

DRAFT ALTERNATIVES for MUIR WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT

	Current Conditions and Management	Connecting People with the Parks Alternative 1	Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems Alternative 2	PREFERRED: Focusing on National Treasures Alternative 3
Overview	<p>Muir Woods National Monument is managed to protect the primeval redwood forest in the larger Redwood Creek watershed, and to interpret the Monument's natural history, as well as the establishment of the Monument, which had a major role in the early American conservation movement.</p> <p>One of the most well-known iconic sites in the park, Muir Woods is an international attraction and ecological treasure. With trees over 1,000 years old, it preserves a small yet towering vestige of the vast forests of <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i> that once graced the slopes and valleys surrounding San Francisco Bay. The Monument also supports an incredible diversity of flora and fauna.</p> <p>The park balances preserving the redwood ecosystem with providing access to a large number of visitors. For many, it is their initial experience with the national park system. Key park objectives include fostering a conservation ethic among visitors, preserving and restoring critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, supporting public transportation as a way to reduce congestion, and promoting a watershed perspective in land management that includes state parks, two water districts, and local communities.</p>	<p>In this alternative, the park would offer visitors the opportunity to experience and enjoy the primeval forest ecosystem and understand the Monument's place in American conservation history through a variety of enhanced programs, facilities, and trails that access the forest and connect local communities to the park and surrounding open space.</p> <p>Although retaining much of the present system of trails through the forest, existing facilities and uses would be modified or relocated to reduce their impacts on the ecosystem and improve the park experience.</p> <p>The Monument would continue to welcome a diversity of visitors and support a range of experiences, better serving as a gateway or stepping stone to understanding the national park system.</p> <p>A shuttle system, with parking and basic visitor services off site, would be an important first point for orientation and key to sustainable access. Collaboration with other public land managers would continue to address watershed restoration and stewardship.</p>	<p>Muir Woods National Monument and the Redwood Creek watershed are part of the UNESCO Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve – one of the world's richest reservoirs of plant and animal life. This alternative would restore the primeval character of the old growth redwood forest. Visitors would be immersed in the forest, and could experience the natural sounds, smells, light, and darkness of the forest.</p> <p>The experience would be more primitive than it is today; the majority of the built environment — buildings, parking lots, paved trails — would be removed, and all visitors would arrive by shuttle, bicycle, or on foot. The landscape would be 'messier' than it is today, but the forest would function more naturally: Redwood Creek would be allowed to meander across the flood plain, flooding the valley bottom, uprooting trees and opening gaps in the canopy.</p> <p>Where not in conflict with natural resource goals, historic trails and structures would be adapted for contemporary uses. A light-on-the-land, accessible trail would reach into the heart of the forest. Visitors would engage in participatory stewardship, education, and science that further the preservation of the forest and all its parts — the creek, salmon, spotted owls, bats, natural sounds — as part of the continuing history and evolution of the land preservation and conservation movement.</p> <p>Restoration of the Redwood Creek watershed would be accelerated in collaboration with other land managers. Actions would include the removal of unneeded management roads, stabilization of sediment sources, and removal of invasive vegetation.</p>	<p>One of the last old-growth forests in the world, Muir Woods National Monument is a window into the complex world of nature and conservation. This alternative would present Muir Woods as a contemplative outdoor museum where visitors would discover the primeval redwood forest and the Monument's place in the early US conservation movement.</p> <p>A system of trails would lead visitors into the forest to touch, see, and learn, in different ways, about the essential qualities of the forest. These include its iconic giant trees, the ecology of Redwood Creek, and William Kent's generous donation of the forest to the American public. Rather than continue to concentrate visitation along a main trail, visitors would be encouraged to take different thematic interpretive trails, some new and some existing, to experience the different parts of the park. Other trails would link the Monument with the surrounding Mt. Tamalpais State Park.</p> <p>Visitors would continue to be drawn to the Monument to see the trees, but they would leave with a richer understanding of this precious ecosystem and how these few acres helped spark conservation across the United States. They would be motivated to return and learn more of the story.</p> <p>Building on the interagency "Redwood Creek Watershed Vision" (2004), and cooperative management agreement with California State Parks, the NPS would continue to collaborate with the public and other land managers to address watershed restoration, stewardship, and recreation.</p>
Arrival	<p>Today, most visitors arrive by personal vehicles and commercial tour buses. Since 2005 a pilot shuttle service has been used during the summer to help reduce traffic congestion. Current parking areas are located adjacent to Redwood Creek and very near the main concentration of redwoods.</p> <p>The entrance area is located at the edge of the redwood forest adjacent to Redwood Creek. It includes a parking area, restrooms, and a small visitor information station with a bookstore and fee collection booth. This area is a hub of activity with a mix of</p>	<p>Off-site Welcome Center</p> <p>Same as Alternative 3.</p> <p>Diverse Opportunities Zone</p> <p>Same as Alternative 3.</p>	<p>Off-site Welcome Center</p> <p>Same as Alternative 3, except that the shuttle service would run year-round. All visitors would come to Muir Woods either by shuttle service from the welcome center, or under their own power.</p> <p>Park Operations Zone (Old Inn area)</p> <p>The Old Inn and adjacent areas would be used for administration and limited maintenance operations. Only a small parking area would be available for</p>	<p>Off-site Welcome Center</p> <p>To enhance the visitor experience and address congestion problems, permanent shuttle service to Muir Woods would be provided during peak periods throughout the year, supported by a new welcome center in the vicinity of Highway 1/Interstate 101, created in collaboration with Marin County, State Parks, and Caltrans. Express transit service from downtown San Francisco and improved connections with the regional ferry services will also be explored.</p> <p>The welcome facility would provide necessary visitor</p>

