

QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY

NATIONAL PARK SEARCHES FOR THE ESSENCE OF LEWIS AND CLARK

Historians have long suspected that the reconstructed Fort Clatsop, Lewis and Clark's camp in the winter of 1805-06, was not in the same spot as the original. The hastily erected enclosure was occupied for a little more than three months before the weather turned and the expedition headed back east. It sat moldering until the 1850s, when it was torched by pioneers to make way for crops.

The replica, built in 1955, was based on the recollections of early homesteaders. The park's main attraction, last fall it too burned to the ground. The fire created a chance to clarify the historical record which, though well documented in journals, is very sparse in the way of physical evidence. Archeologists now had an opportunity to determine the original's exact location.

Evidence of the expedition is famously elusive. Archeologists have turned up few signs along the route. This was the first chance in 50 years to excavate one of the most important sites.

In the three-week project, investigators used a magnetometer and ground-penetrating radar, turning up signs of the long Native American presence before Lewis and Clark and the settlers who came afterward. Though nothing could be definitively linked to the travelers, the findings add to the archeological record from earlier excavations, including musket balls and glass beads used in trading.

And not far away, Station Camp, where the expedition first arrived, is being set aside as a unit of Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. As the state spends \$5.5 million to reroute a highway away from the site, National Park Service archeologists have uncovered tens of thousands of artifacts from the early fur trade,



The area was a very busy place, which surely muddied the archeological record. According to park superintendent Chip Jenkins, the fort was an attraction as early as 1811. People traveled considerable distances to see where the expedition spent the winter. In the 1840s, the first wave of settlers cleared the land for farming. Later, there was a clay mine in the area, and a steamboat landing as well.

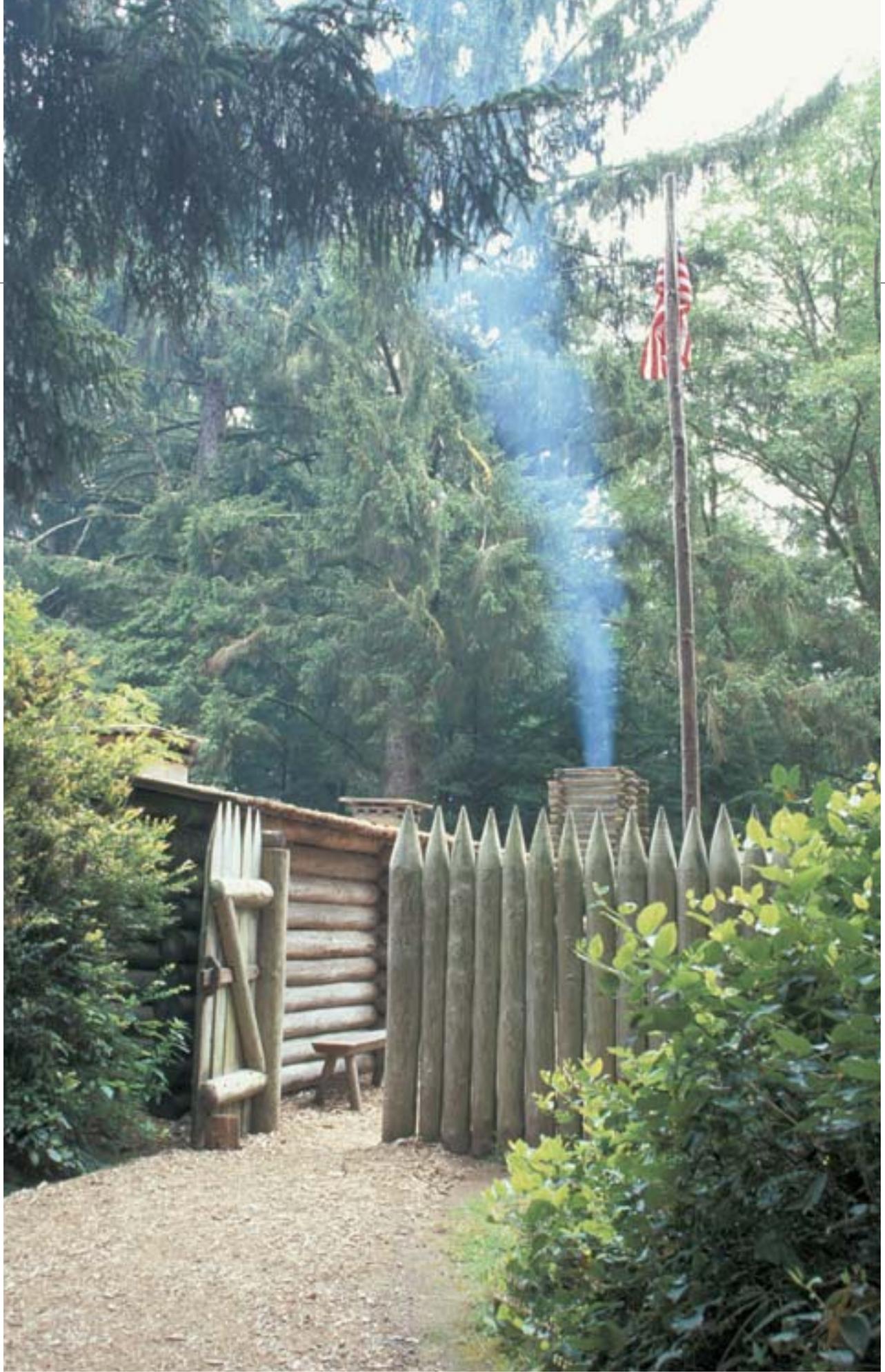
Still, though disagreement remains on the fort's location, many agree that the replica was in close proximity to the original. And given what's been learned over the last decades, the new one, now being constructed, will be a much closer match. The 1955 version was built by skilled craftsmen who took a great deal of pride in the quality of their work. But their flush-cut log ends and tight notches were almost certainly not what the Lewis and Clark expedition produced. Exhausted, perpetually wet, and eager to get a roof over their heads, the men were not particular about quality. "We know they threw up the walls in three weeks," says Jenkins. "They were living under rotting elk hides. They had no tents at that point."

