

National Park Service
General Management Planning Team-GGNRA
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda parkway
Denver, Co. 80225-0287

ALCATRAZ ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

A non profit charitable corporation dedicated to preservation and restoration of
Alcatraz Island

In regard to the three proposed plans for the future of Alcatraz Island. The Alcatraz Alumni Association, Inc., comprised of former officers and residents, offer the following comments:

We strongly support removing the rubble from the parade ground and opening this area to more foot traffic.

We strongly support concentrating the bird nesting on the western side of the Island.

We strongly support rebuilding the Social Hall for use as the Alcatraz Alumni Museum, and include the two lane bowling alley and snack bar on the lower floor with full auditorium and commercial kitchen on the main floor to provide services to the public.

We support refurbishing Industries buildings for gatherings, meetings, class rooms, museum and displays, including an operating kitchen.

We support refurbishing apartments in 64 building, for use as a centerpiece, multipurpose facility to include overnight Hostel lodging, Post Office, canteen, class rooms, administrative offices.

We support using the kitchen of the Cell House for use of overnight lodging.

If there is to be a hotel on Alcatraz, we would support the rebuilding of A, B, & C buildings for use as a hotel. The outer façade and interior common areas should be to historic dimensions and finishes.

We support green technology for sewer, heat, water, power, etc. with necessary equipment housed in existing shop buildings or concealed from the public view and access.

Additions not in the plans we would like to support

We support rebuilding the two apartments of the Light House.

We support rebuilding the Wardens house.

We support rebuilding the Duplex, housing for the Captain and Associate Warden.

We support rebuilding the four Lieutenants cottages.

We support rebuilding the Medical Technicians house, behind the Wardens House.

We support rebuilding the No. 2 Road Tower. (We were able to salvage the spot light)

We support purchase and restoration of the Warden Johnston to be maintained at its historic pier.

Any of these structures could be used by GGNRA staff, and for overnight lodging, class rooms, artifact sales, museums, and food service.

Additions or changes we would not support

We do not support the addition of any new, non historic structures at Alcatraz, on the parade ground or elsewhere on the Island for a hotel or any other purpose.

We do not support turning 64 building into a hotel.

We feel strongly the Island should be rebuilt under the banner theme, **RESTORE ALCATRAZ**, to its latest working model, circa 1963. At this historic period, the Island was a well known and well placed small town community encompassing several historic periods, nicely blended, with its San Francisco location, and uncluttered.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the former officers and residents.

Phil Dollison,



President,
Alcatraz Alumni Association Inc.

June 27, 2008

Dear National Park Service, July 6, 2008

COASTSIDE HORSE COUNCIL

The Coastside Horse Council is a coalition of horse owners and riders who wish to keep horses as a part of our lives and community. The history of Half Moon Bay Coastside is rich in agricultural heritage. The agriculture in the area is a vital part of the community and a part that should not be lost as the San Francisco Bay Area grows and development begins to spread into the Coastside.

As part of keeping the area rural and as untouched as we can, we strive to keep our horses in a manner that does not have a negative impact on the environment. We comply with strict guidelines, keep the horses in areas that are not sensitive, and follow a strict and successful manure management program.

We work with the land managers of the regional Open Space areas to preserve existing trails and develop new trails. Equestrians volunteer in the Open Space and County Parks to help the land managers maintain safe and user friendly trails.

New areas coming up for review include Rancho Corral de Tierra, this 4000 + acreage is one of the biggest land acquisition in the Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA) since its inception in the 1970's. It is the first large extension of GGNRA south of San Francisco. This expansion will affect all of us who live here or use the open space. It will bring in more visitors to hike, bike and ride the trails, to enjoy the area and wildflowers.

As horse(women) we understand the importance of the open space and the trails. We want to insure that these trails continue to exist and the area remains open for all to enjoy. It is something that all of us on the Coastside should help to preserve. We all need to let GGNRA know that we care about this land and we want to preserve it "as is", while allowing open use of the land.

WE WANT GGNRA TO ALLOW FREE ACCESS TO THE AREA, CONTINUE TO LET ALL OF US WALK THE TRAILS, WALK OUR DOGS, RIDE OUR BIKES AND RIDE OUR HORSES.

The historical significance of the long standing barns and stables that have been part of this land for the past 150 years can not be allowed to be diminish or in any way destroyed: Cultural heritage can not be forgotten. Much of this area is too steep for farming or agricultural use, but can be used for trails and other visitor use. We need to preserve the area and we are working to do just that. Please help the Coastside Horse Council in our efforts to retain the rural aspects of this special and unique community. Let GGNRA know before July 31, that you want to preserve the barns and stables that exist in the area

e-mail ...goga_gmp@nps.gov...

Or write....

Sincerely,
Beverly Garrity
BEVERLY R GARRITY

National Park Service
General Management Planning Team - GGNRA
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80225-0287



Beverly Garrity
PO Box 370527
Montara, CA 94037

Equine Planning Recommendations and Considerations for Rancho Corral de Tierra

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

General Management Plan



Prepared by

Coastside Horse Council (CHC)

July 28, 2008



331 Main Street,
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

July 28, 2008

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Attention: Mr. Stephan Nofield

Dear Sir:

Subject: GGNRA Management Plan for Rancho Corral de Tierra

This document is presented by the Coastside Horse Council in response to your request for community feedback with regard to the GGNRA Management Plan alternatives. Our response centers on the Rancho Corral de Tierra region of the park. This is the area of the park with which we are most concerned and also the area for which we can make the greatest contribution to the planning effort.

The content of this document serves two distinct purposes. The first is to provide a general response from a major segment of the horse community to the plan alternatives. This response is limited to the Management Plan as it impacts the horse community. The second purpose is to provide visibility into the role, contribution and impact of the horse community, past and present, on the Rancho and the surrounding communities. As responsible horse owners and residents, we are uniquely qualified to provide critical background information to decision makers who may have not experienced the San Mateo Coastside environment, nor had the opportunity to view first hand the significant part horses play in the local environment.

Our goal is to achieve a management plan that serves the public without disrupting the character of the Coastside and the local communities. We are committed to working with your organization in any capacity that would allow us to make a positive contribution. As planning moves forward, we are hopeful that your organization will create advisory programs or forums in order to pro-actively involve the local community, including the CHC, in the process.

If, after you read this document, you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Larry DeYoung at 650-728-5346 (email larrydeyo@aol.com).

Sincerely,

Larry DeYoung, President
Coastside Horse Council

Cc: Brian O'Neill, General Superintendent, GGNRA
Nancy Horner, Chief of Planning and Compliance, GGNRA
Christine Powell, Public Affairs and Congressional Affairs Specialist, GGNRA
Andrea Lucas, Landscape Architect, GGNRA

Table of Contents

ABOUT THE COASTSIDE HORSE COUNCIL	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
MANAGEMENT PLAN RESPONSE	6
CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE PARK	8
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	9
Terrain.....	9
Watersheds	9
Flora	9
Fauna.....	10
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	11
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT	12
Economic Impact.....	12
Social Impact.....	13
EDUCATION.....	14
Equine Skills.....	14
Community Outreach	14
PARK STEWARDSHIP	16
Watershed Management	16
<i>San Mateo County Confined Animal Ordinance.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Manure Management</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Water Quality Monitoring</i>	<i>16</i>
Trail Monitoring.....	17
Volunteer Trail Maintenance.....	17
APPENDIX A. ENVIRONMENTAL EXCERPTS FROM THE SAN MATEO COUNTY CONFINED ANIMAL ORDINANCE.....	18

ABOUT THE COASTSIDE HORSE COUNCIL

Founded in 1999, the Coastside Horse Council (CHC) is an advocacy group dedicated to protecting the equestrian lifestyle for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public and to preserving, enhancing and creating equestrian trails, facilities, staging areas and related open space areas. The CHC was originally formed to work with San Mateo County to develop a Confined Animal Ordinance. In partnership with the County and local environmentalists, we were able to create an ordinance that is fair and equitable to commercial stables and private horse owners, while protecting the sensitive watersheds.

Currently, CHC consists of 50 active members and numerous local horse owners who rely on the CHC as a conduit for information and an advocate for the greater horse community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following summarizes the key points presented in this document. The reader is strongly encouraged to read the complete document for a more comprehensive understanding of these points.

- The CHC supports Alternative 1: Connecting People with the Parks with the recommendations and caveats described in the Management Plan Response section.
- As Rancho Corral de Tierra becomes part of the GGNRA, horseback riding should continue to connect people with the park. This means continuing and enhancing the multi-use trail system and retaining the boarding facilities that currently house the majority of our horses.
- The Rancho is a diverse ecosystem comprised of chaparral covered hillsides and several creek valleys that has coexisted with horses for 300 years.
- The existing boarding facilities, some of which have existed since the 1940's, serve as social centers for the horse community providing unique social, economic and recreational opportunities.
- 300 horses reside in the boarding facilities located on the Rancho, contributing \$2 million annually into the local economy. Removal or significantly downsizing these facilities will:
 - Have an untoward impact on the local economy.
 - Result in insurmountable relocation problems for owners.
- The boarding facilities operating within the Rancho provide programs and classes that benefit people of all ages and abilities, including:
 - Equine clinics, shows and Pony Club
 - 4H and Future Farmers of America
 - High-risk inner city programs
 - Therapeutic riding programs
- The boarding facilities actively protect the watersheds by aggressively applying best practices in manure management and run-off control, and by preserving the riparian corridor.
- The boarding facilities have an active water quality monitoring program in place along San Vicente and Martini creeks.
- The horse community informally monitors the trails, assisting other users and reporting suspicious activities.
- The horse community donates their time on a regular basis to maintain the trail system.

MANAGEMENT PLAN RESPONSE

The CHC supports Alternative 1: Connecting People with the Parks with the recommendations and caveats described in the table below. In keeping with the theme of this document the recommendations focus on the needs of the horse and the horse community. We have encouraged our membership to submit their overall feedback to the GMP alternatives on an individual basis.

The table below contains excerpts from the Alternative 1 description on the left and the corresponding CHC recommendation on the right. The table entries are ordered starting with the highest priority elements of the plan.

ALTERNATIVE 1: CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE PARKS	CHC RECOMMENDATION
...(include) equestrian facilities with strong public programs	<p>CHC recommends retaining the existing boarding facilities under a long term lease.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In their current locations ▪ Without reduction (dramatic or phased) in permitted boarding levels <p>Note: The income generated will far exceed \$1,000,000 during a 10 year lease period. During the same period, the park service could save an additional \$2,000,000 savings using the horse community in the role of volunteer park stewards.</p>
New or retained facilities would be restricted to appropriate sites and would include environmental protection for natural and cultural resources	<p>The CHC agrees with this statement with the caveat that the existing boarding facilities are retained as described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boarding facilities would continue to be subject to the environmental provisions of the San Mateo County Confined Animal Ordinance. (See Appendix A)
... enhanced and sustainable system of trails ...	<p>The CHC recommends that all trails be designated “multi-use” trails, open to equestrians, hikers, cyclists and dog walkers.</p> <p>The CHC recommends a trail system based on existing trails with improvements as required to counter environmental impact and ensure safety.</p>
“portals” would be established in the areas of existing development: these would include facilities to support visitor enjoyment and exploration ...	<p>The CHC recommends that portals be established subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portals will provide safe and easy access from Hwy 1, this includes horse trailers. ▪ Separate areas will be provided for off-loading, and parking horse trailers. ▪ Portals will not encroach on, or interfere with the operation of the boarding facilities. ▪ Portals will not disrupt or otherwise burden

Equine Planning Recommendations and Considerations

ALTERNATIVE 1: CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE PARKS	CHC RECOMMENDATION
	residential areas.
... (include) visitor center, stewardship/ educational center, warming hut, group picnic areas, developed campsites, and rustic overnight accommodations.	<p>CHC recommends limited infrastructure development in accessible locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not over-develop the park with new facilities. Basic comfort facilities, small and strategic parking areas, basic signage, basic visitor information stations/kiosks will suffice. ▪ Locate campsites near portals in serviceable locations. ▪ Provide separate areas for horse camping and trailer parking.
Habitat restoration and community stewardship activities would have a strong presence.	<p>The CHC recommends that GGNRA supports the existing community stewardship and enables an expanded role for the horse community.</p> <p>The CHC supports continuing the educational and outreach programs sponsored by the boarding facilities.</p>
An improved trail network would connect the local communities to the park and link the ridges of Montara Mountain to the Pacific Ocean.	The CHC supports a network of multi-use trails, which link the Rancho with other trail systems and parks.
... trail connection to Sweeney Ridge through the SFPUC watershed's northwest corner would be explored with other land managers.	The CHC supports a network of multi-use trails, which link to Sweeney Ridge through the SFPUC watershed.
... (create) overlooks, picnic areas, and sites for primitive camping along trails in more remote settings.	CHC recommends that remote locations be restricted to trails and not include facilities that will need servicing by the park.

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE PARK

Throughout the history of Rancho Corral de Tierra, horses have played a key role in 'connecting people with the land'. During the era of the Spanish land grants, and later when individual ranches dotted the landscape, horses were essential to ranching and farming, as well as basic transportation. As our economy has moved away from ranching and the population has grown, the Rancho has remained. In these changing times, horses and the Rancho continue to be closely linked. The large horse community, boarding facilities and private barns are here because the Rancho is here, and provides an unparalleled riding experience. Today as in the past, horseback riding is still the most popular means to explore the area.

Over the preceding decades, the Rancho has become a *de facto* open space area. During this time, the land has been treated with respect. The local community has kept its impact on the land to a minimum. The trails that have been maintained are the old roads used as either fire breaks or access to power poles or other utilities. Equestrians, cyclists, hikers and dog walkers have shared the trails without incident.

As Rancho Corral de Tierra becomes part of the GGNRA, horseback riding should continue to connect people with the park. A large portion of the Rancho Corral de Tierra is comprised of remote rugged back country with steep vertical ascents of 1000 – 1500 feet. The steep terrain is not friendly to the casual user. Consequently, equestrians will likely remain the majority users of the back country areas. 'Connecting people with the park' means a lot of things to a lot of people. To the local horse community, it means continuing and enhancing the multi-use trail system and continuing the boarding facilities that currently house the majority of our horses and serve as the social and cultural center of the Coastside's horse community.

The remainder of this document takes a closer look at Rancho and its connection with the horse community. The Natural Environment, Historical Background, and Social and Economic Impact sections provide context that will help planning decision makers make more informed decisions. The Education and Park Stewardship sections focus on the contributions that the horse community, particularly the boarding facilities, already makes to the health of the Rancho and the well being the surrounding communities.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

TERRAIN

Rancho Corral de Tierra area is comprised of chaparral covered hillsides and several creek valleys. The steepness of the hillsides and the diverse character of the area make it challenging to traverse and trails are difficult to develop. Geologically, much of the area is decomposing granite and the hillsides are prone to landslides. The hills are wave cut terraces. The soil in the valleys is rich in nutrients and has been farmed for over 200 years. The entire area is an active tectonic area and is prone to catastrophic changes in erosion patterns. According to the Stanford University Geology Department, erosion caused by bikes and horses is a minor component in this type of landscape.

WATERSHEDS

The stables, which have been in the area for at least 140 years, are located in natural valleys. These valleys are the result of creek activity and water still flows through this area. The creeks may run all year, but in dry seasons they can be ephemeral, and San Vicente creek often dries up. Development in the area has had a major impact on the streams during the last century; they all have to run under the highway, through storm drains and over sewage pipes before reaching the ocean. Moreover, on the West side of the highway there are houses that border the creeks.

FLORA

It seems unreasonable to try to return this area to pre-1800 condition. The number of plants (grasses, thistles, clovers, Scotch Broom, and others) that have been introduced to the area would make it difficult to reinstate the endemic plants, other than some of the native bunch grasses and the flowers, such as the California poppy. We have the opportunity at this time to restore some of the land to a more "natural" state, but we will have to decide what natural state we are choosing. The Ohlone, who lived in the area prior to the Spanish, burned the hills regularly and kept the brush to a minimum. At this time, the amount of senescent brush is a major fire hazard, which should be addressed. Grazing programs in other open space areas have aided in reducing fire hazardous undergrowth. The Eucalyptus trees that were brought into to the region have extended far beyond the areas where they were first introduced. These trees have a major impact since the oils they produce are toxic to many of the native plants, especially in the riparian corridor. Many invasive plants such as Cape ivy, Scotch Broom, and Pampas grass are common in this area. The wildflowers, which bloom in the spring, include Lupine, Penstomen, Monkey Flower, roses and mustards. The native grasses have been far-outpaced by the non-native *Avena Fatua* and others. The native chaparral is still the biggest percentage of the flora in this area and probably dominates at least 75% of the hillsides.

FAUNA

The fauna of the area is unaffected by the presence of the horses. Horses are not seen as a threat by deer and other animals which don't seem to recognize a human on horseback. Indeed, many riders have reported passing only a few feet from bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, opossums, deer, fox, and the occasional mountain lion without disturbing these wild animals. The Rancho is well known to birders as an exceptional area for raptors during the spring and fall migrations. The area is part of the Audubon yearly bird count. California towhees, California quail, flickers, tanagers, a variety of wrens and warblers are also present in this area. There are thriving populations of pack rats, voles, ground squirrels, gophers, moles, etc. to support the larger mammals and bird populations. The flowers and other native and non-native plants provide ample food and shelter for the birds.

This biological diversity has peacefully coexisted with horses for over 200 years. Every effort should be taken to preserve the fauna of the area. Working with park specialists, horse patrols could be organized to help monitor the biological health of the Rancho.

The streams in this area are often seasonal and flow in the summer can be very low or non-existent. While no census has been conducted, stickleback and other species of small fish have been observed. There is a significant population of frogs and other amphibians, such as newt and salamanders. The most commonly seen snakes in the area include gopher and garter snakes.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For over 200 years, Rancho Corral de Tierra and the surrounding region have had a strong, continuous connection to horses and ranching. To this day the connection helps shape the unique character and lifestyle of the San Mateo County coast

Rancho Corral de Tierra was originally known as “El Pilar” or “Los Pilares” (from the rocks at Pillar Point). During the 1700’s the lands became part of the Mission San Francisco and were used for grazing of the Mission’s horses, cattle and oxen. In October of 1839, 7766 acres of the Rancho Corral de Tierra were granted to Tiburcio Vasque. This portion of Rancho included the land along the ocean and what is now known as Montara, Moss Beach, Princeton and El Granada. The grant was used primarily for cattle ranching. One account of the Rancho shows the assets at the time to be “1 league of land, 2100 cattle, 200 horses and mares owned by Tiburcio Vasquez on Rancho Corral de Tierra”¹.

As crops replaced range lands in the late 1800’s to the early 1900’s, horses were the backbone of the workforce. The historic barn in what is now “Ember Ridge Equestrian Center” was constructed during that period to house stock. It had stalls for horses on the outer edge while the main open expanse of the barn was used for storing hay and other crops. The social life of the community centered on the culmination of the harvests and branding. These gatherings provided much needed social contact, an opportunity to further commerce and to exhibit expertise in ranch riding skills and competitions such as roping and sorting cattle.

The current horse ranches and boarding facilities, some of which have existed since the 1940’s, are the legacy and connection to the Rancho Corral de Tierra. They serve as social centers for the horse community. Boarding facilities provide unique social, economic and recreational opportunities that are increasingly difficult to find.

The GGNRA has an obligation to preserve the history of the Rancho Corral de Tierra; an obligation that cannot be fulfilled without recognition of the role horses have played both in its history and today. One way to accomplish this might be an interpretative display of a few dusty saddles at a visitor center. A far better option is to preserve the horses’ connection to this land and to this community, and enable visitors to observe the ranching and riding culture firsthand. Reading and hearing about ranching and being immersed in it are two very different experiences. The latter having a more profound and lasting imprint on the park visitor.

¹ Davis, William Heath, Seventy-Five Years in San Francisco, 1929

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Approximately 300 horses reside in the boarding facilities located on the Rancho, with dozens more in the surrounding communities. To put this number into perspective, it is worth noting that in 2005, the American Horse Council reported that there were approximately 698,000 horses in California and that the value of the horse industry to California was \$4.1 billion annually. Since 2005, the cost of feed has gone up by 60%, so by conservative estimate, the Rancho boarding facilities and surrounding horse operations inject from \$2-3 million annually into the local economy. No other user group that currently uses the Rancho, or is likely to use the Rancho when it becomes part of GGNRA, produces this type of economic return.

We firmly believe that removal or significantly downsizing the Rancho's boarding facilities will have a serious deleterious impact on the economic health of mid-coast San Mateo County. Besides owners and their horses, there is an extended network of goods and services providers that will be negatively impacted, and in many cases become unsustainable, if a significant number of the Rancho's horses are lost.

These include:

- Hay and Grain producers
- Tack and Hardware Stores
- Instructors and Horse Trainers
- Equine practitioners
 - Veterinarians
 - Equine Acupuncturists
 - Equine Chiropractors
 - Equine Massage Therapists
 - Equine Dentists
- Farriers
- Ranch Employees
- Restaurants

The loss of the above goods services will have a significant multiplier effect for the local horse industry. The impact will extend to the private ranches and boarding facilities adjacent to the Rancho. A lack of equine related goods and services will make horse ownership very difficult and as a result, we can expect to see dramatic losses in the non-Rancho horse population.

GGNRA planners should also consider the financial ramification to the National Park system of closure or attrition of the Rancho's boarding facilities. After all, for virtually no upfront investment, the GGNRA would inherit a money making operation. In this era of sharp cuts in government spending, it is difficult to see how any agency could afford to lose significant revenue.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The Rancho's facilities provide some of the only affordable boarding in the San Francisco Bay Area. Inland boarding opportunities are limited and the cost is exorbitant. For many owners, there is simply no other place for their horse to go and they will have to give up their horses. At a minimum, moving to new locations would result in higher boarding costs and lengthy commutes – an alternative which many boarders cannot afford.

On a broader scale, the social and cultural impact of removing the boarding stables from the Rancho cannot be overestimated. The State of California in its Local Coastal Program for unincorporated San Mateo County has recognized the importance of the horse community in preserving the semi-rural nature of the San Mateo Midcoast.² It is this semi-rural character that accounts for much of the appeal of this area to residents and tourists alike. The GGNRA planners are invited to ask current visitors to the Rancho and the adjacent McNee Ranch State Park their reaction to encountering a horse and rider on the trail. We have no doubt that the vast majority of these visitors will tell you of their delight in seeing some of the "Old West." They may also tell you that they asked the rider to pose for a picture.

Thus, economically, socially, humanely and culturally, the Rancho community of horses and riders is a huge positive to the area. The greater good is served by maintaining that community.

² San Mateo County Local Coastal Plan, Pgs 7.10, 7.12, and 11.15

EDUCATION

The boarding facilities operating within the Rancho boundaries provide public programs and classes that benefit people of all ages and abilities. While many of these programs have been around for a number of years, they remain popular with the public and continue to evolve and expand.

Education and outreach is a win-win opportunity. By enabling these programs to continue, the GGNRA will provide the kind of community outreach and educational opportunities to which the Park Service is committed. In addition, it will demonstrate its commitment to supporting and maintaining the character of the San Mateo coast and local community.

The programs listed below are hosted by the boarding facilities currently operating within the “Diverse Opportunities Zone” of the Rancho Corral de Tierra.

EQUINE SKILLS

- Equine Clinics and Shows – Open to all ages and abilities, these regularly scheduled events feature horsemanship and hands-on training delivered by nationally recognized experts. Events are sponsored by the hosting facilities, as well as local associations, such as the San Francisco Horseman and San Mateo County Horseman Associations. Topics range from riding skills, equine husbandry and equine health, to trail safety. Events are well attended with participants coming from as far as the Monterey Peninsula.
- Pony Club – This internationally acclaimed program teaches not just riding, but stable management, land stewardship and superior horsemanship. Open to ages 7 to 22.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) – These school-sponsored programs (the local FFA chapter is the ONLY chapter in the Bay Area) have been hosted by the boarding facilities since the 1960’s. The programs are open to students from ages 8 to 15. They provide a hands-on experience that lasts from November through August. During that time, each participant has the experience and responsibility for raising and caring for their own animals.
- High-risk Inner City Programs – These activities are hosted by the boarding facilities as part of school district programs. They provide a unique horse experience that can have a positive impact on these children for a lifetime. The programs are almost entirely volunteer-based, which demonstrates the willingness of the local horse community to reach out to the community.

For example, in past years, students from Malcolm X public school, located in the Bay View district of San Francisco, were invited to Ember Ridge for a weekend retreat. The visit included camping, riding, horse and ranch care, even a class in manure management. For many of these students, who witness violence daily, these programs provide a rare glimpse into a very different way of life.

- Therapeutic Riding Program – (This program is under development at this time and will be operational in the near future.) The therapeutic riding program will serve those children and adults with learning and physical restrictions who can benefit from proven horse-rider therapies.

This program will be particularly valuable since similar programs in San Mateo County are currently wait-listed and unable to keep up with demand.

PARK STEWARDSHIP

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

In place since the late 90's, these programs are not only a critical aspect of protecting the water, land and people, but they provide a model for other facilities in how to minimize their impact in a watershed environment.

San Mateo County Confined Animal Ordinance

In the late 90's, the CHC was instrumental in drafting and securing the adoption of San Mateo County's Confined Animal Ordinance. One of the stated purposes of the ordinance is to *protect water quality, sensitive habitats, soil and other significant environmental resources from potential adverse impacts of confined animals.*

The environmental provisions of the ordinance were drafted in concert with the CHC, county public health officials and local environmental groups including the Committee for Green Foothills. These provisions, which are strictly adhered to by the boarding facilities along Martini, and San Vicente Creeks, are presented in Appendix A.

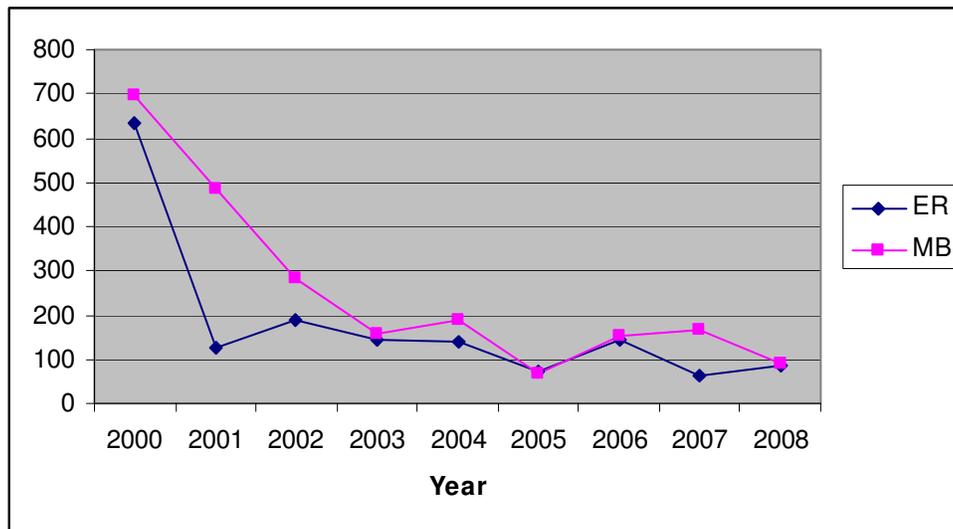
Manure Management

Concurrent with the development of the Confined Animal Ordinance, the boarding facilities implemented aggressive manure management programs. Methodologies were based on accepted best practices. For example, Ember Ridge collects and composts its manure on concrete slabs and then provides the nutrient-rich compost spread to local farmers.

Water Quality Monitoring

Working with the County and other local organizations, the boarding facilities implemented a monitoring program along San Vicente and Martini creeks to measure water quality. Largely as a result of this effort, pollution sources above and below the ranch properties were identified and resolved. Today, the San Vicente and Martini Creeks are clean in the portion of the creeks that run through the ranch properties. (See the Figure that follows.)

Yearly average of *E coli* at Ember Ridge (ER) and Moss Beach (MB) Boarding Facilities



The graph shows the *Escherichia coli* levels measured in San Vicente Creek. The levels have been reduced significantly since the first samples were taken in 2000. Acceptable levels are below 200 ppm. Manure management and changing the pattern of rain water runoff are contributing factors in controlling the *E coli* levels.

