

Regional Trail & Bikeway  
Systems Plan  
2006

SECTION VIII  
CULTURAL & HISTORICAL  
RESOURCES



## SECTION VIII. CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

Clark County possesses a rich cultural and environmental heritage. The area was abundant in plants and wildlife for the Chinook and Klickitat Indians to hunt, fish and gather. Lewis and Clark made their famous expedition and camped and traded with the Native Americans along the Columbia River in the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge area.



From approximately, 1840 to 1860, the Hudson's Bay Co. operated Fort Vancouver, cultivating the land, trading with the Native Americans and attracting hunters and trappers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Settlers came to Clark County to build farms and to later develop the logging industry.



Thousands of waterfowl continue to winter in Clark County's wetland areas, thriving on the mild climate and abundant food sources. Historians, archaeologists and environmentalists are finding rich sources of cultural and environmental information to study, preserve and enhance the area.

Many rewarding learning opportunities are available as the proposed trails pass through or within close proximity to some of the Country's historically and environmentally significant sites.

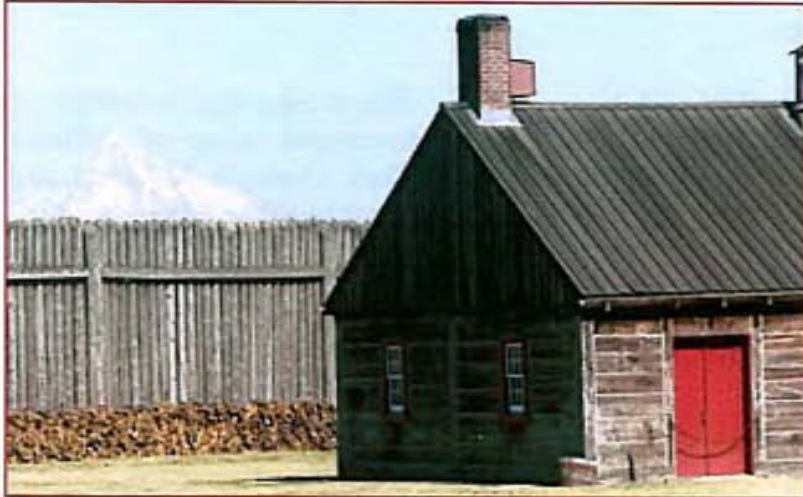
Bicyclists and hikers will be able to take day, overnight or week long cultural and environmental tours of different sections of the trail system. Clark County's historical and environmental significance will come to life to school children, who will be able to visit specific areas along the trail as they study history and ecology in school. Many of the historical and ecologically significant places are within Vancouver, Ridgefield, Camas and Cattle Ground city jurisdictions. The trails plan does not include these city jurisdictions, but provides trails to the cities enabling trail users to take advantage of each area.



## A) THE PLACES

### *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site*

Fort Vancouver was the Northwest base of operations for the



London-based Hudson's Bay Company, controlling 700,000 square miles stretching from Russian Alaska to Mexican California, and from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. As a center of activity and influence, the Fort had a profound effect on the development of this region and remained an active post until 1860. Today, costumed interpreters re-enact the past in ten reconstructed buildings, providing an authentic slice of life from Fort Vancouver's heyday.

### *Officers Row National Historic District*

Officers Row is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the Northwest and one of Vancouver's great historic treasures. The 21 exquisitely preserved Victorian-era homes built for U.S. officers represent the architecture style common to the Army, while reflecting unique Pacific Northwest



modifications. Over the years the Row has been home to such military notables as Ulysses S. Grant, George C. Marshall and Omar Bradley. Historic markers tell the story of the area.



***Downtown Vancouver***



Rich in history and full of surprises, downtown Vancouver is a great place to live, work . . . and walk. The influence of the city's founding pioneers is felt in prominent downtown structures, monuments, and the oldest public square in the Pacific Northwest. Public art, fountains, plazas and parks add to the appeal. Your tour takes you past historic attractions such as Providence Academy, built in 1873, as well as exciting examples of urban redevelopment, including Vancouver Center and Esther Short Park Plaza.