DRAFT ALTERNATIVES for MUIR WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT

	Current Conditions and Management	Connecting People with the Parks Alternative 1	Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems Alternative 2	PREFERRED: Focusing on National Treasures Alternative 3
	pedestrians, automobiles, and buses. Additional parking areas are further down along Redwood Creek and are frequently used during periods of peak demand.		<p>special needs. The park entrance would be relocated to the current lower parking lot and designed to accommodate a modest transit stop for the shuttle. It would also provide basic visitor services.</p> <p>[Steering Committee: Do we want to make a statement about limiting the footprint of development in the park.]</p> <p>Sensitive Resources Zone (Along Redwood Creek)</p> <p>The existing main entrance area, including the entire upper parking area, restrooms, and visitor center, as well as a major portion of the lower parking lot, would be removed to restore natural conditions, including seasonal flooding.</p>	<p>services that could include parking, sheltered waiting areas, restrooms, and orientation to Muir Woods and other regional destinations. The facility would also connect visitors to other regional and local transportation systems.</p> <p>Diverse Opportunities Zone</p> <p>The Monument’s existing entry area would be redesigned to enhance the visitor’s arrival experience, protect resources, and improve safety. Parking at the Monument would be reconfigured or relocated using sustainable design practices to reduce impacts to the creek and other sensitive resources. Capacity would meet demand during non-peak periods. Pedestrian access would be improved to offer visitors a more natural experience transitioning into the redwood forest separated from roads and parking.</p> <p>A modest facility would be provided to receive visitors arriving by different modes of transportation. The services provided could include shuttle drop-off, sheltered waiting areas, orientation, restrooms, food service, and a bookstore. The existing separate structures for fee collection, bookstore, and restrooms could be replaced as part of the new facility with a smaller net footprint.</p> <p>Future use or removal of the Old Inn would be determined through more detailed site planning that would consider its utility for visitor services or operational needs in the redesigned entry area. Realignment of portions of the county road (Muir Woods/Frank’s Valley Road) would also be explored to improve operational safety and visitor access.</p> <p>In collaboration with Marin County, shoulder parking along Franks Valley Road in non-trailhead areas would be restricted when sufficient transit access is available to meet parking demand in order to improve pedestrian safety and protect Redwood Creek.</p> <p>[Steering Committee: Do we want to make a statement about limiting the footprint of development in the park.]</p>
Redwood Forest and Redwood	The main trail system is a series of loops running along Redwood Creek, crossing the creek four times on	Scenic Corridor Zone (Redwood Creek corridor including the existing wooden arch, several existing	Sensitive Resources Zone (Majority of the Monument)	Interpretive Corridor Zone (Large corridor around Redwood Creek)

DRAFT ALTERNATIVES for MUIR WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT

