office of the Superintendent assembled a leadership team who worked in concert with the Fort Washington Park Manager in developing a comprehensive NACE-wide annual and long-range GPRA plan. Specific projects were outlined for Fort Washington Park within the annual and long-range GPRA plans including visitor satisfaction and visitor understanding goals. Those are the goals that address recreation, interpretation, and visitor experiences.

The outcomes or how well the park is achieving its visitor-related goals are measured annually at every unit of the National Park System through survey forms that are distributed to

visitors at each NPS unit. Visitors send their completed survey forms to the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit where the data is collected and compiled for each NPS unit. The survey results reflect visitor opinion about each park’s facilities, services and recreational opportunities, as well as measures visitor understanding and appreciation of each NPS unit’s significance.

Park management has set the GPRA long term goal that by September 30, 2013, 95% of visitors to National Capital Parks-East are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

The actual percentages for visitor satisfaction throughout all of NACE including Fort Washington are: (2005 = 90%, 2006 = 94%, 2007 = 94%, and 2008 = 95%) reflect an increase for all of NACE which would include Fort Washington.

The long term goal that by September 30, 2013, 72% of National Capital Parks-East visitors understand the significance of the park was also set.

The actual percentages (2005 = 94%, 2006 = 60%, 2007 = 82%, and 2008 = 74%) reflect fluctuations that are difficult to determine relationships if any to Fort Washington because all of the NACE parks are included in the data.

Core Operations Planning Process

The NACE Leadership Team and National Capital Regional Office staff developed and implemented a Core Operations analysis process that integrated management tools to



Artillery and artillery firing demonstrations are used to help tell the historical story of the Fort.

improve park efficiency. The process has assisted park management in making fully informed decisions on staffing and funding alternatives as they relate to core mission goals. This process improved management practices and ensured funds would be spent in support of well-defined purposes within NACE. The top priority of this planning process was to ensure that all funds are spent in the most efficient manner and that any park request for funding is credible before Congress. And, more importantly, the Core Operations process will determine if there are adequate funds (allocated properly) and people to preserve and protect the resources. A core operations analysis is not about cutting park funds or staff; it is about using park funds wisely.

Desired Visitor Experiences

Desired visitor experiences describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to Fort Washington Park. These experiences will be available to the degree possible to visitors of all abilities through the use of universal design.

Fort Washington Park will provide visitors with an opportunity to:

- Obtain accurate pre-site visit information including picnic reservations, trail maps, fishing regulations, and program schedules from the park website and other types of media.
- Receive a comprehensive orientation to the park facilities and interpretive stories.

- Participate in a variety of interpretive programs: self-guided tours, family friendly programs, guided tours, virtual tours, concerts, education programs for all age levels.

- Participate in Junior Ranger activities.

Visitor and Audience Profiles

- Enjoy well kept, clean park facilities and grounds.
- Have universal access to park facilities.
- Be assured of personal safety during their visit.
- Learn why Fort Washington is important to better understand what happened here.
- Enjoy the river and understand the ecology and importance of the river.
- See and hear birds, including a variety of waterfowl, along the Potomac River.
- Hike the trails along the river in the woods.
- Experience the sights and sounds of the fort during the day and the evening.
- Stamp their passport.
- See an historic and scenic view of DC, Mount Vernon, Wilson Bridge and Washington Monument.
- Experience the tranquil bucolic setting.
- Surf Web Ranger sites and utilize other modern media.

Approximately 292,981 visitors come to Fort Washington Park annually. This figure is based on a five year average of monthly public use data taken during calendar years 2003–2007. There has been a steady increase in visitation each year. These statistics also indicate that during that period only about five percent (13,739) of the visitors go to the historic fort. Ongoing major repairs to the historic fort itself, gun batteries, visitor center, picnic areas, trails and other facilities has greatly curtailed visitation in that area. Repairs to the Officer’s Quarter, Enlisted Men’s Barracks, Main Gate, Demi-Bastions and other features within the historic fort has severely limited visitor access to and use of these buildings. However, with the final stages of repairs beginning in 2009, visitation at the fort should increase during the lifetime of this Long-Range Interpretive Plan.

Park staff believes that most visitors are from the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area including local Prince George’s County and the Alexandria area. These groups often see the park primarily as their picnic ground or large backyard. The main activity in the park is picnicking. Some come with large groups for church and company picnics; others come for weekend track meets, volunteer projects, or small group activities. Family picnic outings are common and popular. The stay for all groups is generally for several hours; often all

day in the summer. Almost all come to the park by automobile.

Recreational uses of the site include activities such as bicycling, dog-walking, fishing, picnicking, and walking. The primary recreational areas including picnic site, playground, and sports facilities are located in the reserved picnic area which has been purposely separated from the historic fort. Many visitors are unaware of the massive masonry fort on the other side of the ravine. Yet, almost all park visitors view or come in contact with one or more of the Endicott batteries because they are located adjacent to the recreational areas as well as the historic fort.

At the first signs of spring, local visitors (especially young people) crowd the park on weekends.

Visitation during the summer season at Fort Washington Park constitutes approximately fifty percent of the park's annual visitation.

School group visitation is primarily on weekdays during the spring. These groups often expect tours of the historic areas of the park. Tour reservations are taken but there are also frequent unannounced groups which are accommodated if staff is available. Buses are the usual form of access to the park for these groups. Prince Georges County Public Schools annually brings 20 busloads of students to participate in cross country meets in the park.

According to statistics within the 2005 *Statement for Management*:

- 65-70% of visitors come to the park for recreational use

Between May and August over 100,000 people will use the picnic areas, some "discover" the Commandant's House, now the visitor center, and a shortcut to the old Fort, the Point and Battery White.



- 30-35% of visitors come to the park for the fort and programs
- Average group size: fort—3, recreational area—7
- Gender split almost equally between both areas
- Ethnicity: fort—69% white, 29% black; recreational area—87% black, 11% white
- 63% white visitors come on weekdays
- 76% black visitors come on weekends



Between May and August 100,000 visitors will attend a family reunion, church picnic, office outing, birthday celebration, or some other group activity within the reserved picnic areas. Some of these visitors may “discover” the historic fort during their visit; however, there is no data available to accurately determine that number.

Based on the above information, the team determined that the park has four predominant user groups: recreational users, history enthusiasts, cross-over users (recreation and history), and education groups. The recommendations of this plan will include all user groups; however, special emphasis will be placed on providing interpretive connections to the education groups and crossover users.

Issues and Influences Affecting Interpretation

The project to stabilize Fort Washington is a primary issue impacting the level and type of interpretive services that can be provided. Currently visitors are unable to be given adequate indoor orientation and interpretation. Furthermore, there are no accessible restrooms or group gathering areas within the Fort. The work is projected to be completed in 2010.

Staffing is also an issue. The two GS-025-Park Rangers, one GS-090-Park Guide and two seasonal Visitor Use Assistants are responsible for staffing the entrance station, the visitor center, and bookstore, administering picnic permits, and providing interpretive services seven days a week from April to October. When the entrance station is closed, the three permanent employees staff the visitor center and bookstore, provide visitor services, research and develop interpretive media and programs, as well as patrol more than 5,000 acres of parkland. Volunteers provide the majority of the

Many recreational users feel that the park is a local picnic ground and they do not understand or recognize the national significance of the park.

interpretive services with oversight from one of the Park Rangers. The Park Guide also assists with Volunteer Historic Weapons programs as well as other volunteer projects. Fort Washington Park staff, especially the Park Manager, also have responsibilities associated with the four adjacent parks and National Capital Parks–East. Determining staff responsibilities within Fort Washington Park and National Capital Parks–East will be imperative to carry out this plan. Developing employee skill sets to increase interpretive effectiveness is also a significant concern.

