

## **Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine State of the Park Report Fiscal Year 2004**

### **Overview/Summary of Progress**

Fort McHenry had an outstanding year of events and accomplishments in 2004. Planning is moving ahead for a new Education/Administration Facility. The Cultural Landscape Report, Alternative Transportation Study, and Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment will soon be finalized and released to the public. This year **\$1,681,000** was received for the park base funding. Additional funding from donations, project funds and fee demonstration totaled **\$559,803**. Highlights of the year include one of the best Star-Spangled Banner Weekend/Defenders' Day commemorations in recent memory, attended by **18,000 visitors** on **September 10-12, 2004**. During the park's annual "Tattoo" on August 15, 2004 officers and staff of the U.S. Naval Reserve Center next to the park were honored as park partners and citizen-soldiers. In March of 2004, the park served as a media staging area for over 30 local and national networks during the tragic "Seaport Taxi" capsizing and subsequent body recovery operations in the Patapsco River just off the park seawall.



*2004 Defenders' Day/Star-Spangled Banner Weekend Program*



*2004 Military “Tattoo” Ceremony*

### ***Planning***

Significant progress was made toward completion of three major planning studies necessary for the proposed **Education/Administration Facility**. A **Cultural Landscape Report (CLR)** was completed by the Olmsted Center. An **Alternative Transportation Study (ATS)** was finalized by the Volpe Center, and a final draft of the **Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Affect (DCP/EA)** was submitted for review. The CLR Landscape Inventory and Condition Assessment were produced with the assistance of an intern funded by Baltimore’s Parks and People Foundation. The ATS was produced by the Department of Transportation’s Volpe Center and the DCP/EA by Vanesse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. of Williamsburg, VA. Final release to the public for all three projects has been scheduled for November 2004.

Park staff continues to participate in and support the on-going work on the **Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail Study**. The final report will be released to the public in the Federal Register in December 2004. It is anticipated that legislation for designation will be introduced to Congress in late 2004 or early 2005. Supporters of this initiative are hopeful the designation will be announced by the 191<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Baltimore on September 2005 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 2006. Associated educational activities at both locations are being planned in conjunction with the park.

The **Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP)** was completed in 2003, and the interpretive staff continues to work on action items. The CIP-identified projects were drafted into individual staff annual work plans. The primary focus for projects in FY04 was in the areas of publications and education. Park staff received training in 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.

Former Superintendent Laura Joss and our new Superintendent John McKenna are working with regional partners and NPS sites on planning for the **Bicentennial of the War of 1812**, which will be celebrated in 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 is also working on introducing legislation to establish a Bicentennial Commission. This initial planning and ground work will become increasingly important as we approach 2012.

### **Resource Stewardship**

The park reviewed 6 **Section 106 cases** dealing with compliance for on-going projects, including an Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect for the Development Concept Plan. Fort McHenry staff received training in the use of the new web-based system entitled Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC). Fort McHenry was designated a pilot park and regional contact for training and technical assistance for this new national program. Substantial work was completed on the **Rehabilitation of the Historic Seawall Line Item Construction Project** in 2004. This contract was completed utilizing a Design/Build process involving an innovative technique. The contractor partnered with an engineering firm to “dewater” the face of the wall using a cofferdam to permit a safe work environment for making repairs to the structure. Extensive masonry stabilization and repair work on approximately 1300 linear feet of the historic seawall was completed along with landscaping in the area adjacent to the structure. Riprap stone was placed to reduce the impact of storms and regular tidal action on the wall. The hillside adjacent to the Maintenance Area was re-contoured to reduce hydraulic pressure on the structure. The excavations needed for this element of the project were archeologically monitored to insure that any features in the area (consisting almost entirely of early twentieth century fill) were recorded and that representative artifacts were retrieved.

As a NPS **Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network** site, the park continued to work on the **Water Battery Site** grant project awarded in 2002. This project will include expanded living history opportunities, new waysides and an exhibit on a major section of the 1814 Water Battery and its associated artillery. This is particularly important because of the role these batteries played in the Battle of Baltimore and the fact that no physical remnants of this feature survive. Designs for interpretive wayside exhibit panels were produced. Construction work included the excavation of the site, borings for the piers at load-bearing points and erection of the gun platform framing system. It is anticipated that the waysides and the Water Battery platform will be completed in late fall 2004. This new outdoor exhibit will enhance the interpretation of the site where the French naval cannons defended Baltimore’s harbor during the British bombardment in 1814.

