

**Golden Gate National Recreation Area**  
**Statement of Purpose**  
**July, 2005**

**The National Park Service Organic Act of 1916** states that units of the National Park System are established “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for enjoyment of the same in such manner as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” This statement represents the most basic purpose of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Golden Gate was created during an era of growing environmental awareness and rapid disappearance of open lands and historic sites. In the late 1960’s a remarkable convergence of events highlighted the vulnerability of widely beloved landscapes and landmarks surrounding the Golden Gate, spurring the government to respond with a study and citizens to organize a political vehicle to save them. Based on the study and the urgings of the organized public, the administration supported a new national park here, focused on the adopted slogan “parks to the people.” Congress and the administration were motivated by the fact that the majority of voters resided in urban areas- ordinary people who seldom, if ever, went to national parks. Golden Gate offered an exceptional opportunity to bring national park experiences to a massive constituency.

Therefore, the special purpose of Golden Gate National Recreation Area is:

*To offer national park experiences to a large urban population.*

This concept is clearly reflected in the legislative history of the park, hearing records and the memories of the people who were there.

The enabling legislation establishing the park, recognizing that heavy use could impair its “*outstanding natural, historic, scenic and recreational values*”, reconfirmed the mandate of the Organic Act:

*“In the management of the recreation area, the Secretary of the Interior shall utilize the resources in a manner which will provide for recreation and educational opportunities consistent with sound principles of land use planning and management. ...the Secretary shall preserve the recreation area, as far as possible, in its natural setting, and protect it from development and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area.”*