NOTE: The EPA specifies 200 ppm or less is an acceptable *E. Coli* level for areas upstream from a recreational area (in our case Fitzgerald Marine Reserve). This is the same acceptability level used by the National Park Service.

TRAIL MONITORING

Because of the number of riders and their ability to navigate the roughest terrain, the equestrian community has assumed the role of an informal mounted patrol. In situations where someone is injured or missing, equestrians are among the first to mobilize and often first to make contact and report conditions and locations to the appropriate authorities. Equally important, the equestrian community is diligent about reporting suspicious behaviors and providing assistance and advice to other users.

VOLUNTEER TRAIL MAINTENANCE

The equestrians have developed and maintained most of the trails throughout the last 60 years. Today, members of the horse community donate their time on a regular basis to maintain the trail system by clipping overgrowth and keeping the area clear of brush and litter. They would gladly support any trail or park stewardship programs.

APPENDIX A. ENVIRONMENTAL EXCERPTS FROM THE SAN MATEO COUNTY CONFINED ANIMAL ORDINANCE

Prohibited Locations. *Confined animal structures and animal use of the property, including pasture or range area, shall not occur in the following areas of the parcel:*

Lakes, creeks and streams.

Land located within (1) fifty (50) feet of lakes, and perennial creeks and streams, and (2) thirty (30) feet of intermittent creeks and streams.

Sensitive habitats, including riparian corridors and wetlands.

Land located within fifty (50) feet of the outward boundary of riparian corridors.

Land located within one hundred (100) feet of wetlands.

Land used for a domestic well or septic tank, or located above leach lines.

Slopes exceeding thirty percent (30) for structures, and fifty percent (50%) for animal use.

Minimum Setbacks. *Confined animal structures shall maintain the following minimum setbacks:*

From front property line: 50 feet

From side and rear property lines: 30 feet

From a dwelling unit on the same parcel: 30 feet

From the nearest setback line required for a dwelling unit on an adjacent parcel: 80 feet

From a domestic well:

(1) Up to ten animals: 50 feet

(2) More than ten animals: 100 feet

Drainage.

- a. *All surface runoff, including rainwater that falls near or upon animal structures, shall not come into contact with stored animal manure. Energy dissipaters, gutters, ditches, berms and/or other diversion devices may be used to divert rainwater from confined animal areas.*
- b. *All liquids shall not drain closer than ten (10) feet from wells, septic tanks, and/or drainfields.*
- c. *Animal waste runoff and liquids used to clean confined animals shall not drain directly into a creek, stream, lake or similar water body. Runoff may be confined and diverted by various means, including maintaining the existing on-site filtering vegetation, planting new vegetation grass strips, installing filter fencing or straw bales/logs, and/or constructing earth berms, and sediment ponds.*
- d. *Standing water shall not be allowed to accumulate near confined animal structures.*
- e. *A minimum two percent (2%) downward slope shall be maintained on land that is within five (5) feet of confined animal structures to assure adequate drainage away from the structures.*
- f. *Facility drainage shall conform to the drainage component of the site management plan.*

Facility Management.

- a. *The keeping of confined animals shall not create a nuisance or be detrimental to human or animal health, safety or welfare.*
- b. *On-site manure management shall conform to the manure management component of the site management plan.*
- c. *All animal wastes, including soiled bedding, shall be collected daily from confined animal structures, and managed in a manner that is not conducive to the proliferation of insects, rodents and other disease-carrying creatures.*

Effective manure management methods include, but are not limited to, composting, mulching, spreading of manure, and covered storage. Stored animal waste for off-site use or disposal may not be kept on the site for longer than fourteen (14) days. Stored waste shall be covered and separated from the ground by an impermeable material. Surface water runoff in the manure management area shall not come into contact with stored animal wastes. Runoff may be diverted by various means, including constructing earth berms and/or installing straw bales/logs.

- d. Should active composting occur on the site, composted wastes shall be mixed or turned over often to increase aerobic bacteria activity and to keep the pile fully aerated and active. Should passive or static composting occur on the site, the proposed process shall be reviewed by the Director of Environmental Health to assure that odor and fly breeding problems are prevented.*
- e. Animal feed shall be stored in appropriate facilities or containers such that it is kept dry and, to the maximum extent feasible, free of mold, rodents and insects.*



P.O. Box 475372 San Francisco, CA 94147-5372 Please Visit Our Website: www.crissyfielddog.org

July 28, 2008

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
Stephan Nofield
12795 West Alameda Parkway
PO Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Dear Stephan,

On behalf of the Crissy Field Dog Group, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for the GGNRA General Management Plan (GMP) Spring 2008 Fourth Newsletter. CFDG has been involved in dog and urban recreation area related issues in the GGNRA since 2000. We advocate responsible dog ownership as well as good environmental stewardship in all areas of the GGNRA. We have a long-term vested interest and view of the GGNRA's planning process and how it addresses and affects all park visitors and their enjoyment and use of this unique urban recreation area.

INTRODUCTION

The summary of the GGNRA GMP planning/EIS process presented in the Spring 2008 Fourth Newsletter indicates the GMP effort is being organized into "Management Concepts" and "Management Zones" which are applied to each GGNRA unit. In our experience in working through the combined rulemaking/EIS process for dog management in GGNRA, we think a focus on management concepts and on management zones where particular concepts apply, is a useful one.

We complement the Park Service on trying to take a wide range of goals and objectives that need to be balanced within the framework of the NPS's and GGNRA's missions and the Organic Act, and present them in a public document in a way that tries to focus on different emphases in different locations, appropriate to the values and opportunities of each area of the GGNRA.

Management Concepts

We therefore hope the Park Service is serious about listening to public comment on these Management Concepts and Management Zones – because they need some important, additional refinement, as explained in our comments. As you are aware, the heart (and headquarters) of the GGNRA is located in the City of San Francisco where most park visitors view the GGNRA units as a major urban recreation area. In addition, the outlying GGNRA areas include Marin and San Mateo counties, which are adjacent to major suburban areas.

One critical refinement of the Management Concepts is their posing of false choices or alternatives – proposals that necessarily polarize people and interested organizations, instead of helping people to give good input to the Park Service on achieving the balance among the uses described on page 2, page 5 and elsewhere, so that a wide range of values are preserved for current and future generations.

To be concrete, if you read the Management Concepts, as described on pages 6 and 7, each one involves connecting people with the GGNRA and conserving natural and historical resources for their intrinsic value and so that they are sustained for people to be able to enjoy them.

Unfortunately, the Management Concepts, as discussed for most of the GGNRA units and Management Zones, then depart from this integrated view of recreation area management to make the “Alternative 1 – Connecting People” into a development-oriented option, “Alternative 2 – Protecting and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems” into a natural/wilderness approach, and “Alternative 3 – National Treasures” into a museum-based approach. This does a disservice to the public and to the validity of the planning process because it essentially forces people or interests aligned with urban recreation, ecological conservation, and cultural education to pick one or the other – when in fact, most park users are fans of all three and do not see these as exclusive.

If the guiding principles of sustainability community-based stewardship, and partnerships – to name just three of these principles – mean anything, they mean bringing these together, not separating them.

It is useful to help the public articulate what we think may be the best focus for any given area of the GGNRA – whether active recreation, natural/habitat with few people, or cultural/historic preservation. **However, there is a big difference between asking people and the GMP to indicate a focus for particular areas or Management Zones at a GGNRA unit – which we agree with – and posing a set of alternatives in a way that suggests a range of activities can occur in an area with a particular focus.**

We ask that you take a close, objective look at how the current Management Concepts are framed on each GGNRA unit with the above comments in mind. We ask that you bring a more integrated approach to them – one that does not reflect exclusive uses, unless a particular resource or zone is so valuable or sensitive, and that other uses are so

inherently incompatible and cannot be managed, that a choice is required to select only one use in the zone. Any such areas and the basis for these choices should be clearly identified and scientifically or technically supportable. For example, the restoration and planting of native species should not be an excuse to close areas to the public where proper fencing to protect the native species would suffice or in certain areas where endangered species and recreation can co-exist, as is true in many national parks and recreation areas.

Current Conditions

In this regard, the importance of an accurate understanding and statement of current conditions and management cannot be overestimated. The current conditions not only provide an important baseline, but they are important for understanding what the plan proposes to *change*. Unfortunately, the GMP omits any mention of the long established recreation uses with dogs, horses, etc., e.g. dog walking is mentioned only in Fort Funston current conditions (p12). We have provided an attachment with a list of sites in all three counties with their current conditions as identified from the recent Negotiated Rulemaking Process for Dog Management that the committee and Park Service worked on together. Also, it would be useful to have the acreage of each site managed by the GGNRA listed in the GMP.

In addition, the current conditions need to acknowledge and recognize the GGNRA's lax approach to special events and their impacts, while discouraging less intensive regular uses. For example, in 2006, there were 200 special events at Crissy Field and this number and SIZE of these special events are growing out of control. The GGNRA, we believe, needs to recognize and acknowledge that the historic and cultural aspects includes long established recreational uses, as these directly affect the culture of San Francisco, Marin and the Bay Area and have a significant cumulative impact.

Another concern is the GGNRA's current trails plans that are forcing recreational users together and eliminating long held social trails. This trails plan will no doubt elevate conflict from different user groups, including bicyclists.

Structure of the GMP

The ability to understand how the plan might change raises a more basic question about the GMP. It is simply not possible to understand from the newsletter what the GMP contains and how it is structured. Therefore, it is difficult for the public to provide meaningful comment on a preliminary plan alternative without knowing, if you will, "what a GMP looks like." This is not explained anywhere in the document.

As noted above, the "Preliminary Alternatives" are composed of Management Concepts that are too polarizing and management zones that are too exclusive. One can expect the GMP/EIS "Preferred Alternative" will be a "combination" of the Management Concepts and Management Zones at any given GGNRA unit. This raises a question of whether the

current preliminary alternatives are realistic, as NEPA's purposes is not to invent 'straw' alternatives. Still, that still does not explain the structure of the plan.

We have been told by GGNRA staff that the current GMP is old and dated, and that the real GMP is a "compendium" of amendments, policies, regulations that have been adopted since the prior GMP. If that is the case, it would be important for the public to be able to see this current GMP compendium. When a preferred alternative is developed, it is essential for full disclosure and for the ability to comment meaningfully, for the planning materials to explain what is proposed to change.

For example, it is not clear which existing plans remain in place and which new plans are being prepared in addition to the GMP (eg Crissy Field Environmental Assessment (EA)). Will the existing Crissy Field EA/plan remain in place or be "updated" and be incorporated into the GGNRA GMP? How will the other ongoing plan as identified on p3 (such as the Marin Headlands and Ft. Baker Transportation and Infrastructure Management Plan) be incorporated into the GMP?

Perhaps the GMP is a series of goal statements, or policy statements, or maps. Perhaps the GMP is a broad-scale set of 'subarea' plans, one for each main GGNRA unit, which show focus areas or exclusive use areas, or areas where future plans will be prepared. Perhaps the GMP is augmented by later plans or regulations. It just isn't clear what the GMP is, and how it relates to other GGNRA policies, rules, plans, programs, or projects. Without this understanding, it is exceedingly difficult to comment on the content and level of detail of the plan. Equally important, it is difficult to know how the GMP governs later GGNRA decisions, and whether or how that the public will be involved in these later GGNRA decisions.

Prejudging Decisions

We have a particular concern about the relationship between the GMP, the Dog Management Plan/Rule/EIS in general, and the Crissy Field Plan/EA in particular.

It is not clear where dog management fits in – either it is separate and supersedes the GMP (unlikely, at least over time), or there will be a view that it must be consistent with the GMP policies – in which case it is not separate, because this plan will set the parameters and boundaries for the dog management plan, which should be disclosed.

The timing of both plan/EIS processes cannot be predicted with certainty – either one might be completed before the other. It is our understanding, not clear in the GGNRA Spring newsletter, that the dog management plan/rule will govern human recreation with off leash dogs in the GGNRA. However, given the polarized nature of the alternatives as presented (see above comments), a GMP that establishes certain policies or zones could well be carried out in a way that either prejudices the dog management plan (if that is not completed first) and/or skews the implementation of the dog management plan in the future, as the plan will doubtless include an adaptive management component to allow for experience.

NEPA plainly prohibits an agency from limiting the choice of reasonable alternatives until the EIS process is completed (40 CFR 1506.1). The preliminary plans, management concepts, and management zones, as presented would – if taken into account at this stage – appear to prejudice the development of the dog management plan/rule. The GMP needs to address more clearly how “functional” or “area” plans fit into the GMP and its subsequent interpretation and implementation so as not to limit the choice of reasonable alternatives in these parallel or associated planning efforts.

Tiering

Given the likely generality of the GMP and the need for many implementing actions, the intended use of tiering is not clear: how the GGRNA will go from the GMP to later plans, policies, regulations, programs, or projects and their associated environmental review? It would be very helpful to have a table that illustrates this, perhaps with examples.

CONCLUSION

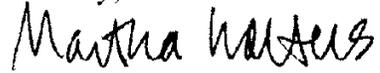
In closing, we are supportive of the effort to develop good Management Concepts and applying them to Management Zones, as a planning tool to develop the GMP. We ask that you take a “hard look” at how these are currently characterized, because we believe they are not consistent with the Guiding Principles (on page 5), and do not do justice to the intent of the concepts (on pages 6-7) to focus on particular resources while providing a range of visitor experiences and natural and historic resource conservation.

In short, it’s not people (or even people and dogs or horses) versus the environment, or recreation versus nature. Sustainability is well-stated, in NEPA’s words, as “productive harmony” between people and nature; trusteeship; achieving “a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities;” and to “preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice.” We would encourage you to review the framing and evaluation of alternatives in the EIS in light of the national environmental policy stated in Section 101 of NEPA and to bring a more realistic, non-polarizing, integrated approach to the preliminary alternatives.

Finally, we ask that you clarify the structure and components of the GMP, how these relate to existing plans and future plans, how the GMP relates to implementing actions (and what are these types of actions), and how you plan to tier from the GMP to subsequent actions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the GGNRA GMP Spring 2008 newsletter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha Walters". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "M".

Martha Walters
Chair, Crissy Field Dog Group

Attachment

**ATTACHMENT OF CURRENT CONDITIONS FOR MARIN, SAN FRANCISCO
AND SAN MATEO COUNTIES, GGNRA GMP COMMENTS: JULY 28, 2008**

MARIN COUNTY

Oakwood Valley, Marin City Ridge and Gerbode Valley

The current conditions for historical recreational activities here do not accurately reflect the use of this area. Oakwood Valley and Marin City Ridge (Alta Avenue) are used for hiking, biking, horseback riding and off/on-leash dog walking.

“Visitor Access improvements...would be provided ...to support access to the trail system with improved community connections/adjacent communities.” You must mean: The City of Sausalito in the 1979 Pet Policy stated that the NPS would provide access for the City of Sausalito to the GGNRA/Marin Headlands “at a future date”. That has not been accomplished nor discussed at any recent date. Such a connection would enable residents to leave their cars outside the Park boundary and access the trails of the Marin Headlands car free.

Realizing that Tennessee Valley Road, the trailhead for Oakwood Valley is very narrow cars realistically should only park on one side in a very limited area (7 cars max) for safety. Enlarging the trailhead area further at Oakwood Valley would be cause for concern for the safety of increased visitors exiting their cars along the roadway.

Oakwood Valley:

Alternative 1, 2 and 3 dismiss the current historical recreational activities at the site area of Oakwood Valley, Marin City Ridge and Gerbode Valley.

Rodeo Beach/Marin Headlands

The current conditions section for historical recreational activities does not accurately reflect the use of this site in that the weather is the determining factor here. Fog and wind blanket the Headlands/Rodeo beach area much of the year. Water activities include low to high use by the surfing community, however swimming is not a normal activity except by a few brave souls on an unusually hot day. Land based activities include hiking, biking, horseback riding and off-leash dog walking. This area remains low in conflict with all users.

Upland Area historical recreational use supports hiking, biking, horseback riding and off-leash dog walking.

Alternative 1: Many trails within the Headlands over the years have narrowed from fire trail width to single file passage from a lack of maintenance. Improving trails/fire roads, which were very accessible some years ago, should be improved by regular on-going maintenance keeping the trails that exist available for safe and poison oak free passage. A warming hut near the beach sounds wonderful in theory, but owing to the amount of

paper/plastic and glass that is left for others to pick up on the beach and the parking lot now we could not recommend encouraging further eating and drinking near the beach adding to the debris left by visitors currently.

There is some confusion in regard to the Capehart housing area removal "creating a more scenic entrance into Rodeo Valley." The Marin Headlands Transportation Plan recommends the current tunnel entrance/exit be changed to allow only exit to Alexander Avenue, therefore it would not be necessary to remove them.

We have noticed that the Paramedics are no longer stationed at the firehouse out at Ft. Cronkite, and with the existing number of children, park partner staff and visitors we would think it to be an incredible safety issue without adding it to the increased uses proposed.

Rodeo Beach/Marin Headlands

Alternative 1: Yes but keeping historical recreation

Alternative 2: No

Alternative 3: No

SAN FRANCISCO

Upper Ft. Mason

Need to clarify the "informal uses and occasional large special events" in this section. There is no mention that UFM is located in the Marina District of San Francisco and the GGNRA Park headquarters is surrounded by three sides of houses, apartment buildings and a large Safeway located directly across from Park Headquarters. In addition, there is high parking use by the local high school during the school year that makes parking a nightmare for anyone who is attending a meeting, etc. at the Park Headquarters or at the Old Army's Officers Club (again, there is no mention of the Officer's Club). And why is there a need to enhance Congressman Burton's memorial? By it's very geographic location, it's hard to imagine that Ft. Mason could serve as the primary visitor entrance to the GGNRA...it's very location in the Marina dispels that notion.

UFM is heavily used by the local neighbors and used for informal recreation for hikers, joggers, walkers, off leash dog walkers, morning Tai Chi class for the elderly, sunbathers (on a rare sunny day) and non-organized sports activities. There is moderate to high use by bicyclists, runners and walkers on the paved trail through the Great Meadow. Because of the location of the International Youth Hostel, there can be a variety of international visitors.

UFM has seen an increase of large special events, basically doubling its special use permit form 29 in 2000 to 61 in 2006. Is this what the GGNRA wants for the future, a dramatic increase of special events and destination areas? And it is unclear by what is meant by a "Stewardship Hub" in Alternative 2.

China Beach

Again, it's important to accurately describe the current conditions of this locale. For example, China Beach is well known for folks primarily surfing. It is a very rare day when folks can picnic at China Beach due to the foggy and windy conditions. We are not sure what is meant by improving visitor facilities and access to support current uses. And again, China Beach is located adjacent to the Seacliff and Richmond neighborhoods in San Francisco.

Lands End

The current conditions section need to accurately reflect the use of this site. This is a multi-use recreational area (again located in the San Francisco) where folks walk, jog, bike ride, walk their dogs off leash and hike. Local neighbors have been going to Lands End for years and enjoy the relative "quiet" of this area of the Park. There have been reports of vandalism, heavy drinking and sexually deviant behavior activities in the wooded areas. We understand that the GGNRA wants to make this into another "destination area", much like Crissy Field, which needs to be further evaluated. Tourists come here to enjoy the ocean vistas. Special use permits have increased from 20 in 2000 to 37 in 2006.

Ft Miley

Again located in San Francisco, this area is predominately visited by local neighbors and activities include walking, some picnics and off leash dog walking. Folks here enjoy the quiet and are not interested in developing the site into a destination area or feel the impacts in being adjacent to a destination area such as Lands End.

Ocean Beach

The current conditions of Ocean Beach include a variety of recreational users, including but not limited to, surfers, walkers, off leash dog walkers, horse back riding, and family outings on the rare sunny days. Most of this use is on the northern portion of the beach as parking limits access in the main beach area, so the southern portion is less crowded. In addition, there is no mention about the Ocean Beach Task Force and their goals. It is unclear whether the goals of this Task Force are compatible with how the people who recreate at Ocean Beach visualize their future recreational opportunities.

Ft. Funston

Current conditions include hang gliding in a one section of Ft. Funston, off leash dog walking and commercial off leash dog walking (primarily on weekdays), and reduced handicap access on the north end of the Sunset Trail. FT Funston Dog Walkers hold a monthly cleanup with large number of volunteers. Is it necessary to have a warming hut there? If so, it may be a great opportunity to have dog-training seminars held there.

SAN MATEO

The San Mateo sites that we have addressed below are only mentioned in this GMP newsletter are to manage the protection or preservation of natural resources when, in fact, there is a large suburban population who either run, walk or hike, walk with their dogs off leash, horseback ride, and/or bike in these areas. The GGNRA GMP does not appear to consider recreational values as a major interest here, which is incorrect. Also, the GGNRA is planting new endangered species in San Mateo sites where there were none before.

Milagra Ridge

A slight clarification here as it is the northwest slope that allows for potential development of the Bay Area Ridge Trail connection to the coast. And the parking is extremely limited-only **parking for 4 cars**. We would encourage that the Bay Area Ridge Trail leave enough room for multiple recreation user groups, including but not limited to hikers, runners, off leash dog walkers, horses and bikers. Additional visitor amenities to improve accessibility, trailhead parking, restrooms and picnic facilities would support and enhance the visitor experience.

Mori Point

This section does not accurately depict the current condition of the site. This site is directly adjacent to a neighborhood and subsequently, there is very limited parking for folks who want to walk, walk their dogs off leash and generally enjoy the area. There is NO handicap parking available, so disabled folks don't have access to walk their dogs off leash there. The GGNRA could put some fences around the vernal pool areas (and other sensitive species) as neighborhood kids have a tendency to play in these areas. Additional visitor amenities to improve accessibility, trailhead parking, restrooms and picnic facilities would support and enhance the visitor experience.

Sweeny Ridge/Cattle Hill

Again, the section does not speak about the very limited parking at both the Sweeny Ridge and Cattle Hill entrances. Runners, off leash dog walkers and some bicyclists primarily visit both areas. As with the other San Mateo locations, there isn't any acknowledgement that the parking areas need to be expanded and to include handicap access. Additional visitor amenities to improve accessibility, including trailhead parking, restrooms and picnic facilities would support and enhance visitor experience.

EnviroHorse
3027 St. James Rd
Belmont CA 94002-2955 650-592-0722
www.californiastatehorsemen.com/envirohorse.htm

July 17, 2008

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
ATTN: Stephan Nofield
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P. O. Box 25287
Denver CO 80225-0287
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov:80/document.cfm?parkId=303&projectId=15075&documentID=23015>

Re: GGNRA General Management Plan Update

EnviroHorse has been an active participant in planning sessions both in Marin and San Mateo Counties. We support the extensive comments previously offered to you by the Marin Horse Council and ETRAC and the Coastside Horse Council of San Mateo County. In addition, we offer the following comments.

The Pflieger Estate

While the GGNRA has existed in San Francisco and Marin Counties for years, we in San Mateo County have only had tangential experience with it through the Pflieger Estate in Woodside. An excellent relationship exists between park staff and the Woodside community of which the Pflieger Estate is part.

We support the addition of more trails in the Estate and increased access to Skyline and the Ridge trail. There is a great need for better parking and access to Pflieger for cars and horse rigs both on Skyline Road and in Woodside. A connection through the adjacent SFWD land is a goal we have pursued for several years as connections through this area are badly needed. We support Alternative 1 if it is amended to specify hiker and equestrian use only. Bikes should not be allowed in this property. The terrain is too steep and lines of sight too limited to support multi-use. To address biker concerns, we recommend alternative routes using your easement potential in the SFWD areas adjacent that have been detailed by Ernst Meissner to GGNRA staff and San Mateo County Park staff. This is adjacent to the wildlife preserve in Huddart County Park, so no dogs should be allowed in this area.

A trail (the P-18 Ridge/Skyline Trail) is needed to connect Phleger with existing regional trails from Highway 84 to Purisima Creek Redwoods OSP by providing an alternate route, parallel to Highway 35 for hikers and equestrians.

The Windy Ridge Trail is another urgently needed entry alternative. It was used for many decades to access from the east to Phleger from Canada Road through San Francisco Water Department property. In the fall of 2002 that trail was closed by SFWD leaving only one access point, the Miramontes Trail at Richards Road in Huddart County Park. GGNRA access through easements with SFWD and CalTrans are vital and should be mentioned in Alternative 1.

Additional emphasis should be put on adding short loop trails, roughly 1 to 3 mile long loops, both off of Skyline and from the Huddart side. These would allow more users to enjoy the diversity of the ecosystems available in Phleger.

The Phleger Estate is a rare gem of steep terrain forest in the middle of an urban landscape. GGNRA must strive to keep the near-wilderness character of Phleger Estate.

Rancho Corral de Tierra

GGNRA must not do anything to change the nature of the Coastside as a rural enclave adjacent to a thriving urban area. Existing stables on the Rancho lands should be left in place. There is no where else to move them. Loss of these facilities will have a profound affect on the community as a whole. The same is true for stables in Marin County.

While locals have been riding, hiking and dog walking on these wonderful ranch lands for over 60 years, the prospect of throwing them open to potentially 6 million visitors annually will require careful planning and significant infrastructure development of parking areas and trail systems with destination options. Equestrians need very little infrastructure. We prefer our trails and parking areas to be unpaved for the safety of our horses. Adequate horse rig parking needs to be factored in and specifications have been provided to GGNRA staff by Mike Bushue of ETRAC. Hose bibs for water would be appreciated, but no troughs, as they can breed mosquitoes and transmit germs.

San Mateo County horsemen have a vision that GGNRA management of Rancho Corral de Tierra can help make into reality. GGNRA has the ability to negotiate easements with the SFPUC, county parks, and MROSD to create trail linkages between public lands and regional trail systems. We cannot emphasize the value that this will be to our county. We need trails connecting from West to East from the Coastal Trail to the Bay Area Ridge Trail. We dream of a trail that links Big Basin State Park in Santa Cruz County with McNee State Park and has horse

camps at 20 mile intervals from Rancho del Oso to McNee. Horsemen will be willing to fund development of horse camps if locations can be designated by various land managers. Corral de Tierra at Ocean View Farms would be a perfect location for one such horse camp.

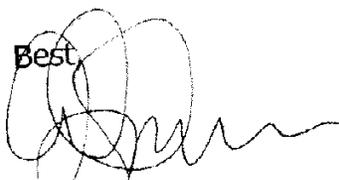
Horsemen are active trail volunteers already for San Mateo County Park and Recreation Department through their Volunteer Horse Patrol, with the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District Trail Patrol, and as Trail Leaders for the SFPUC section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail from Hiway 92 north to the Portola gate. We provide eyes and ears to augment too often scarce staffing on site. You will find ready volunteers for your needs in San Mateo County.

As trail planning begins for the Rancho Corral de Tierra, please be aware that the Coastside Horse Council supports multi-use trails for this property. There will be a need to create a number of loop trails or varying lengths to offer users a variety of experiences on this extensive property. And of course, spurs off to connect to other regional trails, parks and open spaces.

We have greatly appreciated the opportunity to interface with GGNRA staff throughout this planning process and look forward to working with them in the future. In general, we support Alternative 1 as long as it leaves stables in place. Since we are frequent visitors to the Marin headlands and have seen the fabulous trails and stables for horses up there, we are confident that our San Mateo County farmlands will be preserved, yet accessible, to trail users.

Best wishes in this exciting endeavor and thank you for consideration of this viewpoint.

Best,



Adda Quinn



EQUESTRIAN TRAIL RIDERS' ACTION COMMITTEE

Lyndall Erb, PhD; Chair
BOX 370210, Montara, CA 94037

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
ATTN: Stephan Nofield
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P. O. Box 25287
Denver CO 80225-0287

RE: Golden Gate National Recreational Area
General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Nofield

The attached document is presented by the Equestrian Trail Riders Action Committee in response to the request for public comment on the alternatives for the GGNRA General Management Plan. We would like to thank the members of the GGNRA staff who have reached out to the equestrian community and who have responded to our requests for more information.