Numerous library **archival projects** were undertaken in the park library in 2004 and will continue in 2005. The **Civil War Prisoner of War database** is 75% complete and **War of 1812 Soldier database** is 60% complete. Park staff has recently begun compiling a new **Historic Images database** and responded to **179 public research requests**. An article on Gribeauval carriages was written by our park ranger/historian and published in *The Company of Military Historians* quarterly journal. He also published a comprehensive article, "Joseph Hopper Nicholson: Citizen-Soldier of Maryland" in the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Volume 98, Number 2.

The original 1814 **flagpole cross brace timbers**, two historic **ship models**, over 40 historic **flags**, and two circa **1800 cannon carriages** (extremely rare) were treated by the Harpers Ferry Conservation Treatment Center. The **French naval gun (1809)** was mounted on a newly constructed carriage and placed at the Water Battery site. The park also worked with the **Maryland Historical Trust** on a long term loan and conservation treatment of **11 cannonballs** (of various calibers) that were recovered from the Patapsco River. These rare artifacts were fired from large naval guns that were mounted at Fort McHenry during the bombardment in 1814.

#### **Law Enforcement and Resource Protection**

Protection staff was supplemented by an additional full-time commissioned law enforcement ranger funded by a 2003 ONPS base increase for this purpose. This has enhanced the park's ability to respond to emergencies and provides a proactive counterterrorism program. Park staff responded to over a dozen medical incidents, two narcotics cases, a car break-in, and several transient/homeless contacts, 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. Fort McHenry continues to take security into consideration during routine operations and special events, and relations with Baltimore Police Department remain excellent.

#### **Partnerships**

In 2004, the park continued strong alliances with the **Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, Maryland State Office of Tourism and Development, 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 \$12,500 in support for events and educational activities in 2004. The Patriots presented Mayor Martin O'Malley with their 2004 Francis Scott Key Award on September 8<sup>th</sup> as the kick off for the Star-Spangled Banner Weekend festivities. The park also worked for over a year with the **A&E Network/History Channel and the Mayor's Office** on the production of a two-hour documentary "**First Invasion, the War of 1812**," that was aired on September 12, 2004. This is the first television documentary on the history of the War of 1812 and birth of our National Anthem.

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 examine Baltimore's cultural resources and stories to determine whether their national significance merits an expanded partnership with the NPS. A site visit throughout the city was conducted. 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, US Corps of Engineers, and US Naval Training Center Fort McHenry.

In 2004, the park entered into an exciting partnership with the Maryland State Office of Tourism for the implementation of a grant to develop and publish 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. The Maryland Office of Tourism announced the release and distribution of over 750,000 copies of this new brochure at the 190<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Baltimore in September 2004.

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 780 hours in the field towards resource management of this vital area, and nearly 225 yards of debris weighing in at over 187 tons of debris were collected. A highlight was the **National Public Lands Day** event in September 2004, where a mix of approximately 100 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 \$3000 check was presented to the park by Wal-Mart-Unilever during the event. Finally, the Baltimore Bird Club continued to record data and banded over 610 birds in the wetlands.

The park continues its strong partnership with the city of Baltimore, receiving significant support from local Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments during special events and emergency situations. Park staff worked very closely with these departments during the Seaport Taxi capsizing incident and its annual Defenders' Day celebration.

### **Visitor Trends and Satisfaction**

A visitor survey conducted in August 2004 indicated that 97% of visitors reported satisfaction with park facilities and services (2004 GPRA goal was 95%). This survey also indicated that 80% of visitors understand and appreciate the significance of FOMC (2003 goal was 65%).

Visitation to the park in Fiscal Year 2004 (619,659 visitors) was almost 11% above the FY03 total. This is still down from pre-2002 levels and is attributed to the rise in fuel costs, the economy, and bad weather through the winter, spring and summer. This overall visitation decrease is consistent with national and area travel statistics.

