

Strategies

In an effort to improve upon existing achievements, Point Reyes National Seashore has developed 12 strategies for the future. These strategies are divided into three categories:

1. **Generating Revenue/Increasing Reimbursables**

By generating revenue and increasing reimbursements, the seashore hopes to augment the amount of funding available for operations and investments. Strategies in this section focus on fees and donations.

2. **Increasing Efficiencies/Cost Avoidance**

Increasing efficiencies and avoiding costs would allow the park to focus its financial resources on areas that are most critical to the mission of Point Reyes National Seashore. This section examines assets, sustainability, and organizational structure.

3. **Improving Services or Other**

Improving services would enable the seashore to advance its goals of preservation and education. As such, strategies in this part examine restoration projects, education, volunteerism, and working with other national parks.

While not all of the following strategies are financial in nature, each of these strategies will allow the national seashore to deliver the highest value possible to visitors while simultaneously working to preserve and protect the park's natural and cultural resources. The following is a brief overview of each strategy.

1. **Generating Revenue/ Increasing Reimbursables**

Examine Fee Structure for Special Use Permits

The national seashore would like to examine special use permits related to ranching and nonranching operations. Income from special use permits related to agricultural operations in Fiscal Year 2006 was \$577,539. Expenditures, including labor, non-labor, and indirect expenses, related to ranching operations was \$625,772 in Fiscal Year 2006. This difference means that the park did not recover all costs associated with ranching operations at the seashore in Fiscal Year 2006. The seashore also issues nonranch special use permits for filming, photography, weddings, races, picnics, nonranch residences, and other purposes. The fees for these permits are intended to recover costs incurred by the seashore due to special uses. The seashore would like to evaluate and monitor these costs to determine whether all associated expenses incurred as a result of these uses are being recovered.

The following example illustrates a nonranch related analysis. A typical wedding at the seashore requires a \$50 application fee and requires staff time for phone calls, site visits, resource impact review, and other ancillary duties. The staff time, vehicle use, supplies, and utilities for a typical wedding would cost the seashore \$81 using Fiscal Year 2006 rates, which would result in a loss of \$31 per wedding to the seashore. Point Reyes National Seashore plans to conduct similar analyses for other non-ranch special use permits.

Special use permits related to ranching operations are distinct from other permits at the seashore. In February 2006 the United States Government Accountability Office reviewed grazing fees in the National Park Service. National Park Service guidance provides direction to park units on setting fees for special uses, including grazing. Director's Order 53 states that the fee should consist of two amounts: (1) the value of the land or facility, plus (2) the costs for managing or supporting the use. This fee structure establishes a premium for grazing on National Park Service lands by recovering costs in addition to a market fee charged for the lands and facilities used for grazing. The national seashore already charges a fee for grazing based on market rates. The seashore recovers its costs from the grazing receipts generated and does not charge an additional fee. If the seashore were to add a costrecovery amount to the current market-based fee, the total fee would exceed the market value for grazing in the area. This directive may conflict with the seashore's mandate to work with local ranchers to maintain grazing.

Historically, the national seashore has evaluated the market value for ranching fees, including the rate for animal unit months (the amount of forage needed by an "animal unit" grazing for one month), every five years based on an independent appraisal. In September 2002 the animal unit month market-based rate of \$7.00 on Point Reyes National Seashore land was established based on an appraisal. This fee should be evaluated in Fiscal Year 2007. Further, rather than instituting a costrecovery fee in addition to the marketbased rate for grazing, management will consider indexing the marketbased rates to inflation each year.

The benefit of analyzing both ranch and nonranch special use permits is to recover all costs so that special uses are neutral to the national seashore's fiscal operations. Special use permits are not designed to make a profit.



Increase Association Membership

In an effort to increase membership in the Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA), the seashore plans to increase its assistance with PRNSA recruitment. The association will operate a mobile information and recruitment center that will take an active role in soliciting memberships. Until recently, the national seashore has conducted passive recruitment, relying upon visitors to notice PRNSA publications and join at a later date. Future efforts would provide a volunteer to inform visitors about the benefits of association membership. This volunteer would operate in high traffic areas and at times when visitation is at its greatest.

In Fiscal Year 2006, 272,944 individuals visited Bear Valley Visitor Center. Of the visitor center guests, 35 people signed up for a new PRNSA membership during their visit. In addition to the Bear Valley Visitor Center, 33,584 people visited the Ken Patrick Visitor Center and 106,694 people visited the Lighthouse Visitor Center in Fiscal Year 2006. One person signed up for a new membership at the Ken Patrick Visitor Center during the year. Average memberships are \$50 for the “supporter” level. These amounts do not reflect new memberships activated online or by mail.

