



## Cultural Landscapes

### EBEY'S LANDING NATIONAL HISTORICAL RESERVE

#### Importance

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, on Whidbey Island in Washington State provides the nation a vivid and continuous record of Pacific Northwest history. The land appears much as it did a century ago. Patterns of settlement, historic homes, pastoral farmsteads and commercial buildings are still within their original farm, forest, and marine settings. A visitor can experience a variety of diverse physical and visual landscapes within a small geographic area. The community of Ebey's Reserve is a healthy, vital one that allows for growth and change while respecting and preserving its heritage.

The cultural landscape of the reserve is made of historic settlement, development patterns, and natural features. Collectively, landscape patterns and their relationship over time imprint and reflect human history in the land and give it its unique Northwest character. A few examples of the unique attributes of this place include:

- Unique geography of naturally formed prairies surrounded by wooded ridges and shorelines.
- How settlers responded to the natural environment in their development, farming and homestead choice.
- Vegetation related to land use such as the formation of hedgerows in historic farm boundaries.
- Road systems charting the paths of wagon roads and bearing the names of early and present day farm families
- Historic farmstead cluster arrangement representing the periods of farm use and technology over the past 150 years.
- Archaeological resources including over 40 seasonal and permanent camps of Native Americans, some going back 9,000 years.
- Views and other perceptual qualities where one can imagine what it was like to be here hundreds if not thousands of years ago.
- Coupeville and Ferry Landing – Intact sites that connect farmland to all of Puget Sound.

The Reserve was set aside in 1978 to “preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historic record from nineteenth century exploration and settlement of Puget Sound up to the present time.” Approximately 85% of the Reserve is privately held. Of the historic structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 98% are privately owned. Because of this, the preservation and sustainability of the Reserve's cultural landscape requires a strong local stewardship commitment, through partnership and from local residents. Recognizing that the pressures facing the Reserve are more complex now than 33 years ago, the Trust Board and its partners are establishing a set of programs and collaborative strategies to provide technical and fiscal support to more effectively cultivate and sustain the Reserve's deep tradition of local stewardship.



### **Cultivating Local Stewardship: Cultural Landscape Preservation Grown Here**

Conservation easements to prevent future development and help support viable agriculture are the highest priority and most effective way of protecting the Reserve’s unbroken historical record and rural character. Working in coordination with the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, and The Nature Conservancy to secure Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF), among other sources, remains an essential tool to protecting the last remaining heritage farmsteads dating back to the Donation Land Claim Law of 1850. In the absence of LWCF funding, the San De Fuca Uplands area of the Reserve remains threatened by subdivision and incompatible development.

In addition to these land protection efforts, it is also essential for citizens to have their own tools available. Many citizens, especially those who have recently moved into the community are unaware that they live within or near a protected historic reserve. The following are tangible strategies and new tools to help empower private property owners to continue to nurture the deep tradition of local stewardship grown at Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve.

Ebey’s Landing is America’s first historical reserve and is a living classroom where new tools in historic preservation are being developed to address the issues of today and the future. These tools include:

#### *Field School and Conference*

An annual Historic Preservation Field School that provides a hands-on, four-week preservation experience for locals and visitors. The school illustrates application of the Secretary of the Interior’s ‘Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties’ on National Register heritage buildings.

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**Opposite** Freeman Boyer, owner of the Boyer Barn and the 2010 Preservation Crew of Ebey’s Landing 3rd Historic Preservation Field School - comprised of members of the Coupeville Lions Club, the NPS and other community volunteers. Photo is in front of the Boyer Barn, circa late 1800’s.

**Above** Ferry House, Front Porch Reconstruction and stabilization underway. Funded through NA Trust, American Express Partners In Preservation Grant, NPS, Coupeville Lions Club, Island County Historical Society, local residents, and visitors

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The Ebey's Forever Conference includes field trips, workshops and panels featuring leading local, regional, and national voices in cultural resource management, sustainable agriculture, and interpretation.

### *Design Review*

Review is a legal process of applying context-specific design guidelines to proposed construction and remodeling projects within the Reserve. A tool to help property owners care for and conserve the overall character and appearance of the Reserve, this unified program and guidelines encourages compatible rehabilitation and site planning, and ensures that new development is sensitive to the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and landscape. Members of the New Historic Preservation represent the Town of Coupeville, Island County and the Reserve when considering building applications through the cultural landscape lens.

### *Ebey's Forever Fund and Grants Program*

The Ebey's Forever Fund was established by the Trust Board in 2009 to provide direct fiscal support to the owners of historic properties in the Reserve through its Ebey's Forever Grant Program. A community-based entity based on the Washington Heritage Barn Program, the Fund offers matching grants to these owners to help preserve the Reserve's most historic structures for traditional uses and uses yet to come. In 2012, \$62,000 in grant funding was awarded to eleven contributing historic properties for preservation work – helping property owners achieve the highest standards for historic preservation.

**Above** Jacob Ebey House Rehabilitation Project – completed. Now open seasonally, with a core of 40 volunteer docents, as Reserve's 1st Visitor Contact Station

**Opposite** Kineth Water Tower circa 1896. Exterior rehabilitation, window restoration, and stabilization. During and after.

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