Collaborating with constituencies within the local community will be important to the success of this plan. The continued expansion of the park watch program to include more nearby neighborhoods may help to reduce possible conflicts among user groups who are enjoying the variety of available park resources. Overcoming the language barrier with the local Spanish and Filipino communities may help to create greater opportunities for them to become park stewards.

This collaboration may also help to address the lack of National Park Service identity that Fort Washington Park has within the community. Many recreational users feel that the park is a local picnic ground and they do not understand or recognize the national significance of the park.

Three major special events will occur during the life of this plan: the War of 1812 Bicentennial, the Civil War Sesquicentennial, and the National Park Service Centennial. Each one of these events will require

additional time, money and staffing that will stretch the already overstretched resources of Fort Washington Park.

Existing Conditions



Information and Orientation

Community Relations

The park informs the public of upcoming events and special programs through public service announcements sent to area newspapers, radio and television stations, and the internet.

A local newsletter is distributed quarterly to park neighbors, social interest groups, local schools, and constituents. The list can be updated daily if necessary by the NACE IER&VS Public Information Specialist with assistance from Fort Washington Park interpretive staff.

General requests for information are mailed and e-mailed out daily. The park Visitor Use Assistant and Park Guide are responsible for these daily requests. Any special requests are

generally sent to the interpretive supervisor unless another park manager is specifically identified. All who receive these requests will confer with the Park Manager as needed.

Personal Services

The park receives information requests on a daily basis via letters, phone calls, and e-mail messages. Most requests are for basic information about the park and/or directions to the park. Brochure requests are decreasing, as the park website becomes more popular.

Signs

The entrance to Fort Washington is approximately three miles off of Indian Head Highway (MD Route 210) a major six lane roadway. The road goes through a series of residential housing developments.

Fort Washington's visitor center and museum.
Photo credit: Mr. T in DC, flickr.com. Licensed under Creative Commons.

Existing Conditions

There is a brown highway sign on Indian Head Highway and then blue signs on the Fort Washington Road. There is an engraved wooden NPS sign at the entrance to Fort Washington Park. A new custom wooden brown Marina sign at the end of Warburton Drive near the entrance to the marina parking lot was installed in late 2008.

Website

The park website is a very popular way to gain information about the park. Virtual visitors access the website to learn about park history, interpretive programs, and operating hours, and to find directions to the park. The park recognizes the importance of the website as a tool to reach “virtual” visitors, long distance researchers, and as a pre-visit information opportunity. Park

interpretive staff continually research and develop upgrades to this media.

On-Site Facilities

The Fort

The fort is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. October through March and from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. through the rest of the year. There is a self-guided walking tour handout available just inside the main gate. Wayside exhibits are located throughout the fort. Artillery demonstrations are held on the parade grounds on the first Sunday of the month April to October. The guard house has an interpretive exhibit that is in need of extensive rehabilitation. Group tours of the historic fort are offered upon request and the staff relates the tour to the requestor’s interests.

The wall mounted topographic relief model in the visitor center is very popular despite being quite dated and difficult to connect to the surrounding landscape.





Battery Humphries is one of eight Endicott Batteries located within the park.

Officer's Quarters and Enlisted Men's Barracks in the Fort

The Officer's Quarters and the Enlisted Men's Barracks will remain closed until late 2010, when repairs to the interiors have been completed.

Tour Roads

There are 3.5 miles of newly paved (as of 2009) and marked roads winding in and around the picnic, fishing and historic areas of the park.

Visitor Center/Commandant's House

The Commandant's House was adaptively restored in 1984 to serve as park offices and as a visitor center with exhibits, bookstore, restrooms, and audiovisual programs. Within the visitor center are exhibits, displays, an orientation film, and a bookstore. Present interpretive media reflects the history of Fort Warburton and Fort Washington from 1808 through 1946. Several staff prepared exhibits include images of historic 19th and early 20th

century fort life supplied by soldiers and other residents of the fort. There are also handicapped accessible restrooms available.

The visitor center is open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. October through March and 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. the rest of the year. The park is closed January 1, Thanksgiving and December 25.

The visitor center is often closed due to inadequate staffing. Lighting is inadequate in every part of the visitor center except the restroom. In 2008, park management began working with the Harpers Ferry Design Center in developing a design for completely renovating the auditorium, fabricating new exhibits, and installing new displays. In addition, the staff has been working with Eastern National to improve the scope of sales and merchandise exhibits.

Endicott Batteries

There are eight batteries and three fire control towers located within the park. All of the structures were built between 1891 and 1903, and each has a different design, although all are made of reinforced concrete. Most of the batteries and towers are closed due to numerous safety issues relating to their state of disrepair. In 2007, repairs to the Fire Control Tower near the visitor center were completed, but no public access is anticipated. Battery White near the waterfront has become a regular tourist attraction due to its proximity to the river and the dynamic vistas offered by its vantage point. Waysides are used to interpret some of the batteries and one tower.

Trails

The River Trail (1970), Swan Creek Trail (1980s), Pump Station Trail, and Hiker/Biker Loop collectively make up approximately five miles of trails within the park. Several sections of these trails are in need of

rehabilitation. The Waterside Trail has unclear directional markings and limited directional information. There are a few waysides on the River and Swan Creek Trails. The trails are currently not found on the Official Park Map & Guide.

The Potomac Heritage Trail On-Road Bicycling Route includes Fort Washington, Fort Foote and portions of Piscataway Park.

Fee Station

The fee station is staffed 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily and until 7:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays from April through October. Brochures and basic information are provided so that the fee station is essentially a contact station. Staffing the fee station takes precedence over staffing the visitor center and providing interpretive programs in an effort to give visitors a uniformed greeting and information as they enter the park. It is not unusual for the permanent staff to cover the fee station during the

Due to staffing limitations, the fee station often becomes the only staffed visitor contact station.



Visitor Use Assistants lunch breaks. This occurs primarily on week days limiting the number of interpretive programs that are offered during the The Point including the Fishing Area and Lighthouse

There are benches available along the water's edge; however, debris and driftwood that gets washed up on shore at the beach makes it difficult to use portions of this area until it gets removed by staff and volunteers. There are excellent birding and fishing opportunities along the shoreline. The lighthouse is fenced off and closed to the public except during special events such as the Maryland Lighthouse Challenge in mid-September. Once work is completed in early 2010 the fencing surrounding the lighthouse is expected to be removed.

Recreational Facilities

There are 120 acres of designated group and family picnicking areas, numerous fishing spots, a roller-blade area, and several large unmarked fields that can be used for baseball, volleyball, or other field sport. There is a playground in Picnic Area B and a basketball court at Picnic Area C. A new and larger playground is being constructed within Picnic Area B during the summer of 2009.

Picnic Areas

There are 10 different reserved picnic areas that include open picnic tables, grills, water fountains, and comfort stations for groups. Bulletin boards in each area contain minimal safety information, but no orientation or historic context except for



the park brochure and various flyers about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

A large playground is located within the Picnic Area.

*Post Exchange/Headquarters,
Bachelor NCO Quarters and
Parade Grounds*

Located just inside the park entrance visitors must pass these buildings and the parade ground to go to the picnic area or the fort. There are no signs and no markers indicating what the buildings or area is or the historical context for why they are there. The buildings have been mothballed for preservation purposes and are closed to the public.

