

**FORT UNION TRADING POST NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**  
**RENDEZVOUZ SAFETY AND AUTHENTICITY**  
**STANDARDS**

**Update 6/01/2023**



*Too often in the past, Living History has gotten a reputation among historians and an increasingly sophisticated public, for simply being a way to indulge some enthusiasts' fantasies. It has been used as an opportunity to fire off guns and parade around in colorful, but scarcely believable, costumes.*

*So often I have been told when I have suggested a more challenging or less picturesque way of showing a park's history to the public, "Why bother? The visitors aren't going to know the difference anyway." Perhaps some do not, but I think we must respect the intelligence of the average visitor enough to understand that many, if not most, can spot a phony when they see one, even if they cannot say why. Is it the mountain man with the black plastic-rimmed glasses, or the pioneer with the digital wristwatch?.....That will be the memory they take home.*

-----David W. Rickman, The Sutter's Fort Costume Manual

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The staff at Fort Union Trading Post NHS seeks a historically accurate depiction of life at Fort Union Trading Post NHS. To that end, certain standards are expected of all participants.

We concentrate on the period 1828-1867. Clothing, camp equipment, and materials should meet the test of being representative of the period. We do however, want all to feel welcome and colonial era (1770s era) is appropriate to this event.

The primary focus of Rendezvous events is to portray and re-create historic lifeways and material culture; including activities, camping equipment, fashion, and weapons common on the Northern Plains during Fort Union's historic period. We ask that you make friendly, personal contacts with our visitors. Such contacts will help create an interactive learning environment.



Living History Volunteers are vital to help connect visitors with our shared past. You can help visitors connect the dots of history. What daily activities did people engage in? What problems and challenges did they face? How may they have dealt with them? Use your camp set up, demonstrations, and historic presence to help bring to life the fur trade story of Fort Union Trading Post.

Interpretation should focus on the interactions between Upper Missouri Tribes and Euro-Americans at Fort Union, both of whom lived, worked, traded at, or visited Fort Union in the early to mid-19th century. The Upper Missouri Tribes include: the Assiniboine, Crow, Blackfeet, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arkiara, Lakota, and Dakota. Euro-Americans at Fort Union include: American Fur Company employees, trappers, independent traders, hunters, rivermen, missionaries, slaves, visiting artists and scientists, military personnel, among others. Also, the Metis, people of both American Indian and Euro-American, ancestry were both employed by, and traded with, Fort Union.

Check out great videos of Fort Union highlighting the site history and significance on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/visitfortunion/videos>. Read about our history on our park website: [www.nps.gov/fous](http://www.nps.gov/fous).

## **PARK CONTACTS:**

1. Loren Yellow Bird – 701-572-9083 Loren\_Yellow\_Bird@nps.gov  
Park Ranger & Rendezvous Coordinator
2. Lisa Sanden – 701-572-1029 ext. 218, 701-609-7677, Lisa\_Sanden@nps.gov  
Park Ranger & Volunteer In Parks (VIP) Coordinator

## **VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS AGREEMENTS**

1. All participants must sign a VIP volunteer agreement in order to participate and/or camp at Rendezvous
  - a. Individual/Group VIP form – completed by individual or one adult member of a group.
  - b. Anyone (including FUMLA members) interested in blacksmithing must see VIP Coordinator Lisa Sanden. Park staff must approve all blacksmiths. Blacksmithing volunteers must complete an additional VIP agreement and complete a safety orientation.

## **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

Help protect and preserve this site's history and resources for future visitors' education and enjoyment, while ensuring your own and current visitors' safety.

1. **Smoking is not permitted inside the Trade House, Clerks Office, or in any park buildings.**
2. Collecting and/or removing artifacts from the park is illegal.
3. Please respect the purpose of the event. Traders, buck-skinners, and participating families are to be in period clothing – no blue jeans or tennis shoes. Keep non-period camp items under period cover.
4. Please respect the visiting public. Be cordial to visitors, keep a clean camp, and control your pets.
5. Mosquitos are ubiquitous and ferocious; bring bug spray/citronella candles or other deterrents of your choosing.