As a result, the new version will be more rustic. Now being built at an indoor arena at the Clatsop County fairgrounds, it will have the appearance of having been hewn with the types of tools the explorers used. While the 1955 replica was based on a floor plan sketched by William Clark, other journals have surfaced by members with more of a hand in the actual construction. These descriptions have informed the design.

some which likely pre-date Lewis and Clark. For more information, contact Superintendent Chip Jenkins, chip_jenkins@nps.gov, or visit the park online at www.nps.gov/lewi.

Left to right: Working on the new fort; the first replica before the fire; eyeing evidence; staffers setting up an archeological grid; the first replica.

LEFT TO RIGHT DAILY ASTORIAN, STEVE RINGMAN, SEATTLE TIMES, AP DAILY ASTORIAN, DAMITA DELIMONT STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY



IN THE NAME OF LAZARUS

DOCUMENTING THE ARTIFACT OF AN EARLY EPIDEMIC

It was unusually hot and dry in Philadelphia the summer of 1793. Creeks and rivers were low, and mosquitoes bred in great numbers. The docks were also crowded with refugees from political turmoil in the Caribbean, and some had Yellow Fever. The disease, spread liberally by the mosquitoes, became an epidemic in no time, its symptoms horrific. Philadelphia emptied out as the death toll rose. Accounts of the period read like apocalyptic science fiction.



Far left: HABS architectural historians Jamie Jacobs and Catherine LaVoie documenting the quarantine station. **Near left:** The cupola offered a vantage point to see ships with immigrants approaching.

THE LAZARETTO, AN ITALIAN WORD DERIVING FROM LAZARUS, THE PATRON SAINT OF LEPERS, IS THE OLDEST STRUCTURE OF ITS KIND IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE ONLY ONE STILL STANDING, A RARE ARTIFACT OF THE HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY.

This summer, a team from the Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, arrived at a rambling brick structure on the Delaware River. Their objective was to document the 200-year-old quarantine facility that was the direct result of Philadelphia's traumatic experience. The Lazaretto, an Italian word deriving from Lazarus, the patron saint of lepers, is the oldest structure of its kind in the United States and the only one still standing, a rare artifact of the history of public health policy.

