



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Fort Mason, San Francisco, California 94123

IN REPLY REFER TO:
D18 (GOGA-PLAN)

JUN 27 2011

Dear Park Friend:

We are pleased to present the Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument for your review and comment. This plan is intended to guide management of the park over the next 20 years. We invite you to review the draft and share your thoughts with us, and to let us know how it addresses your aspirations for the future of the park.

Prepared over the last five years, the draft plan contains various ideas for future management of the park. Some of these came from the public and park partners, and others build upon earlier successes or from lessons learned by day-to-day management of the park since 1972 as directed by the 1980 General Management Plan. We employed a rigorous planning process to explore a range of alternatives and create the National Park Service's preferred alternative which encompasses what we believe are the best ideas. The preferred alternative is described in chapters four (for Alcatraz), five (for Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties) and six (for Muir Woods). We hope you will give those chapters special attention.

We think you might be interested in a sample of some actions the draft plan identifies. Please bear in mind that implementation of the final general management plan will depend on many factors, including future National Park Service funding, service-wide priorities, and partnership funds, time, and effort.

In Marin County:

- Renovations to outdated visitor facilities at Stinson Beach and Tennessee Valley that will also incorporate restoration of the natural landscape.
- Improvements to the entrance of Muir Woods National Monument, including reorganizing parking and pedestrian paths, repurposing a historic building for use as an education center, and formalizing continued operation of the successful shuttle with development of an off-site intercept facility.
- Improvements to better serve visitors in the Marin Headlands, such as a visitor facility combining information and food service at Rodeo Beach.
- Solutions to long-standing inadequacies for park operations, including construction of a centralized maintenance facility in the Marin Headlands and dedication of a public safety office at Fort Baker.

In the City and County of San Francisco:

- Enhanced connections for visitors along the San Francisco Bay Trail between Aquatic Park (San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park) and Fort Mason Center.
- A course of action on Alcatraz Island that highlights its rich history, rehabilitates the Main Prison and historic barracks (which could include new exhibits and modest dorm-like overnight accommodations for volunteers) and opens the parade ground that overlooks the San

Francisco Bay. It also expresses the park's ongoing commitment to protect nesting water bird colonies, including the shoreline and offshore area.

- Collaboration with the City of San Francisco, California State Coastal Conservancy, and others to create and implement a long-range master plan for the Ocean Beach corridor—looking beyond the park's narrow boundary.
- Consolidation of museum collections into historic buildings in the Presidio.

In San Mateo County:

- Management guidance and improvements for new parklands, including a broad concept for Rancho Corral de Tierra that retains equestrian uses, restores habitat, and looks to create a sustainable system of public trails and trailheads that will serve future visitors.
- Partnerships to explore a shared multi-agency visitor center.
- New areas to be added to the park boundary, which include important small parcels and larger areas, such as the tidal zone along existing park sites, will enhance our ability to cooperate with other agencies in resource conservation and management.

We invite you to take this opportunity to help shape the future of the park by sending us your comments. You can do that online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>, by regular mail to the address above, or at one of the open houses we will host in communities around the park. These will be announced shortly. Your thoughtful comments are important to us and will make a difference as we finalize the plan in the coming year.

Thank you for your support and interest in this special place.



Frank Dean
General Superintendent

Enclosures (1)

Draft GMP/EIS, Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument

ABSTRACT

Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement
Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument
Marin County, San Francisco City and County, and San Mateo County, California

Established in 1972, Golden Gate National Recreation Area has been operating under its first general management plan, approved in 1980. Since the park's establishment, it has doubled in size and a better understanding of the park's natural and cultural resources and recreational uses has been gained. Muir Woods was declared a national monument in 1908 and is currently managed as part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. A new management plan is needed to guide these two parks for the next 20 years. This *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* describes three action alternatives for managing Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument.

The no-action alternative consists of the existing park management and serves as a basis for comparison in evaluating the other alternatives. Alternative 1, "Connecting People with the Parks," would further the founding idea of "parks to the people," and would engage the community and other potential visitors in the enjoyment, understanding, and stewardship of the park's resources and values. Park management would focus on ways to attract and welcome people, connect people with the resources, and promote understanding, enjoyment, preservation, and health. **Alternative 1 is the National Park Service's preferred alternative for park lands in Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties.** Alternative 2, "Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems," would place an emphasis on preserving, enhancing, and promoting the dynamic and interconnected coastal ecosystems in which marine resources are valued and prominently featured. Recreational and educational opportunities would allow visitors to learn about and enjoy the ocean and bay environments, and gain a better understanding of the region's international significance and history. Alternative 3, "Focusing on National Treasures," would place an emphasis on the park's nationally important natural and cultural resources. The fundamental resources of each showcased site would be managed at the highest level of preservation to protect the resources in perpetuity and to promote appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of those resources. Visitors would have the opportunity to explore the wide variety of experiences that are associated with many different types of national parks—all in this park and monument. All other resources would be managed to complement the nationally significant resources and associated visitor experiences. **Alternative 3 is the National Park Service's preferred alternative for Alcatraz Island and Muir Woods National Monument.**

The impacts of implementing the various alternatives were analyzed. Potential impacts were analyzed in six broad topic areas: natural resources; cultural resources; visitor use and experience; the social and economic environment; transportation; and park management, operations, and facilities. Natural resources included both physical and biological resources. Cultural resources included archeological, ethnographic, and cultural landscape resources; historic structures; and park collections.

This *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* has been distributed to other agencies and interested organizations and individuals for their review and comment. The public comment period for this document will last for 60 days after the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of availability has been published in the *Federal Register*.

HOW TO COMMENT ON THIS PLAN

Comments on the *Draft Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS)* are welcome and will be accepted during the 60-day public review and comment period. The easiest way to submit your comments is via the online form at <http://www.parkplanning.nps.gov/goga> (click on “General Management Plan” and then “Open for Public Comment”). We also accept written comments at the following address:

Superintendent
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Attention: Draft GMP/EIS
Fort Mason, Building 201
San Francisco CA 94123

Comments will be accepted for 60 days after the publication of the Environmental Protection Agency’s notice of availability in the *Federal Register*.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.