

Vancouver Fort, Downtown and Waterfront

This walk is rich in history, passing through the Vancouver National Historic Reserve (VNHR) and downtown Vancouver, then traveling over a unique 40-foot long land bridge.

Begin at the VNHR Visitor Center, 1501 E. Evergreen Boulevard. Walk west on Evergreen along Officers' Row, home to the U.S. Army's Vancouver Barrack's officer corps from the 1850s until the post's reduction in size and scope after World War II. Cross I-5 and enter downtown Vancouver.

From Evergreen, turn left onto Esther Street and pass through a vibrant urban renewal area, home of the Vancouver Farmers Market. From Esther, walk into Esther Short Park. Leave the park at the glockenspiel in its southeast corner and walk south on Columbia Street. It bends left and passes under the Interstate Bridge. Follow the pathway along the Columbia River, passing interpretive panels highlighting Fort Vancouver's days as a fur trading headquarters, the Oregon Trail and the arrival of the U.S. Army.

Leave the river at Old Apple Tree Park, and proceed to the pedestrian land bridge spanning State Route 14. Follow the bridge to the fort site and uphill to the Visitor Center. For a longer walk, continue east along the river, then turn north on Columbia Shores Boulevard. Walk under SR 14 to connect with V Street. Turn left on 5th, right on E Reserve Street, and then left on Evergreen to return to the start.

3.96 miles 8730 steps difficulty 45.628, -122.663

VANCOUVER: FORT, DOWNTOWN AND WATERFRONT

The Confluence Project

The land bridge is part of the Confluence Project, seven art installations in the Columbia River Basin that evoke the history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804–1806 and the changes it brought to the peoples and landscape of the Pacific Northwest.

At the bridge are two cedar canoe panels that reference the site's role as a historic tribal crossroads as well as a point of contact between European and Native people. The bridge was designed by Seattle architect Johnpaul Jones, and is near the terminus of the "Klickitat Trail" that linked interior Klickitat and Taidnapam people to the riverine Chinook people, and linked river resources (smelt, sturgeon, salmon, wapato) with those of the prairies and mountains (camas, oak, berries, game animals). The bridge also reconnects Fort Vancouver's fort site and gardens with sites along the river where much of the working life of the fort took place from the 1820s to the 1840s.



Aerial view of the land bridge



