

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

A preferred alternative was selected for each of the 21 sites identified in this plan/EIS. Due to the high number of sites and alternatives, a modified Choosing by Advantages (CBA) process was used for choosing the preferred alternative for each site. The CBA workshop took place May 26 -27, 2010. For each site, team members from GGNRA selected the alternative that best met the objectives of the plan (defined in chapter 1). Six main objectives were used to identify the preferred alternative. Each objective included more than one subtopic for the resource. Not all of the subtopics for each objective were compatible, requiring team members to balance competing needs. After evaluating each alternative against each objective, a preferred alternative was selected that best met the objectives for the dog management plan.

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In addition, a preferred alternative was also selected for the handling of permits at GGNRA. To ensure consistency of the permitting process within the park it was determined that only one permit alternative would be selected and this selected alternative would be applied to all park sites. One permit alternative would also simplify the enforcement of the new permit regulation for law enforcement and it would be more easily understood by visitors. Alternative C was selected as the preferred alternative for permits. This alternative states that all dog walkers, including commercial dog walkers are allowed up to three dogs per person. Commercial dog walkers and private individuals with more than three dogs can obtain a dog walking permit; however the limit is six dogs. In a ROLA, permit holders may have up to six dogs off leash. Permits would restrict use by time and area. Permits would only be issued for: Alta Trail/Orchard Fire Road/Pacheco Fire Road, Rodeo Beach/South Rodeo Beach, Fort Baker, Upper and Lower Fort Mason, Crissy Field, Baker Beach, and Fort Funston. This alternative was selected since it provides a parkwide opportunity for visitors with more than three dogs to experience GGNRA.

The following discussion identifies the preferred alternative for each site and the rationale to support the decision.

New Lands

Alternative D was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for New Lands because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Under alternative D, New Lands would be closed to all dog-walking unless opened by the GGNRA Compendium. The “closed unless opened” approach is the reverse of 36 CFR 2.15. New lands would not be considered for a ROLA. Alternative D provides protection of the natural and cultural resources that may occur at the site and requires the park to evaluate several factors before determining what areas could be opened to on-leash dog walking, including desired future conditions for natural and cultural resources, safety of park visitors and employees, and integrity of park programs and activities. Having the area closed to dogs would be more easily enforced by park law enforcement staff. Areas opened to dogs would also be evaluated under the compliance-based management strategy.

Stinson Beach

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Stinson Beach. On-leash dog walking would be allowed within the parking lots and picnic areas. Alternative C would minimize conflict with other visitors and would provide health and safety benefits. Alternative C would allow dog walking, but under

clear, concise direction, which is the same as the current condition and consistent with the overall NPS regulation for dog walking.

Homestead Valley

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Homestead Valley. On-leash dog walking would be allowed on the Homestead Fire Road and the neighborhood connecting trails that may be designated in the future. Alternative C would provide a neighborhood connection for dog walkers. Alternative C is protective of the spotted owl and rare grassland plants at the site. Alternative C would allow dog walking but that is clearly defined, easily understood by visitors and enforceable by park law enforcement staff.

Alta Trail / Orchard Fire Road / Pacheco Fire Road

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Alta Trail/Orchard Fire Road/Pacheco Fire Road. Alternative C includes on-leash dog walking on the Alta Trail to the Orchard Fire Road, and on the Orchard and Pacheco Fire Roads. This alternative provides both an on-leash loop trail and a no-dog experience on the Alta Trail beyond the Orchard Fire Road. Alternative C provides protection for contiguous habitat with little fragmentation where dogs are a potential impact to top predators such as coyotes. Alta Trail also traverses Mission Blue butterfly habitat; therefore alternative C is consistent with the treatment of that habitat throughout the park. Overall, alternative C provides a clear, simple dog regulation that provides a dog and no-dog experience that could be clearly explained by park staff and enforceable by park law enforcement staff.

