

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

San Francisco, California

October 2015

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Dear Neighbors, Friends, and Partners:

I am pleased to announce that the National Park Service (NPS) is in the process of preparing a Foundation Document for planning and management at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. I invite you to join with us in this endeavor.

A Foundation Document involves revisiting a national park unit's core mission and significance, most important resources and values, and the interpretive themes that tell the park's important stories. The statements in this document are rooted in the park's enabling legislation, and also incorporate the perspectives of park partners who contributed in advance of drafting the document and the expertise of park staff. Although the Foundation Document is not a decision-making document and does not include actions or management strategies, it describes a shared understanding of what is most important about the park. In this capacity, the Foundation Document will reestablish the underlying guidance for future management and planning decisions for the National Park Service at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

Many of the park's planning documents need to be updated, and preparing the Foundation Document is the first step for considering the park's future planning and study needs. Because your input and opinions are important to us, I invite you to help the park lay a solid foundation for moving forward. Please review and provide comments on the draft document so that we may take your thoughts into consideration as we finalize the Foundation Document. You may submit your feedback in several ways:

1) Input your comments online (preferred) at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/SAFRFoundation>

2) Attend the public open house on Thursday, November 5 from 4-7pm in the park Visitor Center, 499 Jefferson Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 (at the corner of Hyde and Jefferson Streets).

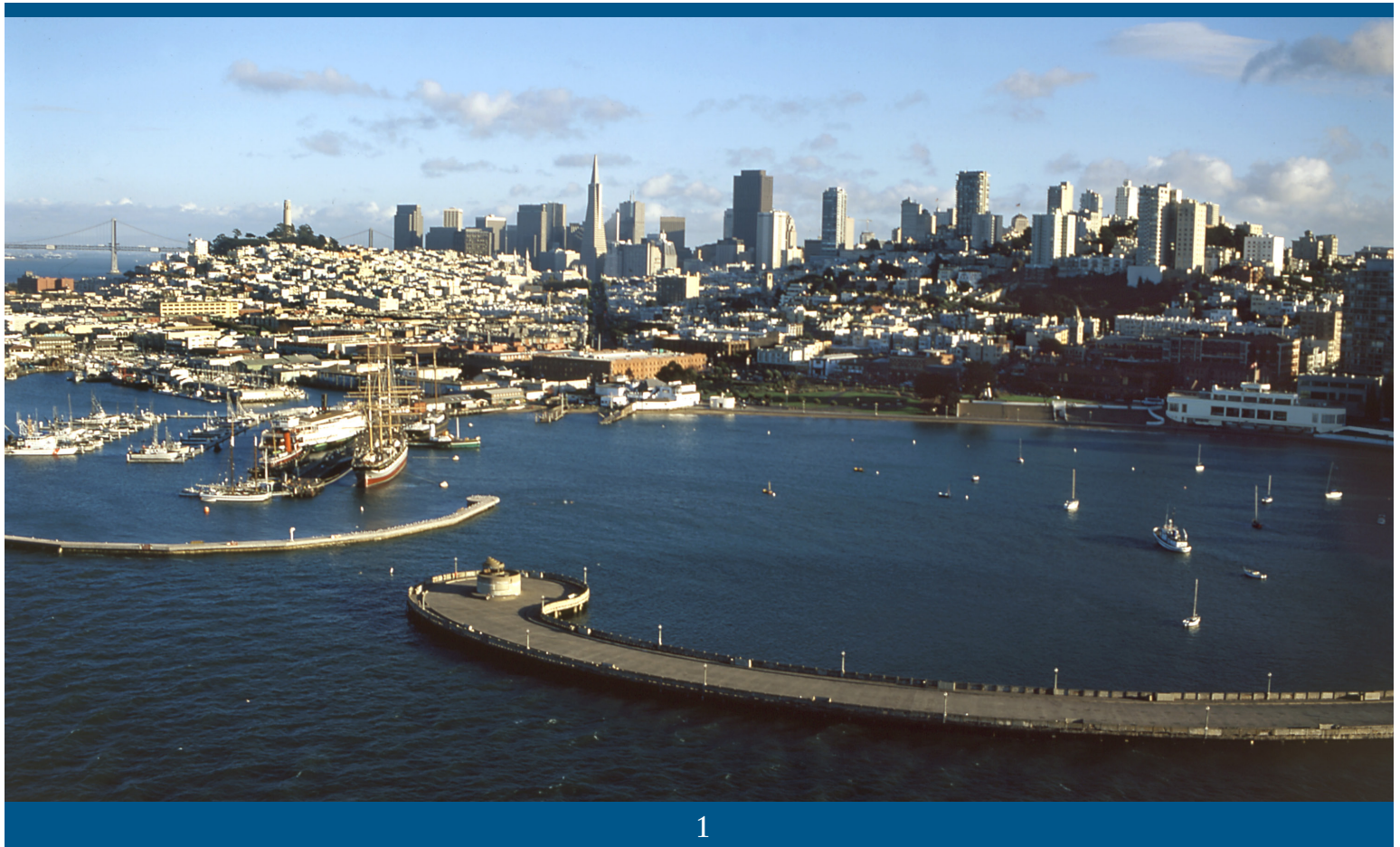
3) Email your comments to: Lynn_Cullivan@nps.gov. Subject line for emails should be "San Francisco Maritime NHP Foundation Document Comments." or

4) Mail a letter to the park at:
2 Marina Blvd. Bldg. E
Fort Mason Center
San Francisco, CA 94123-1382

All comments should be submitted by **November 16, 2015**. Thank you for your interest in the national treasure we call San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we plan for its future.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hendricks
Superintendent



PURPOSE

The purpose statement identifies the specific reason(s) for establishment of a particular park. The purpose statement for San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park was drafted through a careful analysis of the presidential proclamation that established the park. The purpose statement lays the foundation for understanding what is most important about the park.