While recognizing the overwhelmingly substantial benefit of existing membership renewals, the national seashore would also like to increase the number of new members of PRNSA.

2. Increasing Efficiencies/Cost Avoidance

Focus on High-Priority Assets

The park will focus on those assets that contribute most to the mission of Point Reyes National Seashore and the National Park Service. The seashore has identified 28 assets for deconstruction to reduce long-term operations and maintenance costs. The number of historic structures has already been reduced from 297 to 279 by eliminating low-priority assets in poor condition and recycling building materials. Management will continue to evaluate FMSS data and the results of the park asset management plan being produced Fiscal Year 2007 to reduce the overall number of assets.

Improve Energy Efficiency

The national seashore is committed to environmental stewardship, and reduced energy consumption is directly linked with preserving resources for future generations. The seashore will pursue

increased energy efficiency through the use of renewable energy systems, alternative fuels, and day-to-day sustainable practices.

The national seashore will actively compete for outside sources of revenue to install renewable energy systems because they provide an immediate reduction of operating costs and advance the seashore's goal of reducing its carbon footprint. Each of the seashore's solar energy systems produces a cost savings to the park of approximately \$1,000 annually based on the cost of electricity. In addition, these systems provide an environmental benefit that is aligned with the National Park Service mission to preserve the seashore's resources. In Fiscal Year 2006, the Bear Valley Visitor Center photovoltaic system generated 6.74 megawatts of power. According to the Environmental Protection Agency's estimates, the seashore's use of this renewable energy source at this location prevented the release of up to 5,922 pounds of carbon dioxide in Fiscal Year 2006.

In addition to pursuing the acquisition and installation of additional renewable energy sources for facilities, the seashore is evaluating alternative fuel options for vehicles. Management remains committed to partnering with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) to increase the percentage of its fleet powered by alternative fuel. The seashore is also evaluating the fiscal and environmental benefits of a biodiesel tank at Point Reyes National Seashore.

The seashore's day-to-day operations target reduced consumption of energy. From converting the type of lights used to managing how office machinery such as copiers and computer monitors consume power, the national seashore will improve its energy efficiency and reduce intensity of energy use.

Improve Fleet Efficiency

The national seashore is committed to fulfilling transportation needs with the minimum possible environmental impact at the lowest cost possible. The seashore will improve fleet efficiency by three methods: (1) utilizing more fuel efficient vehicles, (2) right-sizing the fleet, and (3) centralizing management of its fleet.

In the NPS Pacific West Region, the U.S. General Services Administration, the federal government's premier acquisition agency, is the mandatory source for vehicles. However, the seashore has successfully pursued and secured donated vehicles

from Toyota and Ford in the past. In pursuit of goals related to environmental stewardship, management and staff at the seashore would like to shift to more energy-efficient vehicles powered by alternative fuels such as biodiesel or propane. The seashore's present fleet of alternative fuel vehicles has demonstrated that in addition to reduced environmental impact, the use of these vehicles represents a potential cost savings. For example, in Fiscal Year 2006 the average cost per mile associated with one of the seashore's donated hybrid vehicles used by the Interpretation Division was \$0.06 per mile. In contrast, the cost per mile for the use of a comparable-sized gasoline-powered sedan used for similar functions by the same division was \$0.57 per mile.

General Services Administration vehicles are leased, not owned, and are replaced in accordance with GSA year and mileage parameters. Point Reyes National seashore can reduce petroleum consumption by pursuing donated alternative fuel vehicles and by leasing alternative fuel vehicles from GSA. To reduce costs in addition to reducing environmental impact, however, the seashore can also evaluate the size of its fleet by assessing current vehicle utilization rates and right-sizing the fleet before replacing vehicles. In Fiscal Year 2006, 38 GSA-leased vehicles, which represents approximately 60 percent of the seashore's average GSA fleet, were under the mileage utilization target set by GSA of 1,000 miles per month for passenger-carrying vehicles and light trucks and 833 miles per month for full-size trucks. As part of the business plan process, the national seashore has identified vehicles with low-mileage utilization and will evaluate whether these vehicles should be replaced.

Finally, the national seashore could implement periodic assessment of vehicle utilization, cost, and quality in the course of normal operations. The information management system related to fleet management at the seashore is largely decentralized. While some data is tracked, it is not necessarily used as the basis for decision making, and performance measures for owned and GSA-leased vehicles have not been established. Ensuring access for decision makers to information such as the average cost per mile for vehicles will guarantee that transportation decisions target the lowest cost and environmental impact possible.

