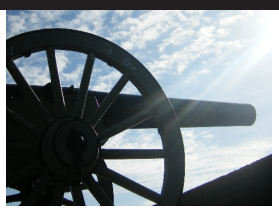
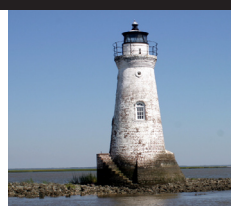
Park News

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Pulaski National Monument





Fort Pulaski Press

Summer 2007

Park Unveils 30-Pounder Parrott Rifle, the Largest Firing Reproduction Cannon in U.S.

On April 14, 2007, in conjunction with the 145th commemoration of the Battle of Fort Pulaski, a new 30-Pounder Parrott Rifle was unveiled at Fort Pulaski National Monument. The 4,200 pound cannon, created by Steen Cannon of Ashland, Kentucky, easily eclipses the next largest functional reproduction piece, a 20-Pounder Parrott weighing nearly 1,750 pounds.

The 30-Pounder Parrott played a key role in the history of Fort Pulaski. Union forces used these rifled cannons against the fort during the battle of April 10-11, 1862. Their greatly improved range, accuracy, and hitting power made it possible to breach the 7.5-foot-thick walls of Fort Pulaski from a mile away.

The Battle of Fort Pulaski featured the first significant use of rifled artillery in combat. The success of rifled cannons during the battle helped to revolutionize warfare, and signaled the end of masonry fortifications worldwide.

Fort Pulaski's new 30-Pounder Parrot Rifle fired for the first time from Tybee Island on April 14, 2007 to commemorate the 145th Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Pulaski, NPS Photo

Parrott rifled cannons were introduced on the eve of the Civil War, and were named for their inventor, Robert Parker Parrott. They came in a variety of sizes. The 30-Pounder version could fire a 30-pound projectile, and had a maximum range in excess of five miles. The new reproduction cannon will be fired every Saturday during the park's weekly cannon demonstrations. Fort Pulaski National Monument has a trained crew of park staff and volunteers that offer frequent cannon and musket demonstrations.

> **"For the first time in decades visitors to a Civil War battlefield park will be able to appreciate the incredible power of these large artillery pieces."**
> **Charles E. Fenwick, Superintendent**

The $50,000 cannon was purchased using entrance fees collected in the park and will be the centerpiece of one of the most active black powder programs in the National Park Service.

Charles E. Fenwick, Superintendent

Welcome to Fort Pulaski National Monument!

We hope your visit is the experience of a lifetime. Whatever your interest—sightseeing, hiking, kayaking, bicycling, exploring, history, nature study or photography— you will find Fort Pulaski National Monument like no other place.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers, who help make the park such a vibrant and exciting place to be and I would like to offer an invitation for you to become part of this team whether you can stay for a day or if you have months to commit. See park staff for more information about volunteering.

Finally, the park is asking the public to review and evaluate alternatives for the General Management Plan (GMP). The GMP establishes goals and objectives for the park with regard to protecting and preserving its natural and cultural resources and for providing visitor services and achieving desired visitor experiences.

To find out more, ask for a copy of our GMP newsletter. We are accepting public comments through July 1, 2007. Please get involved in your National Park. Thank you.

Charles E. Fenwick

Cockspur Island Lighthouse relit for first time in 98 Years.

Fort Pulaski National Monument hosted a special relighting ceremony of the Cockspur Island Lighthouse on Sunday, March 18, 2007. The park remained open that day until 7:30 PM. Visitors were able to view the relighting from the top of Fort Pulaski or from the end of the Lighthouse Overlook Trail.

The newly developed Lighthouse Overlook Trail begins just north of the fort and extends 3/4 of a mile to end within a short distance of the historic lighthouse.

The Cockspur Island Lighthouse has withstood crashing waves, the roar of cannons and the wrath of time. For more than 150 years it has defiantly stood guard over the mouth of the Savannah River.

Eventually, the North Channel became the preferred route of travel for large vessels. The lonely sentinel of the South Channel was no longer needed. The light was extinguished on June 1, 1909 and the 46-foot-tall brick tower has downgraded to a day marker.

During this special ceremony the lighthouse was "relit" for the first time in nearly one hundred years. In 1958, ownership of the lighthouse was transferred from the U.S. Coast Guard to the National Park Service.

The Cockspur Light is one of five surviving historic lighthouses in Georgia and was a witness to a major turning point in military history—the Battle of Fort Pulaski on April 10-11, 1862. During that 30-hour battle more than 5,000 rounds passed over the lighthouse that was the midway point between the Confederate forces in the fort and Union lines on Tybee Island. Remarkably, the Lighthouse emerged unscathed.

This ceremony is a clear reminder that there is a witness to that turning point in history that refuses to be silent anymore. The ceremony also focused much needed attention on the imminent threats to the foundation of this landmark and allows the Park Service to further its mission by restoring an important historic scene.

A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter salutes the newly relit Cockspur Island Lighthouse during the offical relighting ceremony that occurred on March 18, 2007. NPS Photo

Interpretive Programs

Daily Ranger Programs

Fort Pulaski National Monument offers visitors daily interpretive programs inside historic Fort Pulaski. Activities include musket & soldier drills, Civil War soldier talks and guided fort tours. Activities are scheduled from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday thru Friday & Sundays.

