

	Preliminary Alternatives for San Mateo County	
	Current Conditions and Management	Connecting People with the Parks Alternative 1
<p><b>Overview</b> (see alternative maps on pages 44 - 46)</p>	<p>At the time the previous general management plan (GMP) was developed, the GGNRA did not manage any land in San Mateo County. Since that time, the park has grown to include almost 30,000 acres within its boundaries in San Mateo County.</p> <p>Stretching along the San Mateo coast to Corral de Tierra and inland to the Phleger Estate, the southern park lands feature a remarkable wealth of natural and historic resources. From rugged coastal bluffs and windswept ridgelines to a redwood forest, wetlands, and streams, these lands support an abundance of plants and wildlife and tell the story of the people who have shaped this peninsula over generations.</p> <p>GGNRA’s park lands in San Mateo County serve a large and diverse local population, offering unsurpassed opportunities for recreation and enjoyment. Whether enjoying the trails, strolling the beaches, or taking in panoramic views up and down the Pacific coast, there are unlimited ways to explore and appreciate these park lands.</p> <p>Currently the National Park Service’s presence in San Mateo is limited, sites are not well identified, and there are few basic facilities to support access. Management of park land in San Mateo County is guided by the park’s authorizing legislation (its purpose) and the management policies common to units of the national park system. Although a general management plan amendment was approved for Sweeney Ridge in 1985, this current general management plan will provide management guidance for the first time to the other GGNRA park sites in San Mateo County.</p> <p>Other small-scale site planning for places like Mori Point have also been completed. The park has consulted with other agencies to achieve fundamental park goals, as regarding the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) watershed, where the park holds scenic and recreational easements.</p>	<p>In all three alternatives, park lands and marine environments in San Mateo County would be managed as part of a vast network of protected lands and waters (some recognized as part of the UNESCO Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve); this network includes SFPUC watershed lands, state parks, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and other county and regional park lands.</p> <p>In the spirit of the “Parks to People” movement that created the Golden Gate National Recreation Area more than three decades ago, this alternative would focus on the importance of improving access and community engagement in GGNRA’s park lands. Given the significant addition of park land in this area in recent years, a series of actions would be needed to enhance visitor access, enjoyment, appreciation, and stewardship.</p> <p>Key efforts would include increasing the visibility of NPS sites and connecting park sites to nearby communities through various information, outreach, and volunteer programs. The addition of new signs, trailhead parking, and trails will help visitors find their way to various park sites and will help them gain an understanding of the park’s diverse natural and cultural resources.</p> <p>Equally important would be providing facilities to welcome visitors to the park. This alternative would promote development of a multi-agency visitor information and orientation facility. Located along Highway 1, the information facility could be shared by the National Park Service/GGNRA, San Mateo County, California State Parks, NOAA/Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and other organizations.</p>
<p><b>Thornton State Beach to South of Mussel Rock</b></p>	<p>GGNRA manages approximately 30 acres in 2 parcels in this geologically dynamic coastline: one parcel south of Thornton State beach and one parcel south of Mussel Rock. No improvements have been made by the park for public access and there is no active park presence in this area. In the absence of a general management plan, current management is guided by the park’s authorizing legislation (its purpose) and the management policies common to units of the national park system.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>In all alternatives park managers would preserve and enhance the natural and scenic values of the area; allow for natural coastal geologic processes to continue; and provide modest visitor access facilities (trails, trailheads) to beaches, scenic overlooks, and along the California Coastal Trail, where feasible.</p> <p>The beach, dunes, and cliffs extending from San Francisco’s Ocean Beach south to Mussel Rock (a stretch of almost 5 miles) would be managed to protect shorebird habitat, allow natural shoreline processes to continue unimpeded, and provide improved or new trails for visitors to enjoy and view nature.</p>
<p><b>Milagra Ridge</b></p>	<p>Added to the park in 1987, the area is managed to protect and restore natural habitat, (especially endangered species habitat), to protect historic coastal defense fortifications, and to provide public access through a system of trails so people can enjoy the site and its scenic views. Recent acquisition by the park of a conservation easement on the northeast slope allows potential development of a Bay Area Ridge Trail connection to the coast.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>The area would be managed to preserve its wild character and protect endangered species habitat. Heavily disturbed areas would be restored. Trail improvements would be limited, but would include the Bay Area Ridge Trail connection to Oceana Boulevard and a trail connection to Skyline Boulevard.</p> <p><b>Scenic Corridor Zone</b> (center of ridge)</p> <p>Additional visitor amenities to improve accessibility, including trailhead parking, restrooms, and picnic facilities would support visitors and local stewardship volunteers.</p>