### **Resource Education/Visitor Services**

In 2004, Ranger staff offered a broad range of interpretive activities focusing on primary park themes. Rangers and park uniformed volunteers offered interpretive programs to 49,930 visitors. The living history volunteers continued to offer vibrant black powder musket and artillery drills during weekends and special commemorations. This year approximately 150,000 visitors enjoyed informal interpretation. Several special tours and programs were given on and off site. The largest was a series of programs given for over 1200 midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy given over a two-day period.

Over 56,229 school children visited the park for educational field trips. This type of visitation continues to concentrate in April, May and early June. The record this year was 59 buses in one day. Staff is working with the City of Baltimore and other local schools to encourage school visits outside of this peak period. The park also hosted a visit by 1300 Baltimore City and County school children on September 10, 2004, sponsored by the Baltimore City Mayor's office in conjunction with the Star-Spangled Banner Weekend/Defenders' Day celebration. The Baltimore Department of Transportation supported the park by installing over a dozen brown wayfinding signs throughout the city to direct visitors to Fort McHenry.

Work on rehabilitating exhibits in the Star Fort, supported heavily by Fee Demonstration funds, continued this year. The primary focus was on the design and implementation 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. The park was honored to be chosen as the NPS website's "Park of the Week" in June of 2004 during the week of June 14, National Flag Day.

### **Special Events and Incidents**

Annual special events on site occurred on **Living American Flag Day** (2800 schoolchildren), **Marine Corps Tattoo Ceremony**, (1200 visitors) and the **Star-Spangled Banner/Defender's Day Weekend** (18,000 visitors). The annual **Flag Day** program was attended by 3200 visitors. The park continued to offer special commemorative talks, wreathlayings, and programs for Veteran's Day, Memorial Day and the September 11 anniversaries. Governor Robert Ehrlich visited the park to help commemorate Earth Day on April 22 and spoke about the importance of the state wetlands adjacent to the park in Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. The park also supported two visits to Baltimore by President Bush in December of 2003 and April of 2004.

On March 6, 2004, a commercial water shuttle that provides transportation to the park from Baltimore's popular Inner Harbor tourist area capsized on the Patapsco River during a sudden thunderstorm. The "Seaport Taxi," operated by the National Historic Seaport in Baltimore was carrying 25 people. US Navy personnel stationed at the US Naval Reserve Training Center, adjacent to the park, recovered most of the passengers. They witnessed

the capsizing and responded with a Navy landing craft. The rest were rescued by Baltimore City Fireboats. There were several initial fatalities, and three persons remained missing until March 15. Initial response triage and recovery involved over 30 different agencies. Park staff provided traffic control and media support at the park picnic area. Regional and national media used the park as a staging area and reporting base from March 6 to March 15 to broadcast the incident to the nation, until the bodies of the last three victims were recovered from the bottom of the river.



*Seaport Taxi Accident –Baltimore Fire Dept. News Conference  
March 2004*



*Seaport Taxi Accident – Media staging in park picnic area  
March 2004*

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) played a major role in all operations at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine. Overall, volunteers contributed **27,248 hours** to the park – the equivalent of thirteen 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.



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. The event took place on September 10, 11 & 12 and involved volunteers in educational programs, parades, demonstrations and other living history activities. On Friday, September 10, living history volunteers gave educational and interpretive programs to over **1,300 school children**, many from the inner city. The Mayor of Baltimore City, the Honorable Martin O'Malley, a two-year veteran VIP, dressed in living history clothing and gave talks to schoolchildren on Friday and helped lead the Saturday evening commemoration.

On Friday afternoon, over 100 volunteers paraded through the streets of Baltimore and held a ceremony in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The parade, witnessed by over 1,500 city residents, strengthened ties between the park and the local community. In preparation for the event, volunteers actively supported park partners through planning efforts, living history programs and other activities. Park partners included the Chesapeake Bay Gateway Network, *Pride of Baltimore II* (a reconstructed War of 1812 ship), The Maryland State Office of Tourism, Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House and War of 1812 Museum.

