



Golden Gate National Recreation Area • Muir Woods National Monument



Dear Friends,

We are at an exciting stage in creating a new vision and direction for managing Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument (often referred to collectively as “the park”). In this newsletter, the planning team presents preliminary alternatives that describe three different future visions for managing the natural and cultural resources and opportunities for visitor experiences within the park. By developing preliminary alternatives, the planning team is able to explore different ways that the park could be managed. Once fully developed, one of these alternatives could be selected as the National Park Service’s preferred alternative or a new alternative could emerge that combines elements from some or all of the preliminary alternatives.

At this time, we are pausing to share our progress with you and gather your thoughts and ideas before we proceed with work on the general management plan. Your review and comments on the preliminary alternatives will help refine these alternatives and guide the planning team in developing the preferred alternative.

In this newsletter, you will find summaries of the work we have accomplished so far. Following the summaries is a presentation of the management zones and preliminary alternatives for your review. Your comments are very important, as the planning process is at a stage where the alternatives are still evolving. This June, we invite you to join us at open houses in Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties where you will be able to explore, discuss, and comment on the preliminary alternatives. Below is a list of the many ways you can share your comments and some links to more information related to the plan. Thank you for your interest and participation in the development of the general management plan.

Sincerely,

Brian O’Neill
Superintendent

You’re Invited to an Open House!

The park staff will be hosting open houses in Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties. We invite you to explore the preliminary alternatives and discuss your ideas, concerns, and thoughts with the planning team.

Wednesday, June 4, 3:30 to 6:30 PM
Harbor House Conference Center,
in Princeton-by-the-Sea
346 Princeton Avenue
Half Moon Bay, California 94019

Thursday, June 5, 3:30 to 6:30 PM
Sanchez Art Center, Concert Hall
1220 Linda Mar Blvd.
Pacifica, California 94044

Saturday, June 7, 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM
Fort Mason Center, at Marina Blvd. &
Buchanan St., Bldg. D, Rm 100
San Francisco, California 94123

Tuesday, June 10, 3:30 to 6:30 PM
SF Bay Model Visitor Center, Multi-Purpose
Room, Marinship Way, via Bridgeway St. & West
Harbor Dr., Sausalito, California 94965

Tuesday, June 17, 3:30 to 6:30 PM
Independence Hall, in Woodside Town Hall
2955 Woodside Rd. (Behind the Pioneer Hotel)
Woodside, California 94062

Sign language interpreters are available on request, but please make the request at least one week prior to the event. The park’s TDD phone number is (415) 556-2766.

How to be Involved

Your written comments on this newsletter are welcomed and encouraged! Comments can be submitted electronically or by mail as listed below. Please consider the questions listed on the enclosed comment form in addition to any other thoughts and ideas. Receiving your input before August 1, 2008 will allow us to learn from you before we continue forward with the planning for the general management plan. Thank you.

Mail your comment form or letters to:

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

In addition to written comments, you can provide your comments on the preliminary alternatives during the upcoming open houses. We encourage you to attend one of these workshops to talk with the planning team firsthand about your ideas, comments and questions! The open house schedule is listed on page 1.

Web Site:

Complete the electronic version of the comment form on the web at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/goga>

Email:

Submit letters and comment via email to:
goga_gmp@nps.gov.

Telephone (message only):

415.561.4965

Sign up for the E-Newsletter

Please sign up for the e-newsletter at:
<http://www.nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt/planninglanding.htm>. We will be sending additional information (including newsletters) via e-mail.

You can also visit the National Park Service’s Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/goga> where you will find more information on the general management and other planning efforts currently underway at Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument.

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Insert

Summary of management zones for park planning.



General Management Planning

Much of what we enjoy now at Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument is the result of dedicated community members whose visions helped preserve these lands and who contributed to the original 1980 *General Management Plan*. These park areas are a showcase of that community support.