	Current Conditions and Management	Connecting People with the Parks Alternative 1	Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems Alternative 2	PREFERRED: Focusing on National Treasures Alternative 3
Creek	<p>footbridges. Visitors have opportunities to stroll among the groves of ancient redwoods. A variety of interpretive waysides and scheduled interpretive programs support the visitor's discovery of the Monument's resources. Intersecting with the main trail are other trails that provide visitors with extended hiking opportunities to adjacent public lands. The Administration-Concession Building provides food, retail services, restrooms, and park offices. The nearby historic Superintendent's Residence and associated structures are used for park operations.</p> <p>Since the Monument was established, the National Park Service has increased its understanding of the health of a redwood forest ecosystem. Past practices of allowing visitors to drive, picnic and camp within the forest have long been phased out. Natural fires have been suppressed throughout most of the 20th century and are now slowly being reintroduced to the area as a tool to enhance the health of the ecosystem. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corp lined portions of Redwood Creek with rocks as a means to stabilize and contain the flow of water within the existing channel. These actions protect selected redwood trees on the banks, but eliminate the natural meandering of the creek across a wider floodplain, constraining its role in sustaining a healthy ecosystem.</p>	<p>buildings, and the main loop trails)</p> <p>This area would be managed to provide a national park experience within the primeval redwood forest setting. The Administrative-Concession Building would transition to support interpretive, educational, and stewardship activities, providing a flexible classroom and program space in the woods. Experiences would immerse visitors in nature (the sights, sounds, smells of the forest) where quiet would be encouraged. Improved accessibility would ensure that all visitors could have these experiences. New restrooms and drinking water would be provided near Bridge 4 to protect resources and enhance visitor comfort.</p> <p>The historic Superintendent's Residence and nearby structures would be used for administrative purposes. Other structures needed to support visitor uses or park operations would be rehabilitated. Non-historic or nonessential structures would be removed.</p> <p>Natural Zone (All areas beyond the Redwood Creek corridor)</p> <p>The majority of the Monument would be managed to preserve and restore natural systems and contribute to the primeval forest setting. Visitors within this zone would have opportunities for self-discovery and challenge on trails in a more dispersed and wild park setting.</p> <p>To provide a diverse continuum of experiences, visitors would be introduced to ways of accessing the adjacent landscapes and the recreational opportunities of Mount Tamalpais State Park, Marin Municipal Water District, and Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The Ben Johnson, Fern Creek, Redwood Creek, and Dipsea trails would provide access to a variety of day and overnight recreational experiences.</p>	<p>The old growth redwood forest would be managed to achieve the highest level of natural resource integrity. The visitor experience would promote an intimate relationship with the natural resources of the primeval redwood forest. Visitor access would be highly controlled and limited to designated areas and activities. The visitor would have the opportunity to engage in participatory stewardship, and educational and science activities.</p> <p>The natural conditions of the redwood forest and Redwood Creek would be restored and allowed to continue unimpeded. Floodplain processes and riparian habitat would be restored by removing, re-aligning, or re-designing trails, bridges and other impediments to natural processes. Woody debris would accumulate in the creek and on the forest floor.</p> <p>Visitor services in the forest would be relocated to the transit stop. In consultation with the state historic preservation office and other stakeholders, the existing buildings and other major infrastructure would be removed and the sites restored to their natural conditions. All buildings, except the Old Inn, would be removed, including the former Superintendent's Residence and the Administration-Concession Building.</p> <p>The trail system would be redesigned to accommodate fewer visitors in a more intimate and appropriate setting. A simple accessible trail would reach into a portion of the old growth forest. The existing main trail along the creek would be relocated out of the floodplain, and other trails and bridges could be removed, relocated, or redesigned to allow and promote natural processes. Paved surfaces would be removed.</p> <p>The trail system throughout the Monument would be designed to connect to other trails that would allow it to extend from the redwood forest to the ocean, highlighting the connection between the uplands and the ocean and the role that watershed restoration plays in maintaining healthy ecosystems. A reroute of the Redwood Creek crossing of the Dipsea Trail will be explored to find a more appropriate location with less impact to the natural functions of the creek; the rest of the Dipsea Trail would be maintained along its historic alignment.</p>	<p>This area would be managed as a setting where visitors discover and interact with the features of the primeval redwood forest. Each trail within the Monument would unveil a different story and experience using creative interpretive approaches that are appropriate to the majestic old-growth forest. The trails would be designed and managed to provide visitors with opportunities to learn, explore, and become immersed in the resources that illustrate a particular theme. Examples of thematic trails could include an ecology-themed trail that leads visitors to examine the forest structure and the dynamic habitats of the creek. Another trail would highlight a century of conservation history and quietly usher visitors into Cathedral Grove. Some trails would start at the main entrance and highlight the main redwood groves along the creek. Others would bring visitors down into the woods from higher in the canyon.</p> <p>The Dipsea Trail and other trails from Mt. Tamalpais State Park also would be highlighted, offering opportunities for self-discovery. The experience would be further reinforced through ranger led activities that engage the visitor with the Monument's natural and cultural resources.</p> <p>Portions of the main trail and bridges could be relocated to allow for creek and floodplain restoration and improvements to the integrity of the redwood forest ecosystem.</p> <p>The Administrative-Concession Building would transition to support interpretive and educational, activities, providing flexible classroom and program space in the woods. Non- historic and non-essential additions made to this structure and its surroundings would be removed to reduce development in Muir Woods. The adjacent restroom building would be retained.</p> <p>The historic structures and features that represent the conservation movement would be preserved and rehabilitated, and used to support visitor programming and services. These include the former Superintendent's Residence, equipment shed, garage, trails, monuments, and named groves The historic creek stabilization rock work could be removed in targeted areas to restore natural creek functions</p>