***Columbia River Waterfront***

Since 1991, Vancouver's waterfront has undergone an amazing renaissance with the development of a four-mile scenic trail connecting the downtown area to the city's long-neglected shoreline. Discovery Historic Loop links to the trail at the foot of Columbia Street and takes you past the waterfront's many historic, cultural and scenic attractions, plus shops, restaurants, and great places to picnic, play or just enjoy the view.



***City of Vancouver***

The City of Vancouver's Columbia River Renaissance Project has developed a plan, integrated with the trails plan for a 12-mile trail extending along the Columbia River corridor from Frenchman's Bar to I-205. The Renaissance Project has identified a number of significant natural, cultural, and historic resources within the study area including



Vancouver Lake, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and Officer's Row.

### ***Vancouver Lake***

Vancouver Lake's dominant feature is the adjacent Columbia River lowlands. The wetland areas at the lake have a number of points where a trail could allow observation of the unique wildlife and plant species without disturbing their environment. A public park which provides picnic, swimming and wing sailing opportunities is also located at the lake.



### ***Fort Vancouver National Historic Site***

The Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is a reproduction of the Hudson's Bay Co. operation that was located in the Vancouver vicinity from approximately 1840 to 1860. It provides a view into the life and operation of the Fort at that time. On special days, life at



the Fort is reenacted in full costume. Volunteers and National Park staff members dress in authentic costumes depicting the varied cultures from which its occupants and visitor came.

Some of the special events that occur each year include:

- Queen Victoria's Birthday Celebration
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration
- The Encampment
- The Candle Light Tour
- Christmas at the Fort Re-enactment

The National Parks Service is engaged in an ongoing program of improvements to the site. Presently the fur trapper's warehouse is nearing completion. Existing buildings include the chief factor's house, the bakery, the blacksmith shop, the infirmary, the trading post and store and the lookout tower. A garden fashioned after gardens of that time containing arbors, benches, a sundial and historic plants is located at the entrance, outside the Fort walls.



***The Clark County Historic Museum***

The Clark County Historic Museum, in the old Carnegie Library, exhibits many artifacts that are historically significant to life in the Clark County area and provides information on the history of the area. Along with a visit to the museum, history buffs and school children can take walking tours of the historically significant buildings located in the Vancouver downtown area.



**COLUMBIA WAY/COLUMBIA RIVER/EVERGREEN HIGHWAY TRAIL**

***Old Apple Tree Park***

The Old Apple Tree Park along the Columbia River Renaissance Project Trail is a city park which both honors and preserves the Northwest's oldest apple tree, planted in 1826 by the founder of Ft. Vancouver. Now surrounded on the north by SR 14 and the south by the railroad tracks, the park presents a strong contrast between the cultivated landscape of the past and the hard-edge landscape of the present. Each Fall, an Old Apple Tree Park Festival takes place where a piece of apple pie (and sometimes apple tree seedlings) may be purchased.



### ***COLUMBIA RIVER/EVERGREEN HIGHWAY TRAIL STUDY PROJECT***

The Evergreen Highway Trail Project will provide a rewarding trip east, near the Columbia River on an old residential highway to the City of Camas.

Several historic sites date back to British control from Fort Vancouver and early American settlement. The river area was important to Native American activities and settlement as well, but development and “pot hunting” has disturbed these sites leaving no specific resource to visit. Historic markers at a selected area along the bikeway could be installed to provide awareness of the importance of this area to the Native Americans. The Lewis and Clark Expedition campsites are also not accessible, but could be referred to by marker.

The following is a brief description of each of the historic and environmental points of interest along the trail.

#### ***Stranger House***

“The Stranger House” is historically significant for its close association with the earliest period of settlement in Clark County and serves as a rare example of pioneer plan construction.”