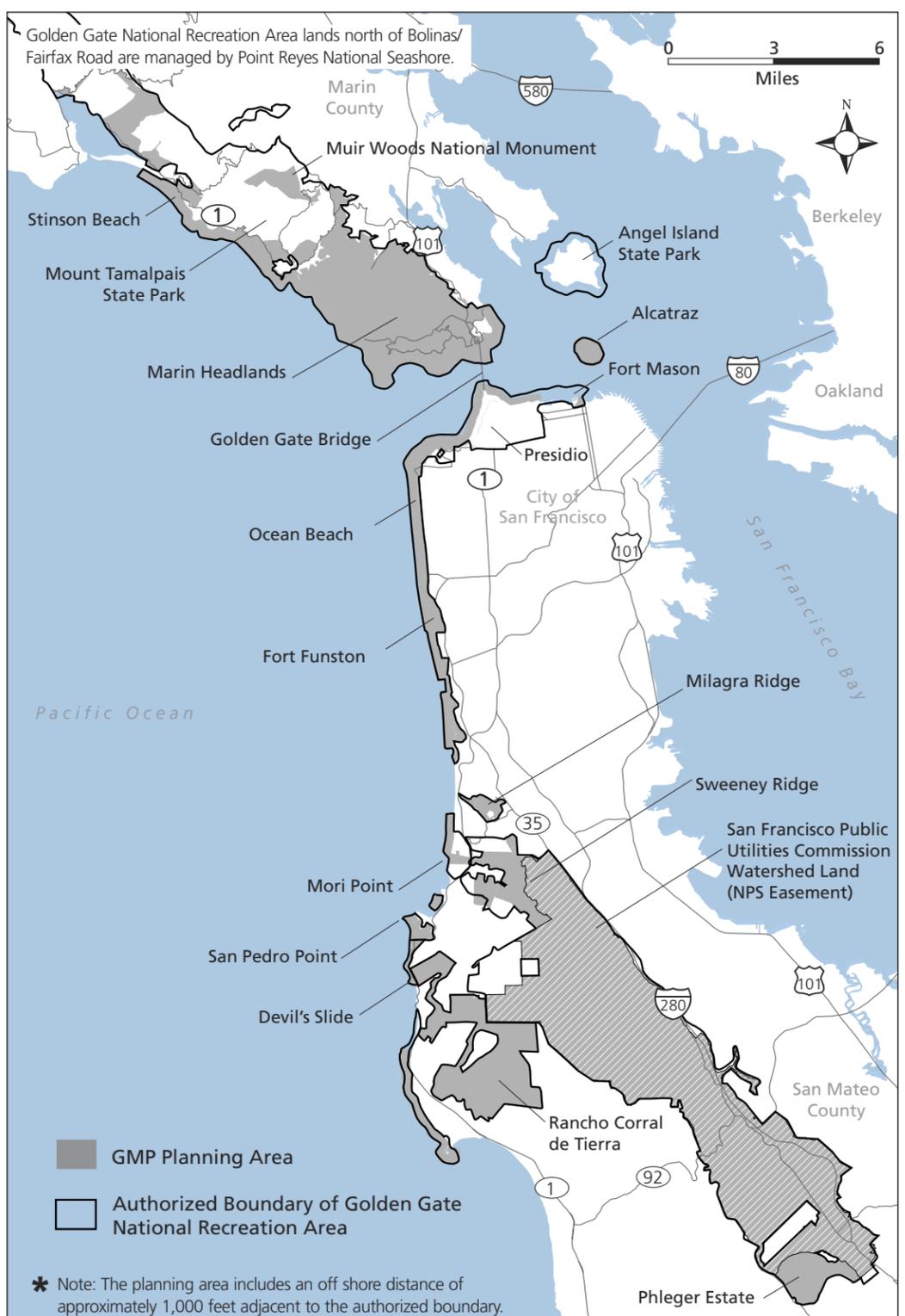
A general management plan serves as a foundation and framework for the management and use of park lands, and articulates the desired future conditions for natural and cultural resources and visitor experiences that will best fulfill a park's legislated purposes. The plan will look ahead at least 20 years and guide the detailed planning and day-to-day decision making that will follow.

The plan represents an agreement with the American public about how these park lands will be managed in the future. The general management plan considers the park areas as part of a larger ecological, cultural, and socioeconomic system. This comprehensive approach involves coordination with park neighbors, including other open space land managers and neighboring communities, to ensure that the decisions made through this process are widely supported and sustainable over time.

The new general management plan will be our blueprint to move into the future. It has been more than 25 years since the original plan for Golden Gate National Recreation Area was approved. Since then, the park has doubled in size, and the park staff has gained a better understanding of the natural and cultural resources and recreational uses within the park.