<p><b>Shelldance Nursery Area</b></p>	<p>Added to the park in 1988 and 1993, the small area is managed for multiple uses: a commercial orchid nursery, a trailhead to Sweeney Ridge, and storage of park maintenance equipment.</p>	<p><b>Diverse Opportunities Zone and Park Operations Zone</b></p> <p>In all alternatives, the site would transition over time from a commercial nursery to an area that provides a variety of visitor services (enhanced trailhead parking serving both Sweeney Ridge and Mori Point, restrooms, park orientation and information, a community stewardship center). Access from Highway 1 would be improved.</p> <p>In all alternatives, a portion of this park site would be dedicated to park operational needs possibly including a satellite facility for maintenance and public safety, native plant nursery, and ranger, workforce or volunteer housing.</p>

Preliminary Alternatives for San Mateo County		
Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems Alternative 2	Focusing on National Treasures Alternative 3	
<p>As in the other alternatives, park lands and marine environments in San Mateo County would be managed as part of a vast network of protected lands and waters. In this alternative, however, park managers would place greater emphasis on preservation and restoration of these dynamic, interconnected coastal ecosystems through collaborative partnerships with other land management agencies in the region. Together these groups would work to sustain the area’s native biodiversity, re-connect fragmented habitats and migration corridors, minimize the impact of invasive species, manage for changing fire regimes, and restore naturally functioning ecosystems. Pro-active management would build into the environment greater resiliency to climate change.</p> <p>The GGNRA’s park lands in San Mateo County provide an extensive wildlife corridor that includes habitat for threatened and endangered species. Under this alternative, these lands would serve as living laboratories, engaging visitors in participatory science, education, and stewardship—activities that nurture personal connections with nature and inspire advocacy.</p> <p>Exploration along the vast network of trails would further highlight the park’s diverse ecosystems and rich cultural resources. Cultural resource sites and stories—archeological sites, European exploration, agricultural land uses, coastal defense sites, and the lighthouse—would emphasize human occupation of the coastal environment. Most cultural resources would be stabilized as discovery sites if not in conflict with natural resource restoration.</p> <p>Land protection strategies would seek to reconnect fragmented endangered species habitat and strive to remove features that impede movement or migration of species, or disrupt ecological function.</p>	<p>As in the other alternatives, park lands and marine environments in San Mateo County would be managed as part of a vast network of protected lands and waters. This alternative, however, would highlight how this “quilt” of undeveloped land has been protected by numerous organizations. Over the past 20 years, the National Park Service, local governments, private land trusts, and dedicated individuals have worked hand in hand to acquire and preserve this “Wilderness Next Door.”</p> <p>Today, these lands are a national treasure of recreational, natural, and cultural resources. Several nationally significant historic sites are in San Mateo County, along with habitat for numerous endangered species. Many of these important resources are managed by other agencies on nearby sites. This alternative would focus on protecting resources in the park while developing recreational and thematic connections between sites managed by other land managers.</p> <p>This alternative also looks beyond the immediate park lands to explore the potential to stimulate regional landscape management and enhance heritage tourism. To do so, park managers would work with communities between Pacifica and Santa Cruz to support the National Scenic Byway designation of the Pacific Coast Highway (Hwy 1). The highway is one of the unifying features of the rural coast, and is characterized by forested hills, small-scale agriculture, and seaside communities.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b> (see alternative maps on pages 44 - 46)</p>
<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Thornton State Beach to South of Mussel Rock</b></p>
<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>The land would be managed to preserve the wild character of the area and protect endangered species habitat. Heavily disturbed areas would be restored. Trail improvements would be limited, but would include the Bay Area Ridge Trail connection to Oceana Boulevard.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 2.</p>	<p><b>Milagra Ridge</b></p>
<p><b>Diverse Opportunities Zone and Park Operations Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Diverse Opportunities Zone and Park Operations Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Shelldance Nursery Area</b></p>

