

May 23, 2010

To: Cape Elizabeth Town Council

I am writing to tell you about an exciting project that the Fort Williams Charitable Foundation and the Fort Williams Advisory Commission are undertaking together.

The Advisory Commission proposes conducting an engineering planning study to determine the underlying condition and the feasibility of uncovering Battery Blair. The planning study would be the first step to a much broader project that would eventually involve excavating the site, creating historical displays and restoring public access to portions of the fortification. I have enclosed a background piece on the history of Battery Blair.

The estimated cost of the study is \$37,000 and the Fort Williams Charitable Foundation has pledged \$18,000 in support of the study if the remaining funds can be raised from the greater Fort Williams and Cape Elizabeth community. With this support we can make the first phase of the project a reality and take the next step to give visitors to the Park a historical experience that presently only exists in books and pictures.

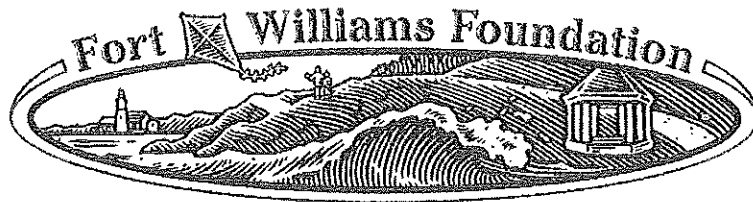
The FWCF is requesting a gift of \$10,000 from the Portland Head Light Fund to make the engineering feasibility study possible. We are most grateful for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol Fritz".

Carol Fritz  
President





## **Battery Blair at Fort Williams Park**

When President George Washington commissioned building Portland Headlight in 1793, little did the farmers, fishermen, sea captains and other early settlers dream of the park that would surround the light more than 200 years later. Today's Fort Williams Park was an important military facility for the defense of Portland Harbor through two world wars.

The Town of Cape Elizabeth purchased Fort Williams in 1965, but with limited funds to invest in the Fort, it lay dormant for 10 years. However, in 1975 a major sewer project generated a huge amount of fill that the Town government used to build roads and playing fields in the Park, and cover the gun batteries along the shoreline. Two of the batteries were covered completely but Battery Blair's north gun emplacement was left uncovered. To celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1899 naming of Fort Williams, the FWAC and a volunteer committee raised funds to turn this one exposed platform into an interpretive center. Located just behind Portland Head Light, Battery Blair is now one of the most visited areas in the Park.

For the past two years the Fort Williams Advisory Commission (FWAC) has been studying the existing infrastructure in Fort Williams Park. As part of that process they looked at the remaining gun batteries for potential improvements and restoration. After careful review of these batteries, they decided that Battery Blair had the best potential for restoration.

In 2009 the Fort Williams Advisory Commission created the Battery Blair Committee to study the feasibility of removing a portion of the earth cover from the battery and using it as a location to present the history of the battery. In the 35 years since the batteries were buried, there has been a growing belief that the Park's rich history, especially military history, is important and that educating the public on the importance of preservation and interpretation of historical areas is critical.

The Commission believes that Battery Blair is a unique structure worthy of deeper study for restoration. The rehabilitation of Battery Blair would enhance the military history of the Fort and it would be a strong partner with the Portland Head Light Museum and its focus on the history of the lighthouse.