

# Friends: Efforts create well-rounded experience for park visitors

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"These guys fill a wonderful niche here. I applaud the Friends for all the work they have done over the years," park ranger John Koch said. "It's been incredibly beneficial for the park."

The group has its sights set on upgrades to a flagpole in the Civil War earthen fort and multiple repairs to Battery Pratt, a gun emplacement facing the Columbia River.

## Jack's masterpiece

An attraction of Battery Pratt is a remade artillery rifle, which was scrapped by the Army years ago. The full-scale replica was designed and built by Friends of Old Fort Stevens member Jack Buckmeir, who recently died.

David Lindstrom, secretary and treasurer for the nonprofit group, said all the members are impressed with Buckmeir's work, and are disappointed he is no longer around to finish other projects in Battery Pratt.

"Literally out of scrap steel and being able to use line drawings, he was able to come up with the right dimensions and came up with this," Lindstrom said of the replica gun. "This is Jack's masterpiece."

Inside Battery Pratt, soldiers used a hand-cranked elevator to bring shells up to the rifle. One area was designated as the plotting room, where soldiers used maps to calculate where the guns should point and when they should fire.

"It sounds primitive, but it worked," Lindstrom said.

The group received a plotting table for the room this week, costing about \$1,200. The group hopes to use

another \$2,000 to \$3,000 to fully rebuild the plotting room.

At a meeting Wednesday, the group agreed to spend \$4,000 on historically accurate steel doors for Battery Pratt.

Restoring historical pieces is ongoing work for the group, Lindstrom said.

"It's always a scramble," he said. "The instruments we need to replicate, we are still figuring out exactly what they looked like."

For the Civil War earthen fort, the Friends allocated \$2,000 this week for a new 75-foot flagpole. It will be large enough to hoist a 30-foot American flag that is being stored in a duffel bag at the park.

"We fly a very small flag now, but it's not the type that was there originally," Lindstrom said.

## Living history

The Friends' work is seen all around the historical area of the park. From new gravel walkways to new historical pieces, the group is constantly adding to the fort.

Some projects are too expensive or too cumbersome, having to get the approval of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Register of Historic Places.

Overall, the state parks sees the partnership with the Friends as valuable.

The Friends are all volunteers except two paid staff positions who manage the military museum.

Having the group staff the museum takes pressure off the state park, which is not always budgeted to operate the museum.



Photos by Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

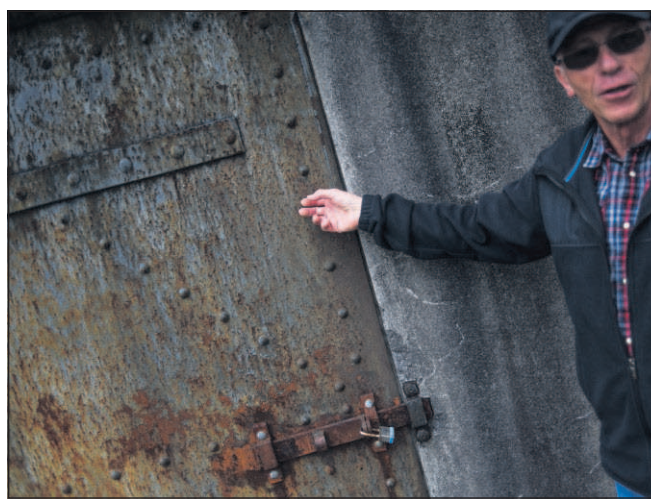
Friends of Old Fort Stevens Secretary David Lindstrom tours Fort Stevens State Park historic area Thursday. The Friends of Old Fort Stevens group works to preserve and restore parts of the park.

Koch said the group's efforts create a well-rounded experience for park visitors.

"We are very thankful they are able to help us in the way they do," Koch said.

Each weekend this summer, the Friends are busy hosting living history events leading up to the 26th annual Civil War re-enactment in September. The living history events are another way the group tells the story of the fort.

"It's one of the more important things we do here," Lindstrom said.