Oakwood Valley

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Oakwood Valley. Oakwood Valley would provide on-leash dog walking on the Oakwood Valley Trail from its junction with the Oakwood Valley Fire Road to the new gate at the Alta Trail. A ROLA would be established on the Oakwood Valley Fire Road from the Tennessee Valley Road trailhead to the junction with the Oakwood Valley Trail. Continuous fencing would be installed to protect sensitive habitat and double gates would be installed at each end of the fire road. This alternative is a consensus recommendation from the negotiated rulemaking. The fencing along the ROLA would protect habitat for potential special status species. The gates at the trail junction provide protection for the contiguous habitat beyond the trail/fire road junction. Alternative C also provides a no-dog experience on the section of the Oakwood Valley Trail from the trailhead at Tennessee Valley Road to the junction with the Oakwood Valley Fire Road. The defined ROLA with the gates would provide clear boundaries to the public and would be clearly defined and enforceable by park law enforcement staff.

Muir Beach

Alternative D was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Muir Beach because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. On-leash dog walking would be allowed on the Pacific Way Trail. Alternative D would provide maximum protection for the restored lagoon, shorebirds, California red-legged frog, steelhead, Coho, and the riparian wetlands. Off-leash dog walking can occur at a small beach area on county property adjacent to the NPS beach. Alternative D provides a no-dog experience on the beach and those visitors looking for a southern Marin beach for dog walking could go to Rodeo Beach. Alternative D would be clearly defined and would be easily enforceable by park law enforcement staff.

Rodeo Beach / South Rodeo Beach

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Rodeo Beach because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative C would include a ROLA on the beach and on-leash dog walking on the footbridge to the beach and South Rodeo Beach. This site is considered a low conflict area and has a low number of shorebirds, which allows a ROLA to work easily. In addition, low conflicts may be due to the large size of the beach so visitors can easily spread out. Alternative C provides the best experience for dog walkers and it would be easily explainable and enforceable by park law enforcement staff since the regulation would be simple and clear. Alternative C would provide a separate beach area, South Rodeo Beach, for a no-dog experience and also provides resource protection close to Bird Island.

Marin Headlands Trails

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Marin Headlands Trails because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative C includes on-leash dog walking in the Lower Rodeo Valley trail corridor, which includes the Rodeo Beach parking lot to the intersection of Bunker and McCullough Roads via the Lagoon Trail, Miwok Trail, and Rodeo Valley Trail, Old Bunker Fire Road Loop, Battery Smith-Guthrie Fire Road Loop, and the Coastal Trail Bike Route, which includes the Julian Fire Road 101 to Rodeo Beach parking lot. Alternative C provides a dog and no-dog experience for park visitors. By eliminating dog walking on the Coastal Trail, alternative C protects and maintains the integrity of the interior Marin Headlands habitat including the Mission Blue Butterfly habitat. Alternative C provides protection of the habitat by limiting dog walking, but it is offset by the ROLA located on Rodeo Beach.

Fort Baker

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Fort Baker because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. On-leash dog walking would be allowed on the Drown Fire Road, Bay Trail, Lodge and Conference Center grounds, Battery Yates Loop Road, and the parade ground. Alternative C provides protection for the Mission Blue Butterfly habitat including the unfenced habitat near Battery Yates and the fenced habitat adjacent to the Chapel Trail. Alternative C provides for a no-dog experience and it does not allow dogs at the waterfront where there is currently high or anticipated increased visitation. Alternative C provides a variety of areas for dog walking within a controlled environment that could be clearly described and enforced by park law enforcement staff. Overall, alternative C provides the most opportunity for multiple user groups.

Upper and Lower Fort Mason

Alternative B was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Upper Fort Mason because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative B includes on-leash dog walking in all areas where dogs are allowed (Great Meadow, Laguna Green, lawns, sidewalks, paved trails, parking lots, and housing areas). The site contains the park headquarters and receives a high number of tourists including those on rental bikes. The on-leash regulation provides for visitor safety in this multiple use site. This regulation would be clear and would be easily explained and enforced by park law enforcement staff. Alternative B also provides the most protection of the cultural resources on the parade ground.