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Sweeney Ridge including Cattle Hill and Picardo Ranch	Added to the park in 1984, Sweeney Ridge is managed for natural values (especially endangered species habitat), and to protect significant historical resources that include the Portola Expedition San Francisco Bay Discovery site and 20th century Nike facilities. Cattle Hill is expected to be transferred to the National Park Service by the City of Pacifica in the near term and recent collaboration has provided trail and habitat improvements on this site. Picardo Ranch and the western extension of Cattle Hill are both private land not managed by the GGNRA at this time. Picardo Ranch includes the lower slopes of Cattle Hill and its trails connect to Sweeney Ridge. Currently, an equestrian facility provides horse boarding. Park acquisition of these lands or a conservation easement is possible within the planning horizon of the general management plan.	<p><b>Natural Zone</b> (Majority of the area)</p> <p>The area would be managed to protect the large contiguous natural landscape extending into the SFPUC watershed. Visitors would experience the area through stewardship activities, trail use, and primitive camping.</p> <p><b>Scenic Corridor Zone</b> (Sneath Lane and part of Sweeney Ridge)</p> <p>Trail amenities would be developed, and connections would be enhanced to the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the Sawyer Camp Trail in the SFPUC watershed.</p> <p><b>Diverse Opportunities Zone</b> (Developed portion of Picardo Ranch)</p> <p>If acquired, the existing facilities could be adapted or replaced with new facilities to support visitor activities, including continued equestrian use, and park operations. Management would include strong protection for natural and cultural resources.</p>
Mori Point	Added to the park in 2002, this park site is managed to preserve and enhance habitat for threatened and endangered species (San Francisco garter snake, red legged frog) and to restore natural functions to a highly degraded site. A network of hiking trails, including the California Coastal Trail, is under development to provide visitors access to the area’s scenic views.	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>The land would be managed for ongoing preservation and enhancement of natural habitats and for public enjoyment of the site and its exceptional views and landscapes. Trailheads and trails would be enhanced to improve accessibility and connections to local communities and the California Coastal Trail.</p>
Pedro Point, Devil’s Slide, and San Pedro Mountain	These rugged coastal areas are not managed by the GGNRA. However, they will be greatly affected by the opening of the Highway 1 tunnel under construction, and are likely to be added to the park within the planning horizon of the general management plan. The City of Pacifica manages Pedro Point to preserve its natural features and open space. The Devil’s Slide segment is managed by Caltrans to support Highway 1; several agencies have been involved in planning trailheads for the future conversion of the road to a multi-use trail when the Devils Slide tunnel opens in 2011. Lands adjacent to Highway 1 in this area and on San Pedro Mountain are in public and private ownership.	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>These lands, if acquired, would be managed to maintain natural features and scenic views and to continue with the habitat restoration and access improvements initiated by the community. Trailheads and trails would be developed and enhanced to improve accessibility and connections to the California Coastal Trail and adjacent public lands. Collaboration with adjacent land managers would be essential.</p>
Rancho Corral de Tierra	<p>One of the largest areas of open space near San Francisco, the 4,200 acre site is managed by the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and encompasses the majority of an 1839 Mexican Land Grant. The isolated and undisturbed condition of the land provides unique and productive habitat for a diverse array of plant and animal species, including several threatened and endangered species. The headwaters of four major coastal watersheds are contained within this property, providing important riparian habitat and a scenic backdrop that visually distinguished the San Mateo mid-coast region.</p> <p>Limited public access is provided for recreation such as hiking and horseback riding. Four equestrian facilities are operated under leases, supporting a popular way of accessing the large, steep, and rugged site.</p> <p>The acquisition process is underway to transfer this land to the National Park Service. Approximately 300 acres of the Rancho are not included in the park boundary and will remain in agricultural use.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b> (Majority of the area)</p> <p>In all alternatives, the majority of the area would be managed to preserve the wild, open character of the land and offer trail-based recreation that is light on the land, including hiking, biking, and equestrian use. Natural habitat and processes would be restored, and the ecosystems of the four coastal watersheds would be restored to the greatest extent possible.</p> <p>In this alternative, visitors would enjoy the area through an enhanced and sustainable system of trails, stewardship activities, and primitive camping. Destinations for discovery in the park, such as overlooks, picnic areas, and sites for primitive camping, would be created along trails in more remote settings. An improved trail network would connect the local communities to the park, and link the ridges of Montara Mountain to the Pacific Ocean. Opportunities for a trail connection to Sweeney Ridge through the SFPUC watershed’s northwest corner would be explored with other land managers.</p> <p><b>Diverse Opportunities Zone</b> (Existing developed areas)</p> <p>In this alternative, “portals” would be established in the areas of existing development: these would include facilities to support visitor enjoyment and exploration of this large, diverse park area and the extensive adjacent public lands.</p> <p>In addition to equestrian facilities with strong public programs, facilities could include a visitor center, stewardship/educational center, warming hut, group picnic areas, developed campsites, and rustic overnight accommodations. Detailed planning following the GMP would determine the mix of uses that would share this zone. New or retained facilities would be restricted to appropriate sites and would include environmental protection for natural and cultural resources.</p> <p>Habitat restoration and community stewardship activities would have a strong presence in this zone. The adjacent working agricultural landscapes and Fitzgerald Marine Reserve could be incorporated into the visitor experience through programs and interpretation.</p>