DRAFT SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT

Through preservation and interpretation of historic ships, extensive museum collections, traditional maritime skills, and its San Francisco Bay setting, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park brings America's maritime legacy to life and promotes the understanding and enjoyment of the nation's West Coast maritime heritage.



SIGNIFICANCE

Significance statements express why San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park's resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why the park is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park.

DRAFT SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

- San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park maintains the largest and most diverse collection of national historic landmark ships in the United States, representing a pivotal period of maritime commerce on the West Coast as the industry shifted from sail to mechanical power.
- San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park's collection, the oldest and largest maritime history collection in the western United States, provides tangible and compelling links to maritime history and heritage, and is one of the largest museum collections in the national park system.
- Located just inside the straits of the Golden Gate, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park preserves and shares the area's rich legacy as America's first major West Coast seaport, a center for maritime commerce, and a gateway for immigration and migration.
- San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is the premier West Coast showcase for traditional and contemporary maritime skills, perpetuated through hands-on preservation, research and education, and the continued operation of historic ships and equipment.
- The Aquatic Park National Historic Landmark setting, including the maritime-themed architectural design and art of the Aquatic Bathhouse Building, offers easy access to an oasis of recreation and beauty in a highly urbanized area on the San Francisco Bay waterfront.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

DRAFT SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

- **Historic Fleet of Ships** – The fleet of six historic ships—five of which are national historic landmarks—represents a significant period in maritime commerce: the late 19th to mid-20th century. These ships provide a variety of opportunities to learn about maritime preservation and experience the development of trade methods and technologies in sailing ships and steam vessels.
- **Maritime Skills** – Maritime skills are paramount to the preservation and maintenance of the collection of the park’s floating cultural resources. The park perpetuates maritime skills, such as seamanship, craftsmanship, rigging, boat building, ship carpentry, and steam boiler operation, through ongoing work and educational demonstrations.
- **Waterfront Recreational and Scenic Opportunities** – The Aquatic Park National Historic Landmark Historic District, envisioned in 1866 and built in the 1930s as a WPA project, includes Aquatic Park cove and beach, viewing stands, the Maritime Museum Building, speaker towers, and ancillary buildings within landscaped grounds. Originally designed for recreation, the district continues to allow an urban audience to enjoy a variety of scenic and recreational opportunities.
- **Aquatic Park Bathhouse (Sala Burton Building)** – The white, nautical-themed, multipurpose structure, originally designed as the Aquatic Park Bathhouse and also known as the Sala Burton Building or Maritime Museum, is significant for its Streamlined Moderne architectural style and maritime-themed abstract artwork. Local artists, led by Hilaire Hiler and funded by the Federal Arts Project, created murals, sculptures, mosaics, and reliefs representing Hiler’s color theory, ships on the bay, underwater worlds, and marine life. The building has functioned as a maritime museum since 1951.
- **A Center for Maritime Research** – The Maritime Research Center provides access to rich sources of information about San Francisco and West Coast maritime history and culture.
- **Opportunities to Understand Maritime Heritage** – The park utilizes its iconic setting and unmatched resources to offer exceptional opportunities for public education in maritime history and tradition.
- **Opportunities to Experience Vessels on the Water** – The park’s ships and small craft provide visitors a rare opportunity to experience the sights, sounds, smells, and feel of the traditional maritime environment, both at the dock and on the bay.
- **Collections** – The park’s extensive museum, archives, library, and small craft collections provide tangible and compelling links to the diverse maritime heritage.

OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES AND VALUES

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park contains other resources and values that are not fundamental to the purpose of the park and may be unrelated to its significance, but are important to consider in planning processes. These are referred to as “other important resources and values” (OIRV).

- **Other Historic Structures** – Historic structures, including the Lewis Ark, the tugboat Eppleton Hall, the wheelhouse from the tugboat Sea Fox, and the Tubbs Cordage Office Building, provide context for understanding maritime heritage.
- **Haslett Warehouse** – The Haslett Warehouse (now the visitor center and Argonaut Hotel) provides context for understanding maritime heritage and supports park operations.





INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

DRAFT SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK INTERPRETIVE THEMES

- **Maritime Commerce: Economic** – Pacific coast maritime history illustrates the vital role maritime communities played in expanding trade, bridging local and global economies, and building maritime industries that continue to fuel national development.
- **Maritime Commerce: Social** – The development of San Francisco and the surrounding region demonstrates how maritime trade and transportation created a social crossroads that both fostered the interchange of cultures and ideas and led to exploitation and conflict.
- **Ship to Shore** – The unique nature of life on the water has created a distinct maritime culture with unique social structures, rich traditions, and specialized skills that influenced the sphere of life and arts ashore.
- **Technology and Change** – Maritime technology developed in tension between tradition and innovation. Changes in maritime technology had profound impacts on individuals, industry, and society as a whole.
- **The Maritime Environment** – West Coast maritime history reveals the complex interactions between humans and the maritime environment. This insight helps us contemplate our environmental responsibility and highlights our physical, emotional, and spiritual connections to the water.

