RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FORT WARD HISTORICAL PARK

Fort Ward Gate Rededication, September 25, 2010
Photo: T. Fulton

by the

AD HOC FORT WARD PARK AND MUSEUM AREA

STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY GROUP

for the

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

JANUARY, 2011

[Cover photo L. to R.: James Hartmann, City Manager, Council Member Alicia Hughes, Council Member Paul Smedberg, Council Member Redella "Del" Pepper, Friends of Fort Ward President William Schreiner, Museum Director Susan Cumbey, Assistant Museum Director Wally Owen, Vice Mayor Kerry Donley, Mayor William Euille, Council Member Frank Fannon, Office of Historic Alexandria Director Lance Mallamo, and Colonel David E. Anderson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.]

FORT WARD PARK AND MUSEUM AREA STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY GROUP

MEMBERS

Tom Fulton, Chair

Charles Ziegler, Vice-Chair

William Schreiner, Secretary

Richard Brune

Ripley Forbes

Robert Moir

Linda Ries

Frances Terrell

Philip Voorhees

Adrienne Washington

CITY SUPPORT

James Spengler

Laura Durham

Walter Powell

Lance Mallamo

Pamela Cressey

Susan Cumbey

Wally Owen

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Executive Summary	**5**
Map – Known and Potential Cultural Resources Fort Ward Park	**6**
1. Introduction	**7**
2. History and Culture **Charles Ziegler and Frances Terrell**	**10**
Recommendations	**17**
3. Recreational Use **Ripley Forbes and Robert Moir**	**19**
Recommendations	**21**
4. Environment and Natural Resources **Linda Ries and Richard Brune**	**23**
Recommendations	**25**
5. Park Operations **William Schreiner and Philip Voorhees**	**27**
Recommendations	**34**
6. Planning **Tom Fulton et al**	**38**
Recommendations	**43**
7. Development and Promotion **Adrienne Washington and Tom Fulton**	**45**
Recommendations	**47**
Appendices	
I. The Ad Hoc Fort Ward and Museum Area Stakeholders Advisory Group	**48**
I I. Resolution 2349	**51**
III. Summary of Community Concerns	**53**
IV. *Washington Post* Article	**55**
V. Initial Recommendations for Archaeology & History at Fort Ward Park	**57**

Executive Summary

The Advisory Group, created by the City Council to make recommendations on management at Fort Ward Park, offers the following specific actions for the City:

- **Prepare a Fort Ward Master Plan**. The plan should include: a Resource Inventory and Management Plan ("RMP"); a Cultural, Historical and Archaeological Resource Inventory; a Storm Water Run-off Mitigation Plan; an Interpretive Plan; a Vegetation Management plan, a plan for Community Input, a Joint Management Plan among affected city agencies including the use of cooperative Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"); Special Use Permits ("SUP"); and provisions for Picnic and Event Permits. Such a Master Plan would provide citizens with a role in, and understanding of, management decisions at Fort Ward Park.

- **Complete the archaeological investigation** at Fort Ward Park. With the discovery of marked and unmarked graves, the City must make it a priority to complete an inventory of sites, promote understanding, properly interpret, ensure protection and strive to honor the graves of the African Americans and others in Fort Ward Historical Park.

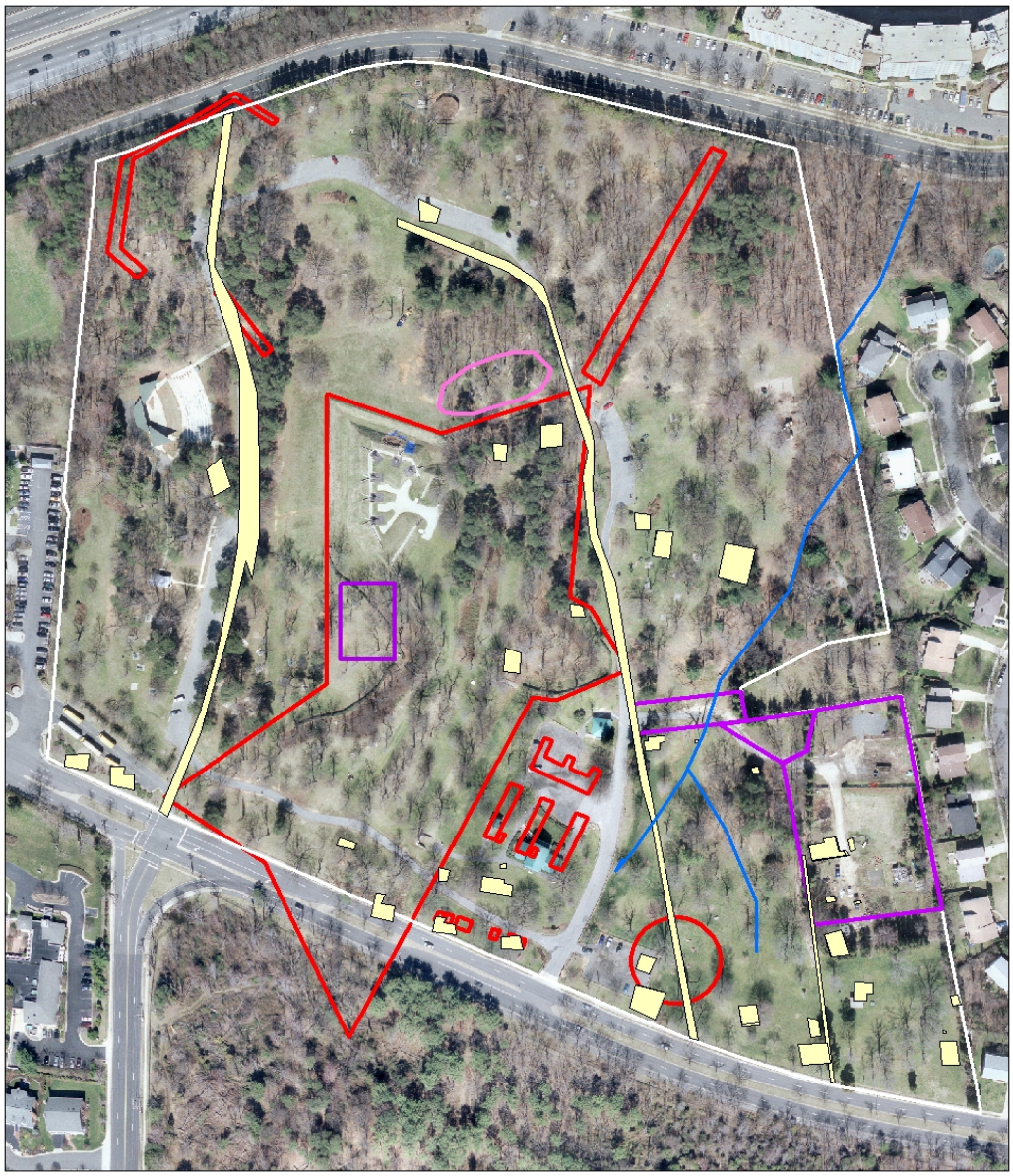
- **Address infrastructure issues** at Fort Ward Park. **Mitigate storm water runoff problems** and threats to marked and unmarked graves within the Park, the privately-owned Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, and impacts on the recreational sites, topsoil and vegetation throughout the park. Move the playground to a location that is fully accessible and adjacent to parking, perhaps on the West side, south of the Amphitheater.

- **Focus attention on re-invigorating the Arboretum** or consider eliminating this function at the Park. **Set up a regular schedule for tree care and pruning** and **create a tree replacement plan** utilizing data from the 2010 tree inventory. Coordinate tree planting with OHA data to avoid damage to identified sites. Update the arboretum signage and information. Complete **clean up** of **the Maintenance Yard** including soil and gravel piles and work to create instead a landscape that properly honors the African American graves that lie in this area.

- **Use best management practices (BMPs) in choosing mowing and turf management practices.** Develop mowing policies and schedules appropriate to the historic Fort, areas with graves and other historic artifacts, and recreation areas. Monitor for invasive species, soil compaction, areas in need of re-vegetation, and use temporary fencing to allow restoration in heavily impacted areas.

Encourage city staff to continue to collaborate on management issues of Fort Ward and keep communication open and transparent across different city departments. Establish a **Citizens Advisory Committee** to assist in Fort Ward management.

Known and Potential Cultural Resources
Fort Ward Park



Legend

- Known and Potential Burial Areas
- African American Neighborhood-Known Structure and Road Locations
- Known and Potential Civil War Features
- Recorded Native American Site
- Stream--Potential Trash Area

N

200 100 0 200 Feet

Note: Additional features, including burials, may be present throughout the property. Archaeological excavations will be necessary to identify and confirm locations of significant buried resources.

OHA/Alexandria Archaeology

1. Introduction

Background

Fort Ward Park ("Park"), a 35+ acre jewel of the Alexandria Park system, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Such a designation requires adherence to specific standards of preservation. Over time, the Park has been subject to competing demands of recreation versus preservation resulting in a gradual loss in the historic character of the Park. With limited open space in the City, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities ("RPCA") began intensifying use, particularly in the maintenance facility located on the East side of the Park, elevating citizen concerns that cultural resources including marked and possibly unmarked graves were being harmed.

Overall management of the Park is the responsibility of RPCA with substantial input from the Office of Historic Alexandria ("OHA") which also manages the earthen Civil War Fort and Museum and maintains the overall historic character of the Park; and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services ("T&ES") which advises on storm water runoff.

Photo: G. Eugster.

In 2008, neighbors in the West End of Alexandria began noticing changes in the Park that had been underway for several years. New maintenance operations within the Park by RPCA, including a 2008 proposed expanded Facilities Plan, establishment of a District Park Maintenance Operation, loud parties, using amplified speakers, large numbers of cars parked on grass, and huge numbers of partygoers were beginning to occur with some frequency. Additionally, an area in the Park informally known as the maintenance yard that lies next to a community of homes was undergoing increasingly intensive use. Large trucks, dumpsters, and bulk garden supplies were being stored in the yard, near where a tombstone marked the grave of one of the Park's early residents.

Park neighbors also experienced increased property flooding from the Park during periods of heavy rainfall. However, it took an attempted break-in at a home bordering the Park, where the intruder entered the property from an overgrown site within the Park, for neighbors to be galvanized into action. Alexandria police, led by then Chief Richard Baker, were immediately responsive and a tour of the maintenance yard yielded several recommendations for making it less attractive to potential criminals. However, when approached by concerned citizens, the RPCA, then led by Director Kirk Kincannon were not especially receptive. In one noteworthy instance when it was pointed out that cars could be kept out of the Park at night by simply closing the gate, the gate was removed.

With citizens and the City seemingly at an impasse over how the Park might best be managed, the City agreed to hold a series of public forums on issues of concern at Fort Ward Park. The first, held February 18, 2009 at the adjacent St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School was led by RPCA Director Kincannon and featured a City-directed charrette which allowed residents, after considerable spirited debate, to choose their own priorities in what management issues the City should address at the Park. The second public forum was held March 4, 2009 at the City's Lee Center and followed much the same format. A third public meeting was held March 18, 2009 at T.C. Williams High School where Mr. Lance Mallamo, recently hired as Director of OHA, joined RPCA Director Kincannon in leading the meeting. That meeting was notable in that a number of descendent families who had relatives buried in the Park attended.

Additionally, on March 15, 2009, an article appeared in the Washington Post titled; "*At Civil War Fort, A Tale of Two Histories*," (see Appendix IV) which laid out the story of some of the African Americans buried at the Park and the fact that City-owned trucks were still being parked in close proximity to marked graves. The resulting public comment and issues raised in the public forums prompted the City to remove the vehicles and begin to move other associated maintenance materials from that area of the Park.

As a result of citizen concerns and media awareness, including publication of a periodic newsletter titled *The Fort Ward Observer* the City took several positive actions. The City Council appropriated $50,000 for an archaeological examination to better understand where graves might lie within the Park. The RPCA began to revise and better control its permitting process. Also, in March 2009, OHA created a citizen-led "Fort Ward Park History Work Group," to better understand the complex history of the area for the period between the Civil War and the creation of the Park in the 1960's.

On June 23, 2009, the City Council approved Resolution 2349 (see Appendix IV) establishing an Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholders Advisory Group (Appendix I), tasking it with:

a. Advising the City with the goal of finding appropriate balance between competing uses of the Park, including active/passive recreation, environmental, historic and archaeological interests;

b. Providing the City with recommendations on balancing Park uses, including reviewing recent changes, and implementing education and outreach opportunities; and

c. Advising the City on issues and opportunities related to current and historic Park use, management, and long term goals, refined through a City-wide park master planning process.

The following then is the resulting effort of a group of dedicated citizens committed to ensuring that the City of Alexandria continues to own and maintain one of the cultural jewels of Northern Virginia – Fort Ward Park.

2. History and Culture; Issues and Recommendations
Charles Ziegler and Frances Terrell[4]

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with the historical context of Fort Ward Park, the earthen fort that lies there and the history of the vibrant African American community that made "the Fort" and surrounding Seminary area their home for more than 150 years.

Alexandria's Civil War Fort Ward and Museum

Background

Fort Ward was the fifth largest fort in the Defenses of Washington, a ring of forts and batteries built during the Civil War to protect Washington, D.C., from Confederate attack. It is the best-preserved fort of the Defenses, featuring the fort's original earthwork walls and authentically re-constructed Northwest Bastion, as well as the Ceremonial Gate entrance, Officers' Hut, and Museum.

Native American Presence

Evidence of a Native American presence on the site of what became Fort Ward Park was discovered in the late 1970s by archaeologists in the Alexandria Regional Conservation Office and the Commonwealth of Virginia (see Map, P. 6). Approximately ten flakes of milky quartz, byproducts of the process of shaping stone spear points or arrowheads were found just to the northeast of the Northwest Bastion. Unfortunately, insufficient archaeological evidence exists at this time to be able to date the finds. Future additional archaeological work may uncover further evidence of a Native American presence in the Park area.

The Civil War

On May 24, 1861 Virginia seceded from the Union. Early in the morning of the same day, Union troops occupied the City of Alexandria. During the next month, Union soldiers began camping in the area around the Virginia Theological Seminary, not far from the future location of Fort Ward. Construction of Fort Ward—named for Commander James Harmon Ward, the first Union naval officer killed in the Civil War—began in July 1861 and was completed by September 1. The fort was sited so as to defend the high ground at the junction of Braddock Road and Leesburg Pike.

In 1864 Fort Ward was extensively modified in order to correct and improve early design deficiencies, so much so that it came to be considered a model of mid-19th century military engineering. It was described by General John G. Barnard, the Chief Engineer of the

[4] Charles Ziegler is a member of the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission. Frances Terrell is a descendent of families buried at Fort Ward and President of the Seminary Civic Association.