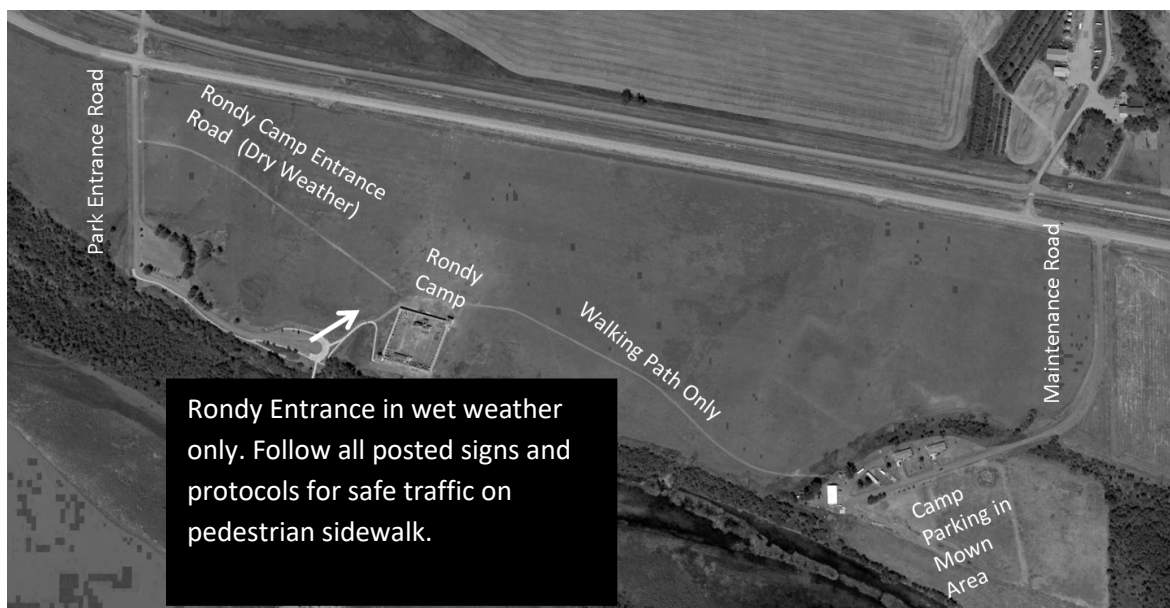
## **CAMPING AT RENDEZVOUS**

If this is your first Rendezvous, please plan to arrive during park operating hours – 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Central Time so park staff can help orientate you to the camp. If arriving during operating hours is not possible, please call the VIP Coordinator at least one week in advance to arrange for an after-hours arrival. Plan to attend the mandatory camp meeting for all campers, Friday night at 7:00CDT, held under the main camp awning.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

1. Visitor Center (VC) hours are 8:00 am CDT to 5:00 pm CDT. The visitor center has running water and flush toilets. Showers are not available on site. In case of extreme heat, the VC also has air conditioning. Free Wi-Fi is also available in the VC. Volunteers in period clothing using modern technology (cell phones, laptops etc.) must do so out of the public's view.

2. Staff are not able to charge volunteers' mobile electronic devices (cellphones) at the front desk. Additionally, volunteers may not charge their devices in public areas of the Visitor Center. Please plan to turn your devices off or bring a power pack with you to camp.
3. Porta-potties and potable water (via garden hose) are available at camp site. Filtered water via a bottle filler water fountain is available in the VC during open hours.
4. As a Thank You to all Volunteers - The Fort Union Association provides free ice for all campers. Ice will be located in a large self-serve chest in the camp area.
5. As a Thank You to all Volunteers - Fort Union Trading Post NHS provides free firewood for all campers for use at the fort. Pallets of firewood will be stationed out in camp.
6. The site will have staff camping onsite and will have National Park Service (NPS) Law Enforcement on Friday and Saturday night.



**ACCESSING THE CAMP:** There are two ways to access the camp (see map):

- a. **DRY CONDITIONS – RONDY CAMP ENTRANCE ROAD** is the preferred method for accessing camp. It is located roughly halfway between our park entrance and large parking lot. For archeological preservation this road is only be available in dry weather. Please be courteous when using this road, it is single lane.
- b. **WET CONDITIONS - THE SIDEWALK** is the alternate route to access camp used only during wet weather. When the dirt road is closed this is the only access to camp.
  - a. Pedestrians on sidewalk have the right of way  
It is our goal to make sure volunteers can safely access the Rondy grounds with the least amount of confusion or wait times. We understand many volunteers are traveling many miles and hours (and even days) to participate in Rendezvous. Please do not remove the sidewalk-closed sign or attempt to drive around it.

