



Fort Stevens State Park
100 Peter Iredale Road
Hammond, OR 97121

Park: 503-861-3170
Info: 1-800-551-6949
oregonstateparks.org



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Fort Stevens State Park

Trail Guide & Historic Military Site



Welcome to Fort Stevens

The Fort Stevens Military Reservation guarded the mouth of the Columbia River from the Civil War through World War II. The park has more than five miles of hiking trails and seven miles of bike paths. The Oregon Coast Trail begins at the South Jetty and continues along the beach.

Hiking Trails

Scenic views of the water abound on the two-mile trail around Coffenbury Lake. A mile-long trail runs between the north end of the lake and Battery Russell along a ridge created by dune action many years ago, then connects with a nature trail east of the campground. This trail can also be accessed from the dump station.

If you look carefully at the forest, you can see how it is layered, with the tall trees on top, small trees and shrubs next, and small flowering plants on the ground. Each type of plant has found the level where the amount of sun is just right for its growth.

Trees & Flora

The park is full of Sitka Spruce, Shore Pine, Western Hemlock, Red Alder and Cascara Buckthorn. Small trees and shrubs include Pacific Red Elder, Oregon Crabapple, Coast Rhododendron, Red Huckleberry, Salmonberry and Salal. The ground cover is patched with Horsetail, Skunk Cabbage, and a variety of ferns such as lico-rice, sword, bracken, deer and wood.

Watch for uprooted trees exposing broad, shallow root systems. This is caused by high water levels in the ground, which prevent the roots from going very deep.

Guardhouse



Because of shallow roots, large trees are toppled by storms. These decaying trees return to the soil and supply nutrients for other plants.

You are not walking alone on this trail; deer like to walk here, too. Other wild animals that inhabit the park, include waterfowl, ravens, squirrels, possum, beaver and raccoons. Look for mounds of earth and burrow holes made by gophers, moles, and mice.

Things to Know

Day-use fees are charged at Coffenbury Lake and the historic area of this park year-round. All vehicles in those areas must display a daily or a seasonal pass. Daily passes are available in these locations. Annual or 24-month day-use passes may be purchased at the park office or from other vendors.

The annual or 24-month day-use pass is valid at all state parks charging the fee. Your camping receipt or check-in card serves as a pass for those days registered. Display the receipt on the driver's side of your dashboard, or put your check-in card on your rear-view mirror.

Vehicles on the Beach

Motor vehicle travel on the beach is prohibited north of the Peter Iredale beach access to the South Jetty from noon to midnight May 1—September 15. Travel is permitted in this area at all other times. Be aware of posted signs for other rules and regulations.



Civil War Rodman Cannon

Local Sightseeing

Astoria is historically important as the first permanent American settlement west of the Mississippi. The Columbia River Maritime Museum, Fort Astoria, the Clatsop County Historical Museum, and the Astoria Column all offer information on the area's history. Call the Astoria Chamber of Commerce (503) 325-6311 for more information.

Lewis and Clark National Historical Park is home to a replica of the fort in which the Lewis and Clark expedition spent the winter of 1805-06. Drive south on Ridge Road, turn left at the "Y" to find alternate Highway 101, then follow the signs.

Seaside and Cannon Beach offer resort activities and spectacular scenery. Call the Seaside Chamber of Commerce (1-800-444-6740) or the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce (1-503-436-2623).