Examine Organizational Structure

The seashore will evaluate its current organizational structure to ensure resources are being used efficiently and overhead expenses



An NPS range manager inspects the condition of grasses at a vegetation restoration site. PHOTO BY KRISTIN GILLISS

Opposite: Caspian terns at Abbotts Lagoon NPS PHOTO

are minimized. For example, the seashore may evaluate whether consolidating staff focused on parkwide information management is appropriate. An Information Management Branch might include geographical information system staff and information technology staff who would maintain the integrity of the seashore's data, software, and hardware.

3. Improving Services or Other

Partner with PRNSA on Strategic Point Reyes NS Projects

Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA) is an extremely valuable partner of the seashore. By conducting both educational programs and fundraising activities, PRNSA, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has been supporting the seashore since 1964. See the Management and Administration section of this business plan for more information about the association. The association is currently leading the Giacomini Wetlands Restoration project. The seashore would like to discuss other possible strategic projects with the PRNSA board for the next 10 years. To accomplish this objective, the seashore and the association are planning to develop a process of regular strategic goal setting and review with the association's board and management. This process would allow PRNSA to conduct proactive fundraising for projects that will begin in later years. Additionally, this strategy will allow PRNSA and the seashore to have more unified communications with donors and other supporters of the seashore.

Possible projects would include the restoration of Point Reyes National Seashore dunes, and other NPS Centennial Initiative projects listed in the Centennial Initiative section of this business plan. The nine Centennial projects are estimated to cost over \$25 million in total. Point Reyes National Seashore will need help from PRNSA and others willing to donate time and money to help the seashore. These projects will benefit both Point Reyes National Seashore and other national parks within the San Francisco Bay Area.

Develop Partnerships for Delivering Critical Outreach and Education Services Not Done by Park Staff

The national seashore currently uses 21 partners to deliver critical outreach and education services not performed by park staff, and is planning to expand these partnerships. Current partnerships include the Point Reyes Bird Observatory Conservation Science,

California State Parks, local schools, the Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin, and many others. Point Reyes National Seashore would like to expand this list of 21 partners by finding educational niches that are not filled by staff, which could be occupied by partners.

An example of such an educational niche and related partnership would be the seashore's relationship with the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN). This organization works to protect endangered coho salmon and steelhead trout. In addition to habitat restoration and policy development, the organization accomplishes its mission through environmental education. The seashore relies on SPAWN to conduct high-quality environmental education related to coho salmon, which compliments the efforts of the national seashore's staff.

Another example of a potential educational partner is the Pacific Coast Research Learning Center. The national seashore hosts one of 17 Science Learning Centers in the country. These facilities promote science in national parks. The seashore would like to establish a formal method by which the research of visiting scientists is made available to the public at large. This could be through scheduled information sessions at the seashore or through publications produced for public audiences.

The seashore's strategy to increase partners such as the ones mentioned here is to examine current educational and interpretive offerings and identify areas the park is unable to address at current staffing levels. By using partners, the seashore hopes to fill those educational needs without incurring additional cost. This effort would expand the seashore's role in educating the public about the natural and cultural resources of the Bay Area and would engage more people to help the National Park Service through education.

Coordinate Field Seminars and Other Presentations With Bookstore Merchandising/Examine Further Uses of Bookstores

The role of the bookstore operation at Point Reyes National Seashore is to further the interpretive and educational aims of the seashore, and to provide some visitor convenience items. The seashore furthers interpretation and education primarily through book sales. Visitor convenience items include souvenirs, sweatshirts, water, postcards, and other similar items. Visitor convenience items carry the highest profit margin. Books provide





the greatest educational value. The seashore operates three bookstores in each of the main visitor center locations: Bear Valley, Lighthouse, and Ken Patrick. The Lighthouse and Ken Patrick are not open as often as Bear Valley.

The national seashore has two types of bookstore customers: summer and winter visitors. Summer visitors generally purchase souvenirs such as magnets and postcards. Summer visitors also purchase sweatshirts because of the rapidly changing climate of the seashore. Winter visitors are generally more interested in books and educational materials.

In the future, the national seashore and the Point Reyes National Seashore Association plan to coordinate items sold in the bookstores with topics of current field seminars and presentations to maximize the educational benefits of the bookstores and to provide additional income. Book sales of a particular subject are greatest after people have attended a field seminar about the same subject. For example, a field seminar about birds will usually lead to increased sales of books related to birds.

