

STATE  
♦ OF THE ♦  
PARKS®

November 2007



SAN JUAN ISLAND NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



A Resource Assessment



National Parks Conservation Association®  
Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®

# STATE ♦ OF THE ♦ PARKS®

## Center for State of the Parks

More than a century ago, Congress established Yellowstone as the world's first national park. That single act was the beginning of a remarkable and ongoing effort to protect this nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage.

Today, Americans are learning that national park designation alone cannot provide full resource protection. Many parks are compromised by development of adjacent lands, air and water pollution, invasive plants and animals, and rapid increases in motorized recreation. Park officials often lack adequate information on the status of and trends in conditions of critical resources.

The National Parks Conservation Association initiated the State of the Parks® program in 2000 to assess the condition of natural and cultural resources in the parks, and determine how well equipped the National Park Service is to protect the parks—its stewardship capacity. The goal is to provide information that will help policy-makers, the public, and the National Park Service improve conditions in national parks, celebrate successes as models for other parks, and ensure a lasting legacy for future generations.

For more information about the methodology and research used in preparing this report and to learn more about the Center for State of the Parks®, visit [www.npca.org/stateoftheparks](http://www.npca.org/stateoftheparks) or contact: NPCA, Center for State of the Parks®, P.O. Box 737, Fort Collins, CO 80522; Phone: 970.493.2545; E-mail: [stateoftheparks@npca.org](mailto:stateoftheparks@npca.org).

Since 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA, its members, and partners work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

- \* More than 325,000 members
- \* 22 regional and field offices
- \* 35,000 activists

A special note of appreciation goes to those whose generous grants and donations made this report possible: Dorothy Canter, Ben and Ruth Hammett, MSST Foundation, and anonymous donors.

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## INTRODUCTION



ERIN MCPHERSON

The San Juan Islands are an archipelago consisting of 172 islands off the coast of the state of Washington. Human occupation and use of the islands has been extensive. Central Coast Salish peoples have inhabited the islands for thousands of years; archaeological evidence indicates human occupation reaching back at least 9,000 years. During the 18th century, both the British and the Spanish charted the islands; the Spanish gave the group of islands its current

name. Nearly equidistant between the mainland United States and Canada's Vancouver Island, the San Juan Islands were claimed by both the American and British governments in the early 19th century, a fact that prompted contention for several decades.

The 1846 Treaty of Oregon established the boundary between the United States and Canada along the 49th north parallel to the middle of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, then south

The San Juan Islands are located between the coast of Washington and Canada's Vancouver Island.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The park is in the final stages of drafting and updating a new general management plan (GMP) to replace the existing one, which was written in 1979. The new plan is slated for completion in 2008, and it will provide overall resource management guidance, including strategies for dealing with destructive, non-native rabbits. The draft plan is scheduled to be released for public comment in November of 2007.
- Park staff recently partnered with the Washington Conservation Corps to control erosion and stabilize an exposed shell midden on the north coast of the English Camp in Garrison Bay. The project has protected archaeological resources from being washed away or exposed to poachers.
- In the summer of 2005, park staff finished replacing the roofs of all the historic buildings with cedar shingles, preventing damage from leaks.
- As an example of the park's commitment to care for and interpret the wide gamut of resources resident in San Juan Island National Historical Park, staff recently installed an exhibit that interprets prehistoric archaeology, displaying items such as shells and early tools.
- In 2003, park staff began prescribed burns in the Garry oak stands at Young Hill in the English Camp. The reintroduction of fire into the ecosystem will benefit fire-resistant native species and help restore the natural course of ecosystem change through time.

The exterior of the Officers' Quarters at the American Camp has been restored to its original appearance.



ERIN MCPHERSON

down the middle of "the channel" that separates the continent from Vancouver Island. The negotiators, located thousands of miles away, were unaware that two major channels existed: Haro Strait near Vancouver Island and Rosario Strait to the east, near the mainland United States. The treaty failed to specify which strait would constitute the water boundary between the two nations, an omission that years later would nearly cause the United States and Great Britain to go to war over possession of the San Juan Islands.

The settlement of San Juan Island began during the 1850s. The British Hudson's Bay Company established a fishing camp on the island in 1850-51 and a sheep farm in 1853. As Americans returned from the Frazier River gold rush in Canada, many began claiming farmsteads in the same open prairies valued by the British for sheep grazing, which increasingly led to disputes over ownership.

Tensions between the two groups came to a head on June 15, 1859. On that morning, an American citizen named Lyman Cutlar shot and killed a boar that he found rooting through his potato patch. The boar had wandered from the Belle Vue Farm, which was owned by the British Hudson's Bay Company. Cutlar offered to pay for the boar, but the farm manager was not willing to negotiate, and ill will escalated. In response, both countries sent troops to the island to protect their interests and their citizens. Threats and ultimatums were exchanged and battle appeared imminent. Fortunately, before shots could be fired, senior officials from both governments were able to intervene and negotiate a cease fire in the dispute that became known as "The Pig War."