Interpretive Media

All of the present media, with the exception of the orientation film, is static. There are numerous photographs depicting various stages of fort occupation by the military, but nothing that ties in the environmental impact perpetuated by their presence.

Existing Conditions

All of the present media was created over 30 years ago.

Audiovisual Presentation

The park presently offers an adequate but dated overview of the fort's history called the "Fort Washington Story". Video quality is fair to good. The visitor experience is hampered by the viewing area, which is comprised of a handful of benches grouped around a free-standing video monitor. Audio quality is poor and subject to interruption by ambient noises such as ringing telephones or conversations in the visitor center.

The orientation film is at least 25 years old if not older. It has been copied onto a digital video disk and visitors use a self-start system to begin the film. Usually the staff will inform the visitor of the film and either start it for them or let them know how to start it. The film is not audio described. In 2007 the Harpers Ferry Center began working on audio descriptors and enhancements to the film.

Publications

Fort Washington Self-guided Tour includes 18 stops along a somewhat circular route through the fort. It is available in the rack just inside the Main Gate. Much of the information is duplicated on the waysides within the fort.

The following site bulletins are available to the public to pick up in the visitor center. Most are not always out due to the number of slots in the display rack.

- WAAC Detachment Adjutant General's School
- Battery Decatur: Coast Defense of the Potomac
- Battery White
- Battery Emory
- Artillery District of the Potomac
- Battery James Many

The Fort Washington Story, an adequate, but outdated orientation film, is offered at the visitor center.



- Battery Smith
- Coast Defense of the Potomac
- Picnic at the Park-rack card
- Spring/Winter Activities Rack card
- Fort Foote
- Harmony Hall Walking Tour
- Muzzle Loading Artillery at Fort Washington
- Torpedo Defense
- Mammoth Guns

The Official Map and Guide is difficult to use as an on-site way finder because the brochure was not designed to be used this way. The map and guide does not include resource management information, topographic information, an area map, or a diagram of the fort.

A Junior Ranger booklet can be obtained at the visitor center. Visitors are encouraged to seek out the answers by reading the exhibits, watching the orientation film, and touring the fort. Answers can be found in the visitor center and in the fort. Booklets are available for two age groups: 6 to 8 years and 9 to 12 years.

The staff has produced an assortment of site bulletins of the other affiliated Fort Washington Park sites and National Capital-Parks East. There is limited recreational information available.

Signs

There are at least seven bulletin boards located in different areas around the park. Only two contain current information. Most have minimal safety information.

New entrance signs were placed at the location of the current main entrance off Fort Washington Road. There is limited National Park Service identity throughout the park and there are no trail head signs.

Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits depicting the operation and use of the Endicott Period Batteries are located near Battery Decatur and three other wayside exhibits depicting the logistics and variety of the coastal fortification armaments are located at the overlook to the historic fort. Most of the waysides related to the military history and may have been produced by Harpers Ferry Center more than 25 years ago. There are six waysides located along the River and Swann Creek Trails that describe the flora and fauna as well as man's interaction with the land and Potomac watershed. These were produced about 2002 by Jefferson Patterson Park.

A few wayside exhibit panels highlight individuals related to the military history of Fort Washington. The bases are weathered. Many are informational and descriptive rather than interpretive. The graphics are poor. There are no audio wayside exhibits within the park probably because there is little or no power accessible at the wayside locations. Some wayside panels are not well placed and some

panels seem to identify present resources, but not all. There is no comprehensive story told throughout the park.

Exhibits

The visitor center exhibits do an adequate job of explaining the history of Fort Washington and its role in the defense of the Nation's Capital from the War of 1812 to World War II. Graphic elements are dated, and the exhibit panels show signs of considerable wear. The exhibit's topographic relief model is also quite dated. Its position on a wall makes it difficult to connect the map to the site's surrounding landscape. The exhibits do not express the entire history of the park and are not accessible. The museum objects on display are not protected from UV or humidity fluctuations. The temporary exhibit has outlived its purpose. There is no historical description or

Exhibit graphic elements are outdated and the panels show signs of wear.



interpretive context for the Commandant's Quarters.

Various replica furnishings relating to the 1863 living conditions similar to those of an officer including a bed, desk, trunk, stove, and assorted accoutrements assembled by park staff are exhibited in one room on the first floor of the Officer's Quarters.

Historic Furnishings

No exhibits and no historic furnishings are listed on the Media Inventory Database System (MIDS) report. The items on display in the Guard Room and Officer's Quarters have been collected and donated over the years by staff and volunteers to make it look "used".

These objects represent various degrees of appropriateness. An approved Historic Furnishings Report (HFR) exists which would guide the refurnishing of additional spaces and the improvement of the existing furnished rooms. The research itself is thorough and should provide an accurate underpinning for furnishings or exhibits in the fort. The HFR is over 20 years old. It may need to be updated with additional research and lists of recommended furnishings if rooms are to be furnished in a manner other than outlined in the document.

An architecture and engineering firm is currently (as of FY2009) working on restoring the Officer's Quarters and the Enlisted Men's Barracks to the 19th century Civil War time period.

Interpretive Media Assets

Media assets include other park resources available to interpretation that support the design of personal services programs or interpretive media.

Artifact Collection

There are 12,000 19th and early 20th century artifacts in the Fort Washington collection. Most items relate to the soldiers in the garrison as well as a few from the civilian occupation of the site during the Civilian Conservation Corps. Camp NP-4 was operated at Fort Washington from December 1940 through December 1941.

Archives

In early 2008, National Capital Parks–East Curator Mike Antonioni and Park Ranger Barbara Wadding developed an exhibit for the auditorium on historic artifacts found in the attics of the North Powder Magazine and the Officer’s Quarters.

Art Work

No artwork relating to the history of Fort Washington is known to exist in any of the NPS facilities.

Park Library

Several hundred books, manuals, and manuscripts are housed on the shelves in the visitor center library. Most are contemporary volumes relating to the interpretation of garrison life and nature. In addition, there are a couple hundred historic photographs depicting early garrison life as well as

repairs to the fort during the late 1940s and 1950s.

Cultural Landscape

A Cultural Landscape Inventory was completed in 2006. This document detailed the past and present use of 175 buildings and structures within the 341-acre Fort Washington Park.

Personal Services

Education

The “Bridging the Watershed” program that the Alice Ferguson Foundation does is the only curriculum-based education program offered. The curriculum is for grades 9 to 12 and includes four different programs: “Watershed Watchdogs”, “Talkin’ Trash”, “Alien Invaders”, “Don’t Get Sedimental”.

Tours of the fort are available to all grades upon request.

The “Welcome to Ft. Washington Teacher’s Guide” was created by a previous employee and includes a tour of the fort. It is no longer distributed. A NACE teacher’s guide that includes Fort Washington Park is now being distributed instead.

Special Events and Programs

Concerts on the Parade Grounds (Theme 2) inside the historic fort are held on Independence Day and Easter Sunday.

Throughout the year the park presents special events including an Independence Day fireworks

observance (Theme 2); the Maryland Lighthouse Challenge (Themes 1 and 2); costumed lantern tours of the fort (Themes 1 and 4); Company D 1861 Civil War encampments (Theme 1—Civil War and Theme 4); and the Universal Soldier living history program. The Universal Soldier program was cancelled two years ago because the National Capital Historic Weapons Program changed the interpretive year of historic weapons. It placed limitations on non-black powder firing weapons. This mandate was a result of post 9/11 District of Columbia stricter gun control laws. The park has also offered a Women's History Month laundress talk (Theme 4); and a Guard Duty tour (Themes 1 and 4).

