

## **CFMNP (Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park) UPDATE APRIL 2011**

A lot has happened in a short period of time, so this is a longish update. If you're primarily interested in knowing how you can help, please skip to the **"What You Can Do"** section near the end of this message.

### **Fort Monroe Authority Decision about National Park**

The Fort Monroe Authority (FMA) —the state board overseeing Fort Monroe --unanimously approved a plan for a Fort Monroe National Park at its March 24 meeting. The plan provides for National Park Service (NPS) management of (i) significant recreational space and natural lands north of the fortress and (ii) a yet-to-be-defined substantial NPS managed corridor in Wherry Quarter connecting the fortress area to these northern areas. This is in addition to NPS management of the fortress and the moat themselves, the parade ground, and several historic building and structures and adjacent open space within and just outside the moat. Most significantly, it places all of Fort Monroe within the boundaries of a national park, although some areas will be owned and managed by the state. We were disappointed that the eastern shoreline paralleling Walker Air Field was not slated for NPS management, but this area was at least restricted to tourism, hospitality, open space, recreation and historic preservation uses. We believe that if this parcel is developed properly, it can enhance the tourist experience. All in all, we think March 24 was a truly a red-letter day for Fort Monroe and the many citizens who have worked to make it a grand public place.

Here's a link to the March 26 (page B1) **Virginian-Pilot** article about the decision:

<http://epilot.hamptonroads.com/Olive/ODE/VirginianPilot/LandingPage/LandingPage.aspx?href=VmlyZ2luaWFuUGlsb3QvMjAxMS8wMy8yNg..&pageno=MTc.&entity=QXIwMTcwNA..&view=ZW50aXR5>

Here's a link to the March 29 **Virginian-Pilot** editorial supporting the creation of a Fort Monroe National Park:

<http://hamptonroads.com/2011/03/turning-point-fort-monroe>

Here's a link to the **Daily Press** article on the March 24 meeting:

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/hampton/dp-nws-monroe-park-decision-20110324,0,3251618.story>

Here are links to the **James River Journal** articles on the March 24 FMA meeting. The first link has a clear illustration that shows everything but the to-be-determined national-park corridor in Wherry Quarter:

<http://jamesriverjournal.com/news-archives/15146-fort-monroe-authority-votes-unanimously-to-request-all-of-fort-monroe-to-become-a-national-park.html>

<http://jamesriverjournal.com/news-archives/15144-fort-monroe-housing-plan-falls-apart.html>

### **Now For Less Happy News**

As the Daily Press article also reports, an FMA study raised many concerns with the practicability and benefit of the leasing model for the Fort Monroe Authority managed properties

and suggested that it would be better to sell these. But sell-offs could have a negative impact, we believe, on the character and longer term financial sustainability of Fort Monroe as a grand public place.

## **Among Our Many Activities over the Last Couple of Months**

We succeeded in making the new state FMA legislation (signed into law by Gov. McDonnell on March 28) more balanced and protective of Fort Monroe than earlier proposals. Note that the revised state law will expressly permit the Governor to convey property at Fort Monroe to the NPS.

We are in the process of creating a map showing our vision of a Fort Monroe National Park and have already used a draft of it in several venues to promote our ideas.

We arrived at a consensus vision of a Fort Monroe National Park, including the idea of the outer boundaries, with a number of preservation and conservation organizations, most of them national: **National Parks Conservation Association (320,000 members strong), National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Virginia, Civil War Trust, Chesapeake Conservancy, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation.** Some of these organizations sent letters to Bill Armbruster, FMA executive director; and Mayor Ward of Hampton, the chair of the FMA NPS committee (and a very influential proponent of a sizeable national park).

We participated as a stakeholder in the FMA NPS Task Force.

We met with four of the governor's FMA appointees to discuss our vision of a Fort Monroe National Park.

Along with the legislative representative of the National Parks Conservation Association, we met with editors/journalists of both The Daily Press and The Virginian Pilot to update them on the rapidly evolving situation.

We endorsed a proposal from Historic Restoration Inc. (HRI) to restore the facades of the large old barracks Building 5 and several other adjacent historic buildings inside the fortress and convert them into mixed income apartments (including a significant number of "affordable" units). Although we would have preferred a more aspirational use of the buildings, we learned that affordable housing targeted working people and not the unemployed as occupants; and that the restoration firm, HRI, was highly regarded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and others. Moreover, we wanted to support the leasing model, since we knew there was sentiment on the FMA for selling off Fort Monroe property—sentiment that unfortunately surfaced at the last FMA meeting. The development proposal was withdrawn because of a deadline consideration, but we hope HRI returns with a less controversial proposal for other buildings.