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<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>This area would be managed to protect and restore the large contiguous natural landscape extending into the SFPUC watershed. Visitors would experience the wild character of these lands through stewardship activities, trail use, and primitive camping. Sneath Lane could be downgraded to a trail and connect to the Bay Area Ridge Trail in the SFPUC watershed. Unnecessary fire roads could be downgraded to trails, or removed if not historic, and natural resources restored. If acquired, a trailhead would be located at Picardo Ranch with modest visitor support facilities (restroom, picnic tables, parking).</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b> (Majority of the area)</p> <p>The area would be managed to protect the large contiguous natural landscape extending into the SFPUC watershed. Visitors would experience the area through stewardship activities, trail use, and primitive camping. The area would connect visitors to the Bay Area Ridge Trail.</p> <p><b>Diverse Opportunities Zone</b> (Developed portion of Picardo Ranch)</p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Sweeney Ridge including Cattle Hill and Picardo Ranch</b></p>
<p><b>Sensitive Resources Zone</b></p> <p>Visitor use would be highly controlled to protect threatened and endangered species that inhabit the site. The public would continue to engage in community stewardship to preserve and restore the native coastal ecosystem.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Mori Point</b></p>
<p><b>Sensitive Resources Zone</b> (Devil’s Slide area)</p> <p>If acquired, the rugged coastal areas west of existing Highway 1 would be managed to protect nesting sea birds. Visitor access would be highly managed or closed during breeding seasons.</p> <p><b>Natural Zones</b> (Other areas)</p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Pedro Point, Devil’s Slide, and San Pedro Mountain</b></p>
<p><b>Natural Zone</b> (Majority of the area)</p> <p>Same as Alternative 1, but with fewer and more primitive visitor amenities. Unnecessary fire roads could be downgraded to trails or removed if not historic, and natural processes restored.</p> <p><b>Sensitive Resources Zone</b> (Creek corridors)</p> <p>In this alternative, the four equestrian facilities, all located along coastal streams, would be removed or relocated away from creek corridors over time. The park would partner with surrounding land managers to restore the creek corridors, reconnect them to the ocean, and restore anadramous fish passage.</p> <p><b>Scenic Corridor Zone</b> (Existing equestrian lease area)</p> <p>This area would accommodate an equestrian facility, in a sustainable location and configuration, compatible with natural resource management goals for the surrounding area.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b> (Majority of the area)</p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p> <p><b>Diverse Opportunities Zone</b> (Existing developed areas)</p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Rancho Corral de Tierra</b></p>

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Montara Lighthouse	The site is presently managed by the US Coast Guard. Under an agreement with California State Parks, a hostel is operated in several structures related to the lighthouse. Day use of the site is focused on scenic views and lighthouse history. Transfer of this site to the park is anticipated within the planning horizon of the general management plan.	<b><i>Evolved Cultural Landscape Zone</i></b>  In all alternatives, the historic lighthouse structures would be preserved, and access from Highway 1 would be improved.  Management would enhance the current hostel and day use programming and would consider additional visitor information and orientation services/facilities. Improved north and south trail connections would better integrate this site as part of the GGNRA. The historic resources would be preserved and adaptively used to tell the stories of this historic site.
Phleger Estate	Added to the park in 1994, the area is managed to preserve the cultural and natural resources of this 1,000-acre second growth redwood forest and to provide access to the regional trail system.	<b>Natural Zone</b>  In all alternatives, the area would be managed to provide recreation in a natural and contemplative setting that complements the more developed recreational experiences at adjacent Huddart County Park. The redwood forest ecosystem would be restored and managed for trail-based recreation. Trail connections to adjacent lands would be pursued in collaboration with San Mateo County and SFPUC. These connections would include the Bay Area Ridge Trail and potential access from trailheads on Cañada Road and Skyline Boulevard. Community stewardship of the site could contribute to trail and habitat improvements.