Events that are focused on protecting and preserving the natural resources (Theme 3) within the park include Public Lands Day, Park Day, Potomac Watershed Cleanup, and Park Clean-ups that are also service projects.

Personal Services

These programs are primarily presented by volunteers and coordinated by permanent park staff:

- Costumed tours at the Fort are conducted on the first Sunday of the month during the winter. (Theme 1—Mexican War/Civil War and Theme 4)
- Historic weapons demonstrations and living history events are presented on the first Sunday of the month for seven months. (Theme 1—Civil War and Theme 4)

- Informal talks and tours are provided by permanent staff and volunteers on request. Topics cover all themes and are dependent on the needs of the visitors.

Staffing

The park has dedicated groups of volunteers who present the monthly demonstrations and living history programs. Two permanent staff members are trained and certified as Historic Weapons Safety Officers and are qualified to put on uniforms and present firing demonstrations, if there are not enough volunteers. The safety of staff due to schedule shortages, i.e. not enough staff to cover during critical program and events, must be addressed.

Partnerships

The Chesapeake Chapter of the US Lighthouse Society helps with the repair work on the lighthouse. The Society has not returned since 2007 due to a need for a more intense renovation of the structure which has been pending since August 2007.

The Accokeek Foundation works in cooperation with the National Park Service to preserve the natural and cultural resources of Piscataway Park by fostering the NPS mission through programs and events for thousands of visitors annually. The Foundation protects a portion of the view shed from Mount Vernon while providing public access to the park's significant resources. Additionally, the Foundation provides education to the public about life and agriculture throughout

the long history of the National Colonial Farm. The Foundation provides visitors with an understanding of the unique combinations of Native Americans, European Americans, and African Americans to the cultural history of the site. The Foundation's Colonial Farm provides visitors with a historically accurate understanding of typical family life in 1775; thereby complementing the history available at Mount Vernon. The Foundation's Ecosystem Farm offers prospective and local farmers training in effective sustainable farming practices and serves as an example of state-of-the-art farmland preservation and conservation practices.

The Alice Ferguson Foundation (AFF) works in cooperation with the National Park Service in providing natural and cultural educational opportunities for youths and educators in the metropolitan area. Utilizing the facilities of the Hard Bargain Farm—a fully

functional 20th century farm with cattle, sheep, goats and other livestock—this organization has contributed greatly to NPS efforts to increase worldwide understanding of the human impacts on the ecosystem through hands on interpretive programs that use livestock, tidal exploration, and conservation exploration to enhance environmental sensitivity among educators and students.

Each year, AFF increases participation in the Bridging the Watershed environmental education program. This program encourages participants to participate in hands on activities that give them a stronger understanding of how they can contribute to the protection of the environment. In addition, AFF host the annual Potomac River Clean-up which provides thousands of volunteers to assist with removing hundreds of tons of debris from the Potomac River and its tributaries

Historic weapons demonstrations are presented monthly April through October.



while learning about environmental protection. The AFF has also begun to provide educational programs on thinking Green for construction and conservation.

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail - This NPS program works with communities as well as local, state, and federal organizations along the Potomac River Basin in developing common themes relating to the cultural diversity and historical diasporas that can be interconnected via travel along this trail which includes hiking, biking, and canoeing along the Potomac River.

Eastern National

The Eastern National sales area is located in one room of the visitor center. Average annual sales are approximately \$9,000. Percentage donations have been used to print the self-guided tour brochure.

Volunteers contribute many hours to help maintain and clean-up Fort Washington.

Volunteer Program

Since 1969, an active Volunteer in Parks group has conducted weekend 19th century military demonstrations for visitors. The park supplies the equipment, uniforms, and extensive safety training for this activity, which includes firing demonstrations of small arms and artillery.

A Park Watch includes approximately 20 regular walkers who act as a neighborhood watch group for the park.

In fiscal year 2008, base funding for the Fort Washington Volunteer in Parks program was \$6,000. During that fiscal year, volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours towards interpretive programs, clean-up projects, maintenance, research, photography, Park Watch, and other park support activities.



Recommendations



Interpretive planning analyzes all needs and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, facilities, programs, and opportunities for partnerships to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the park's purpose, significance, and values.

The following is a description of programs and media proposals designed to realize the visions, objectives, themes, and visitor experiences previously described Fort Washington Park. The discussion of each program or media proposal identifies its purpose, special considerations, and sometimes the suggested themes or methods of presentation. However, the methods of presentation are merely suggestions and should not limit creatively in the development of personal services or media design. These recommendations contain both long-term and short-term strategies which may be

very helpful when preparing the Annual Implementation Plan and related funding requests.

The following principles will apply to all interpretation at Fort Washington Park:

All interpretation will address physical and programmatic accessibility.

- Where possible, interpretation will use objects and documented personal examples to bring the story alive for visitors.
- Where possible, the park will partner with neighboring institutions and tribal consultants to develop programs, media, share research, etc.
- The park will implement recommendations coming from the National Park Service Identity Project and

Batteries overlook the Potomac River. Photo credit: TrailVoice, flickr.com. Licensed under Creative Commons.

universal design concepts as signs and interpretive media are upgraded.

- Interpretation will include examples and perspectives from diverse points of view.
- Where possible, “virtual visitors” will have opportunities to view key park vistas and access to new research, studies, management plans, and historical information.

Timeline

Currently the park interprets the time period of 1808 to 1946. During the confirmation workshop held in September 2008, a determination was made by the planning team, and National Capital Parks-East Superintendent Hazelwood approved, for the timeline to be redefined to include American Indian settlement through current time. This will allow for interpretation to include indigenous peoples, early European settlement, George Washington, and events of September 11, 2001.

Information and Orientation

Information about Fort Washington Park will continue to be made available by telephone, mail, and the Internet.

Community Relations

Informing the Fort Washington area communities about park activities and events is an opportunity to create goodwill with local residents and build the park’s identity as a unit of the National Park System. This can

be inexpensively done through the local newspapers or community calendars. Other options include:

- Provide the local papers with a weekly or monthly calendar of events.
- Publish events on local civic calendars through local cable television networks.
- Provide the newspaper with a regular column, possibly monthly, about topics of interest to the community. Begin this well before a significant issue or change occurs to establish rapport and credibility with residents.
- The cooperating association can place ads at non-profit rates for special public events or programs.
- Post notices on local bulletin boards such as the post office, library, and grocery store.
- Participate in local civic organizations and develop relationships with the city, county, and state. Identify the role of the Fort Washington Park in the community.
- Use banners to promote park events in town.

Website

An ever-increasing percentage of park visitors are web users who visit Fort Washington Park’s website (www.nps.gov/fowa) seeking information. Many of these “virtual visitors” never actually come to the park, but have their needs met solely through the website.

The website should highlight the opportunities and experiences that are available to both on-site visitors and virtual visitors.

In addition to the still photos in the *Photos & Multimedia* section, add graphics and visually enhance the information presented.

Update the *Suggested Reading* section to include a new reading list and a link to the Eastern National website so that visitors can purchase park specific reading materials.

Identity and Orientation Signs

Before visitors can have a meaningful park experience, they need to find their way to the park, determine where the experience begins and take care of their basic necessities. These visitor experience issues such as agency identity and orientation must be addressed before interpretation can begin. Effective highway and road

guide signs as well as pedestrian orientation and information are the first steps toward satisfying basic visitor needs.