Pacific Sloped Flycatcher

Oregon Coast Roosevelt Elk



Guide to Historic Military Site & Recreation Trails

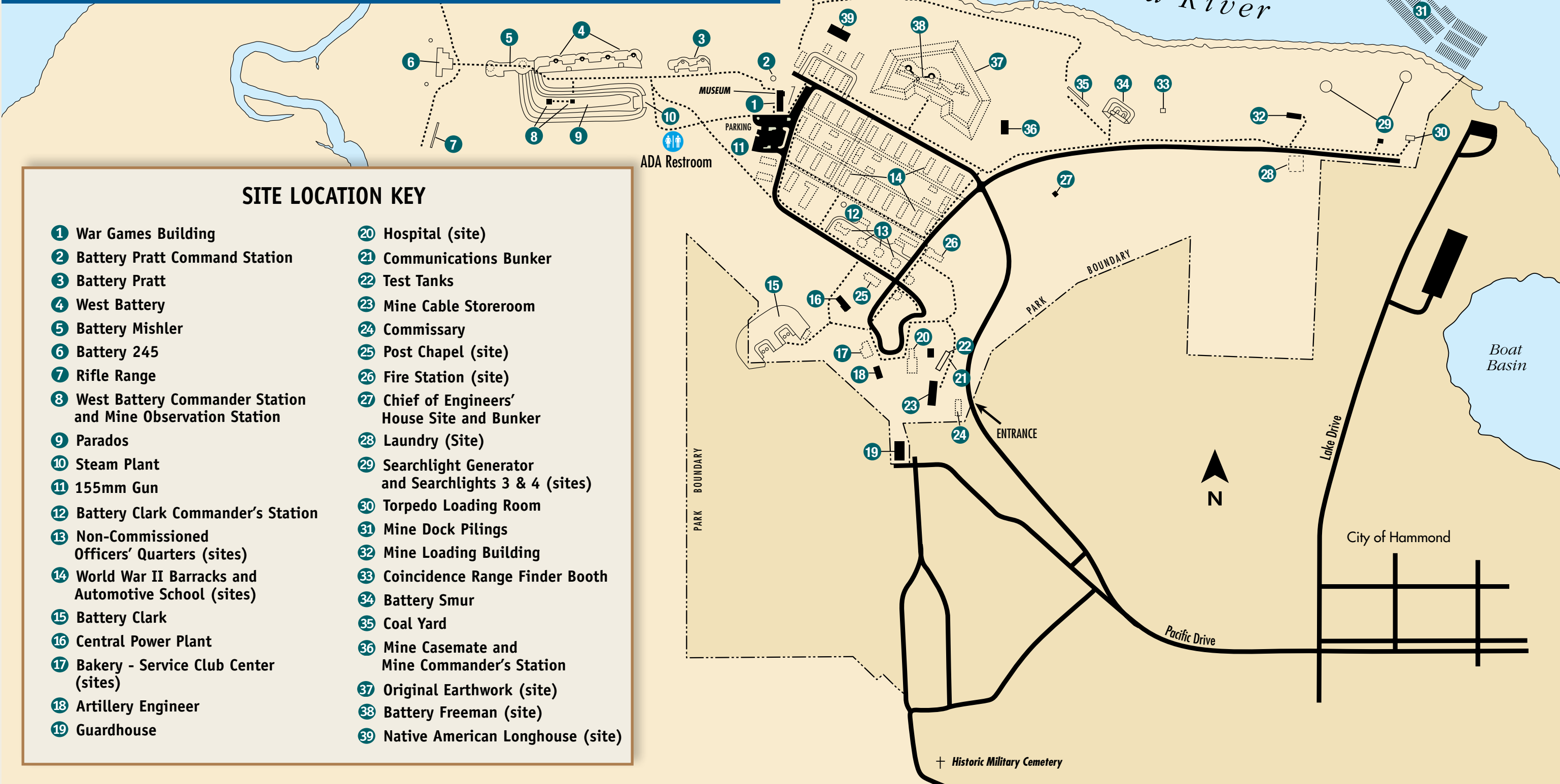
Experience Civil War History with a Self-Guided Tour

Fort Stevens, named for Territorial Governor General Isaac Ingalls Stevens, who was killed at Chantilly, Virginia, in 1862, was constructed during the Civil War and remained active until shortly after World War II. From 1897 to 1904, the fort experienced significant development, including the construction of eight concrete gun batteries. Although the guns have been removed, nearly all the batteries remain and are the primary features of this tour.

After the army coast artillery abandoned Fort Stevens, many of the buildings in the fort area were demolished. To get a sense of what the fort looked like when it was an active military post, visit the scale model and other exhibits in the Visitor Center.

A walking tour takes about an hour for the first half (stops 1–14 on the map) and an hour for the second half (stops 15–39).