BUILT IN 1799, IT WAS THE FIRST STOP FOR IMMIGRANTS COMING TO Philadelphia. The Lazaretto operated for over 90 years, and today is considered one of Pennsylvania's most significant, and endangered, historic sites. "This was a physical representation of the new health law," says Jamie Jacobs, a HABS architectural historian. "Every ship that came up the Delaware had to stop there. There was not an Ellis Island, there was no real immigration service at the time." Unused and in a state of limbo for years, the site was to become a parking lot but last August it was purchased by Tinicum Township for \$3.1 million, and rescued from demolition.

The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The HABS team, consisting of a photographer and a pair of architectural historians, is creating a record that would aid its candidacy as a national historic landmark. In any event, the research and documentation will become part of a thorough permanent record that did not exist before. The project was conducted as part of a HABS endangered buildings program. The Northeast Region of the National Park Service, whose jurisdiction includes Pennsylvania, lent its support.

THE EPIDEMIC OF 1793 DID NOT END UNTIL NOVEMBER BROUGHT COLD weather and an end to the mosquitoes. Shortly thereafter, Philadelphia formed the nation's very first board of health, taking the lead in establishing a system to control infectious diseases. There was no federal role in maintaining health standards, considered the responsibility of state and local government. American cities of the time had neither the means nor the knowledge to main-

Right: Ironwork on the gates. The architect borrowed details from English country houses.





LEFT AND NEAR RIGHT JAMES ROSENTHAL/INFS/HABS

Left: An empty stairway in the once-crowded quarantine station.

tain proper sanitation, so the only defense was quarantine. At about this time, municipalities created some of the first sanitation regulations, an attempt at behavior modification intended to change the public’s approach to hygiene. Quarantine on a large scale was seen only in the bigger port cities like Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, where human traffic and the potential for disease were high.

THE LAZARETTO WAS BUILT ON A MARSHY ISLAND. FROM A CUPOLA AT THE top of the 30-room Georgian structure, a lookout could see ships as they came up the Delaware River. The lookout rang a bell to alert the physician and the quarantine master, who boarded arriving vessels to examine passengers for disease. The sick were offloaded and stayed until they recuperated or, in some cases, died. Potentially contaminated cargo was offloaded too.

The building was 10 miles downriver from the city, far enough to be considered safe. It replaced an older facility—a “pest house,” in the vernacular of the time—that was too close for comfort. According to Jacobs, the building’s design borrowed from trends in hospital design in England. The style of public institutional buildings followed what he calls a “domestic typology.” In his report on the Lazaretto, he quotes *The Hospital: A Social and Architectural History*: “Noble and bourgeois donors built for the sick poor in forms familiar to themselves that were so closely

It wasn’t until the end of the 19th century that the Federal Government got involved in health issues, brought about by the massive influx of immigrants. More than 90 years after the Lazaretto opened its doors, the first permanent federal immigration and quarantine station opened at Ellis Island.

The Lazaretto closed in 1895, when a new federal facility opened a few miles downriver in Marcus Hook, designed for handling immigrants on a large scale. During WWI, the building’s location on the Delaware made it an ideal base for seaplanes, and equipment from this era remains at the site.

ACQUIRING THE LAZARETTO TOOK AN INITIATIVE BY THE COUNTY, WHICH found support in the state legislature for a grant to help purchase the property. Tincum County plans to build a new firehouse and evacuation center nearby, a move that gives some preservationists cause for concern, since it is not just the building itself that is considered important, but the entire 10 acres associated with it. It is assumed that many immigrants did not leave the Lazaretto alive. Where they were buried seems to be an open question, but the answer may come to the fore when the firehouse construction starts. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has approved a \$50,000 survey of the site.

Plans for the building’s preservation are on hold, but the HABS documentation could be used as blueprints for a rehabilitation.



Far left: Water damage inside. Center: The doors to an outbuilding. Near left: A decorative touch at the entrance.

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derived from palaces or country houses, it is hard to distinguish a hospital from a gentleman’s home.”

The central feature is the entrance and administrative section, “a Georgian house on steroids,” HABS architectural historian Catherine LaVoie calls it. On either side are identical wings, one for women and one for men, each with a long veranda that served as a common space. A number of outbuildings have long since vanished, but there remain a kitchen, a bargeman’s house, a physician’s house, and a pair of sheds.