Department of Washington who was in overall charge of the construction of the forts and batteries around Washington, as "one of the most important of the defenses of Alexandria."

After the Civil War, some consideration was given to incorporating Fort Ward as part of the 20 forts to be retained as a permanent defense system for Washington, D.C. However, this idea was not implemented. By the end of 1865 many of Fort Ward's fittings had been sold, and it ceased to be a military installation.

In 1865, the war ended. The Union Soldiers left. African Americans had gained their freedom. Now what? It has been documented that there was an extensive presence of African American refugees in the area of the Fort who worked in support of the Union variously as U.S. Colored Troops, laborers, cooks, and drivers. Confronted with the problem of where to live, and how to survive, some settled at the now abandoned Fort Ward Union military base. Through sheer strength of will, determination, fortitude, guts, and against all odds, they fashioned a life for themselves; then out of necessity, developed an entire viable self sustaining community that's still very much in existence today. Burr Shorts and James Jackson were two of the earliest property owners at the Fort with 10 and 11 ½ acres respectively as early as 1879.

With these early purchases subsequently subdivided among family members, the community grew, sustained itself through employment at the Episcopal High School and Seminary, and merged into the Seminary Community where they founded the Oakland Baptist Church and the Seminary school. They remained on the property until the late 1950's, when the City purchased or through eminent domain forced them to leave as they prepared for the centennial celebration of the Civil War. Their lives were disrupted, their homes destroyed, and they were displaced. In 1961, the City again disrupted the Seminary community, displacing everyone in order to build T.C. Williams High School. The school stands today where in 1927 the Seminary "colored" school stood. Each time family members who were unable to return were lost to the community.

Establishment of the Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site

The preservation of the forts within the Defenses of Washington and their incorporation into the Greater Washington Park System was suggested as early as 1902 by the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed many well-known urban parks, including Central Park and Prospect Park in New York City, indicating that the historical importance of this system of forts was recognized even at that date. In the 1960's, with the upcoming Civil War Centennial, interest in preserving Fort Ward intensified. Detailed plans were drawn up, and land for the park was acquired by the City of Alexandria.

Fort Ward Gate 1964
OHA file photo

In 1962 Fort Ward opened as a park; Fort Ward Historic Park and Museum was officially opened on May 30, 1964. The restoration project was

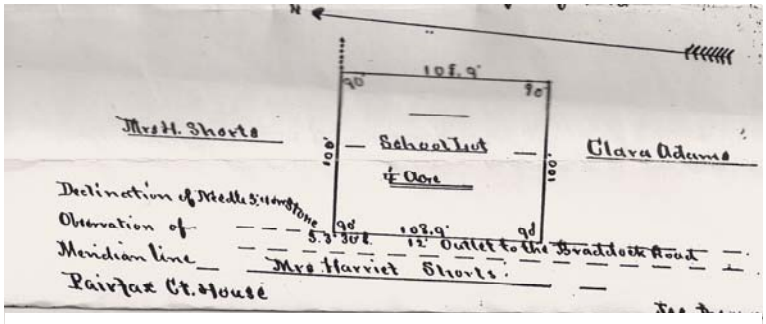
such a major achievement that it was instrumental in the selection of Alexandria as an All-American City in 1964. The Northwest Bastion was restored to its 1864-65 condition, including reproduction armament taken from the 1865 table of armament. Un-restored elements were identified by descriptive markers. The City of Alexandria received an award from the Council on Abandoned Military Posts for its major contribution to the preservation and interpretation of Fort Ward.

African American and Native American culture, Summary of existing and proposed interpretation

History

African American culture began at Fort Ward Park post Civil War, although there is strong evidence indicating a presence during and perhaps even before the Civil War. As noted earlier, African Americans established the Fort Ward and Seminary community, and maintained a decades long connection with the Theological Seminary and Episcopal High School. OHA's History Work Group and the Non-profit Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendents Society have been proactive in gathering data to substantiate, refute or nullify information.

After emancipation, settling at the Fort, finding employment mainly with the Seminary and High School, African Americans were determined to secure economic opportunity and social mobility. Education represented one of the keys to achieving these goals and in 1898, Clara Adams, Harriet Shorts' daughter, sold part of 10 acres subdivided by Burr and Harriet Shorts, to the Fairfax County School District for the creation of a school where many children of the African American community at the Fort and Seminary would attend.



Part of deed of sale of Clara Adams ¼ ac.for school, 1898.
Source: Clara Adams deed, Fairfax County records.

When in 1925, the school closed due to overcrowding that property was sold to the Diocesan Missionary Society of Virginia to be used as an Episcopal church known as St Cyprians. That same property in 1942 became the home of John Claiborne and later in 1947 was home to Sgt. Lee Young.

As was the custom among African Americans during these early settlement years, James Jackson set aside a portion of his 11 ½ acre property as a burial ground for his family, friends and loved ones, thereby establishing what became known as the "Old Jackson Cemetery" at Fort Ward.

Citizen Concerns

The citizen concerns are in protecting and preserving the African American heritage in the Park post Civil War; and in recognizing their participation in the struggle to free themselves and to establish a viable, thriving community thereafter.

It should be noted that during the March 2009 public hearings concerning the future of the Park, provision of signage and markers relating to African American history received the second largest number of votes in terms of the importance of the issue, following only concern for noise problems from various recreational activities in the park.

Actions Taken so Far

1. Interpretative signs are being developed by OHA, in cooperation with the African American Descendants Group. With a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Neil Vaz, a Howard University Graduate Student, developed text and graphics for six draft signs to be reviewed by the History Workgroup, and the public, and when finalized, to be installed at historic sites in the Park on or before July 1, 2011. The locations of the signs have not yet been firmly established. Themes for the signs included (i) overview, a triage of the park, Seminary community and Seminary/High School; (ii) church and cemetery; (iii) education; (iv) Civil War; (v) founders, and (vi) The Jackson cemetery and labor.

2. The Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendents Society and the Fort Ward History Work Group have discussed having an African American presence at the annual Civil War Reenactment event. One of the Shorts was a servant at the Menokin household, (formerly located near where Minnie Howard School is now located), and could have encountered Robert E. Lee on one of his visits there.

3. African American exhibits, photos of U.S. Colored Troops, laborers, and possibly a small community model within the Museum itself.

Oakland Baptist Church and Cemetery

Several founders of the Oakland Baptist Church ("OBC"), the center of the community's spiritual, social, moral, and political sphere, lived in the Fort. The church started in a bush arbor as Oak Hill Baptist Mission in 1888, then relocated to 3408 King Street in 1893, where it stands today. Burr and Harriet McKnight Shorts once owned the land that became the burial ground which by 1930 was known as the Oakland Church Lot. In 1939, most of the current cemetery was conveyed to the Oakland Baptist Church by a relative of the Shorts. A land exchange with the City of Alexandria in the 60's caused some reconfiguration of the original property; however, the fence around the cemetery delineates its legal boundaries.

Citizen Concerns

Issues are identifying unmarked graves, graves outside of the cemetery including the maintenance yard, water runoff, and damage to the fence as a result of trees on city property

falling on the fence. Families are largely concerned about preserving the dignity and integrity of their loved ones buried there.

Actions Taken so Far

1. Alexandria's Office of Archeology has used ground penetrating radar ("GPR") equipment to search for possible grave sites not yet identified in the Park. Oral testimonies from family members formerly living at the Fort have indicated that there were many more burials in the park than the ones in the Oakland Baptist Church and Jackson cemeteries. While over 27 anomalies have been detected, additional GPR investigation will be done to search for graves as well as other artifacts, some Native American.

GPR search for graves at Fort Ward
Photo: G. Eugster.

2. Oral histories from families, church and funeral home records, old newspaper obituaries, and city records have all been used for identification purposes. Some relatives are sure they know where their ancestors are located but they do not have formal paperwork nor exact dates of death. So identification is ongoing.

Temporary barrier around Jackson Cemetery.
Photo: G. Eugster.

3. The Jackson cemetery has been roped off by the City as well as the graves outside of the OBC cemetery including the Fitzhugh and Adams gravesites.

OBC Cemetery erosion
Photo: G. Eugster

In an effort to address issues of water runoff at both the Marlboro Estates and the Oakland Cemetery, Mr. Richard Baier, Director of Alexandria's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services ("T&ES"), outlined an action plan in May 2010. The Director indicated that erosion, flooding and drainage problems within and adjacent to Fort Ward were being caused by runoff from Episcopal High School land, Park land, OBC's cemetery and Marlboro Estates. He said that Fort Ward is a large park carrying a lot of water; that there is no collection system in the park, and the surface area of the maintenance area needed to be removed and restored to a vegetated state.

4. The T&ES Director indicated that the City was willing to replace the hay bales that were installed earlier to reduce water flowing from the park maintenance yard into the

cemetery. A “no mow” policy has also been implemented with the intent of returning grass to a natural uncut state, it would serve as a barrier to the free flow of water.

With regard to the fence damage, City officials, OBC leaders, Advisory Group members, Councilwoman Alicia Hughes staff and Marlboro Estates homeowners met on June 28, 2010 in the OBC cemetery to discuss past and possible tree damage to the fence. In November 2009 and February 2010 trees within the Park fell into the cemetery damaging the fence. Mr. John Noelle, the City Arborist had marked off the trees which had fallen and those he felt posed a threat to the cemetery in the future. RPCA Director, Spengler, indicated that the trees would be removed by the end of July. Mr. Mallamo, the OHA Director indicated that the trees along the cemetery border were not historic and were planted by the City after 1964 probably to screen the cemetery from the surrounding Park. As of the end of October 2010, all trees have been cut down and the chain link fence repaired.

City tree damage to OBC Cemetery fence
Photo: G. Eugster

One of the OBC church officers, Alphonzo Terrell, told the group the graves outside the cemetery and in front of the maintenance yard were part of the original Oakland cemetery. He said when the city and church traded land the original cemetery boundaries were altered. Original access to the cemetery was from Braddock Road, through the maintenance yard, and past the area where the Adams are now buried. During the discussion of the reconfiguration of the cemetery, OHA Director Mallamo suggested that the City might take over the cemetery, install an attractive fence about 6 ft high, and include it in as part of their tour, having visitors walk inside the cemetery and putting up signage outside about the two different cemetery, Oakland and Jacksons. Church Trustee Lena Rainey commented she had to take it to the Church for discussion. No action has been taken as yet on this suggestion.

In conclusion, while there have been measures taken to capture the African American history, in and around the Park, through research by the History Work Group members, African American Descendants Society, OHA and archeology staff before, during and after the Civil War, locating and preserving grave sites, identifying families living in the Fort, discovering the connection between the Fort, the Seminary community, the High School and the Theological Seminary, the African American community is still awaiting the results of these efforts. The placement of signage, for instance, must be strategically located so as to note the historical significance of the area, but not in a manner which detracts from the overall appearance of the park or create an encumbrance to visitors either touring the park for historical purposes, for relaxation, for exercise or a family gathering.

Managerial Challenges

The fact that the Park is both an historic site and a recreational facility has created significant managerial challenges for ensuring the preservation of its historic character while addressing recreational needs. From 1964 to 1981 the RPCA operated the entire site. The Museum and historic Fort became the responsibility of the Department of General Services in 1981, and in 1982 the responsibility was transferred to the newly-established Office of Historic Alexandria.

As a result of the post-1981 division of responsibilities for the Park, historic site and RPCA operations became less coordinated over time in some functions: communications on park maintenance projects and operations; picnic reservations; trash removal; and parking issues. In particular, there have been issues directly concerned with the protection of the historic character of the Park:

-RPCA staff are not trained in historic preservation issues.

-There is a need for improved coordination with RPCA to ensure that the mowing of grass in the restored Northwest Bastion and other selected areas of the fort are performed in a timely way, according appropriate turf preservation guidelines.

-Improvement is needed in coordinating and balancing Park maintenance projects with the protection of historical resources. For example, the installation of the irrigation system and other digging operations need to be sensitive to historic preservation issues.

-Coordination of and provision of resources for the performance of routine maintenance duties that preserve the well-cared-for appearance and integrity of the historic site. Due to previous staff cuts, OHA staff must rely on RPCA staff for the provision of these services.

Preserving Fort Ward Park's Historical Character

Perhaps the most important challenge has been that of balancing the preservation of Fort Ward Park's historical character with legitimate recreational needs. In this context, it is important to remember that Fort Ward Park was established as an *historic* park. The 1982 application for the listing of Fort Ward on the National Register of Historic Places states:

Fort Ward is a 35-acre Historic Park owned and operated by the City of Alexandria, Virginia. The park is comprised of three major elements. In order of importance [emphasis added] they are:

a) Civil War Earthen Fortifications

b) Reproduction Period Military Buildings

c) Recreational Facilities

It should also be noted that in a letter to the Stakeholder Advisory Group of March 17, 2010 the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission ("HARC") wrote:

"The preservation, protection and interpretation of the historic resources of Fort Ward Park should be the primary consideration in the formulation of any plans for the future of Fort Ward Museum and historic site, as listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"HARC recognizes the legitimate and rightful needs of the citizens of Alexandria for appropriate recreational space and facilities. Nevertheless, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission places on record its considered view that the protection and preservation of the historic character of Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site and its ability to offer exhibits, education and interpretive programs, tours and other related activities not be compromised in any way."

Also, study of the identified Ft. Ward Park priorities and issues identified by the community in the meetings held in early 2009 clearly indicate that matters of African American history and identification of historic areas are considered of primary importance to concerned citizens. Indeed, the only group of issues that was considered to be of greater importance, as measured by the number of votes obtained, were issues of excessive noise, alcohol abuse and overcrowding.

It therefore follows that, in considering priorities and plans for the Park, priority needs to be given to preservation and enhancement of the historical character of the Park.

Recommendations

1. Establishment of a MOU between OHA and RPCA, with a list of issues that are to be addressed by the directors of the respective agency to resolve between themselves, should any of these issues arise.

2. Establishment of a requirement for meetings on a regular—perhaps monthly—basis between the park-level leads from each agency, and for quarterly meetings between the directors of OHA and RPCA.

3. Mandating reports to the City Council and a public advisory body to be established as a successor to the Advisory Group, prepared jointly by the directors of each agency on a quarterly basis, until a Park Master Plan is completed.

4. Requiring that any Park Master Plan incorporate the mandating of regular meetings at the appropriate level, and at regular intervals, to ensure continuing coordination and cooperation in the administration of Fort Ward Park.

5. The City incorporate the aforementioned suggestions and ideas into the Park planning, as well as Civil War Re-enactment, Civil War Camp Day, community model, and African American and U.S. Colored Troop photos and other artifacts in the museum at Fort

Ward, as a teaching tool for students and visitors on African American culture, during and post Civil War.