Both sides agreed to a joint occupation of the island until a diplomatic resolution could be made regarding the boundary. The American Camp grew on the south end of the island where the conflict had begun. In 1860, the British established their camp in a sheltered bay on the north end of the island,



within easy sailing of their naval base at Esquimalt on Vancouver Island.

For the next 12 years, both nations occupied San Juan Island peacefully, each with one company of light infantry. The American Civil War prevented speedy resolution of the boundary conflict. Finally, German Kaiser Wilhelm I was chosen to decide ownership of the islands once and for all. On October 21, 1872, his committee ruled in favor of the United States and established the international boundary at Haro Strait.

Nearly 100 years later, in 1966, Congress officially recognized the historic importance of those 19th-century events and established San Juan Island National Historical Park to preserve and interpret the American and English Camps. This is the only unit of the National Park System dedicated to the peaceful resolution of conflict, giving it a unique role in teaching the history of our nation and its relationship with the world.

### PRESERVING A UNIQUE STORY

San Juan Island National Historical Park encompasses 1,752 acres on San Juan Island in Washington. The park's boundaries include the English and American Camps, which are located on opposite ends of the island.

On July 27, 1859, Captain George E. Pickett, who would later garner fame as a general in the Confederate Army, settled the American Camp on the southeastern tip of San Juan Island. The camp was established to protect the American citizens on the island from the British inhabitants and the American Indians in the area. The U.S. Army built 34 structures at the camp; three are still standing today. This unit of San Juan Island National Historical Park covers 1,223 acres and includes much of the original military reservation.

The English Camp, located on the northwestern shore of the island, was established eight

months later. The English chose their site because it was protected from the elements and was geographically separated from the American Camp. The Royal Marines erected at least 37 structures at their camp during the joint occupation, six of which can still be seen today. This unit of the park covers 529 acres and includes only a portion of the original British military reservation.

Though the soldiers obviously represented opposing interests, they regularly visited each other's camps to celebrate holidays and to challenge one another to sporting competitions. Following the end of the military occupation period in 1872, the English Camp site was occupied by the Crook family as a farm and homestead until the state of Washington acquired the site in 1963. The American military relinquished control of the American Camp in 1874. Various homesteaders established farms on the former military reservation. The land was used primarily for a variety of agricultural purposes until the 1950s. The state of Washington acquired the core of the historic camp in 1953, eventually donating it to the National Park Service in 1966. But by that time much of the American Camp

had been sold to developers, so individual parcels had to be purchased by the federal government for inclusion in the new park.

San Juan Island National Historical Park commemorates the events of the joint occupation, preserves historic structures, and celebrates the lasting legacy of peace along the border between the United States and Canada—the world's longest unfortified border. Eight permanent staff members with a limited budget care for resources that include 1,752 acres of cultural landscapes, 23 historic structures (including the remnants of wells, walls, and foundations), and innumerable archaeological resources still concealed beneath the soil. This small staff also serves the 260,000 people who visit the park each year.

Because the park focuses on historical events, the staff works to restore and maintain the historic scene of the camps as they were between 1853 and 1871. San Juan Island National Historical Park's natural resources are not ignored, however; on the contrary, their care is closely tied to cultural resource management goals.