However, the first order of business is a study of what’s possible. Suggestions range from a simple public historic site to a living history museum with costumed role players, interactive displays, and genealogical resources. The township is making sure the structure is stable and watertight while plans are developed.

For more information, contact Bill Bolger, manager of the NPS Northeast Region’s national historic landmarks program, bill_bolger@nps.gov or Jamie Jacobs, james_jacobs@nps.gov.

AMERICAN PASTORAL

WEB EXHIBIT REVISITS THE ROOTS OF THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

The landscapes are luminous and forbidding, epic in scope and heavy with portent. Painted at the dawn of the Industrial Age, they are an elegy to a lost Eden. The Vermont mansion where they are displayed was home to a host of thinkers and benefactors—the pioneers of conservation—people with means who had come to love nature and were instrumental in its defense.



MANY OF THE WORKS—BY SOME OF THE 19TH CENTURY’S FINEST LANDSCAPE PAINTERS—SERVE AS A COMMENTARY ON THE THINKING OF THE TIME. THEY RECAST NATURE AS A SPIRITUAL TEXT, AS A MEDITATION ON OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD, IDEAS THAT ARE PARTICULARLY PRESCIENT TODAY.

Vermont’s Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park commemorates the birth of American environmentalism. It also serves as an education center for land stewardship. Its paintings are the focus of a new online exhibit produced with the Museum Management Program of the National Park Service.

Many of the works—by some of the 19th century’s finest landscape painters—serve as a commentary on the thinking of the time. They recast nature as a spiritual text, as a meditation on our place in the world, ideas that are particularly prescient today.

THE PARK WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1992, WHEN THE ROCKEFELLER FAMILY donated the 550-acre estate to the American people. While the exhibit’s main feature is the paintings, it also offers a history of the succession of wealthy conservationists who lived here.

Built in 1807, the mansion was the boyhood home of George Perkins Marsh, an energetic and multi-talented man whom the exhibit calls a “a key figure” in the intellectual ferment of the mid-1800s. His father instilled a love of nature on rides through

the countryside in a two-wheeled wagon. The young Marsh took to roaming the woods around the big Federal-style house, soon realizing that the world his father loved was quickly changing. Mount Tom, which rose up behind the mansion, was being denuded by logging and grazing. With a perception rare for the time, he saw a chain reaction: erosion washed away the topsoil, which in turn silted up the waterways, destroyed fish habitats, and rendered fields infertile. His vision of nature as an interconnected web stayed with him for the rest of his life.

MARSH STUDIED LAW, GOING ON TO BECOME A U.S. CONGRESSMAN AND one of the founders of the Smithsonian. Every time he returned home, he was shocked by the abuse being wrought on the land. He spoke out, warning farmers of the consequences and advocating

Above from left: Conservation pioneer Frederick Billings; a study of Lake George in the Adirondacks; the mansion in Woodstock. Right: Yosemite in 1870, by landscape painter Alfred Bierstadt.



BILLINGS WAS CAPTIVATED BY THE WEST'S DRAMATIC LANDSCAPES, AND TROUBLED BY WHAT THE GOLD RUSH HAD DONE. HE WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO SUGGEST THE IDEA OF NATIONAL PARKS, RECOMMENDING THE PRESERVATION OF PLACES LIKE YOSEMITE, THE UPPER VALLEY OF THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER, AND WHAT WOULD LATER BECOME GLACIER AND MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARKS.





for the more responsible agriculture practiced in Europe. His book, *Man and Nature*, published in 1864, was seminal. He questioned what the destruction of nature would do to the climate. The book was a revelation. But with a country in the throes of expansion, Marsh's voice was stilled. Appointed ambassador to Turkey, then Italy, he spent most of his time in Europe. His family sold the house in 1869.

THE NEW OWNER, FREDERICK BILLINGS, HAD GROWN UP WITHIN SIGHT OF THE estate. He'd made a fortune as a lawyer and real estate developer during the Gold Rush in California. A fellow conservationist, he admired Marsh.

