



# The Guardian

State of the Park Report 2005

## Fort McHenry Staff Marches Forward in 2005!

Fort McHenry had an outstanding year of events and accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2005. Planning is moving ahead for a new Education/Administration Facility. The Cultural Landscape Report, Alternative Transportation Study, and Development Concept

### Planning is moving ahead for a new Education/Administration Facility.

Plan/Environmental Assessment were finalized and released to the public. This year \$1,717,200 was received for the park base operating funding. Additional funding from donations, project funds and fee demonstration totaled \$301,745. Highlights of the year include one of the best Star-Spangled Banner Weekend/Defenders' Day commemorations in recent memory, attended by an estimated 12,000 visitors on September 9-11, 2005.

### Change of Command

Superintendent John McKenna left Fort McHenry in December 2004 to return to Gettysburg National Military Park as the Deputy Superintendent. For the first half of 2005, Chief of Area Services, Greg McGuire served as the Acting Superintendent of Fort McHenry and Hampton National Historic Site. Greg did an exceptional job and kept both parks running well.

Gay Vietzke joined FOMC/HAMP in June of 2005 as the permanent Superintendent of both parks. Gay



General Superintendent Gay Vietzke (left) takes over the management of Fort McHenry NM&HS. Charles Strickfaden (right) recently became Chief Ranger at Flagstaff Area Parks in Arizona.

was most recently Superintendent of Sagamore Hill National Historic Site in Oyster Bay, New York. She arrived in time for Flag Day 2005 and was able to see the busy summer season and Defenders' Day celebration during the final quarter of FY2005.

The Park also lost two significant managers this year. Chief Ranger Charles Strickfaden left FOMC in July 2005 to become the Chief Ranger at the Flagstaff Area Parks in Arizona. Supervisory Park Ranger Hugh Manar retired at the end of September after 30 years with the NPS (20 at FOMC). Both positions will be advertised and filled in FY 2006.

### Visitor Trends & Satisfaction

A visitor survey conducted in August 2005 indicated that 99% of visitors reported satisfaction with park facilities and services. This survey also indicated that 82% of visitors understand and appreciate the significance of Fort McHenry.

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Visitation in 2005 continues to remain strong, (622,436 visits). This is down from pre-2002 levels due to fuel costs, economy, and inclement weather in spring and summer.

## Administratively Speaking:

The Fort McHenry budget for FY2005

ONPS Base Funding	\$1,717,200
Fee Demo. Program	\$302,143
Concession fee Prog.	\$18,143
NPS Pass Program	\$7,148
Volunteer Budget	\$7,160
Recarpeting V.C.	\$36,000
Pollution prevention	\$5,000
Pollution prevention	\$4,800
Donations	\$15,464

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Total \$2,113,249

Fort McHenry utilized a total of 28.15 Full-time equivalents (FTE) during FY 2005. Our allocation is 29 FTE. The park used fifteen (15) STEP appointments, 8 seasonal appointments and "0" thirty day appointments.

Other vacant positions include: (1) Chief Ranger; (1) Supervisory Park Ranger; (2) Masons; (1) Maintenance Worker; (1) Masonry Worker; (2) Motor Vehicle Operators and (1) Purchasing Agent.

A total of 26 SF-182 training forms were completed in FY 2005 totaling 573 training hours.

# Resource Stewardship

The park reviewed six Section 106 cases dealing with compliance for on-going projects, including an Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect for the Development Concept Plan and subsequent "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) signed in February 2005. Fort McHenry was designated as a pilot park and regional contact for training and technical assistance for the new national compliance software program known as PEPC (Planning, Environment and Public Comment System), and has been a leader in the system's implementation.

As a NPS Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network site, the park moved towards completing work on the Water Battery Exhibit grant project awarded in 2002. This project includes expanded living history opportunities, new waysides, and a section of the 1814 Water Battery and artillery. Designs for the interpretive wayside exhibit panels were produced and are currently being fabricated for installation. Construction work included excavating

the site, borings for the piers at load bearing points and erection of the gun platform framing system. It is anticipated that the waysides will be completed for the ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 11, 2005. This new outdoor exhibit will clearly show how the Americans won the battle in 1814.