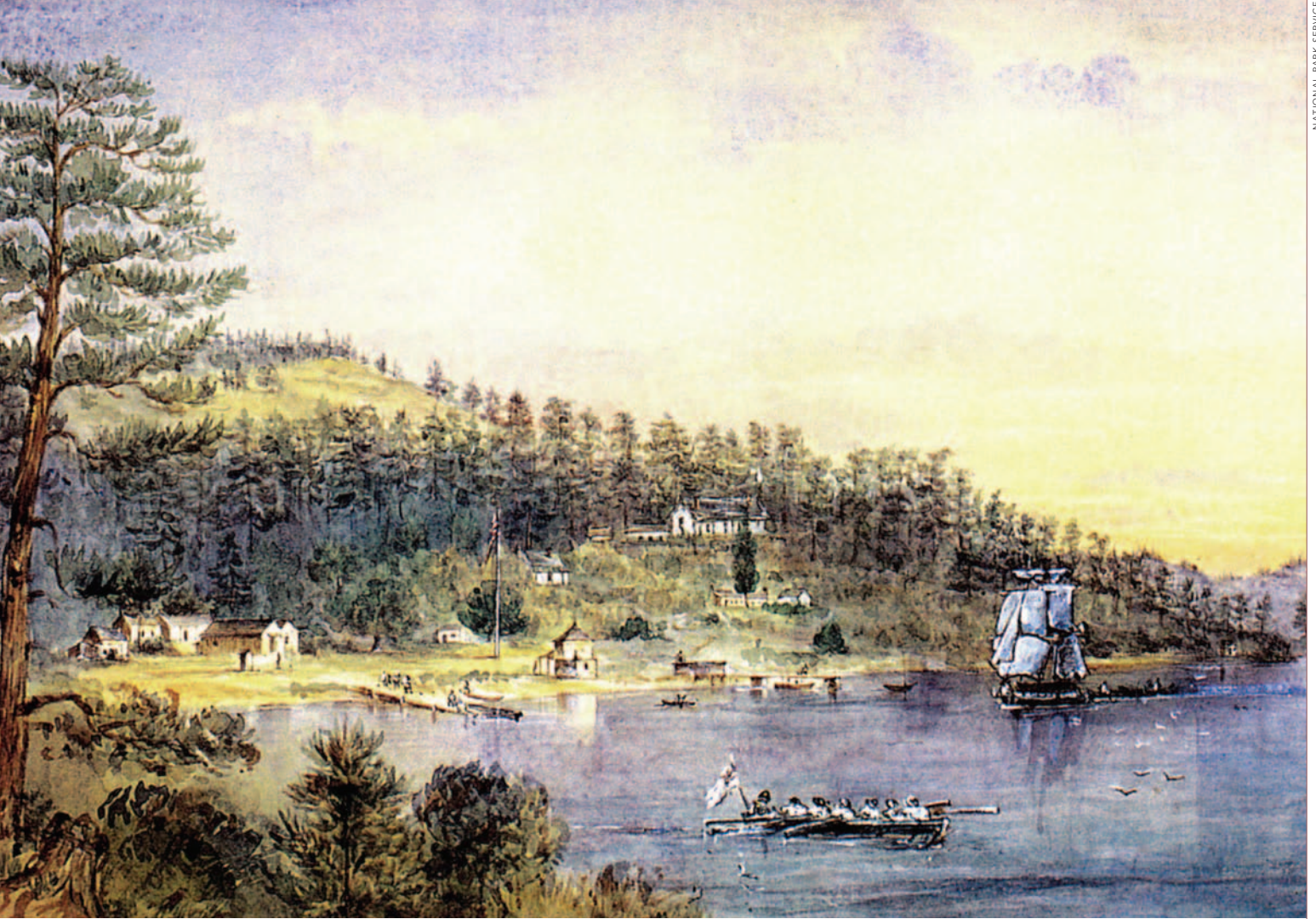
English Camp was composed of at least 37 structures. Six are still standing, including the barracks, hospital, and blockhouse.



ELIZABETH MEYERS



## THE ASSESSMENT



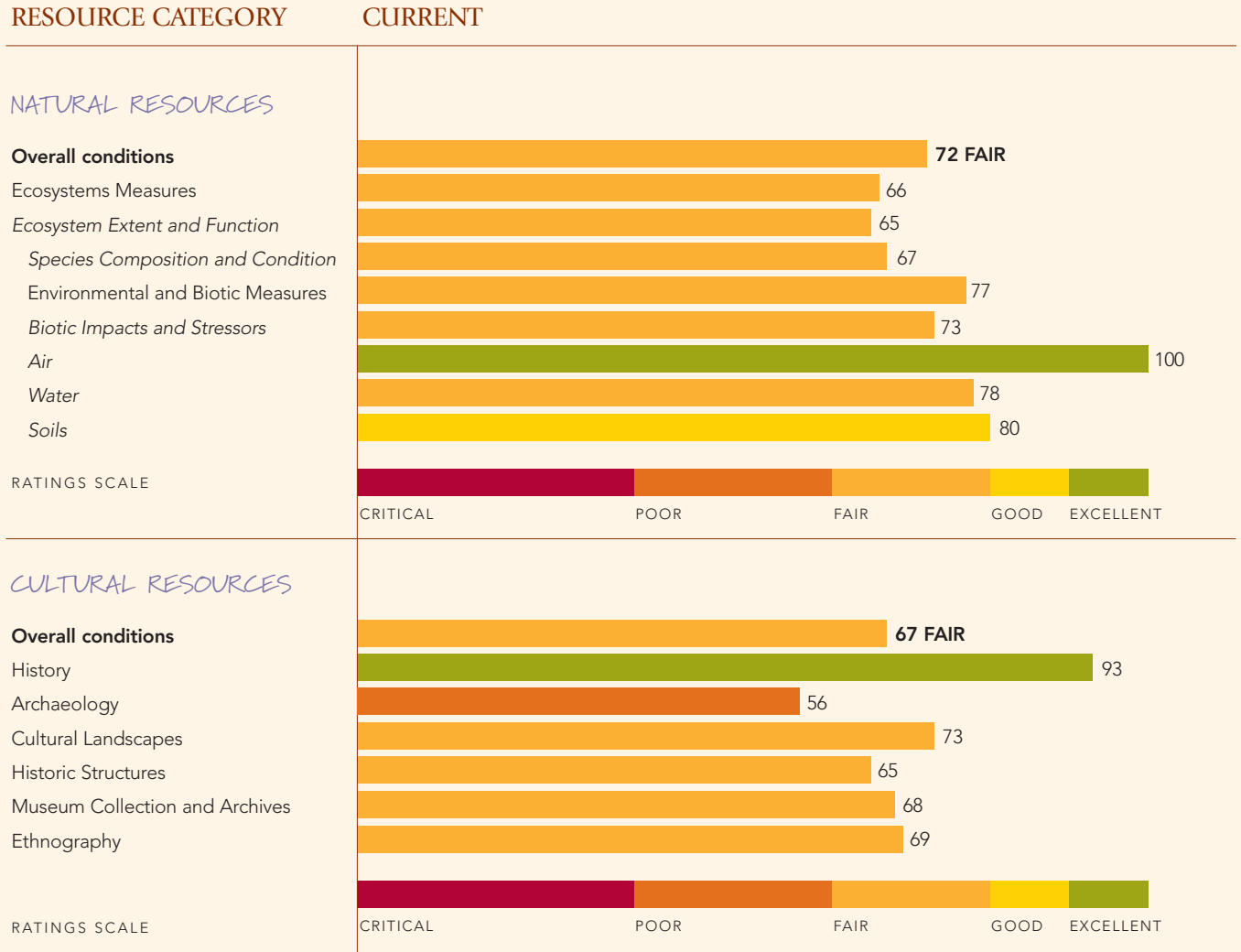
Recognizing San Juan Island National Historical Park's significance to our shared national heritage, NPCA's Center for State of the Parks endeavored to determine the conditions of resources protected within the park. Researchers gathered information and used established, peer-reviewed methodologies to assess and systematically rate conditions of both cultural and natural resources at San Juan Island National Historical Park. These methodologies