ETRAC is a coalition of the equestrian clubs on the Peninsula in both San Mateo and San Francisco counties. We are most concerned with the status of GGNRA in San Mateo County as there is a large parcel of land that will fall under the GGNRA management soon. However, we are concerned with the overall status of the trails and accessibility for horses throughout the GGNRA properties. The Marin Headlands are a favorite place for all of us to ride and we want to keep that area as a multi use area. We would like to see a General Management Plan that allows the lands to be used by all. GGNRA should be prepared to allow the use to continue as it has and to extend a welcome to all visitors, hikers, cyclists, dog-walkers and equestrians.

On behalf of ETRAC and the clubs it represents we present our comments. Please contact me if there are any questions or you would like more information, my phone number is 650-888-2799; email lferb@ix.netcom.com.

Regards,

Lyndall Erb, PhD
Chair, ETRAC

A COALITION OF EQUESTRIAN ORGANIZATIONS:

COASTSIDE HORSE COUNCIL - DISABLED EQUESTRIANS - JBH CAMP AD HOC COMMITTEE - LOS ALTOS HOUND - LOS VIAJEROS RIDING CLUB - MOUNTED PATROL OF SAN MATEO COUNTY - PORTOLA VALLEY TRAILS ASSOCIATION - SAN FRANCISCO HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION - SAN MATEO COUNTY HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION - THE SHACK RIDERS - WOODSIDE HORSE OWNERS ASSOCIATION - WOODSIDE TRAILS CLUB

Equestrian Trail Riders Action Committee

Response to GGNRA Proposed Alternatives

For General Management Plan for San Mateo County

The Equestrian Trail Riders Action Committee (ETRAC) represents the collective equestrian community of San Mateo and San Francisco Counties. These groups include San Mateo Horsemen, San Francisco Horsemen, Coastside Horse Council, Los Viajeros Riding Club, San Mateo Mounted Patrol, Disabled Equestrians, Jack Brook Horse Camp Ad Hoc Committee, Los Altos Hounds, NCEFT, Portola Valley Trails Assoc, Shack Riders, WHOA!, and Woodside Trails Club. Collectively these clubs represent over 1000 active trail riders in the area.

As the voice for the equestrian community ETRAC would like to present the following response to the GGNRA Proposed Alternatives for San Mateo County. We look forward to the addition of so many more acres of open space to the GGNRA holdings in San Mateo County, and believe it can have a successful outcome for both the local community and for visitors from outside the area. The addition of these lands to GGNRA will significantly impact the surrounding community. Rancho Corral de Tierra will open up areas that have not been previously available, except for local use. The possibility of introducing 6 million visitors a year to this area is unprecedented. While the focus of the GGNRA is to enable the public to enjoy natural areas, the planning group must understand that this area does not currently have the capability to welcome and support such a large projected number of visitors. For the public to be able to enjoy the hiking, biking and horseback riding in the new areas proposed for San Mateo County in Rancho Corral de Tierra, increased parking and other amenities will have to be created. (See Attachment 1) Many of the features of the coast hills and the Marin Headlands are geographically and ecologically diverse and not always appropriate for day hikers wanting a trail that will make a 1 or 2 mile loop. The park lands in the San Francisco Bay Area are most often the destination of small groups that are looking for a short loop trail that will allow them to start at a convenient parking lot and end at the same area without making an out and back trek.

While we agree with the overall direction of the proposed management plan, we do not see the alternatives as providing for the type of use we would like to see continue into the future. We agree that the lands serve a large local population and they offer unsurpassed opportunities for a variety of recreational uses. We see this time as an ideal opportunity to take a new look at the presence of GGNRA in San Mateo County. We would like to see GGNRA use this opportunity to keep the Coastside as a rural enclave and to continue to keep the near wilderness aspect of Phleger Estate. One of our goals is to build and improve the county trails to have short day hike loops and longer bike and equestrian loops, as well as connections from East to West and North to South. We want trails to connect with the Ridge Trail and the Coast Trail and with the County Parks. We see the increase in GGNRA lands as an opportunity to fulfill these goals and expand the existing trails while adding new trails. We also are interested in seeing the development of horse camps every 20 miles from Big Basin State Park up to McNee State Park. Horsemen will be willing to fund development of

such camps if locations can be designated by various land managers. Corral de Tierra would be a perfect location for one such horse camp.

However, we do not see that any of the alternatives address all the needs of the community. ETRAC prefers the concept of Alternative One "Connecting People with the Parks." The people should have access to these areas while we preserve the existing uses and character of the area. However, Alternative One is limited in the concept of what to do with existing structures and facilities and as such is still not the solution we would prefer.

None of the alternatives address the need for multi-use trails. We support multi-use for all GGNRA trails, except in the Phleger Estate where bikes are not currently allowed and should not be allowed in the future. Multi use includes walking, jogging, biking and horseback riding. The inclination of many land managers faced with maintaining year round trails is to pave those areas most used by the public. This may be good for many of the users, those pushing baby carriages or biking with small children, however for the joggers, many bikers and the horses paved trails are not a good solution. In fact, statistics provided by Dr. Mary Page Hufty of Palo Alto Medical Clinic, show a child's fall while walking or running on dirt is 5x less likely to result in death than a child's fall on asphalt. Concrete has closer to an 8x increase in risk of death. (See Attachment 1) Many users prefer the footing of an unpaved trail. A solution to this is to allow at least a 4 foot unpaved shoulder on paved trails to allow those users who prefer a dirt path to share the path. For longer loops and trails in the hills and rough terrain such as those in Phleger Estate and the Coastal hills, paving is impractical and should not be considered.

In addition, we support the position of the Marin Horse Council regarding the use of the lands in Marin County. GGNRA should be aware that the trail riders in the San Francisco Bay Area often trailer their horses to ride the open spaces and parks throughout the entire Bay Area. We do not limit our trail riding to our local area. The Bay Area is a truly exceptional area for Open Space and Parks and preservation and maintenance of the trails is of paramount importance to us as users of the trails. We welcome GGNRA as a new neighbor who will help preserve the land for future generations and maintain the trails for all of us to enjoy.

In support of our position we would like to present the following comments regarding the properties in San Mateo County. We are addressing the areas that we see as potential use areas that are not sufficiently addressed in the proposed plan.

1. Thornton State Beach to South of Mussel Rock.

This is proposed as a Natural Zone and we agree that this should continue to be managed as a natural area. We would propose language in the plan that addresses the multi-use aspect of the California Coastal Trail. We agree that providing modest access to this area is sufficient as it is not easily accessed but is an area of great beauty and geologic significance. We would propose that the trails provided would be multi-use and as such would remain unpaved. We would also propose a re-wording of the management of the area comprised of beach, dunes and cliffs, to allow access to the beach for hikers and equestrians. The beach area is not suitable for bikers due to the

nature of the sand. Access for hikers and riders would still allow the natural shoreline processes to continue unimpeded and allow for shorebird habitat.

2. Milagra Ridge

This is proposed as a Natural Zone and while we agree that this should be well managed, we disagree that the trails in this area should be limited. We would like to see an effort made to make a connection between Sweeney Ridge and Milagra Ridge as this was traditionally an area that was open to hiking and in the past to equestrians. The connection may have to be in part through the streets of Pacifica as development in this area is heavy. It may not be possible to allow equestrian access as the access to this area has been limited, but we think it should be re-evaluated to be enlarged and allow horse trailer parking. Access to the ridges by equestrians has been severely limited by lack of adequate parking and trail connections. Current access is through privately owned lands that we can only use with permission. There are opportunities to link Milagra Ridge and Sweeney Ridge that could allow connections to continue down through San Pedro County Park and down the coast to McNee State Park. This would include connecting the newly obtained Ranch Corral de Tierra.

3. Sheldance Nursery Area

This is proposed as a Diverse Opportunities Zone and we agree that the access to this area allows for a multi-use parking and trailhead access. The current parking could be enhanced to allow for several horse trailers to be parked while still leaving room for cars and other visitors. It is an ideal area to access both Sweeney and Milagra Ridges. It is also an area that could be enhanced with the addition of a warming hut.

4. Sweeney Ridge

Under Alternative 1 this area is broken into a Natural Zone, Scenic Corridor Zone and Diverse Opportunities. We support the park pursuing the acquisition of the Picardo Ranch, but only under the condition of retaining the stable in place. The Sweeney Ridge area is crucial to the expansion of trails through San Mateo County from North to South. The connection to the Fifield - Cahill trail through the PUC holdings is a vital part of the connections to the Skyline trail and the Bay Ridge trail. It is important to maintain the multi-use trails throughout the ridge and to allow greater visitor access. Sweeney Ridge access to the Pacifica coast area needs to be enhanced for all users. The site at the top of the ridge with the Cabrillo monument is an ideal site for a visitor's center. The access up Sneath Lane could be reopened and access for all users including handicapped would then be available. There is ample area at this site to include a number of cars and even horse trailers. It would be the perfect place to access the ridge and the trails that continue south to McNee and Rancho Corral de Tierra. While breaking these areas into zones sounds good on paper the actual placement of the zones is not intuitive to those of us who know these areas well. There are a number of trails through this area that could be enhanced without disturbing the local flora and fauna. The resident bobcats are frequently spotted by riders and seem unperturbed by the hikers and riders in the area. Bikes are infrequently in this area as the terrain is not ideal for biking except at the top of the ridge. Opening the area with more parking and access for all would allow more bikers to use this area. Sweeney Ridge, like much of this area is beautiful at the top but difficult to get to as a hiker or

casual biker. The terrain is steep and inhospitable, which makes the trails steep and rocky.

5. Mori Point

Mori Point is an old quarry and the land has been through many changes. The current plans call for restoration of the "natural habitats," natural habitat is not defined anywhere in the proposal and without a definition of what will be considered "natural" it is impractical to consider. Does "natural" mean pre-Miwok Indian; pre-Spanish, pre-Pacific development? Restoration will be almost impossible due to the damage already inflicted on the area. If by restoration it is meant removal of invasive non-native plants such as the Pampas grass and restoration of some native grasses we could support this and continue with Site Stewardship. If restoration means removal of the flowers and other flora that have taken hold on the property and create an area of great beauty in the springtime, we could not support that concept. There are several examples of use of language that is not defined in the proposal and this leaves much to the imagination of the responder as well as to future developers of the area.

Mori Point is a part of the Coastal Trail and it should remain a multi-use area. The trails that exist in the area are mostly roads to the quarry and although attempts to reclaim them are being made it does not make sense to not maintain them as single track trails. The only alternative for this area is Alternative 1 but again it must include all users including equestrians. There is a need for better parking at this site and the trails should NOT be paved as has been done on the Pacifica part of the Coastal Trail.

6. Devils Slide, Pedro Point and San Pedro Mountain

Retaining this area as a Natural Zone is a plan that we can support although we would appreciate more language addressing the trail use and users. There is ample area to create good parking for horse trailers and cars. Use of existing parking as well as working with the State to improve parking at McNee State Park and Montara State Beach would greatly expand the ability to use this land.

7. Rancho Corral de Tierra

The acquisition of this large parcel of land will change the whole operation of GGNRA in San Mateo County. This area has traditionally been an open space and has been used for at least 60 years by the community for hiking, biking, dog walking and horseback riding. The only alternative we can support is Alternative 1 and then only with some changes to the language. The area has traditionally been an off-leash dog walking area and this is not considered in the proposal. The local community uses this area for hiking, biking and horse back riding with no incidents with off-leash dogs. This would indicate that this is an area that can support a multitude of uses and should be continued as a multi use area. Formation of Site Stewards and a Volunteer Mounted Horse Patrol would enhance the experience for all users.

The four equestrian facilities on the property are a vital part of the Coastside equestrian world. The entire area would be adversely affected if these stables were to be removed. These horses make up a large percent of the total horse population on the coast and there are no other barns on the Peninsula large enough to take in the number

of animals that would be displaced. The businesses that support these stables, veterinarians, farriers, feed suppliers, etc, also support the horse owners located in the community. Since the majority of these service providers do not come from the Coastside and the majority of the horses in the area are at these boarding facilities, the loss of these horses would reduce the need for the support services and would be devastating to the rest of the equestrian community. There is also the staff of these barns to consider. The loss of any jobs on the Coastside is not trivial. It is not just the horse support services that would be affected. Horse owners are major consumers at area restaurants and stores. The facilities also provide a variety of public services. They provide riding lessons, pony camps, access for pony clubs, they serve both FFA and 4 H members and even provide some therapeutic services. The local community is heavily in support of retaining its rural character and the loss of the local horses would alter this character unacceptably.

Much of the land in this area is diverse and difficult to traverse. Equestrians have developed and maintained most of the trails throughout the last 60 years. The steep terrain is not friendly to the normal short distance day hiker and the local equestrians are still the majority users of the area. The stables, which have been in the area historically for at least 140 years are located in the natural valleys in the area. These valleys are the result of the creeks. The creeks may run all year or be ephemeral. Development in the area has had a major impact on the streams during the last century. The creeks run through storm drains that when under the highway are placed over sewage drains before reaching the ocean. Leaks in either system can potentially cause pollution at the beach. On the West side of the highway there are houses near most of the creek beds. In recent years there has been an effort to clean the creeks and reduce the pollution that reaches the ocean. While the majority of pollution is caused by decaying sewage systems from residential development, as part of this effort, the stables have been monitoring the effluent from their facilities and have cleaned up the water below the stables. (See Table 1) Manure management is an important part of this clean up and responsible manure management programs are already part of the barns' operations.

Table 1 graphs the *Escherichia coli* levels measured in San Vicente Creek. The levels have been reduced significantly since the first samples were taken in 2000. Acceptable levels are below 200 ppm. The EPA and National Park Service specify 200 ppm or less as acceptable for areas upstream from a recreational area. Manure management and changing the pattern of rain water runoff are the major factors in changing the *E coli* levels.

Attachment 2 is a draft paper addressing the pathogens found in horse and other livestock fecal samples.

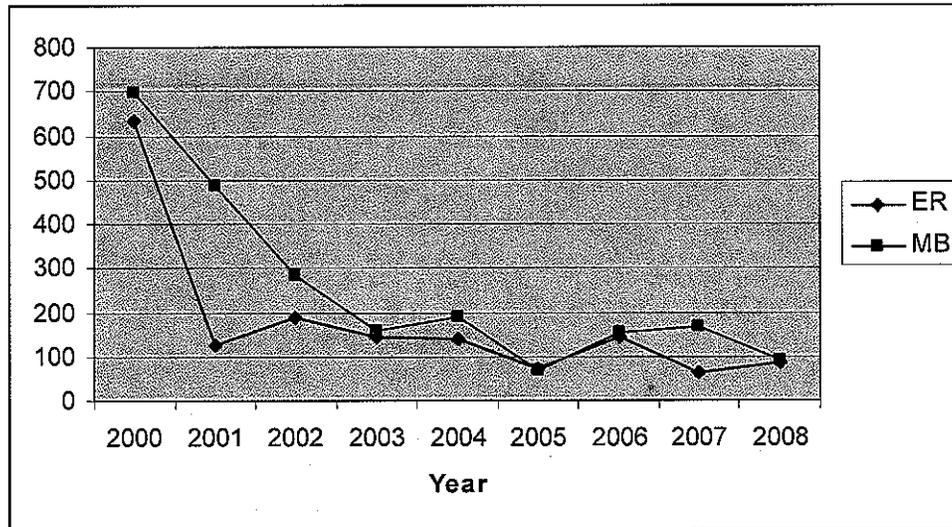


Table 1. Yearly average of E coli at Ember Ridge (ER) and Moss Beach (MB) Ranches

It seems unreasonable to try to return this area to pre-1800 condition. The number of plants that have been introduced by farming, ranching and cattle grazing makes it virtually impossible to know what the endemic plants were. To think that we could get back to the state the Spanish explorers reported on with wild flowers from Mt Diablo to the Sierras while ideal is unrealistic. We have the opportunity at this time to restore some of the land to a more "natural" state, but we will have to decide what natural state we are choosing. The Indians who lived in the area burned the hills regularly and kept the brush to a minimum. At this time the amount of senescent brush is a major fire hazard and should be addressed. The existing trails need improvement to allow multi-use and visitor safety. This is a project that could be facilitated by volunteers from the horse community who have offered their services to GGNRA. The non-native Eucalyptus trees have had an impact on the local riparian flora. The removal of these would greatly enhance the area and would restore much of the natural riparian flora.

The fauna of the area have flourished with the presence of the horses. Horses are seen as a non-threat by deer and other animals which don't seem to recognize the human on board the horse. Horse Patrols of the area would allow the park to monitor the health of the fauna. Those of us who use the area for riding know that the wildlife in the area is diverse. There are mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes and foxes that are frequently seen in this area. It is well known to birders as an exceptional area for raptors during the fall migrations. Every effort should be taken to preserve this aspect of the area. Any new facilities must take into consideration the impact on the wildlife in the area as well as access for the public including trailer parking. The idea of "portals" in existing areas is interesting, but since most of the development in the area under consideration for "portals" is the existing stables, the impact of enlarging parking in sensitive areas must be taken into account. The area is mainly steep hillsides and not really conducive to camping areas and other uses without a lot of development near the creeks. The GMP should address the land formation and not just stipulate that "portals" will be established. The area of the portals should be determined before the types of facilities are considered. Access at the North end of the property should be explored in

conjunction with McNee State Park to expand existing off road parking and a method of ensuring safe crossing of Highway 1 for all users. Currently the most parking is at Montara State Beach on the West side of the highway and crossing the road on the weekends can be difficult. Access at the South end of the property could be addressed at a couple of spots. With the addition of adequate parking the ridge in El Granada is a spot that could be developed to include a warming hut and other conveniences. There is a small spot on Etheldore in Moss Beach that could be potentially developed into primitive parking. Development of existing facilities is not an option as those facilities all have limited access except at Oceanview Farms.

8. Montara Lighthouse

This area is currently not a trail use area and we have no concerns with the proposed Alternative 1. We would propose that this location would be an excellent spot for a visitor's center and/or warming hut.

9. Phleger Estate

We support the addition of more trails in the Estate and increased access to Skyline and the Ridge trail. There is a great need for better parking and access to Phleger, lots should be developed off Skyline with adequate parking for cars and horse rigs. A connection through the adjacent SFPUC Watershed is a goal we have pursued for several years as connections through this area are badly needed. We support Alternative 1 if it is amended to specify hiker and equestrian use only. Bikes should not be allowed in this property. The terrain is too steep and lines of sight too limited to support safe multi-use trails. To address the concerns of the bicyclists we recommend alternative routes using your easement potential in the SFPUC areas adjacent. Adequate rig parking is needed on Highway 35 to access Phleger from the west. This is adjacent to the wildlife preserve in Huddart Park, so no dogs should be allowed in this area.

A trail (the P-18 Ridge/Skyline Trail) is needed to connect Phleger with existing regional trails from Highway 84 to Purisima Creek Redwoods OSP by providing an alternate route, parallel to Highway 35 for hikers and equestrians. Windy Ridge Trail is an urgently needed entry alternative used for many decades to access from the east to Phleger from Canada Road through SFPUC property. In the fall of 2002 that trail was closed by SFPUC leaving only one access point, the Miramontes Trail at Richards Road in Huddart County Park. GGNRA access through easements with SFPUC and CalTrans are vital and should be mentioned in Alternative 1.

Additional emphasis should be put on adding short loop trails, roughly 1 to 3 mile long loops, both off of Skyline and from the Huddart side. These would allow more users to enjoy the diversity of the ecosystems available in Phleger.

10. PUC Easements

We strongly support any effort to gain more access through the Watershed property to connect the northern end of the county with trails at the southern end. The Ridge trail is incomplete through this area with breaks at the Watershed. We would help develop any trails that will connect Milagra and Sweeney Ridges with the Skyline Trail.

11. Marine Environment

The natural beauty of the ocean is what brings visitors to the coast. We support all efforts to protect and maintain this area.

ATTACHMENT 1 – ETRAC Horse trailer survey results as presented to MROSD

ETRAC Trailer survey for San Mateo County and El Corte Madera Preserve Parking

5/02/08

ETRAC, Mike Bushue
etrac2trails@yahoo.com

Back ground

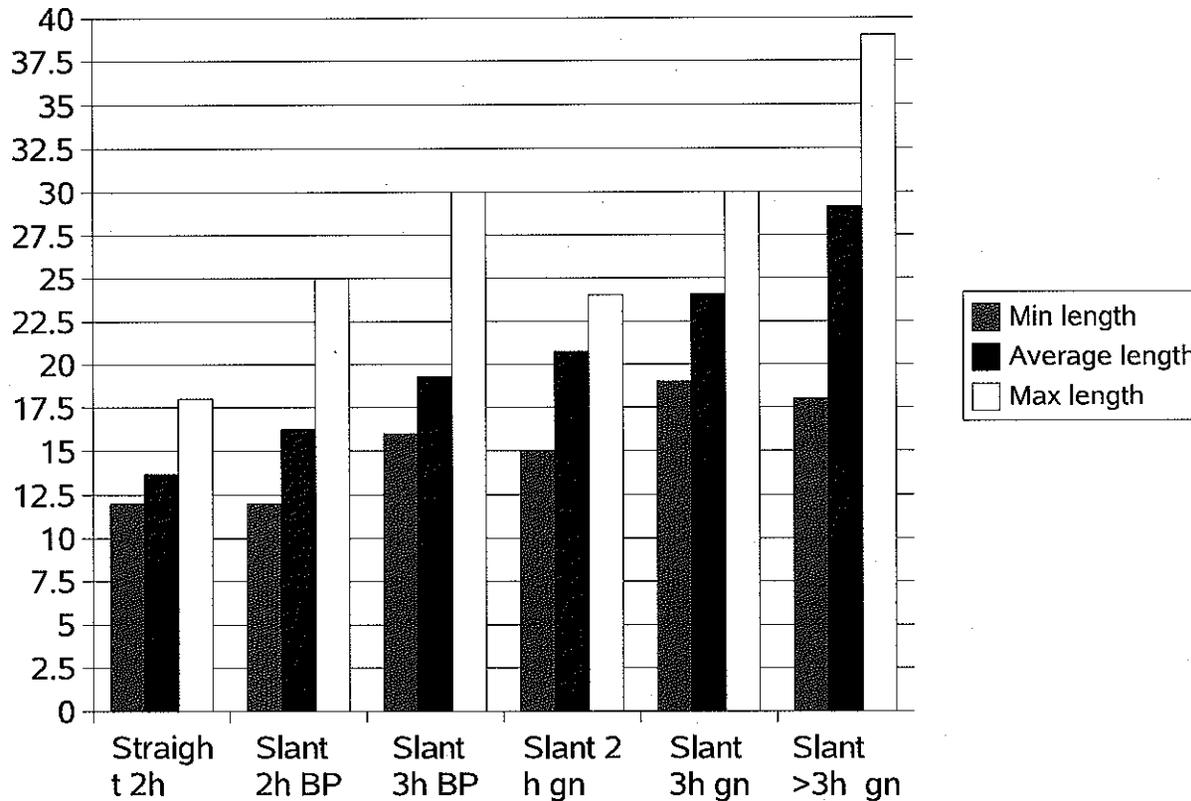
- MROSD is looking at creating a parking area at the Southern end of El Corte Madera Preserve
 - Potential for 60 parking spots for cars
 - Recommendation is to have allocation for up to 4 equestrian trailer/rig parking spots
 - Concern on Length of trailer expected to us facility due to ingress and space allocation

Trailer survey by ETRAC

>300 trailers logged

Length from bumper to trailer mount

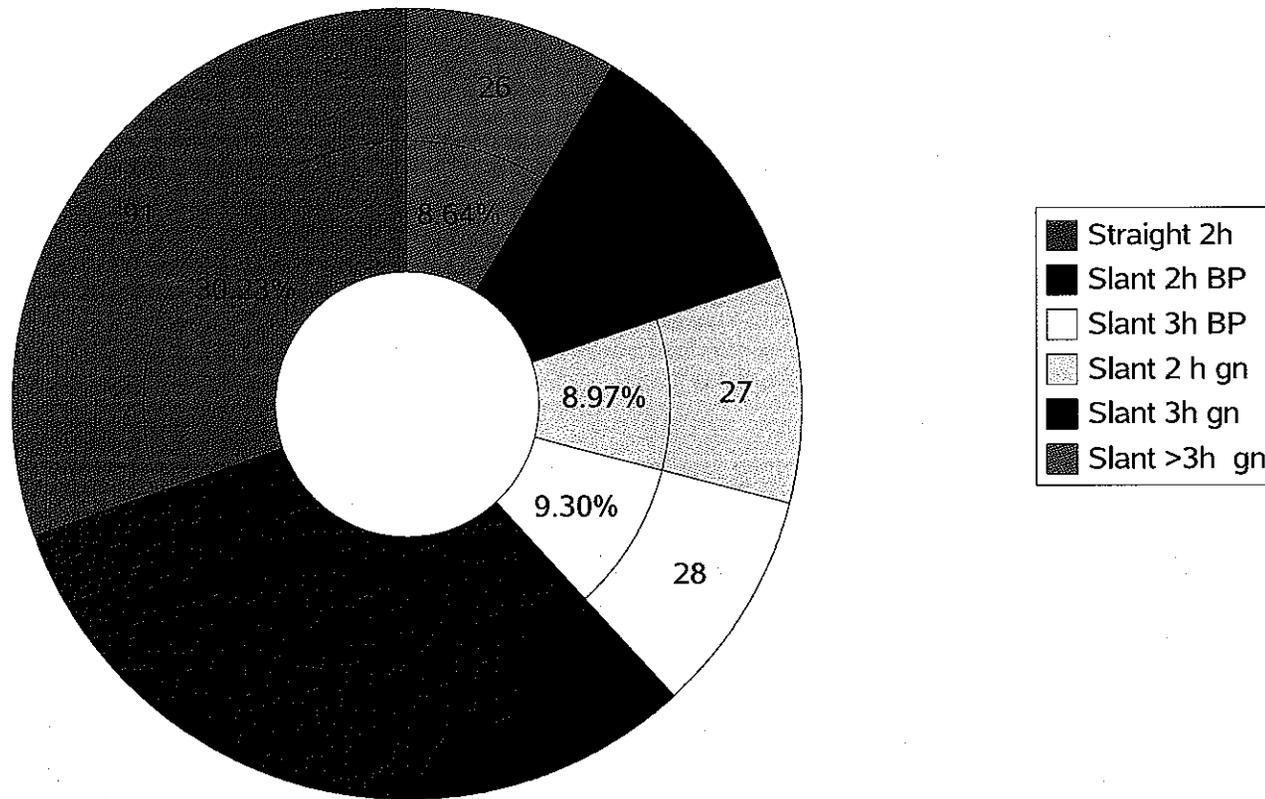
Trailer length by type min, avg, max



Trailer survey by ETRAC

>300 trailers logged

Trailer count and % by type



Trailer summary

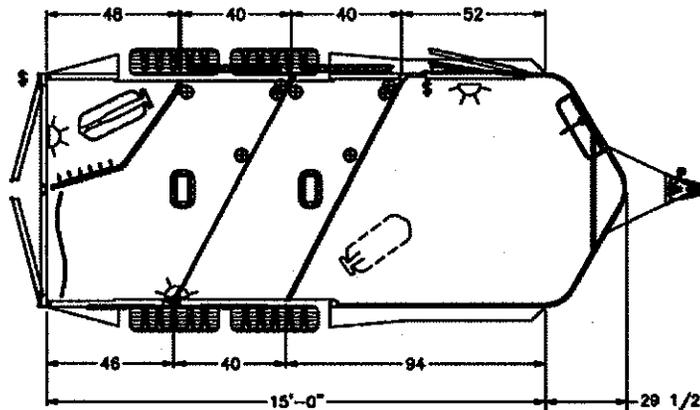
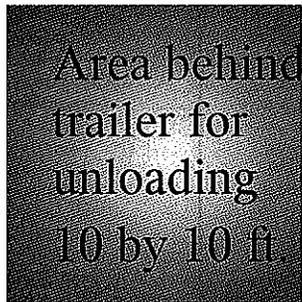
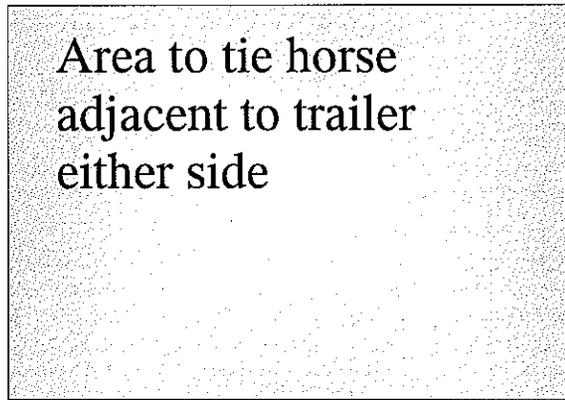
- 70% of trailers meet 16 ft avg. bumper pull length.
Straight 2h-bp, Slant 2h-bumper pull and slant 2h-goose neck.
- 90% of trailers will meet 20 ft avg. bumperpull length
This adds in 3 horse bumper pull and 3 horse goose neck trailers.