Fort Stevens State



**1 WAR GAMES BUILDING/
VISITORS' CENTER (1911)**

The War Games Building started out as a plotting room for the West Battery. The 2nd Fire Command fed data into the plotting room from base end stations situated nearby. The center part of the building was a dormitory for enlisted men, and the officers' quarters were located where the interpretive store sits today.

**2 BASE END STATION TO THE RIGHT OF
BATTERY PRATT (1900)**

Over time, this tower served multiple purposes. Originally, it provided Batteries Mishler, Lewis and Walker fire control information. It was also used as a meteorological station. Until Battery Pratt was deactivated, in WWII, the station provided Battery Pratt with fire control data. Eventually, it housed the remote controller for the searchlight, Position 3.

Named for 1st Lt. James P. Pratt, who was killed in action during the Civil War, this battery remained active until 1943. It was armed with two 6-inch rifles on disappearing carriages, which were designed to protect the submarine mines in the river, and to stop enemy ships from going up the Columbia River.

The first concrete emplacement built at Fort Stevens, it was one of many built along U.S. coastlines after an 1886 federal analysis found coastal fortifications severely lacking. The main feature of this emplacement was the 10-inch “disappearing guns.” By 1909 the West Battery was divided up, and Guns 1-2 were renamed Battery Lewis (for Meriwether Lewis), and Guns 3-4 were named Battery Walker, for Col. Leverett H. Walker, the commanding officer of Fort Stevens 1906-

5 WEST BATTERY, GUNS 5-6 (1898)

Guns 5-6 were also part of the West Battery. Known as Battery Mishler since 1906, this emplacement has a unique place in coast artillery design: both its 10-inch disappearing guns were capable of 360° movement, called “all around fire.” Only one other in the U.S. was so designed (in Galveston, Texas), and it no longer exists. Battery Mishler’s guns were also deactivated in 1918, although the guns were left in place for spare parts. For much of World War II, Battery Mishler was the site of the Harbor Defense Command Posts for both the Army and Navy. After the war, the guns were removed, but the pits were covered over. During the Cold War, an early warning radar and bomb site station were installed, and remained until 1962. Check the Visitor Center for a schedule of guided tours during the summer.

During World War II, the 200 series batteries were built to supplement harbor defenses. Battery 247, located across the river at Fort Canby, was the main battery of this type for the Harbor Defenses of the Columbia. Its guns, and those of Battery 245, were fired during training exercises.

The rifle range sited here was used during the early years of Fort Stevens. It was updated in 1942, but in doing so, a portion of the old range fell on several civilian workers, killing them. It fell into disuse, likely after Battery 245 came on line. After the mid-1940s, a rifle range to the west was used.

The Battery Commander Station was one of the first built. It served the West Battery, and later, Battery Mishler. A Depression Position Finder instrument was installed there. By using the height of the tide and by determining the angle of the target, triangulation was used to find the range of the target. This information was phoned to the gun(s). The submarine **mine base end station** also used a Depression Position Finder to develop range readings for the First Mine Command.

The Parados was a concept developed by the brilliant French military designer, Vauban. It consists of an embankment of earth at the back edge of an emplacement that protects it from rear attack. This parados also protected the West Battery, by limiting the area of fire from the Columbia River. If attacked, the gun crews could effectively operate in the area without fear of flying fragments from enemy ship bombardments.

This plant produced electrical power for the West Battery. It was converted to a reserve power unit in 1920.

Although the 155mm gun was never installed at Fort Stevens, two of them were mounted at North Cove, Washington. As a harbor defense weapon, this gun was mounted on a concrete emplacement called a Panama mount. The gun's projectiles weighed 95 pounds each and had a range of nearly 11 miles.

This station provided range information for Battery Clark's plotting room.

These are the oldest remains of buildings within the Fort area. Each building was a two-story duplex, built on a foundation of brick, and with brick cisterns behind each.

None of these buildings remain, but the area once hummed with activity. The foundation remnants you see were for the boiler room and the restrooms. The rest of the building was wooden and set on concrete piers. The barracks housed up to 65 men.

Named for Captain William Clark of the Corps of Discovery, this was the only mortar battery at the fort. Originally it was armed with eight 12-inch mortars; four of them were moved in 1917 across the river to Fort Canby. This equalized mortar fire at the mouth of the Columbia River, and made the Battery safer for gun operators.