DRAFT ALTERNATIVES for MUIR WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT

	Current Conditions and Management	Connecting People with the Parks Alternative 1	Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems Alternative 2	PREFERRED: Focusing on National Treasures Alternative 3
				<p>important to forest health.</p> <p>Sensitive Resources Zone (Upper north-facing slopes of the canyon)</p> <p>These areas would be managed to preserve the redwood forest and natural sounds that provide a backdrop to the adjacent interpretive corridor zone. Visitor access to this area would be carefully managed and limited to retain the pristine setting and protect its resources.</p> <p>Natural Zone (Western portion of the national monument)</p> <p>This area of the Monument would be managed to preserve natural systems and contribute to the primeval forest setting. Visitors within this zone would have opportunities for self-discovery and challenge on the Ben Johnson and Dipsea trails in a more dispersed and wild park setting.</p>
<p>Muir Woods Addition (also known as Camino del Cañon and Conlon Avenue)</p>	<p>Over time, additional tracts of land have been acquired to support the administrative functions and visitor use of the Monument. In addition to the Old Inn property, other properties through an area referred to as Camino del Cañon and Conlon Avenue were acquired by the NPS. These properties include the rustic buildings of historic Camp Hillwood and other non-historic structures, roads, and trails. Some structures are used for park operations, housing, and a native plants nursery, while others are under special use permits, reservation of use and occupancy, or have been vacated and are scheduled for removal.</p>	<p>Diverse Opportunities Zone (Camp Hillwood and Conlon Avenue Area)</p> <p>Camp Hillwood and its immediate surroundings would be adaptively used for day use or overnight educational opportunities. The historic values of the camp would be preserved while the facilities would be adapted to contemporary uses.</p> <p>All existing operational functions within this zone (maintenance and nursery) would be relocated to Lower Redwood Creek (former Banducci flower farm) or in shared facilities with Mount Tamalpais State Park at Kent Canyon.</p> <p>Natural Zone (Other areas in Camino del Cañon)</p> <p>The majority of the area would be managed to preserve the natural setting. The landscape and streams would be restored to a natural setting. All non-historic structures would be removed.</p>	<p>Natural Zone</p> <p>The area would be managed to restore native habitat and natural processes with emphasis on removal of unneeded roads and development, stabilization of sediment sources, re-establishment of natural drainage patterns, restoration of the tributary creek, and removal of invasive vegetation that has escaped from developed areas.</p> <p>All existing operational functions within this zone (maintenance and nursery) would be relocated to Lower Redwood Creek (former Banducci flower farm) or in shared facilities with Mount Tamalpais State Park at Kent Canyon. Water and sewer systems could be relocated to appropriate sites using sustainable technologies and practices.</p> <p>All other park operations and stewardship support facilities (including the native plant nursery) would be relocated to a suitable area within the Redwood Creek watershed outside the Monument boundaries.</p>	<p>Natural Zone</p> <p>The area would be managed to provide trail opportunities and restore native habitat and natural processes with emphasis on removal of roads, non-historic structures, stabilization of sediment sources, re-establishment of natural drainage patterns, restoration of the tributary creek, and removal of invasive vegetation that has escaped from developed areas.</p> <p>Diverse Opportunities Zone (Conlon Avenue)</p> <p>A modest parking area and trailhead would be located in this zone. The NPS would continue to explore a sustainable wastewater treatment solution to replace the existing lift station. Other existing operational functions (maintenance and nursery) would be relocated to Lower Redwood Creek (former Banducci flower farm) or in shared facilities with Mount Tamalpais State Park at Kent Canyon.</p>