6. The City might partner with the Oakland Baptist Church to have the cemetery included on the National Register of Historic Sites since it meets the requirements in number of years in existence and is located within the Park itself which already carries that distinction.

7. The City consider replacing the chain link fence around the cemetery with a 4-6 ft black wrought iron fence making it more in conformance with the historic nature of the Park and more visibly appealing to visitors and/or community casual users.

8. Devise a permanent solution to eliminate water runoff in the Park and more specifically the cemetery realizing that the laying of hay bales is only a temporary measure. Short and long term recommendations included construction of a temporary dyke or swale to channel runoff away from the OBC cemetery and improved groundcover to reduce water flow. Long term, increase the capacity of the ditch and re-vegetate the area to mitigate erosion, install additional drainage structures for storm water relief, and construct storm water vault or other storm water detention facility.

9. Complete the historic research to highlight the contribution of the African American community in the cultural history of the Seminary area.

3. Recreational Use; Issues and Recommendations
Ripley Forbes and Robert Moir[5]

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader input and recommendations for the continued use of Fort Ward Park as a major facility for passive recreational usage.[6] This usage is intended to have minimal negative impact on the historic importance and natural environment of the Park. It is also intended to offer transformative suggestions for possible changes in the recreation policies, usages rules and maintenance standards in light of growing awareness and respect for the historic and cultural significance of the Park.

Background

Since it's opening in 1964, more people come to the Park on a daily basis for passive recreational use than any other recreational reason. The Park has served as the major passive recreation venue for residents of the west end of the City of Alexandria. The Park hosts numerous walkers, joggers, picnickers, sledders, dog walkers and playground users.

In 2008 the City of Alexandria's RPCA, roughly counted 63,617 people using the Park for walking or picnicking during the picnic rental season (April through October). In 2009, this number fell to 54,949 people due in part to needed administration decisions that reduced the number of picnic rental areas from 11 to 7 and excessive gatherings that adversely impacted Park resources were prohibited. Through end of August, the Park has recorded 43,885 passive recreational users with a further decrease in picnic areas to 5.

Photo: G. Eugster.

[5] Ripley Forbes and Robert Moir serve on the Park and Recreation Commission representing Planning District 2.
[6] The separate nature of the active recreation side of the park (the tennis courts and rectangular artificial-turfed field) are not discussed here because it is the feeling of the Advisory Committee that because of their separate entrance and parking facility as well as the fact that they are fenced off from the Park proper, its usage has no impact on the Park.

A recent count conducted during the weekend of September 3rd (Friday) through 5th (Sunday), 2010 provided a count of 1,606 passive recreational users broken down as follows:

Walkers:	Friday	389
	Saturday	433
	Sunday	403
Playground users:	Saturday	30
	Sunday	63
Picnickers:	Saturday	148[7]
	Sunday	110

It is assumed that the number of walkers decreases during the non-picnic season (November through March) but easily exceeds 100 people on average per day.

In a community that is becoming more and more urbanized, it is incumbent upon the City to provide and preserve land for a multitude of public uses. The competition for use of these facilities will only get more intense in the future. Additionally, the growing appreciation for the historic and cultural nature of this Park needs to be reflected in how Park resources and Park administration support the needs of citizens who value the Park as a site for passive recreation, relaxation and unstructured physical activity. Historic, cultural and recreational activities can mutually co-exist but reforms may be needed.

Current Situation

A recent poll of users of the Park noted the following problems are perceived to exist: (a) noisy picnics; (b) picnickers abuse of alcohol; (c) inappropriately large picnic groups; (d) excess trash; (e) safety of walkers; (f) lack of a nature walk; (g) lack of signage for the dog park; and, (h) large festivals not associated with the historic nature of the park.

In response to these concerns and recognition of the increasing use of the facility, RPCA has introduced several changes to mitigate future potential damage to the historic nature and natural environment of the Park and the surrounding community.

Foremost is the introduction of a resident park manager. His job is to not only oversee the daily operation of the Park, but to provide an increase in security for the facility. This has been accomplished by: (a) decreasing the number of picnic areas; (b) more stringent issuance of permits (limitation to the size and length of picnics); (c) provision of rangers on weekends; (d) construction of a ranger booth for permit check in; (e) limiting the number of vehicles on the roadway; and, (f) moving the city maintenance facility.

[7] Numbers for picnickers includes those with and without reservations.

In addition, the RPCA has limited the number of permits for the pavilion areas, limited the number of picnicker per permit, limited the decibel levels of amplified music, eliminated certain inflatable recreational devices and limited alcohol use. Also, the limiting of the number of vehicles with permission to enter the Park has increased the safety for walkers and picnickers.

Increased signage has directed users of the Park to appropriate areas and usages. Simple measures such as keeping cars off the grass as well as directing picnickers and pedestrians off historic sites and off designated wild growth areas have all helped to mitigate damage to nature and decreased storm surface run-off. However, these efforts are not enough.

Recommendations

1. Creation of a natural walkway for nature walks. We recommend that a nature walk be created around the periphery of the Park. This walk way should be constructed of a semi-impervious material. Signage and rest areas (benches) should indicate important historic and natural features of the Park. The stops on this walk should include: (a) Oakland Baptist Cemetery; (b) the monument to the City's first arborist; (c) the bridge; (d) native specious of bushes, trees and flowers; (e) areas containing potential unmarked gravesites; (f) home sites; (g) presently unmarked Fort Ward Civil War ramparts; and, (h) areas of known Native American habitation.

2. Removal of the concrete from the run-off gulley by the monument to the arborist memorial and the impervious material surrounding the monument itself.

3. Removal of the playground to an area that is accessible to people with disabilities. Its present location is in the direct path of run-off and removal and replacement with a more natural surface will decrease run-off leaving the Park.

4. Improvements to the roadway loop. The road surface is starting to deteriorate and needs replacement in several areas. Several citizens recommend a curb to keep cars of the grass. We disagree, as the curbs will only serve to increase the amount of imperviousness of the road surface. Park Rangers need to continue to ensure that Park patrons do not park inappropriately.

5. The dog park. Signage for the current dog park is poor. Serious consideration should be given to removing the dog park, but continue to allow well behaved dogs in the park when they are on leash. If the dog park is to be retained, it needs to be identified with signage in the park, the dimensions of the dog park need to be well defined and the dimensions of the current dog park reduced to move it farther away from the historic rifle battery. Signage alerting parents and children to the location should be made prominent because the area is not fenced and children play in the vicinity. We strongly

oppose any fencing of this area and would prefer the area be returned to the park as a site for passive recreation.

6. There are major restoration needs in the Park due to years of deferred maintenance and weather damage. The city needs to commit resources or accept volunteer assistance to clear deadfall from wooded areas. Additionally the erosion of the grassy areas leading to the current playground site as well as multiple picnic areas should be addressed to restore the natural character of the park. Installation of water breaks, perhaps using the large deadfall and installation of wood chips would help restore these areas until a long-term solution to the dispersal of rain water can be addressed.

7. Consideration should be given to restoring the gate between the Park's athletic field and the passive area of the Park. This would ease access to the public restrooms and allow visitors to move more easily between the passive and active sections of the Park.

8. Strengthen picnic procedures by prohibiting consumption of alcoholic beverages and the use of amplified music in the Park. There should be no authority for the granting of individual exceptions relating to picnic reservations. The only area of the Park where amplified music should be permitted is in the amphitheater where summer concerts are held. The consumption of alcohol and amplified music are not integral to the goal of maintaining a passive recreation resource. For the safety and enjoyment of those who value the Park for its tranquility and respect its significant cultural origins, these additional protections should be considered.

4. **Environment and Natural Resources; Issues and Recommendations**

Linda Ries and Richard Brune[8]

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter focuses on existing conditions of natural resources within boundaries of the Park, as well as areas of concern we identified, issues identified at public meetings and from public comments, and finally recommendations for management of natural resources of the Park.

Introduction and background:

Fort Ward Park is rich in cultural and historical resources. In addition the Park could be considered rich in natural resources in an urban area. The Park has seen many changes in management of its natural resources over the past one hundred and fifty years. During the Fort development, trees were removed for wood products and to provide good views from the Fort. After the Fort was no longer actively used and as people settled on the land surrounding the fort, homes were built, gardens and trees were planted, and other plants and trees filled in the area naturally. After the Park was created in the 1960's, some trees were planted and there were still some trees and plants in the Park from the former residents. In other areas, natural succession of trees and plants is obvious where the use of the land is less intensive. What makes this Park unique is the blending of natural and native species and ornamental, planted species.

Trees in the Park include tulip poplars, white and red oaks, Virginia pine, maples, cherry, hickory, sassafras, ash, black locust and as well as some attractive ornamental varieties of trees such as ornamental cherry, crepe myrtle, camellias, bald cypress, ginkgo, and true cedar. Some non-native ornamental trees were planted as part of the City Arboretum. These species were chosen to represent a variety of trees that are hardy, disease and insect tolerant, as a demonstration to citizens and to increase the diversity of trees within the Park. This tree diversity provides a rich habitat for squirrels, birds and various butterflies and insect species. Recently, the City indicated a tree inventory had been completed which would be an excellent resource to complement recommendations in this chapter.

Another natural resource is the soil. Because the Park is slightly higher than other land surrounding it, it functions to drain the land after rain storms and snowmelt into lower areas, storm drains and draws. The area containing the Fort could be managed to help manage storm water by not only man-made infrastructure but by also managing the natural resources of the park – trees, shrubs and forbs, and amending the soils to restore and increase soil permeability.

Because of the impact of grounds and turf management methods used, maintenance vehicle traffic on turf, and recreational use especially in picnic areas, the predominant clay soil has become compacted. This stresses tree roots and causes premature mortality and other

[8] Richard Brune is a member of Alexandria's Parks and Recreation Commission. Linda Ries is a frequent user of Fort Ward Park.

problems in trees. The presence of hardscape –including roads, paved picnic table pads, and sidewalks - have affected the health and condition of the existing trees and plants. As evident by the recent storms of the summer of 2010, when over 22 large, mature trees failed, sustaining a healthy forest canopy is very challenging. Some of these trees had extensive decay, and would have failed at some point, but of concern is the large loss of canopy and potential for increased tree mortality over the next decade. Other concerns would be accidental introduction of invasive insects (or diseases) such as Emerald ash borer which has been found as close as Fairfax County and would be devastating to ash trees in the Park.

The Park is special not only for its cultural and historical richness but also as a wonderful green space which serves as a refuge for city weary residents. As economic resources are stretched thin in the city, management of the natural resources – especially the urban forest of the Park may mean it will be difficult to sustain and replace the forest canopy. As trees are approaching maturity, resources from the city to properly prune, remove trees and shrubs as needed and plant replacements are needed for the Park to retain a healthy forested canopy. Also necessary is a proposed planting plan with recommended tree species based on sites that are appropriate for trees and that won't disturb artifacts and historical locations. In some locations it may be appropriate to plant memorial trees to honor former residents. Any future plans for replacing and management of existing trees must complements goals to protect cultural and historical resources.

Issues

Declining tree health and forest canopy

Recent tree failure (at least 22 large trees failed in 2010 storms), stressed and dying trees, signs of extensive decay, broken branches, disease and insect damage, leaning trees are all currently occurring at the Park. Some of the trees that failed in 2009-10 winter and summer storms have been removed, the trees along the OBC cemetery fence have also been removed, but these lost trees have not been replaced. As a result there have been minimal tree plantings, as well as the neglect of the arboretum. There has been no master plan for planting and historic trees are not documented. To its credit, a tree inventory was completed in 2010 and has been shared with the City of Alexandria.

Photo: G. Eugster.

Storm water drainage, loss of topsoil and compaction of soils

Picnic and recreation sites on the northern and eastern sections of the Park have clay soils that have been heavily compacted by recreational use and maintenance vehicles. These compacted soils cause extensive run-off and are damaging to tree roots and vigor of all plants. Last summer some straw was laid down over grass seed along damaged turf on the edge of road at the North end.

There is extensive sheet erosion as well as evidence of gully erosion in drainages. Top soil is being lost through much of the Park. Some Park areas were designated "no mow/natural areas" to alleviate some erosive problems and to save money on turf management. After one summer of not mowing some areas, it appears this has been beneficial in some area to slow flow of storm water as well as save on mowing costs. However, some areas have now become very weedy, and some invasive species are becoming established. These areas should be continually assessed. Some areas might be appropriate for long term "no mow" – others should be mowed on occasion to keep for park aesthetics and to keep weeds from seeding and spreading. Over time, some of the "no mow" areas could encourage pests or become a fire hazard as tall grasses dry. Thus, storm water is not retained in the Park even for irrigation.

One observer noted that there appears to be a decline in the use of the Park by songbirds.

Other

One noticeable lack is that there are no community service or volunteers to help with maintaining flower beds, clean-up or planting of trees in the Park.

Recommendations

1. Set up a regular cycle to prune to remove dead and broken branches, and increase vigor of all trees. Prioritize pruning in heavily used areas of the Park. Conduct an annual hazard tree exam of trees that are adjacent to picnic areas, roads, and locations where people gather. Adopt sound arboricultural practices to maintain and increase tree vigor. Help the City plan a larger budget for tree care.

2. Use the recent tree inventory to assess existing canopy and identify areas with greatest need to increase canopy. The park could be divided into "zones" to help identify priority areas. Work closely with OHA employees to identify locations to avoid planting where there may be grave sites, cultural resources and artifacts. Promote replacement of trees that have been removed or have failed over the last decade. Create a planting plan for the Park and develop a recommended tree replacement list. Start a program to plant memorial trees in honor of previous residents of the Park. Schedule maintenance of new trees including: watering, mulching, and pruning as needed. Increase volunteer and educational opportunities for the public to increase ownership of Park trees.

3. Limit use of Park maintenance vehicles in these areas already affected especially when soils are wet. Aerate and/or add soil amendments. Do not remove all of the leaves in the fall, leave some in place to add nutrients to soil and slow erosion. Restore bare areas by using hay/mulch and grass seed, use temporary fences to keep people and vehicles of any sort out of these areas

4. Review areas that are currently not mown, and moderate the location of these areas as needed**.** Monitor and treat invasive plants before they become more widespread.

Apply other mitigation techniques including mulching with straw and reseeding areas that have sheet erosion. Monitor and reseed areas that will be excavated for archaeological surveys. Plant rain gardens to help capture and minimize damaging run-off, especially on eastern side of park. Some hardscape areas such as picnic table pads could be replaced with pervious pavers to decrease run-off.

