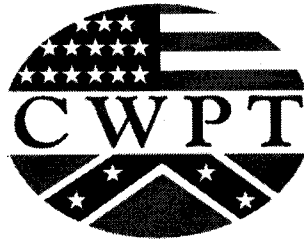


NATIONAL
TRUST
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APVA
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National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®

April 18, 2008

The Honorable L. Preston Bryant, Jr.
Secretary of Natural Resources
and Chairman, Fort Monroe Federal Area Development Authority
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Bryant:

We are writing to you on behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Civil War Preservation Trust, APVA - Preservation Virginia, and National Parks Conservation Association to express our shared perspective on certain issues that will influence the redevelopment of Fort Monroe.

Fort Monroe is well known as a place of extraordinary significance and a designated National Historic Landmark, which is distinguished by its unique and irreplaceable historic, cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational values. The U.S. Army will vacate and close Fort Monroe by 2011, and this transition away from its historic military use poses a risk to and creates new opportunities for Fort Monroe. Consequently, Fort Monroe deserves all of our best efforts to assure the highest level of protection and best quality of interpretation as the next era of Fort Monroe's history is determined and implemented in years to come.

**Continued Productive Use, Adaptive Reuse, and Maintenance
of Historic Resources at Fort Monroe:**

When the Army vacates Fort Monroe and the 570-acre National Historic Landmark reverts to the Commonwealth of Virginia, Fort Monroe must be carefully preserved as a vibrant and economically self-sustaining, publicly accessible place where people live, work, and visit, and where visitors' understanding and appreciation of the nation's history is enhanced.

The keystone of any redevelopment concept for Fort Monroe must be the preservation, productive use, adaptive reuse, and maintenance of the historic structures, features, and cultural landscapes of the National Historic Landmark. It would be an irresponsible approach to historic preservation to attempt to embalm or freeze time at Fort Monroe. Instead, all of the historic structures at Fort Monroe should be utilized, either through continued use or adaptive reuse. This is the first order of business at Fort Monroe. In the future, any demolition of historic resources at Fort Monroe should be strictly limited to those cases where all other options, including mothballing, have been thoroughly evaluated and exhausted. We also support consideration of the benefits and costs of reusing, at least over the short-term, any non-historic structures at Ft. Monroe.

Great care must be taken to preserve and enhance the other character-defining features of Fort Monroe, including its context, setting, open space, landscapes, and view-sheds. Open space, for example, should be conserved for public use and benefit, particularly along the waterfront, in areas of sensitive ecology, where needed for protection from flooding or sea level rise, and to protect views and other character-defining qualities.

In our view, the consultation and public involvement pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the preparation of a draft programmatic agreement to govern future stewardship of Fort Monroe are proceeding on track and on target. We commend the Army and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for their work to ensure this important progress. We strongly support the concept of management zones and treatment principles as well as the procedural framework for future (post-reversion) consultation and decision-making which are at the very heart of the draft programmatic agreement. We also strongly support the substantive protection provided for in the draft programmatic agreement which is necessary to accomplish first-rate reuse planning and historic preservation of Fort Monroe.

It is especially important that all consulting parties to the Section 106 process continue to share any issues and comments they may have regarding the draft programmatic agreement and, thereby, constructively contribute to the timely completion of the drafting process.

Historic Preservation Strategies and Tools:

Fort Monroe's preservation and future management will depend upon the effective use of various preservation strategies and tools. For instance, the stewards of Fort Monroe must facilitate and promote the use of Virginia and Federal historic rehabilitation tax credits. These powerful incentives will be critical to achieving full preservation and active use of the historic buildings at Fort Monroe.

Our organizations support the full exploration of any and all preservation-based strategies, including, but not limited to:

- Design standards;
- Form-based code;
- Historic preservation ordinance;
- Virginia and Federal historic rehabilitation tax credits;
- Long-term lease(s) to private parties for compatible use and maintenance of historic properties;
- Sale, donation, or transfer to private parties dedicated to preservation;
- Preservation easements, with endowment to inspect and enforce;
- Presidio Trust model (i.e., a quasi-governmental, for-profit, accountable, and entrepreneurial steward);
- Fort Monroe foundation (i.e., a private, non-profit, watchdog, mission-driven, fundraising "engine"); and,
- Cultural heritage tourism.

Limited New Construction at Historic Fort Monroe:

Fort Monroe must be a center of vital and diverse activity to achieve the economic sustainability that will make the highest level of preservation and interpretation viable. This can be achieved best through preserving and using historic properties and by adding carefully planned and compatible new structures of outstanding design where essential to support the economically viable future use of Fort Monroe.