Identity and orientation signs will address several visitor experience goals. Assuring that the NPS arrow-head logo is on appropriate park signs will help visitors understand that Fort Washington Park is a unit of the National Park System. Road guide signs will allow visitors to easily find and access the park entrance, picnic areas, historic fort, and enjoy a full range of activities. Signs within the park will help visitors safely enjoy their visit by learning about and following safety guidelines and park rules.

Initiate a Sign Master Plan request through Harpers Ferry Center and secure funding to implement the plan. Developing a Sign Master Plan that meets accessibility and NPS graphic identity standards identifies the park



Improving park signs will help visitors safely enjoy their visit.

The visitor center located within the Commandant's House should be the focus of interpretation.



as a unit of the National Park System and provides orientation for all visitors, whether they enter in a vehicle, on a bicycle, or on foot.

On-Site Facilities

Visitor Center/ Commandant's House

The visitor center located within the Commandant's House should be the focus of interpretation. The first floor will continue to be the visitor access area and the second floor will be offices. The visitor use space must be able to accommodate all visitors and address Architectural Barriers Act and Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) requirements using universal design principles.

The PMIS project #110503 will assess the condition of the Commandant's House including an analysis of the exterior paint to determine color accuracy and a structural analysis of the entire building.

Officer's Quarters and Enlisted Men's Barracks

Three PMIS projects #21174, #108810 and #150643 are being used to restore and repair the ca. 1824 Officer's Quarters and the Enlisted Men's Barracks. The lower level of the Officer's Quarters will become a visitor contact station within the Fort as well as an exhibit area. Group activities, including orientation, audio visual presentations, educational programs, and exhibits of artifacts and furnishings, are planned for the

lower level of the Enlisted Men's Barracks. The second floor of the Enlisted Men's Barracks will be used as a volunteer staging facility for living history programs. During the September 2008 Confirmation Workshop it was still not known if the Barracks can be used because there are no restrooms in the building.

To support the restoration project, research will need to be done to identify additional historical images to augment current data. During the course of the restoration project photos will be taken and documents retained that will help staff develop and present a restoration program.

Endicott Batteries, Fire Command Control and Fire Tower

This plan recommends that the park continue to only provide opportunities for visitors to have access to the exteriors of the structures. No interior access will be provided and no exhibits will be fabricated or installed. Wayside exhibits will be redesigned to meet NPS Identity Program requirements and to include more historical and visitor safety information.

The Point including the fishing area and Lighthouse

Signs stating fishing license requirements would help eliminate potential fines. In 2008, engineers and historic preservationists from National Capital Region and the Historic Preservation Training Center began



By 2010 the stabilization of Light 80 should be completed.

designing repairs for the 1901 lighthouse with expectations of completing the stabilization by early 2010. Once completed the park expects to remove the fence and reestablish the picnic area near the lighthouse.

Trails

Create an exercise station trail with interpretive components adjacent to parking lot #1. Change traffic patterns to make exiting the park easier and safer by removing the triangle and changing the signs to better control the flow of traffic from the parking lot to the park entrance via Washington Drive.

A trail plan and trail map needed to be created so that visitors have a better understanding of where they can go, where they are, and what they might see.

Recreation

Create “healthy park” guides and recreational events in cooperation with nationally recognized organizations such as the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, Alzheimer’s Association and others. The interpretive element of these events and guides could focus on the physical training of the soldiers stationed at Fort Washington. Staging events in the park provides opportunities for visitors to use the open green spaces and trails.

Establish and implement a “Rise Through the Ranks” exercise program to encourage visitors to explore more areas of the park and make a stronger

connection to the historical resource. A strictly voluntary program, the visitor keeps track of the miles of trails that s/he has covered on a printed chart. A tiered system is established so that once a visitor completes a certain number of miles s/he rises through the ranks and receives a token of recognition for the accomplishment. The rankings correspond to the ranks found within the different troops that were stationed at the fort. This program is designed to bring the visitors into the visitor center, engage with staff, become familiar with the different troops and their rankings, and determine with which time period those troops might be associated (Theme 1).

Interpretive Media

Audiovisual Media

Audiovisual media are well suited to the presentation of chronological and sequential material. They can capture realism, provide emotional impact, and create a mood or atmosphere. Also they can reach many visitors at one time and be posted onto the website. Audiovisual elements may be included in exhibits, posted onto the park website, in addition to being shown in dedicated auditorium spaces.

To upgrade the audiovisual media at Fort Washington, the staff should take the following actions:

- Create 3-D digital image of Fort Washington for use in multiple media.

- Write and produce a Fort Washington Park orientation video. (PMIS #66243).

Portable Audiovisual Opportunities

The park's staff should discuss, research, and determine the best method to offer "individualized" audio and/or audiovisual opportunities utilizing the most current technologies. Portable audio programming can provide opportunities to connect to resource meanings while walking, running, or riding along the roads and the trails.

Because of its compact size, Fort Washington Park would benefit from a well-produced audio tour. An audio tour could provide practical/logistical information, dramatic reenactments, oral history interviews, in-depth site-specific interpretation, music, and more. Similar tours have proven very popular elsewhere in the National Park System, most notably at Alcatraz Island. Ideally, the audio tour should be produced in conjunction with new wayside exhibits and other proposed media elements in order to assure seamless integration between the various types of media and compelling stories of the fort.

Full Accessibility for all Audiovisual Programs

In response to former National Park Service Director Mary Bomar's memo of October 20, 2006 on the "Audiovisual Accessibility Initiative for Visitors with Disabilities," the interpretive staff has initiated steps to assure that the park's current and future audiovisual programs and auditorium are meeting accessibility

requirements. For more information, see the website for Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media at www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/index.htm#. Funding for these upgrades, if approved, will include the following improvements:

- Create captioning and audio description for park video (PMIS #63569).

Exhibits

Plan, design, and fabricate new exhibits for the visitor center (PMIS #66244) that create one visitor flow pattern, one cohesive message, and a unified visitor experience that provides a seamless exhibit experience. The exhibit plan must address current themes, remove ineffective messages, and upgrade the exhibits to meet NPS accessibility and exhibit standards.

Historic Furnishings

Research, update, and expand the 1984 Historic Furnishings Plan (PMIS #43240) to include a broader period of interpretation per the newly approved timeline. Acquire and install the historic furnishings (PMIS #63516) necessary to implement the plan.

Park staff will need to answer the following questions within the plan to determine how best to use historic furnishings. Should the areas be fully furnished or accessible reproductions? How to address an environment that cannot support historic fabric or original artifacts? Should areas that are not accessible be used? All structural issues in the

barracks/fort must be addressed before proceeding with the plan.

Commanding Officer's Quarters

One room could be restored for interpretation of the life of the post Commander, using appropriate original and reproduction furnishings. Furnishings in this structure will be fairly formal and of good quality, which will provide an interesting lifestyle comparison with furnishings in the Officers' Quarters and Enlisted Men's Barracks. The Historic Furnishings Plan (HFP) does not contain a plan for furnishing this building, however, so additional research would be required beforehand, which would become an addendum to the HFP.



The guard room is a good introductory space for visitors entering the fort, and it could serve a useful orientation function.

Guard Room

This room is currently accessible to visitors, with no barriers. In order for it to remain this way, all objects in the room will have to be reproductions, and of such size as not to be easily carried off. Additional items could be provided for times when the room might be staffed, and these are all listed in the HFP. Interpretive reader rails could be used to “fill in”

the space and explain its use when it is not staffed. The guard room is a good introductory space for visitors entering the fort, and it could serve a useful orientation function.