Stranger worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company in England

and came to Fort Vancouver in 1838 to tear down the temporary sawmill and replace it with a larger mill. He supervised the mill for 12 years.

#### ***Fisher’s Cemetery***

Several remnants of the old community can still be found near present day 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue, including the building which once housed the community store and the pilings in the Columbia River at the end of 164<sup>th</sup>. “The cemetery, one of the few remaining remnants of the community, is well preserved and is thought to be the oldest settlers’ burial ground in Clark County”.



### ***WPA Era Fish Hatchery***

Directly across from the sawmill site, on the north side of the highway, is the Vancouver Trout Hatchery, which is operated by the Washington Dept. of Wildlife. The attractive hatchery buildings and grounds were constructed in 1936 as a WPA (Works Projects Administration) project as part of President Roosevelt's "New Deal".

Prior to the construction of this fish hatchery, Henry Biddle's son, Spencer Biddle built a small hatchery in the same vicinity and raised rainbow trout which were sold to the Union Pacific Railroad dining car service, Henry Thiele's restaurant in Portland and large hotels in Chicago.



## **CITY OF CAMAS**

### ***Lacamas Lake Park***

Lacamas Lake Park is located at Round Lake north Camas. Donated to the citizens of Clark County by Crown Zellerback (now James River Corporation), Lacamas Lake Park provides a picnic area, play center, hiking trails and excellent fishing for trout, bass, bluegill and perch. South of the lake, below the dam, Lacamas Creek becomes a rushing stream cascading across a unique rock formation called "Pot Holes". Huge old growth trees set off a wilderness area where a nest of ospreys and other native birds attract birdwatchers. Wildflowers, including the camas lily, which blooms in mid-April, abound. Hiking trails cover the 312 acres, providing a ringside view of the natural habitat with its wide variety of wildlife.



***Pittock-Leadbetter House***

The Pittock-Leadbetter house located on Lacamas Lake is a fine example of Victorian Architecture. It was commissioned by Henry Pittock, founder of the Oregonian Newspaper as a wedding gift to his son and daughter-in-law.



As a member of the construction crew, John Roffler got his first home building experience and his inspiration to pursue a building career.

***Roffler Houses***

Several houses build by John Roffler can be seen in the City of Camas. Some include: the Alves-Roffler House which was Roffler's first home built for his bride, the Ulrich House built between 1913 and 1914 for his brother Ulrich, the Charles Farrell House, Roffler's grandest house



built for his sister and her husband, who were prominent Camas business people, and several other houses.

***Steigerwald Wildlife Refuge and Proposed Interpretive Center***

East of Camas, the Steigerwald Wildlife Refuge and proposed Interpretive Center, with construction scheduled for 1994 which will serve as the Gateway to Columbia River National Scenic Area on the Washington side, and will provide wetland



wildlife refuge education in this area of the county. The center will be located in the northeast corner of the refuge with convenient access from the rail and bikeway along the

Columbia River Dike, providing linkage to Cottonwood Beach and the proposed Washington State Park.

***Point Vancouver to Cape Horn Trail***

The trails plan provides for connection to the Vancouver to Cape Horn Trail at Lawton Creek in the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area. The Pt. Vancouver to Cape Horn Trail leads to the cliffs and scenic views of Cape Horn. Although Clark County enters only a small portion of the



Columbia Gorge Scenic Area, the trail plan provides access to explore trails located in the Gorge.



### **VANCOUVER/LAKE FELIDA/ RIDGEFIELD AREA**

The Vancouver Lake/Felida/Ridgefield Area provides the environmentalists and historian with an opportunity to study the abundant wildlife that inhabits the Vancouver Lake and Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge. Additionally, a historic prune farm and dryer are located at the Anderson/Beletski Prune Farm.

### ***Vancouver Lake***

As described earlier, Vancouver provides opportunities to explore the lake and adjacent Columbia River lowlands as well as to picnic at Vancouver Lake Park.