SFPUC Watershed Easements	These 23,000 acres are managed by SFPUC to protect the City’s water supply and the ecological and cultural resources of the watershed. Compatible recreational, educational, and scientific uses are highly controlled; primary public access is on trails along the eastern edge of the watershed where the trails are easily accessible from adjacent communities. Access on the 10-mile Cahill Ridge alignment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail is provided by guided tours. The GGNRA manages two easements over the watershed: a Scenic Easement and a Scenic and Recreation Easement that provide for preservation of natural values and limited recreational use. The SFPUC and GGNRA cooperate to assure that ongoing water operations and other allowable uses are compatible with the preservation and access components of the easements. The SFPUC watershed forms the core of the UNESCO Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve, a rich reservoir of plant and animal life.	<b>Natural Zone</b> (Majority of the area, corresponding with the Scenic Easement)  Park managers would continue to cooperate with the SFPUC for the preservation of the natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational features of the watershed. Within this zone, the park would promote a new trail connection between the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the California Coastal Trail on the existing alignment over Whiting Ridge: this would connect Sweeney Ridge with McNee Ranch State Park and Rancho Corral de Tierra.  <b>Scenic Corridor Zone</b> (Eastern area closest to Highway 280, corresponding with the Scenic and Recreation Easement)  Park managers would promote connecting the existing San Andreas multi-use trail to Sweeney Ridge via Sneath Lane, thus improving trail access to the Phleger Estate from Cañada Road. Park managers also would promote the implementation of other trail improvements proposed in the San Francisco Watershed Management Plan (2002), including completion of the north-south corridor through the watershed in areas of low sensitivity.  Preservation of scenic views along the trails, Cañada Road, Skyline Boulevard, Interstate 280, and its vista points would also be promoted in cooperation with SFPUC and Caltrans.
Offshore Marine Environment	The GGNRA has jurisdiction through a management lease over a 1,000-foot-wide fringe of coastal waters immediately off shore. Park management of these areas accommodates public uses that include water recreation (swimming, surfing, and boating) and noncommercial fishing. The area supports research, inventory, monitoring, and consultation and cooperation with other resource managing agencies.	<b>Natural Zone</b>  In all alternatives, the offshore marine environment would be managed for natural and cultural resource protection, while allowing swimming, surfing, non motorized boating, and fishing where appropriate.





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Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems Alternative 2	Focusing on National Treasures Alternative 3	
<p><b>Evolved Cultural Landscape Zone</b></p> <p>Similar to Alternative 1, the historic resources would be preserved and adaptively used, but the site would be dedicated to stewardship and environmental education. The site would become a campus focused on enhancing understanding and stewardship of coastal resources, with hostel and overnight accommodations for program participants and staff.</p>	<p><b>Historic Immersion Zone</b></p> <p>As the most intact lighthouse complex in the park, the site offers an opportunity for immersion in the life of lighthouse keepers. This alternative would restore historic structures and landscape features, remove contemporary structures, and develop new visitor programs. Overnight stays would be part of the immersion experience.</p>	<p><b>Montara Lighthouse</b></p>
<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternatives 1. Interpretation would explore the estate’s similarities with and differences from Muir Woods National Monument.</p>	
<p><b>Sensitive Resources Zone</b> (Majority of the area)</p> <p>In this alternative, the park managers would continue to cooperate with the SFPUC for the preservation of the natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational features of the watershed. Park managers would promote natural resource preservation and highly managed public access in most of the watershed to support the values that resulted in designatin this area as the core of the UNESCO Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve.</p> <p><b>Scenic Corridor Zone</b> (Sawyer Camp/San Andreas Trail corridor)</p> <p>Park managers would promote access and visitor services along the existing multi-use trail and the implementation of trail improvements proposed in the San Francisco Watershed Management Plan (2002), including completion of the north-south corridor through the watershed in areas of low sensitivity.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b> (Majority of the area, corresponding with the Scenic Easement)</p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p> <p><b>Scenic Corridor Zone</b> (Eastern edge, adjacent to I-280)</p> <p>Same as Alternative 1, but with an emphasis on promoting enhanced interpretation to highlight the scope of the water system with its origins in Yosemite National Park.</p>	<p><b>SFPUC Watershed Easements</b></p>
<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Natural Zone</b></p> <p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	<p><b>Offshore Marine Environment</b></p>