Recommendation to accommodate up to 20 Ft bumper pull equivalent trailers.

- 20 Ft. bumperpull length is equal to a 25 Ft. goose neck trailer
Gooseneck trailer mount to ball location is approx. 5ft.

Requested Rig Area

10 ft from
trailer



Drawing shown: 2H with 52" dressing room

- **50 FT. By 20 ft wide space recommended**
- 20 foot truck, 20 ft trailer, plus 10 ft unloading zone. Equates to 6 parking spots
- Request 10ft by trailer length to tie horses. Preferred over separate tie area and keeps horse droppings on controlled area
- Need area behind trailer to unload. Recommendation of 10ft. By 10ft area
- Preference is pull along slots end to end over parallel.
- Optional sign on 2 trailer slots "Equestrian parking or overflow" and Equestrian parking only on remaining 2



5/2/08

ETRAC, M Bushue

6

ATTACHMENT 2 – Letter from Dr Mary Hufty

San Mateo County Planning Commission
455 County Center, 2nd floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th floor
Oakland, CA 94612

To Whom This May Concern,

As a physician with a keen interest in community health and well being I am writing in support of the article submitted by Faye Brophy DVM et al which informs the opinion that riding horses on trails and in streams have only beneficial health effects. I have been in family practice in Northern California for 25 years. For the last 18 years I have been at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, which services a large percent of the population of the Peninsula. In addition to an active practice, I am Chairman of the Health Maintenance and Prevention Guidelines for Palo Alto Medical Foundation and the greater Sutter Health System. My work keeps me in direct contact with the dire needs for exercise, contact with nature and outdoor adventure of the people I serve.

I have never encountered an infectious disease or diarrheal illness that could in any way be attributed to horses. The risk of infection or illness from shared use of water or from manure or urine in stream water is as close to zero as we can predict in medicine. Considering the size of the equine presence on our Peninsular Trails I would support that the overall environmental effect is positive.

My experience as a hiker is that the surface of trails is improved by shared use with horses; the compaction and irregularity of the trail tread improves traction and decreases slips and falls. Trails that are only used by pedestrians become too slick and narrow for optimal safety and hiking pleasure.

However, my strongest opinion on trail safety is that the presence of horses keeps trails open and the tread natural. The necessity of keeping metal horseshoes off slippery concrete or asphalt results in a huge improvement in safety for users in general. A child's fall while walking or running on dirt is 5x less likely to result in death than a child's fall on asphalt. Concrete has closer to an 8X increase in risk of death. This statistic should be considered prior to any recreational trail limiting equestrian use. Equestrians will always be your strongest ally for a natural trail tread, although both hikers and bikers enjoy the feel and look of a dirt path.

Finally, I cannot resist speaking to the fear of nature and large animals, which has permeated the last 50 years of outdoor activity. Park users and the general public must have the opportunity to interact with the plants and animals that have as much right to be in the Peninsula's parks and open spaces as we do and perhaps more. We have occupied so much of the space that they need already. The role of animals and the outdoors in decreasing illnesses including depression, heart disease, hypertension, attention disorder and criminality has been well documented in the medical and psychological literature. We must do everything we can to keep the outdoor experience as vibrant as possible.

Respectfully yours,

Mary Page Hufty, MD

210



Golden Gate Audubon Society

2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G • Berkeley, California 94702
Phone: (510) 843-2222 • Fax: (510) 843-5351 • Email: ggas@compuserve.com

Americans Committed to Conservation • A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

July 22, 2008

National Park Service
General Management Planning Team – GGNRA
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Dear Sirs:

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, representing about 6000 members in San Francisco and the Bay Area, wishes to thank the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the National Park Service for the opportunity to comment on the General Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

In general, the Golden Gate Audubon Society wishes to express our support for Alternative 2. We oppose major elements of Alternatives 1 and 3. Our detailed comments explain our position. We did not comment on Muir Woods or other Marin County areas. Most of our comments are limited to Alcatraz Island and San Francisco.

Our comments are being submitted by mail and on line. Attached are our comments.

Very truly yours,

Daniel P. Murphy
Conservation Committee

Comments of the Golden Gate Audubon Society regarding the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement: Newsletter 4. Spring 2008, for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument: July 22, 2008

ALCATRAZ ISLAND

There are many problems with Alternative 1 that make it inappropriate for this or any other unit of the National Park System. The categorical denial of the natural values of the island is unacceptable. Of particular concern is that the section "Arrival Area including the entry pier and Building 64" needs a natural history element. We oppose opening closed areas to the public. This would cause irreparable environmental damage to seabirds. Building more amenities such as a hotel is completely inappropriate for Alcatraz. It is actually a contrast to the actual history of the island in which prisoners were kept in strict confinement. The idea that sensitive wildlife areas need preservation is incomplete. Cliffs are the most significant element of habitat that needs preservation and they aren't even mentioned. Management of gulls to reduce conflicts in core visitor use areas could well mean shooting or poisoning gulls. This is a terrible idea for an agency that is supposed to preserve the natural elements of our parks. Human impacts need to be controlled. We oppose the Diverse Opportunities Zone in favor of maintaining the status quo. We oppose removal of rubble from the Parade Ground and any efforts to manage bird populations to accommodate enhanced visitor access. Should the "Natural Zone" proposed in Alternative 1 be adopted it would require the destruction of significant bird habitat. Closing seabird colonies, particularly cliffs, during the nesting season only would compromise their value as roosting sites. All access points above cliff dwelling birds should be permanently closed.

Should alternative 1 be adopted there are significant problems associated with it that must be considered. First is the matter of fresh water. It would seem the only way to provide an ample supply of fresh water for the proposed amenities would be to install a pipeline to San Francisco. That must be made part of this proposal if it goes further. Second is the matter of supplying food, laundry services, trash removal and all the other things that are part of a major resort. Maintaining a residential visitor complex will require a considerably greater activity on the island and that must be

addressed as well. For those reasons, as well as the impact on wildlife, we oppose Alternative 1.

We oppose Alternative 3 because it too would reduce bird habitat and underemphasize the natural values of the island.

We support Alternative 2 for Alcatraz. Specifically, we support improvements to the arrival/departure area and Building 64 that include wildlife and environmentally friendly design. Access to wildlife that would be disruptive to their nesting or their roosting should be limited to researchers and park staff and volunteers. Food services should be limited and no human food should be permitted on the island's trails or outdoor areas. Beside interpreting the island's history, it is critical that the National Park Service improve the interpretation of the island's natural history. As one of the west coast's most easily accessible, and most significant, seabird colonies, the natural history interpretation of Alcatraz should equal that of its historic interpretation.

ALTERNATIVES FOR SAN FRANCISCO

For the most part, Golden Gate Audubon supports Alternative 2 for the San Francisco coastline. We don't agree with any alternative for Land's End and we have significant questions about alternatives for Ocean Beach and Fort Funston.

FORT MASON: The presence of the community garden and its value for the public and for the wildlife it attracts is significant. It should be mentioned as a fixture that will remain at Fort Mason. Much of the rest of upper Fort Mason possesses significant habitat areas. The trees over the batteries, the eucalyptus and palms all have value in our urban landscape and should be preserved. It would probably be wise to develop a reforestation plan for this area since it is likely the trees are at or near the end of their expected lifespan.

LANDS END: We do not concur with any of the alternatives for Land's End. This area possesses two very significant assets that need to be described and need to be addressed. First, the exotic habitat has significant value for migrating birds in both spring and fall. It is likely hundreds of migrants stop along Lands End, and in fact the entire coastline to the Golden

Gate Bridge, during spring migration. Landbirds migrating along the coastal edge of the Pacific Flyway depend on the resources available on this stretch of GGNRA to continue their migration northward over the channel of the Golden Gate. In fall thousands of birds follow the coast southward and may stop to feed after long and stressful migratory flights from the north. Of course this is a rich bird habitat for resident and wintering birds as well, but it is most significant for migrants and it must be acknowledged as such. The second element that must be addressed in this document is the recreational value of Lands End for birders. Particularly during September and October, Lands End is a heavily used birding site in San Francisco. Since rare birds regularly stop in the area, birders visit the area to see them. This recreational activity should be acknowledged and supported in this document.

We do not concur that native habitat and natural process should be restored. It would be far more prudent to support much of the existing urban habitat. Some exotic trees provide critical feeding, roosting and nesting habitat for many bird species. Blackberry, fennel, and other exotic plants support migrating birds in fall. It would be far more productive to focus restoration on opening springs and seeps, and controlling exotic species like cape ivy and ice plan that provide little or no habitat value and in fact destroy habitat. The goal for this is area should be one in which a balance between our urban exotic plant community and our natural plant community share the site. It is critical that when trees are trimmed they are not left devoid of all deadwood as was the case in the recent work done between Merrie Way and the Lands End Parking Lot. It would be most productive to develop a snag policy in which guidelines are developed for dead limbs and for standing dead trees.

FORT MILEY: This area should be treated much the same as Lands End. We oppose increased vehicle access. We are concerned that no mention is made of its value to migratory birds. Like Lands End, Fort Miley is a significant resource to spring and fall migrating birds and to the birders who enjoy them. Another element that is missing from this and all other areas of this plan is the historic value of trees around batteries. The groves of mixed eucalyptus, pine and cypress were presumably planted to provide some level of cover from aerial surveillance. They should be a significant part of the historic interpretation of the gun emplacements. The trees also provide islands of habitat critical to migratory birds. Like on Alcatraz, both a historic/cultural value and a natural history value should form the foundation for preservation and interpretation.

It would be wise to identify significant natural resources for Fort Miley. Beach tansy and other more common native plants have been found near Battery Chester and Fort Miley. This is the only area in San Francisco where chipmunks have been observed recently. This is the only population of these native mammals in the north peninsula. Increased public access could threaten them. As with other parts of GGNRA, increased access would also be accompanied by the release of feral cats and by an increased number of off-leash dogs. Both of these would impact birds, mammals and native plant communities.

OCEAN BEACH: We have serious concerns about Alternative 1. While expanded visitor amenities including a coastal promenade may seem attractive and may be part of a major project in the future, it must be constructed in conjunction with a plan to preserve a dune structure that will probably have to be supported with infusion of sand from some other source. Even if there is no construction along the beach, it is important to support a beach and dune community that provides habitat for Western Snowy Plovers and other shorebirds, gulls and terns that roost there. That dune structure must include the following: a flat, tide washed flat beach, a foredune with a brack line and a loose low dune formation; a dune line that is high enough to provide refuge during extremely high tides, particularly ones that are enhanced by winter storms. Dogs should not be permitted on this stretch of beach. Human activity should be restricted during the peak hours of winter high tides. During those tides dunes can become islands and the only refuge for shorebirds. Allowing people to compete with them for the dune tops creates an unnecessary stress on the birds. This is a manageable problem that should be adopted for the area between Noreiga and Santiago Sts. Any plan adopted for this area should be consistent with the Western Snowy Plover Recovery Plan.

Though we support Alternative 2 it is important that any alternative that is adopted must include a minimum of two wildlife protection zones. First is the area is used by Western Snowy Plovers. The other is the beach and adjoining bluffs at north end of Fort Funston where the Bank Swallows nest.

We are concerned about the proposal in Alternative 2 regarding the Natural Zone in the southern portion of Ocean Beach. We assume that refers to the beach south of the north parking lot at Fort Funston on the Great Highway. We agree that natural processes should be allowed to proceed along the

beach between Fort Funston and southward to Mussel Rock. However that is inconsistent with other plans to preserve Battery Davis as described in Alternative 2 for Fort Funston.

Actually, it would be much more clear if Ocean Beach were divided into 3 zones. Zone 1, from the north end of the beach to Lincoln Way, could be managed for maximum visitor beach use. Zone 2, from Lincoln Way south to Fort Funston, would encompass that area of beach inhabited by many shorebirds, provides habitat suitable for wintering Western Snowy Plovers, has a dune feature and may need to be managed to protect infrastructure associated with the Great Highway. This zone needs special attention that would preserve natural values and city infrastructure while permitting recreational access consistent with those preservation goals. Should a promenade be part of the eventual plan for this zone it should be one designed to focus some recreational activity on it and not the beach. Zone 3, from Fort Funston to Mussel Rock should be viewed like the area described as the southern portion of Ocean Beach.

GGAS favors measured habitat restoration on Ocean Beach. We are particularly concerned about *Ammophila arenaria*. It needs to be removed wherever it exists and replaced with appropriate native vegetation. Ice plant is another species that needs to be controlled.

FORT FUNSTON: The alternatives for Fort Funston are questionable across all alternatives. Battery Davis is our first concern. If it is preserved as a historic seacoast fortification it will be in conflict with the goal of permitting natural process to prevail on the beach. It would be better to maintain the fortification until it is threaten by erosion. A removal plan should be in place, because when the cliffs erode to the point they threaten the battery, there will be a significant threat to the public and to the resource. It would be best at this point to develop a plan for it's removal when the times comes.

Discussion of the Natural Zone in Alternative 2 is completely inadequate. Preservation of Bank Swallow habitat must be incorporated in this alternative and in the others. It should be noted that there are only 3 Bank Swallow colonies remaining on the entire California Coast. This is down from over 50 historic colonies. Sadly, the Fort Funston colony is the largest of the three. It needs to be recognized as an almost unique resource and it needs special protection that must be defined in this document.

The terrace that composes upper Fort Funston is dealt with inadequately. If dog walking is to be allowed at all, it should be in a designated zone, not everywhere. The restored areas at the north end of Fort Funston and the at the south end bordering the Olympic Club should be acknowledged and they should be expanded so they are contiguous. If any historic interpretation is adopted, it should include preservation of tree cover at Battery Davis, at the Y intersection and along the Skyline Grove. All three are historic features planted by the US Army to provide some cover for the fortifications there. They were viable with brush understory until off-leash dogs were allowed to run free through the entire area. As a result one of San Francisco's most productive fall birding areas was lost. It would be wise to restore the understory with vegetation similar to that used by the army and not with natives. Like Land's End, Fort Funston should be vegetated with a mix of native and non native plants so it reflects it's natural and historic vegetation types. We urge the National Park Service to enforce the same regulation here as they do in all units of our National Parks by restricting dogs to paved areas and requiring the use of leashes.

OFFSHORE MARINE AREAS: We are deeply distressed with the narrow interpretation of marine areas. Though we support the concept of a marine reserve to protect seabirds and marine mammals from Eagle's Point to Seal Rocks, we think it is far too limited. That protection should include the entire channel of the Golden Gate. We do not object to use of that area for aquatic commerce, but it should be preserved as a natural resource as well. We also strongly support designation of the waters offshore from Fort Funston as part of marine reserve. Not only does this area support a rich and varied fishery, it also provides resources for tens of thousands of seabirds. Birds roost on the waters throughout the year. Summering shearwaters sometimes feed as close as the surf zone. Diving ducks flock in large numbers and feed on bivalves on the ocean's bottom. Loons and grebes can number in the thousands. This is truly an incredible resource that needs protection. The threat comes from development like the sewage pipeline from the Westside Sewage Treatment Plant that apparently was laid on top of a significant feeding area for wintering scoters. It also comes from dumping sand and dredged material to replenish Ocean Beach. The impact of commercial fishing should be evaluated in terms of its effects on native birds..

A survey should be done of the entire coast of GGNRA to determine exactly what areas provide significant habitat resources to be included in the marine reserve. Mori Point is one such area that is likely to be significant.

SAN MATEO COUNTY

Our comments regarding San Mateo County are very limited. We support Alternative 2. We are specifically favorable to the plan to designate Mori Point a sensitive resource zone. Trails should be constructed in such a way that they direct people away from sensitive habitat areas. It would be prudent to plan for the eventual restoration of Laguna Salada.

While not being specific about the SFPUC Watershed, GGAS does not support additional access to the watershed. Should a plan be developed to allow additional access it should be highly restricted. Access should be restricted to foot traffic and all hikers should be accompanied by trained staff or docents. The San Francisco Peninsula Watershed is home to more listed species than all of GGNRA. One probable reason for that is that the land has not been grazed and over used by people. It is our position that it should remain, for all intents and purposes, a habitat refuge in which a very small part of the Bay Area's natural history is preserved. Activities that might threaten that goal are inappropriate and should be prohibited.



Marin Audubon Society

P.O. Box 599 | MILL VALLEY, CA 94942-0599 | MARINAUDUBON.ORG

July 30, 2008

Stephan Nofield
12795 West Alameda parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

RE: COMMENTS ON GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
MANAGEMENT PLAN

Dear Mr. Nofield:

The Marin Audubon Society appreciates the opportunity to comment on the GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (GGNRA) currently being considered for revision. We are a 50©)(3) organization whose mission is to protect wildlife and their habitat. We have a long history of support for and working with GGNRA advocating protection of its unique natural resources. Our general comments are below and we have enclosed specific comments on sites in Marin County, the Muir Woods National Monument and, because of its importance as a breeding colony for seabirds, Alcatraz Island.

Our interest is in preserving GGNRA's wildlife and habitats while encouraging enjoyment and use by people that does not adversely impact native ecosystems, habitats and wildlife. These extensive and diverse habitats are the basis of a healthy environment for people and for wildlife. We support reconnecting fragments that have been isolated, ensuring movement corridors for wildlife, minimizing or avoiding the impact of invasive species, and focusing on protecting native ecosystems.

In the overall, Marin Audubon Society supports Alternative 2 because it is generally the most protective of natural resources. We welcome a continued opportunity to partner with the Park to protect its natural resources. We recommend that the Park's sensitive lands be protected and enhance for its sensitive, rare, threatened and endangered species, and for all of the other native species that depend on the Park's habitats as well.

Protection of the natural environment and unique natural resources should be emphasized over cultural resources. We have no problem with maintaining and sustaining existing legacies of human occupation, such as the lighthouses, defense structures, historic buildings, and archaeological site but this should not be at the expense of the natural environment.. GGNRA should have the goal of protecting our natural heritage and our natural heritage is our native

ecosystems. There is no need to give people "something to do." Being out in natural habitats should be a goal in itself.

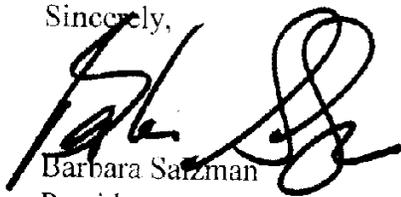
Concerning the description of Alternative 1, we are interested in protecting and enhancing the "landscapes" but we view them as habitats for wildlife and people. These habitats, and the wildlife that depend on them, must be respected, recognized as important resources and protected. The spectacular diversity and uniqueness of the GGNRA environment is the experience that people should have.

More development in the form of new buildings and extensive new trails is not needed. Modest signage to welcome visitors, provide directions, use of existing historic buildings, and low-key interpretive information encouraging people to experience the natural environment is most appropriate. If the emphasis is placed on the resources, the experience people have will take care of itself.

Regarding the description of Alternative 3, we see no need to "highlight" the facilities mentioned, the Golden Gate, Highway 1, Army buildings etc. They are impressive facilities and make their own statement. Scenic and historic facilities and places should be recognized and explained, but there is no need to dwell on them. Only to tell people their story. It is time to ensure our natural resources are protected, and recognized as an essential part of our heritage.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Sarzman', written over a printed name and title.

Barbara Sarzman
President

ALTERNATIVES FOR MARIN COUNTY

Stinson Beach and Environs

We support components of Alternative 2 that include maintaining or reducing the current level of use; considering public transit; restoring natural processes at Easkoot Creek, the riparian corridor, the sand dunes; and restoring the south parking lot to wetlands; and managing the rest of the land to protect coastal ecosystems; and contributing to the restoration of Bolinas lagoon.

For Alternative 1 we recommend against active beach recreation and not expanding food and other concessions etc. These services would introduce increased impact from litter, smells, and other problems with people services such as these. Providing alternative transportation is a positive component of this alternative.

Hwy 1 and Panoramic Highway

We support the greater emphasis on coastal ecosystems protection under Alternative 2. For Alternatives 1 and 3 we do not oppose adding a few overlooks provided no natural habitats would be destroyed or damaged. There are many areas along the coast, however, where viewing is possible, so we question the need for this development. The scenic rural environment should be protected. Construction of overlooks should avoid, not just minimize, habitat impacts and be subject to thorough environmental review.

Slide Ranch

Moving all or some of Slide Ranch would enable restoration of a more complex habitat at Big Lagoon. Relocating the entire ranch would necessitate thorough environmental review to ensure there would not be increased impacts at the new location.

Marin Headlands/Forts Barry and Cronkhite

Our preferred alternative is 2, however, we do not support aiming for higher public uses. Rodeo Valley, the Fort Cronkhite ponds provide important habitat for waterfowl, diving birds, and some seabirds. They are particularly important as refugia during storms and rough waters in ocean. Maintenance and visitor use of bunkers and historical buildings is fitting, but expanding "military identity" is uncalled for. Habitat preservation should be paramount.

Further, why would habitat for just endangered and special status species be protected? This area is habitat for many native migratory birds and other wildlife that should also be protected as they are part of the native ecosystem. Habitat should be restored and maintained for all native species. We recommend no higher levels of visitor use, and support controlled use. This Alternative should clearly recognize wildlife protection as major goal.

Alternative 1 We oppose any new construction. There are plenty of opportunities available hike, bird watch, horseback ride, walk, photography, to name just a few. Additional uses are not needed. The trails are already accessible and people can already picnic. No new facilities are needed.

Alternative 3 Recognizing military history is one thing, but history does not need to be "made alive." It is the historic buildings and facilities that are of interest.

Capehart Housing

We support Alternative 2 which would remove Capehart housing. These buildings have no historic significance and, in fact, are unattractive. There also have been a number of problems with behavior of residents which have contributed to problems for native wildlife, the management of which seems to create additional problems for staff. Restoration of the riparian and upland habitat is in the public interest.

Conzelman, Bunker, and McCullough Roads

Alternative 2 will benefit by restoring coastal habitats particularly for Mission Blue butterfly. Public access should be tightly controlled.

For Alternatives 1 and 3, only limited trail improvements should be made. Any new trails should be subject to environmental review to ensure they do not destroy or degrade any habitats.

Kirby Cove

Unlike Alternative 2 in other locations, this alternative does not recognize Kirby Cove's habitat values. Any camping should be subject to protection of habitats. Care should be taken to ensure the Water Trail use and trailheads construction does not cause impacts to coastal habitats and wildlife.

Alternatives 2 and 3 camping is already provided and should not be significantly increased.

Point Bonita, Historic Light House and Related Structures

We have no problem with preserving these historic structures should be preserved but any alternative chosen should not adversely impact diving bird species that use the deeper waters off these coasts. The waters off of this area attracts diving birds species that do not occur in most other locations in the Bay. Management of the Water Trail should not be a part of Alternative 2. We oppose management for high levels of visitor use in the sheltered Ft. Baker area where the use of the sheltered lagoon by sea birds is already being impacts. There already is enough use. We support restriction of visitor resources in marine environment for all three alternatives.

Offshore Marine Environment Fort Baker, Muir Beach and Point Bonita

Alternative 2 We are concerned that the "high levels of visitor use" that is suggested would result in adverse impacts to the diving birds that use these offshore waters. Care should be taken to ensure that boat use, including users of the Water Trail, do not disturb rafting seabirds and diving birds that occur in these waters. Implementation of a Water Trail launch area must be accompanied by a requirement for regular monitoring of impacts and a commitment that enforcement be provided to ensure the species are not harassed. Sensitive marine resources should be protected.

Muir Woods National Monument

Generally Marin Audubon supports Alternative 2 because its goal is to achieve the highest level of natural resource protection. We particularly support controlling visitor access.

All activities, educational or otherwise, should be passive and designed to lead the visitor to appreciate and participate in the unique and majestic experience of an old growth redwood forest, which exists few places in the world. We support removal of buildings, restoring natural conditions of Redwood Creek, restoring floodplain functions, and creating conditions to allow the creek to naturally meander. This would be a great benefit to spawning salmon. We support this alternative's emphasis on protection of this unique redwood ecosystem.

We also support redesign of the trail system, to accommodate fewer visitors. We do not object to trail remaining in the floodplain as long as it is recognized it may flood during some winter rainy periods, but we do support restoration of natural processes as the primary goal.

Concerning possible relocation of trails, GGNRA needs to assess possible adverse impacts of relocating the trail. Could there be more environmentally sensitive conditions and impacts, such as erosion potential, tree removal and/or habitat loss, with relocating elsewhere? All trails should have a natural surface. Removal of paved surfaces which were installed by GGNRA some years ago, after which the trees began to show signs of decline, is long overdue.

Comments on other Alternatives:

Under Alternative 1 Muir Woods would be managed to provide a national park experience which would include various activities. In our view the best educator is experiencing nature itself. Buildings and simply take people away from this magnificent forest. Improved access means more people and larger crowds which detract from this primeval forest and its quiet atmosphere.

Alternative 3 would create a museum type experience which is unnecessary and out of place in this majestic habitat. We appreciate that visitor use would be carefully limited but wonder if this simply means there would be more trails that people would be limited to. We think theme trails are an unnecessary distraction from the majestic nature of this natural ecosystem. Any trail relocation should be carefully evaluated to ensure the construction and use impacts would not be worse than where they are now.

Alcatraz Island

Marin Audubon supports Alternative 2 as the alternative that is the most protective of Alcatraz's incredibly rich and diverse avian resources, however, for the reasons listed below, this alternative has some aspects that would be detrimental. In particular establishing food service opening the Parade Ground.

With the removal of the prison and intensive human uses, wildlife have recolonized Alcatraz and it has become the most diverse and intensely used island for breeding and roosting seabirds in the Bay and probably along the Coast as well. Certainly the use of Alcatraz by wildlife goes back many centuries, but this historic use has not been documented and recognized. While the human historical uses are emphasized these days, in our view Alcatraz's bird life ranks up with the Galapagos and as a single island probably has more diversity and populations than most of the Galapagos. Protection of its current and historic natural resources should be emphasized in all planning. Unfortunately, none of the alternatives currently described would provide adequate protection for natural resources.

For all alternatives, we strongly oppose introduction of food service because of potential adverse impacts. Food service will create conditions that will incite the gulls to become more aggressive increased trash, negative interactions between people and birds, and increased predators (rats) which can significantly impact nesting colonies by eating eggs.

Overnight Accommodations (camping, hotel) should not be introduced because the increased human activity, lighting, food use and noise, all of which would adversely impact the nesting colonies and roosting birds. It would increase the risk of extensive disturbance because, unless guards were present at the nesting areas all night, it would provide opportunities for people to go into closed nesting areas and cause significant disturbance. This could lead to abandonment of colonies.

We have the following specific recommendations about Alternative 2 to best ensure it does not create conditions that will degrade natural resources:

1. Close all maintenance and access areas during nesting season (February to September) Seasonal To reduce disturbance potential to nesting birds.
2. In the Marine Zone, designate a 300-foot closure along the northeastern, south and west perimeter areas as no-use zones during seabird breeding season from February to September. The buoys that once circled the island should be replaced to noticing boaters that boats are prohibited. Also, access to these colonies from above on the island must be restricted during breeding season.
3. Maintain natural areas around the Laundry building, Model Industries building, the Parade Grounds, the western side of the island and the rubble piles which are important breeding habitat. Particularly during breeding season, visitors and maintenance activity should be prohibited. Maintenance on the landscape between the dock and cellhouse should be conducted during the

Fall and Winter months only, when the seabirds are not nesting.

