



MORI POINT TRAIL AND RESTORATION PLAN SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SCOPING

INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service, in coordination with the Golden Gate Parks Conservancy, has begun planning to create a management strategy for lands at Mori Point, which is located on a promontory above the City of Pacifica in San Mateo County, California. The GGNRA completed public scoping on the project in fall 2005. At that time, the GGNRA held a public meeting and a site walk, and contacted regulatory agencies and the public to gather ideas, information, concerns and suggestions in order to develop project alternatives. This scoping update provides a summary of comments received thus far.

PROJECT AREA

Mori Point is the newest addition to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Mori Point is 105 acres and a key link to the national park lands of Sweeney and Milagra Ridges, and the plentiful recreational open space and opportunities along San Mateo's coast. Mori is rich in cultural history and natural resources. It was originally part of the Spanish San Pedro Land Grant. The Mori family, for whom the land is now named, settled in Pacifica in the 1890's and developed a farm and then roadhouse on Mori Point. The site was also used as a rock quarry and scars can still be seen throughout the landscape. Mori Point is now home to the federally threatened California red- legged frog and the federally endangered San Francisco garter snake. Today, with a wild population limited to coastal San Mateo County and other small pockets of land, the San Francisco garter snake is considered critically endangered in the wild because of the loss of habitat. In terms of water resources, Mori Point straddles both the Laguna Salada and Caldera Creek wetland ecosystems.

Past land use activities at Mori Point has resulted in significant erosion acceleration along the western bluffs and interior drainages, alterations in the region's natural hydrology, and unnatural topography - all of which present potential threats to visitor safety and public access, natural processes and resource protection, and visual aesthetics. There are no formal trails at Mori Point, only a random assortment of unmaintained paths, many of which are impassable in the winter months. Of the many passages that criss- cross the site, several pass directly through or over endangered species habitat. Last year the National Park Service (NPS) received a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy to assist with the planning of a formal trail system at Mori Point, with a special focus on the portion of the California Coastal trail that traverses the site. With this funding, the NPS has gathered detailed baseline information on Mori Point's visitor and recreational use, vegetation communities, trail alignments, invasive species locations, hydrological conditions, and endangered species habitats. With this information, the NPS is well- poised to design a management strategy that improves visitor access by creating a sustainable and comprehensive trail system while minimizing impacts to park resources, with an emphasis on protecting endangered species habitat.

PROJECT GOALS

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The goals of the Mori Point Trail and Restoration Plan are to:

- Protect and enhance habitat for the endangered San Francisco garter snake (SF garter snake) and the threatened California red-legged frog in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Preserve and restore the ecological integrity of the Mori Point habitats by reducing threats to native plant communities and natural processes.
- Develop a safe and sustainable trail system incorporating the California Coastal Trail that improves recreational experiences and reduces impacts to park resources.

WHAT IS SCOPING?

The primary goal of scoping is to determine the range of issues and project alternatives to be addressed in planning and included in the environmental analysis for the project. During scoping, the park presents to the public a description of the project proposal and a list of project goals, and asks the public to submit comments, concerns, and suggestions related to the project.

Types of comments that are useful during scoping include:

- alternative approaches and ideas for accomplishing the project goals;
- environmental and socioeconomic issues that need to be addressed;
- other potential projects that might affect or be affected by this project;
- information that should be considered in the planning and analysis (such as related research or historical knowledge); and
- information on how you use the park and how the project might affect that use.

Scoping comments help to define project opportunities and constraints and identify a range of project alternatives. Project alternatives are the important values, supported by data and research that accomplish the project goals.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TO DATE

Public scoping is initiated by making the public aware of the project. The following methods were used to notify the public of the Mori Point Trail and Restoration Project:

- Mailings to more than 1,500 individuals, agencies, and organizations
 - Regulatory and public agencies
 - Fairway West and nearby residents
 - Site Stewardship mailing list
 - GGNRA mailing list
- On-site bulletin board and flyers
- Newspaper Press releases (Cities of San Francisco, San Jose, San Mateo, Pacifica)
- Open House – October 25, 2005
- Site Walk – October 29, 2005
- Seventeen people signed the registrar for the public meetings, though approximately 30 individuals attended. Fourteen people attended the public field trip. Thirty-seven individuals provided

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comments. Comments were submitted in writing at public meetings and via email, mail, and through the PEPC website.