5. In addition to mitigate storm water problems on the eastern side of park: increase capacity of draw and revegetate. Install additional drainage structures and possibly a storm water vault or other retention facility. Investigate potential capture of stormwater in cisterns or rain barrels for flower beds or newly planted trees, plant a rain gardens to help capture and minimize damaging run- off. Continue debris clean-up within stream channel, ditch and inlet structures. Construct temporary berm to channel water away from OBC cemetery. Work with neighborhood to advise them on they can help moderate stormwater as well.

6. Aggressively manage and eliminate weeds and unwanted species invading the Park.

7. Do a survey to assess birds in the Park. Plant existing flower beds areas in species conducive to attracting songbirds, and butterflies. This might be an excellent volunteer project for a garden club, youth group or local school.

8. To strengthen pride and ownership of Park grounds, plan for opportunities for the public to volunteer and help take care of Fort Ward Park, tree planting, taking care of flower bed, pick up litter, pull invasive plants, plant butterfly garden.

5. Park Operations; Issues and Recommendations
William Schreiner and Philip Voorhees[9]

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the management of the Park. Included are ways in which the site itself is managed for users – including those who visit for recreation, nature, or historic features. We focused on Park management that visitors seldom consider, but can add or detract from their experience. For example, few visitors would consider the number and location of picnic pavilions when planning an outing in the Park, or consider the process of mowing when deciding to visit the Museum and Historic Fort,[10] yet these decisions have an influence on how the Park is perceived and experienced. Many Park management and operation decisions directly impact the experience of Park users.

Management and Operation of Fort Ward Park

The unique management structure at the Park presents special challenges for the Park, and an understanding of that structure is necessary to an understanding of the concerns we reviewed. Unlike any other City park that we know of, two City agencies – Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities and the Office of Historic Alexandria – share responsibility for managing operations. This dual-agency management structure has certain benefits but also carries risks that challenge clear communication about park purposes and management priorities. In many ways, the dual-agency management structure seems appropriately designed for a Park that contains an abundance of historic features as well as significant open space.

Despite these benefits, it can impede effective management and operation of the Park. Some of these impediments result from having two agencies operating closely on one site. Others appear to include misunderstandings or disagreements between the agencies that result from the conflict of different agency missions and goals. This was apparent in public hearings in 2009 regarding conditions in the Park: many residents commented on problems that result from a lack of comprehensive planning and communication between the two agencies. Clearly, better cooperation and coordination between RPCA and OHA are key in improving management of the Park and Historic Site and will result in a better experience for visitors, as well as a clearer understanding of the site's purpose by city residents and others.

Improvements in the operation of the dual-agency structure have occurred during the term of the Advisory Group, and the Advisory Group identifies two reasons for this. First, both lead agencies have new managers. Jim Spengler, Director at RPCA, and Lance Mallamo, Director at OHA, have demonstrated a willingness to cooperate and communicate on Park challenges, and appear to bring fresh approaches to those challenges. Second, both agencies

---

[9] William Schreiner is President of the Friends of Fort Ward. Philip Voorhees is a member of Alexandria's Environmental Policy Commission.

[10] This Chapter will refer to the restored and/or preserved star-shaped Fort Ward, built during the Civil War, as the "Historic Fort." Discussion of specific Civil War-era defensive earthworks located in the Park but outside of the Historic Fort itself will be clarified as needed in the text.

have shown a willingness to respond to concerns raised about the Park over the past two years. While the work of building a better dual-agency structure is not complete, new leadership with fresh approaches and a willingness to respond to challenges posed by the Park and Historic Site bodes well for the future.

Current Situation

Turf Maintenance and Mowing

a. Non-Historic Open Space

Mowing the open spaces surrounding the Historic Fort may appear to present no more of an issue than mowing the open spaces at any other City park. The space appears to be open for recreation and picnicking. However, just underneath those open spaces lie significant historical resources: the grave sites of members of the community that developed in the area around the Historic Fort site, the foundations of many of the buildings built by that community and Civil War defensive structures outside of the walls of the Historic Fort itself.[11] Mowing of this open space requires particular care to avoid damaging these features.

Over the term of the Advisory Group, mowing practices applied to the area around this Historic Fort have changed substantially in two ways. First, in one area where graves have been identified has been barricaded and excluded from mowing, to prevent further damage to the depressions that suggest gravesites. This is a positive step that the Advisory Group encourages and that should be expanded while a full investigation is ongoing. Both historic preservation and respect for the human remains being identified in the Park suggest careful treatment of these areas until discovery is complete.

The other changes in the Park's mowing practice outside of the Historic Fort has been the addition of "no-mow" areas where mowing is not undertaken with frequency. This was a substantial policy change that has impacts on many areas of the Park. RPCA first outlined the "no-mow" policy at the start of the mowing season, and presented areas of the Park that would not be mowed with frequency. The purpose, as it was explained to us, was two-fold: higher grass would slow down water through the Park and reduce erosion; and, higher grass would deter recreation users from using areas of the Park where subsurface historic features were likely to be found. Additionally, the "no-mow" policy likely had a positive fiscal impact on RPCA's mowing budget – but the Advisory Group has received no information on savings or the reallocation of funds resulting from savings.

From a Park operations standpoint the "no-mow" policy has been controversial. At the end of the policy's first year, it is evident there are positive and negative consequences. On the

[11] As noted in note 5 above, this discussion of mowing in the Park area around the Historic Fort excludes Civil War features that supported the Historic Fort but are outside the remaining walls of the Historic Fort itself – such as the rifle trench that extends roughly northeast from the old walls of the Fort and is bisected by the park loop road. While those features are identified and some are out of the way of regular recreational use, they need to be tended with the same care that the Historic Fort is.

positive side, the policy represents a new approach to park operations, and was in response to citizen concerns with water erosion and the protection of historic features and gravesites. And the fiscal benefit represents an attempt to respond to budgetary constraints. Significantly, the "no-mow" policy was developed cooperatively by the two agencies that govern the Park. This cooperative effort is a key to solving many of the Park's challenges, and is something the Advisory Group encourages.

Like many solutions though, the implementation of the "no-mow" policy raised concerns and some unintended consequences. Citizens living around the Park informed the Advisory Group that the policy was implemented with little citizen input. Additionally, neighbors living near the "no-mow" areas of the Park are concerned about the effects of the overgrowth – large unsightly weeds and vermin are not what they had in mind when they chose to live near Fort Ward Park. At least one neighboring resident has commented to the Advisory Group that the "no-mow" policy has limited the areas that families can use for recreation primarily to the mowed areas closer to Braddock Road, thus increasing, in that resident's view, the risk of collisions between playing children and Braddock Road traffic. The "no-mow" areas themselves have also had the unintended consequence of driving recreational users into smaller open spaces in the Park and even outside of open spaces onto historic features: runners have been observed clambering over the walls of the Historic Fort in the absence of other areas to run.

Weeds along eastern boundary of Park (now cut) *Photo: G. Eugster*.

The Advisory Group was informed in October 2010 that RPCA plans to continue the "no-mow" policy in 2011, but only an area on the East side where substantial water drains toward the North. To our knowledge Park staff made this decision without any input from the public.

The decision to not mow a certain part of the Park in 2011 may slow water and ease some storm water concerns. We were not fully informed of the information used to decide where to mow or not mow in 2011, however, and are not able to comment on the 2011 plan. Lack of public comment is disconcerting and will almost certainly lead to a waste of City resources. Given the controversial nature of this policy, the decision to pursue the "no-mow" policy without public review is short-sighted and inefficient. RPCA leadership informed us that the decision of what to mow or not mow in the Park is a staff-level decision not normally subject to public review. That decision, however, is not made in a vacuum or in a remote corner; its impact will be noticed by Park users as soon as the grass begins to grow in 2011. Those people will proceed to bring their complaints and thoughts about the policy to City leadership, who will then proceed to internally review the decision with RPCA. Some

involvement beforehand would save a lot of debate about the policy later, and may lead to a "no-mow" area more in line with users expectations.

b. I*nside the Historic Fort*

Mowing inside the Historic Fort area has been problematic. The Fort requires careful turf treatment much like the care and attention given to a golf course green, but has, instead, been treated like the 'rough.' This problem existed prior to the advent of the Advisory Group.

Re-enactment inside Historic Fort
Photo: T. Fulton

The Northwest Bastion has been mowed by an outside contractor in recent years, and the rest of the Fort, made up of historic earthworks, has been mowed by RPCA. Both the contracted mowing of the Northwest Bastion and RPCAs' mowing of the rest of the Historic Fort have been subject to an inability to reach a successful outcome – the frequent mowing of the Fort in a manner that enhances the visitor experience and does not damage an irreplaceable piece of the City's history. In the Northwest Bastion, mowing has been infrequent: in 2009, the Friends of Fort Ward requested City involvement in ensuring that the restored Northwest Bastion of the Fort was mowed when a misunderstanding between the two agencies led to it not being mowed for an extended length of time.

Outside the Northwest Bastion but inside the preserved earthworks, mowing has not always been done with the care that needs to be shown to historic structures. On occasion, the earthworks have been mowed with riding mowers that scraped away the earthwork. Damage to the historic earthwork is costly to repair and supports faster erosion of the work itself. Other parts of the Fort maintained by RPCA have been included in that agency's "no-mow" policy, discussed above, leading to an unkempt appearance and possible earthwork damage from excessive overgrowth. The result for the non-Northwest Bastion part of the Fort has been hodgepodge: some sections mowed with riding mowers, and others mowed minimally or not at all. The result harms Alexandria's fifty-year investment to preserve and interpret Fort Ward, and detracts from the visitor experience.

The Advisory Group was informed by RPCA that it does not have the technical ability to properly mow the non-Northwest Bastion part of the Fort, and has suggested that the entire Fort be mowed by outside contractors (in the same way that the Northwest Bastion part of the Fort currently is). While we find this conclusion surprising given the variety of turf conditions that are otherwise well-managed, we accept that RPCA is the best judge of its own capabilities.

B. Maintenance Yard

A maintenance yard is located on the eastern boundary of the Park, adjacent to the Park's boundary with the Marlboro Estates community. The maintenance yard was one of the

main concerns expressed at public hearings held regarding the Park in early 2009. The variety of concerns included: 1) failure to adequately maintain a clean, healthy environment in close proximity to Marlboro Estate neighbors; 2) noise generated from the operation and movement of city maintenance equipment unrelated to the Park itself; 3) unpermitted use of the Park as a non-specific city maintenance area; 4) erosion at other places in the Park caused by impermeable or semi-impermeable packed soil accelerating the movement of water through areas of the park during rain events; and most significantly, 5) location of the maintenance yard right atop significant historic features – indeed, grave sites are identified through markers located in the yard, and others have been identified through archaeological research.

Water sheeting at maintenance yard entrance. *Photo: G. Eugster.*

In the Advisory Group's view, there is little doubt that the maintenance yard's location was a mistake. No maintenance facility should ever have been located in an area where graves are visible, nor should it have been placed directly abutting a residential area. The City ceased operation of the yard when concerns were raised in 2009. Currently, the yard is not in active use and its functions have been placed elsewhere. Even without active use, though, the yard still contributes water to erosion in other areas of the Park, its historic features are inaccessible to Park visitors, and its location next to the property lines of the OBC located within the Park's boundaries and adjacent to the yard reflects especially poor planning and is a continuing insult to the descendants of the community that was bulldozed to create the Park.

C. Parking

Parking is a challenge at the Park. During large events, the small lot along Braddock Road and the unpaved lot behind the Museum overflow, with parking provided by closing one of the lanes of that road. Moreover, neither lot is sufficient to safely handle tour buses that visit the Museum (more of which are expected during the next several years as the Civil War Sesquicentennial begins and Civil War tourism increases). At the 2009 public hearings, six citizens commented that there "needs to be parking for casual use" and one commented that "City vehicles take up visitor parking spaces," again reflecting an apparent concern that parking at the Park is not currently sufficient. During our term, parking areas at the Park have not changed measurably.

D. Staffing and Security

Various issues related to staffing of, and security in, the Park were frequently raised in 2009 public hearings. According to a collection of citizen concerns prepared by RPCA after those hearings, security issues were raised frequently and in different guises based apparently

on the commenting citizen's view of an interrelated set of security issues: six individuals commenting noted generically that "security at the Park is a concern," three called on the City to "address drug use, crime, rats, vermin and speeding by St. Stephens & St. Agnes parents dropping off students,[12]" three asked the City to "address closing times and a gate," and one simply pled "involve the police."

Issues related to staffing of the Park also came up in different ways at the same hearings. Two commenters said that "Staff not on duty to help," and four exclaimed "Who do you go to if needed? Who is in charge?" On the other hand, several citizens volunteered possible remedies for these concerns based not on the City's resources but on the resources of their fellow citizens: five called on Park users to "take home their own trash, 'leave no trace,'" and two asked the City to "coordinate a volunteer corps for the Park." Other significant and related suggestions included a "community service plan," an "adopt-a-garden plan," and a "plan for Park users to donate time."

Over the term of the Advisory Group, some progress has been made on both the staffing and security fronts at the Park. RPCA obtained funding for a staff member to supervise Park use during the summer weekends. This has helped with crowd control and ensuring that picnic pavilions are appropriately used. A new reservation system for picnic pavilions has also helped reduce the burden of picnic pavilion use on Park staff and presumably has led to a more efficient visitor experience. Additionally, RPCAs' Park Manager has established better communication with the Alexandria Police Department, and that the police have occasionally cracked down on speeding on the Park's ring road in the early mornings.

E. Storage and Buildings for Park Operations

A constant challenge at the Park has been adequate storage for Fort Ward Museum and space for Park operations. This problem was exacerbated by the necessary closure of the maintenance yard. Outside of the Museum building itself, the only buildings available in the Park for storage and park operations are the small maintenance building located on the north edge of the parking lot immediately behind the Museum and a portion of the amphitheater on the west side of the Park. The maintenance building was designed to reflect the building style that likely would have been used at Fort Ward during the Civil War (a style also reflected in the Museum building) to replicate the actual buildings that stood in the area of the Museum and its parking lot. The maintenance building includes restroom facilities and is currently used as operations space for Park management.

Prior to the closure of the maintenance yard, the maintenance building was shared between the Museum storage and park operations space, but with the closure of the maintenance yard, the Museum's storage space was relocated to the amphitheater – making retrieval of Museum property challenging. The relocation of the Museum's storage facility has

[12] We conclude, based on later work of the Advisory Group, that the reference in this citizen's comment to "St. Stephens & St. Agnes" is to parents dropping off their children at that school in the mornings who apparently use the Parks' ring road as a cut-through to reach the school.

had a significant impact on maintenance projects and interpretation at the Museum, given the increased time to retrieve objects and the Museum's reduced staff. Additionally, the Museum's storage space in the amphitheater is not climate-controlled, and is inappropriate for storage of much of the Museum's property (or even for some maintenance items like paint).