can be found online ([www.npca.org/state-of-the-parks](http://www.npca.org/state-of-the-parks)).

Current overall conditions of San Juan Island National Historical Park's known cultural resources rated a "fair" score of 67 out of 100, and natural resources received a "fair" score of 72 out of 100. This report describes park resources and summarizes resource conditions.

This painting shows the English Camp as it looked in 1868. It was painted by E.L. Porcher, a junior officer aboard the *HMS Sparrowhawk*. Compare to photo on previous page.

Note: When interpreting the scores for natural resource conditions, recognize that critical information upon which the ratings are based is not always available. This limits data interpretation to some extent. For San Juan Island National Historical Park, 58 percent of the information required by the methodology was available.



The findings in this report do not necessarily reflect past or current park management. Many factors that affect resource conditions are a result of both human and natural influences over long periods of time, in many cases predating the park's creation. The intent of the Center for State of the Parks is to document the present status of park resources and determine what actions can be taken to protect them in the future.



## KEY FINDINGS

- The park's budget has not kept pace with rising expenses. Cost increases have exceeded funding increases by about 4 percent per year and have resulted in a shortage of operating funds. At existing funding levels, the park cannot afford to adequately control non-native species, plant native species, or maintain and restore historic structures.
- Staff positions have gone unfilled due to a consistent lack of funding, while the park needs funds to hire additional resource management, law enforcement, maintenance, and interpretive staff. The park's draft general management plan cites the need for seven additional staff.
- Though much cultural resource work has been done on the island, incalculable archaeological resources remain undiscovered and are at the mercy of erosion and illegal collection. Funds are needed for an archaeological overview and assessment, which would include information on all known and potential sites, and would help staff understand what additional work is needed. An archaeological overview and assessment would also provide information to help staff interpret the park's American Indian history.
- Researching international archives to learn more about the historic boundary dispute between the United States and Great Britain would refresh and update an already powerful and enduring message of peace. Funds are needed to support this work.
- Non-native European rabbits are wreaking havoc on archaeological resources and park ecosystems, especially the prairie at the American Camp. The damage they are responsible for includes habitat degradation, loss of native vegetation cover, and an increase in non-native plant species.
- Non-native plants are common within the park's prairie ecosystem, partly because of past agricultural practices. Invaders such as Himalayan blackberries, tansy ragwort, Canada thistle, and bull thistle are found throughout the park's acreage, and damage by rabbits has facilitated their spread. Other noxious weeds such as herb Robert, spotted knapweed, and sulfur cinquefoil have also been found in the park in recent years.
- Residential development poses a significant threat to both natural resources and cultural landscapes at the park. In addition to compromising historic views, increased development will further tax the local water supply. There are also concerns that residential septic systems could fail and affect water quality in the park's coastal watersheds. Development also fragments native ecosystems and can isolate wildlife populations, which is a particular concern with rare habitats such as prairie and Garry oak woodland.



The formal garden at English Camp was fully restored and is open to visitors.