Guard House and Cells

Although not currently accessible to visitors, these rooms would have been minimally furnished and the HFP contains a list of appropriate objects.

Adjutant's and Commandant's Offices

These are second-floor spaces, over the guard house and guard room, and as such would not be accessible to all visitors. These rooms would have been fairly substantially outfitted, with all of the necessary office objects needed to conduct fort business, and would have to be well-secured if furnished. Any future refurnishing would probably involve either full-height barriers or allowing visitors to view the rooms through the windows. Interpretation of the Post Commander's duties could also be handled in his quarters, however, rather than in this room.

Officers' Quarters

Beginning in January 2009 the interior of this building will be completely rehabilitated and an updated Historic Furnishing Plan will be used by the park in reestablishing appropriate exhibits and displays to depict eras of use from 1824 through 1946.

Because of its size and history of use through various periods, this building has the potential to fulfill various interpretive needs. Its generally good state of preservation should allow it to be at least partially refurnished according to the HFP. Since it has

multiple rooms, however, it can also be used for other interpretive purposes such as exhibits or other media. Comparing it with the Enlisted Men's Barracks would allow the contrast between enlisted and officer life to be shown graphically. Furnishing several rooms to different periods would allow further discussion of officer and fort life over the years. The current interior configuration contains alterations that reflect several periods, and these dates must be confirmed through analysis of the existing building fabric. Alternately, a representative officer's room of a given period could be furnished on the first floor along with the officers' mess. Decisions involving any interpretation of the second-floor rooms or the basement kitchen will involve issues of accessibility. Architectural investigation and paint analysis will be necessary to provide an accurate setting for any refurnishing.

Enlisted Men's Barracks

This building has the potential to provide a variety of interpretive opportunities, using media ranging from furnishings to exhibits, audio-visuals, and interactive spaces, either separately or combined. The life of the enlisted soldier of one period, or over time, could be interpreted through an immersive experience that allows visitors to interact with reproduction furnishings, supplemented by other interpretive media that help set the scene, either through lighting, ambient sound, or through more formal media such as exhibits, text panels, or audio-visuals. The various uses of the first floor rooms over time, including kitchen/mess room, hospital, and sleeping quarters, provide the potential for additional

interpretive experiences. As with the Officers' Quarters, decisions regarding the use of second-floor spaces will involve issues of accessibility. One possible approach that was discussed was furnishing one first-floor room as a squad room, part of which would be fully furnished and protected by



a barrier. This would merge into an area that was somewhat less furnished (small items removed), but would be totally accessible to visitors. The same approach could also work with a mess room or hospital room.

Receptions, celebrations, meetings and other social events could be held in the Enlisted Men's Barracks. Special use permits could be written for Civil War weddings, military functions and other appropriate uses that reflect the interpretive themes of Fort Washington.

Publications

Visitors typically use publications in two ways for information and orientation during their visit, and for

Once restored, the Officer's Quarters will contain exhibits and displays depicting use from 1824 through 1946.

Recommendations

in-depth interpretation following their visit. The park's primary free publication is the NPS unigrid brochure; however, the brochure is not designed to be used on-site



The plan should ensure that the wayside exhibits do not impact the scenic viewshed since that is one of the primary reasons visitors come to Fort Washington.

and does not encourage visitors to consider both historic and recreational opportunities when planning their visit. To help upgrade the park brochure and the other free publications, the interpretive staff should take the following actions:

- Revise and update the park unigrid brochure
 - Add shaded relief (topography)
 - Add an area map with inset of picnic areas
 - Add affiliated sites (Piscataway Park, Harmony Hall, and Fort Foote) and trails
 - Include all pertinent safety, resource protection language, rules, recreational and regulations

- Update the self-guided walking tour of Fort Washington
- Create and print a park handbook
- Create a site bulletin for park trails so that visitors have a better understanding of where they can go and what they might see. This publication could also be posted on the park bulletin boards and website.
- Add publications from other NACE and other local NPS sites, partners and areas of local interest

Signs

Develop a park sign plan to analyze the sign needs of the entire park and recommend solutions that will bring the park into compliance with the new NPS Sign Management Program. Installation of comprehensive park signs will bolster the identity of the park as part of the National Park System, effectively guide visitors to the park from Indian Head Highway and adjacent neighborhoods, and improve the on-site visitor experience with way finding and site identification signs.

Create poster size maps at National Capital Region's interpretation office to place on bulletin boards.

Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits tell the park story on location. They "caption the landscape" and help visitors make direct connections with resources and their meanings. Wayside exhibits provide round-the-clock information and interpretation, and with appealing high quality design, writing, and graphics,

they can serve to instill and reinforce respect for important resources.

In association with good graphics, waysides can show what a site looked like at different points in time. In addition, temporary waysides can be developed and inexpensively to interpret construction and restoration/preservation projects.

A park-wide wayside exhibit proposal is recommended to ensure the development of a complete and unified system of waysides with an NPS identity. The proposal will provide an in-depth assessment of all potential wayside exhibit sites. It includes informational and interpretive exhibits. The document also can set priorities to guide wayside development in phases as funding allows.

The proposal will describe the purpose of each wayside exhibit, identify graphics available for use, show thumbnail design concept drawings, and determine exact exhibit sizes, base styles, and locations. A detailed budget estimate also would be part of the document.

The wayside exhibit plan should include introductory panels to the historic fort and Endicott batteries as well as an overview panel near Commandant's House that describes the layered history of the fort. The exhibit panels should use historic, new, or current photos and graphics. The plan should ensure that the wayside exhibits do not impact the scenic viewshed since that is one of the primary reasons visitors come to Fort Washington.

Interpretive Media Assets

The park would like to hire a Museum Tech to work with the NACE Curator. One project will include assembling appropriate period furnishings to outfit the exhibit spaces in the Officer's Quarters, Enlisted Men's Barracks, Guard Room, Guard House, Adjutant's Office and Commandant's Office in the fort.

Artifact Collection

Conserve Historical Photographs and Documents (PMIS #117559) using historical photos and documents currently stored in our museum facility.

Participate in the HFC digital imaging project to create digital images of park collection.

Park Library

Get content of park histories and files organized in order to increase the use of these materials in current and future presentations, exhibits, and other media. Improve research network coordination with universities, historians and other agencies. Install a high speed internet connection throughout the visitor center including a computer station in the library. The connection will improve access to online research tools and the park interpretive database as well as provide opportunities to digitize the historic files and photographs.

Personal Services

Education

An effective park education program requires adequate staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. The resources and themes of Fort Washington Park offer great potential for the development of dynamic and popular education programs in partnership with local area schools.

Future growth of the park education program is primarily contingent upon the support of the National Capital Parks–East and National Capital Region’s Education Specialists. This would allow the park to:

- Work with Bridging the Watershed program coordinators to increase opportunities for FOWA involvement (Theme 3).
- Develop a site specific “Bridging the Watershed” program (Theme 3).
- Develop, implement, and evaluate a local school social studies curriculum-based program (Theme 1 and 4).
- Establish a Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program to increase interpretive opportunities on-site and in the classroom.
- Create online curriculum opportunities parallel with the local, Teacher-Ranger-Teacher and Teaching with Historic Places programs.
- Create traveling trunks.

With a strong program and ties directly to local, state, and national curriculum standards, more schools will see the value of using the park to help meet their needs. This can be accomplished by involving educators from local area schools directly in the development of both general and specific activities and guides.