Although always valued for its preservation of public open spaces, Golden Gate National Recreation Area is now considered to be one of the most biologically diverse areas along the California Coast and is recognized by the United Nations as part of the Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve. Numerous and varied landscapes, including military landscapes, ranch sites, and historic districts, have been identified within the park since 1980, expanding our awareness of the park's historical importance. At the same time, the growing and diverse population of the San Francisco Bay Area now enjoys the park in a variety of ways, creating new and different demands that must be addressed.

The Planning Area Map



Where We Are in the General Management Planning Schedule

Earlier this year, the GMP planning team defined the issues that the new management plan will address, guided by the public comments we received. Using this information, the planning team developed

management concepts, each exploring a different possible future for the parks. During the next six months, the planning team will further refine the preliminary alternatives with assistance from the public.

Status	Estimated Time Frame	Planning Activity	Public Involvement Opportunities
Completed	Spring and Summer 2006	Foundation – Identify park purpose, significance, primary interpretive themes and the fundamental resources and values of the parks. Scoping – Identify concerns, expectations, and values related to the parks with the public, NPS staff, partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders.	Review Newsletter #1 and send us your ideas and concerns using the response form. Attend one of six public meetings and voice your ideas and concerns.
Completed	Fall 2006 to Winter 2007	Planning Issues – Guided by public input, identify a set of issues that the general management plan will address. Data and Resource Analysis – Collect and analyze data associated with each planning issue and identify opportunities and constraints.	Review Newsletter #2 and send us your comments. Participate in quarterly Golden Gate National Recreation Area open houses regarding current park projects including the GMP.
Completed	Spring to Fall 2007	Management Concepts – Develop a range of management concepts to explore different potential visions for the future of the parks. These management concepts are then built into preliminary alternatives with more detail. Management Zones – Develop a draft set of management zones for use in developing preliminary alternatives. Preliminary Alternatives – Develop a set of preliminary alternatives that detail the proposed vision for the future of the parks.	Review Newsletter #3 and send us your comments. Participate in quarterly Golden Gate National Recreation Area open houses regarding current park projects including the GMP.
In Progress	Winter to Summer 2008	Complete Development of the GMP Alternatives Based on public input from this newsletter and the public workshops in June 2008, revise and complete the range of alternatives that will be analyzed in the General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement; select/create the NPS preferred alternative.	Review Newsletter #4 and send us your comments. Participate in the June 2008 planning open houses and voice your ideas and concerns about the preliminary alternatives. Stay informed about the process by visiting the website and reading periodic postcards and e-newsletters.
	Fall 2008 to Spring 2009	Prepare and Distribute a Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement	Attend public workshops and voice your ideas and concerns. Review the Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and provide written comments.
	Summer and Fall 2009	Revise Draft Plan and Prepare a Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement	Review the Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement.
	Winter 2010	Begin to Implement the Approved Plan Prepare and issue a “Record of Decision” and implement the plan as funding allows.	Work with the NPS to implement the approved plan.

The Planning Area

The new general management plan will address the NPS-administered lands within the legislative boundaries of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument. The planning area includes only park sites that are not covered by recent land use management plans. The planning area also includes newly acquired and future land acquisitions as well as lands and waters that are leased to the National Park Service or are under other management arrangements or easements (such as the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Peninsula Watershed). Golden Gate National Recreation Area lands north of Bolinas-Fairfax Road are being addressed in the *Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Update*.



Some park sites have recently completed new land use management plans, and therefore are not included in the GMP planning area. These include:

- Presidio of San Francisco, including Fort Point National Historic Site and Crissy Field
- Sutro Historic District
- Fort Baker
- Lower Fort Mason

These park areas will not be revisited in this plan.

Ongoing plans include:

- Marin Headlands and Fort Baker Transportation Infrastructure and Management Plan
- Wetland and Creek Restoration at Big Lagoon, Muir Beach
- Marin Equestrian Plan
- Headlands Institute Campus Improvement and Expansion Plan
- The Marine Mammal Center Site and Facilities Improvements
- Extension of San Francisco Municipal Railway’s Historic Streetcar EIS
- EIS/Dog Management Plan for GGNRA.

These plans are being coordinated with the GMP and will be incorporated as appropriate.

Park Purpose and Significance

The following park purpose and significance statements are based upon the enabling legislation and an analysis of park resources. These statements convey the reasons Congress and the president established the park

and why each park is distinctive. Park purpose and significance statements form the foundation for developing general management plans. Planning proposals must be consistent with these foundation statements.



