

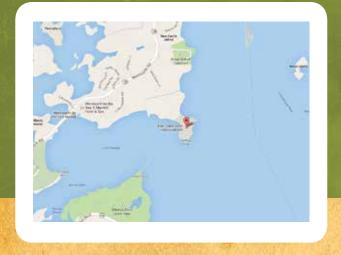
Things to do

- Tour the Visitor Center
- Walk the informative trail to learn the military history of the site
- View the remains of the military fort
- Try geocaching
- Walk or run the site's trails
- Enjoy breathtaking views of the ocean and Little Harbor
- Picnic with your family and friends
- Fish at the end of the breakwater
- Bird watch
- Schedule a school or youth group field trip
- Launch your kayak
- Swim on a small, unguarded beach
- Play frisbee in the field



Fort Stark STATE HISTORIC SITE

For more information, please visit NHStateParks.org



We Welcome Your Help

The Fort Stark Brigade Volunteers is made up of a great bunch of people who know the satisfaction of watching the park become transformed into an attractive and popular destination. Volunteers cut brush to expose our beautiful views, clean the beach, develop historical displays and work in the museum. Workdays commence in May and continue throughout the summer on Wednesdays from 9:00 to 11:00 am. Other arrangements can be made to work different days. Can you spare a few hours a week? Please join us.

Fort Stark is a Carry in/Carry out Park. Please help keep our park clean. Pets are not permitted.

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Fort Stark State Historic Site NH Department of Resources and Economic Development Division of Parks and Recreation



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Fort Stark STATE HISTORIC SITE



Fort Stark Historic Site is located on a peninsula historically called Jerry's Point on the southeast corner of New Castle Island. It overlooks the Piscataqua River, Little Harbor and the Gulf of Maine.

Fort Stark was named in honor of General John Stark, commander of the New Hampshire forces

at the Battle of Bennington (1777). It is one of seven forts built to protect Portsmouth Harbor. In New Hampshire are Forts Stark, Washington, Constitution (William and Mary), and Dearborn (Odiorne Point State Park); and Forts Sullivan, McClary and Foster are in Maine.



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FORT STARK STATE HISTORIC SITE

The earliest forts were built to protect the colonists. As Portsmouth Harbor increased in importance and the Revolutionary shipbuilding industry grew, additional fortifications became important. With the establishment of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in 1800, harbor defense become critical. At Jerry's Point there is evidence of earthworks, circa 1794, and a stonework fort, 1873. Following the Spanish American War (1898), defense of key harbor fortifications such as Fort Stark were constructed on both coasts during the Endicott period (1890-1920) and included Fort Constitution and Fort Foster. The defense concept was to mine the harbors and erect gun batteries. However, no shots were fired in anger. The final fortifications occurred during World War II when batteries were added to Fort Foster, and Fort Dearborn was built. The five remaining forts are considered historic sites and are open to the public today.



The main structure seen in the park, the Harbor Entrance Control Post (HECP), was built to resemble a war ship when viewed from the sea. This building was used as the control center for harbor defenses.

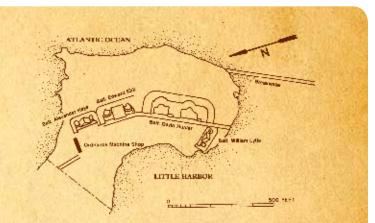
The HECP building and the batteries are not safe and are not open to the public. Use caution when walking.



The restoration of Fort Stark is a joint effort of the State of NH, the Town of New Castle and its many dedicated volunteers.

The Beauty of the Park

In the spring of 2007, townspeople began the work of clearing the invasive species that threatened to overtake the park. With chain saws, brush cutters, rakes and shovels, the volunteers went to work removing bittersweet, sumac, poison ivy and other plants that choked out the native species. After six years of hard work, visitors can now enjoy the natural beauty of the peninsula with the stunning vistas of Whaleback Light, Portsmouth Harbor Light, and the Isles of Shoals. Visitors can walk the newly created walking trail to the shore, and enjoy the gorgeous display of wildflowers. Kayakers arrive on our sandy beach to rest and explore. Scuba divers discover items of interest off our rocky beach. Visitors enjoy our family friendly picnic area and large fields for lawn games.



The Visitor Center

The Ordnance Machine Shop Museum and Visitor Center is open to the public on Saturdays from 12 Noon until 4 PM from Memorial Day to Labor Day, or by appointment. With more volunteers we could extend the hours our museum is open. Please volunteer. Entrance is gratis, but donations are greatly appreciated. Spring to fall the grounds are open during daylight hours.



Displays

Visit the Ordnance Machine Shop Museum to learn more about the rich history of Fort Stark, with its display of military artifacts from WWI and WWII, complemented by many photographs and maps.

Learn about the more than 100 ships that wrecked off the rocky coast of New Castle from the 17th century to the present, in the "Shipwrecks of New Castle" exhibit.

Learn how soldiers and sailors communicated by Morse Code using the recently restored Navy signal lamp. It was used for silent communications between ships, ship-to-shore and shore-to-shore as well as for searching for downed planes and men overboard. This artifact was restored thanks to the efforts of the Live Free or Die Chapter of the Nam Knights Motorcycle Club.