Crissy Field

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Crissy Field because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative C would include no dogs within the Wildlife Protection Area (WPA) to provide maximum protection for the western snowy plover and other shorebirds and listed species. It is also consistent with the Crissy Field EA, the GGNRA General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA),

and the Final Recovery Plan for the Western Snowy Plover. Alternative C would allow on-leash dog walking on the promenade, which would provide visitor safety and resource protection. A ROLA would be established on the middle section of the airfield, a relatively underused section of the site. This ROLA would not be fenced, minimizing the impact to the cultural landscapes. A ROLA would also be established on Central Beach; no dogs would be allowed on East Beach. This would provide visitor safety and enjoyment by multiple user groups and would reduce conflict on the beach. East Beach is the most heavily used area by diverse interests due to the proximity to parking and facilities. Central Beach receives less use by other visitor groups other than dog walkers and it offers a great stretch of beach for dogs to exercise. The trails and grassy areas near East Beach and the multi-use trail along Mason Street would require dog walking on-leash. The on-leash regulation in this area would benefit the safety of both visitors and pets and reduce conflicts in the area. Overall, alternative C provides the best option for multiple user groups to experience the site; space is available for dog walking on-leash, dog walking under voice control, and a no-dog experience. It is anticipated that clear geographical boundaries would aid visitor understanding and compliance with the regulations. Since alternative C provides multiple options, it would be easy for park staff to direct park users to a site that meets their use needs.

Fort Point Promenade / Fort Point National Historic Site Trails

Alternative B was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Fort Point because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative B would allow for on-leash dog walking on the promenade, Bay Trail, Andrews Road, and Battery East Trail. The on-leash regulation would provide visitor safety in an area of high congestion and multiple uses. It would also provide safety to dogs and dog walkers due to the close proximity of the roadway and the edge of the seawall. Alternative B provides a balanced approach for the multiple user groups at the site and provides clear regulations that would be easily enforceable by park law enforcement staff.

Baker Beach and Bluffs to Golden Gate Bridge

Alternative D was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Baker Beach because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative D would allow on-leash dog walking on the beach south of the North Parking Lot. On-leash dog walking would also be allowed on the trails to the beach south of the north parking lot and on the multi-use Coastal Trail. Dog walking would not be allowed on the northern section of the beach. Alternative D provides areas for different user groups. It provides separate and direct visitor access to no dog areas. Alternative D provides the greatest protection for shorebirds on the beach. Overall, alternative D allows multiple visitor experiences while still protecting the resources at the site.

Fort Miley

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Fort Miley because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative C would allow on-leash dog walking in the east side trail corridor. The on-leash regulation would provide safety to visitors and staff due to the adjacent park maintenance operations area - concrete bunkers edged by the steep embankments, the, and the picnic area. Alternative C in East Fort Miley also provides both a dog and no-dog experience for visitors. No dogs would be allowed in West Fort Miley. This regulation would separate the dog walkers from special use groups such as school groups, Ropes Course participants, and other users such as picnickers. Alternative C would also provide additional safety to construction traffic and hospital workers and patients since West Fort Miley is located adjacent to the Veteran's Administration (VA) hospital, which has heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Overall, alternative C provides a variety of visitor uses. The dog walking regulation would be clear and easily enforceable by park law enforcement staff. Alternative C provides the best opportunity for multiple user groups.

Lands End

Alternative B was chosen as the Preferred Alternative because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative B would allow on-leash dog walking on the El Camino del Mar and Coastal Trails. This area is currently being developed for a visitor center, full access trails, and more parking; therefore, on-leash dog walking would increase safety as use will continue to increase in the future. On-leash dog walking would also increase visitor safety on the heavily used/ADA accessible restored Coastal Trail. The on-leash dog walking regulation would be clear and simple for visitors to understand and therefore would be easily enforced by park law enforcement staff. Alternative B would also provide the longest loop at the site for dog walking; therefore it is likely that the park would receive community support for this alternative.

Sutro Heights Park

Alternative E was chosen as the Preferred Alternative because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative E would allow on-leash dog walking on the paths, parapet, and lawns within Sutro Heights Park. This alternative allows the most dog walking access. Dog walking would not be allowed within the formal, landscaped gardens. Alternative E is dog friendly, but still with logical limits. This alternative would be easily enforceable since it is clear, straightforward, and easy to understand. The community is likely to support this alternative since it is similar to the current regulation with minor alterations.

