

Alternative 1 Connect

Rationale additions for Connecting to people

1. New Zone: accommodates higher density of visitors and interp services, protects sensitive resources and . Provides appropriate treatment for cultural landscapes and allows for rehabilitation of historic structures to preserve significant values. Include area of historic structures (zone boundary should be refined to include service drive and associated structures in area of “superintendent’s residence” and adjacent maintenance facilities.
2. change to wild: allows for lower density of visitor use, allows cultural landscape features to be preserved where they would not compromise natural values (ie: retain historic trails). Allows for a variety of trail experiences and a more wild, backcountry feeling experience.
3. evolved cultural landscape: Hillwood Camp and immediate surroundings (check with Paul Scolari to refine boundary). Allows for adaptive re-use and preserving important values of the historic structure and its setting

Visitor Experience:

- stress-less and informed arrival and transition. Assumes some parking retained at Woods, but “assured” such as through reservations. Most visitors arrive by shuttle from a remote hub (or hike/bike in)
- greeted by and immediately immersed in NPS rustic environment (compatible with NR Dist.)
- retained parking and new transit facility keep with rustic feel
- visitor contact and orientation provided at off-site hub and at Woods
- “menu” of visitor opportunities with appeal to diverse audiences offered (different lengths, challenge level, themes, experiences, interp support)
 - Ranger guided
 - Audio tours
 - Self guided
 - Seasonal attractions

New Zone VE: Higher density visitor experience: area where most first time visitors would explore to get basic immersion into MUWO experience, has the highest encounter rate with other visitors and NPS presence is highest here. Most universally accessible zone. Provides a sense of immersion in nature (sight, sound, smell and big trees/creek) and understanding of conservation story. Quiet is encouraged.

Wild Zone VE: Lower density visitor experience, more backcountry feeling, more self-discovery

Other:

- Current concession converted to education/stewardship/program support/
- Programmatic access to exterior of historic structures in Supt. Residence area provided (ranger-led or self guided)
- Parking closest to VC is removed and meadow restored to provide more natural sense of arrival
- Closest parking retained is for buses and ADA
- VC? TBD
- Further away lots: minimal amount of parking retained for non-shuttle times, transit center provides comfortable place to wait for bus with light, healthy food, seating, restrooms, shelter consider Old Inn or new structure on other side of road for accessibility (ADA)
- Old Inn/Ed Center Area: if not transit center, other visitor/program support or operational facilities or removed if non-essential
- Conlon Av.: all existing operational functions would be relocated to provide attractive entrance path/road to Hillside Camp and restored natural setting
- Hillwood Camp site: programmatic use day use or overnight (possibilities include research, stewardship, volunteers, ed or community groups, time share for outreach groups, retreats)

Random thoughts:

Find an area for picnicking (couple of options – like near transit center, at Conlon trailhead, near services)

Consider making MUWO the place where every elementary school student in the local area (to be defined) has a redwood forest, watershed, creek, conservation experience)

Outside the Boundary Ideas

- Consider making Frank Valley Road car-free on Sundays to provide opportunities for Redwood Ck. Watershed exploration – potentially with rental bikes)
- Relocation of maintenance facilities to Kent Canyon
- Trailhead parking (small) and picnicking in Santos Meadow
- Cooperation in watershed management
- Shuttle-supported 1-way hikes

Question #1: Describe the visitor experience

Under this alternative, the emphasis at Muir Woods National Monument would be on showcasing the park's most nationally important natural and cultural resources to a large number of visitors. Resources would be managed at the highest level of preservation in order to protect the natural and cultural resources in perpetuity and also to promote appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of those resources by a large number of visitors.

The visitor experience would begin with an "anticipation" stage, in which visitors could use the park's website and other informational sources to help plan their visit to Muir Woods. Visitors would have a range or continuum of experiences to choose from during their visit at Muir Woods. These experiences would include visits of various durations, difficulty/accessibility, transportation modes, and access points.

Visitors could access the park via multiple portals such as Muir Beach, the lower parking lot, Mountain Home Inn, and the current main entrance, all of which would be served by public transportation options such as shuttle buses. The visitor experience approaching Muir Woods would be as organic and natural as possible, so that visitors understand that they are approaching a national treasure and are not distracted by heavy congestion or infrastructure such as parking lots.

Visitors would have opportunities for solitude, contemplation, inspiration, education, and discovery in a dynamic natural environment at Muir Woods National Monument and in the Redwood Creek watershed. Best management practices would provide a high level of resource protection while providing the best possible visitor experience to large numbers of visitors. Infrastructure such as trails, bridges, and benches would be appropriately located and sized, and would be designed to both protect the natural resource and enhance the visitors' experience. These infrastructure elements would be as flexible as possible, in order to respond to changing conditions such as trees falling. High visitor use would be expected and would be effectively managed rather than limited.

Visitors would also have opportunities to learn about the park's cultural history and the role of Muir Woods National Monument and associated figures such as John Muir, William Kent, and Gifford Pinchot in early conservation history by visiting sites such as the cluster of historic C.C.C. era buildings near the superintendent's residence.

