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An Unbroken Historical Record: Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Administrative History by LAURA MCKINLEY. Seattle, Wash.: National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region, 1993; xiv + 200 pp., maps, notes, photographs, appendices, bibliography, index; paper-bound.

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve encompasses 17,400 acres of scenic prairie, woodland, and wetland on Washington state's Whidbey Island. It features a variety of historic buildings from a blockhouse, to barns, to Victorian townhouses. Established in 1978, the reserve's purpose is to preserve a rural community which reflects land-use patterns from nineteenth-century exploration and settlement to the present time. Laura McKinley's administrative history, *An Unbroken Historical Record*, documents the founding of the reserve and its subsequent administration by the National Park Service (NPS) and the citizen-appointed Ebey's Landing Trust Board. McKinley's primary concern is with the viability of this experimental new unit in the national park system. "Is the reserve concept working, and has Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve accomplished what its founders intended?" she asks (p. 3).

McKinley does a fine job of elucidating what a historical reserve is and what the commemoration of an "unbroken historical record" (as it is phrased in the enabling legislation) means. The reserve "honors the present as well as the past, continuity as well as change," the author writes (p. 3). Ebey's Landing is fundamentally a cultural landscape, where marginal farmlands have turned to second-growth forest, fences of a century ago have grown into hedgerows, and country roads trace the boundaries of the island's original donation land claim. The goal of the local residents who campaigned to get the reserve established was to preserve the area's historic character as well as its organic character as an inhabited place. They did not want to freeze it in time, but rather to protect it from the economic and demographic pressures of the metropolis 45 miles to the south. Specifically, they wanted to prevent rural landowners from turning their farms into subdivisions for summer homes and other commercial developments. The NPS, for its part, wanted to encourage this grassroots effort without being drawn into something beyond its ken. Local residents were adamant that they did not want the place made into a park; the NPS must maintain a low profile. Overall, McKinley finds this an unusual though workable premise for a unit of the national park system. "The community goal to manage development, and the NPS mission to preserve nationally significant natural and cultural assets, are in harmony," she avers (p. 123).

Ebey's Landing was the first national historical reserve in the national park system. McKinley notes in passing that the historical reserve idea has been compared to the "Greenline parks" that the English created after World War II to protect the character of "populated, working landscapes." But she roots her story of the creation of the reserve in the 1970s in the organization of two citizen committees in central Whidbey

Island, one concerned with preventing the island's open spaces from being turned into subdivisions, the other focused on the area's historic buildings. As the former group promoted the idea of a Whidbey Island National Seashore, garnering support from other western Washington conservation groups and the local U.S. representative, the latter group worked on creating a historic district around the original (Ebey) donation land claim for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Gradually these historical and environmental preservationists saw their interests coalesce and reinforce each other as they successfully foiled the plans of one developer after another. In McKinley's richly detailed narrative account, it becomes clear that the concept for Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve was forged out of a series of local political exigencies. The administrative history serves as a valuable case study of a kind of environmental politics that has received relatively little attention: the politics of county zoning and real estate development.

Preservationists' calls for a national historical reserve met with skepticism on the part of officials in the NPS. They argued that the area was too limited to be nationally significant, that the system of private land ownership and scenic easements would not afford the area adequate protection, that the costs of land purchases and administration for Ebey's Landing would be a drain on NPS resources needed elsewhere. The NPS compromised with Washington's U.S. Senator Henry M. Jackson and U.S. Representative Lloyd Meeds, accepting the reserve on the conditions that its administration would be turned over to a local board as soon as the county enacted the necessary zoning ordinances. In time, McKinley states, NPS officials became more supportive of the historical reserve idea.

McKinley labels the reserve a "partnership park" (p. 1). Ninety percent of its land area is privately owned. The public interest is protected not through government ownership of the land primarily, but rather by the purchase of scenic easements from the land owners. Local, state, and federal governments work with citizen groups to marshal limited public and private resources for the protection of land values. Ten years after the creation of the reserve, authority was officially transferred to the Ebey's Landing Trust Board and now the reserve is an affiliated unit of the national park system. McKinley finds that this nontraditional approach to preservation has two advantages over the traditional insistence on exclusive federal ownership of nationally significant historic resources. First, it is possible for the NPS to accomplish more with limited fiscal resources. Second, in a rural setting where agriculture is an essential part of the landscape, it preserves the landowners' relationship to the land.

Yet McKinley cautions that it is too soon to declare the reserve a success. Critical areas within the reserve still remain unprotected. And the limitation of scenic easements is that they raise petty legal hassles, require constant vigilance, and may be defeated by a gradual loss of commitment to or awareness of their strictures. The author finds an interesting tension at the core of the historical reserve idea. The reserve requires a certain level of public recognition in order to inspire a local

commitment to its perpetuation, McKinley observes, yet it must also keep a low profile so that it will not draw large numbers of visitors, alienate residents, and undermine the restful feeling of the place. Local people generally do not perceive the reserve as a magnet for tourism and a source for economic development, yet if the reserve remains too obscure there is a danger that the grassroots preservationist sentiment which still forms its underpinnings will fade into complacency.

Like most administrative histories, *An Unbroken Historical Record* sometimes suffers from a lack of context. The author might have provided more background on some of the essential concepts that the reserve embraces, such as historic preservation, cultural landscape preservation, and administration by a local trust board. The author ignores the interest in Ebey's Landing taken by other conservation groups such as the Mountaineers, hewing closely to her story of the preservationists on Whidbey Island. But these are minor quibbles. The narrative structure of the chapters on the establishment and administration of Ebey's Landing works well, for these chapters provide an intimate and worthwhile look into the making of a partnership park. McKinley conveys a sense of the personalities and community dynamics involved.

An Unbroken Historical Record is a valuable addition to the Park Service's series of administrative histories. It is based on more than forty interviews with local residents and NPS officials, and on the records of the NPS and the local trust board. As a history of a nontraditional unit of the national park system, the report is somewhat nontraditional itself in its liberal use of non-NPS oral history sources and in the critical stance of the author. McKinley was employed directly by the NPS to produce this report, and the report deserves notice as an example of the kind of self-critique that the NPS administrative history program is capable of producing. As a case study of the founding years of a partnership park, this history will be of concern to anyone interested in the future expansion of the national park system.

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Oregon's Highway Park System, 1921-1989: An Administrative History
by LAWRENCE C. MERRIAM, JR., and DAVID G. TALBOT. Salem: Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, 1992; 310 pp., notes, photographs, maps, park directory, appendices, index; paperbound, \$8.00.

Oregon's state park system is one of the best in the country. Anyone who has driven through the Columbia River Gorge, visited Oregon's beaches, or strolled along Portland's waterfront can attest to the park system's diversity and beauty. As of 1990, the system had the nation's fifth highest visitation and included more than 220 parks, encompassing some 90,000 acres, with nearly half of that land along Oregon's coast. Yet the only comprehensive history of Oregon's state parks was written