Interpretive Programs

Park rangers at Fort Washington Park would like to improve interpretation and tell current stories more effectively. Dependence on volunteers to provide the majority of the personal interpretive services, however, limits the number and type of programs that can be offered.

Interpreters are the best interactive tool in enabling visitors to experience, understand, appreciate and make personal connections with the resource. The park will continue to provide costumed interpretation and artillery demonstrations within the fort. However, special emphasis should continue in the direction of offering guided tours from outside the visitor center to the fort; presenting an Endicott Battery talk/tour (Theme 1-1890s and Theme 4); and presenting a talk or tour about the invasion and burning of Washington, D.C. (Theme 1-1814 and Theme 4). Providing loaner muskets and military hats for children to use during living history programs may help younger audiences make connections to the park stories being told. With the completion of the repairs to the Officers Quarters and the Enlisted Men’s Barracks, the park will present indoor living history activities about the Civil War, WWI,



Park Manager Bill Clark presents an interpretive program to local school children.

and WWII garrison life (Themes 1 and 4).

Park staff will contact local groups like the National Audubon Society and Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin about providing natural history programs (Themes 2 and 3) and network with local photography and genealogy organizations to attract more local visitors.

Since personal services interpretive programs are relatively easy to change, the activities should be evaluated on a regular basis to discontinue those that are not effective, modify, and improve those that require it, and validate those that are successful.

Special Events

All special events must relate to the purpose, significance, and themes and provide interpretive opportunities. Adding an interpretive talk to any of the parkwide clean up events will help to strengthen connections to “Theme 3: The nation is now charged with

defending Fort Washington Park from environmental impacts,” and emphasize the importance of the volunteers’ efforts.

Partnerships

Interpretive partnerships play a key role in the delivery of essential programs and can also provide opportunities for enhanced interpretive products and services.

Cooperating Association

Fort Washington Park and NACE staff will work with the Eastern National Regional Manager and NPS Regional Cooperating Association Coordinator to review and update the scope of sales so that the park themes will be represented through a diversity of sales items and price points. The sales items should also reflect the diversity of the park visitors by portraying the African American and American Indian experience as well as offering Spanish language translations.



Volunteer dressed as a War of 1812 infantryman.

Thematic sales items could include reproduction items and postcards made from historical photographs. To help younger visitors make connections to the military history, training muskets and shako hats could be sold. A park handbook would provide an orientation and historical context for all Fort Washington visitors. Safety items such as insect repellent, water, and hiker safety guides would be helpful to all park visitors.

Park staff will work to improve how visitors are being told where the bookstore is located and to encourage visitors to stop in. To facilitate increased visitation within the bookstore a new cash wrap should be added to the Eastern National agency improvement list.

Volunteer Program

The Volunteers in Parks program could be enhanced with more dedicated NPS supervision and an increase in VIP funding. Greater outreach to those volunteers

interested in the broad span of military history could produce benefits in research and the availability of costumed interpretation. An effort to enhance and expand the participation of local volunteers would be beneficial as well. A military theme could be used to establish a “recruiting” system for volunteers.

Research and Evaluation Needs

Fort Washington Park has never had a Visitor Use Study conducted and the park really needs to learn about its visitors and visitation trends. Who visits? What are their motivations, expectations, and satisfaction levels? Why do certain audiences not have an interest or knowledge of the fort and its historic significance? What are the interests and expectations of repeat visitors and recreational visitors? How do the answers to these questions vary from season to season? What bilingual interpretive services and media are needed within the park?

Research also is important in the development of specific media and programs and will be planned as part of all substantial media projects and special programming. The park is planning many different types of media projects during the life of this plan that will each demand its own research and evaluation. Front-end evaluations would query potential visitors before products and activities are developed. This type of research is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results. Formative evaluations would be conducted during conceptual design and would test inexpensive mock-ups of interpretive media and programs



Visitors will only have limited access to the gun batteries at Fort Washington.

before fully investing in final products. Summative evaluations are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facilities, and programs—i.e. whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people are actually make use of the information of if visitor behavior is affected.

The recommended media projects and interpretive programs will also benefit from the following research projects:

- Capture oral history in digital format (audio/video)
- Inventory buildings
- Conduct an Historic Resource Study —History of Fort Washington
- Conduct an Historic Landscape Study of the Fort
- Conduct an Accessibility Study of the Fort

Staffing and Training Needs

In order to fulfill the vision of this plan, additional funding will be required. Increased funds will enable the park to hire additional interpretive staff. Staff needed include one more visitor use assistant and one museum technician. These additional positions will allow the Park Manager to focus on management responsibilities and the two GS-025-9 Park Rangers and the Park Guide to provide more in depth interpretive services rather than just coordinating volunteer programs. Operations Formulation System (OFS) and Project Management Information System (PMIS) funding requests will need to be submitted to acquire these additional positions.

The interpretive staff would benefit greatly from training programs that focused on improving research, graphic production, photography, web development, oral history techniques, audio visual equipment use and other ranger skills such as resource management, compliance, earth sciences and special event coordination.