Additionally, PRNSA would like to consider sales items that enable visitors to experience the park more broadly. For example, selling windbreakers and pre-packaged nutrition bars would allow visitors to hike spontaneously on one of the seashore's trails. In the distant future, PRNSA would like to explore the possibility of opening satellite retail and educational outlets in other parts of the Bay Area. This strategy would allow Point Reyes National Seashore to educate people that live farther away from the seashore and would provide some extra income for critical projects.

The Point Reyes National Seashore Association does not currently monitor item-by-item sales activity. However, total sales are highest in the summer months. If the seashore would like to increase revenue in the future, it could consider evaluating a different product mix, changing the configuration of the stores, and offering different types of items at different seasons according to the two visitor types. In Fiscal Year 2006 the Bear Valley bookstore, which is the most active of the three bookstores, generated \$1.06 per guest of that particular visitor center. In previous years, this rate was closer to \$1.38 per visitor. Total sales of the three bookstores are expected to increase five percent from Fiscal Year 2006. The total operating margin of the three bookstores is projected to be 14.2 percent in Fiscal Year 2007.

Evaluate Volunteer Management

Point Reyes National Seashore has proposed to receive funds for a volunteer coordinator in Fiscal Year 2008 as part of the National Park Service Centennial Challenge. This funding would allow for a seasonal position nine months out of the year. The seashore would like to determine how this position can best add to the volunteer management and recruiting already performed by existing staff. As mentioned in the volunteer section of this business plan, volunteerism in the National Park Service is designed to be a mutually beneficial relationship. As such, the seashore spends staff time recruiting, training, and managing individuals and groups willing to donate their time to help Point Reyes National Seashore. A volunteer coordinator would help the seashore recruit additional potential volunteers.

For example, Point Reyes National Seashore uses volunteer groups to help maintain trails. Without these volunteers, the seashore would close many of the trails presently open to the public. High school groups are the largest source of volunteers for trail maintenance. The seashore instructs these students on equipment safety and trail maintenance techniques and provides supervision when students are using tools to dig trails and clear brush. For safety purposes, the seashore accommodates 10 trail volunteers for every one staff person. An increase in volunteers would also require a commensurate increase in staff time.

Staff at the seashore would like the volunteer coordinator to centralize outreach efforts, data management, and budgeting. Volunteer recruitment is currently a passive process, requiring people to search the Point Reyes National Seashore website for volunteer information. Often, the website will contain outdated projects. Volunteer contact information and statistics about hours worked are not maintained consistently once volunteers sign up for projects. The new volunteer coordinator would be responsible for these duties. Additionally, the new volunteer coordinator would handle budgeting tasks related to volunteers for expenses such as recognition gifts, gloves for trail work, vehicle use, and other expenditures.

According to the terms of the Centennial Challenge, the national seashore will receive funding for a volunteer coordinator for an undetermined amount of time without subsequent increases in latter years. Any cost of living or step increases will need to be covered by the seashore, which would be around 3 percent per

year. To cover the costs of this new federally mandated position, the new volunteer coordinator will need to generate more than 2,000 hours of volunteer work each year in addition to the number of hours presently donated to the seashore. Over five years, this would translate to an estimated \$254,839 of benefit, not including additional costs of volunteers.

Identify Efficiencies Through Using the Park Network

Point Reyes National Seashore is part of the Bay Area Network. As part of a network of national parks, the seashore would like to increase efficiencies between park units. The seashore is commencing this type of activity with the Wildland Fire Division. As stated in the current operations section of this business plan, one of the goals of Wildland Fire is to continue supporting network parks. The fire management officer of Point Reyes National Seashore has written the fire management plan for Pinnacles National Monument, and is currently writing the fire management plan for John Muir National Historic Site, Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site, and Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

By managing fire planning centrally, Wildland Fire plans to capture efficiencies in terms of operation, communication, and interagency coordination. For example, Pinnacles National Monument was unable to conduct any prescribed burns for fire abatement purposes in the past few years. With the help of Point Reyes National Seashore, Pinnacles National Monument treated five acres with prescribed burning this past year. The seashore would like to identify efficiencies in other functions similar to those led by Wildland Fire.

Communicate Results of Science-based Inquiry to Park and Public

The management of Point Reyes National Seashore is committed to science-based decision making. Development of a science communication plan will enable the seashore to ensure that park managers and the public are well-informed about the scientific rationale for management decisions. Point Reyes National Seashore will continue to encourage research at the seashore targeting high-priority needs of park managers. Critical data, trends, and decisions based on this research will be better communicated to visitors through interpretation and by other means identified in the science communication plan.