This plant was oil-fueled, producing steam for electrical generators. It powered most of the complex, with an auxiliary plant at the east end of the Parados. A separate plant produced power for Battery Russell and a small plant powered the searchlights.

Bread for the fort's residents and workers was baked at this site. The building was later remodeled as a service club center, and was eventually demolished.

The Artillery Engineer and staff developed fields of fire, or grids, for various guns, which enabled quicker firing solutions for a given target. This information was then posted on large maps in the various plotting rooms. They were also responsible for monitoring weather data, because factors such as atmospheric pressure can affect the speed and range of artillery shells.

Occasionally (especially on payday), men stationed at the fort would get disorderly. When this happened, they spent time in this building. The Guardhouse is open to the public on a limited schedule during the summer months.

A two-story building here served the medical needs of the men. During World War I, swine flu devastated Fort Stevens and an estimated 50 men died in this building from the epidemic.

This bomb-proof and gas-proof building was the center of all communications. A large switchboard monitored everything. The structures in front of this building were tanks used to test cable for the sea mines.

Everything needed to operate sea mines, except the explosives, was kept here.

This is where the fort's personnel bought supplies.

The religious and emergency needs of the fort were met in these buildings. The church was appropriately painted white and the fire station red.

The house once located here was built for the Chief Engineer during fort and jetty construction. The wood paneled concrete bunker was built as a private bomb shelter after the Japanese shelled Fort Stevens in 1942.

The post laundry was privately constructed, owned, and operated until 1945, when it was transferred to the U.S. Army.

A small power-generating plant was located in this building, providing power for the two minefield searchlights. To the north, over the small mound, are two searchlight stands.

When this facility was used, a metal structure covered the concrete base and tank. Torpedoes were tested in the water tank, loaded onto railroad cars and transported to a nearby loading dock.

The earliest plans for Fort Stevens show a dock at approximately this location, but by 1874 the shoreline had changed, and an extension was necessary. By 1910, the mine operation at the mouth of the Columbia required a new docking facility, including a railroad track for loading the mines onto boats. During World War II, the docks were further improved in anticipation of naval assaults.

In this building, the explosive charges were loaded into the sea mines. They were then transported to the mine dock on railroad cars.

The small bunker was used as an observation and security post for the east end of the fort. Evidence suggests that it was not used after 1920.

Named for 3rd Lt. Elias Smur, killed during the War of 1812, this battery was armed with two 3-inch rapid fire guns. Battery Smur was designed to protect mine operations in the Columbia River. It was deactivated in 1920, and the guns were removed and scrapped.

Coal was used to heat the fort buildings.

Before World War II, all the mines on the Columbia River were controlled from this structure. Orders to detonate the submarine mines came from the Mine Commander's Station to the south of the casemate. All mines were electrically detonated, and for extra protection, the casemate was gas- and bomb-proof. During World War II, this casemate was inactive and all submarine mines in the Columbia River were controlled from Fort Columbia on the Washington side of the river.

Due to the presence of British and Confederate sea raiders in the area, President Lincoln ordered the construction of fortifications at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1863. On the Oregon side, Fort Stevens, a nine-sided earthen fort surrounded by a moat, was built at Point Adams. Armament consisted of 26 guns, including seventeen 10-inch muzzle loading Rodman cannons, which could fire a 128-pound cannonball over one mile. Fort Stevens was completed and occupied by troops in 1864. The earthwork was the only fort of its type on the west coast of the United States. During a modernization program at the turn of the century, a new battery was constructed within the original earthwork. Battery Freeman, named for Lt. Col. Constant Freeman, who served in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, was armed with two 6-inch rifles on Barbette pedestal carriages and one 3-inch gun on a pedestal mount. All guns were removed from Battery Freeman in 1920, and the battery, along with the earthwork, was leveled in 1940 to make way for a parade ground. The earthworks was reconstructed by the Friends of Old Fort Stevens in cooperation with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, and the help of the National Guard and U.S. Marine construction engineers.

This is the approximate site of a Clatsop village known as Neahkeluk. The site was the largest village in the area and was used seasonally in the summer for fishing and trading.