F. Picnic Pavilions

Photo: T. Fulton

The number, and use, of picnic pavilions in the Park has raised challenges for Park operations. Indeed, initial citizen concerns that helped lead directly to the creation of the Advisory Group resulted from an internal RPCA plan to renovate and relocate some of these facilities. In the past, these facilities often attracted much larger crowds than they were designed for, and this led to noise, excessive trash, and other issues. That said, picnicking in the Park is a civic use that, when appropriately monitored, not done by excessively large crowds, and done in the proper locations, is a positive activity. Excessive use of the picnic facilities by larger-than-expected crowds was apparently the cause of the problem with picnics in the Park.

During the term of the Advisory Group, some progress has been made in striking a better balance between this appropriate use of the Park and excessive use. The Park's operations manager has removed a number of the facilities located in areas of particular historic sensitivity, and has instituted a new reservations system to help ensure that large crowds are not using the picnic facilities. Better staffing – discussed separately in this section – has also helped control picnicking crowds. It is unclear to the Advisory Group however, how much progress can be made here without a clearly identified park management plan that delineates the anticipated level of public use of the park, allocation of space for large events, and a plan for staffing the park and crowd control on event days.

G. Park Amenities

During the 2009 public hearings, several citizens raised concerns about amenities in the Park outside of the picnic pavilions and the maintenance facility. Fourteen citizens commented that the Park's restrooms needed to be rehabilitated. Four noted that site amenities should be appropriate for a park with the historic features of the Park, and four more expressed concerns about signage in the Park (generally noting that it was inadequate and should include Spanish translations). One commenter called for removing the entrance booth to the Park's ring road (currently stationed just past the entrance to the Museum's parking lot).

With the exception of the comment about removing the entrance booth, the Advisory Group would agree with these citizen concerns. For Park visitors that do not enter the Museum, the restrooms may be their only indoor experience while visiting the Park, and Alexandria's pride in its park system should be reflected in those facilities. Moreover, on a busy summer weekend, the rest rooms at the Park are likely to be heavily used. The Advisory Group also agrees that signage in the Park should be efficient and appropriate, and comport with the ongoing work of the City's Wayfinding Program.

In light of its recognition that Park staff needs to be readily accessible to control Park use (especially picnic pavilion users and traffic), the Advisory Group does not agree with the one citizen's comment calling for the removal of the entry booth on the Park's ring road.

None of these concerns have changed substantially during the term of the Advisory Group, although we note that six new signs describing the historic features of the Park are being prepared by OHA.

H. Other Concerns raised to the Advisory Group

Various other concerns raised by citizens during the 2009 hearings included requests for programming for the City's nursery and arboretum, a request for a pay phone on the west side of the Park, a need for electrical outlets for Park special events, a request for a utility survey of the Park, and a complaint about leaf blower noise. The Advisory Group notes these comments, but either did not investigate them in detail given the limited time and resources available to it (in the case of programming for the City's nursery), or did not necessarily agree with all of them, in light of the competing priorities for the use of the Park space (the remainder of the comments).

Recommendations

1. **Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU")***:* cooperation between the agencies that manage the Park appears improved. The Advisory Group has two broader concerns about this cooperation, however. One is that the increased cooperation could be short-lived. Second, that cooperation between the agencies has yet to encompass all aspects of the Park's operation. To address this, the Advisory Group has made recommendations on the long-term management structure in the Park in other sections of this Report. One interim step reported to the Group by the agencies, though is a proposed MOU that will stipulate good management practices for co-managed Park operations and specify a chain of responsibility for operations. We encourage the City to commit to this project seriously, and push for its' completion. We have not seen this MOU, and do not know its' contents. To the extent that the MOU is intended to overcome the challenges facing the Park and clarify the role of the agencies involved in park management, the Group sees this MOU, including its public release and discussion, as central to improving the management of the Park. We would therefore strongly encourage each agency to complete work on the MOU, circulate the same for public review, and commit to follow the MOU as a critical component until a more comprehensive Park Management Plan is completed.

2. **Mowing**: *Non-Historic Fort Mowing;* Nothing demonstrates the complexity of the Park more than the issue of mowing. In parts of the Park outside the historic Fort, graves, both marked and unmarked, and historic artifacts of the African American community as well as Native American culture, deserve to be mowed in a way that respects and honors those who are buried there. Other areas of the Park lie on slopes where mowing can affect storm water run-off and thereby affect rates of erosion. Decisions about mowing can affect the spread of invasive species, such as weeds, including poison ivy, oak and sumac. An unintended consequence of not mowing on a regular basis is the increase in rodents, fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes. Mowing is currently jointly managed, the OHA contracts for mowing within the reconstructed area of the Fort and the RPCA mows areas outside the Fort (and portions inside). The RPCA has a "no mow" policy where it believes erosion is significant. The Advisory Group believes that the issue of where to mow, where not to mow, and just how to mow, should be resolved jointly by the agencies involved in a public way through a MOU, that meets the needs of the Park. Such a policy must establish a regularized schedule where the height of grass is determined by lawn use, slope, erosion patterns and rainfall.

   Mowing inside the Historic Fort area; The Advisory Group recommends that before April 2011: directors of RPCA, OHA, and their staff, convene a two-hour meeting[13] to discuss the proper management and care of the turf in the Historic Fort – with the focus the efficient management of the turf; and, at that meeting, agree upon steps for proper management of the turf inside the Historic Fort – including the use of outside contractors if their use is deemed necessary; and assign responsibilities for agreed-upon actions to accountable staff; carry out outlined actions during 2011; and meet again at the conclusion of the 2011 mowing season, evaluate which actions worked and did not, and prepare an improved action plan for 2012.

3. **Maintenance Yard**: The RPCA must complete the decommissioning of the Maintenance Yard. This should be undertaken as quickly as possible to alleviate the blight of the yard, and show due respect for those who are buried within its perimeter. We encourage: 1. the removal of the fence; 2. the removal of the greenhouse and remaining stored materials; 3. removal of the gravel base and deposits of soil and rocks and the restoration of the turf to a surface that will slow water runoff; and 4. the erection of appropriate barricades – along the lines used at the Jackson Family Cemetery area of the Park – to protect grave sites. For the longer term, full consideration should be given to the future use – if any – of the Maintenance Yard area. No one place in the Park better represents the challenge of reconciling conflicting use values than the Maintenance Yard. While the Yard is a symbol of the City's many competing uses in the Park, it is not clear what its future should be.

---

[13] Our recommendation of a two-hour meeting is not intended to be an act of micromanagement on the part of a citizen advisory group. Our intent is only to suggest to the two lead agencies that the problem of mowing inside the Historic Fort is a fairly compact one that is capable of being solved with a reasonable amount of discussion and planning among the knowledgeable professionals involved, and that the investment of a modest amount of time into advance planning will avoid the consumption of more time in the absence of such a plan. Of course, if the lead agencies see the scope of the problem differently, they are free to take as much or as little time as needed to craft a solution.

Once the Yard is completely decommissioned, then, civic values such as 1, preserving and interpreting the City's history, 2, assuring the neighbors adjacent to the Yard the right to quiet enjoyment of their property, and 3, providing safe and adequate space for recreation must be brought into harmony at the Yard site. All three are desirable values at the core of what makes Alexandria a great City to live and work. In our view, no one value can be favored to the exclusion of another: If the Yard site were fully closed to public access, thus fully promoting the adjacent residents' interest in the quiet enjoyment of their properties, the two other values would be compromised because the City would be denied the opportunity to share and interpret important artifacts of its heritage in the Yard space, and a valuable piece of land that could be used for quiet picnicking or recreation would be foreclosed, increasing the use of other areas of the Park. If the Yard site were fully opened to public recreation without adequate protection for the gravesites and other artifacts there, the City would not be fully protecting its heritage that those artifacts represent, nor would it be protecting the neighboring homeowners from excessive noise.

A full balancing of these values will require more information about the archaeological resources in the maintenance yard. Archaeology undertaken in 2010 has raised as many questions as it has answered. Before deciding on a permanent course for the maintenance yard, it will be necessary to understand the historic resources in this area. However, necessary resources of time and money for this work have not been allocated.

Until work is completed, the City should proceed to make necessary interim decisions, starting with what we do know, the ground in the maintenance yard contains historic resources, including graves, and must be treated with the same care and respect as an existing cemetery. We recommend that once the actions outlined above, and appropriate archaeology research by OHA continued until completed, the following steps be taken: 1. erect appropriate signage to explain the significance of the gravesites in the Yard and the contributions of the community that lived in and around the Yard; 2. place appropriate screening plants along the eastern boundary of the Park in consultation with the neighboring homeowners; 3. the Yard area outside of the identified historic artifacts which should be fenced as one of the Initial Steps should be made available for public access, but 4. to limit noisy activities and preserve the right of quiet enjoyment held by the neighboring landowners, no amenities that encourage prolonged use of the area – such as picnic tables – should be placed in the opened area of the Yard. These interim steps will demonstrate respect for those buried here until a more permanent plan to balance the different needs of this area can be finalized.

4. **Parking**: The Advisory Group encourages the agencies managing the Park to: 1. consider, though public input whether current parking spaces inside the Park can be expanded or whether additional parking areas can be added, giving due concern to the need for parking light of the possible changes to the number of large events being held in the Park; 2. consider whether the current and any future parking lots can be constructed using materials to minimize water erosion in other areas of the Park; 3. devise a manner to permit tour buses to safely reach the Fort Ward Museum.

5. **Security**: RPCA is increasing its coordination with City police, this should be encouraged and continued. We also recommend that: 1) speeding crackdowns – especially in the early morning hours – continue; and 2) RPCA consider installation of a gate arm that could block access to the Park's ring road past the entry booth during the hours when the Park is closed.

6. **Staffing:** On staffing at the Park, we note that RPCA has increased the weekend staffing at the Park. It appears to the Advisory Group that this has significantly improved both the recreational visitor experience and security, and should be continued. Given the historic nature of the Park, we would also recommend that RPCA provide training for all of its crews that staff the Park in both the history of the Park and Historic Fort, and in the general historic preservation concepts necessary to maintain historic parks. This would, we believe, result in at least two benefits: it would enable Park staff to enhance the visitor experience while promoting a greater understanding among the Park's chief stewards of the value of the Park's historic resources and the care needed to preserve those resources. We think the knowledge to conduct this training is already available in OHA.

   In light of the City's current fiscal restraints, we think RPCA should accept the requests made by many citizens commenting during the 2009 public hearings and utilize citizen volunteers to augment its staff at the Park. Some citizen comments called for a "volunteer corps" for the Park. We think that RPCAs' "Adopt-a-Park" initiative may be tailor-made for this effort. We think that among the various stakeholder groups that have participated in the public process surrounding the future of Fort Ward Park, one group (or a coalition of groups) can be located that can fulfill this role.

7. **Storage and Buildings for Park Operations**: The Advisory Group encourages the lead agencies managing the Park to: 1. assess all of the usable space in the Park included in the maintenance building north of the Museum and at the amphitheater; 2. assess whether that space is being used in the most appropriate manner, giving due regard to the need for the Museum to have adequate and nearby storage space, as well as the need for space to conduct Park operations; 3. in light of (2), make any needed changes to the use of these spaces.

8. **Picnic Pavilions**: The removal of certain picnic structures and a new reservations system has helped abate some of the concerns about excessive numbers of picnics held by large crowds in the Park. In the short term, the Advisory Group encourages RPCA to continue to be vigilant in this area. In the longer term, the appropriate size and location of picnic facilities should be the subject of a master plan for the Park.

9. **Park Amenities**: The Advisory Group recommends the following changes to park amenities: 1. the Park's restrooms should be rehabilitated; 2. in coordination with the City's wayfinding project, Park signage should be: a) redesigned to be more appropriate for a historic park; b) reviewed to ensure that it clearly provides necessary information on Park rules and procedures; and c) communicates Spanish translations where needed; 3. the entry booth on the Park ring road should be redesigned and reconstructed to fit with the Civil War-era Museum and nearby maintenance building.

6. Planning; Issues and Recommendations
Tom Fulton[14]

The purpose of this chapter is to lay out the need for a clear systematic planning process for Fort Ward Park.

Issues

A concern often expressed among Advisory Group members is how did the situation at Fort Ward Park get so bad? The answer appears to be a lack of adequate planning or guidance for the long term health of the Park. Many management decisions were short-term, often ill-conceived, responses to "problems" as they arose. What is needed is a Master Plan to help guide management decisions at the Park. Unfortunately, there have been earlier efforts to write a master Plan for the Park, but they have been ignored over time. The City Council can play a role by ensuring a plan is written – and followed. The Council should write into the city code a process, including citizen involvement that provides a framework under which the City can undertake city-wide Park planning. Existence of a park planning requirement in City code would prevent backsliding by agencies charged with completing the work and offer citizens some understanding of the process.

Many of our recommendations address problems arising as a result of the lack of a plan to guide the City in how it manages the Park. Indeed, from the beginning, when it resorted to eminent domain to force a few of the area residents off their land, to the present, the City has demonstrated a lack of openness and inclusiveness about decisions associated with the Park. In the unfortunate instance of the forced relocation of a few of the African American families living at Fort Ward Park in the 1960s, which generated long-standing ill-will and distrust of city government, it is the opinion of the Advisory Group that while individuals were compensated for their property, such action should not be repeated.

The Advisory Group is pleased that the City Council has committed to the process of developing a City-wide park master plan and its intention to begin with Fort Ward Park. Implementation of and adherence to an overall Park Master Plan would have, in all probability, precluded problems such as the parking of city trucks on and near marked graves. Having a clear cut master plan with well understood avenues of public involvement will, in our view, allow for long term management and use decisions within Fort Ward Park that take into consideration its diverse nature.

Developing a Master Plan for the Park can serve as a model for other parks across the City. As an initial task, the Advisory Group recommends the institutionalization of a process to solicit, consider and evaluate input from residents and experts in park planning. As changes in use over time at the Park demonstrate, citizens need some understanding of what uses are acceptable in these large parks, and if they need to change, how? The Advisory Group strongly

[14] Tom Fulton serves as Chair of the Advisory Group, this section is the result of extensive collaboration among all the members of the Advisory Group.

recommends that the City's appropriate agencies undertake a rigorous effort to develop a master plan for large parks beginning with Fort Ward Park. This process should incorporate a process for allowing change over time, and seek to incorporate maximum citizen participation as well as incorporate the mandating of regular meetings at the appropriate level, and at regular intervals, to ensure continuing coordination and cooperation in the Park's administration.