FREQUENTLY VOICED ISSUES/RECURRENT THEMES:

The following is a summary of frequently voiced issues received through scoping thus far.

Coordination

- Coordinate with biker community, which has a large base of potential volunteers to help with trail work.
- Coordinate with Pacifica City Council, GGNRA Liaison committee, City and County Law Enforcement, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Coordinate with SF Recreation and Parks on their proposed habitat improvements nearby.
- Coordinate with Quarry to include connector trails to and from Rockaway Beach.
- Hold more public meetings in Pacifica to counter the perception that Park decisions do not take the concerns of local residents into consideration.

Trail Alignment

- Create more loop routes.
- Too many trails are being closed; there is a need for more alternative routes.
- Increase connectivity to Rockaway Beach.
- Route trails along previously disturbed sites (existing roads and trails) as much as possible to minimize disturbance to sensitive habitat.
- Include the bluff trail; it is one of the most popular trails at Mori Point and people will use it regardless of designation.
- Include a trail connecting the top of Mori Point to the rest of the headlands.
- Include a trail connecting the bluff trail and Mori Peak.
- Since the “Bowl” is the most significant habitat area, route trails around it rather than through it.
- Instead of the ridge trail, build a contour trail that will be more interesting and less susceptible to erosion.
- Include the coastal connector trail. Even though it is steeper, it is well traveled and more desirable and people will use it regardless of designation.
- Add a trail or stairs connecting the berm to the beach; it is currently dangerous, especially for children.
- Ensure open access to the Point proper. It is important for people to be able to wander and enjoy the point as contemplative space.
- If trail options are too limited, people will be frustrated and use the social trails anyway, thus wasting planning efforts.
- Route the fairway trail away from the neighboring backyards.

Trail Use

- Trails should be designed so that they are accessible to people of all age groups and physical abilities.
- All trails should be multi use, open to hiking, dog walking, cycling, and equestrian.

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- Multi use should be encouraged, but only to the extent that it doesn't negatively impact sensitive species.
- Support the Coastal Trail being multi use; want a better rationale if connector trails are not also multi use.
- Include single-track loop for cycling
- Create at least one section of hiker only trail, perhaps to a view site or other locations where multi use would be inappropriate
- Do not exclude horses.
- Site should be accessible and safe for children.

Dogs

- Off leash dogs were part of the intent of purchase and transfer of Mori Point and Mori Point is the most popular off leash hiking site in Pacifica.
- Owners must assume responsibility for cleaning up after their dogs.
- Install dog cleanup sites, trashcans and instructive signs.
- Create an off-leash area for dogs, perhaps near the coastal berm.
- Allow on-leash dog walking.
- Off-leash dogs endanger safety of children and others.
- Do not allow off leash dogs because species and habitat are of primary consideration, and recreation secondary.

Trail Design

- Post and cable fence may help keep people on trails and would be good for hand holds as well.
- Bikers prefer more natural and rugged surface; it is a misconception that they want flat paved trails. Challenging trails are better because they control speed whereas flat, wide, paved, or hard pack gravel encourages high speeds.
- Biking is not harmful as long as trails are built sustainably and drain properly; suggest IMBA's guide to sustainable trail building.
- Do not pave any trails.
- Phase in trail restoration over a period over several years.
- Keep signs, fences and trail control devices to a visual minimum.
- Need increased signage
- Do not mimic Milagra ridge, there is too much fencing there. Closures can be accomplished with signage, plantings, and small stretches of barriers.

Wildlife and Vegetation

- Protection of wildlife and habitat restoration is top priority, recreation is secondary.
- GGNRA is a recreation area, not a nature preserve, there is no justification for taking recreational property in order to create habitat. Consider using snake undercrossings.
- Coordinate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to control bullfrogs.
- Control feral cat population; they are a threat to the sensitive species on site.
- Minimize herbicide use.
- Introduce native plants to provide habitat.
- Clarify invasive species removal plans.

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- Use caution when removing non-native vegetation along Mori road to ensure that removal activities do not compromise slope stability.

Ponds

- Support construction of additional ponds.
- Do not support additional ponds; there are already enough ponds
- Control mosquitoes with larvicides so that frog ponds are not erroneously connected with West Nile Virus outbreaks.
- Coordinate with local homeowners; their home foundations flood each winter and a strategy to divert that underground water to ponds may be a win-win.