Repeat visitors or those who wish to have an in-depth, hands-on experience would have opportunities to get actively involved by prior arrangement through activities coordinated through a volunteer and education campus located at Conlon Avenue. This would promote civic engagement and citizen science, as well as support the park's volunteer program.

Visitors who wish to picnic or engage in other activities that are not suitable for the redwood forest environment would be directed to less sensitive resource areas such as Muir Beach or Camp Alice Eastwood.

Large groups of visitors would be able to gather in a location such as the upper parking lot or the footprint of the current concession building for official park programs or other events.

Question #2: Respond to each visitor experience goal

A. The national treasures alternative will provide visitors with opportunities to explore, learn, and enjoy the showcased resources and stories.

Enabling large numbers of visitors to explore, learn, and enjoy Muir Woods National Monument is a primary component of this plan. Visitors would be able to select from a range of experiences depending on the duration of their visit and other factors. The park would be managed in such a way that heavy visitation would not impair sensitive natural and cultural resources.

B. The national treasures alternative will allow the showcased resources and associated stories to shape (and constrain) recreational opportunities.

Muir Woods National Monument and the Redwood Creek watershed would shape and constrain recreational opportunities. Best management practices would protect the integrity of the park's natural and cultural resources while also providing for a high level of public use and a range of visitor activities. Trails would be realigned and facilities relocated as needed in order to allow for high use while protecting sensitive natural and cultural resources. A cleverly designed public transit system would facilitate directing various recreational opportunities to the most appropriate parts of the Redwood Creek watershed.

C. The national treasures alternative will emphasize active public participation in stewardship programs focused on showcased sites.

Active public participation in stewardship programs would be encouraged through the park's volunteer program and through opportunities for visitors to participate in hands-on activities. These programs would be coordinated through the park's education campus at Conlon Avenue.

D. The national treasures alternative will provide visitors with opportunities for understanding and enjoying a national park experience and associated traditions.

More than most parts of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument feels like a traditional national park experience. The park would be managed in such a way that many people could enjoy memorable national park experiences in the redwood forest at Muir Woods National Monument. Visitors could learn about early conservation history and figures such as Muir, Kent, and Pinchot, and could continue that tradition by becoming actively involved themselves in park stewardship programs.

Alternative 4 Seamless

Visitor Experience

Matrix Bullets:

- Focus on connecting trail and transit systems between open space, parks, and communities.
- Provide visitor opportunities and support through share information, regulations, facilities, and visitor services.
- Consider decisions on desired and appropriate visitor opportunities in a regional context.
- Provide stewardship activities that support resource management in a regional context.

Expanded Description of Visitor Experience for Muir Woods NM:

Visitor experience begins outside the Redwood Creek watershed at transportation hubs.

Develop transportation hubs that connect possibly at north end of GG Bridge (Vista Point), Fort Baker, Sausalito, Manzanita, and or Dias Ridge (east side of Panoramic Hwy on GGNRA land).

Visitor services and support are provided at the hubs – restrooms, visitor/welcome center or warming hut, food service, sundry purchase opportunities, orientation, interpretive panels, printed resources/maps, films, planning aids, etc.

Concept is for visitors to prepare for their visit to MUWO before getting to the park – preparation includes both logistics of visit (how long to stay, what loop routes to take) and a preliminary cognitive/emotional connection to the prime resource (Coast Redwood ecosystem).

Requires trail connections from SF, neighboring land managing agencies, and gateway communities

Hubs are connected to existing and expanded public transportation on land and water.

Ample parking at transportation hubs for limited stress to begin experience.

Orientation facility – various sizes to provide cultural/natural resource information and interpretive connections; maps/brochures/films; restrooms/food services/ possible staff/volunteers.

Shuttle bus trip has audio orientation (Antennae Theater approach) and or interactive experience with staff/volunteer to further prepare visitors.

At MUMO shuttle stop/depot – in view of entry arch that serves as portal to the Woods; outside depot has restrooms, benches, picnic area, covered waiting areas, locator maps/panels, possible vending service (food).

Visitor should have self-guided information from hubs and shuttle, but may have opportunity for scheduled tour options.

In-Woods: after entering archway portal to the woods, visitor should be prepared to leave the world of shuttles, asphalt, and exhaust to experience a primeval redwood forest (a sense of leaving the world behind and entering a cathedral-like atmosphere of quiet awe).

Trails will be one-way and use bridges (and top of grove) to define different loop opportunities. Trails off the main creek corridor would offer expanded wild options.

Loop trails will have self-guided interpretive stations to augment/support any printed materials – visitors may also encounter roving interpretive staff/volunteers as well as other park staff (maintenance, scientists, trail crews).

Trails in main corridor will be safe, ADA compliant, highly maintained. No bikes or horses or dogs.

Exit shuttle back to the hubs will continue the experience with audio program or opportunity for interactive dialogue.

Important that integrated shuttle system serves other agencies and connects with communities of Stinson Beach and Muir Beach.