To be successful, in our view, the **Master Plan** should incorporate several essential components of planning: including an overall **Resource Inventory and Management Plan**; a **Cultural, Historical, and Archaeological Resource Inventory** including the African American and Native American presence in the Park; a formalized **Joint Management Plan;** a **Citizens Advisory Committee**; an **Interpretive Plan**; a **Vegetative Management Plan** including a plan for the **Arboretum**; and a **Storm Water Run-off Mitigation Plan**; **Picnic and Event Permitting;** and a better use of **Special Use Permits**.

Resource Inventory and Management Plan ("RMP"): The Advisory Group understands that Fort Ward Park is incredibly diverse and complex. At times the Park hosts large concerts in its amphitheater, children at its playground, families picnicking at its pavilions, joggers using the .6 mile road that circles the Park, history buffs at its museum, tree identification fans at its arboretum, all the while allowing descendent families to visit graves of ancestors, and those enjoying quiet contemplation at its memorial azalea gardens. All of these involve complex uses of Park resources, but there has been no in-depth inventory of these resources nor a management plan developed to ensure that the Park retains the diverse qualities we treasure today and into the future. An Inventory and RMP should be developed and with citizen participation folded into a Master Plan for Fort Ward Park.

Cultural, Historical, and Archaeological Resource Inventory: The OHA, to its credit, and that of its Director Lance Mallamo, has undertaken an effort to document and understand the rich neighborhood African American history that surrounds Fort Ward Park. The Advisory Group believes the City should encourage and facilitate completion of this effort. Although we understand the on-going nature of learning all there is to know about the people who lived in an area as complex as surrounding Fort Ward Park, having a more complete Cultural Resource Inventory of the Park is a must for associated management decision making. For instance, although flooding is a problem within Fort Ward Park and neighboring homes,

Recent excavation at Fort Ward.
Photo: T. Fulton.

Alexandria's Department of Transportation & Environmental Services currently believes it does not have enough information about the possible location of unmarked graves within the Park to proceed with a permanent water run-off mitigation effort.

Alexandria's City Council is commended for allocating $50,000 in citizen funds for the examination of where and how many possible graves exist at Fort Ward. While the Park is the site of an iconic Civil War earthen Fort, its history does not stop there. The area was also the home to a community of African Americans and the descendents of many of

those families still reside in the Seminary area of Alexandria today. The Advisory Group believes these gravesites need to be found, interpreted, and appropriately honored. Planners at Fort Ward need the information about these graves, some marked some unmarked, to restrict these areas to activities considered appropriate. This on-going effort should be supported by the City Council in its budgetary process until it is completed.

Joint Management Plan: Fort Ward Park may be unique in the City for its joint management. While such a configuration can lead to cost and personnel benefits to the City, both sides need to clearly understand their duties and obligations. The Advisory Group recommends the agencies managing the Park formalize their understanding of each agencies' responsibilities. Such a joint plan should contain formal opportunities for citizen participation in those decisions.

Citizen Advisory Committee: The Advisory Group believes that one of the great strengths of Alexandria is the role citizens play in decision making in the City. At the Park, the Advisory Group believes that role should be on-going and strengthened. The Advisory Group urges the city and City Council to form a citizen's advisory committee to oversee the implementation of these recommendations at the Park as well as to oversee on-going management at the Park. Such a group might include (but not be limited to) members of local citizen groups such as the Seminary Hill Association, The Seminary Civic Association, the Friends of Fort Ward, as well as descendent and church groups with family buried at the Park. Responsible City agencies should also be required to submit regular reports to the City Council and any public advisory body established as a successor to the Advisory Group. These reports should be prepared jointly by the directors of each agency on at least a quarterly basis, until a Park Master Plan is completed. Finally, City managers might consider, if they don't already, placing a "public outreach" element as a critical component in evaluating affected City employees annual performance.

Interpretive Plan: There is a need for visitors to the Park to better understand what they are seeing at Fort Ward. The Park is trying to meet many diverse needs and often it leaves visitors confused about just what the Park is all about. The Advisory Group believes that the City needs to incorporate an Interpretive Plan into its Master Plan planning process, with citizen involvement, that helps convey the message of what the Park is (and what it is not), to its users. Such an Interpretive Plan would help focus Master Park planning goals.

Such an interpretive plan should work to better integrate the outreach and event planning opportunities currently handled separately by OHA and RPCA. Joint planning efforts could

better leverage and extend limited City resources and more fully integrate various electronic communications systems such as websites, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to fully project the unique characteristics offered by the Park to interested citizens, students, and visitors.

The Interpretive Plan might include the Park's role in history such as, Civil War Re-enactment, Civil War Camp Day, community model and African American and U.S. Colored Troop photos in the museum at Fort Ward, as a teaching tool for students and visitors on African American culture, during and post civil war. Finally, public signage, in coordination with the City's wayfinding project, should be: 1. redesigned to be more appropriate for a historic park; 2. reviewed to ensure that it clearly provides necessary information on Park rules and procedures; and 3. communicates Spanish translations where needed.

The City should also consider forming an education outreach committee of City officials from the OHA, RPCA, as well as educators and interested citizens to work to offer Fort Ward as an instructional tool relating to Civil War history as well as African American History post Civil War, reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights movement. The city could build on Fort Ward's current school outreach program, "Life During the Civil War."

A Vegetative Management Plan: The Parks natural resources and the humans who occupied the site are inextricably intertwined. Visitors come to the Park for the open space, the trees and the flowers. There is as great a need for an overall Vegetative Management Plan for Fort Ward to properly manage these natural resources as there is to understand human occupation at the Park.

The Arboretum: Not many Alexandrian's know that Fort Ward Park serves as the City's arboretum. Sadly this high minded ideal has been badly neglected. Aside from a few signs at the foot of a few trees dedicating them to specific individuals, and a brochure that is now out of print, there is not much evidence at the Park of its status as the City's arboretum. Frankly, the view of the Advisory Group is that the arboretum should receive greater and more consistent attention from the City. In the way that management of the Park should be the focus of a public process that results in a plan of action such an effort should also be undertaken for the arboretum. The City has completed the first step in this effort, an inventory of tree type/age/location/health. From this inventory, the City can prioritize a plan for investing in appropriate replacement trees where warranted. The complexity of the Fort, however, dictates that many divergent considerations be taken into account as planning proceeds. For instance, an important part of the Civil War fort at the Park is the view shed from inside, this needs to be included in any arboretum planning. Also important to such a plan is where currently unknown burial sites might lie.

Storm water Runoff Mitigation Plan: The City must pass along to future residents a Park that is undiminished. One certain threat is that of erosion caused by storm water runoff. It should devise a permanent solution to eliminate water runoff in the Park, and more specifically the graves, understanding that the current use of hay bales is only a temporary measure. Excess runoff threatens not only existing features within the Park and private property adjacent to the Park, it also threatens marked and unmarked graves both within the overall Park and

those concentrated in the privately-owned OBC cemetery that lies within the Park. The City needs to immediately undertake planning to develop methodologies that will mitigate current runoff and preserve important features within the Park. Such a mitigation plan should be an important part of an overall Master Plan for the Park.

There are several restoration needs in the park due to years of deferred maintenance and weather damage. The City needs to commit resources or accept volunteer assistance to clear deadfall from wooded areas. Additionally the erosion of the grassy areas leading to the current playground site as well as multiple picnic areas should be addressed to restore the natural character of the park. Installation of water breaks, perhaps using the large deadfall and installation of wood chips would help restore these areas until a long-term solution to the dispersal of rain water can be addressed. The restoration should also include the removal of the concrete from the run-off gulley by the monument to the arborist memorial and the impervious material surrounding the monument itself. To further reduce compaction, there should be a limit to the use of park maintenance vehicles in these areas already affected especially when soils are wet. There is a need to aerate and/or add soil amendments. Do not remove all of the leaves in the Fall, leave some in place to add nutrients to soil and slow erosion. Restore bare areas by using hay/mulch and grass seed, and use temporary fences to keep people and vehicles off these affected areas

The City should review areas that are currently not mown, and moderate the location of these areas as needed**.** Monitor and treat invasive plants before they become more widespread. Apply other mitigation techniques including mulching with straw and reseeding areas that have sheet erosion. Monitor and reseed areas that will be excavated for archaeological surveys. Plant rain gardens to help capture and minimize damaging run- off, especially on eastern side of park. Remove piles of dirt that were deposited in locations that are contributing to excessive water flow. Remove aggregate materials in the maintenance area and restore grass and trees to better absorb water flow. Some hardscape areas such as picnic table pads could be replaced with pervious pavers to decrease run-off.

In addition to mitigating storm water problems on the eastern side of park, the city should increase capacity of draw and revegetate, it should install additional drainage structures and possibly a storm water vault or other retention facility, and continue debris clean-up within stream channel, ditch and inlet structures. It may wish to consider the construction of a temporary berm to channel water away from the OBC cemetery. The City should work with neighbors on how they can help moderate storm water as well. For storm water that leaves the Park, it should consider possible capture in cisterns or rain barrels for flower beds, newly planted trees, and consider plant rain gardens to help capture and minimize damaging run-offs on eastern side of the Park.

Picnic/Event Permitting: After experiencing picnic events where permit applicants stated attendance would be under 35, but where as many as 900 attended, the City undertook a substantial revision of its reservation and permitting system. As a result, the Advisory Group believes RPCA should be commended for these changes. While public use of the Park should be

actively encouraged, however rules should be clearly vetted, understood and enforced. Limits on noise, group size, parking, and duration of events should be proposed by the appropriate city department(s), then publically vetted, placed on adequate signage, on permits themselves, and on the web - and then enforced.

Picnic procedures should be strengthened by prohibiting consumption of alcoholic beverages and the use of amplified music in the Park. There should be no authority for the granting of individual exceptions relating to picnic reservations. The only area of the Park where amplified music should be permitted is in the amphitheater where summer concerts are held. The consumption of alcohol and amplified music are not integral to the goal of maintaining a passive recreation resource. For the safety and enjoyment of those who value the Park for its tranquility and respect its significant cultural origins, these additional protections should be considered.

The removal of certain picnic structures and a new reservations system has helped abate some of the concerns about excessive numbers of picnics held by large crowds in the Park. In the short term, the Advisory Group encourages RPCA to continue to be vigilant in this area. In the longer term, the appropriate size and location of picnic facilities should be the subject of a Master Plan for the Park.

View inside greenhouse
Photo: G. Eugster

Special Use Permit ("SUP"): Finally, the Advisory Group notes the City's selective use of SUPs in its decision making at Fort Ward Park. In one example, two green houses were built at Fort Ward at different times. The first, now gone, existed just north of the restrooms at the edge of the Museum parking lot. The City applied for and received a SUP for its construction. A second green house, built later further east in the maintenance yard, and still there, was apparently constructed without a SUP (at least none can be found). Several other structures also exist in the Park without known SUPs. In our view, SUPs serve as an important public check and balance on city decision making. They require multiple review by other city agencies and offer the public some opportunity to let its concerns be known on a proposal prior to its implementation. The city should carefully adhere to the use of SUPs in its decision making at Fort Ward Park.

Recommendations

1. The City Council should enact a code for the development and implementation of a Parks planning process including Fort Ward Park that maximizes public participation.

2. The City should undertake and complete a Master Plan for its Parks and should begin with Fort Ward Park.

3. A Master Plan for Fort Ward Park should include a completed Resource Inventory and Management Plan; a Cultural, Historical, and Archaeological Resource Inventory; a formalized Joint Management Plan; a Citizens Advisory Committee; an Interpretive Plan; a Vegetative Management Plan; a Storm Water Run-off Mitigation Plan; and a Picnic and Event Permitting Plan.

4. The City should better adhere to its own rules and regulations in managing Fort Ward Park.

7. Development and Promotion; Issues and Recommendations
Adrienne Washington and Tom Fulton[15]

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide City decision makers and Park Managers with options and recommendations for increasing public outreach and awareness including interpretive products, educational opportunities, and special occasions at the Park.

Background

Fort Ward Historical Park and Museum officially opened with much fanfare on Memorial Day in 1964 as the City of Alexandria's main contribution to the Civil War Centennial then taking place across the nation. Over the next nearly 50 years, the Park has evolved to become a large city park that contains a museum, an amphitheater, picnic areas, serves as the city's arboretum, and contains the best example still in existence of the ring of Forts that protected Washington, D.C. during the Civil War. It is jointly managed by Alexandria's RPCA and OHA. Both city agencies feature the Park on their respective websites as does the City of Alexandria on its homepage. Because of its historical and cultural significance, the Park serves as one of the primary city engines for passive recreation, tourism, as well as serving as a unique teaching tool.

Photo: T. Fulton.

Current Situation

Although the Park represents one of the City of Alexandria's major public attractions, the public's awareness of the range of what it offers is limited at best. Currently, outreach to visitors is shared by OHA and RPCA. In most cases, in addition to maintaining Fort Ward's website, www.FortWard.org, OHA offers programs through the Museum located on the Park grounds, while RPCA, which also maintains a website, generally offers events that take place in the amphitheater or in areas outside the earthen walls of the Fort itself. Recent efforts to increase outreach include sharing information on a Civil War Round Table website, www.alexandriacwrt.com, as well as with the National Park Service at: www.nps.gov/cwdw/. OHA also sends information about events at the Park to the Virginia Tourism website and the Civil War Trails program. It is anticipated that notices of events will be sent to Virginia's Sesquicentennial website calendar as well.

Most day visitors to the Park are there to enjoy outdoor, passive recreational opportunities such as walking, jogging, picnicking and use of the children's playground. Visitors

[15] Adrienne Washington, a descendent of several of the families who made Fort Ward their home, is a member of the nonprofit Fort Ward descendent family's organization as well as the Oakland Baptist Church. Tom Fulton serves as Chair of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, and is a member of the Alexandria Archaeology Commission.

to the site's Museum and earthworks numbered approximately 34,000 in FY2010, up significantly from the approximately 25,000 visitors who came in FY 2009 with many of these taking a self guided walking tour of the earthen Fort's interior, especially its reconstructed Northwest Bastion. Infrequently there are events such as a reenacted Civil War or Revolutionary War skirmishes that attract visitors.

Photo: T. Fulton.

There is little public awareness of the Park's listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or its designation as the official arboretum for the City of Alexandria. Awareness is minimal of the Park's rhododendron garden. Although the Park is the site of a superb outdoor amphitheater it is underused. There is little interaction between the Park and Alexandria's school system, although it represents an authentic example of a crucial period in our Nation's history. Although the City informs visitors about Fort Ward through its various website portals, there is little innovation to attract or compelling reason to visit those sites. In addition, although the city, to its credit, is moving to alternative forms of electronic communication with its interested stakeholders such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc., there is little evidence that these sites are being exploited to their full potential.