### ***Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge and Interpretive Center***

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, one of the most important nesting grounds for migratory birds (including ducks, swans, sandhill cranes and several subspecies of Canada geese) in the Pacific Northwest provides the individual the opportunity to study the wildlife unique to this



area. The refuge area is historically significant, as well, being "...the site of a major village of Cathlapotle Indians, a band of the Chinook tribe with whom Lewis and Clark traded and spent several nights on their 1804 expedition." A basalt quarry used to obtain cobblestones to pave the streets of Portland is also located on the site.

An interpretive center fashioned after Chinook-style longhouse and a replica of the Lewis and Clark campsite is proposed to be built. Chinook-style art is proposed to be used on both the interior and exterior of the center. The main floor will have a reception area, exhibit hall, auditorium (which can be divided into three classrooms) and an archaeological lab and curation/storage facility.

The camp site will focus on Lewis and Clark and observations made during the expedition.

### ***The Lancaster House/Columbia House***

The Lancaster House/Columbia House, which is possibly the oldest frame mansion in the state of Washington, is located north of the Wildlife refuge and visible from the boat launch road north of the Refuge.



## **BATTLE GROUND/ LEWISVILLE PARK AREA**

### ***The Lewisville Park***

Lewisville Park is the county's oldest regional park. Built by



WPA (Work Projects Administration) workers during the Depression era, its picnic shelters and historic caretaker's residence are excellent examples of 1930's Rustic Architecture.

### ***Pomeroy Living History Farm***

The Pomeroy Living History Farm provides visitors a view into one of Clark County's pre-electric farms. E.C. Pomeroy settled in Clark



County in 1910. The existing farm was built in the 1920's after the first one was destroyed by fire. It was electrified in the 1930's. During the first full weekend of each month from June through October, visitors can learn how the farm operated. There is a tea room where a plowman's lunch or afternoon tea can be purchased on Fridays and Saturdays and special teas and events area featured throughout the year. A gift shop which sells British imports is open all year during the weekend and on certain days during the week.

### ***Moulton Falls Park***

Moulton Falls Park, located on the East Fork of the Lewis River, provides historic and environmental experiences from hiking on the Murphy Grade which was built in the 1920's for logging,



visiting volcanic rock formations including pools and low waterfalls cut from the dense lava rock, to studying stands of Douglas Fir, Alder, Dogwood, Hemlock and Willow.

### ***C.A.S.E.E. (Center of Agriculture, Science, and Environmental Education)***

The C.A.S.E.E. Salmon Creek Center will provide a full day experience in wetland development, fish management, agriculture studies and environmental design. Part of the Battle Ground School District educational program, C.A.S.E.E. Salmon Creek Centers is an 80-acre site currently in the developmental stages. "The site will include a central structure housing classroom facilities, science laboratories and related facilities for learners of all ages, as well as support staff. Several agencies with a scientific, agricultural and environmental mission will also be allocated space. Other features will include a conference center with breakup rooms designed to accommodate 150 people and a demonstration/food preparation kitchen. An arboretum, nature trail, and organic farming site are being designed in conjunction with demonstrations of the use of recycled plastics, woods, tires, and organic materials. A wildlife and animal habitat area exists and will be complemented by a series of ponds which will demonstrate aquatic habitat, fisheries, and ornamental uses of water.

### ***Cedar Creek Grist Mill***

Built in 1876, the Cedar Creek Grist Mill has been restored and is open on a regular basis on weekends. Tour groups, school children and other organizations can tour the mill during the week



by appointment. The Grist Mill is the only grain grinding mill in Washington that has maintained its original structural integrity, grinds with stone and is water powered.

## **YACOLT/AMBOY/ CHELATCHIE PRAIRIE AREA**

The Yacolt/Amboy/Chelatchie Prairie Area is rich in the history of the Klickitat Indians, the McClellan Trail and early pioneer settlement. The original pioneer home where new pioneers stopped before they settled and several Indian food gathering locations can be visited in this area. The Historic Chelatchie Prairie Cemetery and Yale Bridge provide additional insight into the history and ecology of the area.