### CULTURAL RESOURCES—PARK HARBORS BOTH HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC RESOURCES

San Juan Island National Historical Park interprets a contentious event in American history and serves as a testament to the possibility of peaceful conflict resolution between nations. Though the park was specifically created to interpret the 12-year period when citizens and soldiers from America and Britain occupied San Juan Island and the preceding events, park staff would like to expand programs and exhibits to highlight other topics such as natural resources

and the history of American Indians. But inadequate and outdated facilities, as well as staffing- and funding shortfalls, limit this work. To address these issues, the park's draft general management plan calls for replacing the temporary modular building that now serves as the American Camp visitor center. It also recommends that the park obtain an additional interpretive ranger, more funding for curatorial work, additional staff to maintain historic structures and manage natural resources, and three additional seasonal positions.

San Juan Island National Historical Park preserves 23 historic structures, located at both

the American and English Camps. Structures at the English Camp include the blockhouse, barracks, commissary, hospital, and a restored English formal garden. This site also includes the Crook House, which dates from the post-military period. The one-room commissary is believed to be the oldest surviving English Camp structure, and the two-room barracks is still used by the park as a visitor center in the summer; both were restored in the 1970s. The blockhouse was restored in the early 1990s; the first level is open to the public in summer. Other structures, except for the English garden, are closed to the public.

Surviving structures at the American Camp include the laundress quarters, the officers' quarters, the reconstructed fenced parade ground, and the earthen redoubt. Work on the redoubt, which is essentially a fortification with earthen gun platforms, began in 1859, but it stopped when the peaceful settlement of joint occupation was signed. The redoubt is considered one of the most intact examples of pre-Civil War military construction in the United States.

The park's historic structures are integral to interpretation. A two-member maintenance crew works full time to protect these historic structures from powder post beetles, natural deterioration, dry rot, and other threats. In addition to support for regular maintenance activities, the park requires more staff and funding for extensive rehabilitation of some of the historic structures such as the laundress quarters at the American Camp. The park's deferred maintenance backlog is about \$1.66 million.

Also vital to the park's interpretation efforts are the cultural landscapes that include and surround the historic structures. These landscapes set the scene for visitors to envision the historical events that took place on San Juan Island. Non-native plants and animals are encroaching on the cultural landscapes, changing their historical appearances. Top restoration priorities include clearing historic vistas, controlling the non-native rabbit population to restore native grasses, and clearing the historic road connecting the American Camp to Old San Juan Town.

Although few of the structures that were once

Funds are needed to restore the laundress quarters at American Camp, which is where the camp's laundress and her family lived.



ERIN MCPHERSON

Construction of the redoubt, which is a fortification with earthen gun platforms, began in 1859 but was never finished because a peaceful resolution to the conflict was found.



MIKE VOIRI

part of the American and English Camps are still standing, a wealth of archaeological resources provides further insight into 19th-century events and people. To date, 19 of San Juan Island's archaeological sites are listed in the Archaeological Sites Management Information System (ASMIS), a service-wide database of archaeological information. According to a 2006 ASMIS update, nine are in good condition, nine are in fair condition, and one is in poor condition. Overall, the park has focused on historic archaeology more than prehistoric archaeology, as is mandated in the establishing legislation of the park. The historic research has established baseline data that is used to restore the military camp landscapes and structures.

In addition to mid-19th-century historical resources, the park likely possesses abundant prehistoric archaeological resources that have yet to be discovered, researched, and interpreted. Thus far, ten prehistoric archaeological

sites have been identified within San Juan Island National Historical Park, including Guss Island, which the Lummi people identify as their place of origin. Though several specialized studies have been conducted, a number of those are outdated, and the full extent of prehistoric archaeology has yet to be realized. Consequently, an archaeological overview and assessment is one of the park's highest priorities. A comprehensive overview and assessment would help staff identify and protect archaeological resources and expand interpretation of historic structures, ethnography, prehistory, and traditional uses. Above all, a comprehensive assessment would prioritize the park's extensive archaeological needs.

San Juan Island National Historical Park does not have an archaeologist on staff. Instead, the park relies on assistance from university partnerships and the Pacific West Regional Office, whose staff serve many parks and do not have the time and resources to address all of the

park's needs. In addition, garnering funds to support archaeology projects can be a challenge. In the absence of archaeology staff and project funds, archaeological sites remain threatened by erosion and illegal collecting of artifacts. Sites at risk would benefit from the addition of more seasonal interpreters and law-enforcement rangers who could explain the importance of resources to visitors and monitor their activities.

San Juan Island National Historical Park does not have the proper on-site facilities to fully care for its museum collection and archives, which include shells, buttons, military emblems, smoking pipes, leather shoe parts, ceramics, bottles, bricks, and window panes. The archive includes letters from the 1860s, photographs, and visitor logs. The Marblemount Facility at North Cascades National Park stores about 400,000 items, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site houses 53,000 items from the Hudson's Bay Company, and the University of Washington's Burke Museum in Seattle stores some 500,000 prehistoric items. Partnerships with these sites are critical for proper storage of the collection and archives, but it is difficult for the park's interpretive staff to develop new exhibits when the collections are located off site.