Amenities

- Provide trash cans
- Provide picnic area with benches and picnic tables to encourage public use.
- Do not use picnic tables

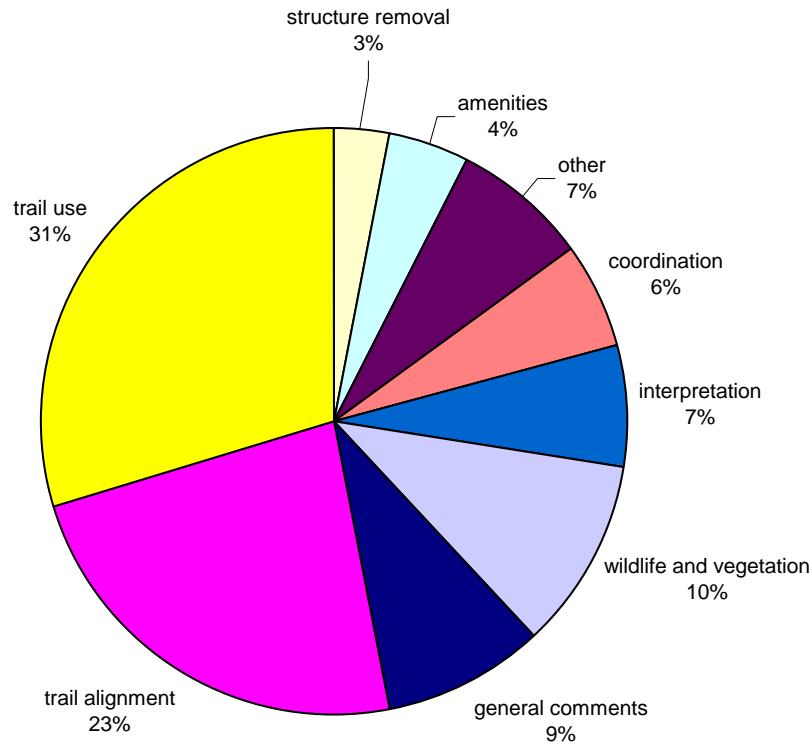
Interpretation

- Consider using Ohlone language in naming trails.
- Post trail maps on site that show connection to the California Coastal Trail.
- Talk about more than just T&E species. Include more common wildlife that people are familiar with. Try to appeal to those who are not interested in frogs and snakes.
- Include historic interpretation to give people who may not share environmental concerns an interest in preserving Mori Point.
- Provide info about why dogs should be leashed, and cleaned up after, and only designated trails should be used.