The park continues to maintain a sizable museum collection of 55,395 artifacts that are fully cataloged. The park also worked with the Maryland Historical Trust on a long-term loan and conservation treatment of 11 cannonballs that were recovered in the Patapsco River. These rare cannonballs (of various caliber) were fired from the fort during the battle in 1814. (See photo below) A Mexican War-era flag is currently undergoing conservation treatment at the Harpers Ferry Center. Thirty-three graphic images were replaced in the "E" Building exhibit room and a new graphic label was produced for the circa 1800 cannon carriage on display.



This 18-pound cannonball, also called "roundshot", was fired at the attacking British in 1814.

# Special Events and Volunteers

Annual special events on-site occurred on a rainy Living American Flag Day (650 school children), and the Star-Spangled Banner/Defenders' Day Weekend (an estimated 12,000 visitors). The annual Flag Day program was attended by an estimated 2,000 visitors. The park continued to offer commemorative talks, wreath layings, and programs for Veterans' Day, Memorial Day and the September 11 anniversaries.

Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) played a major role in all operations at Fort McHenry NM&HS. Overall, volunteers contributed 27,522 hours to the park - the equivalent of 13 full-time employees. Volunteers serve in resource management, visitor services, living history and administration. They perform light security duties and assist at all special events.



**Baltimore's Mayor Martin O'Malley serves as Colonel of the Fort McHenry Guard.**

The largest special event was the annual Star-Spangled Banner Weekend, a three-day program commemorating the writing of the National Anthem and Battle of Baltimore in 1814. It took place on September 9, 10 & 11 and involved a parade through the city, educational programs at the fort, cannon firings, living history encampment and symbolic ship-to-shore

“bombardment” and grand fireworks show. Over 12,000 visitors came to the park over a three-day period.

Volunteers assisted in planning and running interpretive programs during the summer - including a Concert-In-the-Park series that ran from June - August. Volunteers also organized and presented a special Fourth of July program, Sailors' Day with the U.S. Navy Sea Chanters and a large Civil War Weekend. These programs attracted thousands of visitors and were featured in leading newspapers from the Baltimore/Washington area and six local TV stations.

Volunteers gave 48 off-site programs to schools, local museums, and civic organizations. These programs strengthened partnerships with other organizations such as the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, and the Baltimore City's Heritage Office.

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## NPS Safe!

The park continues to emphasize workplace safety and employee training. This year the antiquated park alarm and fire monitoring devices were upgraded in the Visitor Center and Star Fort. Park maintenance and ranger staff attended Hazardous Materials for First Responders training, drivers training, and annual CPR refresher courses. Staff continued to emphasize regular tailgate safety sessions at All-Employee meetings, including a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing for staff involved with the Seaport Taxi incident.

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## Special Park Uses

Interest in Fort McHenry as an event and filming venue remains high, both locally and nationally. The park was used as a backdrop by five Miss USA candidates introducing themselves to a national television audience. The National Association of Music Education filmed an actor portraying Francis Scott Key in various settings around the historic fort as part of the World's Largest Concert/National Anthem Project. The park issued 32 Special Use Permits to major partner events such as the Flag Day Foundations “Living American Flag” and “Flag Day” celebrations as well as numerous smaller walk-a-thons and runs, bicycle relays, military retirement, re-enlistment and change-of-command ceremonies, and performances of the National Anthem by school and professional choral and band groups. Fort McHenry received very good coverage in local media, and received national coverage during Star-Spangled Banner Weekend, including National Public Radio and the Baltimore Sun newspaper. The park professionalized the Special Park Use function by developing a position description for, and hiring, a Special Park Uses/Fee Program Coordinator.