Staff would like to be able to display more of the museum collection, and they are currently working toward this goal. The park's draft general management plan calls for permanent and rotating exhibits to display artifacts from the collection and to educate the public about the role of archaeology at the park. More funding is also needed to support the curator at the Marblemount Facility. At current funding levels, there is only enough support for the curator to care for the collection for about six weeks each year.

Although the enabling legislation for San Juan Island National Historical Park focuses on the period of dual occupation in the mid-1800s, the area has a rich history of use and settlement by several groups of American Indians. Known

collectively as the Central Coast Salish, they include the Lummi, Klallam, Swinomish, Samish, San Juan Tribe of Indians, Mitchell Bay Tribe, and the Canadian Songhees, Saanich, and Semiahmoo bands. Some of these groups established permanent settlements on the islands, while others were transient and used the islands for temporary camps. These peoples fished, harvested shellfish, hunted, and cultivated the camas plant (*Camassia* spp.) on San Juan Island. The park would like to further research the Salish peoples and interpret their lives through exhibits and programs. But because prehistory and early use of the islands are not included in the park's establishing legislation, the staff cannot focus on this work while funding shortfalls exist. For now, the park interprets these first inhabitants with a prehistoric exhibit that was installed at the American Camp visitor center in the summer of 2006, and prehistoric history is interpreted in special summer programs.

Camas plants were an important food for American Indian peoples on the San Juan Islands.



MIKE VOIRI



In keeping with the park's management goals, the prairie at American Camp looks much like it did during the mid 1800s, though invasive species are causing problems.

### NATURAL RESOURCES—RESTORING HISTORIC SETTINGS AND PRESERVING NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

San Juan Island National Historical Park was created to preserve and interpret historical events; the park's natural resources and surroundings are critical elements of this story. Protecting natural resources also contributes to cultural resource management goals. For example, non-native plants and animals affect both native species and cultural landscapes, so addressing invasive species benefits both natural and cultural resources.

Much of San Juan Island National Historical Park is forested, though there are large expanses of open prairie, six miles of marine shoreline, and unique lagoon habitats. Overall, many of the ecosystems, including the prairies and forests of the American and English Camps, look much as they did between 1853 and 1871, which is compatible with park goals. But species composition and some ecosystems have changed as a result of invasions by non-native species (see sidebar).

The south side of Young Hill, in the English Camp, is home to a remnant stand of Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*), a type of ecosystem known

## NON-NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS PLAGUE PARK

Ecosystems and cultural landscapes within San Juan Island National Historical Park are threatened by non-native plants and animals. European rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) were brought to the island during the 1880s as a food source for settlers. The animals, which reproduce quickly, are wreaking havoc on the park's archaeology and natural habitats, especially the prairie at American Camp. The rabbits are responsible for a loss of native grasses and an increase in bare soil, which is quickly colonized by invasive plants such as Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), and bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*). Prairie restoration is the park's top natural resources goal, and removing the destructive rabbits is an important component of restoration efforts. Plans for rabbit control will be outlined in the park's upcoming general management plan. A feasibility study and environmental assessment is being drafted for rabbit control; the plan should be ready in 2008.

To combat non-native plants and move toward prairie restoration, the park receives help from the North Coast Cascades Network Exotic Plant Management Team. Invasive plants are removed by hand and with the careful use of herbicides. In some

locations, prescribed fire is also used to prepare sites for restoration; afterward, native grasses are planted. Control efforts focus on Canada thistle, California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and a number of other invasive species.

In addition to rabbits, other problem animals include feral cats (*Felis silvestris*) and non-native red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*). The San Juan Islands are located along an important avian migration route, and the park provides a critical resting stop for many species, while others nest within park boundaries. Cats and foxes prey on several bird species, including the vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*), threatening their survival.

Invasive marine species in the waters surrounding San Juan Island National Historical Park include a seaweed, (*Sargassum japonica*), and two bivalves—Pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*) and mahogany clams (*Nuttalia obscurata*). These species are considered to be potential problems for the park rather than immediate or existing concerns; the park has limited data on marine systems and could use additional research on species diversity in these environments.



ERIN MCPHERSON

Prairie restoration at the park is a top priority and includes planting native species that are propagated by park staff.

## PARK HARBORS RARE ISLAND MARBLE BUTTERFLY

Previously believed to be extinct, island marble butterflies (*Euchloe ausonides insulanus*) were rediscovered in the San Juan Islands in the late 1990s. The Park Service is working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the island marble butterfly under the framework of a conservation agreement developed by the two agencies in 2006. Management is a challenge because activities such as prescribed fires, historic landscape restoration, and visitor activities all have the potential to affect the species and their habitat. In addition, rising sea levels associated with global warming could affect the habitat of this rare butterfly, which sometimes lays eggs on native mustard plants around old driftwood piles on beach strands.

for its high biological diversity. Garry oak woodlands on the continent have declined, so remaining stands larger than one acre—such as the Young Hill stand—are classified as priority habitat ecosystems by the state of Washington. To help protect the Young Hill woodland, park staff began conducting prescribed burns in 2003. Resource managers expect that the reintroduction of fire into the ecosystem will help restore natural successional processes by helping fire-resistant native species, such as Garry oak, out-compete undergrowth, such as Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*).