Rancho Corral de Tierra © 2000 Robert Buelteman. Courtesy of POST



National Park Service photo

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Park Purpose

The purpose of Golden Gate National Recreation Area is to offer national park experiences to a large and diverse urban population while preserving and interpreting the park's outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values.

Park Significance

- The convergence of the San Andreas Fault, San Francisco Bay at the Golden Gate, and the California coastline creates a dynamic environment of exceptional scientific value.
- The remnant undeveloped coastal corridor of marine, estuarine, and terrestrial ecosystems supports exceptional native biodiversity and provides a refuge for one of the largest concentrations of rare, threatened and endangered species in the national park system.
- The park includes one of the largest and most complete collections of military installations and fortifications in the country, dating from Spanish settlement in 1776 through the 20th century. These installations served as command post for the Army in the Western United States and the Pacific.

This long period of military presence has yielded one of the most extensive collections of historic architecture in the national park system.

- Alcatraz Island, the site of pre-Civil War fortifications, was the nation's first military prison, later became the most notorious maximum security penitentiary in the United States, and subsequently was the site of the occupation that helped ignite the movement for American Indian self determination.
- Park lands are within the traditional homelands of Coast Miwok and Ohlone people. They contain indigenous archeological sites with native heritage, historic, and scientific values.
- The continuum of park resources at the doorstep of the San Francisco Bay Area provides an abundance of recreational and educational opportunities.
- The coastal headlands of the Golden Gate are internationally recognized for their outstanding scenic quality. They serve as the panoramic backdrop to the metropolitan San Francisco Bay Area and contribute to the quality of life for area residents and visitors.

Muir Woods National Monument

Park Purpose

The purpose of Muir Woods National Monument is to preserve the primeval character and ecological integrity of the old-growth redwood forest for scientific values and inspiration.

Park Significance

- Muir Woods National Monument preserves the last remnant old-growth forest close to metropolitan San Francisco that retains its primeval character.
- The establishment of the monument is an important manifestation of early 20th century conservation history.



Guiding Principles

Park managers must follow many laws, policies, and directives when managing national parks. In addition, we have identified some fundamental principles that will help guide the management of the park.

Sustainability

We will continue to learn about and use practices that help sustain the resources of our park. Sustainability will be fundamental to the facilities, projects, programs, and operations of the park, using sound environmental management practices. We will demonstrate environmental leadership and seek opportunities to promote sustainability and stewardship to park visitors, neighboring communities, and the stakeholders we serve.

Community Based Stewardship

We are committed to ongoing involvement of individuals and organizations in understanding, caring for, and preserving the park's natural habitats, historic places, and trails. This community stewardship brings the commitment to preserve our common heritage and public lands—national treasures that can best be sustained with the help of others.

Civic Engagement

We are dedicated to ongoing, dynamic conversations with the communities we serve. We will provide opportunities for meaningful involvement to promote better understanding and communication, discuss concerns, and express values and preferences when park decisions and policies are being developed and implemented.

Partnerships

We will continue to build on the legacy of the many partnerships that have extended our ability to protect resources and serve the public since the park was established. Through mutual collaboration, shared values, and learning, these partnerships have created outcomes beyond any one organization's individual capacity. Partnerships will continue to be an important way to accomplish the park's mission and build a community of stewardship.

Regional Collaboration

In working to preserve our park's resources unimpaired for future generations, park managers will establish and maintain cooperative relationships with managers of adjacent public lands; tribal, state, and local governments; community organizations; and private landowners. We will collaborate with others to ensure that watersheds, ecosystems, viewsheds, and trail and transportation systems that extend beyond park boundaries are considered holistically, in order to best preserve important park resources, provide equitable and sustainable access, and advance the goal of creating a seamless network of parks.

Planning Issues to be Addressed in the General Management Plan

This section summarizes the major issues that the new general management plan will address. The exploration of different ways to address these topics and the issues associated with them was the basis for the

development of the range of management concepts and preliminary alternatives.

Visitor Access: Transportation and Trails

The plan will address visitor access to and within the park in order to improve visitor experiences, improve connections among park sites and the larger community, and protect resources.

Recreation Opportunities and Conflicts

The plan will address recreational opportunities by identifying types of use, desired experiences, and support facilities that are appropriate for different park sites in response to visitor demand and resource sensitivity. The plan will also provide guidance on how to promote, evaluate, and manage appropriate and desired types and levels of use.