Saturday's program included a large military encampment, ongoing living history demonstrations, a symbolic ship-to-shore "bombardment", and fireworks. In addition to living history, VIPs directed traffic, provided for crowd control and assisted in security operations. Over 18,000 visitors attended the park over the three-day period. Volunteers assisted park staff in planning and running interpretive programs during the summer. Volunteers helped organize and present a concert-in-the-park series that ran from June-August. VIPs researched period music, wrote the script and assisted in publicity. Volunteers also organized and presented a special Fourth of July program, Family Day and 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 assisted in daily operations. They gave children's programs on a daily basis and assisted park rangers in staffing the park during summer late hours. This enabled rangers to devote more time to accomplishing the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan. Throughout the year, VIPs conduct the majority of in-park educational programs for thousands of school age visitors to Fort McHenry. During fiscal year 2004, volunteers gave **45 off-site** programs to schools, local museums and civic organizations. Volunteers enabled the park to strengthen partnerships with other organizations such as *The Pride of Baltimore II*, Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, Baltimore City's Heritage Office and Smithsonian Museum of American History.

Volunteers took the lead in conservation efforts in the adjacent wetland and during periodic in-park cleanups. Hurricane Isabel severely eroded major portions of the wetland and left tons of debris into the park. Throughout the year, in partnership with the



National Aquarium in Baltimore and the Baltimore Bird Club, resource management volunteers donated thousands of hours assisting park maintenance teams in removing the debris and restoring the wetland. Bird monitoring efforts have counted over 300 different species in the park and these exciting statistics have been forwarded to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **Special Park Uses**

Interest in Fort McHenry as an event and filming venue remains high, both locally and nationally. The park issues Special Use Permits to major partner events (the Flag Day Foundation's "Living American Flag" and "Flag Day" celebrations) as well as numerous smaller walkathons, military re-enlistment and change of command ceremonies, and performances of the National Anthem by school and professional choral groups. Fort McHenry received very good coverage in local media, and received expanded national coverage during Star-Spangled Banner weekend, including National Public Radio. The park professionalized the Special Park Use function by developing a position description for, and hiring, a Special Park Uses/Fee Program Coordinator.

The **A&E Network History Channel** embarked on an exciting new project with the park to produce a documentary on the War of 1812, entitled "First Invasion, The War of 1814." This film highlights Fort McHenry, and footage for it was shot in the park in June of 2003. Park staff and living history volunteers were featured, and assisted the film crew and production team with film locations, graphic art, editorial review and significant props. The Patriots of Fort McHenry hosted a premier event on September 8, 2004 at the Senator Theatre with Mayor Martin O'Malley, Congressman Ben Cardin and Senator Paul Sarbanes. Over 800 participants attended the premier before it was aired on television on September 12, 2004. Mayor Martin O'Malley appeared in the film.

### **Safety Programs**

The park continues to emphasize workplace safety and employee training. This year 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 recertification courses. Staff continued to emphasize regular tailgate safety sessions at division and All-Employee Meetings, including a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing for staff involved with the Seaport Taxi incident.

Work continued on both the Environmental Audit (EA) and the Environmental Management System (EMS). Currently, the Baseline EA Best Management Practices are 50% complete and Non-Compliance Actions are 81.25% complete. The Routine EA Best Management Practices are 66.67% complete and Non-Compliance Actions are 50% complete. The EMS is 12% complete. The EMS coordinator is working with the newly established committee to assist with development of the park program. He attended EMS training in Spring 2004 and will train the incoming committee and remaining park staff on the program.

### **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.

### **Final Note/ 2005 Goals**

Complete the Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect/ FONSI

Finalize and distribute the Alternative Transportation Study and Cultural Landscape Report

Begin partnership development with the Patriots of Fort McHenry in accordance with DO-21 guidelines

Work with Congressional delegation on the legislation for the Star-Spangled Banner NHT designation

Work with Congressional delegation toward establishment of War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission

Modify financial management practices to respond to increased budget constraints

Streamline and improve cost effectiveness of Visitor Services operations

Complete construction of the Water Battery Exhibit & Gateways funded waysides

Complete Installation of the Archeology Exhibit in D Building

Work with Public Land Corps to preserve and maintain cultural landscape

Continue Fort McHenry Wetlands clean-up projects with park partners