- b. For Visitor and Volunteer safety, all vehicles arriving during visitor hours (8:00am – 6:30 pm CDT) will need an escort up the sidewalk to the Rendezvous grounds. This can be done in different ways, depending on the circumstances at the site.
- c. If the sidewalk is in use due to wet weather we will have signs at the park entrance and at sidewalk entrance with the current situation and rules. We hope that will help to clear up any confusion as to what to do when you arrive.
  - i. Situation A: Volunteer/Staff in parking lot (at information station) will coordinate with the cart driver to escort vehicles.
  - ii. Situation B: No Volunteer/Staff in parking lot, vehicles can still follow the cart up sidewalk. Wait for the cart to do a round.
  - iii. Situation C: Use the call box located next to the covered bench to contact the visitor center. Park Staff will arrange for someone to escort your vehicle up sidewalk.

**PARKING DURING RENDEZVOUS:** Designated camp parking will be in the park housing/maintenance area on the riverside of the maintenance access road.

1. **Please unload at the camp expeditiously.** Once unloaded at the campsite, move your vehicle to the designated parking area. Vehicles may not be left overnight on the rendezvous grounds and may not be left in the visitor parking areas at any time.
2. No vehicles are allowed on the path leading east from camp to the maintenance area.
3. If you camp on Trader's Row, we ask that you wait until 4:00 pm Sunday before you bring your vehicle around to break camp. Those who need to leave early, plan on camping behind or beyond Trader's Row. This makes for less intrusion on the camp scene Sunday afternoon. If you would like to camp on traders row, but will leave earlier than 4:00 pm, please let park staff know in advance.
4. Please leave a clean camp. Pick up all litter, and return unused firewood, sand and rocks to where the appropriate piles.

#### **FOR RV'S**

1. Parking and primitive camping in RV's is allowed in the maintenance parking area.
2. The site does not have power or sewer hookups available.
3. The site does not have a dump station.
4. Generators can be used in the parking area during the day and evening. Quiet hours (no generators may be used) are 10 pm CDT – 8 am CDT.
5. No campfires or braziers are allowed in the parking area.

#### **CAMP FIRES**

1. Campfire are allowed at Rendezvous within the mown area of camp only.
  - a. Fire pits are NO LONGER allowed at Fort Union. In order to minimize impacts to fragile archeological areas, disturbing the soils or sediments for any reason is prohibited.

- b. When setting up camp, please completely encircle your fire area with the available rocks and place a firm layer of sand within the circle to completely cover any exposed ground. Sand will be provided in the Rendezvous area.
  - c. Fires may be built to the size necessary for cooking purposes only.
  - d. Even if there are no active fire bans in camp, please be careful with all fire and flame, including candles.
  - e. Do not leave a burning fire unattended at any time.
  - f. Fire extinguishers, water cans and flappers will be stationed at all firewood pallets.
2. Braziers - Braziers are allowed in camp.
- i. Fort Union has many braziers available for volunteer use, see fort staff to check one out.
  - ii. Hardwood coal will be provided for braziers.
3. Self-contained gas or propane fires are allowed
- i. Camp stoves must be small table-top sized, no large BBQ grills will be allowed
  - ii. Must be hidden similar to all non-period items during the day
  - iii. Cannot be left unattended while in use (while a flame is present).

## **FIRE BAN PROTOCOLS**

4. As we are a rural open prairie, Fort Union will follow all City, County and State Burn ban/limits. Park staff will also monitor conditions and may decide on a ban outside of a declared ban. We understand this can cause confusion and stress for campers that need to cook and plan meals. Here is our policy:
5. **NO BAN IN PLACE:** Campfires and braziers are allowed in the mown area of the Rendezvous grounds.
- a. Campfires are allowed in camp
  - b. Braziers are allowed in camp.
  - c. Fires are allowed in camp stoves inside volunteers tents.
6. **OPEN FIRE BAN:** Open fires are banned in camp.
- a. Campfires are not allowed.
  - b. Fires are allowed in Braziers in camp.
    - i. Braziers will be made available to campers.
  - c. Fires are allowed in camp stoves inside volunteers tents.
7. **FIRE BAN/RED FLAG WARNING:** Total fire ban in camp, fires will be allowed for cooking purposes only in certain areas in the fort.
- a. Fire are not allowed in camp sand/fire rock.
    - i. Absolutely no open fires are allowed in camp.
  - b. Fires are not allowed in braziers in camp.
  - c. Fires are not allowed in camp stoves inside volunteers tents.
  - d. Fort Staff will open the Trade House and Clerks Office fireplaces for cooking purposes during normal operating hours only when staffed by fort staff.
  - e. The fire ring in front of the Carpenters Shack will be open to general use.