4. Establish seasonal closures of Agave Trail and the Parade Ground to protect sensitive breeding birds (Western and California Gulls, Brandt's Cormorants, breeding on the cliffs below the Parade Ground, Pigeon Guillemots nesting on the cliffs below Agave Trail.

5. Use of the West Road for cormorant colony viewing should be allowed with caution and only with docent led tours to ensure adequate control, so that people do not impact the colony. Studies and observations have demonstrated that signs alone will not work to ensure visitors do not disrupt and destroy bird colonies.

Regarding other Alternatives.

Alternative 1

(See discussion above about food service and overnight use)

We strongly oppose opening the Parade Ground and Laundry buildings to visitor use at all, much less for high use access. Furthermore the concept of "managing" the gulls in the "core visitor" areas Parade Ground is unrealistic and impossible. The Parade Ground is the largest non-disturbed area of Western Gull and Black-crowned Night Heron breeding habitat and the only breeding for California Gulls. The Laundry building is a breeding site for Western Gulls and Brandt's Cormorants nest adjacent to the building. Allowing these to be high use areas would have widespread and significant impact to these species. Further, there is potential for significant destruction of breeding Black Oystercatchers, Pelagic Cormorant and Pigeon Guillemot along the seawall under the laundry buildings.

Using the Model Industries Building for Park operations would also adversely impact Pigeon Guillemots, Black Oystercatchers and Black-crowned Nigh Herons

Opening the Agave Trail, lower walkways, walkway between Barker Beach and Greenhouse Gardens corridor around perimeter of the island all would have significant adverse impact to nesting birds in the vicinity. We urge that these trail not be opened.

Alternative 3 -

This alternative could have significant adverse impacts from major renovation of many island structures with no recognition that nesting season February to September should be avoided. Moderate to high use areas are proposed in and around Model Industry's building should be dropped. Because this area is used by many of the birds to raise young, this use would eliminate most of the breeding habitat, would cause the birds to concentrate in other areas thereby increasing predation and disturbance in all other areas. Of particular concern is that only places Black Oystercatchers and Pelagic Cormorants nest is the Model Industries and Laundry Building areas.

The proposal for a 1,000 foot Historic Immersion Zone around the island could be beneficial to the birds, but only if on the on-island activities were restricted. Otherwise there would be disturbance from above which would significantly reduce or destroy the nesting seabird colony.

226



Marin Conservation League

1623A Fifth Avenue • San Rafael, CA 94901

(415) 485-6257 • Fax (415) 485-6259

e-mail: mcl@marinconservationleague.org • website: www.marinconservationleague.org

Board of Directors

Nona Dennis
President

Daniel Sonnet
1st Vice President

Roger Roberts
2nd Vice President

Charles Brousse
Secretary

Kenneth Drexler
Treasurer

Ron Albert
Peter Asmus
Betsy Bikle
Priscilla Bull
Joe Bunker
Tymber Cavasian
Carson Cox
Bruce Fullerton
Brannon Ketcham
Michelle Passero
Tim Rosenfeld
Scott Shepardson
Larry Smith
Susan Stompe
Periann Wood

Tim Nardell
Legal Counsel

Dru Parker
Operations Manager

Jessica Leah Grace
Administrative Coordinator

National Park Service
General Management Planning Team - GGNRA
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, Colo. 80225-0287

July 31, 2008

Subject: Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and Muir Woods National Monument Management Plan

Dear Sirs:

Marin Conservation League (MCL) is pleased to submit this letter in response to the request for comments on the GGNRA-Muir Woods National Monument General Management Plan as proposed in the Spring 2008 Newsletter #4 describing Preliminary Alternatives. Our responses focus on Preliminary Alternatives for Marin County and are presented in two sections – comments of a general nature, and comments on specific locales within the planning area.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

MCL urges you to place the greatest possible emphasis on Concept 2 – Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems throughout Marin County. In a few specific instances we recommend a different alternative. These exceptions are noted below.

We note that the differences among the three alternative management concepts are subtle but, nevertheless, distinct in their emphasis. While the other two concepts/alternatives do not ignore natural resources and ecological systems, Concept 2 gives special attention to restoration and preservation as well as maintenance of these systems – e.g., reconnection of fragmented habitat, recovery and survival of special status species and wildlife, and restoration of natural processes. We believe that Marin County could be a showplace within the GGNRA for natural resource stewardship by emphasizing protection and restoration of the ecosystems here.

We recognize that the GGNRA is also about people and the history of settlement of the San Francisco Bay Area, and would like to point out that Concept/Alternative 2 also emphasizes the historical legacy associated with the physical challenges that settlers faced in their encounters with Marin's rugged coastal terrain and their reliance on the coastal ecosystem that sustained them. Placing the historical legacy



Recycled Paper

Marin County's Environmental Guardian

A nonprofit corporation founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance the natural assets of Marin County.

within the context of that ecosystem is central. Concept/Alternative 2 accomplishes this objective.

GGNRA is in the distinctive position of being in the center of a large urban area and will continue to experience high densities of visitor use, and, at the same time, will continue to offer exceptional opportunities for public education. The ecologically diverse natural systems within GGNRA and Marin provide the basis for offering public education about the sensitivities of these natural resources and the tools and practices that will be necessary to sustain them for the future enjoyment of generations to come. The Park's reputation in the long term will rely not only upon how well it has protected and preserved the coastal ecosystems that are its foundation, but also on how well it has educated the public regarding their protection and preservation. Concept/Alternative 2 emphasizes this objective.

Nevertheless, the allocation of management zones under Concept/Alternative 2 reflects the fact that, even with the emphasis on natural system restoration and preservation, there are specific areas that are less sensitive to human uses and, therefore, can tolerate more active use such as for camping and educational activities. We find those uses generally acceptable, but wish to underline the fact that the Marin County portions of the GGNRA are very diverse in ecosystems and historic and current human uses. Generally the connections between habitats should be improved, with emphasis upon preserving significant habitats and biological diversity. At the same time, the area should be accessible for nonprofit group educational activities, support other nonprofit uses such as the Headlands Institute and Marine Mammal Center, very limited commercial use to support tourism, and passive recreation such as camping, hiking, bird-watching, etc. Concept/Alternative 2 recognizes this diversity of low impact functions by recommending that existing facilities continue with limited improvements for the sake of public safety and the scenic enjoyment of visitors.

Another general point that we wish to make concerns how the GGNRA Management Plan will be coordinated with management of adjoining public lands, such as the Mt. Tamalpais State Park, Marin County Parks and Open Space District lands, and Marin Municipal Water District watershed lands, so as to accomplish common goals of natural resource protection and preservation in the face of increasing public use. Balancing the needs of the entire Marin ecosystem with the inevitable pressures for recreational uses by the regional populace requires the close collaboration and cooperation of all these entities in a sustainable manner. This requires an organizational structural response as well as joint policy and program planning and coordinated enforcement strategies.

We also urge you to review the new Marin Countywide Plan, adopted November 2007 after an exhaustive public review process. Many important natural systems policies and programs deserve your consideration. To the extent possible, GGNRA Management Plan policies and programs should at the least be congruent and consistent with those established in the Countywide Plan, e.g., streamside and wetland protection measures and standards for trail design, uses, and connections.

We note that the GGNRA Management Plan does not give clear direction on what will be done with its trail system under the various alternatives. Perhaps that was an oversight or will be addressed separately. However, many of the public uses, including occasional conflicts of the GGNRA in Marin are associated with trail use for walkers, runners, horses, dogs, and bicycles. It would be helpful for the Management Plan to elaborate more fully on GGNRA's plans with regard to its trail system under the three Concepts/Alternatives.

A major focus of restoration of the native coastal ecosystem is the removal of exotic vegetation including eucalyptus, broom and other invasives, and their replacement with native plants. The GGNRA Management Plan should incorporate objectives for addressing this issue. In this connection, the GGNRA Management Plan should consider establishing a direct seeding program for oak and buckeye and other native plant species as an effective way to restore native plant communities. Most federal parks use nursery seedlings that are planted out and have to be cared for until they become established. Direct seeding, however, with locally harvested nuts and seeds is well suited to re-establishing native habitat with the least amount of attention and without supplemental irrigation.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS BY SUB-AREA:

Muir Woods:

Overview: The approach to “managing” Muir Woods should place the highest emphasis on restoring the primeval character of old growth redwood forest and its natural functions. Visitor use is inevitable and important in its global importance as a World Heritage site, but visitation should be secondary if we expect the ecosystem to be self – sustaining over the long term. We are in the unhappy circumstance of possibly “loving the place to death.”

Arrival and Entry: This area should be reduced in size to allow Redwood Creek a more natural floodplain. Visitor access should rely upon an expanded shuttle service, and physical improvements for visitors, including shops and most administration should be relocated.

Redwood Forest and Redwood Creek: The natural conditions of the redwood forest and floodplain should be preserved and where necessary, restored (e.g. habitat along Redwood Creek within the Monument) to the greatest extent possible. We are emphatic that this is not an “outdoor museum!” The cultural history of Muir Woods is secondary to the long-term integrity of the ecosystem.

Camino del Canon (Muir Woods Addition): This area, which has had a long history of human use, offers the opportunity for conservation education. It could accommodate both administration and education facilities for Muir Woods as well as provide for natural

landscape preservation. For this area we would recommend the Alternative Concept 1 approach.

Stinson Beach to Bolinas-Fairfax Road:

The current level of visitor services should continue without major expansion of services or facilities, except for renovation of deteriorating existing facilities. However, we do not believe that parking lots should be removed to allow wetland restoration in this case, given the absence of alternative land for parking in peak use periods. Any natural processes that affect Bolinas Lagoon should be managed to protect and promote the natural restoration of the Lagoon.

Highway 1 and Panoramic Highway:

Although we encourage placing emphasis on protecting and restoring the coastal ecosystem, this stretch of road is among the most scenic in the area. To improve safety, some improvements could be made, but must be done without threatening the “remote” esthetic quality of the area and without compromising the fragile coastal bluffs.

Slide Ranch:

Concept/Alternative 2 contemplates the removal of Slide Ranch to another undefined location. In the absence of information on where new alternative locations could be and how the transfer would be accomplished, we believe it should be retained in its present location as described in Concept/Alternative 1 (Connecting People with the Parks). Slide Ranch has a long and successful history of exposing people to both organic farming and our natural coastal ecosystems.

Golden Gate Dairy:

This site abuts Redwood Creek. Under Concept/Alternative 2 it is designated as an Evolved Cultural Landscape Zone. The GGNRA Management Plan as presented makes no mention of how this area will be managed with respect to its relation to Redwood Creek. It is important that there be a complete separation and control of “cultural” and other uses that would potentially impact Redwood Creek. Redwood Creek is habitat for endangered Coho Salmon, and protection of this resource should take priority over any “cultural” use of this site.

Tennessee Valley:

This is one of the most accessible and heavily used areas in Marin. It is enjoyed by a wide variety of visitors, including joggers, hikers, birders, families, senior citizens and equestrians as well as bikers. Expansion of parking and picnicking facilities at the trailhead are appropriate. Unused housing structures and other facilities should be

removed and the watershed restored to its natural condition. However, Concept/Alternative 2 contemplates removing roads and narrowing the main trail as well as removing dams and artificial ponds. The former reduces accessibility, and the latter has potential unknown impacts on wildlife and the beach. This deserves further study, and a Master Plan that might incorporate some of the contemplated uses in Concept/Alternative 1 (Connecting People with the Parks). In this connection, we question the need for either food-serving facilities or overnight accommodations anywhere in Tennessee Valley. The eastern watershed of Coyote Creek that provides entry to Tennessee Valley and lies within the GGNRA should be left as a Natural Zone without camping facilities.

Marin Headlands, Fort Barry and Fort Cronkhite:

This is another heavily used public area of the GGNRA, especially the Rodeo Lagoon, Cronkhite Beach, and certain upland areas dedicated to other park-compatible uses. We support the continuation of those various uses as indicated in Concept/Alternative 1 (Connecting People with Parks). We also support the designation of Rodeo Lagoon and most of the Rodeo Valley Uplands being managed as Sensitive Resources and Natural Zones. We question the compatibility of a warming hut and food service facility at this site, however.

Capeheart Housing Area:

The restoration and reconnection of habitat in this area is desirable. However, it is also advantageous to provide affordable workforce housing for park staff. The current amount of houses appears to exceed the needs for park staff. A combination of Alternatives 1 and 2 might be desirable, with only sufficient housing remaining to serve the needs of park staff.

In conclusion, Marin Conservation League appreciates the opportunity to comment on the GGNRA and Muir Woods National Monument Management Plan, and look forward to continued dialogue with GGNRA as you revise the Draft Plan and proceed to prepare the Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely yours,



Nona Dennis
President

cc. Mr. Brian O'Neill, Superintendent

July 31, 2008



P.O. Box 1115
Fairfax, CA 94978
voice (415) 456-3469
fax (415) 456-9344
www.marinbike.org

Board of Directors

Jerry Edelbrock, *President*
Scott Klimo, *Vice President*
Don Magdanz, *Secretary*
Julia Violich, *Treasurer*
Matt Adams
Maureen Gaffney
John Goggin
Stephen Hesson
Vince O'Brien
Alexander Price
Tom Woolley

Advisory Board

Mark Birnbaum
Joe Breeze
Tom Hale
Deb Hubsmith
Jim Jacobsen
Patrick Seidler

Staff

Kim Baenisch
Executive Director

Tom Boss
Membership Director

Jo Ann Richards
Database and Activities Coordinator

Bob Trigg
Administrator

Deb Hubsmith
Advocacy Director

David Hoffman
Director of Planning

Andy Peri
Advocacy Outreach Coordinator

Wendi Kallins
Safe Routes to Schools Director

Laura Kelly
Safe Routes Project Coordinator

Peggy Clark
Safe Routes Project Coordinator

Aviva Joseph
Safe Routes Teen Coordinator

Frances E. Barbour
Safe Routes Instructor

Heather Crawford
Safe Routes instructor

National Park Service
General Management Planning Team – GGNRA
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Re: Comments on Golden Gate NRA – General Management Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

The Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the General Management Plan for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. MCBC is a ten-year old member-based bicycle advocacy organization with over 1,000 members. We promote safe bicycling for everyday transportation and recreation. Since Marin County one of only four federal pilot communities in the United States related to advancing non-motorized transportation, MCBC is always looking for opportunities to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian improvements can be made into models for other communities nationwide.

MCBC attended the June 10 Open House at the San Francisco Bay Model Visitor Center related to the GGNRA General Management Plan. Our comments are based on information received at that meeting as well as Newsletter #4, published by the National Park Service.

As part of the General Management Plan ("the Plan"), MCBC wants to ensure that the following elements are included and supported in the Plan:

- Improving bicycle access and safety for all users – both on-road and off-road (including plans for on-road facilities such as bicycle lanes, shared use markings, separated pathways, signage, and bicycle parking),
- Expanding opportunities for creating loops within the Park for both transportation and recreation,
- Creating connections between communities whenever possible,
- Continually engaging community participation for any transportation-related projects within the Park,

- Promoting non-motorized transportation **within** the Park as a means to reduce our carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels while providing a healthy way to experience the Park,
- Promoting non-motorized transportation **to** the Park as a means to reduce our carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels while providing healthy access to the Park,
- Studying projects and methods that promote non-motorized transportation with the intent of having as little environmental impact as possible.

If you have questions, would like clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me via phone (415) 456-3469 x4# or email: david@marinbike.org.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hoffman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Hoffman, Director of Planning
Marin County Bicycle Coalition

Marin Green Dog Alliance

July 29, 2008

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
Attn: Stephan Nofield
12795 West Alameda Parkway
PO Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Dear Mr. Nofield:

Several of our members attended the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) Open House in Sausalito on June 10th and we have reviewed the three alternatives outlined in the Spring 2008 Newsletter. We have the following comments for your consideration.

We are a group of citizens who consider ourselves active environmentalists. Our members include individuals who have: solar panels on our roofs, drive 'hybrids', tithe to environmental non-profits, promote recycling, commute on public transit, work to ban chemical pesticides in our communities, and advocate the use of goats (as opposed to chemicals and/or mowing and/or controlled burning) to reduce the danger of wild-fire in our open spaces. We, also, live with dogs. We do not find these two characteristics (environmentalist and human with a dog) to be in conflict. Our dogs are our companions.

We agree with the need to develop a long-range plan to protect our beautiful, sensitive environment while maintaining the founding reasoning behind the GGNRA: to provide open space recreation for the large urban population living nearby and to those visiting this urban area from other parts of the United States. We hope that the National Park Service has not forgotten the reason that this wonderful group of lands was preserved for all of us.

We urge the National Park Service (NPS) to include coordination with other regional planning entities, such as County of Marin and the State of California, to maintain the existing trail system (fire roads) and to develop additional links to connect these roads as needed. This would allow access to the open spaces we cherish here in Marin without driving into any of the parks. This concept is in keeping with the stated goal of the GGNRA Transportation Plan that is currently in development.

Regarding the three Management Concepts, the same fundamental goals are included in all three of the Concepts/Alternatives; the difference we see is in the emphasis of the goals. We whole heartedly support Concept #1: Connecting People with the Parks, "Park management would focus on ways to attract and welcome people, connect people with the resources, and promote understanding, enjoyment, preservation and health." This Concept emphasizes the NPS management commitment to the founding idea of the GGNRA, ie "parks to the people."

We realize that the final General Management Plan will contain elements from all three Alternative Management Concepts; however, whenever there are conflicts among the three, we urge you to give primary consideration to Concept #1: Connecting People with the Parks.

Of particular interest to our group is access to the fire roads that run throughout the Marin Headlands (and connect with fire roads in neighboring County and State park lands). For residents in Southern Marin these areas are our 'backyard'. We walk these roads and never cease to marvel at the beauty and variety of wildlife, plants and geography that exist so close to home.

We have followed the GGNRA Dog Management Committee meetings closely. While we were not allowed a seat on the main Committee, one of our members did have a seat on the Technical Sub-committee. At the end of the two years of meetings there was very little agreement on where we, the citizens, could walk in the GGNRA with our dogs. In particular, there was little or no discussion on where we could walk with our dogs on-leash.

Almost the whole of the two years was spent on off-leash discussion, and two of the three areas that are under consideration for off-leash use in Marin County are Rodeo Beach and Muir Beach. This is especially concerning since both of these beaches seem to have vanished from the General Management Plan entirely (areas close by are included: Golden Gate Dairy and Creek, and Marin Headlands: Fort Barry and Fort Cronkite, but not the Beaches). In addition, Rodeo Beach may be eliminated from consideration if the Transportation Plan goes to shuttles in the Headlands. That leaves us with (possibly) a very short walk up Oakwood Valley Trail.

This letter addresses our concerns about on-leash dog walking in the Marin Headlands (all areas listed: Fort Barry and Fort Cronkite; Conzelman, Bunker and McCullough Roads; Oakwood Valley, Marin City Ridge and Gerbode Valley; Tennessee Valley). The specific Alternatives refer to the 'Uplands' of the Marin Headlands as either:

Alternative 1 - a Natural Zone: "outside the trail corridor, the area would be managed to protect undeveloped coastal habitat and outstanding natural features that are backdrops to the scenic corridor experience". We are only interested in access to the fire roads that transect these areas, so do not think our presence with a dog on-leash (or a horse or a bike) should cause concern.

Alternative 2 - a Sensitive Resources Zone: "Visitor access would be highly controlled and restricted to designated trails in this zone." We are not sure what this means as it relates to recreational use, but we suspect it implies we humans are not entirely welcome, let alone humans with dogs, and/or horses, and/or bikes.

Alternative 3 - seems to generally follow the same guidelines for use as Alternative 1.

The same fundamental goals are included in all three of the Concepts/Alternatives; the difference we see is in the emphasis of the goals. We whole heartedly support Concept #1: Connecting People with the Parks, "Park management would focus on ways to attract and welcome people, connect people with the resources, and promote understanding, enjoyment, preservation and health." This Concept emphasizes the NPS management commitment to the founding idea of the GGNRA, ie "parks to the people."

We realize that the final General Management Plan will contain elements from all three Alternative Management Concepts; however, whenever there are conflicts among the three, we urge you to give primary consideration to Concept #1: Connecting People with the Parks.

The areas that the Alternatives refer to as "the Uplands", are the areas those of us living in the communities of Sausalito and Mill Valley consider our "backyard". These are the areas that we can access without driving into the GGNRA. These are the areas that we want to access with our dogs (on-leash) and our bikes and our horses, just as many have for as long as most of us can remember.

We long for the day we can legally walk with our dogs on-leash from our homes in Sausalito up the Morning Sun trail or across the Spencer Avenue overpass onto Alta Fire Road, over to Bobcat Trail and down to the Miwok Trail and on to Rodeo Beach for years. It is a beautiful route through an old eucalyptus grove, across the ridge-top and then down the Gerbode Valley, through the old farmstead, then along the creek and the lagoon and finally to the beach. From Alta Fire Road we could also continue onto the trail-head in Marin City and then home via sidewalks.

Some of us live in Mill Valley and walk on-leash with our dogs up County View Road or Marin Drive, and then onto the Miwok Trail, then across Highway Route 1 and continue on into Tamalpais State Park, or from the Miwok Trail to the Coyote Ridge Trail then onto the Coastal Fire Road to the Coastal Trail, and from there to either Muir Beach or to Rodeo Beach. We want to continue to do so with the blessing of the NPS.

Some of us gain access to the Park by walking in from Marin City on Alta Fire Road. This is currently the most used area in the GGNRA in Marin for off-leash use. The community bordering this entrance includes a large apartment complex that is noted for being dog friendly. Of the 198 units, 80% include at least one dog. There are people, dogs and bicycles aplenty here, and have been for many years. The land surrounding Alta looks none the worse for wear from all of this on-road activity.

All of the routes referenced above consist of fire roads; these are not narrow trails, they are wide (10 to 14 feet) roads. We share these fire roads with other hikers, and bicyclists, and equestrians. There is seldom any conflict, not with each other, nor with the wildlife through which we pass.

As a group of conservationists, we all take seriously the negative effects of auto use on our environment. When possible we prefer to stay out of our cars. Our interest is in walking into the park-lands that border our communities. We hope that the NPS will support us in our efforts to conserve, and will provide us access with our dogs into the GGNRA from the communities that are the Park's neighbors.

Many of our members are of the "boomer generation". The older we get, and the more congested and troubled urban areas get, the more many of us rely on having our dog with us. They are on-leash, they don't chase or harass wildlife or humans or other dogs, they are our companions and walk next to us.

We ask that the NPS remember the founding guidelines of the GGNRA, and that the new General Management Plan includes access into the GGNRA in Marin for those of us wanting to walk in with our dogs on-leash.

We thank you for considering our concerns.

Sincerely yours,

Sonja Hanson, Chair
Marin Green Dog Alliance
524 Spring Street
Sausalito, CA 94965

sonyahanson@hotmail.com
415-332-6829

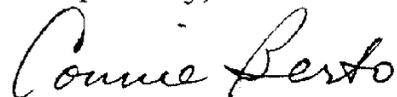
Therefore: for the Marin Headlands, Alternatives 2 and 3 are not acceptable; Alternative One is acceptable ONLY if the equestrian presence is continued, trail access is maintained, and parking for rigs expanded.

It should be emphasized that safety of trail users is important to all and especially to equestrians who are deeply concerned about the well-being of our mounts. To that end, it is vital that mountain bicycles be restricted from footpaths because of the safety hazards they present by their high speed and limited range of rider awareness, i.e., they only look at the ground directly in front of them. The celebrated lawsuit of 1994 (No. C-93-0009, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California) which the local mountain bicyclists and IMBA brought for more trail access (and lost on all counts) against the Secretary of the Interior, the National Park Service and GGNRA settled several issues. One issue was that evidence showed conclusively that mountain bikes on narrow trails do cause conflict among users, and another, that bicyclists have no inherent right to use their vehicles on trails. This landmark case confirmed the values of safety and peaceful enjoyment of wilderness without users being put at risk by speeding bicyclists. The slower pace of hikers and horses is in harmony with nature, wildlife, and with each other. Based on long experience, I urge that the NPS should continue to limit access of mountain bicyclists to wide vehicular-width fire roads (except in Wilderness areas).

In closing: I support the position papers submitted by the Marin Horse Council and Sandy Greenblat, the papers submitted by Ocean Riders of Golden Gate Dairy Stables, and the position papers submitted for San Mateo County issues by the Equestrian Trail Riders Action Coalition and the Coastside Horse Council.

Thank you for the generous and plentiful opportunities that the public has had to examine the alternatives and to submit opinions. It is rare and refreshing to have such an open public process in these important issues. We equestrians are willing to partner with the National Park Service, but we can not support the elimination of our historic partnership with our horses.

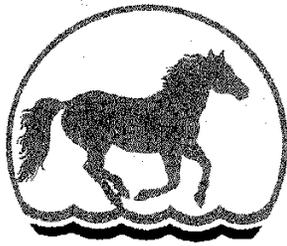
Respectfully,



Connie Berto

Director, Marin Horse Council Inc.

Cc: MHC, Inc.
files



OCEAN RIDERS

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION OF MARIN

415-388-7670

July 25, 2008

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
ATTN: Stephan Nofield
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver CO 80225-0587

RE: Golden Gate National Recreation Area
General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement
Newsletter 4

Dear Mr. Stephan Nofield:

On behalf of Ocean Riders of Marin we wish to thank the staff of the GGNRA for the presentation given to Park Partners prior to the open house at the Bay Model. We appreciate being given the opportunity to fully understand the complex nature of the preliminary proposals so we can intelligently respond as Park Partners.

We open our comments to raise an aspect of the Plan that is lacking, yet central to the experience of all park users: the trails and fire roads. The National Parks were created for the preservation and protection of public open spaces and the conservation of the landscape and natural resources for future generations. Access to these parks depends on the trail systems as a key component: *connecting people with nature and the quiet enjoyment of our wilderness experience*. Historically this access was done on foot and by horseback, with the park's single track trails the historical result of passage by men and animals over time. The horse is a more traditional living part of the lands now known as GGNRA than any other factor other than the local flora and fauna. Horses may not be a native species, but then again, neither are we unless we possess 10% Native blood.

Horses and their riders created the original path that has officially become the Redwood Creek Trail on the road to Muir Woods. We feel the heart of the park system, the trails, has been lost in these plans and that protection of the park trails system is critical to the continued ability of the public to gain its rightful access to this public treasure. Of major concern as well is the increasing issue of basic safety for hikers and equestrians due to the increase in the number of mountain bikes in the park, both on legal trails and on those on which bicycles are banned. There is a conflict of user enjoyment, safety, and 'purpose' (quiet enjoyment of our wilderness experience) if single track trails become open to mountain bikes. The opportunity to experience the qualities of solitude, quiet and naturalness sought after by hikers and equestrians alike is put at risk, often replaced with

startling jolts to the system when bikes suddenly appear at any speed. Hikers and horses are in harmony with nature; in fact much more wildlife can be observed from the back of a horse than on foot because the horse masks the human scent. The hiker and the horse can both stop in mid-stride when encountering wildlife, whereas a bike at any speed requires more stopping room, often skidding and scattering gravel, and disturbing anyone in the vicinity. Then there is the maintenance issue. The Honorary California State Park Ranger, George H. Cardinet Jr. states "*the foot or hoof impacts the soil stabilizing and consolidating creating durable tread. The rotary action of the bike's wheels especially with the knobby structure of the tires for grabbing the tread, tear it up in so doing. Viewing trail treads after the passage of the bike wheels sees a developing V shaped tread and, or the loss of tread*". This V then channels rainwater, causing further erosion. In his March 18, 2006 letter (attached) George Cardinet, who dedicated many years building and repairing trails on Mt. Diablo, discusses at length the impact of mountain bikes on our park trails. With limited funds for maintenance, let alone for the much-lacking enforcement, we feel the NPS should limit the access to mountain bikers in the GGNRA to fire roads.

Thank you for taking these concerns into account in the process of planning.