# Planning Ahead!

The foundation was laid for the new Education Center in 2005! No, we don't mean a literal "foundation" but the final stages of the planning process. Four major planning studies were needed to plan for the proposed Education/Administration Facility. A Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) was completed and distributed by the Olmstead Center. An alternative Transportation Study (ATS) was finalized by the Volpe Center, a Boundary Survey prepared by Vanesse Hangen Brustlin, Inc, and a final Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Affect (DCP/EA) was submitted and approved along with a "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) that was signed by the NPS Regional Director in February, 2005.

Park staff continued to participate in and support the ongoing work on the **Star-Spangled National Historic Trail Study**. The final report was released to the public in the Federal Register in December 2004. Legislation for designation was introduced to Congress in May 2005. Subsequent

hearings in the Senate were held in July 2005. Supporters of this initiative are hopeful the designation will be announced by the 192nd anniversary of the Battle of Baltimore in September 2006 along with the legislation for the establishment of a National Bicentennial Commission.

Park staff also continues to consult with the Smithsonian Institution's team who are working on the **Star-Spangled Banner Conservation Project** and the museum is hopeful the flag will be back on permanent exhibition by 2008. Associated educational activities at both locations are being planned in conjunction with the park.

The interpretive staff continues to work on action items outlined in the park's **Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP)**. Park staff received training in the development of site bulletins and brochures in compliance with NPS standards and undertook revisions of several site bulletins, as well as developing new event brochures.

FOMC staff continued to work with regional partners and NPS sites on planning for the **Bicentennial of the War of 1812**, which will be celebrated



from 2012-2014. After making contact with all other known NPS parks that have themes related to the War of 1812, a table of sites, their association with the War of 1812, and their anniversary planning activities has been compiled. In addition, a list of local, state and regional organizations with ties to the War of 1812 has been compiled. A list of proposed bicentennial activities has been shared with these partners, and their input has been incorporated into the list. The Maryland Congressional delegation has introduced legislation to establish a federal Bicentennial Commission. This initial planning and ground work will become increasingly important as we approach 2012. Additionally, we have met with the Governor's staff; a similar bill to establish a State of Maryland 1812 Bicentennial Commission has been introduced in the Maryland Legislature.

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## Law Enforcement and Resource Protection

Park staff responded to multiple medical incidents, and several transient/homeless contacts, one arrest of an aggressive visitor, and continued to support Hampton NHS's limited law enforcement staffing. Park law enforcement staff attended Weapons of Mass Destruction training and a new Regional counter-terrorism academy. They were supplemented during special events by detailed law enforcement staff from other parks in the Northeast and National Capital Regions. Additionally, the park

signed an agreement with the Baltimore City Police Department describing mutual support and cooperation. Fort McHenry continues to take security into consideration during routine operations and special events, and relations with Baltimore Police Department remain excellent.



Baltimore City's police equestrian unit assists the park in special events during the year.

# Partnerships

In 2005, the park continued strong alliances with the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, Maryland State Office of Tourism and Development, Baltimore Office of Promotion, the National Historic Seaport in Baltimore, and the sailing ships *Pride of Baltimore II* and the *USS Constellation*. Our ongoing partnership with **Living Classrooms-Patriots of Fort McHenry** continued, and they provided the park with over **\$24,101** in support for events and educational activities in 2005. The Patriots were also instrumental in working with the Maryland Delegation to get an \$11.06 million earmark for the new Education and Administration facility in the Federal Transportation Bill passed this summer. They also submitted an additional request to Baltimore City and to Maryland State for \$1.4 million each to complete funding of this project.

Fort McHenry continues to be active with the **Greater Baltimore History Alliance**, and that group has entered into a partnership with the **Baltimore City Heritage Area** (BCHA) program. BCHA asked representatives from the Northeast Regional Office to assist with a workshop (May 16, 2005) on grant



**A Yellow-Shafted Flicker, one of many birds banded and monitored in Fort McHenry's tidal wetland.**

sources for historic sites in Baltimore. Relationships continue to be very strong, particularly during special events, with several city and federal partners including the Baltimore Police and Fire Departments, Maryland Port Authority, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Naval Training Center - Fort McHenry.