- f. Braziers will be made available in behind the Bourgeois House in the kitchen area for volunteer use
- g. Park Staff will ask volunteers to only use candles in lanterns and be exceedingly careful with any open flame.
  - i. Park may have some enclosed lanterns for loan to campers.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Weather in western North Dakota can be harsh, with extremes in temperature and the possibility of sudden, violent storms.

1. Be prepared for rapidly changing conditions.
2. Potential for sudden violent thunderstorms/hailstorms.
3. Summers are warm with average high temperatures in the 80s-90s May through September. Highs of 100+ are not uncommon.
4. Wind is considerable year-round – bring storm ropes and/or extra tie downs.



## SEVERE WEATHER PROTOCOL

### SITE STORM SHELTERS:

1. Bourgeois House Visitor Center
2. Trade House
3. Southwest Bastion

Park staff will constantly monitor the weather via the front desk computer, if severe weather is expected:

1. When the site enters a severe weather watch site staff will:
  - a. Notify campers of expected weather event and timing of event.
2. When the site enters a severe weather warning site staff will:
  - a. Notify campers of expected weather event and timing of event.
  - b. Voluntary camp evacuations are allowed – all storm shelters will be made available to campers.
3. When the site is in a tornado warning or deemed necessary by site staff due to impending weather – **mandatory camp evacuations** will follow these procedures:
  - a. Park staff will ring the Kitchen Bell followed by two blasts of an air horn, repeated two times.
  - b. Park staff will also go camp to camp to make sure all camps are evacuated and to help any campers with special needs.
  - c. Children must remain with at least one guardian during the duration of a severe weather evacuation. During an evacuation it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to



account for their children, park staff will be unable to do so. For safety and accountability there will be no exceptions to this rule.

- d. Once into the fort site, for everyone's safety, volunteers will not be allowed to return to camp until the weather event is over.
- e. Please leave any alcohol in camp, do not bring it into the evacuation areas with you.
- f. During either a voluntary or a mandatory evacuation, all storm shelters will allow pets. All animals will need to remain in the owner's physical control and on-leash at all times.
- g. Livestock/Horses, if there are any livestock or horses in camp, they will be allowed to be penned inside the walls as deemed safe by site staff. This will not be a common occurrence and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## **CAMP EQUIPMENT**

1. The use of a period style canvas or hide tents is mandatory, no modern camping tents will be allowed.
2. Modern equipment such as coolers, sleeping bags, cameras, and plastics must be kept covered or stored out of sight.
3. Wood, tin, ceramic, copper, brass, and iron are all acceptable cookware. Modern enamelware or aluminum ware is discouraged.
4. Clay pipes and chewing tobacco are acceptable in camp, but no cigarettes please.
5. All historic flags and banners displayed on canoes or within a camp should be representative of the time period interpreted during Rendezvous. You will be asked to remove any flags or banners that are not appropriate for our event.

## **TRADER/TRADE BLANKET SALES ITEMS**

For any specific questions about sale items please contact Rendezvous Coordinator Loren Yellow Bird.

1. All items sold must be period appropriate and all sale furs must fit the fort's historic period. No domestic animal (excepting farm stock, i.e. sheep or cow) skins or pelts may be sold or displayed at any time.
2. No projectile weapons, such as toy bows and arrows or pop guns, may be sold.
3. All traders must be in period clothing and utilize period displays – i.e. no jeans, sneakers or modern acrylic display stands.

## **FUR TRADE FASHIONS**

The following lists are by no means all inclusive, but rather a general starting list. For any questions, or to find quality sources for clothing, please call Fort Union Trading Post NHS and speak with a park ranger.

The park does have some period clothing and camp gear for loan – to request these items, please call VIP Coordinator Lisa Sanden. It is appropriate to mix and match American Indian and Euro-American clothing.

Also – remember this event is open to the public and modesty (in dress and behavior) is required.