Future Action

Interpretive Products: Currently there is underway an effort to expand interpretation at the Park beyond the traditional Civil War story of Generals and their tactics through the use of interpretive signs to tell the story of the African American families who settled at the Fort in the aftermath of the Civil War. Eventually a series of six to eight signs will inform visitors of the families who lived there and built a school, founded a church, and lived as a tightknit community for some 100 years. These interpretive signs will join an already existing set of signs that mark a self guided tour of the Fort and explain the Fort's role in the civil War itself. There is also an effort underway to develop podcasts providing short descriptions of neighborhood attractions in the West End of Alexandria including Fort Ward. These new efforts at interpretation are anticipated to be in place for the upcoming Sesquicentennial.

Educational Outreach: The Park lies within one mile of a number of public and private schools, including; Alexandria's Hammond Middle School, T.C. Williams High School, Minnie Howard, (the Ninth grade campus of T.C. Williams), the private St. Stephens and St. Agnes School (its middle school lies on the western edge of the Park), the Episcopal High School, The Friends School, the Virginia Theological Seminary and the Alexandria Campus of the Northern Virginia Community College. Currently few, if any, of these schools make the Park a field trip to

study its museum or the earthen fort. The Fort appears not to be included in any of the school's teaching curriculums.

Special Occasions: Just as the Park played a key role in Alexandria's celebration of the Centennial of the American Civil War, it stands poised to make a similar contribution in the upcoming Sesquicentennial of 2011-2015. During the Centennial the focus was on the tactics of the armies of the North and the South and the decisions of their commanding generals. Alexandria's own Robert E. Lee played a key role in the stories of the period. As we approach the Sesquicentennial, the emphasis has changed, now the interest is in discovering the story of the common man and how he, or she, was affected by events. Research recently conducted by the Office of Historic Alexandria and interested citizens indicates that families of African Americans who lived at the fort lived through many of the events of the period and after. We are now beginning to better understand their story and to tell it to a wider audience.

The Park is the site of several annual events including Civil War Camp Day, Civil War Kids Camp, Christmas in Camp, and periodic soldier-led walking tours of the Fort. It has, in the past played host to events such as the Alexandria Jazz Festival, the Scottish Festival, and is frequently the site of privately sponsored birthday and other private events.

Recommendations

1. The City should work to better integrate the outreach and event planning opportunities currently handled separately by OHA and RPCA. Joint planning efforts could better leverage and extend limited city resources.

2. The City should work to more fully integrate various electronic communications systems such as websites, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to fully project the unique characteristics offered by the Park to interested citizens, students, and visitors.

3. The City should consider forming an education outreach committee of city officials from OHA, RPCA, as well as educators and interested citizens to work to offer Fort Ward as an instructional tool relating to Civil War history as well as African American History post Civil War, reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights movement. The City could build on Fort Ward's current school outreach program, "Life During the Civil War."

4. City managers might consider, if they don't already, placing a "public outreach" element as a critical component in evaluating the annual performance of affected City employees.

Appendix I

The Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group

On June 19, 2009, the Alexandria City Council received a recommendation from City Staff for the creation of a citizen's group to advise it on management decision making at Fort Ward Park. On June 23, 2009, the Alexandria City Council adopted Resolution 2349 affirming that recommendation. Resolution 2349 authorized the City to select ten residents to serve on an Advisory Group that would exist for one year and make recommendations to the City regarding the Park and its management. While specifically excluding any recommendations within the museum walls at the Park, the Resolution did not restrict the subject area of management the Advisory Group could undertake in its deliberations within the Park itself.

The Resolution stipulated that these ten citizen members would fall into the following five categories: 1. three members recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission; 2. three members recommended by the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission ("HARC"); 3. one member recommended by the Environmental Policy Commission; 4. two citizens at large; and 5. one member living within a one-mile radius of the Park. By the end of October, 2009, the members had been selected.

The first pro-forma meeting of the Advisory Group was held on December 8, 2009, where new members met one another and were introduced to Mr. Lance Mallamo, Director of the OHA and Mr. James Spengler, the new Director of RPCA, having replaced the departed Kirk Kincannon. Led by City officials, Advisory Group members agreed to meet again on January 14, 2010, to begin work.

On January 14, 2010, the members of the Advisory Group met and as its first item of business selected officers. Tom Fulton was elected Chair, Charles Ziegler Vice-Chair and William Schreiner as Secretary. The selection of officers was unanimous. A recording of minutes was undertaken. It was also decided that the Advisory Group adopt a mission statement to guide its work:

Mission Statement:

> "Ensure the preservation and protection of Fort Ward Park for the citizens of Alexandria into perpetuity. Commemorate and interpret Fort Ward history related to the Civil War, the African American community living in and around the Park and all other cultures. Develop a framework of recommendations for the overall usage of Fort Ward by balancing and merging the richness of culture and history with recreational, environmental, and operational management demands." *Approved, March 11, 2010*

Additionally, the Advisory Group asked that City officials involved with management at the Park address the Advisory Group and answer questions. Finally, the Advisory Group agreed to a schedule of future meetings.

Over the course of 2010, the Advisory Group, meeting twice monthly, has heard formal presentations from:

Mr. James Spengler, Director of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Mr. Lance Mallamo, Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria
Mr. Richard Baier, Director of the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Dr. Pam Cressey, City Archaeologist
Ms. Susan Cumbey, Director Fort Ward Museum

Mr. Wally Owen, Assistant Director, Fort Ward Museum
Mr. John Noelle, City Arborist
Mr. Walter Powell, Parks Department Regional Supervisor

In addition to presentations from assorted city officials, the Advisory Group also sought out written statements regarding management actions at Fort Ward Park from the following:

The Alexandria Archaeology Commission
The Alexandria Parks and Recreation Commission
The Friends of Fort Ward
The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission
The Oakland Baptist Church
The Seminary Hill Association
The Seminary Civic Association

The Advisory Group, after discussion, agreed to produce a set of recommendations in a report and chose to divide into subcommittees, each to undertake the authorship of a chapter of the document that was anticipated be the result of its deliberations. The five subcommittee chapters agreed to were:

1. Historical and Cultural Issues and Recommendations
2. Recreational Use Issues and Recommendations
3. Environment and Natural Resource Issues and Recommendations
4. Park Operations Issues and Recommendations
5. Development and Promotional Issues and Recommendations

The agreed to topics and items addressed by the Advisory Group spring largely (but not solely) from the comments received from citizens who attended the three public forums sponsored by the City as well as written comments that were received. These were then compiled by Ms. Laura Durham of the RPCA into a document titled: "Fort Ward Park Priorities and Issues Identified by Community" (See Appendix II), and an associated document which included topics raised by e-mails and letters, is divided into five general categories: 1, Historic/Cultural Uses; 2, Park Operations; 3, Active/Passive Recreational Uses[16]; 4, Environmental/Natural Resources; and 5, Other.

The Advisory Group made a presentation in chambers before the Alexandria City Council on Tuesday, April 27, 2010, and held a public forum at Minnie Howard School on Thursday May 13, 2010. On November 1, 2010, the Advisory Group posted a draft of its recommendations document online for public comment. Several interested citizen did provide useful comment, many of which are incorporated in this document.

[16] Originally two categories; Active Recreational Uses, and Passive/Casual Uses, these were combined into one category Recreational Uses by the Advisory Group. Subcommittees were free to include issues raised within any category if deemed appropriate.

Finally. the Advisory Group would like to thank Glenn Eugster for giving permission to use some of the many photos of Fort Ward Park in his collection.

RESOLUTION NO. 2349

Resolution Establishing an Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park And Museum Area Stakeholders Advisory Group

WHEREAS, City Council wishes to establish an ad hoc stakeholder advisory group to advise City staff on Fort Ward Park and Museum Area use and management; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Ward Park and Museum Area are valuable City resources for use and enjoyment by residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Ward Park and Museum Area includes significant historic, environmental park, and recreational resources; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Ward Park and Museum Area is adjacent to a residential neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the appropriate balance of uses needs to be reviewed and determined; and

WHEREAS, a diverse group of City residents with a wide variety of interests can assist in recommending this appropriate balance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

1. That there is hereby established an *ad hoc* stakeholder advisory group known as the Ad Hoc Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Stakeholder Advisory Group.

2. That the Advisory Group shall consist of ten members, as follows: 3 members recommended by the Park and Recreation Commission, 3 members recommended by the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, 1 member recommended by the Environmental Policy Commission, 2 citizens at large, and 1 citizen living within a one-mile radius of Fort Ward Park.

3. That the City Manager shall appoint the ten members of the Advisory Group for a limited duration.

4. That the Chairpersons of the Park and Recreation, Historic Alexandria Resource and Environmental Policy Commissions shall recommend to the City Manager its members for the Advisory Group.

5. That, in making their appointments, the City Manager and Commission chairs shall endeavor to ensure that in aggregate, Advisory Group members provide:

   a. A commitment to a balanced, multi-use park and historic site in the City; and

   b. Are representative of the diversity of interests and uses of the park and museum site.

6. That the functions of the Advisory Group shall be:

   a. Advise staff with a goal of finding an appropriate balance between the different uses of the park, including active, passive/environmental and historic/archeological interests.

   b. Provide staff with recommendations on balancing park uses, implementing education and outreach opportunities and reviewing the success of recently implemented changes.

   c. Advise staff on Fort Ward issues and opportunities related to the interim park/historic area use, management of Fort Ward and long term goals to be refined through a city-wide park master planning process.

7. That staff assistance to the Advisory Group shall be managed jointly by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and the Office of Historic Alexandria, with support as needed from the Departments of Transportation and Environmental Services, Planning and Zoning and General Services, and the City Manager's Office.

8. That the Advisory Group shall meet on an ad hoc basis and will be formed for a limited duration of no more than one-year unless otherwise extended by City Council.

ADOPTED: June 23, 2009

WILLIAM D. EUILLE **MAYOR**

ATTEST:

Jacqueline M. Henderson, CMC City Clerk

Fort Ward Park Priorities and Issues Identified by Community

HISTORIC/CULTURAL USES	#
1. African American History	
a) Signage of historical African American community, historic markers	19
b) Restoration of community graves and artifacts	15
c) Exhibit for museum	15
d) African American History--Input and Research	11
2. Identification of Historic Areas	
a) Grave sites, Pre-post Civil War, African American History, Regional significance, others	17
b) Identify w/ signage- visible and clear.	11
c) Identify areas/gravesites through research, GPS	8
3. Market/ Promote "Park Story"/ History	
a) Recognize historic significance of site. Valuable levels within park.	10
b) Tours: African American Community, Oral History, Walking Tour, Cell Phone technology	8
c) Begin planning, preparations for 150th Anniversary of the Civil War.	2
d) Appoint a committee to begin short/long term interpretive plan for 150th Civil War Anniv.	3
e) History needs to be more accessible	1
f) Interpretive program	1
4. Interpretive Trail-- of cultural, natural, Af. American resources	16
5. Resource Management	
a) Preserve history in museum. Concerns about flooding in basement.	3
b) Message to "respect park and its' resources" (Picnic users)	3
c) Assess if historic and cultural resources are compatible w/recreation use	2
d) Mission Statement to define Parks historical purpose/importance.	2
e) Go back to the original concept of park-historic with azalea beds, passive uses.	2

PARK OPERATIONS	#
1. Maintenance Facility	
a) Move maintenance yard, but do not replace w/ additional picnic or public access area	8
b) Regular cleaning and upkeep. Additional screening and buffer.	4
c) Gravesites located inside yard, overlaps w/ yard, does facility need to be moved?	3
d) Programming for Nursery--Now and when its gone	2
e) Nursery used as staging than for growing.	1
2. Rehabilitate Restrooms	14
3. Security	
a) Security for Park	5
b) Closing times/Gates	3
c) Police	1
4. Communications/Assistance	
a) Who do you go to? What is the process for contacting authorities?	4
b) Staff not on duty to help with concerns/ needs.	2
5. Cemeteries/Gravesites	
a) Damage to grave sites	3
b) Better maintenance of Cemetery	2
c) Vegetative Screening	1
6. Park Amenities	
a) Site amenities/furnishings should be appropriate for a historic area.	4
b) No Loud signage, etc..	3
7. Other Maintenance/Operations	
a) Leaf blower noise--why are leaves picked up?	1
b) Incorporate green practices in maintenance	1
c) City vehicles take up visitor parking spaces	1
d) Do not increase parking.	1

ACTIVE RECREATIONAL USES	#
1. Picnics	
a) Noise- Noise problems with picnics, parties. Prohibit/ban amplified sound.	41
b) Alcohol- prohibit/ban alcohol /ABC permits	17
c) Overcrowding--control, reduce picnics, reservations, group size-no large groups.	15
d) Limit/eliminate picnics in areas adjacent to residents	5
e) Noise abatement w/ adequate staffing on weekends	4
f) Temporarily stop/reduce picnics to assess needs and to allow areas to regenerate	2
g) Increase reservation fees	1
h) Requirements for reservations-Alexandria residents/non-residents	1
2. Parking/Vehicles	
a) Parking issues--spillover into adjacent neighborhoods from events/picnics	7
b) Vehicular traffic--eliminate vehicles or relocate?	4
c) Control access into park	4
d) No additional parking	2
3. Special Events	
a) Large events, such as Jazz Festival- not historic, negative impact, unrelated to history	4
4. Facilities	
a) No additional pavillions	5
b) Lighting--lights are on and park is empty	3
c) Rehab/Upgrade Amphitheatre	1
d) Electrical Outlets for Special Events (controlled)	1
5. Management	
a) Determine max. limit to balance use and historic resources	3

PASSIVE/CASUAL USES	#
1. Pedestrian Uses	
a) Maintain walking/running paths	6
b) Walking Park is a plus	3
c) Pedestrian/vehicular are shared-- safety concerns. Have a pedestrian only 'loop'	3
d) Identify walking and driving road	2
e) Sidewalks	1
2. Parking availability for casual use	6
3. Other	
a) More Historical emphasis	3
b) More passive use	2

ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURAL RESOURCES	#
1. Arboretum	
a) Re-establish arboretum at Fort Ward as part of master plan	16
b) Master plan for Arboretum--include education and plant collections	12
2. Trees and Landscaping	
a) Replant trees lost to attrition	6
b) Trees/arboretum are non-existant	5
c) Azalea beds, festival	6
d) Tree work, maintain existing azaleas, plants	3
e) Document trees/historic trees	1
3. Drainage	
a) Drainage along east property line/ throughout park	4
b) No more paving, impervious surfaces	4
c) Utilize stormwater as irrigation around loop	1