Ocean Beach

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative C allows on-leash dog walking on the trail along the Great Highway adjacent to the SPPA. Alternative C would provide a ROLA on the beach north of Stairwell #21 and no dogs on the beach south of Sloat Boulevard. The no dog regulation in the SPPA and on the southern portion of the beach provides the maximum protection for shorebirds. There are fewer shorebirds located on the northern section of the beach where the ROLA is proposed. The no dog regulation is also continuous with dog walking use on the northern section of the Fort Funston beach. Alternative C provides balance for both dog walkers and those wanting a no-dog experience and also provides protection of natural resources. Monitoring would be simplified since there would be less areas providing dog walking.

Fort Funston

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative C would allow a ROLA on the beach south of the Beach Access Trail and a ROLA between the Chip Trail, Sunset Trail, and the main parking lot. On-leash dog walking would be allowed on the sand ladder and ADA Accessible Trail south of the main parking lot. No dogs would be allowed north of the Beach Access Trail. These areas would provide a loop from upper Fort Funston down to the beach for dog walkers. The on-leash requirement for most trails provides protection for the restored areas in Fort Funston and would minimize safety concerns related to cliff edges and use of south Funston area by school groups. Prohibiting dogs on the north end of the beach provides protection for nesting bank swallows and shorebirds. This also provides a no- dog beach experience.

Mori Point

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Mori Point. This alternative allows on-leash dog walking on the Coastal Trail, Old Mori Road, and the beach within the GGNRA boundary. Alternative C was selected because it provides protection to sensitive habitat, the California red-legged frog, and San

Francisco garter snake. Additionally, alternative C provides adequate space for multiple user groups and provides access to the site from the adjacent neighborhoods. The site would be clearly signed and would be easily enforceable by park rangers and law enforcement.

Milagra Ridge

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative for Milagra Ridge. Alternative C would allow on-leash dog walking on the Fire Road, the trail to the western-most overlook and WWII bunker, and on the Milagra Battery Trail (future connector to lower Milagra). Alternative C provides both a dog and no-dog experience at the site. This alternative provides protection for species and is consistent with the parkwide policy regarding Mission Blue butterfly habitat areas. Alternative C would reduce further fragmentation of the habitat at this site. There has been ongoing outreach to the community by park staff and much community involvement in restoration efforts at Milagra. It is anticipated that the community would be supportive of continued leash regulations at this site.

Sweeney Ridge / Cattle Hill

Alternative C was selected as the Preferred Alternative for Sweeney Ridge/ Cattle Hill. This alternative would not allow dog walking within the Sweeney ridge area. At Cattle Hill, alternative C would allow on-leash dog walking from the Baquiano Trail from Fassler Avenue to, and including, Farallons View Trail. Alternative C protects the Mission Blue butterfly habitat and large area of undisturbed contiguous habitat that is rare and contains wildlife that could be disturbed by the presence of dogs. This site is contiguous with the San Francisco watershed, which also does not allow dogs. Alternative C would be clear to the public and would be easily enforceable by park law enforcement staff. Alternative C would allow multiple user groups to experience the trail and provide balance.

Pedro Point Headlands

Alternative C was chosen as the Preferred Alternative because it would best meet the objectives of the plan. Alternative C would allow on-leash dog walking on the Coastal Trail. Alternative C is consistent with the adjoining land management regulations and maintains consistency as the trail crosses the park boundary. Alternative C protects the contiguous wildlife habitat and helps to limit the disturbance of wildlife, vegetation, and possible special status species habitat. It provides safety to both dogs and dog walkers by keeping dogs on-leash away from the cliff edges. Alternative C provides opportunity for many visitor uses and is well-balanced. The on-leash regulation on the Coastal Trail would be clear and readily enforceable by park law enforcement staff.

Cost of Implementation of the Preferred Alternative

The total costs of implementing the preferred alternative are estimated at \$1,511,270. The bulk of these costs are associated with the hiring of additional personnel for implementing the dog management plan. For a more detailed explanation of personnel costs under the preferred alternative, see the “Park Operations” section in chapter 4.