Friends of Old Fort Stevens Secretary David Lindstrom shows the original steel door on Battery Pratt Thursday at Fort Stevens State Park historic area. The Friends of Old Fort Stevens group has installed replica steel doors on many of the historic military structures around the park. More photos online at DailyAstorian.com

# Fritsch: 'I leave here with no ill will towards this community or this commission'

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further on the reasons behind his resignation.

## Personnel matter

Privately, some city commissioners had discussed placing Fritsch on administrative leave pending an independent investigation of his conduct on the dam. The City Commission had scheduled a performance evaluation for Fritsch for Tuesday's regular meeting but postponed the review. Commissioners announced instead that the city would contract with Akin Blitz, a Portland labor attorney, on a personnel matter, which turned out to be Fritsch's separation agreement.

Commissioners had reviewed Fritsch's performance earlier this year and awarded him a raise. Over the past few months, however, the city manager became a focal point among people who oppose the removal of the dam.

The Skipanon Water Control District, which owns the dam, wants to remove the outdated structure to shed liability and improve fish passage and water quality on the river. An engineering plan has found no increased flood risk if the dam is taken out.

The Nygaard family, who own Warrenton Fiber, and

Mayor Kujala's family, who own property near the dam, have urged the city to take control of the dam, warning of flood risks to property owners.

The City Commission in May voted against renewing a \$1.2 million agreement with the water district and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce that would have given the city a single-lane bridge over the river once the dam is removed. The city and others have access over the river now through a gravel road over the dam, and the commission had twice voted in favor of the deal to preserve emergency access.

## Removing the dam

Undeterred by the commission's reversal, the water district and CREST are moving forward on a \$1 million project to remove the dam without the new bridge for the city. On Monday, the water district agreed to barricade the gravel road because of liability concerns.

Behind the scenes, critics have faulted Fritsch for not disclosing a city technical review on the dam to city commissioners and the public. The city review, prepared by a consultant, questioned whether engineers for the water district and CREST

properly modeled the flood plain.

Fritsch told The Daily Astorian last week that the technical review was ordered by the city to help the Planning Commission evaluate the dam removal project. He said it would not have been appropriate to share the review with the City Commission, which might have to assess the project on appeal.

"I leave here with no ill will towards this community or this commission," Fritsch told city commissioners at the special meeting Thursday morning. "I'm positive about what we've done and certainly wish you well going forward."

"I think this is a good agreement for both of us."

Kujala and the commissioners thanked Fritsch for his work.

"We're going to miss you," Commissioner Henry Balensifer said.

An item on the Eighth Street Dam was pulled from the agenda for the special meeting after Kujala said the city needed to have an independent legal and technical review of the subject.

## 'An ambush'

Mike Calog, a Warrenton resident and retired Cannon Beach police officer, was outraged that no public comments

were allowed at the special meeting.

When he asked Kujala why, the mayor said, "Because there's nothing to comment on."

Calog replied, "You just lost a good city manager. I think that's something to comment on."

Outside City Hall, Calog said, "I'm an old combat vet, and I can smell an ambush when I see one."

"Every indication I've heard about this gentleman is he's been a damn good city manager, and the people here have a right to know what's

going on behind closed doors," he continued.

Calog questioned why Fritsch was a distraction. He said "somebody got their feelings ruffled on the dam, and, all of a sudden, we don't have a city manager. And there's no explanation given."



## Are you interested in participating in a heart health study?



Dr. Diana Rinkevich and her research team are holding a recruitment event at Columbia Memorial Hospital on July 7th, 8th and 9th. Staff will be onsite to discuss the study and enroll those who are interested in participating.

Diana Rinkevich, MD of Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) and Columbia Memorial Hospital (CMH) is conducting a study to determine how levels of eicosanoids, which are substances found in blood, differ between men and women and between women who are in menopause and those who are not. We are currently enrolling men and women aged 18 and older.

Participants in this study will have one visit to the CMH Cardiology Clinic to complete questionnaires, have vital measurements taken, and have a fasting single blood draw. At years one and two, you will receive a follow-up questionnaire to be returned by mail.



For more information, please contact:

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