OTHER	#
1. Park Planning	
a) Develop Mission Statement	10
b) Empower Working Group/Committee: ID short /long term goals, managed growth/stewardship	9
c) Postpone facilities plan until master plan complete	6
d) Rebalance use, ID how Park is used;under/ over utilized areas, prioritize use- passive/active	6
e) Communications w/ Public- Open Comm. w/ neigh.	5
f) No changes in Park without public process or input, esp. adjacent neighborhoods	4
2. Volunteer Ideas	
a) Users take home their own trash – "leave no trace"	5
b) Coordinate volunteer corp. for park	2
c) Community Service Plan	1
d) Adopt a Garden to beautify	1
e) Users donate time	1
3. Misc.	
a) Drug Use/ Crime, Rats/Vermin, Parking (and speeding) for St. S./St. A.	3
b) Pay Phone on Westside	3
c) Park is a regional attraction and community asset	1
d) Utility survey needed	1

= #of responses from priority exercise

Dated 3/18/09

Appendix III

Fort Ward Park Priorities and Issues Identified by Community via Emails and Letters January-March 2009

HISTORIC/CULTURAL USES	#	PARK OPERATIONS	#	ACTIVE RECREATIONAL USES	#	PASSIVE/CASUAL USES	#	ENVIRONMENTAL/NATURAL RESOURCES	#	OTHER	#
1. African American History		**1. Maintenance Facility**		**1. Picnics**		**1. Pedestrian and Passive Uses**		**1. Arboretum**		**1. Park Planning**	
a) Signage of historical African American community, historic markers	2	Move maintenance yard	16	Noise and alcohol signage needed with ban of amplified sound.	5	Maintain walking/running paths and add distance markers	2	Re-establish arboretum at Fort Ward as part of master plan	2	Work with the community to develop a mission statement and park plan	2
b) Protection and restoration of community graves and artifacts	16	Move horticultural area	3	Better management and oversight of reservation and permit system	3	Improve overall passive pedestrian use	1	Add more trees	2	Remove October 2008 Facilities Presentation from website	3
c) Exhibit for museum	3	Regular cleaning and upkeep. Additional screening and buffer.	4	Alcohol- prohibit/ban alcohol /ABC permits	1	Walking Park is a plus		**2. Trees and Landscaping**		Create Advisory Group/Committee: ID short /long term goals, managed growth/stewardship	3
d) African American History--Input and Research	6	Restore maintenance area to sod	2	Overcrowding and overuse--control, reduce picnics, reservations, group size-no large groups.	2	Pedestrian/vehicular are shared-- safety concerns. Cars go too fast in the morning	1	Replant trees lost to attrition	1	Postpone improvements and spending until master plan complete	1
2. Identification of Historic Areas		Improvements are evident - satisfied	2	Noise abatement w/ adequate enforcement on weekends	1	Improve speed bumps -now they are ugly and impede pedestians and are an ADA issue	3	Inventory all trees	1	Balance use,compatible uses important	2
a) Preservation ofall historical areas, including pre and post Civil War	5	**2. Security**		Change rental policies and increase reservation fees	1	Likes pedestrian area	1	**3. Drainage**		Written Commitment from Staff - MOU with community	2
b) Identify w/ signage- visible and clear.	7	More security for park	1	Need for larger picnic site with moveable tables	1	More Historical emphasis with decreased recreational use	1	a) Drainage along east property line/ throughout park	1	Park planning should be funded by City Council and have a tranparent public process	5
c) Fund archeological survey and study of area	7	**3. Communications/Assistance**		**2. Dog Park**		Protect open space	1	Erosion control throughout park is needed	1	**2. Volunteer Ideas**	
3. Recognize and protect Civil War history	3	Who do you go to? What is the process for contacting authorities?	1	Better signage with rules for users with dogs	1					Public/private partnerships and grants needed	1
4. Research all significant areas/archeology	1	**4. Park Amenities**		Move dog park	1					Coordinate volunteer/neighborhood corp. for park clean up	2
5. Market/ Promote "Park Story"/ History		Site amenities/furnishings should be appropriate for a historic area.	1	Add area for "small dogs"	1					**3. Misc.**	
Tours: African American Community, Oral History, Walking Tour, Cell Phone technology	4	Remove entrance booth	1	Dog park needs to be enclosed	1					a)Overall improvement needed	1
Begin planning, preparations for 150th Anniversary of the Civil War.	1	**5. Other Maintenance/Operations**		**3. Parking/Vehicles**						Signage in Spanish	1
Add archeological recreation/education programs	1	Move dumpster	1	a) Parking issues--continue to provide on street parking for special events	4					Get land from Episcopal High School	1
6. Interpretive Trail-- of cultural, natural, Af. American resources	1	Incorporate green practices in maintenance	1	d) No additional parking	1						
7. Resource Management		Train staff to maintain historic areas	1	**4. Special Events**							
OHA should manage the park	2			a) This site is good for large events and regularly used by the community. Keep special events here	2						
				b) Improve the amphitheater and picnic shelters	1						
				a) Large events have negative impact and should be moved or reduced	4						
				5. Facilities							
				a) No additional pavillions	1						
				b) Repair existing facilities, including restrooms	1						
				c) Rehab/Upgrade Amphitheatre	1						
				6. Soccer Field							
				Keep Lit Soccer Field	34						
				Turn lights off when not in use	1						

Dated 5/03/10

Appendix IV.

The Washington Post

March 15, 2009

MARC FISHER

A Tale of Two Communities, And of How the Tale Gets Told

With its rolling lawns and secluded glens, Fort Ward looks like a lovely place to take a walk. Turns out, it's far more than a park in Alexandria — it's one history sacrificed to make way for another, a Civil War military installation that has become a contemporary battleground over whose story gets told.

Officially, Fort Ward is, as the city of Alexandria puts it, "the best preserved of the system of Union forts and batteries built to protect Washington, D.C., during the American Civil War." That's fascinating enough: a Union fort in Confederate Virginia.

But Fort Ward is also Adrienne Washington's ancestral home. Her great-grandmother lies buried there, the headstone standing crooked and forlorn in the middle of a scruffy city maintenance yard along one edge of the park — a painful symbol of a community of black families that was forced off the hillside in the early 1960s when the city bought the land to stop a housing development.

Fort Ward is also Tom Fulton's back yard, literally. Fulton, a retired Interior Department deputy assistant secretary who has delved into the history that lies behind his house, and his next-door neighbor, a National Park Service retiree named Glenn Eugster, are part of a group of residents trying to do what the city never did — learn about those who lost out when Alexandria took these 44 acres across Braddock Road from Episcopal High School, reconstructed the old fort and made a park out of someone else's neighborhood.

COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

An undated photo of Clara Adams, looking to the left, at Fort Ward in Alexandria. Her great-granddaughter is helping lead the fight to recognize the area's black history.

Now the city of Alexandria is trying to figure out Fort Ward's future: Should the

See FISHER, *Page G5*

Two Histories in Need of a Combined Voice

FISHER, *From C1*

park be used more intensively — already, it's a site for big corporate picnics — or protected as a site for reflection? And which story should the park and its museum tell — that of the Civil War fort, or the black community that called this home?

The debate has brought together two sets of residents who previously barely knew each other existed: The immediate neighbors, who want to curb the loud parties that have been held in the park since alcoholic drinks were allowed in its picnic groves, and the families who want to recover their relatives' buried stories of life "on the fort." The two groups have united in support of a park that tells a different history — quietly.

"It's just a shame when you have to go through two locked gates to see one of the graves of your ancestors," then find them surrounded by trucks, tools and piles of mulch, says Washington, a columnist at the Washington Times who is researching the history of the Fort Ward settlement where her family lived through much of the 19th and 20th centuries.

For a long time, the city operated a trash transfer station right where Washington's great-grandmother, Clara Adams (1865-1952), was laid to rest. Her headstone — and, historians say, the unmarked grave of her husband — now sit smack in the center of the maintenance yard, an offense to history that the city could solve easily, Washington says.

Neighbors who want the park to tell the full story of Alexandria's past have been gearing up for a fight. "Our park services have always had a discomfort with the tension between African American history and Civil War history," Eugster says. "But what started for us as a literally not-in-my-backyard battle because the city had put dumpsters behind our houses led us to explore what really is one story of both the Civil War and the black community that was here afterwards."

During the Civil War, you could stand atop Fort Ward and see Confederate soldiers at Baileys Crossroads three miles away, and those black flecks in your spyglass certainly looked like cannon (though you'd later learn that they were really tree trunks painted black to fool Union spies into thinking that the enemy was armed and dangerous).

COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA

An undated photo shows a house at Fort Ward in Alexandria, one of the many demolished when the city bought the land in the 1960s.

After the war, freed slaves settled on abandoned land around the fort. Those workers who built and maintained the Virginia Theological Seminary (of Seminary Road fame) are the people whose graves are now believed to be scattered throughout Fort Ward Park. Just last week, says Lance Mallamo, director of the Office of Historic Alexandria, city historians used old maps to discover an area where still-visible depressions in the ground indicate some of the old residents are buried.

Thanks to pressure from people such as Eugster, Fulton and Washington, the city says it is looking at Fort Ward much as the neighbors do. After a community meeting Wednesday, the city will move to stop the issuing of alcohol permits, reduce the size of picnic groups and number of picnic areas, and look for ways to tell the black community's history, says Kirk Kincannon, Alexandria's recreation and parks director.

The broken headstones are a reminder that the city rebuilt Fort Ward when "there was probably not much thought about more contemporary history," Mallamo says. But since the '60s, "the history of ordinary people has become as important as the history of the heroic."

No one expects to find the money anytime soon to conduct the archaeological digs needed to flesh out Fort Ward's full story. But it should be possible to protect the graves and the row of cedar trees that once led to the long-gone houses, and to use the park's tours and museum to tell a history of the fort that you can still see and the community that you can't.

E-mail: marcfisher@washpost.com

Appendix V.

Initial Recommendations for Archaeology and History at Fort Ward Park
January 2011
Pamela J. Cressey, City Archaeologist

Although the Stage 1 archaeological investigation by the Ottery Group has not been completed in the park, I am preparing these recommendations at the request of the Advisory Group for consideration in their final report. All discussion below is based upon incomplete information without sufficient analysis. However, some general statements can be made at this time.

1. Usefulness of Ground Penetrating Radar in Identification of Graves

Archaeological work to date indicates that Ground-penetrating Radar (GPR) has some use for identifying graves at Fort Ward Park. While some graves have been identified through this method, other graves have not. To date, there is not a 1:1 correlation between GPR signatures and actual graves. More will be known after the Old Graveyard and Jackson Cemetery investigations are completed, but GPR appears to have mixed results. Many GPR signatures have not been associated with graves, and in some cases, more graves have been identified in the ground than signatures predicted. There may be future use for GPR in helping to identify the extent of the graves/boundaries of these cemeteries, but ground-truthing would also be needed to be assured that all graves are identified in a given area.

2. Old Graveyard

Given that the investigation demonstrated that there are more graves in the Old Graveyard than headstones and that these headstones are deteriorating, it is important to have a protection plan in place Consideration should be given to conducting more archaeological work to determine the boundaries of the Old Graveyard and historical research to understand how these graves are associated with the contiguous Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery and whether individual or family names may be identified. The protection plan can include elements, such as, fencing around the Old Graveyard, interpretive signage, methods of conserving and protecting the historic markers, new markers to identify additional graves, memorial, etc.).

3. Maintenance Yard

Much of this area has been changed, and in the areas investigated, little remains of the historic soils. However, some artifacts and subsurface features, such as graves, trash pits, privies, wells, etc., could still be present in unexcavated areas particularly around the school/church/home and in the southern section. The investigation has located the graves of Clara and Robert Adams and revealed that her headstone had been resituated on newer fill soils but still aligned with a grave. No other graves were found, and no GPR signatures proved to be graves. However, only a limited part of the yard was investigated. Graves and other archaeological materials can still be present in untested areas. A small portion of the school/church/home foundation has been found. There may be more evidence in the western portion of this structure, but additional work is needed to make this determination. In some areas, of the yard deeper features may be present, such as the privy/trash pit discovered with early 20th century artifacts. Planning is needed to determine uses of the yard in the future, whether the fence should be removed, marking the other grave, memorials, etc. Any ground-disturbing work outside the investigated areas should have archaeological testing and monitoring built into the planning process of these projects.

4. Jackson Cemetery

The work has not been completed in this cemetery, however, some graves have already been identified. A protection plan is needed that can include: fencing, interpretive signage, markers for graves, erosion-control measures and additional research to identify individuals who may be buried here.

5. Shorts Family Lot

Shovel test pits document that the lot does have some archaeological integrity and features may be found. The trenches called for as part of the investigation have not been conducted here yet. Recommendations await completion of the work.

6. General Recommendations

At this point in the process, the following needs for the preservation and interpretation of Fort Ward Park's cultural resources can be outlined. The historical research should be conducted first. Completing the survey addressed in the second point is crucial to park planning and day-to-day management of ground-disturbing projects (tree planting, etc.) It should be noted that interpretive planning can be done throughout the following tasks and would greatly benefit the appreciation of African American history as well as the historic significance of the park as a whole. Public involvement should be a part of all these recommendations.

- Complete documentary research and report with context to provide understanding of the history of those living/working in what is now the park and the development of the park within the larger Seminary neighborhood and place within American History

- Archaeological Protection of Fort Ward Park: Conduct archaeological survey through shovel-testing across the rest of the park with the exception of the historic fort to identify areas with archaeological potential; Use metal-detection in selected areas across the park to find Civil War artifacts; Produce maps overlaying archaeological and metal-detection results on CAD & GIS-produced historic templates so that the archaeological information relates to families, buildings, landscape, roads, etc; Produce sensitivity maps of areas in the park which have archaeological/historical significance for park planning purposes; Prepare Protection Plan; Prepare recommendations for further archaeological study. .

- Cemeteries and Graves: Identify boundaries through investigation beyond identified graves to locate additional graves; Produce protection plans and consider marking all graves; Produce interpretive plans; Implement such plans. Use appropriate methods for identifying other graves in areas noted in additional historical research and oral history.

- Additional Archaeological Study: If there is interest in more information about the African American community, or others identified through survey measures, a research design can be prepared to more fully excavate the school/church/home area, features identified through this and future stages of archaeology, the Shorts Lot or other houses, outbuildings, etc.

- All ground-disturbing actions should be reviewed for potential impact throughout the park. However, no additional archaeological work is needed before planning for projects to improve drainage. But archaeological review during this process will identify necessary excavation and monitoring needs based upon engineering solutions. After archaeological survey across the park, it may be possible to identify areas in which ground-disturbing actions can occur without review. However, close staff coordination will provide efficient methods of preservation and park improvements.

- Continue to update the Cultural Resource Inventory and Protection plans as more information is acquired.

- Produce Interpretive Plan to include themes, messages, and methods using different mediums; Update plan with new information and community interests.

- Development and continuation of a public planning process for Descendent Family and community input on the above tasks.