GENERAL Comments:

The GGNRA was established to preserve *for public use and enjoyment* the areas of Marin County, San Francisco County, and more recently, San Mateo County. These lands were found to possess outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values. The Park Service is mandated to manage these resources to provide for "recreation and educational opportunities consistent with sound principles of land use, planning and management". Prior to this acquisition, much of this land was agricultural. The term 'agricultural property' as defined in the enabling legislation, means lands which were in regular use for agricultural, ranching, or dairying purposes. Many of the former dairy farms were converted to equestrian facilities by the time the GGNRA was established. We believe it is important to keep all existing equestrian facilities which provide for recreational and educational opportunities, and thus preserve the historical landscape of ranchlands as provided in the enabling legislation creating the GGNRA.

It is important to remember that were it not for the acquisition of these lands, the coast line would now be another Laguna Beach. We are privileged to be part of the process to help shape the long term future of these park lands and work to preserve the historic uses of many of these former dairies.

MANAGEMENT PLAN pertaining to ZONE CONCEPTS

The Zone concepts have been very helpful in identifying the many facets of our urban park and the challenges the park faces in meeting the varied needs while also following the guiding principles established for park managers. We believe equestrian access should not be eliminated or limited in Management Zones identified as: Historic Immersion, Natural, Diverse Opportunities, Scenic Corridor, or Evolved Cultural Landscape. The agricultural component seems to be missing, possibly buried in Historic Immersion and Evolved Cultural Landscape. Many of the sites being challenged have been agricultural, and we wish to preserve the historic landscape with the presence of horse ranching. We understand

that restrictions are needed in Sensitive Resources Zones, but we also believe Best Management Practices can be used to reduce and even eliminate many risks to these zones.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES pertaining to Golden Gate Dairy

While we would explicitly like to state our support for many of the goals of Alternative 1 and Alternative 3 because equestrians are included in these Alternatives, Ocean Riders also feel it is important to retain many of the goals of Alternative 2. Ocean Riders' own Mission Statement strongly supports Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems (Concept 2). By practicing Best Management, we believe equestrian facilities can be responsible stewards in this unique and important watershed.

Ocean Riders is committed to providing educational programs consistent with sound principles of land use. Our proposed outreach programs cover many of the concepts mentioned in the Preliminary General Management Plan:

- Diverse Opportunities - providing inner-city children a rural experience in conjunction with Slide Ranch and Green Gulch; Educational Outreach Programs, and Equine Facilitated Mental Health (EFMA) clinics.
- Education focused on:
 - Evolved Cultural Landscape - farming, ranching, and compost
 - Historic Immersion - farming, ranching, and compost
 - Natural - camping experiences with horses and collaboration with Slide Ranch

Even though we would be providing 'recreational' pursuits, our proposed outreach programs use horses to expand diverse science and stewardship programs; provide opportunities for children to explore wild areas and to experience the qualities of solitude, quiet, and naturalness. These programs would increase understanding, awareness, and support for coastal resources through participation in stories and programs about human interaction with, and dependency on natural resources. Using our horses, the Experiential Learning programs would provide social skill training and promote pro-social attitudes through care-giving experiences; develop choice-making and goal-setting skills, encourage responsibility, and encourage sensory stimulation and integration while immersing the children and young adults in nature.

Review of the Alternatives:

Alternative 1 is appealing because we believe at the Lower Redwood Creek location we could provide richer experiences that support many of the goals of Alternative 2 as well as our proposed educational programs. However, we feel strongly about wanting to be in harmony with the Muir Beach community and the former landowners/long time residents that have worked and lived at the Lower Redwood Creek site known as Banducci's. Thus, we would like to say that if, and *only "if"* the area residents were open to the idea, we would welcome a way to collaborate together so the Banducci vision of organic farming and Ocean Rider's vision of educational programs could benefit each other. Both the Banduccis and the Alcalas are integral members of the Muir Beach community that we in no way want to negatively impact. Jose (Cuco) Alcalá is not only the primary caretaker of our horses, but he is invaluable to the Muir Beach community and Green Gulch with his many skills.

Alternative 2 is unacceptable as stated because it eliminates equestrians entirely, except possibly trail access, from Frank's Valley.

Alternative 3 keeps an equestrian facility at the historical Golden Gate Dairy, which for the past 38 years has been converted to an operating horse ranch. Park historian Dewey Livingston notes that prior to that time, beginning in December of 1898, the Golden Gate Dairy then known as Ranch M, was continually operating as a dairy cattle ranch. One hundred years later, in September of 1998, Ocean Riders took over management from the former stables operator and began working to mitigate environmental concerns. The horse shelters were moved away from the intermittent water course to improve water quality, and many drainage diversions were installed to protect clean water from contaminated water. As stated in the National Register of Historic Places *"the stable and wood frame corrals added within the ranch building complex (by Ocean Riders) do not detract from the setting or feeling conveyed by the ranch, nor do they compromise the property's ability to reflect its historic association with the dairy ranching era."*

Ocean Riders and Green Gulch strongly wish to continue our symbiotic relationship with manure from the horses being put to use in the immediate locale for organic farming. Together we are preserving the historical character of what was entirely agricultural ranchland and are well within the dictates of the GGNRA enabling legislation which strives to protect land used in agriculture prior to acquisition.

We have heard from both the public and the Muir Beach community that there is overwhelming support for the visibility and presence of horses at the Golden Gate Dairy site and for being able to see the horses grazing in the pastures at Green Gulch. The presence of horses is something that brings pleasure to many people beyond those directly involved with Ocean Riders. Visitors often stop by specifically to visit with the horses. We serve as an informal resource as well - we give directions and provide an emergency telephone. We are currently able to offer overnight guest accommodations, horse tie-ups and water for visiting equestrian guests at the Pelican Inn.

However, between the competition for diverse site use at the Golden Gate Dairy stable, the loss of land at Green Gulch due to the Big Lagoon Restoration, and the proposed Transportation Plan which would include busses stopping in front of our site every 20 minutes, we are not only feeling the loss of space, but feeling the loss of our 'sense of place', along with the peace and quiet we would like to offer in implementing successful outreach programs.

We suggest that if further significant pressures are going to be put on the limited space at the current Dairy location, you consider combining the concepts of Alternative 1 and Alternative 3 as the Preferred Alternative for the Golden Gate Dairy. Six horses is the number required to serve twelve children during each outreach program. Relocating only six horses to the Lower Redwood Creek area and *slightly* reducing the number of horses at the Golden Gate Dairy to accommodate the increasing demands on the site, would result in less impact on Natural Resources; would be less expensive to construct a smaller new facilities, and it would provide opportunity to develop a rich program partnership with both GGNRA and State Parks, using the Santos Meadow arena.

Combining the visions in these two alternatives would: (1) allow us to remain a central part of the Muir Beach community and Green Gulch ecosystem; (2) make room for the

expansion of the MBVFD and more diverse uses for the Golden Gate Dairy site; (3) keep the structures and working landscape which have been adapted from an historical dairy farm to a horse ranch (Alternative 3); and, (4) connect us more closely with State Parks (Alternative 1) so we may implement educational programs that would provide a valuable experience to the public (supporting important concept of Alternative 2), without eliminating the equestrian presence in this valley.

Equestrians are often too quickly assumed to be "elite", yet most of Ocean Rider members are people of modest means, working as artists, authors, educators, social workers, and for non-profits. Our members have worked hard to remain at the Golden Gate Dairy because of their love of the land and trails. This valley has been home to some of our horses for over 24 years. We have been committed to strong principles of Green Horse Keeping for the past 10 years, and continue to improve as we research new ideas and practices. While we realize that park principles cannot be established on the basis of individuals currently in place, it is our hope that this plan will help guide the park's future for generations. Ocean Riders' strongest request is that the continued presence of horses be provided for in *any* vision of that future. We do feel flexible about how that may happen and want to be cooperative partners with all the parties involved in the area.

We hope to serve as a model Best Management facility, as we develop ways to keep horses that are in harmony with the full community around us, both human and wild. We appreciate the opportunity to offer this proposal as a way to address the goals of the diverse concepts that are presented yet ensure a long term equestrian presence with no further reduction of horse numbers in this valley.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES regarding Slide Ranch

Ocean Riders strongly supports Alternative 1, keeping Slide Ranch in its present location. We hope to collaborate with Slide Ranch and offer equestrian and educational opportunities to some of their visitors, meeting them at the bottom of the Heather Cut-off trail, and using the arena for programs and possibly some horse camping experiences.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES regarding Lower Redwood Creek

Ocean Riders supports the vision of organic farming being proposed by the residents of the Banducci Farm. We feel there are many educational opportunities in preserving this traditional use of this land, akin to the preservation of ranching inside Point Reyes' perimeter. Ocean Riders does not support any displacement of the residents of these former landowners and tenants, and hope some stewardship program can be developed that can keep generations of Banducci's in the home they love.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES regarding Tennessee Valley and Miwok Stables

Ocean Riders support Alternative 1. We question why after so much money has been allocated to stall repair at Lower Tennessee Valley, all 3 alternatives are suggesting that they be eliminated. We support the idea of providing horse camping at this site, as stated in Alternative 3, but believe the LTV stable itself should not be removed, and that instead a mounted patrol program based there be strengthened and increased. Mounted volunteer rangers (such as the program at the Morgan Horse Ranch in Point Reyes) can be an invaluable partner in monitoring legal and safe use of our parks as population pressure increases human presence.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES regarding Marin Headlands

The three alternatives are not acceptable because they do not recognize the existence of the equestrian facilities which we strongly support. Each unique location of the three stables offers different visitor experience. If Alternative 3 is chosen for the Golden Gate Dairy, Ocean Riders would like to collaborate with PRC so our programs could continue during the rainy season and we could offer year round experiences.

We oppose the conversion of the historical hanger into a maintenance station. It is a magical building that needs to be restored so the public can use it, preferably for outreach programs using horses.

We would like to refer you to Sandy Greenblat's comments in his July 11th letter on many issues about Access, Parking, Water Troughs, horse tie-ups and others, and state our support for each of these ideas. Ocean Riders will be installing a water tank outside the paddocks across from the Pelican Inn for visiting horses. We will pay for this water as a service to our fellow equestrians.

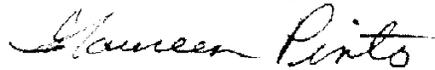
Alternative 1 offers many good ideas regarding improvement of trailheads, accessible trails, camping and picnicking, but it is important that equestrians are included and space is granted to accommodate these activities.

SAN MATEO COUNTY

We endorse the recommendations from the Equestrian Trail Riders Action Coalition (ETRAC) and the Coastside Horse Council (CHC). Alternative One (1) seems to consistently be the best choice for all areas, except for Sweeny Ridge where a combined vision from Alternative 1 and 2 would work, but Alternative 3 is too vague. We encourage GGNRA to pursue the purchase of Picardo Ranch as long as existing equestrian facility can stay in place. The presence of an equestrian ranch on these lands enhances the visitor experience and provides additional recreational activities to Bay Area residents.

We at Ocean Riders thank the GGNRA personnel for the hard work that has gone into preparing the preliminary Alternatives and providing an opportunity for the public input and debates as required under the terms of the NPS General Management Policies. We are grateful for this opportunity to be part of a process that helps shape these lands that we, the public collectively own. We look forward to our continuing partnership with the GGNRA.

Ocean Riders of Marin



By: Maureen Pinto

President of the Board of Directors



**PRBO Conservation Science, Written Comments – Alcatraz Island
General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement
GGNRA – Muir Woods National Monument
Newsletter #4 – Spring 2008**

I. Which ideas of any of the preliminary alternatives do you think are most important to include in the preferred alternative and why?

Alcatraz Island – Alternative 2

Overview: Offering visitors more opportunities for learning about the island's natural as well as cultural history and current resources to provide a better balance between the two management mandates.

Main Prison Building and adjacent areas: Maintaining natural areas and seasonal closures around the Laundry Building, Model Industries Building, Parade Ground and western side of the island, while still providing limited visitor access for wildlife viewing, research and education. Maintaining the rubble piles as important bird breeding habitat.

Power Plant and Quartermaster Warehouse: We commend attempts to protect sensitive seabird areas around the Laundry Building and Model Industries building during breeding season (February – September) by excluding maintenance activities and visitor access near these structures during February – September.

Island Perimeter: Positive natural resource protections proposed in Alternative 2 include the preservation and protection of natural habitat values with visitor use and access highly managed around the island perimeter (i.e., seasonal closures near seabird breeding colonies along the northeastern, south and west perimeters).

Offshore Marine Environment: Positive natural resource protections proposed in Alternative 2 include a sensitive resource zone out to 300' off the island's western shore that would exclude boat traffic, while still allowing some boat traffic along the eastern side of the island.

Visitor Areas: We agree with the seasonal closure of the Agave Trail and Parade Ground, as presently maintained, which is an important management tactic to protect sensitive breeding bird resources, including Western and California Gulls, Brandt's Cormorants breeding on the cliffs directly below the Parade Ground, and Pigeon Guillemots nesting in crevices all along the cliffs and below the Agave Trail.

It is not clear from the map presented in conjunction with Alternative 2 if the West Road would remain open to visitors. Increased interpretive signs and placards warning of restricted areas due to seabird breeding are needed in this area, but the West Road offers the only cormorant colony viewing available to visitors. From this standpoint, the West Road access is extremely valuable for education and outreach associated with the theme of preserving and enjoying coastal ecosystems.

Alcatraz Island – Alternative 3



prbo

Offshore Marine Environment: Reinstalling a line of historic buoys circling the island to prohibit boat traffic near the island (particularly the western shore to reduce disturbance to seabird colonies).

2. **Are there any important elements /ideas that the planning team missed in the preliminary alternatives? Please describe them and explain why these additional ideas are important.**

Alcatraz Island Alternative I

Food Service: The introduction of food service on the island would create a much greater potential for

- injury to wildlife (gulls eating and getting tangled in food trash),
- negative interactions between wildlife and humans (gulls becoming aggressive while attempting to get food from visitors),
- increased trash, and introduction of pests and predators such as rats (which can decimate seabird colonies by eating eggs and small chicks).

Overnight Accommodations: Providing overnight accommodations (hotel, hostel, camping) would

- introduce additional disruption of seabird nesting and roosting areas through human activity, night-lighting, noise,
- increased potential for visitors accessing unauthorized areas.

Visitor Areas: Alternative I suggests that gulls should be managed in 'core visitor areas' including the Parade Ground and Laundry Building which would be 'high-use' visitor areas.

- The Parade Ground currently provides the largest non-disturbed area of Western Gull and Black-crowned Night-heron breeding habitat, as well as the only breeding habitat for California Gulls.
- Increased human use of the Laundry Building area would be disruptive to Western Gulls as well as Brandt's Cormorants nesting adjacent to the building.
- The potential to disrupt breeding Black Oystercatchers, Pelagic Cormorants and Pigeon Guillemots along the cliffs and seawall under the Laundry Building would also be quite high (this is the only location on the island at which Pelagic Cormorants and Black Oystercatchers nest).

Model Industries Building: Alternative I also suggests using the Model Industries Building for Park Operations with high staff use.

- This would greatly increase disturbance to Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants, Western Gulls, Pigeon Guillemots, Black Oystercatchers, and Black-crowned Night-herons nesting nearby.

Trails: Opening trails such as the Agave Trail and Lower Walkways would

- remove much additional gull and night heron breeding habitat



prbo

- potentially disturb breeding guillemots and cormorants (those which have been using the area north of the Powerhouse and south of the Dock).
- Alternative 1 designates a 'sensitive' area along the western cliffs, but from the map it doesn't appear as if this includes the walkway below Barker Beach and the Greenhouse Gardens. If not, this would greatly increase the potential for disturbance to the largest concentration of breeding Brandt's Cormorants, night herons and Snowy Egrets.
- A scenic corridor around the perimeter of Alcatraz would be established by Alternative 1, anticipated as a moderate to high use area. If allowed between February – September when birds are nesting, this would not provide sufficient wildlife protection.

Alcatraz Island Alternative 2

Food Service: Introduction of food service at Building 64 would:

- pose a greater potential for injury to wildlife (gulls eating and getting tangled in food trash),
- increase negative interactions between wildlife and humans (gulls begging/stealing food),
- increase trash on the island,
- and could contribute to the introduction of predators to the island such as rats.

Overnight Accommodations: Providing overnight accommodations (hotel, hostel, camping) would

- introduce additional disruption of seabird nesting and roosting areas through human activity, night-lighting, noise,
- increased potential for visitors accessing unauthorized areas.

Building and Landscape Maintenance: Proposed increased maintenance of landscapes between the Dock and the Cellhouse would:

- reduce available Western Gull and Black-crowned Night-heron habitat, Since this is the most highly-trafficked visitor pathway and the bird habitat in this area has largely already been lost, this could be viewed as a mitigation for other areas now being used or proposed to be opened (such as near the Model Industries or Laundry Buildings, etc.). These other areas could remain closed and highlighted through outreach efforts as a valuable natural resource and the wild side of Alcatraz which is also an important part of the island's history.

Although we commend attempts to protect sensitive seabird areas around the Laundry Building and Model Industries building during breeding season (February – September), we are not sure it is realistic for the park to forego all maintenance on these structures, given its mandate to protect both natural and cultural resources. It should be feasible for



prbo

maintenance to be done on these buildings and surrounding structures during the non-seabird breeding season (fall – winter).

Visitor Areas: It is not clear from the map presented in conjunction with Alternative 2 if the West Road would remain open to visitors. Increased interpretive signs and placards warning of restricted areas due to seabird breeding are needed in this area, but the West Road offers the only cormorant colony viewing available to visitors. From this standpoint, the West Road access is extremely valuable for education and outreach associated with the theme of preserving and enjoying coastal ecosystems.

Marine Zone: Expanding the definition of “sensitive area” in the 300 foot closure could be improved by designating the area as a no-use zone during seabird breeding season (February – September). Even one unintentional human intrusion into this area, if ill-timed and too close, could cause seabird colony abandonment. A scenic corridor of moderate to high use allowed past 300’ away from the island would probably be fine with regards to the bird resources on the island, as long as loud noises (such as gunshots and cannon fire) were not allowed.

Alcatraz Island: Alternative 3

Building and Landscape Maintenance: This alternative proposes the major renovation of many island structures. Construction projects should be limited to outside the bird breeding season from February - September.

Visitor Areas: Alternative 3 also proposed a high-use area in and around the Model Industries Building. This proposal for moderate and high use in the listed areas would:

- effectively remove most of the bird breeding habitat on Alcatraz, as the birds rely on undisturbed habitat to successfully raise young,
- increase disturbance to all species of breeding waterbirds in any remaining habitat,
- and, the Model Industries and Laundry Building areas in particular are very high density bird areas and the only location of some breeding species (e.g., Pelagic Cormorants, Black Oystercatchers).

Marine Zone: Alternative 3 does propose a Historic Immersion Zone with no access within 1000’ of the island, delineated by buoys which would potentially protect seabird colonies from marine-based disturbance (boats, kayaks, jet skis, etc). However, if on-island uses are allowed as proposed in earlier sections of Alternative 3, this would preclude the formation of any seabird colonies during the breeding season and thus marine-based protection would be pointless from a natural resources standpoint.

3. Other comments.

- We find that none of the alternatives as presently described will meet the Park Service mandate to adequately protect both cultural and natural resources on the island.

PRBO Conservation Science
3820 Cypress Drive, #11
Petaluma, CA 94954
707-781-2555
www.prbo.org



prbo

- The introduction of food service and overnight accommodations to the island would likely have significant negative effects on bird nesting, roosting, foraging behavior, survival.
- Opening the Parade Ground, Laundry Building, Model Industries Building, Agave Trail, Lower Walkways, the walkway below Barker Beach, and the Greenhouse Gardens to increased visitor use will have significant impacts on bird populations, including the exclusion of important breeding colonies from Alcatraz Island.
- Seasonal closures such as those already in place are an important tool for managing mixed use areas and should be considered for all revised access and maintenance activities.
- Human access by tourists and maintenance to sensitive natural resource areas (seabird breeding colonies) should be prevented during the months of February – September.
- Conservation of seabirds in the marine zone could be improved if the 300 foot sensitive area was defined as a no-use zone during the months of February – September.
- Reinstalling a line of historic buoys circling the island to prohibit boat traffic near the island (particularly the western shore), would reduce disturbance to seabird colonies.

Preservation of Equestrian Facilities in GGNRA

To: Brian O'Neill, Superintendent
Golden Gate National Recreation Area

From: Friends, boarders and management of S.F. HORSEMEN'S Ranch
ASSOCIATION

Re: (1) Support for preservation of **equestrian facilities**:
Ember Ridge, Picardo Ranch (Millwood), SFPUC Watershed easements,
Moss Beach Ranch, Ocean View Stables, Renegade Ranch, Rancho Tierra
del Coral, Presidio Riding Club, Miwok Stables and Golden Gate Dairy.

(2) Support for continued equestrian access to **riding trails**:
Milagra Ridge, Shelldance Nursery area, Sweeny Ridge, Cattle Hill, Mori Point,
Pedro Point, Devil's Slide, San Pedro Mountain (all south of San Francisco), as
well as trails in Marin County and San Francisco that are located on GGNRA lands.

We the undersigned seek to preserve the existing equestrian facilities and trail access which may in the future be affected by decisions taken by your General Management Planning Team – GGNRA. The above-named stables have successfully operated for decades in our local areas. These facilities are well known and highly utilized. Most are at or near full capacity, confirming the enduring popularity of horseback riding and the continuing urgent need for horse boarding facilities in these coastal areas. Our stables enjoy wide public support and aid many sectors of the local economy (hay and grain production, feed stores, tack stores, online providers, veterinarians, farriers, instructors, rodeos, shows, restaurants, etc.). All of these interests would suffer if riding or horse boarding opportunities were reduced.

As urban areas encroach on rural preserves, it becomes all the more important that the government recognizes that before the advent of GGNRA our equine facilities were already responsible and established custodians of these lands. The trails have been cared for; they are not degraded. Precautions have been taken not to pollute the seasonal streams. Buildings have been kept to a minimum. Dirt bikes and off-road vehicles that would destroy the natural habitat have been discouraged in an effort to preserve the areas. We continue to be good stewards of the land.

With the continued high level of interest in horseback riding, horse camps for children, hourly lessons and horse boarding, it is only reasonable that the local facilities be allowed to continue operating in our coastal areas. Urban residents enjoy these traditional pastimes and value the proximity of our stables to the cities. As construction encroaches on open spaces it becomes more difficult to maintain equestrian facilities. Nevertheless, riding remains very popular and we the undersigned need and support our equestrian facilities in the planned Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

From : San Francisco Horsemen's Assn.

popular and we the undersigned need and support our equestrian facilities in the planned Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Thank you for your attention to our petition and please find attached signatures supporting the continuance and enhancement of our equestrian facilities under your management.

We support horseback riding and stables in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area:

Name

City of residence

Fabiola G. Rachel San Francisco

John M. Sant San Francisco

Juanma Rachel San Francisco

Angela Castano Emerald Hills

Ally Cardinale San Francisco

John Lee Fairfield, ca.

Beverly Alcorn-Poon Fairfield, ca.

Asahie Lane Hayward.

Esther E. Anna Cole Fairfield, CA

Jan V. Ringer HAYWARD, CA 94541

Debbie Cooper Emerald Hills.

Hay Sulis Corsegold, CA

Patty Walsh Pacifica, CA

Patricia McKenna Hayward, Ca

Grace Fernandez SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Frances Cairns San Francisco, Ca.

From:

San Francisco Horsemen's Assn.

Name	City of Residence
Ronka Gald	San Francisco
Janae Peam	Moss Beach
Mary Bennett	HAFF MEERS BAY
John Deb Wolf	SFO Millbrae
Audrey Goodman	Hay Moon Bay
Julie Alushaker	San Francisco
Janette Smith	San Francisco
David B. Peters	Brisbane
Maureen E. Schild	San Francisco
K. Fishman	San Francisco
Margo RAGAS	Hayward
Ann Corry	Moss Beach
Corey Grace	San Francisco
Joanna Shell	San Francisco
Enca Schlesinger	Montara
Hannah Schlesinger	Montara
Samantha Krasner	Montara
Dorothy Stearns	Hayward

From: San Francisco Horsemen's Assn.

Jenny Dent
Susan M. Winstan

San Francisco, Calif 94139
E. Palo Alto CA

Joe Florence
Keren Robinson

San Francisco, Ca.
E. Palo Alto, Ca

Alex Kessler

P.O. Box 7236 Redwood City, Ca 94063

Katley Coet

756 Alta Vista Dr Pacifica, Ca. 94044
~~266 Kent Rd Pacifica, Ca 94064~~

Edward L. Seider

1660 Sutter #101 SF, CA 94109

Suzanne R. Crane

San Francisco, CA

~~[Signature]~~

San Francisco, Ca.

PACIFICA Ca. 94044

Richard Pharr

San Francisco 94112

~~[Signature]~~
~~[Signature]~~

Moss Beach, CA 94038

San Bruno, CA 94066

Wendy Paul

Waukegan, ILL. DC

Halle Miller

San Francisco, CA

Bonny Russell

San Francisco

~~[Signature]~~

San Francisco

Richard Culver

San Francisco

Janet

San Francisco.

Ann Zorn

San Francisco

Paula J. Hollis

San Francisco

William Jay Hollis

San Francisco

From: San Francisco Horsemen's Assn.

Hollya Puleo	Pacifica, CA
John Williams	San Mateo Ca
Judge Michael Moore	San Mateo CA
BEVERLY EPSTEIN	San Francisco, CA
Bill Smith	San Francisco CA
Michelle Moore	Pacific Ca 94044
John LSONA	San Francisco Ca
Jacobs Oberlander	Danville, Ca.
Michael Oberlander	Danville, Ca.

Submitted, July, 2008

Bertille Legrand
2877 23rd street
San Francisco, Ca 94110
(415) 282 5467
Bertillelegrand@yahoo.com

July 28, 2008

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
ATTN: Stephan Nofield
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P. O. Box 25287
Denver CO 80225-0287

RE: Golden Gate National Recreational Area
General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement,
Newsletter 4.

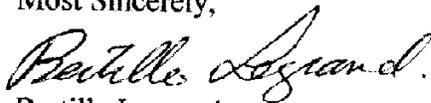
Dear Mr. Stephan Nofield:

On behalf of a group of horse boarders and hikers who keep their horses in the city of Pacifica in San Mateo County, California, I wish to thank you, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA) personnel for this opportunity to add our comments concerning the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement/Newsletter 4, which addresses the lands of GGNRA. Our comments cover parks we ride or hike regularly. For parks that are not familiar to us, we support the recommendations of the local Horse Councils, Horse Associations, and the Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee (ETRAC).

We thank GGNRA personnel for reaching out to the equestrian community, encouraging public input and debates as required under the terms of the NPS General Management Policies of 2006. The following embodies the collective comments and suggestions from our group of park users.

Please call, email, or write the undersigned if there are any questions or inquiries. We are here to do our part in making the GGNRA a better place for everyone.

Most Sincerely,



Bertille Legrand
San Francisco Horsemen's Association Past President

INDEX

COMMENTS ON THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN /ENVIRONMENT PLAN FOR GGNRA NEWSLETTER 4 - SPRING 2008

- 1. GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**
- 2. EQUESTRIANS ON GGNRA LANDS; WHY HORSES?**
- 3. COMMENTS ON THE ALTERNATIVES**

A. SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY

- a) OCEAN BEACH
- b) FORT FUNSTON

B. MARIN COUNTY

- a) GOLDEN GATE DAIRY
- b) TENNESSEE VALLEY
- c) MARIN HEADLANDS; FORT BARRY, AND FORT CRONKHITE
PRESIDIO RIDING CLUB

C. SAN MATEO COUNTY

- a) MILAGRA RIDGE
- b) SHELLDANCE NURSERY AREA
- c) SWEENEY RIDGE INCLUDING CATTLE HILL AND PICARDO RANCH
- d) MORI POINT
- e) PEDRO POINT, DEVIL'S SLIDE, AND SAN PEDRO MOUNTAIN
- f) RANCHO CORRAL DE TIERRA
- g) SFPUC WATERSHED EASEMENTS

PAGE 12: SIGNATURES

1. GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

In all of the Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA) presently owned (and certainly in all future land acquisitions), the parks should be made more accessible to hikers, bicyclists, and horseback riders. Parks were created for the preservation and protection of public open space and for the enjoyment of the public; if the public is not able to enjoy the parks to whatever degree conservancy concerns allow, their support for such open space will flag, and the purchase and preservation of parklands will suffer, harming all future generations. Trails are what make the National Parks accessible to the public; they were originally created both by foot travelers and by those riding horses. Horses and riding have a long history on GGNRA land. We need to preserve and protect this historical use as well as the architecturally significant structures.