Another special park ecosystem, the saltwater lagoons on the north shore of Griffin Bay at American Camp, provide habitat for many plant and animal species. The lagoons and surrounding salt marshes host several species that the state has listed as “sensitive,” such as sharpfruited peppergrass (*Lepidium oxycarpum*), Nuttall’s quillwort (*Isoetes nuttallii*), and erect pygmy-weed (*Crassula connata*). The lagoons are also a natural deposit site for driftwood, including logs that have been treated with creosote, a

The Lummi people identify Guss Island, which sits in Garrison Bay, as their place of origin. Park managers are concerned about the decline in eelgrass in the bay.

ELIZABETH MEYERS







BRENNAN GARRETT

compound that is toxic to marine plants and animals. A preservative that has been used in aquatic environs to retard wood decay, creosote was often used to coat logs used in the construction of docks, and for most telephone poles. Park staff have identified creosote as a pollutant of concern for water and submerged lands. A joint project sponsored by the Northwest Straits Commission and Washington Department of Natural Resources is scheduled to remove these logs from lagoons and other sites at the American Camp in late 2007.

Another concern within San Juan Island National Historical Park's marine system is the sudden decline of eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) in Westcott and Garrison Bays, adjacent to the

English Camp. Eelgrass habitat sustains important migratory and resident animal species, including Dungeness crab (*Cancer magister*), black brant (*Branta bernicla*), and juvenile salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.). The exact causes of this loss are currently unknown, but sources of concern include pollutants from nearby shoreline development and anchoring of recreational boats during the summer months. Park staff are waiting for the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the University of Washington Friday Harbor Labs to complete their research on the decline of the eelgrass before moving forward with restoration plans.

Lagoons, such as Jakles Lagoon in American Camp, provide important habitat.



Storms and other unexpected events cause damage that is not covered by the park's budget.

## STEWARDSHIP CAPACITY

### *FUNDING AND STAFFING—FUNDS NEEDED FOR STAFF INCREASES AND RESOURCE PROJECTS*

Stewardship capacity details how well equipped the Park Service is to protect the parks. The most significant factor affecting a park's ability to protect its resources is the funding a park receives from Congress and the administration. San Juan Island National Historical Park's operational budget was \$725,000 in 2007. Although the park has received some additional funding over the past ten years, it has not kept pace with

increased expenses. Most mandated salary increases and costs associated with a change in retirement plans have not been funded by Congress and had to be absorbed by the park. These cost increases have exceeded funding increases by about 4 percent per year and have resulted in a shortage of operating funds.

At existing funding levels, the park cannot afford to adequately control non-native species, plant native species, or maintain and restore historic structures. These structures are vital to interpreting the park's period of significance, and extensive building rehabilitation is one of the park's highest priorities. Unfunded resource

projects at San Juan Island National Historical Park total at least \$358,000 and include initiating the eradication of non-native European rabbits, rehabilitating the American Camp laundry quarters and restoring the interior of the officers' quarters, replacing the deteriorated elements of the English Camp barracks, and stabilizing two cultural landscapes. Tight budgets also leave no room for the park to respond to unexpected events such as storms, which are common in the Pacific Northwest and have the potential to significantly damage resources, as occurred in 2006.

Staff positions have also gone unfilled due to a consistent lack of funding. The park's administrative officer position has been vacant for two years while two seasonal interpretive positions and two seasonal maintenance positions have not been filled. A seasonal law-enforcement position has also been shortened due to lack of funds. The staff shortage requires that existing personnel perform additional duties, making it more difficult for remaining staff to effectively protect and care for resources. Although the

park has made creative use of volunteers to staff visitor centers, the quality and variety of visitor programs has declined as seasonal funding has been absorbed by increased personnel costs. To meet existing needs, funds are needed to support additional staff: one full-time and one seasonal resource management specialist; one full-time and one seasonal law enforcement ranger; one full-time and one seasonal maintenance worker; and one full-time interpretive ranger.

#### *PARK PLANNING—NEW GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN NEARLY FINISHED*

To guide the management of diverse resources, national parks rely on a variety of plans. The primary overarching planning document at most parks is the general management plan (GMP). Staff at San Juan Island National Historical Park are close to finishing a new GMP to replace the existing plan, which dates to 1979. The new GMP will address contemporary management issues such as rabbit control. Once the GMP is complete, the staff plan to begin



The visitor center at American Camp is too small and contains outdated exhibits.

BRENNAN GARRELTIS

Volunteers dressed in period costumes bring history alive at Encampment, an annual reenactment of 1872 events.

work on a resource stewardship plan to guide cultural- and natural resource management. This is scheduled for 2009.