## **The Future**

Look in the very near future for the Hampton committee of petitioners to file its petition to change the Hampton city code regarding Fort Monroe. Those 7000 signatures will advance the cause of a grand public place at Fort Monroe, and preservation of public ownership of the entire 565 acres.

With the help of national organizations, we will be pushing for the passage of the Fort Monroe National Park legislation in Congress, and for alternate means, if they should become necessary, for transferring property to the National Park Service. (The President could invoke the Antiquities Act and, in cooperation with Virginia, declare properties to be managed by NPS as a National Monument.)

We will monitor the implementation of the various components of the National Park plan to be sure they provide the optimal benefit for citizens.

We will work to investigate fully the facts surrounding the FMA's leasing model, now being treated with skepticism by the FMA, and hopefully demonstrate it is both practicable and significantly protective of Fort Monroe's future.

## What You Can Do

Write to Virginia's Senators Webb and Warner, Representative Rigell (whose district contains Fort Monroe), and your own Congressional Representative (if it isn't Mr. Rigell), indicating your support of the FMA's National Park plan. We suggest you emphasize the importance of (i) the 565 acre outer boundary for the national park; (ii) placing under NPS management all the historic and natural properties Virginia has endorsed putting under NPS; and (iii) establishing a substantial National Park corridor in the Wherry area between the fortress and the Walker Air Field area to provide a unified, seamless national park. **Contact information** is at the end of this message.

Your tax-deductible donations to the educational organization we have created—**Fort Monroe National Park Foundation**—will help us develop information and educate the public on matters related to Fort Monroe's future. Any amount will help, but we suggest \$50-\$100. Please make out your checks to **FMNPF**. Its address:

**Fort Monroe National Park Foundation**  
**P.O Box 097**  
**Fort Monroe, Virginia 23651-0097**

Alternatively, donations to Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park are also needed (make checks payable to CFMNP and mail to the same address as shown for FMNPF above). CFMNP is of course an advocacy organization and donations to it are not tax deductible.

## Contact Information and Links

### Senator Webb

Use contact form at <http://webb.senate.gov/contact.cfm>

#### Washington, DC Office

248 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

Phone: (202) 224-4024, Toll Free: 1- (866) 507-1570, Fax: (202) 228-6363

#### Virginia Beach Office

222 Central Park Avenue, Suite 120, Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Phone: (757) 518-1674, Fax: (757) 518-1679

**Senator Warner**

Use contact form at <http://warner.senate.gov/public//index.cfm?p=ContactPage>

**Washington, DC Office**

459A Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

Phone: (202) 224-2023, Toll Free: 1- (877) 676-2759 [VA residents only]

Fax: (202) 224-6295

**Norfolk Office**

101 W. Main Street, Suite 4900, Norfolk, VA 23510

Phone: (757) 441-3079, Fax: (757) 441-6250

**United States Senate**

Contact information for any United States Senator at

[http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm?State=FL](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm?State=FL)

**Representative Scott Rigell**

Use contact form at <http://rigell.house.gov/Contact/ContactForm.htm>

**Washington, DC Office**

327 Cannon HOB, Washington, DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-4215, Fax: (202) 225-4218

**Virginia Beach Office**

4772 Euclid Road, Suite E, Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Phone: (757) 687-8290, Fax: (757) 687-8298

**List of Links for Representatives (by state) at**

[http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW\\_by\\_State.shtml#va](http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW_by_State.shtml#va)

**Representatives from Virginia:**

- [Cantor, Eric](#), Virginia, 7th
- [Connolly, Gerald E. "Gerry"](#), Virginia, 11th
- [Forbes, J. Randy](#), Virginia, 4th
- [Goodlatte, Bob](#), Virginia, 6th
- [Griffith, Morgan](#), Virginia, 9th
- [Hurt, Robert](#), Virginia, 5th
- [Moran, Jim](#), Virginia, 8th
- [Rigell, Scott](#), Virginia, 2nd
- [Scott, Robert C. "Bobby"](#), Virginia, 3rd
- [Wittman, Robert J.](#), Virginia, 1st
- [Wolf, Frank](#), Virginia, 10th

**House of Representatives**

Contact information for any United States Representative at

<https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>

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Your e-mail responses are welcome at [FortMonroeUpdate@yahoo.com](mailto:FortMonroeUpdate@yahoo.com)



In the plan approved by the Fort Monroe Authority, all of the areas shown in green would be managed by the National Park Service (NPS).

The “N. Wherry Quarter Tourist and Hospitality Bayfront” would be managed by the Fort Monroe Authority (FMA).

A yet-to-be-defined substantial NPS managed corridor in Wherry Quarter will connect the fortress area to the NPS areas to the north.

**Fort Monroe  
FMA Board Approved National Park Footprint  
March 24, 2011**