



Special Events at the Bandstand and Picnic Shelter

Special Events

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (NHS) and the Vancouver National Historic Reserve are home to unique and beautiful landscapes and settings – such as the bandstand and the picnic shelter – that are ideal venues for a variety of activities such as cultural programs, picnics, wedding ceremonies, festivals, athletic events, and film and photography projects.

Special events and activities held in the park require a Special Use Permit, issued only after the National Park Service (NPS) determines that the activities involved will not impair park values and resources.

Managing your Request

The park, through the Chief Ranger's Office, evaluates all proposals for special events. Our permitting process ensures that special events are conducted in a manner consistent with NPS standards of resource and visitor protection.

Our goal is for all special events to foster the mission of the NPS and benefit the general public and event participants.

To facilitate your application for a Special Use Permit (SUP), we have listed below a few things you will need to know about planning and holding your event or activity at the bandstand and picnic shelter.

We are happy to assist you with the permit process and to guide you in planning your event or activity logistics so that they comply with special use policies, guidelines and regulations.

Venue History and Description

Bandstand

The parade ground has a long history of hosting special events. Beginning in 1849, the US Army used these grounds for drill, parades, and military band concerts that drew crowds from Vancouver and Portland. Between 1859 and 1870, the army constructed their first bandstand at the post, thus providing a more formal setting for these special events.

Though the original bandstand is no longer in existence, a reconstructed bandstand sits near the original site and has hosted special events since the 1980s.

The bandstand is located on the parade ground and is a beautiful setting for many events. Currently, electricity is available. Parking is limited and the nearest restrooms are at the park Visitor Center, which closes at 5:00 p.m.

Picnic Shelter

The picnic shelter was constructed in 1973 as a visitor amenity. It is located directly southeast of the Visitor Center. Picnic shelter users have access to the Visitor Center's accessible bathrooms.

The picnic shelter features six doors that can be opened to provide access to all sides of the building, and hosts six picnic tables. Electricity is available. Adjacent to the shelter is a small playground and a parking lot with two accessible parking spots and ample parking.

Please note that the picnic shelter is available on a first come, first served basis during park operating hours, and there is no charge for use of the picnic shelter during this time. For after-hours use of the picnic shelter, a special use permit is required, along with a \$50 application fee.

Conditions of Use

- Access for other park visitors to the bandstand must not be impeded. A Special Use Permit is authorization for your private event to take place on parklands and does *not* grant exclusive use of an area. It is recommended that you schedule your event early or late in the day if you wish to increase the privacy of your event.
- A maximum of two events shall be permitted per day at the bandstand, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- Events at the bandstand and picnic shelter are limited to a maximum of fifty (50) people.
- Alcohol is not permitted.
- During hours of park operation, the picnic shelter is available on a first- come, first-served basis only. The picnic shelter may be reserved for group use after 5:00 p.m. until no later than 8:00 p.m.
- Available parking at the bandstand and picnic shelter is limited, often crowded and not guaranteed. Due to the limited available parking in the vicinity of the bandstand, car pooling or van shuttles are highly recommended for weekday events, and are required for weekend events. If your event will be taking place at the bandstand on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, you must present park staff with your parking and/or shuttle plans prior to the issuance of a permit. This plan will help ensure your guests arrive on schedule and at the correct location.
- A maximum of three hours may be scheduled at either the bandstand or the picnic shelter. Please plan accordingly. This three hour maximum shall include set- up and breakdown time. No set- up will be allowed prior to the start time on your permit.
- Special Use Permits may be denied during periods of heavy public use (e.g., Labor Day weekend, Fourth of July, Memorial Day Weekend, etc.).
- The use of decorations and equipment must be discussed prior to issuance of your permit. The use of special equipment, such as canopies, arches, chairs, or other decorations may require park administrative review and are not allowed in certain areas. Please discuss your decoration plans with park staff and consider using the existing landscape as your backdrop.
- Special conveyances, including but not limited to horse- drawn carriages and electric carts are prohibited outside of paved roadways.
- In respect of other park visitors, amplified music is prohibited. Acoustic music will be considered. Exceptions can be made for portable tape decks or CD players if discussed in advance with park staff and listed as a special condition of your permitted use.
- To protect parklands and wildlife, the releasing of balloons, doves or butterflies and the throwing of rice, birdseed, flower petals or other natural or artificial material is not allowed. Birdseed provides an unnatural food source for park wildlife and may introduce exotic plant species. Because of the Park's close proximity to the Columbia River, balloons are prohibited since they can be harmful to marine life. Releasing doves or butterflies is prohibited by law and will upset the natural balance of wildlife in the Park.
- Use of candles is allowed. Fires, tiki torches and all other forms of open flame are prohibited.
- Affixing directional signage to existing buildings, property, signs, poles or plants is not allowed. Please respect the uncluttered views of the Park. Any posted signs will be removed immediately by park personnel. Park staff will be happy to provide you with written directions and maps to provide to your guests.
- All trash associated with your event must be bagged and removed from the Park. Please make certain that someone in your group is assigned to remove trash and decorations after your event or you may be billed for cleanup costs at \$50 per hour.
- The picnic shelter is available on a first come, first served basis during park operating hours. For after- hours use, a special use permit is required.