

SECTION II. PARK MISSION

The following section pertains to Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine. The Park Mission for Hampton National Historic Site is not described because the authorized service at Hampton NHS does not involve interpretive materials based on the Park Mission, Purpose, Significance and Themes.

Legislated Purpose and Significance of Park

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine (Fort McHenry NM&HS) was established in 1925 to preserve cultural and natural resources for the inspiration, education, and benefit of the public as the birthplace of “The Star-Spangled Banner”.

Its purpose is to preserve the Star Fort, the key to the defense of Baltimore during the Battle of Baltimore, September 13-14, 1814, as a perpetual national memorial and shrine as the birthplace of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” written by Francis Scott Key.

The significance of Fort McHenry lies in the fact that the sight of the American Flag, still flying after the 25-hour bombardment by the British, signaled the successful defense of the fort and the nation, and inspired Francis Scott Key to write “The Star-Spangled Banner”.

Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Laws and Park Jurisdiction

Although all applicable federal, state and local laws apply to the concessioner, the only regular inspections will be by the National Park Service. Because the park is under concurrent Federal and State jurisdiction, park rangers have authority to enforce both Federal and State laws as well as National Park Service regulations. The National Park Service has a cooperative agreement with Baltimore City to provide structural fire protection. The concessioner will be responsible for paying the normal Maryland State and local sales tax like other retail businesses in the State. Sewer, water and electricity are supplied directly by local entities, not the National Park Service. Any building and maintenance activities will comply with all federal, state and local codes. Because of the nature of the building and its location, the National Park Service does not expect to authorize any new construction. Although operations are conducted on Federal property, the concessioner is subject to state and local laws and ordinances in the same manner as if they operated outside of the Federal holding. Business permits normally required must be secured and taxes normally payable must be paid.

Park Management Structure

Fort McHenry NM&HS is managed by a Superintendent and three division chiefs: Administrative Officer, Chief of Visitor Services, and Chief of Area Services. The Chief of Visitor Services has responsibility for supervising the concession operation, subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Park Resource Management Issues

Only those resource management issues which relate directly to the concessioner are noted here.

As a Federal conservation agency, as well as a concerned and responsible member of the community, the National Park Service will encourage the concessioner to reduce the generation

of non-biodegradable solid waste and find alternatives to non-biodegradable packaging materials. The concessioner will be encouraged to participate in Baltimore City's recycling program and must operate a recycling program for glass, plastics, bi-metal cans and aluminum cans, as well as composting for compostable materials.

PARK INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND GIFT SHOP MISSION STATEMENT

The Fort McHenry gift shop should serve primarily as an extension of the educational aspects of Fort McHenry, a means of allowing visitors to take something of their park experience away with them, and to encourage further study of and reflection about park themes. As an integral part of the Fort McHenry's interpretive responsibilities to the public, the Fort McHenry gift shop offers visitors an opportunity to purchase items, which relate to the park's themes and educational purpose.

The image of Fort McHenry and the Fort McHenry gift shop are intertwined; the shop, in both its personnel and merchandise, is a front line of the Fort McHenry's interaction with its public and should exemplify quality and professionalism.

It is the responsibility of the shop personnel to be fully aware of the source, quality, authenticity and educational worth of all items sold in the shop.

The park will encourage the concessioner to offer products that reflect the park themes (developed during the park's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan process in November 2002). Considering the small size of the gift shop not all themes can be addressed, however, these themes will be encouraged during review.

The concessioner should create a mission statement which states why items sold are appropriate to the park, for what type of consumer, and how the item is an aid to the park visit or encourages further reflection or study of the park. All items and prices must be reviewed by the Superintendent prior to sale.

Introduction - Park Purpose

The purpose of Fort McHenry as a national park unit and the nation's only National Historic Shrine is derived from the legislation that created Fort McHenry in 1925. At that time Congress provided for "the restoration of the old Fort McHenry proper to such a condition as would make it suitable for preservation permanently as a national monument and perpetual national memorial shrine as the birthplace of the immortal 'Star-Spangled Banner,' written by Francis Scott Key..."