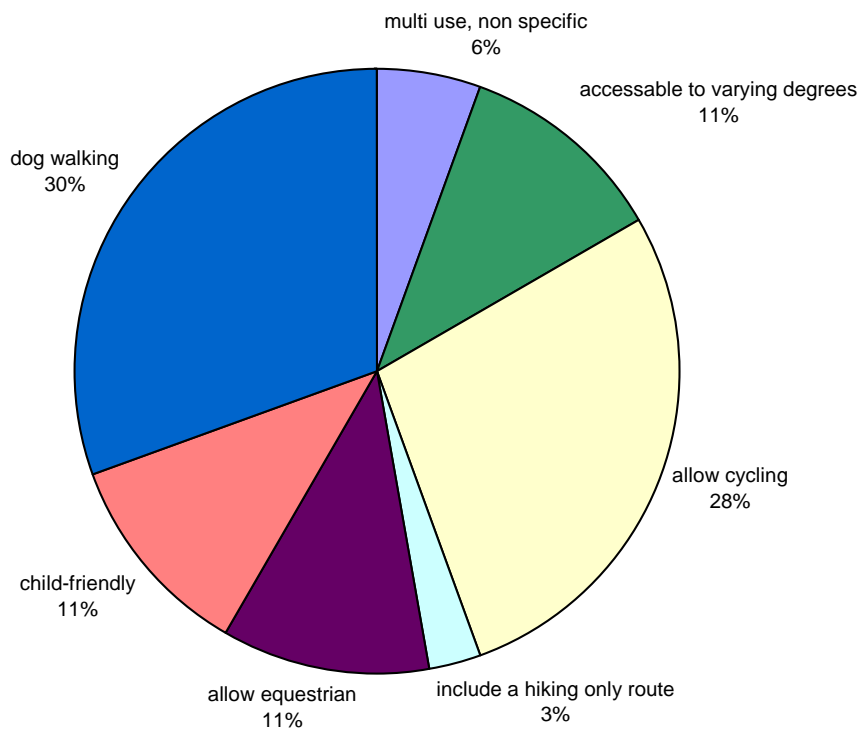
Other Comments

- We are interested in volunteering.
- Do not allow recreational vehicles, only Park servicing and policing vehicles.
- Need clear signage along Hwy 1; the lack of signs on Mori and Sweeny is a long-standing sore point with many Pacificans.
- Remove unsightly concrete debris and structures; remove drainage pipe and concrete footings on beach.
- Disappointed that the bike ramps were torn down, we need places for kids to recreate

General Summary – 134 Comments



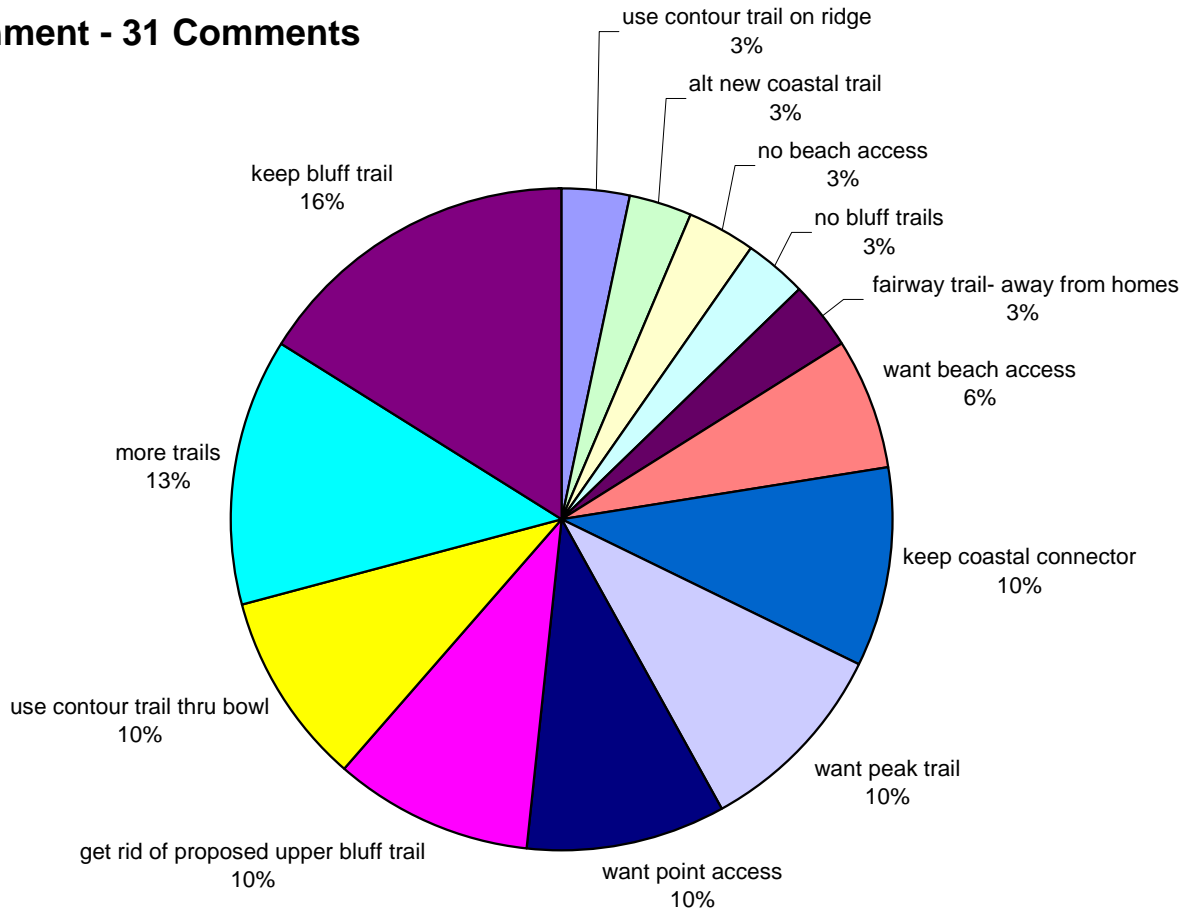
Trail Use - 41 comments



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Trail Alignment - 31 Comments



Dogs – 11 comments