Sustainable Natural Resource Preservation and Management

The plan will provide direction for preserving and managing fundamental natural resources in a sustainable manner, and encourage stewardship.

Sustainable Cultural Resource Preservation and Management

The plan will provide direction for preserving and managing historic structures, cultural landscapes, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, and museum collections.



Climate Change

The plan will provide guidance on how to assess, respond to, and interpret the impacts of global climate change on park resources, and will identify objectives for reducing the carbon footprint.

Land and Water Protection

The plan will address future land protection and boundary changes.

Better Communication and Reaching New Audiences

The plan will provide guidance to help the National Park Service better connect with all audiences, including underserved communities and new audiences that emerge as populations change.

Operational Facilities

The plan will identify a strategy for locating operational facilities.

Scenic Beauty and Natural Character

The plan will provide guidance in the preservation and enhancement of scenic resources.

Regional Cooperation

The plan will provide guidance on improving communication, coordination, and participation with public and private stakeholders with a goal of protecting ecosystems, watersheds, viewsheds, and visitor opportunities that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Park Identity

The plan will provide guidance on improving and promoting the recognition of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument as places where many visitors are first introduced to the concept and values of the national park system.

Partnerships

The plan will provide guidance on partnership development and management that enables the NPS managers to make effective decisions and foster flexible, productive relationships.

American Indian Values

The plan will address incorporating Ohlone and Coast Miwok values into the preservation, management, and interpretation of the resources.

Preliminary Alternatives: Different Ways to Imagine the Future

Each preliminary alternative consists of two main components. First, there is a **management concept** that creates a general theme for the overall management of the park. Second, **management zones** are created that identify desired natural and cultural resource conditions

and visitor opportunities, based on the purpose and significance of the park. These zones are applied to the park in various combinations to reflect the general concepts and to form the preliminary alternatives.

Management Concepts

Management concepts were presented for your consideration in Newsletter #3: Concept 1: “Connecting People with the Parks”; Concept 2: “Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems”; Concept 3: “Focusing on National Treasures”; and Concept 4: “Collaborating Regionally.” These management concepts guided the development of the preliminary

alternatives. During this process, the planning team concluded that the fourth management concept would be a guiding principle integrated into all preliminary alternatives, but would not be carried as a distinct land use alternative.

Concept 1: Connecting People with the Parks

The emphasis of this concept is to reach out and 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—all as ways to reinvigorate the human spirit. Visitor opportunities would be relevant to diverse populations now and in the future.

Rationale

The concept was developed to emphasize the park’s management commitment to the founding idea of “parks to the people,” and its purpose in bringing national park experiences to a large and diverse urban population. Because the park serves such a population, improving connections to people is fundamental to achieving the park’s purpose and to maintaining the public’s continued interest and support.

Goals

Visitor Experience

- Actively seek opportunities to respond to the needs and interests of the diversity of visitors.
- Encourage visitors to engage in a wide range of opportunities and experiences in a diversity of settings.
- Enhance outreach and access to and within the park and make them welcoming.

- Foster the visitor’s deep personal connection to the park and discovery of the values and enjoyment of the natural environment.
- Encourage hands-on stewardship through visitor opportunities that promote personal health and responsibility.

Cultural Resources

- Maximize adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of cultural resources (structures and landscapes) to support visitor enjoyment, understanding, and community connections.
- Work with interested groups and populations to manage cultural resources.
- Manage cultural resources so that visitors can connect with park lands and their stories.

Natural Resources

- Maintain the integrity and diversity of natural resources and systems.
- Enhance the public’s access to natural resources to promote visitor understanding and appreciation.
- Integrate natural resource preservation and concepts with visitor stewardship opportunities to deepen visitor understanding.

Concept 2: Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems

The emphasis of this concept is to preserve, enhance and promote 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 coastal and marine environments, and gain a better understanding of the region’s international significance and history.

Rationale

The concept creates a vision for intentionally connecting resources and systems to form contiguous habitat from the ocean to the coastal hills. The more connected the water and land base, the better the ability for ecosystems to adjust and adapt, thus increasing their resiliency to urban pressures and climate change. The concept also responds to the public’s strong interest in having more natural wild lands in close proximity to the urban communities of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Goals

Visitor Experience

- Connect visitors with resources and the park through expanded and diverse science and stewardship programs that are focused on preservation and restoration of coastal and marine resources and address the implications of climate change.
- Provide greater opportunities for visitors to explore wild areas and immerse themselves in nature.