Schedule of Activities:

11:00 Guided Fort Tour
12:00 Musket & Soldier Demonstration
2:00 Musket & Soldier Demonstration
3:00 Guided Fort Tour
4:00 Musket & Soldier Demonstration

End of Activities

Living History Saturdays

Fort Pulaski National Monument presents Living History events every Saturday. Activities inside the fort include hourly cannon firings, musket drills, Civil War soldier talks, and guided fort tours. Activities are scheduled from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

Schedule of Activities:

10:00 Guided Fort Tour
11:00 Cannon Firing
12:00 Cannon Firing
1:00 Musket & Soldier Demonstration
2:00 Cannon Firing
2:30 Guided Fort Tour
3:00 Musket & Soldier Demonstration
3:30 Cannon Firing

End of Activities

Expanded Summer Hours Begin Memorial Day

Superintendent Charles E. Fenwick announces that Fort Pulaski National Monument will begin its expanded summer schedule on Saturday, May 26, 2007. Effective May 26, the Visitor Center will be open daily from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, and the Historic Fort will be open daily 9:00 to 6:30 PM. Park gates will close at 7:00 PM. All vehicles must be across the Cockspur Island Bridge by 7:00. The expanded summer schedule will be in effect until the close of the Labor Day weekend.

Fort Pulaski will offer numerous activities and special events throughout the summer including, cannon firings every Saturday, as well as daily musket & soldier demonstrations, special talks, and guided fort tours.

The staff and volunteers of Fort Pulaski look forward to the summer season. Superintendent Fenwick remarked, "This is a great opportunity for residents and visitors alike to learn, have some summer fun and take pride in our local history."

Visit the park's official website @ www.nps.gov/fopu for event listings. Fort Pulaski National Monument is on U.S. Hwy 80, 15 miles east of Savannah. An entrance fee of $3 per person is charged; ages 15 and under are free. Valid Federal Recreation passes are accepted and can also be purchased at the park entrance station.

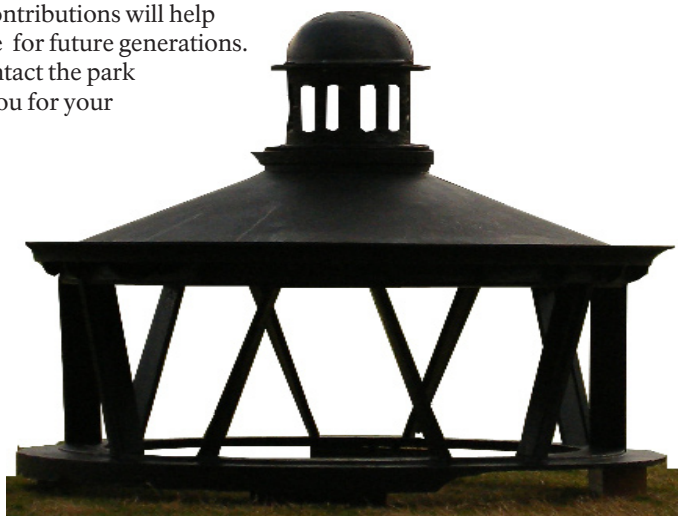
Living History demonstrations inside historic Fort Pulaski. NPS Photo

Help Save the Cockspur Lighthouse

The Cockspur Island Lighthouse's wooden foundation is underwater except at low tide and is threatened by shipworm infestation. Fort Pulaski National Monument estimates that it will cost nearly $1,000,000 to repair the damage to the foundation.

Your tax deductible donations to the Cockspur Island Lighthouse are being accepted by our not-for profit partner, Eastern National. Your contributions will help save this historic structure for future generations. For more information contact the park at 912-786-5787. Thank you for your continued support!

Donations may be sent to:
Eastern National
in care of:
Fort Pulaski NM
P.O. Box 30757
Savannah, GA 31410



Original cupola of the Cockspur Island Lighthouse currently on display inside historic Fort Pulaski. NPS Photo

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Fort Pulaski Press

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Explore, Learn, Protect... Be a Junior Ranger at Fort Pulaski

How far did Civil War cannons have to shoot to reach the fort?

What weighs more, a cannon at Fort Pulaski or an elephant?

Why did the Army put a layer of oyster shells beneath the top of the fort?

If you know the answers to these questions, congratulations. You may qualify to be a Junior Ranger at Fort Pulaski National Monument. If not, you can find the answers by working with your children on the park's Junior Ranger activity book.

The Junior Ranger book is available at the visitor center or inside the fort. Designed to be a voyage of self-discovery for youngsters, it is a great way to learn and have fun at the same time.

Successful Junior Ranger candidates will receive a badge, a certificate and will be sworn in to accept their official duties. As owners of Fort Pulaski National Monument, Junior Rangers can help protect our cherished national resources such as the fort.

The answers are one mile, about the same, and to filter rainwater for drinking. The important lesson, however, is not knowing the answers. The important lesson is for youngsters to explore the fort and find a personal meaning amid the cannons, bricks and stories that make up Fort Pulaski National Monument.