## **MEN'S CLOTHING**

Typical men's clothing may have included:

1. Long-sleeved shirts made from a natural fabric such as leather, linen, cotton, or wool. Please avoid polyester and/or non-period prints.
2. Drop front or French fly breeches or pants in leather, linen, cotton, or wool.
3. A blanket coat or capote.
4. A woven sash and leg ties.
5. Head wear such as knit-style caps or tuques. Beaver, rabbit, or wool felt hats. Scarves of a period fabric.
6. Moccasins, brogans, or leather shoes are appropriate. Slippers, sandals, flip flops, tennis shoes, or other modern footwear is discouraged.
7. Renaissance Fair (Ren-Fair) and "Pirate" style clothing is not appropriate to our event.
8. As this event focus on the fur trade era of Fort Union military clothing, unless pre-approved and deemed appropriate by site volunteer coordinator, is not allowed during Rendezvous.

## **WOMEN'S CLOTHING**

Typical women's clothing may have included:

9. American Indian style dresses
  - a. Strap dresses, Trade Dress, leggings, and sleeves made from either leather or natural fabrics such as linen, cotton, or wool. Please avoid faux leather, polyester, or non-period prints.
  - b. Moccasins of a period appropriate design.
  - c. A woven sash.
  - d. Shawls and wool blankets for outerwear.
  - e. Scarves, beads, and trade silver representative of the period.
10. Euro-American Style Dress
  - a. Late colonial to Romantic era dresses are appropriate; including chemises, short-gowns, and skirt combinations, work or a camp dress made from natural fabrics such as linen, cotton, or wool. Please avoid polyester and/or non-period prints.
  - b. Civil War era dresses, including hoop skirts, are not appropriate. "Saloon Girl" [any short skirt/exposed corset combination] outfits are prohibited from the event.
  - c. Shawls and wool blankets for outerwear.
  - d. Moccasins, brogans, or leather shoes are appropriate. Slippers, sandals, flip flops, tennis shoes, or other modern footwear is discouraged.

## **VOLUNTEER SAFETY**

1. Be aware of hazards and report any new or continuing issues to park staff immediately.

2. Watch your footing, there are numerous ground squirrel holes, which may cause you to injure your feet or ankles.
3. Be careful with fire, use candle lanterns for all candles. Keep campfires small. Fires in the fort fireplaces must be kept moderate in size and allowed to burn out at night.
4. Use caution when cutting wood. Axes and knives are hazardous when used improperly.

### **FABRIC SAFETY**

If you will be working around an open fire, consider your historic clothing carefully

1. Wool is safest.
2. Cotton and linen burn like grass unless they have been treated.
3. Polyester will melt onto your skin.
4. Tight sleeves are safer than loose sleeves.
5. Women can partially protect themselves by wearing a long wool apron over their skirts.
6. If the worst happens, remember what you teach your children – stop – drop – roll.

### **BLACK POWDER**

1. Possession of black powder and/or loaded firearms is strictly prohibited.
2. Unloaded firearms appropriate to the period are allowed, as are empty powder horns, flasks, barrels, or any other typical “black powder” container.

### **PETS**

1. All pets must be controlled on a leash no more than 6 feet long at all times.
2. Pets may not be left alone in camp for extended periods of time.

### **ALCOHOL USE**

Moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages is permitted during Rendezvous only when the park is closed to the public, after 6:30 pm Central Time.

1. Excessive intoxication, and any improper actions as a result of being intoxicated, will not be tolerated.
2. Park staff reserves the right to terminate individual volunteer agreements for excessive alcohol use/belligerent behavior.

### **VOLUNTEER SAFETY – SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

All volunteers have a right to a safe environment to volunteer in. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated at Fort Union. All reports of sexual harassment will be investigated, any volunteer who sexually harass any person at Fort Union will have their volunteer agreement terminated and no longer be allowed to volunteer at Fort Union. All reported sexual harassment claims will be handled confidentially.

1. All staff and volunteers ***must*** refrain from engaging in harassing conduct and fully cooperate in any inquiry or investigation.
2. All volunteers who are victims (past or present) of harassing conduct, ***are encouraged to*** report the harassing conduct.

If you are sexually harassed or witness sexual harassment:

Report the harassment to the site Volunteer Coordinator Lisa Sanden, or any Fort Union staff member you feel comfortable reporting to.