

Tennessee Valley Horse Mounted Patrol Operation:

The Tennessee Valley Horse Mounted Patrol was established in the mid 70's as a ranger Mounted Patrol which later evolved into the current Volunteer Mounted Patrol creating a uniformed presence in the Tennessee Valley areas where the visitation has steadily increased.

Purpose:

Provides the GGNRA Visitor Protection & Resource Management Division with experienced/non experienced equestrian stakeholders from the local community as liaisons for the ranger staff. These stakeholders issue formal & informal information to the public, provide soft security for a high visiting demography, uniform contact with the public in various incidents including search & rescue, EMS, leash law & mountain bike violations. In addition, they provide care of the horses, barn site and trail notification for repairs. These Mounted Patrol members are respected stakeholders of various backgrounds and status within the local community.

Government Stable (Preferred Alternative)

The Tennessee Valley Horse Mounted Patrol Stables should remain at its current site. The site is centrally located and it provides a needed service without adding additional FTE's. They generate positive outreach for the LE the Park in general. Currently it is the only uniformed presence in this highly visited area. This site should be given the resource attention that requires for mitigating the fundamental repairs identified. The deferred maintenance of this site must be addressed given the benefit of the Horse Mounted Patrol that uses limited ONPS funding.

No documented evidence has been presented showing the current Horse Mounted Patrol Operation has harmed the environment or negatively affected any surrounding ecosystems.

The contracted Miwok Stables which provides the public with various equestrian options with an estimated 45 plus head stock but no NPS/Park identification given or interpreted on site. This site over the years has been provided with NPS resources for mitigation measures that improved operations on site significantly.

The AIM-High group was granted a home at the Horse Mounted Patrol site. This operation provides a positive outreach for inner city kids but no NPS identification. Keeping the Horse Mounted Patrol at its current central location would maintain NPS identification, operation controls for the Horse Mounted Patrol along with positive visitor impact in a highly visited area

Bruce Phillips (Park ranger)
Horse Patrol Manager

Alternative (1&2)

The options of moving the Horse Mounted Patrol to upper Marincello is not preferred but it would solve the location concerns addressed above. The financial impact would outweigh the limited financial mitigative measures for the current Horse Mounted Patrol site. The proposed Marincello site would require significant road/trail financial investments in order to provide a new operation for the Horse Mounted Patrol. Also the impact of this alternative would change the cultural landscape and impact the current ecosystems.

Alternatives (others)

Other sites were addressed within the draft. The alternative moving the NPS Horse Mounted Patrol into the Miwok stables is a plan that should be taken off the table. Keeping government/private stock separate is always preferred. By combining the two the park would create possible future liabilities that are unforeseen.

Another alternative was moving NPS Mounted Patrol to the Presidio Riding Club in the Headlands along Bunker road. This option again would remove the presence of the uniform out of Tennessee Valley. The Tennessee Valley site is centrally located for patrol function and a majority of the volunteers live close where they can provide the care that the horses require.

The last alternative addressed moving the NPS Horse Mounted Patrol to the Banducci site. This site change would all but reduce/or eliminate the Mounted Patrol because of distance and safety concerns for the riders accessing the trails traveling the great distances into the Tennessee Valley and back. This is not a very positive alternative and well formed alternative. The time and distance for the Horse Patrol would be reduced for the rider. The vehicle travel requirements for the volunteer would be factor.

Bruce Phillips (Park ranger)
Horse Patrol Manager