Generally speaking, in our view, new construction at Fort Monroe would be beneficial and permissible if it can be demonstrated by the proponents that the proposed new construction would:

- Not require demolition of historic resources;
- Enhance community character and quality of life;
- Reinforce public accessibility;
- Represent creative, compatible design at the highest level;
- Be "green" and environmentally sustainable;
- Be economically self-sustaining;
- Generate revenue to help preserve and maintain historic elements of Fort Monroe that are not economically self-sustaining; and,
- Contribute to the continued physical evolution of Fort Monroe without diminishing or overwhelming the character-defining aspects of the National Historic Landmark district.

Accordingly, a limited amount of new construction would be appropriate at Fort Monroe, but only in selected locations and in strict compliance with design standards to ensure compatibility with the historic character of Fort Monroe, as provided in the

draft programmatic agreement. Design standards for new construction at Fort Monroe must:

- Be binding and enforceable;
- Encourage creative and compatible new design;
- Be clear and rational;
- Encourage design excellence;
- Be richly illustrated;
- Ensure that new structures are distinct from but compatible with existing historic properties;
- Be understandable to laypeople;
- Reinforce other desirable community values, such as public accessibility; and,
- Incorporate "green" design principles.

The Army's 2011 departure is expected to impact the economy of Hampton and the region. The historic preservation-based redevelopment of Fort Monroe can help mitigate adverse impacts to the local economy. However, the irreplaceable qualities of Ft. Monroe should not be sacrificed, as some fear, to allow incompatible new growth in an attempt to remedy the anticipated economic setback. The best historic preservation planning in the immediate future, to ensure strong protection and carefully manage change at Fort Monroe, will result in the most successful economic contribution to the local and regional economy in the long term.

Historic Interpretation and Museums at Fort Monroe:

Public awareness and understanding of the history of Fort Monroe – particularly the U.S. military and Contraband histories – is essential to the preservation of the National Historic Landmark.

Historic interpretation of Fort Monroe must be woven into the fabric of the National Historic Landmark. We support efforts to study, plan, endow, create, and manage facilities and programming to ensure an excellent visitor experience at Fort Monroe. We support a full exploration of dynamic and engaging interpretation methods, including: story-telling, signage, tours, special events, and exhibits. Ideally, interpretation of Fort Monroe should be integrated with regional cultural heritage tourism sites such as Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown. However, a key challenge for the future of Fort Monroe will be to provide the best interpretation and visitor experience for tourists in ways that are compatible with future residential, commercial, and institutional activities throughout Fort Monroe.

We respect contributions made by museums to the preservation of historic places in the United States. Our organizations would support consideration of proposals to establish new museums or branches of existing museums at Fort Monroe. However, we are conscious that traditional museums are costly to sustain and the possible failure of museums within the National Historic Landmark at Fort

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Monroe could threaten historic resources where the museums are located. Fort Monroe may be an appropriate location for additional museums, but any decisions must follow an interpretive planning process that has not yet taken place.

The National Park Service could be a significant partner in preserving historic Fort Monroe. We recommend that the National Park Service consider ways in which the agency could provide on-going assistance at Fort Monroe to help: promote first-rate preservation; guide the integration of new construction that is compatible with Fort Monroe's existing historic character; interpret historic significance; and enhance visitor experience. However, the National Park Service itself is in the best position to evaluate the nature and extent of the agency's future role at Fort Monroe. We are eager to review and comment on the National Park Service Reconnaissance Study currently underway.

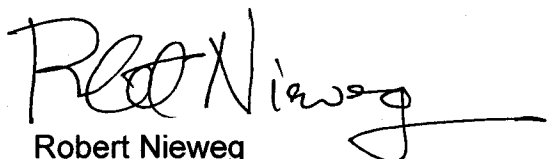
Conclusion:

We commend the Army for its excellent stewardship of historic Fort Monroe. We are grateful to the Army and Virginia Department of Historic Resources for their leadership of the preservation planning and programmatic agreement processes. Our organizations appreciate the Fort Monroe Federal Area Development Authority's public service and careful decision-making process to plan for a sustainable future for Fort Monroe. Finally, we share the public's passion and commitment to preserve the National Historic Landmark for future generations.

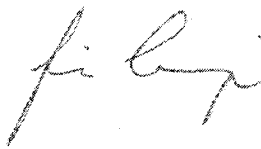
Thank you for considering the views of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Civil War Preservation Trust, APVA - Preservation Virginia, and National Parks Conservation Association.

With best regards.

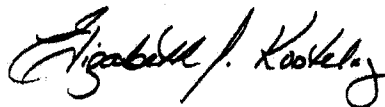
Sincerely,



Robert Nieweg
Director, Southern Field Office
National Trust for Historic Preservation



Jim Campi
Director, Policy and Communications
Civil War Preservation Trust



Elizabeth Kostelny
Executive Director
APVA - Preservation Virginia



Joy Oakes
Senior Director, Mid-Atlantic Office
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