Billings was captivated by the West's dramatic landscapes, and troubled by what the Gold Rush had done. He was among the first to suggest the idea of national parks, recommending the preservation of

places like Yosemite, the upper valley of the Yellowstone River, and what would later become Glacier and Mount Rainier National Parks. In later life, as head of the transcontinental Northern Pacific Railroad—which opened the West further still—Billings advocated natural wonders as tourist attractions. He promoted the land as valuable in and of itself.



Above: Julia Parmly Billings, circa 1865. She was as much an environmental advocate as her husband.

He resolved to restore the countryside he knew as a boy. Buying the estate and reforesting Mt. Tom's slopes, he began to explore better ways of farming.

Billings' marriage to Julia Parmly, a New Yorker, established a connection to the art

world. Their home on Madison Avenue was decorated with works by some of the era's most highly regarded artists. As their collection expanded, the Woodstock house became a private gallery, celebrating the theme of untrammelled nature.

By the time of Billings' death in 1890, the estate's forests and dairy farm were renowned as the epitome of progressive land management. The farm won awards at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.

Billings' granddaughter, Mary French, inherited the property in 1951. She and her husband, Laurance S. Rockefeller, continued the tradition, operating the farm as a model for sensitive land management while furthering the cause of conservation. The Rockefeller

family, a major supporter of preserving open space, figured prominently in the origins of the National Park System. Laurance, an advocate of making nature accessible to the public, was inspired by his father, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who had been instrumental in setting aside wilderness that would become national parks at Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, Grand Tetons, and Redwood.

THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL HAD ITS OWN CONNECTION TO THE EARLY conservation movement. Thomas Cole, Asher Durand, Frederick Church, and others celebrated nature's beauty, its power to inspire, its role as an antidote to an increasingly urbanized world. Their pristine natural scenes broke with the portraits and renditions of historical events that had long been the convention.

The group's name derived from its members' habit—at least in the early days—of exploring the Hudson River Valley for subjects. They helped invest the outdoors with a transcendent quality, while writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau were doing the same in literature. Conservation was a hot issue, and the paintings gave it a visual identity. Collectors sought them out. As the century progressed, artists expanded the scope of the Hudson River School to produce monumental western landscapes.

Frederick and Julia Billings visited many of the scenes depicted in the paintings, their great fondness for the West reflected in inspiring images of Yosemite Valley, Mount Hood, and the coastal cliffs around San Francisco. Says curator Janet Houghton, "The collection gets its evocative power from the fact that it's part of the house's furnishings . . . it reflects the Billings' view of the natural world." It also let them bring the outdoors inside.

In the social geography of the Victorian era, the monied classes mingled with the art world. "It's another truism about the 19th century," Houghton says, "that people of means tended to know the artists and had visited their studios in New York. This is true of the Billings."

THE EXHIBIT OFFERS BIOGRAPHIES OF MARSH, BILLINGS, AND THE Rockefellers, as well as a description of the Hudson River School. The paintings are divided into landscapes of America and Europe, as well as "exotic views" of the Middle East. A timeline on the park's website further illuminates the exhibit's chronicling of "the intense intellectual ferment of the era," encompassing the suffrage movement, abolitionism, and the emergence of the nature essay as a literary genre. The images, all displayed as thumbnails, can be enlarged with a mouse click.



Today, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park maintains the vision of the pioneers of conservation. Beyond commemorating the history of land stewardship, it works toward promoting strategies to balance care of the environment with the realities of the modern world. The park is also home to the

FREDERICK AND JULIA BILLINGS VISITED MANY OF THE SCENES DEPICTED IN THE PAINTINGS, THEIR GREAT FONDNESS FOR THE WEST REFLECTED IN INSPIRING IMAGES OF YOSEMITE VALLEY, MOUNT HOOD, AND THE COASTAL CLIFFS AROUND SAN FRANCISCO.



Conservation Study Institute, established by the National Park Service to achieve these goals. A partnership with academic, government, and nonprofit organizations, the institute provides a forum for exploring contemporary issues, new techniques, and the future of American conservation.

The exhibit is online at www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/mabi. For more information on the exhibit or Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, contact Janet Houghton, (802) 457-3368, ext. 12, janet_houghton@nps.gov, or visit the park web site at www.nps.gov/mabi.