In addition to a new GMP and resource stewardship plan, park resources would benefit from an updated vegetation management plan, a comprehensive archaeological overview and assessment, and a research design and archaeological base map. These documents are needed to adequately address important management issues, but they have yet to be completed because the park lacks both the staff and funds to do so. Funds are in place and work is under way on a rabbit-control feasibility study and an environmental impact statement for relocation of the Cattle Point road, which is threatened by coastal erosion.

#### RESOURCE EDUCATION—NEW VISITOR CENTER AND ADDITIONAL INTERPRETIVE STAFF TOP CURRENT NEEDS

Visitors to San Juan Island National Historical Park may take advantage of one of the park's interpretive presentations or simply stroll through the park and read interpretive panels. Teachers can take students to the park for ranger-led tours, or they may request educational materials for their classrooms. Each year, the park hosts a reenactment event called Encampment. Held at the English Camp, this event commemorates the British relinquishing their holdings to the Americans on November 22, 1872. The reenactment is complete with volunteers in period costumes demonstrating

MIKE VOURI



camp life and trades such as woodworking and blacksmithing; a candlelit ball rounds out the day's events.

The park strives to provide an array of learning opportunities for visitors of all ages, but budget shortfalls have forced the park to decrease the number of interpretive programs over the last ten years. Funds allow for only two full-time interpretive staff, and there is no money for seasonal interpreters. At least two seasonal interpreters are needed to adequately serve park visitors, which numbered 260,000 in 2006.

Visitor facilities also need attention, to better serve the public. The current visitor center at the American Camp is a modular building that was intended to be temporary but has been used for the past 30 years. Exhibits within this visitor center are minimal and very outdated. To better serve visitors, this "temporary" building should be replaced with a modern and permanent structure. The park will submit a request to fund this project sometime this year, but this type of construction funding is limited and often takes several years to obtain.

#### EXTERNAL SUPPORT—PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE VALUABLE SERVICES

At San Juan Island National Historical Park, volunteers perform the types of services that paid employees once carried out, including staffing the visitor center, performing living history demonstrations, guiding walks and giving talks, and providing informal interpretation. In 2006, 199 volunteers contributed 9,856 hours of service to the park. This represents an increase over the previous decade, as the park increasingly relies on volunteers instead of paid employees.

The park also receives support from Battery D, a nonprofit organization that raises funds and supports historic reenactment activities. The members of Battery D appear at several events each year dressed in period uniforms and

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- **Participate in park planning efforts:** The public is invited to provide input on all park plans and studies. San Juan Island National Historical Park is currently updating its general management plan. Copies of the park's planning documents and information on public involvement opportunities can be found online at [www.nps.gov/sajh](http://www.nps.gov/sajh).
- **Volunteer in the parks.** To learn about opportunities at San Juan Island National Historical Park, contact the park at 360.378.2902.
- **Join NPCA** ([www.npca.org/support\\_npca](http://www.npca.org/support_npca)) and/or become an NPCA activist and learn about legislative initiatives affecting parks. When you join our activist network, you will receive *Park Lines*, a biweekly electronic newsletter with the latest park news and ways you can help. Join by visiting [www.npca.org/take\\_action](http://www.npca.org/take_action).

clothing to represent the events of the Pig War. Their first-person interpretation is an important component of the park's education program.

In addition to Battery D, the park has relationships with a number of community and conservation organizations, including the San Juan County Land Bank, San Juan Preservation Trust, and the San Juan Island Trails Committee.



## APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

To determine the condition of known natural and cultural resources at San Juan Island National Historical Park and other national parks, the National Parks Conservation Association developed a resource assessment and ratings process. The assessment methodology can be found online at NPCA's Center for State of the Parks® web site ([www.npca.org/stateoftheparks/](http://www.npca.org/stateoftheparks/)).

Researchers gather available information from a variety of research, monitoring, and background sources in a number of critical categories. The natural resources rating reflects assessment of more than 120 discrete elements associated with environmental quality, biotic health, and ecosystem integrity. Environmental quality and biotic health measures address air, water, soils, and climatic change conditions as well as their influences and human-related influences on plants and animals. Ecosystems measures address the extent, species composition, and interrelationships of organisms with each other and the physical environment.

The scores for cultural resources are determined based on the results of indicator questions that reflect the National Park Service's own Cultural Resource Management Guideline and other Park Service resource management policies.

Stewardship capacity refers to the Park Service's ability to protect park resources, and includes discussion of funding and staffing levels, park planning documents, resource education, and external support.



BRENNAN GARRETT

For this report, researchers collected data and prepared a paper that summarized the results. The draft underwent peer review and was also reviewed by staff at San Juan Island National Historical Park.

NPCA's Center for State of the Parks represents the first time that such assessments have been undertaken for units of the National Park System. Comments on the program's methods are welcome.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Please visit [www.npca.org/stateoftheparks/](http://www.npca.org/stateoftheparks/) to view these reports and to learn more about the Center for State of the Parks®.

NPCA thanks the staff of San Juan Island National Historical Park who reviewed the factual accuracy of the information used in this report. We also thank peer reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

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