It is important to keep all existing equestrian facilities. These facilities expose the Bay Area community to recreational benefits of horseback riding in the parks. We need these equestrian facilities spread throughout the GGNRA as they also make available much needed horse boarding options for San Francisco Bay Area residents.

The existing facilities have a record of financial self-sustainability and represent no financial burden to the County in which they reside but instead vitalize the local economy with equine businesses and services. They are, as well, a source of income for the park service.

Equestrians are a great asset to land managers: organized local Mounted Patrols help in cases of emergency and participate in Search and Rescue. They patrol the trails and help to maintain them. In time of severe budget cuts, the help of an enthusiastic and committed group of volunteers will make a large contribution to trail maintenance and patrol.

Meeting horses on the trails enhances the experience of all the trail users. As an equestrian, I often hear "Oh look, a horse!" People come to the horse to pet him; I feel it enriches their experience as we engage in a conversation with each other.

For fiscal reasons as well for keeping the natural resources as untouched as possible, new buildings on GGNRA land should be limited. Time and money should be spent on developing and maintaining multi-use trails, establishing five-mile to twenty-five-mile trail loops. Building connecting trails between parks by using existing roads and trails, keeping the trails in their natural state is the most effective way to connect the people with the parks. People visit the parks to enjoy the outdoors on either hikes or rides. A visitor center showing slides about nature occurring outside the visitor center's windows

may enhance some visitors' experiences, but cannot provide the irreplaceable, unforgettable human-to-nature connection that helps turn people into conservationists and into nature lovers. Being involved with nature effects that magic. You must help us pass that magic to future generations.

Without well-planned trailheads, the land will be difficult to access if not impossible. Trailheads should provide ample parking for all users, picnic tables, bathrooms, water for people and animals, and tying post for horses.

Bay Area residents count on the GGNRA staff to keep the access to this open land and to keep alive and active the recreational activity of horseback riding. We vote, we volunteer, we pay our taxes; we need your support for continued and enhanced access to these lands.

2. EQUESTRIANS ON GGNRA LANDS; WHY HORSES?

Since the dawn of civilization, horses and humans have enjoyed a remarkable partnership—in war, in peace, in farm fields, and on city streets, horses have worked for us, carried us, comforted us, and inspired us. Today San Mateo County, urbanized as it is, enjoys a healthy mix of city and rural life, with horses continuing to play an important role in local economies, family and group activities, summer camps, sporting events and competitions, rehabilitation of the emotionally and physically handicapped, and more.

Much of the GGNRA lands in Marin and San Mateo counties comprise lands where horses were bred, raised, worked, and ridden. It is part of this land's history. (When the GGNRA was in the process of purchasing the West Marin lands, old locals swore to me that one parcel of the Bolinas-to-Olema GGNRA was originally transferred from its Spanish-land-grant owner to another gentleman in trade for a black stallion.)

On GGNRA lands currently accessible to horses, equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers have learned to share the trails and care for each other. Equestrians stop to talk to hikers and let dogs and children enjoy their horses; they shut gates carefully, understanding as some hikers and bikers might not know the importance of keeping livestock safe; they can respond to trail emergencies quickly, galloping to obtain aid for an injured hiker or bicyclist on the trail. Bikers courteously warn riders of their approach. Hikers yield the trail, usually smiling and often stopping to chat and admire the horses, ask questions about the area, and inquire about where they can find horses of their own to ride. We educate each other. In all our differences, we learn our commonalities—our connection with the land provides us with connection with each other. Along with preserving species and land, providing a place for this connection is what makes a park or recreation area a national treasure.

Horse-boarding facilities and multiuse trails that allow horseback riding are vital to the continuing urban/rural balance in San Mateo. It is this balance, partly, that feeds our economy in diverse ways, keeps us here even when every balance sheet says we could find cheaper land and better housing elsewhere, and attracts the residents and visitors that fight to keep our open spaces preserved and healthy. The sight of a human on a horse connects a tired urban visitor with history and possibilities. With the help of the GGNRA, this sight can continue to be a part of San Mateo County's human and natural landscape.

It is for these reasons we ask you to consider our suggestions below for the use and preservation of our local spaces and trails

3. COMMENTS ON THE ALTERNATIVES

Our comments cover parks we ride or hike regularly. For parks that are not familiar to us, we support the recommendations of the local Horse Councils, Horse Associations and the Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee (ETRAC).

A. SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY

a) OCEAN BEACH

Alternative One (1) is best. It is important to keep the current conditions and management practices for the Ocean Beach. Ocean Beach needs to continue to provide high levels of recreational beach use. The proposed trail connection to Lands End and Fort Funston are very welcomed ideas as it will enhance the experience of all users.

Separate parking for horse trailers should be planned in the development of parking areas.

b) FORT FUNSTON

This area should be managed to provide recreational activities in a more natural setting with limited support facilities as proposed in Alternative Three (3). Restrooms and picnicking facilities are fine ideas. A place to tie horses should be provided as well.

B. MARIN COUNTY

Please find below comments on the alternatives for Golden Gate Dairy, Miwok Stables at Tennessee Valley and the Presidio Riding Club in the Marin Headlands, Fort Barry, and Fort Cronkhite

The three stables on GGNRA land in Marin County are a needed asset to the area. For equestrians, they are vital.

- They provide overnight horse stabling to the traveling equestrian public. Their location nearby a Youth Hostel offers affordable accommodation for the people:- A unique and very valuable combination.
- They make it possible for riding clubs to organize group rides by making the barns located on GGNRA property available for parking rigs, providing water, and providing tying posts for horses.
- They offer rest stops, overnight destinations, and boarding facilities.

d) GOLDEN GATE DAIRY

Alternative Two (2) is unacceptable, because equestrians are forbidden except on a severely limited numbers of trails.

Alternative Three (3), retaining the ranch “as is” and offering equestrian access to trails while keeping the historical dairy ranching spirit alive, is preferable. The ranch has been successfully operated in the existing location for years and is historically a landmark.

In Alternative One (1) the suggestion of having horses on Lower Redwood Creek next to the State Parks arena would create a wonderful opportunity for developing educational programs that could be merged with some of the visions of the local organic farmer.

In the vicinity of the Golden Gate Dairy, one issue that needs urgent immediate remedial attention is the lack of a connector trail between Frank Valley Horse Camp and Muir Beach. Equestrians have to use Highway One. This is very dangerous, as buses, cars, and motorcycles pass us dangerously. It is much worse on the weekend. Equestrians would be happy to work with GGNRA to find the right location for this connector trail and to volunteer in building it.

e) TENNESSEE VALLEY

Alternative One (1) “Connecting People with the Parks” would be the best selection for the area. It is essential that the existing equestrian facilities be retained and possibly expanded. After all, horses are a great attraction to other park visitors.

Regarding the statement “*Trailhead site improvements, including a warming hut (food and visitor information)*”: We do not need such an accommodation adjacent to a trailhead or parking area. There are now enough visitors’ centers in the Marin Headlands,

and adjacent state parks. Opening a food store at this location is not suitable, because it will bring more traffic and congestion to the area. An informative station with a map and better signage would best serve this area.

This trailhead is very heavily visited, especially on the weekend, by every class of trail users: hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders, and baby strollers. It is important to plan a better parking area for cars and trucks with trailers, motorhomes, etc. The picnic area needs to offer a place to tie horses, give access to water for dogs and horses, and provide a better restroom facilities for the visiting humans.

Alternative Two (2) and Three (3) for the Tennessee Valley are not options.

Suggested in Alternative Two (2): Removing roads, nonhistoric structures, and artificial ponds is not necessary unless it improves accessibility to the park. Roads give access to trails. The suggestion to change unnecessary fire roads to multiuse trails or to remove them can be very worrisome to equestrians, and hikers. The process should be an open procedure which includes input from all affected users.

Modest and rustic facilities are good additions as well as overnight camping for all users including equestrians.

Creating an unpaved trail to the sea and to Mill Valley is a splendid idea. Trails should never be paved but rather left in their natural state.

The recommendation you received from the Marin Horse Council for the improvement to be made at Tennessee Valley are in accordance with our vision for the management of the area.

f) MARIN HEADLANDS; FORT BARRY, AND FORT CRONKHITE
PRESIDIO RIDING CLUB

The three alternatives are not acceptable, because they do not mention or recognize the existence of the equestrian facilities. The historical covered arena, the historical hanger, and the Presidio Riding Club should remain. Not only are they part of the history of the area, but they continue to provide services to the park users to enhance and broaden their experience within the park. They provide equestrian public programs, horse boarding options for the local population, and overnight horse accommodation for long-distance travelers with horses.

We strongly oppose the conversion of the hanger into a maintenance station. It is a beautiful historical building that need not become storage for equipment.

Alternative One (1) "Connecting people with parks" list many good ideas regarding the improvement of trailheads, accessible trails, camping, picnicking, and orientation. It is important that equestrians are included in these activities and that space is granted appropriately.

The proposed idea of a food service or a new visitor center should be rejected. It is simply not appropriate, since adequate visitor center already exists.

C. SAN MATEO COUNTY

We only commented on areas where we ride and hike. We endorse the recommendations from the Equestrian Trail Riders Action Coalition (ETRAC) and the Coastside Horse Council (CHC) for the other areas.

a) MILAGRA RIDGE

Milagra Ridge should be managed to protect its natural character and give access to its visitors with a system of trails. Alternative One (1) is the best choice even though it states that trail improvements will be limited.

If no trails are available, people will create their own. As the National Park Service has no staff to patrol these parks to stop people from doing so, it is in the best interest of all the plants and animal species we are trying to protect that you allow people to access this land with a well-developed trail system. Giving controlled access to the land for recreation use (carefully developed trail system, volunteer monitoring, etc.) will help preserve the wild character of the area and its inhabitants.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail connecting Milagra Point to Sweeney Ridge is an important and a long-awaited improvement. At this time, equestrians cannot access Milagra Ridge, because there is no provision for trailer parking. Trailer parking for equestrians should be provided, and trails should not be paved but left in their natural state in harmony with the wild nature of the area.

b) SHELLDANCE NURSERY AREA

Alternative One (1) "A Diverse Opportunities Zone" is the best choice. The area is well suited for a community stewardship center and park orientation and information center; there are already in place buildings and an infrastructure to serve this purpose. The alternative proposes improved access from Highway One (1): this is a very important consideration. The alternative should also include improving the crossing of Highway One (1) to reach Mori Point by foot, bike, or horse.

The road to the site is very steep and is not safely accessible for horse trailers. Parking for horse trailers could be provided at the bottom in the vacant parcel of land there, and a trail to the Sweeny Ridge Trailhead built.

For all visitors, an experience on Sweeney Ridge would be enhanced by connecting Mori Point, Sharp Park Beach, Cattle Hill, Picardo Ranch, San Pedro Valley Park, Mc Nee

Ranch State Park, and Rancho Corral De Tierra to the latter. It will accomplish the mission of the National Park Service: i.e. connecting people with parks by means of providing recreational activities.

Up the road from the Sweeney Ridge Trailhead, the existing trail access around the gate needs to be improved. Equestrians use this area a great deal; it is located next to three horse-boarding facilities.

c) SWEENEY RIDGE INCLUDING CATTLE HILL AND PICARDO RANCH

A combination of alternatives One (1) and Two (2) is the best choice. Alternative Three (3) is so vague that commentary is not possible.

Protecting the natural landscape is very important, but to experience that landscape through trail use, primitive camping is, as well, very important. The existing trail system through this area could be improved without disturbing the local animals and plants. This land is rugged; trails are rough, but it does offer great potential for visitors to enjoy the coastal ecosystem and to connect with the park system and the historical significance of the site (war, ranching, and discovery).

Access to Sweeney Ridge from the top of Fassler Avenue should be made possible by removing the huge rock blocking the entrance. Presently one or two horse trailers can park in a cul de sac one block from the gate at the top of Fassler; the only way to provide more access for horse trailers would be to create a parking lot/turn around inside the locked gate. This might not be feasible or possible from a park or from a neighborhood/traffic pattern standpoint. The trails from Fassler are well suited to horses, however; they are not frequently used by hikers or bicyclists and are wide enough and/or provide enough passing alternatives that mixed use would not be a problem. The only other ways to access these beautiful trails via horseback are from the east side of the mountain, where there is little parking available for horse trailers; from the Shell Dance Nursery, the limitations of which are mentioned elsewhere; or from two privately managed stable in the back of Linda Mar Valley, accessible only to those who board horses there.

The trail from Fassler up Sweeney Ridge also contains a fire gate about 1 mile from the initial locked gate at Fassler. This fire gate, when closed and locked as it is now, will not accommodate horse passage and a passage around this gate would have to be considered should you plan to keep this fire gate closed and locked.

GGNRA should pursue the acquisition of the Picardo Ranch, but only under the condition of retaining the existing stables in place. The presence of an equestrian ranch on these lands enhances the visitors' experience, provides easy and beautiful access to the surrounding area, including Sweeney Ridge, and provides additional recreational activities to Bay Area residents. Horses when managed properly are not disruptive to the ecosystem, and they remind us of their historical importance in the Portola Expedition as painted in the artist's conception of the expedition in the National Park Service brochures

for Sweeney Ridge. Modest visitor support facilities at Picardo Ranch proposed in Alternative two (2) makes good sense. Picardo Ranch is situated in a neighborhood area of Pacifica and is very accessible by foot traffic; it borders a local high school, inviting educational collaboration and volunteer activities connected with the high school.

A place to tie horses as well as picnic tables should be provided at the Portola Discovery Site, the destination for a hike or ride. Along the top of the ridge to the north of this site, a dirt trail needs to be developed on one side of the paved road for equestrian use. Equestrians use this area a great deal; it is located next to three horse-boarding facilities.

Proposals in the three (3) alternatives: Connecting the Bay Area Ridge Trail, the Sawyer Camp Trail in the San Francisco Watershed, and downgrading Sneath Lane are excellent ideas.

d) MORI POINT

Alternative One (1) "Connecting People with the Parks" is the best choice. It will restore this scenic land from the damages of a former quarry operation and the erosion created by illegal off-road vehicles while also improving access to the land.

On the west side of Mori Point, the existing trails are in terrible shape and need to be rebuilt. These trails must remain unpaved and multiuse, because the Coastal Trail travels this area. Paved trails are not only unsafe for horses but are completely contrary to the idea of preserving and restoring the coastal ecosystem. In addition, paved trails in an area as perpetually foggy as Mori Point become slick and dangerous for horses, hikers, and bicyclists.

A connector trail between the Pacifica Rockaway Beach, the Pacifica Linda Mar Beach, and San Pedro Point should be planned and built.

At the Mori Point Trailhead, there is at the present time parking for a one horse trailer if the spot is not blocked by a car. Because there is ample space, it would improve all users' experience if you were to build a separate parking lot for horse trailers. Tie posts and water for people, dogs, and horses should be made available.

Alternative two (2) is not an option, because it controls and limits the access to this beautiful area to the local residents. Within this highly populated urban area, this area is extensively use by hikers, dog walkers, and equestrians.

e) PEDRO POINT, DEVIL'S SLIDE, AND SAN PEDRO MOUNTAIN

On the subject of Pedro Point and San Pedro Mountain: The best alternative is Alternative One (1).

Equestrians did ride the trails a great deal until the area became land-locked a year or two ago. The acquisition of the land by GGNRA will be excellent only if it will give us access

to the trails again. A parking area for horse trailers and a connector trail to the nearby beach at Linda Mar Boulevard should also be provided.

A crossing of Highway One (1) at the Old San Pedro Road to reach this park should be planned as well; the present crossing of Highway One at the Old San Pedro Road is very dangerous because of continuous traffic.

Once the Devil's Slide tunnel project is finished, the idea of adding Devil's Slide area to the existing trail system is very exciting. Trails should be planned to connect Devil's slide to each of the following parks: San Pedro Point, Mc Nee State Park, Montara Mountain, and Rancho Corral de Tierra.

f) RANCHO CORRAL DE TIERRA

The recommendation you received from the Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee (ETRAC) and the Coastside Horse Council for the area are in accordance with our vision for the management of the area.

g) SFPUC WATERSHED EASEMENTS

Alternative One (1) is the best choice for the management of SFPUC Watershed Easements, giving the public long-awaited for access to this beautiful land.

Connecting SFPUC Watershed with the adjacent parks is very important. A connector trail over Whithing Ridge is a wonderful suggestion, considering that opening the existing locked gates is all that would be necessary to make it happen, and it would connect Sweeney Ridge to Montara Mountain. The trails are fire roads, which would easily convert as multiuse trails.

Alternative two (2) is not an option, because it drastically limits the public use of SFPUC Watershed.

Alternative three (3) offers an interpretive station to highlight the scope of the water system; this is an interesting idea that should be implemented.

End of comments.

We thank you very much for reading and considering our comments. We would enjoy hearing from you, should you have questions, comments to pass on or need more information

First Name, Last Name	Address
1. Peter Desmond	2877 23 rd Street San Francisco, Ca 94110
2. Leslie Steer	1464 Crespi Drive Pacifica, California 94044
3. Annie Shaw	208 Pennsylvania Ave. #203 San Francisco, Ca 94107
4. Connie Suzuki	241 Judson Avenue San Francisco, CA 94112
5. Liza Sibley	270 Bayview Circle San Francisco, CA 94124
6. Michael Yablon	719 Faxon Avenue San Francisco, CA 94112
7. Judith and Mike Rothman	1328 A Kobbe Ave. San Francisco, CA 94129
8. Anne C Gardner	4 Desvio Court Pacifica, CA 94044
9. Jeanette L. Taplin	8108 Admiralty Lane Foster City, CA
10. Linda Foreman	107 Outlook Circle Pacifica, Ca 94044
11. Megan Simpson	140 Hamerton Ave San Francisco, CA 94131
12. Carol Hamby, San Francisco Horsemen's Past President	1334 Masonic Ave. San Francisco, CA 94117
13. Dennis L. Hamby, MD	1334 Masonic Ave. San Francisco, CA 94117
14. Melissa Miksch	701 Pennsylvania Street # 101 San Francisco, CA 94107
15. Robin and Jim Everett	20 24 Vista Lane Petaluma Ca 94954
16. Bertille Legrand	2877 23 rd Street San Francisco, Ca 94110

Comments from San Mateo County Farm Bureau regarding management alternatives for the Rancho Corral de Tierra site, San Mateo County, Calif.

1. San Mateo County Farm Bureau appreciates the recognition and acknowledgement by NPS staff of the significance and importance of the adjacent irrigated row crop commercial farming operation during their oral presentations at the public workshops. We would suggest that this recognition be captured in the written narrative of the "Current Conditions and Management" for the Rancho Corral de Tierra project.

Suggested language could be "Approximately 300 acres of the Rancho are not included in the park boundary. Those acres encompass farmland of "Local Significance" as designated by the State of California Department of Conservation" and will remain in private ownership and agricultural use."

2. Important farmland, such as those adjacent to the NPS Rancho Corral de Tierra project, are resources which are the subject of several layers of protection in San Mateo County including county Planned Agricultural District zoning and the Local and State Coastal Plan. Beyond protection of the farmlands, there is recognition in our County that the business of agriculture needs insulation from nuisance issues arising from neighbor complaints about normal agricultural activities associated with the cultivating and growing of crops. In response to this issue, San Mateo County has developed and adopted a form of "right to farm" ordinance. This ordinance reduces the likelihood of "moving to the nuisance" complaints. And beyond the "right to farm" ordinances and protective zoning, our Farm Bureau believes that a buffer zone between farmland and public access trails is important from both a public safety as well as for "food safety and security" purposes and should be considered when planning public access trail systems. Such buffer zones, however, should not be a burden on the existing farm or cause a reduction of the production footprint of the farm. These topics as well as trail closures during some agricultural activities have been highlighted recently during deliberations about the location and use of the Coastal Trail where it will be constructed adjacent to existing row crop operations.

We understand that the siting, planning and eventual construction of trails, access and NPS facilities will be addressed in the future and we look forward to further discussion at that point. We would suggest, however, that it is timely in this current planning process to acknowledge the issue.

The current description for the "Diverse Opportunities Zone" for Alternative 1 suggests that the "working agricultural landscapes" be "incorporated into the visitor experience". We would suggest that it would be appropriate to add to that language "without impact to the agricultural production".

It would be our suggestion, that this consideration be afforded to any adjacent production agricultural operation for this or other planning processes now or in the future in San Mateo County.

3. Within the "Current Conditions and Management" section, there is a statement that "The headwaters of four major coastal watersheds are contained within this property, providing important riparian habitat and a scenic backdrop &" We would like to point out that those drainages are also important source watersheds for both domestic and agricultural uses.

It would be our suggestion, that the anticipated more specific planning efforts for the Rancho Corral de Tierra site include ideas on how to protect existing, possibly enhance existing and or develop new water facilities and storage within these watersheds for benefit of domestic (urban) users and agricultural usage. That suggestion is made because of the urgent need for reliable local water supplies, while also recognizing that correctly managed water enhances both aquatic and terrestrial sensitive species on our coast. We believe that this use of water resources has precedent within the National Parks system (i.e. Tuolumne River being a source watershed for domestic and agricultural use in Yosemite) or even within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (i.e. GGNRA easement over SFPUC watershed lands where Pilarcitos Creek is a source watershed for domestic and agricultural use).

In terms of this current more general planning effort, we suggest that the agricultural and domestic beneficial uses for these source watersheds should be acknowledged and included in the "Current Conditions and Management" section.

Suggested language could be "The headwaters of four major coastal watersheds are contained within this property, providing important riparian habitat, important sources of water for both domestic and agricultural use and a scenic backdrop"

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

San Mateo County Historical Association
2200 Broadway
Redwood City, California 94063
650.299.0104
650.299.0141 fax
www.historysmc.org

2008



July 22, 2008

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
Stephen Nofield
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Dear Mr. Nofield:

Our San Mateo County Historical Association is most excited about your creating a new General Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). GGNRA had few San Mateo County interests when it was formed, but now has substantial properties, easements and partnerships within our county. We will enjoy working with your staff on the Historic Resources Study for your holdings. We are now forming an agreement with Park Historian Stephen Haller to complete this document. We also look forward to adding our comments to your planning process and hope that further partnerships can be formed between our organization, the GGNRA and the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Division.

We read with enthusiasm your "preliminary alternatives for San Mateo County", especially the paragraph in the overview section in "Alternative 1" which refers to: "development of a multi-agency visitor information and orientation facility" which will be "located along Highway 1" and "could be shared by the National Park Service/ GGNRA, San Mateo County, California State Parks... and other organizations."

We propose that you consider the Sanchez Adobe Historic Site in Pacifica as a possible location for visitor services and/or interpretive programming. The Adobe Site, owned by San Mateo County and operated by the Historical Association, is just 10 blocks off Highway 1, has ample parking and consists of 5 acres, much of which can be utilized for interpretive purposes. It is also, historically speaking, central to the story of your properties.

It is in close proximity to your Sweeney Ridge, from which Gaspar de Portola discovered the San Francisco Bay in 1769. As you know this discovery is regarded as one of the most important of the Spanish colonial period in the regions north of Mexico. Our Historical Association has long been involved in researching and recording Portola's expedition. Our museum's founder, Dr. Frank Stanger, helped translate the original journals of the main characters of the discovery party, identified

Board of Directors

Karen S. McCown
Chairman
Umang Gupta
Immediate Past Chairman
Herm Christensen
Vice Chairman
Phill Raiser
Secretary
Brian Sullivan
Treasurer
Al Acena, Ph.D.
John Adams
Paul Borulich
Keith Bautista
Arthur H. Breidenbeck
Roberta Carcione
John Clinton
Shawn Deluna
Robert Desky
Celeste Grannini
John Inglis
Peggy Bort Jones
Douglas Keyston
Sue Lempert
Joan Levy
Anne Peter
Barbara Rucker
Patrick Ryan
Marcy Saunders
Cynthia L. Schreurs
Paul Shepherd
Mitch Postel
President
**President's
Advisory Board**
Frank Baldanzi
T. Jack Foster, Jr.
Georgi LaBerge
Greg Munks
John Schrup
Tom Siebel

their camp sites on the Peninsula and wrote scholarly articles and a book about the party's exploits.

The largest artifact on the site is the adobe house that belonged to Francisco Sanchez, the one time alcalde of San Francisco, commandant of the San Francisco Presidio and leader of the Californians when they faced U.S. Marines at the Battle of Santa Clara. Sanchez's story will certainly relate to the history of your Rancho Corral de Terra of the same era, which was possessed by Francisco's neighbors.

While the house represents the state's Mexican period, actually the site's history is important to all three of the earliest California eras. An Ohlone Indian village called Pruristac thrived here. During mission times, an outpost stood on the site that supplied the Mission at San Francisco with food and other raw materials. This was a substantial operation, the largest of its kind in California. At one point as many people lived and worked at the outpost as did at the Mission itself.

Our primary program at the Sanchez Adobe consists of a well-established hands-on history program for youngsters in the 3rd and 4th grades studying California History. While learning about the site's relationship to the first three eras of the state, the kids make their own adobe bricks, learn how to use a lariat, grind corn, make candles and participate in other learning activities. The program is so popular that when we open it for reservations in the spring, within two weeks it is booked for the entire next school year. We keep the site open to the public five days a week - - Tuesday through Thursday and both weekend days.

While the programs are great, the County and Historical Association have not substantially improved the site for interpretive purposes since the 1950's. Obviously, work is needed. Recognizing this, last year we completed a master plan for the site that includes better utilization of the property and the building of an interpretive center. This is the perfect time for us to have you involved and include the history of the GGNRA's holdings on the County's coast as part of our efforts. We hope that we can convince your staff to come to the Adobe Site, and with County Parks and Recreation representatives, discuss how we can formulate a proposal that could get us all working together. We are convinced that from an interpretive point of view, and from the standpoint of best utilization of all our resources, a productive joint effort can be created.

The San Mateo County Historical Association is a 1500 member, non-profit organization that was established in 1935. We currently operate two historic sites in the County; besides the Sanchez Adobe we also conduct the programming at the Woodside Store for the County Parks and Recreation Division. Our largest recent effort began 10 years ago when we moved our San Mateo County History Museum to the 40,000 square foot "old" courthouse in Redwood City. Since that time we have spent \$20 million dollars to restore the building and make it one of the best county

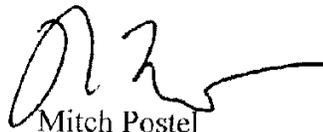
history museums anywhere (I hope you can visit us sometime). While \$10 million came from a variety of governmental sources, the balance was raised through private contributions.

We believe that with the County, we forge a great partnership with the GGNRA. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Karen McCown
Chairwoman



Mitch Postel
President

cc: Brian O'Neil
Steve Haller
Rich Gordon
Dave Holland
Sue Lempert

Preservation of Equestrian Facilities in GGNRA

To: Brian O'Neill, Superintendent
Golden Gate National Recreation Area

From: Members of the Santa Cruz County Horsemen's Association

Re: (1) Support for preservation of **equestrian facilities**:
Ember Ridge, Picardo Ranch (Millwood), SFPUC Watershed easements,
Moss Beach Ranch, Ocean View Stables, Renegade Ranch, Rancho Tierra
del Coral, Presidio Riding Club, Miwok Stables and Golden Gate Dairy.

(2) Support for continued equestrian access to **riding trails**:
Milagra Ridge, Sheldance Nursery area, Sweeny Ridge, Cattle Hill, Mori Point,
Pedro Point, Devil's Slide, San Pedro Mountain (all south of San Francisco), as
well as trails in Marin County and San Francisco that are located on GGNRA lands.

We the undersigned seek to preserve the existing equestrian facilities and trail access which may in the future be affected by decisions taken by your General Management Planning Team – GGNRA. The above-named stables have successfully operated for decades in our local areas. These facilities are well known and highly utilized. Most are at or near full capacity, confirming the enduring popularity of horseback riding and the continuing urgent need for horse boarding facilities in these coastal areas. Our stables enjoy wide public support and aid many sectors of the local economy (hay and grain production, feed stores, tack stores, online providers, veterinarians, farriers, instructors, rodeos, shows, restaurants, etc.). All of these interests would suffer if riding or horse boarding opportunities were reduced.