- Manage low-impact visitor use that enhances the qualities of solitude, quiet, and naturalness in critical natural resource areas, and accommodate active recreational pursuits in other areas.
- Increase visitor understanding, awareness, and support for coastal resources through participation in stories and programs about human interaction with and dependency on natural resources.

Cultural Resources

- Emphasize sites and stories connected to coastal resources, including shipwrecks, archeological sites, agricultural lands and uses, coastal defense, and lighthouses.
- Use cultural resources as a platform to raise awareness of the importance of coastal ecosystem conservation.

Natural Resources

- Reconnect fragmented habitat within and adjacent to the park to strengthen the integrity and resiliency of the coastal ecosystem to respond to climate change and urban pressures.
- Optimize recovery of special status species and survival of wide-ranging wildlife.
- Restore natural processes and/or allow these processes to evolve unimpeded to the greatest degree feasible.
- Promote partnerships to help the park become a center for innovative coastal science, stewardship, and learning.



Concept 3: Focusing on National Treasures

The emphasis of this concept is to focus 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 their value in perpetuity and to promote appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment. The National Park Service would prominently support resource preservation and educational goals. 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. All other resources would be managed to complement the nationally significant resources and visitor experiences.

Rationale

The concept highlights the park's variety of nationally significant resources. By distinguishing the nationally significant resources and promoting the National Park Service identity, the objective of bringing exemplary national park experiences to an urban population would be met. The concept would also allow the National Park Service to focus the management of the park's resources, visitor experiences, and partnerships, giving priority to the most significant sites.

Goals

Visitor Experience

- Provide visitors with opportunities to explore, learn, and enjoy the park's unique resources and stories.
- Allow the park's distinctive resources and associated stories to shape recreational opportunities.

- Emphasize active public participation in stewardship programs at the showcased sites.
- Provide visitors with opportunities for understanding and enjoying national park experiences.

Cultural Resources

- Emphasize the fundamental resources that contribute to the significance of each park, including national historic landmarks. Manage all other resources to complement the significant resources and visitor experiences.
- Tie all the associated cultural resources, museum collections, and stories to the showcased sites.
- Manage cultural resources to highlight the interpretive and educational values and provide, wherever possible, direct contact with the resources.

Natural Resources

- Emphasize the preservation of fundamental natural resources that contribute to each park's significance. Manage all other resources to complement the distinctive resources and experiences.
- Protect or restore the integrity of fundamental natural resources that support each park's significance.
- Manage distinctive natural resources to ensure their ecological integrity while providing opportunities to engage the visitors in hands-on stewardship and exploration.

Management Zones

Management zones have been developed to identify a set of desired conditions for natural and cultural resources, opportunities for visitor experiences, and general levels of development and visitor services. These desired conditions are different in each management zone and reflect the overall focus of that particular zone. Guided by each management concept, zones were applied to the park in different configurations, forming the basis of the preliminary alternatives.

Seven management zones have been developed. These zones identify the widest range of potential natural and cultural resource conditions, visitor experience, and facilities based on the park purpose, significance and special mandates. The zones are summarized in the management zones table included as an insert in this newsletter.

In developing the three preliminary alternatives, the management zones were applied to the park in different configurations that reflect the management concepts. The preliminary alternative maps reflect the intent of each concept, and show how the zones would be allocated.

The Preliminary Alternatives

This newsletter presents the preliminary alternatives with their zone maps and supporting narratives, as well as a description of current conditions. The description of current conditions represents current management direction and trends that are based on the 1980 *General Management Plan* and its subsequent amendments. The description of the current conditions serves as a basis of comparison with the three preliminary alternatives.

The “best” or “preferred” alternative will eventually be developed following an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each preliminary alternative, including consideration of public comments. The preferred alternative could be similar to one of the preliminary alternatives or it could be a combination of ideas and zoning selected from the various alternatives. The preferred alternative will be fully detailed and analyzed along with the other alternatives in the *Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*; expected for release in spring 2009.

The preliminary alternatives, including zone maps, are included in this newsletter for your review and comment. Your comments continue to guide the process of developing a new vision for managing Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument. We welcome your comments on the preliminary alternatives. Your comments can be posted on the web or via the comment form in this newsletter. NPS staff will also host local workshops to gather input from the public.