



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

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National  
Recreation Area

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## **Golden Gate National Recreation Area      News Release**

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For Immediate Release  
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### **FORT BAKER ANNOUNCEMENT**

The City of Sausalito and the National Park Service are pleased to jointly announce an agreement regarding a retreat and conference center at Fort Baker, a unit of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. This agreement limits the proposed size of the retreat center and allows the exciting active proposal with the Fort Baker Retreat Group to move forward. The agreement was reached in advance of consideration by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). BCDC will review the National Park Service Fort Baker plan at their meeting on January 20, 2005. The purpose of the BCDC review is to determine whether the National Park Service plan is consistent with the Commission's *San Francisco Bay Plan*.

With this agreement, the City of Sausalito supports the NPS request asking BCDC to approve the "consistency determination" with an upper limit of 225 rooms for the retreat and conference center. Both the City and NPS have agreed that a retreat center of this size or less would be suitable at Fort Baker. The retreat center would preserve the site's historic buildings by rehabilitating them as a facility for meetings and conferences. The center would also include a program institute focused on topics related to the mission of the National Park Service, including natural and historical conservation and preservation.

The Fort Baker Retreat Group, a private partnership selected by the National Park Service to complete the conversion of the site, is currently proposing a retreat center ranging from 135-185 rooms. The Retreat Group is under "exclusive negotiations" with the Park Service regarding this

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proposal. The Sausalito City Council is supportive of the Fort Baker Retreat Group's proposal and, with this agreement, the City endorses NPS efforts to implement this proposal with the Fort Baker Retreat Group.

To advance the proposed conversion plan of the Fort Baker Retreat Group, the NPS and the City have agreed to resolve the legal impediments to implementing the Retreat Center. In addition, the NPS and the City will continue to closely communicate on issues of joint interest at Fort Baker.

Today's announcement represents an important milestone for Fort Baker's transition from a former military post to a national park. The post was transferred to the National Park Service in August 2002. Prior to that, a comprehensive NPS planning process determined that a retreat and conference facility was a suitable re-use of much of Fort Baker's historic buildings and grounds. However, considerable public discussion and debate focused on the appropriate size of the facility; the approved NPS plan analyzed the environmental effects and set a maximum of 350 rooms. But the plan called for the "smallest economically feasible facility" possible to meet the plan's objectives, including minimizing impacts on the site and its surroundings. As a result of a "Request for Proposals" process, the NPS selected Fort Baker Retreat Group in May 2002 for exclusive negotiations. The Retreat Group's responsiveness to the issue of scale was a key factor in their selection.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area Superintendent Brian O'Neill said "With this agreement, the National Park Service achieves our longstanding goal to rehabilitate this important part of Fort Baker at a size consistent with the Plan's objectives and response to the concerns of our neighbors. We now have enough information to make us confident that we can achieve the preservation, program and environmental goals for Fort Baker within the 225-room upper limit. We have worked long and hard to reach this point and we thank all those who have been involved, including the City of Sausalito, in securing the best possible future for this important park area. We see this as a win for all concerned."

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Sausalito Mayor Dennis Scremin said “The City of Sausalito welcomes and supports the efforts of the National Park Service to limit the number of guest rooms at Fort Baker. The Fort Baker Retreat Group has an exceptional track record in historic preservation and environmentally sensitive projects. We’re excited about their project and will actively support their vision. The City of Sausalito looks forward to a close and continuing partnership the National Park Service in their stewardship of historic Fort Baker.”

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