In 2005, the park continued to work on an exciting partnership with the Maryland State Office of Tourism for the distribution of an **interpretive**

**map and guide on the Chesapeake Campaign of the War of 1812.** This brochure was funded through a \$56,000 Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network grant.

Park Volunteers, partner groups, and maintenance staff worked with the **National Aquarium in Baltimore** to complete three of its quarterly cleanups of the tidal wetlands adjacent to the park. Volunteers contributed approximately 7,152 hours in the field towards the resource management of this vital area, and over 240 cubic yards of debris were collected. A highlight was the **National Public Lands Day** event in September 2005, where a mix of approximately 200 employees from Wal-Mart, Unilever, the National Aquarium and community volunteers worked with park staff to conduct cleanups in the park and adjacent wetlands. As a participating park in the "National Parks America Tour," a \$4,500 check was presented to the park during the event. Finally, the Baltimore Bird Club continued to record data and provided bird banding and monitoring in the wetlands. Over 59,000 birds have been counted in 2005, representing 54% of species found in the state.



**NPS Director Fran Manella presents the Fort McHenry Guard Volunteers, the park's living history unit, with the George B. Hartzog Award in Spring 2005 as finest volunteer group in the National Park Service.**

**Way to go Guard!  
Huzzah!!**

## Resource Education/ Visitor Services

In 2005, Ranger staff offered a broad range of interpretive activities focusing on primary park themes. Rangers and park uniformed volunteers offered interpretive programs to 53,562 visitors. The living history volunteers continued to offer vibrant black powder musket and artillery drills during weekends and special commemorations. This year approximately 21,404 visitors enjoyed these unique interpretive programs. Several special tours and programs were given on and off site. The largest was a series of programs given for over 800 midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy over a two-day period. Over 50,000 teachers, and school children in educational groups visited the park on field trips. This type of visitation continues to concentrate in April, May and early June. The record this year was 39 busses in one day.

The staff is working with the City of Baltimore and other local schools to encourage school visits outside this peak period. Work on rehabilitating exhibits in the Star Fort, supported heavily by Fee Demonstration Funds, continued this year. The primary focus was final installation of the "D" Building Archeology Exhibit (**Witness to War**). The combination of more accurately furnished rooms and additional interpretive exhibits has greatly improved our ability to tell the story of Fort McHenry's role in the Battle of Baltimore.

## Environmentally Speaking

Work continued on both the Environmental Audit (EA) and the Environmental Management System (EMS). Currently, the Baseline EA Best Management Practices are 61.54% complete and Non-Compliance Actions are 85.42 complete. The Routine EA Best Management Practices are 75% complete and Non-Compliance Actions are 68.75% complete. The EMS is 12% complete. The EMS coordinator is working with the newly established committee to assist with development of the park program.



The staff of Fort McHenry NM&HS pose for a group shot on Founders' Day, August 25, 2005.

### EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

By any measure, 2005 was a banner year. The staff and volunteers of Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine look forward to an even better 2006.

**General Superintendent**  
Gay Vietzke

**Chief of Area Services**  
Greg McGuire

**Cultural Resources Manager**  
Anna Von Lunz

**Administrative Officer**  
Lois Schwartz

**Acting Chief of Interpretation**  
Vincent Vaise

**NPS Photographers**  
John Sanken  
James Rogers  
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## Issues Facing the Park

In the post 9/11 world, parks with symbolic and patriotic value, and those with neighboring military posts (Naval Reserve Training Center) such as Fort McHenry, will continue to devote more time and resources to law enforcement and counter-terrorism responsibilities, training and awareness. Park staff will continue to monitor public activities, suspicious packages, and vehicles, as part of the nationwide efforts to deter terrorist activities.

Another major issue is the rapid growth and redevelopment in the surrounding community both adjacent to the park and in Baltimore's popular Inner Harbor area.

An old grain silo just outside the park is being redeveloped into over 500 condominiums and town homes. These new recreational users will impact both resources and services available in this complex urban environment and these factors have been taken into account during the recent planning for a new Visitor Center.