As urban areas encroach on rural preserves, it becomes all the more important that the government recognize that before the advent of GGNRA our equine facilities were already responsible and established custodians of these lands. The trails have been cared for; they are not degraded. Precautions have been taken not to pollute the seasonal streams. Buildings have been kept to a minimum. Dirt bikes and off-road vehicles that would destroy the natural habitat have been discouraged in an effort to preserve the areas. We continue to be good stewards of the land.

With the continued high level of interest in horseback riding, horse camps for children, hourly lessons and horse boarding, it is only reasonable that the local facilities be allowed to continue operating in our coastal areas. Urban residents enjoy these traditional pastimes and value the proximity of our stables to the cities. As construction encroaches on open spaces it becomes more difficult to maintain equestrian facilities. Nevertheless, riding remains very popular and we the undersigned need and support our equestrian facilities in the planned Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

From: Santa Cruz County Horsemen's Assoc.

Thank you for your attention to our petition and please find attached signatures supporting the continuance and enhancement of our equestrian facilities under your management.

Signature	Print Name	Address
	Laura A. Azzaro	175 Tokak Rd. Apts, CA 95003
	ROBERT B. SUHR	100 MARINERA ROAD SCOTTS VALLEY CA
	Stacy James Ryan	3410 Merrill Rd Apts CA 95003
	Carole Degen	PO Box 578 Felton CA 95018
	Joan Wildman	4300 Glenwood Dr. Scotts Valley 95006
	ED KILDUFF	140 ALLAN LN WATSONVILLE CA 95076
	BARBARA KILDUFF	140 ALLAN LN WATSONVILLE CA 95076
	DIANA WICKKOWICZ	3002 APPLE LN APTOS CA 95003
	Suzanne Rudder	616 California St. Santa Cruz CA 95060
	Terese Lovell	2340 N Rudeo Cutch Soquel CA 95073
	Brenda Messenger	925 Freedom Blvd B25 Watsonville CA 95076
	Linda Wahler	168 Olympia Station Rd Felton CA 95018
	DeAnne M. Alvarez	850 Isabel Dr., Santa Cruz CA 95060
	Susan Clough	2038 Old Airline Hwy Paricines, CA 95043
	Lucinda M. Guire	2241 Old Airline Hwy Paricines 95043
	BETTY T. WHITCOMB	8485 WILD HORSE CAV Rd. Prunedale
	James H. Whitcomb	8485 Wild Horse Rd Prunedale Ca 93907
	Elisabeth Hratt	250 Western States, Felton CA 95018
	Janie Cunningham	1 Cathy Lane Scotts Valley, Ca. 95066
	MIKE CALDWELL	1777 Jack Rabbit Ridge Scotts Valley, CA 95066
	Dana Rasmussen	125 Spreading Oak Dr. Scotts Valley CA 95066
	Larry Favok	" " " " " "
	Dee Kenville	161 Hagemann Ave Santa Cruz CA 95062
	Marsha I.S. Barrick	9343 Platane Dr., Felton 95018
	RITA BONNELL	195 Sunbeam Ave Boulder Creek, Calif 95006
	EMMA MCCRARY	310 Swanton Rd - San Jose - 95017
	Jacqueline Davidow	1416 Broadway 95062
	Jaime Ochoa	140 Big Tree Lane 95076

From: Santa Cruz County Horsemen's Association

~~Val Riel~~ VALERIE RIEGEL 545 SUNSET RD BOULDER CREEK CA 95001
Maureen ~~Maureen~~ Mary SULLIVAN 2917 ROBLES DR SANTA CRUZ 95061
Lawrence ~~Maureen~~ Lawrence R. HERZBERG 630 FAIRMOUNT DR BOULDER CREEK 95001
Susan ~~Maureen~~ SUSAN HERZBERG 630 FAIRMOUNT DR BOULDER CREEK 95001
Claudia ~~Maureen~~ Claudia GOODMAN 17151 COGAR ROCK RD BOULDER CREEK 95001
Leslie ~~Maureen~~ Leslie JAQUITH 8408 EAST ZAYANTE RD FELTON CA 95021
Kristi ~~Maureen~~ Kristi LOCATELLI 7940 EAST ZAYANTE RD FELTON, CA 95021

Submitted, July, 2008



August 1, 2008

Slide Ranch, a nonprofit California corporation established in 1970, submits the following comments in response to the proposed General Management Plan for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (the "Plan"). This statement was drafted by the Executive Director and Vice President of the Board of Directors of Slide Ranch in consultation with the President of the Board and members of the board's Executive Committee.

Slide Ranch belongs and should remain where it is.

The most recent draft of the Plan presents three alternatives for the future of the historic coastal site now occupied by Slide Ranch between Muir Beach and Stinson Beach, California. Two of those alternatives call for the relocation of Slide Ranch to a "more desirable location." Slide Ranch respectfully but strongly disagrees with any proposed relocation of the Ranch. In this it is not alone. The managers and staff of Slide Ranch have received a myriad of comments, written and oral, from past and present users of the site, parents of children who have benefited from its many educational programs, and teachers, all of whom unanimously and enthusiastically endorse the operation of Slide Ranch in its present site. Slide Ranch management is advised that NPS staff has received a similar if not greater volume of comments urging that Slide Ranch *not* be relocated away from its home on the coast.

The reasons for this outpouring of support for Slide Ranch are not hard to understand. Slide Ranch may be the most beautiful outdoor classroom in the world. Its present location is ideally suited to the role Slide Ranch plays in the ecology and social well-being of Marin County and the entire San Francisco Bay Area.

Founded in 1970, the year of the first Earth Day, located above the Pacific Ocean and blessed with a panoramic view of the Marin County coastline, Slide Ranch teaches visitors to discover the wonder of the natural world through hands-on activities and independent exploration. Participants of all ages, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds experience a deep connection to the Earth, its soil, water and the human efforts that preserve the land and bring food to our tables. From the moment of its founding in 1970, Slide Ranch immediately started serving inner-city children from San Francisco's Mission District. Today more than 8000 visitors – many of them underprivileged and at-risk youth -- attend Slide's family days, school field trips, summer camp and overnight camping programs each year. This direct and immediate immersion in the natural world has generated a deep base of support for Slide Ranch that spans generations of San Francisco Bay Area residents.

Plan Alternative One, "Connecting People with the Parks," calls for Slide to remain where it is, and is very much in line with the purpose of Slide Ranch. The NPS should keep in mind that the Ranch site was purchased with private funds in 1970 and dedicated to public use in order to protect it from commercial development. Slide Ranch's founding and operation on the coast thus helped realize, and continues to further, one of the basic congressional mandates in the establishment of the GGNRA, namely, that the Secretary of the Interior "shall preserve the recreation area, as far as possible, in its natural setting, and protect it from development and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area." 16 U.S.C. §460bb.

people of Slide Ranch have these words in mind every day. They maintain a deep sense of stewardship for the land and ocean and the creatures that inhabit them. Staff regularly remove invasive plants, maintain trails and provide interpretive and educational programs that inspire visitors to help restore the coastal eco-system. Visitors to this scenic historic coastal farm thus experience firsthand the connections between the food we eat and the natural elements that grow life. The Slide Ranch site has been used by people since the 19th Century. Building on 21st century methods of ecology and farm husbandry, Slide Ranch staff and volunteers manage 134 acres of coast land consistent with its GGNRA Park Partnership and membership in Marin Organics (which Slide Ranch joined in 2005).

The location is unwarranted under the language of the Plan itself. Slide's tide pool exploration and education program, habitat restoration days and curriculum are all heavily oriented to the Plan's goal of "increasing visitor understanding, awareness and support for coastal resources through participation in stories and programs about human interaction with and dependency on natural resources." The Slide Ranch site, perched above the crashing waves, inspires a sense of wonder and awe unlikely to be replicated elsewhere.

Visitors and program participants are not the only beneficiaries of Slide's magnificent location and excellent programs. Slide Ranch has become an important national training ground for young environmental workers, teachers and thinkers who come from all over the U.S. to participate in our Teachers-in-Residence program. After ten months of working at Slide Ranch, these young people disperse to organizations nationwide to apply the knowledge and techniques they have learned at the Ranch.

Slide Ranch is an "evolved cultural landscape", to borrow a term from the NPS, and has been in continuous agricultural use for more than 100 years. It has performed multiple roles and tasks for generations of visitors at its current site. Geological issues do not only exist – indeed, the name comes from the historic "Big Slide" that served as a navigational landmark for 19th Century ships approaching the Golden Gate – but those very issues present opportunities for innovation and creativity. The land beneath Slide's historic facilities is a continuously changing landscape that requires and inspires creative design solutions emphasizing flexibility, innovation and simplicity. In this sense Slide Ranch is not only a classroom but a laboratory for ecologically sound engineering and land use in harmony with a rugged yet astonishingly beautiful environment.

Slide Ranch celebrates a style of farm architecture and working-the-land ethic that dates well back into the earliest days of settlement in West Marin. Its food growing practices, organic soil, re-use of resources, buildings and infrastructure exemplify a light-carbon footprint operation reminiscent of a younger world but which employ the latest tools of organic farming. The Coastal Miwok people harvested and smoked food from the sea at the Slide Ranch site 800 years ago. Visitors today can examine the tide pools where the Miwok fished and moments later enjoy Slide's organic vegetable garden, the pride of West Marin. Slide Ranch honors the Miwok and all people in its very contemporary yet timeless efforts to connect us all to the Earth.

We appreciate the opportunity to share with the General Management Plan team some of our views at this stage. We may have additional comments and views to share with you as the planning process moves forward and one or more alternatives are published by the GMP team.

If you have questions about the official position of Slide Ranch, please contact Executive Director Charles Higgins at 415.381.8758.

For more information about Slide Ranch, please visit www.slideranch.org.

From: Arthur Moritz For The Stinson
Beach Village Assoc. Stinson Beach Ca
94970 PO Box 706

Dear Sirs: This is a response to your
call for comment in The "Comment Form"
with your General Management Plan / E.I.S.
66 NRA, Muir Wood National Monument
Newsletter #4. My comments are limited
to pages 14 and 15 of your recent news
letter as these issues have the most
impact and hold the most interest for
the town of Stinson Beach. My comments
also cover the information gathered
, or not gathered as was mostly the case
at your June 10th Open House in the
SF Bay Model, Multi-Purpose room.

To begin with, separating your proposal
as abstract as they are, into Alternatives
1, 2, or 3 seems almost silly. Example:
under Alt. 1 The park managers "would
explore ways to improve visitor access
to Stinson Beach, such as introducing
seasonal alternative transportation, and
would continue to work with the
community to address congestion." In
Alt. 2 "The park managers would ex-
plore year round alternative transportation".
After years of Comprehensive Transit
Management Plan meetings, and now
this plan, a lot of "exploring" has

(2)

been done. The County of Marin brought us The "Stage" and has supplied some deputies to direct traffic at the stop sign - park entrance juggernaut during seasonal peak traffic periods. Stinson Beach would like to know what exactly you have in mind. The idea of choosing "Alt. 1" over "Alt. 2" because we like "seasonal alternative transportation" rather than "year round" seems, as I said, silly. A ranger at the park entrance at peak traffic hours to assist the County Deputies would seem like a good simple concept but it's not in any of the alternatives.

In both Alt. 1 and Alt. 2 "sustainable new facilities" would replace deteriorated restrooms, showers, picnic areas, and parking lots. The existing deteriorated restrooms, showers, picnic areas and parking lots are concrete concepts. They exist. "Sustainable new facilities" is completely abstract, and could mean just about anything. Stinson Beach would love to see the preliminary concept drawings. How does Alt 1 differ from Alt 2? Where are the new bathrooms going to be located exactly? These are fair questions and need

(3)

one would think, easily answered. At the June 10th NPS Open House I asked these question and expressed the fact that over recent years the consensus in Stinson Beach has been that preserving the number of parking spaces in the Park is important but maintaining the "No Fee" status of the parking lot critical to managing traffic and parking congestion in town. All the NPS personnel I talked to were evasive when it came to anything specific about any of the alternatives. They could not or would not direct me to anyone in the NPS, who could answer whether or not parking fees were part of any of the alternatives.

In alternative 2, "The Eastcott Creek riparian corridor would be further enhanced by re-designing the parking lot," "and the south parking lot would be removed to support wetland restoration." Although environmental restoration does not necessarily reduce the number of available parking spaces a significant reduction seems likely. Again Stinson Beach would love to see the plan. As private property owners in Stinson Beach fill in the flood plain along Eastcott creek

(4)

mitigating Flooding in town may begin to take precedent over parking. Wetland restoration and developing a sustainable creek riparian habitat zone in the Park that functions naturally during periods of high and low rainfall and supports the variety of indigenous plant and animal species while helping to mitigate Flooding in the developed part of town may well become very attractive in a practical as well as environmental sense. Again Stinson Beach would love to see the plan.

Under Highway 1 and Panoramic Highway it mentions new facilities, such as pullouts, picnic areas, restrooms etc. These kinds of facilities, including parking, developed at the old White Gate Ranch House site would be a boon to those who like to hike the "Mid Hill" and or enjoy the "panoramic" views from that area. It might also take a bit of the pressure off the main parking lot at the beach and would also still be within quick reach of the Stinson Beach Fire Department and EMTs. We'd like to see what you have in mind. The Stinson Beach Village

(5)

Association would be very open to meeting with an informed person from the Park service with specifics, hopefully site plans, of what it is you would like to do in our locale! The Comprehensive Transit Management Plan process seemed a lot like a game of "Hide The ball", hopefully this time things will be more transparent.

Sincerely Yours
Arthur Moritz

To contact the SBVA. E-mail
<http://stinsonbeachvillage.com>
Go to Contact

July 29, 2008

National Park Service
Golden Gate NRA General Management Planning Team
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, Co. 80225-287

Dear GGNRA Planning Team:

Stinson Beach Village Association, in Marin County would like to thank you for this opportunity to review and comment on the Management Plan for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). Our residence membership organization have attended your Open House events in Fort Mason and Sausalito, with the focus to review the alternatives outlined in the NPS Spring newsletter (2008), and after collectively meeting this month, drafted the comments below for your preview.

Within the framework of your management newsletter, we have overwhelmingly endorsed the Concept #1: "Connecting people to the Parks," "Park management would focus on ways to attract and welcome people, connect people with the resources, and promote understanding, enjoyment, preservation and health." We have realized since the conception of the GGNRA to the 'Park next Door' means that the "recreational" options are unique to these urban areas and that whatever final combinations are put forward that 'PARKS TO THE PEOPLE' MUST PREVAIL.

The SBVA has strong concerns regarding ANY options put forward that, within the Management Zone, lessen or eliminate, alternatives for this Alternative #1. Examples of these less desirable alternatives are:

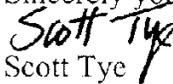
Any plan to remove or eliminate the existing restrooms, showers, or the South parking lot to support increasing wetland restoration. During weekends throughout the summer and during warm days year-round, having the current parking capacity lends itself to the enjoyment and options of the Park visitors and the balance of impact on the Stinson Beach town/community/residents.

Of greater concern is the option in Alternative #2, where there is suggestion that the Park would encourage the abandonment of Highway 1 between Stinson Beach and Muir Beach in the event of a catastrophic slide (road undermining, mudslide, rockslide, etc). Our community would not and can not accept such a radical proposal with NO hope of another alternative route (such as the Devil's Slide Project in San Mateo). California State Highway One is designated as a State and National treasure and an official Scenic Highway with all the clout that it carries.

Restoration of the natural ecosystem of Easkoot creek watershed and the benefits that would contribute to the natural processes that affect the Bolinas Lagoon is of great concern the residents of Stinson Beach in the 2008 community survey just released on the community website(stinsonbeachvillage.com).Stinson Beach Village Association does appreciate this long-range planning process within our beautiful and unique home. Our community environment is equally valued however, and SBVA and the residents will stand firm for our cultural and community character values.

One last observation deals with 'taking care' of what you have. We believe that the delayed and deferred maintenance/repair of existing infrastructure must take precedence over "new" projects of environmental nature.

Again, we stand ready to work toward the improvement and enhanced character of the Recreation Area and it's options. Thank you for the opportunity to share these comments on the General Management Plan and your continued efforts.

Sincerely yours,

Scott Tye
SBVA Coordinator
Marin County



207

Surfrider Foundation
Marin County Chapter
P.O. Box 1171
Larkspur, CA 94939

July 22, 2008

National Park Service
General Management Planning Team – GGNRA
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Dear GGNRA Planning Team:

Surfrider Foundation, Marin County thanks you for the opportunity to comment upon the General Management Plan for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). Representatives of our organization attended your Open House in Sausalito, have reviewed the alternatives outlined in the Spring 2008 Newsletter, and have drafted the following comments for your consideration.

The three hundred members of Surfrider Foundation, Marin County support and promote the protection of and public access to the coastal environment and beaches of Marin County's precious coastline. GGNRA shares these objectives also. Of particular interest to our members and to the surf community are the natural first-rate surf breaks at Rodeo Beach, Muir Beach and Stinson Beach. We thank GGNRA for the great work it is doing to preserve these beaches, provide easy public access, ample free parking and well-maintained public restrooms.

Surfrider Foundation, Marin County appreciates the effort to develop a long-range plan to protect our beautiful, sensitive environment. We urge you to expand the plan's scope to include coordination with other regional planning entities, such as County of Marin, the Army Corps of Engineers and the State of California, to develop a consistent approach for the coastal environment. Given climate change, rising sea levels, persistent cliff erosion and deteriorating roads, coordination across all government agencies is vital to the health of our coastline.

Regarding the three Management Concepts, Surfrider Foundation, Marin County, whole heartedly supports Concept #1: Connecting People with the Parks, "Park management would focus on ways to attract and welcome people, connect people with the resources, and promote understanding, enjoyment, preservation and health." This concept emphasizes park's management commitment to the founding idea of "parks to the people." We realize that the final General Management Plan will contain elements from all three management concepts; however, whenever there are conflicts among the alternatives, we urge you to give primary consideration to Concept #1: Connecting People with the Parks.

The following are our comments regarding the alternatives for the Management Zones of interest to our members.

Marin County, Stinson Beach to Bolinas-Fairfax Road.

We support Alternative 1, which improves existing facilities, replaces existing restrooms and showers, protects and restores the coastal ecosystems and contributes to the restoration of natural processes that affect the Bolinas Lagoon.

In Alternative 2, we are strongly opposed to the elimination of the south parking lot to support wetland restoration. On summer weekends and during very warm days, visitors to Stinson Beach fill all the existing parking lots. Having this large parking capacity greatly contributes to the economic well being to the town of Stinson Beach.

Under Alternative 2, we oppose the suggestion that park management encourage the abandonment of Highway 1 between Muir Beach and Stinson Beach in the event of a catastrophic landslide.

Under Alternative 3, we support restoring the natural ecosystem of Easkoot Creek riparian and the preservation of the coastal defense structures east of Highway 1.

Marin County, Slide Ranch.

Surfrider Foundation, Marin County supports Alternative #1 for Slide Ranch, which is a continuation of an environmental and farm education center managed by a park partner. This partner in good faith has successfully managed this area since before the GGNRA was created. We strongly oppose the Alternative #2 proposal to forcibly remove the center and farm education program to a more geologically stable site.

Marin County, Golden Gate Dairy (Muir Beach)

Surfrider Foundation, Marin County supports Alternative #1, which maintains existing historic structures, supports the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department, moves equestrian use to Lower Redwood Creek, improves trailhead and public transit stop and enhances the creek corridor.

We oppose that portion of Alternative #2 that calls for the removal of non-historic residences and restricts equestrian use to designated trails only.

Marin Headlands: Fort Berry and Fort Cronkhite

Surfrider Foundation, Marin County supports Alternative #1, which among several proposals maintains and improves the recreational experiences including surfing, swimming, hiking, bicycle and horseback riding.

We agree with Alternative #3, which improves the historic preservation of military history and structures.

Offshore Marine Environment

Surfrider Foundation, Marin County congratulates GGNRA for its managing of the 1000-foot-wide fringe of coastal waters immediately offshore and supports Alternative #1 which coordinates policies with the Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries. We especially support the policy of no motorized boating including no jet-skies.

We oppose the portions of Alternatives #2 and #3, which would permit motorized boating. Would this include jet-skies? In our opinion, it is impossible to preserve the sensitive marine environment and allow recreational motorized boating.

Again we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the General Management Plan and your consideration of our suggestions.

Sincerely yours,

Scott Tye
President
Surfrider Foundation
Marin County



Loren Moore
Secretary/Treasurer
Surfrider Foundation
Marin County





July 31, 2008

Superintendent Brian O'Neill
National Park Service
General Management Planning Team - GGNRA
Denver Service Center
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Re: Comments on Golden Gate NRA - General Management Plan

Dear Superintendent O'Neill:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the General Management Plan for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area ("GGNRA").

Transportation Alternatives for Marin ("TAM") is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose mission is to promote pedestrian and bicycle transportation, particularly in the United States. This mission is advanced through the study of international best practices and the promotion of Marin County, California as a model community of pedestrian and bicycle transportation. Our objective is to demonstrate that investment in integrated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, combined with education, can relieve a substantial portion of the overall transportation load.

The mission of the National Park Service is to "preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations." The best way to advance this mission is to develop sustainable alternative transportation systems as a means to reduce congestion both accessing and within the parks, reduce carbon footprint, minimize detrimental environmental consequences of automotive traffic and emissions, and enhance the peaceful, natural experience that draws visitors. We encourage the NPS to work with its local partners and gateway communities to develop creative, long-term transportation solutions in and around our parks.

We encourage the National Park Service to emphasize non-motorized access to the GGNRA in this planning process. A large number of everyday users of the GGNRA are local users. We recommend that the NPS consider the huge increase in non-motorized infrastructure in Marin County to access the GGNRA in the Marin portions of the National Recreation Area, particularly in Southern Marin. These notable increased access opportunities are primarily in the Tennessee Valley and Highway 1 areas.

Our recommendations are made for the National Park Service to include in the General Management Plan EIR process to consider as Alternatives.



The recommendations we make below are primarily for safe and separate accommodation for non-motorized travelers, which are primarily cyclists and pedestrians. Safe and separate accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists are primarily Class I bike paths and multi-use paths. Separate infrastructure increases the number of non-motorized users and provides safer accommodation.

The following are our specific infrastructure recommendations:

1. Class I Bikeway from Vista Point to Ft. Baker. Ft. Baker has been renovated based upon sustainable principles. Non-motorized access to Ft. Baker provides the best, easiest access to Alexander Avenue, Sausalito. Safe and separate bicycle infrastructure should be constructed from Vista Point and GGNRA property down to Ft. Baker and from Ft. Baker to Alexander Avenue via East Road.
2. Manzanita Transferium.
 - a. The NPS should consider working with a public/private partnership including the owners of the land, or possible new owners of the land, next to the Holiday Inn Express on the north side of Highway 1 and the surrounding area at the Manzanita Exit. This is an excellent location for a bus access/transferium and for automobile parking. This should be studied as an opportunity to get people to use non-motorized travel as well as transit including busses to the GGNRA. There is plenty of space to build discreet parking in this area and also work with private parties to build accommodation for automobiles and transfer areas as well as hotel accommodations for GGNRA visitors. The strategy should be to get people to get out of their automobiles. Such strategies could include free parking at this area, only if people get out of their cars and use non-motorized or transit services, both private and public, to access the GGNRA. This would be an excellent location for a bike station, which would provide bike rentals. (Essentially, the GGNRA would only rent the bike station and leave the running of the business to a private business.)
3. Tam Valley Mini-Loop.
 - a. Part of the Tam Valley Mini-Loop is being constructed from Manzanita Station on the North side of Highway 1 to the Tennessee Valley path currently called the "Manzanita Connector." The Park Service should work to complete safe and separate infrastructure on each side of Highway 1 from the Manzanita station to the Tam Valley intersection of Highway 1 and Almonte Blvd. While parts of this will be completed soon, a complete system would facilitate non-motorized access through this area and provide accommodation to decrease congestion, particularly for local residents. This would be a huge mitigation measure for local residents given the amount of traffic that comes through this area into the GGNRA.



- b. Grade separated intersection at Highway 1 and Almonte Blvd for automobile traffic and non-motorized users. The NPS should consider acquiring a 70 yard perimeter of the lands surrounding the intersection of Highway 1 and Almonte on each of the three sides of the T intersection of Highway 1 and Almonte Blvd. and convert such areas to resting areas, meeting areas and non-motorized access areas to the GGNRA. Additionally, the NPS should study elevating the roadway at the intersection, with bicycle and pedestrian facilities under the road in every direction beneath Highway 1 and Almonte Blvd. This would separate the automobiles from cyclists and pedestrians at a busy intersection, allowing safe and separate passage for all users.
 - c. The NPS should consider acquiring the land on the east side of Highway 1 from Coyote Creek to the Highway 1 Almonte Blvd. intersection and return this area to wetlands. This would also provide better non-motorized access along the frontage area on the east side of Highway 1. This would provide the opportunity to raise the road level at this area and decrease traffic issues regarding flooding.
 - d. From the Almonte Blvd. / Highway 1 intersection, along Highway 1, provide safe and separate bicycle accommodation on each side of Highway 1 up to Loring.
 - e. From Almonte Blvd. / Highway 1 intersection, complete the Tam Valley Mini-Loop by providing safe and separate non-motorized accommodation on each side of Almonte Blvd. from Highway 1 and Almonte intersection to the Almonte / Miller Avenue split at the south end of Tamalpais High School.
4. Tennessee Valley Non-Motorized Connection. The County of Marin is building a pedestrian / bicycle path from the North-South Greenway near Coyote Creek up to the Tam Valley Community Center. We recommend that the Park Service continue the path from the Tam Valley Community Center all the way into Tennessee Valley to provide continuous, safe and separate non-motorized access to this Park entrance.
 5. Southern Marin Parklands Flat, Paved Access to Muir Woods. We recommend that the NPS study an access route that provides non-motorized access from Manzanita Station (a connection to the North-South Greenway) to Muir Woods on a safe and separate continuous and basically flat path that would allow all users to access the GGNRA in a non-motorized fashion, as follows:
 - a. Complete the path from Tam Valley Community Center to Tennessee Valley Park Entrance.
 - b. Construct a tunnel near the Haypress region in Tennessee Valley through to Green Gulch. The tunnel would be approximately .85 miles long. From the Green Gulch side of the tunnel, construct a Class I multi use pathway from Green Gulch



to Muir Woods Park Entrance. The pathway would parallel Shoreline Highway to Muir Woods Road to the Muir Woods Entrance.

- c. Provide secure, covered bicycle parking at Muir Woods Park Entrance.
- 6. Northern Loop, non-paved/pervious surface. We recommend the construction of a non-paved, pervious surface path for both cyclist and pedestrian accommodation from Muir Woods up to the ridge near Highway 1, above Highway 1 at the lowest elevation possible to Stinson Beach, from Stinson Beach down Highway 1 past the school, connecting to a planned, improved path up Bolinas Ridge to the Coastal Trail, the Coastal Trail to Rock Springs, from Rock Springs to Pan Toll, from Pan Toll back down to Muir Woods.
- 7. Stinson Beach Improvements. Develop a specific plan for Stinson Beach working with the Stinson Beach residents for parking, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, in particular to limit the areas where people can park outside of the State Park. Consider using alternatives such as parking stickers for locals to identifying them as allowing to park on local streets and only allowing visitors to park in areas designated for visitor parking, including Stinson Beach State Park and the downtown Stinson Beach area.

We recognize that some of these suggestions are bold. We also know that in the era of limited oil resources, greenhouse gasses, energy dependence, traffic congestion, and health concerns, bold solutions are needed. Some of our suggestions are rather straightforward. Others are expansive. We really encourage the NPS to consider these alternatives to get people out of their automobiles and to access GGNRA in a sustainable manner, with a reduced carbon footprint and healthier approach to GGNRA access.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick M. Seidler
President

cc: Supervisor Charles McGlashan
Supervisor Steve Kinsey
Marin County Bicycle Coalition