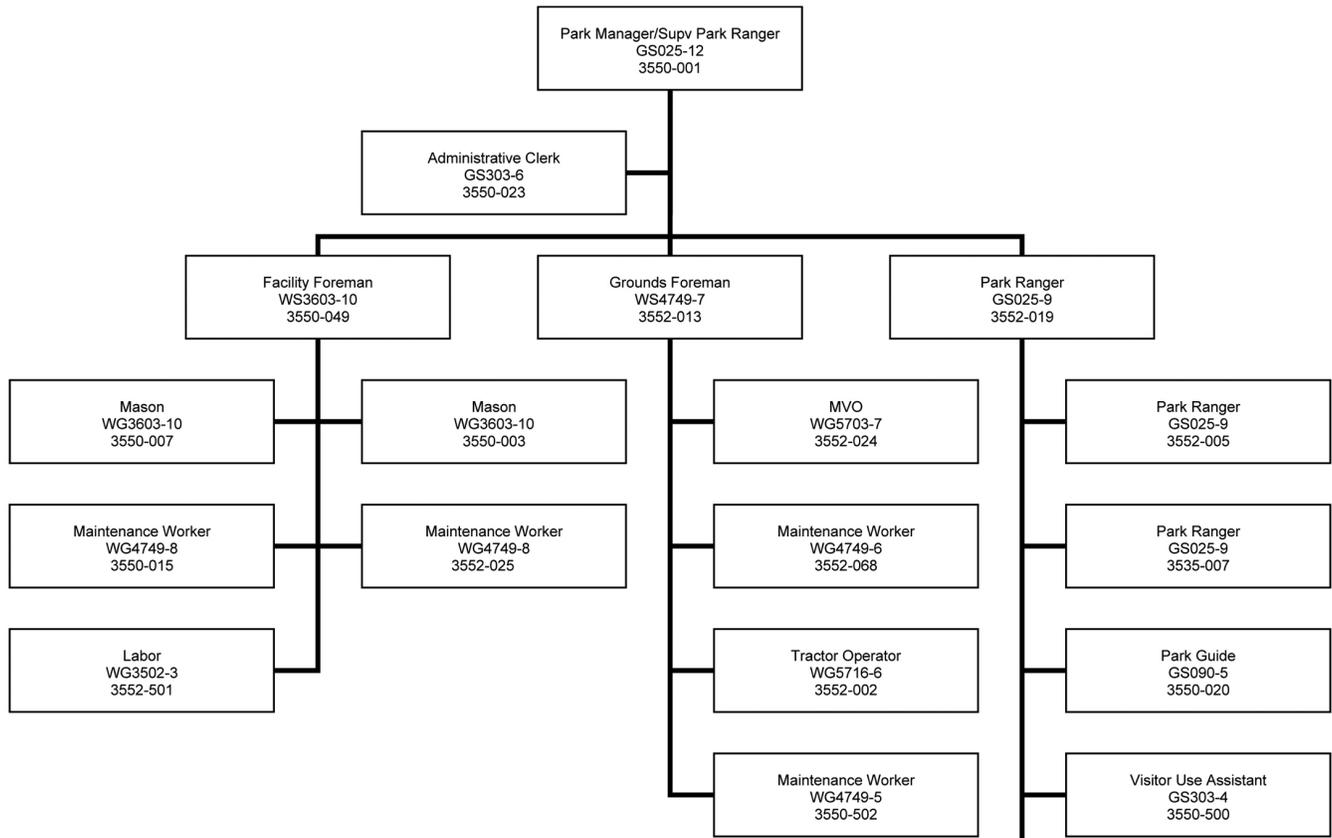
Recommendations

The following table shows the current and projected staffing plan required for full implementation of the recommendations in this Long-Range Interpretive Plan. Information in the table is further supported by the park's core organization chart on the next page. Park management should develop an Operations Formulation System (OFS) request to fund unfunded positions, programs and operational improvements needed to fully implement the recommendations of this plan.

Current and Projected Staffing Plan Required for LRIP Implementation

Title	Grade	Type	Funded	FTE	Unfunded
Park Manager	12	PFT	ONPS	1.0	
Park Ranger	9	PFT	ONPS	1.0	
Park Ranger	9	PFT	ONPS	1.0	
Park Guide	5	PFT	ONPS	1.0	
Visitor Use Assistant	4	Seasonal-1040	Cost of Collection	0.5	
Visitor Use Assistant	4	Seasonal-1040	Cost of Collection	0.5	
Visitor Use Assistant	4	Seasonal-1040			0.5
Museum Technician	4	PFT	ONPS		Change with attrition of Park Ranger

2009 Fort Washington Park Organization Chart



Implementation Priorities

Primary

- Develop and implement exhibit plan
- Increase involvement with the Bridging the Watershed education program
- Establish and offer interpretive programs
- Create a catalog of program outlines
- Develop and implement a wayside exhibit plan
- Develop and implement an historic furnishings plan
- Identify and implement marketing strategies for park and programs
- Increase civic engagement opportunities and contact the local communities about programs
- Improve the website
- Provide “virtual” tours and talks on and off-site including using DVDs and photo albums
- Produce new park video
- Revise the park brochure
- Create interpretive messages for and install exercise stations

Secondary

- Evaluate walking tour and site bulletins; revise, update, and print if needed

- Create and print new site bulletins
- Create 3-D digital image of Fort Washington for use in multiple media
- Develop a sign plan
- Capture digital images in park collection (HFC digital imaging project)
- Develop audio tour
- Enlarge and post maps for bulletin boards
- Create a downloadable recreational/ educational park guide

Implementation Plan

2009

- Begin community relations program including marketing and civic engagement
- Begin planning for the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812
- Create a catalog of interpretive programs
- Develop and implement an exhibit plan (PMIS project #66244)
- Increase involvement with the Bridging the Watershed education program
- Create and produce a “virtual” tour or talk as part of improving the park website

2010

- Finish the work on the fort
- Update the Historic Furnishings Report (PMIS Project #43240)
- Further improve the park website to provide additional trip planning tools

2011

- Fabricate and install exhibits
- Begin planning for the NPS Centennial
- Plan and commemorate the 10th anniversary of 9/11
- Plan and commemorate the Civil War Sesquicentennial
- Develop a wayside exhibit plan

2012

- Begin planning and production of new park video (PMIS 66243)
- Fabricate and install wayside exhibits
- Initiate Teacher Ranger Teacher program along with the develop-

ment of local school curriculum-based program including NACE and NCR education specialists

2013

- Revise and print park brochure
- Complete video and begin showing it on a daily basis.

- Implement curriculum-based programs developed in previous year

2014

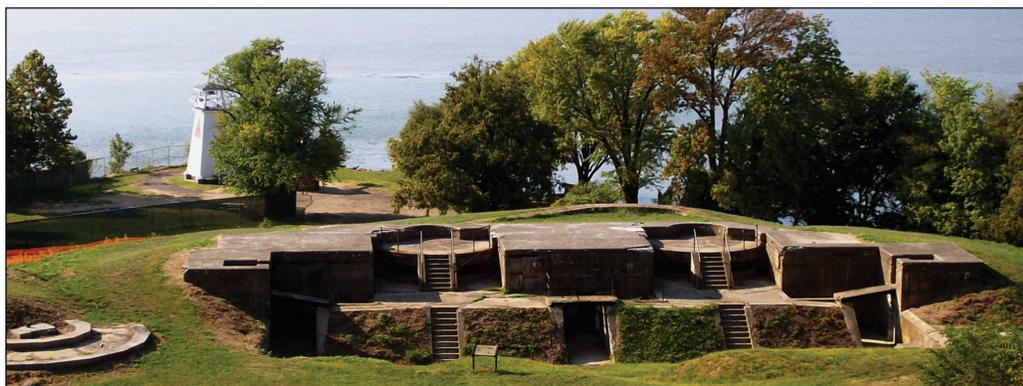
- Commemorate the War of 1812 Bicentennial
- Create interpretive components for the exercise stations
- Evaluate curriculum-based programs developed in previous year

2015

- Install exercise stations with interpretive text

2016

- Celebrate the NPS Centennial



Battery White, built just below the old Fort and completed in 1904, is one example of how Fort Washington evolved to meet the changing defensive needs of the nation.

Appendix A: The Planning Team

National Park Service

Fort Washington Park

Bill Clark, Park Manager
Barbara Wadding, Park Ranger
Lynwood Jefferson, Park Ranger
Bambi Sears, Park Guide
Daryl Johnson, Grounds Supervisor
Harley Ricketts, Facilities Supervisor
Frank Pasquinelli, Volunteer

National Capital Parks–East

Gayle Hazelwood, Superintendent
Alex Romero, Deputy Superintendent
Kirsten Talken-Spaulding, Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services
Lori M. James, Education Specialist
Frank Faragasso, Historian
Mike Antonioni, Museum Curator

Harpers Ferry Center

Toni Dufficy, Interpretive Planner (Team Captain)
Katherine Brock, Interpretive Planner (transferred)
David T. Gilbert, Web Manager (transferred)
Jane Hanna, Writer/Editor
Andy Chamberlain, Staff Curator

National Capital Region

Sue Hansen, Chief of Interpretation and Education

Park Partners

Eastern National

Ann Harris, Regional Manager

Alice Ferguson Foundation

Karen J. Miles, Program Director

Accokeek Foundation

Matt Mulder, Director of Resource Stewardship

Piscataway Indian Nation

Billy Tayac, Chief
Mark Tayac

Piscataway Hills Citizen Association

Mark Holt, President

Coast Defense Study Group

Bolling Smith

Local Citizen

Delores Mosby

Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines

Every attempt will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to national parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

“... To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the qualities of the park experience for everyone.”

NPS SPECIAL DIRECTIVE 83-3, ACCESSIBILITY FOR DISABLED PERSONS

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media.



Seeing the sunset over the Potomac River is a good reason to come to Fort Washington Park.

Harpers Ferry Center
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Fort Washington Park
www.nps.gov/fowa



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Fort Washington has been restored to a c. 1824 appearance.