This includes the primary components of Fort McHenry's story (Fort McHenry, the flag, the national anthem and its author, Francis Scott Key).

Fort McHenry - Primary Significance

The defense of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812 is of national significance because it inspired Francis Scott Key to compose what would become the national anthem. Also, the symbol of resolve that inspired Key, the flag that flew above Fort McHenry during the British attack, has become a treasured national icon. Fort McHenry played a central role in the

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Chesapeake Campaign during the War of 1812, which had a significant impact on the outcome of the war and on post-war America.

Fort McHenry- Secondary Significance

The fort survives as an example of early 19th century American coastal fortifications, and its location reflects the importance of shipping and port cities to the American economy. As military needs changed, the configuration of the fort and its harbor side setting evolved.

Fort McHenry played a significant role in Civil War history in the struggle to keep Maryland in the Union and as a prison for Confederate sympathizers who were jailed when President Lincoln suspended the Writ of Habeas Corpus. It continued to be an active military post into the 20th Century. In World War I it was a major military hospital, and during World War II functioned as a Coast Guard training center.

Interpretive Mission Statement: Interpretive themes capture the essence of Fort McHenry’s significance. They are Fort McHenry’s most important stories and represent core messages that every audience should have the opportunity to hear.

Primary themes - These are those stories that must be communicated to every visitor because they are essential to understanding the significance of Fort McHenry’s resources:

Topic 1: Fort McHenry as the “Birthplace of the Star-Spangled Banner”

Topic 2: A Convergence of Symbols: The symbolic meaning of Fort McHenry is magnified by its association with the national anthem and the flag during the War of 1812.

Topic 3: The Defense of Baltimore during the War of 1812

Secondary Themes - Secondary themes enrich the primary stories and are enhancements to the primary themes:

Subtopic 1: National Defense, Fort McHenry as a First System fortification, and the Fort Community that Supported It.

Subtopic 2: The Constitutional Challenge during the Civil War: During the Civil War, Fort McHenry became a battleground over constitutional rights and federal authority. This theme focuses on the divided loyalties of Maryland’s residents and on the steps that President Lincoln took to maintain federal authority and keep the state in the Union.

Subtopic 3: The Fort and the Chesapeake Bay: This explores how Fort McHenry’s history and activities have been shaped by its location on the bay and proximity to Baltimore. This recognizes the park’s increasing partnerships in bay stewardship at a local and regional level.

PARK PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

General Management Plan (GMP)

The park's General Management Plan (GMP) describes its broad goals for directing managerial as well as commercial, developmental and partnership activities.

The Management Objectives for Fort McHenry NM&HS from the GMP include the following:

Restore, preserve and maintain Fort McHenry as a national monument and memorial to the Battle of Baltimore and the writing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." This requires preserving all Category A structures and the objects in the museum collection.

Park Improvement Projects

Fort McHenry's 6,600 square-foot visitor center was built in 1964 to accommodate 250,000 visitors annually. Current visitation is approximately 600,000 and the building cannot meet the park's visitor service or administrative needs. On a typical spring day, 30-40 buses may visit the park and long lines form for information, the audiovisual program, the bookstore and restrooms. The exhibit area is small and cramped, and the restrooms do not meet A.D.A. requirements.

In late 2005, funding was approved for design and construction of a new Education and Administrative Center to prepare the park for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. The facility will significantly enlarge the space dedicated to educational and interpretive retail operations. The new facility is expected to be completed in 2010.

Park maintenance projects, special events, and interpretive activities will all have some effect on the concession business.

PARK MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR CONCESSION SERVICES

The need for commercial visitor services in Fort McHenry NM&HS is based on objectives for visitor use described in law, planning documents that exist for the park, and the judgment of management considering the way the park is currently used and the present objectives of the National Park Service. The National Park Service has determined that the facilities and services that are called for in this Prospectus are necessary and appropriate to the purposes of Fort McHenry NM&HS.

The park concession management objectives are to provide interpretive literature, theme related items, souvenirs to the visitor and limited food service to enhance the visitor experience.