Although the Amboy/Chelatchie Prairie Area has a rich historic background, (except for the historic homes) a proposed historic museum, bridge and cemetery, much of the history is not easily detected on casual observance. This study, therefore, suggests that this area be given extra support in marking its historically significant sites. The approach suggested below, in addition to pointing out historically significant sites will add a distinct character that should provide added tourist interest. This may

serve as a pilot program for marking other historic places in the county.

### ***North Clark County Historic Museum***

The North Clark County Historic Museum will be housed in the old United Brethren Church building, which was built in 1910. The building is presently being restored and will display Native American, pioneer and logging exhibits.

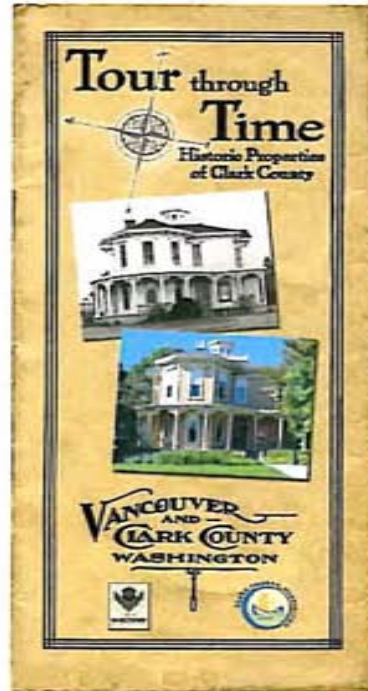


### ***Amboy School***

The Amboy School is located up the road from the Museum. It has been remodeled and is presently used as a residence. The outside of the building still shows how the old school looked. A marker telling when the school was in session and illustrating how it was used could be placed near the front gate. It could depict the children playing outside on the school ground, ringing the school bell (which will be exhibited in the museum) and showing how the children dressed and worked in the classroom. Additional information could tell how long they went to school and what they studied.

### ***Historic Homes***

Many of the first pioneer homes dotting the landscape in the Amboy area provides the visitor a view of what life was like at the turn of the century. These homes are used as present day residences and the owners have somewhat maintained the original appearance. Some of the houses have been restored while others show the wear of time, providing a pleasant view into the home life of this small rural area. Markers could be placed at each home showing the name of the original family and the date the house was built. A map showing the location of each house and telling the history of the area would provide an interesting self guided tour for bicyclists, walkers and motorists.



### ***Chelatchie Prairie/Tumtum Mountain***

The Chelatchie Prairie, quickly disappearing to suburban development, was an important food gathering area for the Klickitat Indians, who traveled from the Yakima area to Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Adams to gather berries, to the Chelatchie Prairie and surrounding area to gather and process camas root and bracken fern and to Fort Vancouver to trade. Located in the prairie near the Mt. St. Helens National Monument Headquarters, is a field where camas lily blooms.

This field is also the site of one of the Indian camas root food processing locations. From the field, is a view of Tumtum Mountain, a distinctive landmark and a special place to the Indians. A small bicycle and pedestrian rest stop could be provided in this general location. A special historic marker could be placed which would include a paved central area with information imbedded into the pavement telling about the significance of the area and which would show



a map of the area as it was used by the Native Americans. The rest stop could be located to provide a view of Tumtum Mountain and a sculpture of Indian women and children digging camas root could be placed in the foreground. Camas lilies could be planted en masse around the sculpture for visitors to see bloom. A description of the native plants important to the Klickitat with pictures or relief sculptures

showing what the plants look like can be included in a sitting wall near the sculpture. Rocks or benches can be provided upon which visitors can quietly sit, eat their lunch and experience what the area was like when the Indians came to gather and process the food. A description of how the food was processed and, if feasible, a replica of the root processing ovens could be located off to the side of the central part of the area.

