



TALKING POINTS, FAQ, & TIPS

• With highlights from the Superintendent's cover letter

For Internal Use Only at Open Houses for the Draft GMP/EIS

National Park Service
Golden Gate National Recreation Area • Muir Woods National Monument
September – October 2011



Talking Points

- The General Management Plan (GMP) is the broad, conceptual **master plan** that guides planning and management of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Muir Woods National Monument for about 20 years. All NPS units are required to have GMPs.
- The NPS is developing a new GMP because the previous GMP, approved in 1980, no longer provides appropriate guidance for the park due to increases in **visitation**, greater **knowledge of resources and their significance**, and **expansion** of the park into San Mateo County.
- Planning for the GMP began with public scoping in 2005, and included public comment on a range of preliminary alternatives (Newsletter 4) in 2008. Since then the NPS planning team developed the NPS preferred alternative and completed this draft which is open for public review and comment until **November 7, 2011**.
- This Open House is a formal opportunity **to facilitate and listen to public comments** about the Draft GMP/EIS, including the NPS preferred alternative, in order to get feedback and understand the likes and dislikes about the draft. It is intended to answer questions and help people prepare written comments about the Draft GMP/EIS.
- **Public comments are important** to the NPS and will be used to improve the plan. The park encourages public comment. Please be sure to submit comments by the **November 7** deadline:
 - by using the form on the PEPC site: www.parkplanning.nps.gov/GGNRA_GMP
 - by letter to the Superintendent
 - on the comment form available at these meetings
 - on the flipcharts at these meetings
- All project documents (Summary Edition, Full 3-volume Draft GMP/EIS, letters/abstract/instructions on how to comment (in *English, Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish*) are **available online at www.parkplanning.nps.gov/GGNRA_GMP**
- **All comments** will be analyzed and may be incorporated into a Final GMP/EIS as appropriate. Later this year, a summary of comments the NPS receives will be published on www.parkplanning.nps.gov/goga. We anticipate publishing a **Final GMP/EIS in 2013**. Completion will not trigger any immediate changes. There are no specific actions that are triggered, unlike the Dog Management Plan.
- Direct any **PRESS** looking for statements or answers to Alex Picavet, (415) 786-8021 or Howard Levitt, (415) 561-4730.
- **If you don't know the answer** to someone's questions, direct them to Nancy Hornor, Brian Aviles, or someone else with more information.

FAQ

What is a General Management Plan?

A GMP is the broad, conceptual master plan that guides planning and management of a park for about 20 years. All NPS units have GMPs. **It defines the desired future condition of resources and describes the kinds of experiences that will be available to visitors.** It also describes potential major developments and how the park will manage user capacity.

Why is a GMP needed at Golden Gate?

In short, the previous GMP, approved in 1980, no longer provides appropriate guidance for the park due to increases in visitation, greater knowledge of resources and their significance, and expansion of the park into San Mateo County.

What park areas are covered by the GMP?

1. NPS-administered lands that are not covered by recent land use management plans
2. Newly acquired and future land acquisitions
3. Lands and waters where the NPS has a lease or an easement

What park areas are NOT covered in the GMP?

Presidio of San Francisco (including Crissy Field), Sutro Historic District, Fort Baker, and Fort Point NHS have recent land use and implementation plans. (*See Planning Area map.*)

What is the purpose of this Open House?

It is an opportunity for the NPS to facilitate and listen to public comments about the Draft GMP/EIS, including the NPS Preferred Alternative, in order to get feedback and understand the likes and dislikes and confusion about the draft plan. It is intended to answer questions and help people gain the understanding they need in order to prepare written comments about the draft.

How will public comments be used to improve the Draft GMP?

Comments must be “substantive.” Substantive comments are those about the accuracy or adequacy of information or analysis, present reasonable new alternatives, or propose changes to the preferred alternative. All comments will be analyzed and may be incorporated into a Final GMP/EIS as appropriate. Later this year, a summary of comments the NPS receives will be published on www.parkplanning.nps.gov/goga. NPS responses to comments will be included in the Final GMP/EIS.

How was the NPS preferred alternative chosen?

The interdisciplinary NPS planning team evaluated each of the alternatives based upon why the park was established, fundamental resources and experiences, environmental impacts, public input, and other criteria including broad costs implications. Based upon these evaluations, including how the park is managed today, the NPS combined elements of each alternative to create the preferred alternative. Long-time Superintendent Brian O’Neill (deceased 2009) and then Regional Director Jon Jarvis (now Director, NPS) were instrumental in shaping the preferred alternative.

What makes up an alternative?

Each alternative consist of 3 parts:

1. **An overall management concept** – that explains the overall approach and guides implementation if selected. I.e. “Connecting People with the Parks” and “Focusing on National Treasures” (*Poster and Summary Edition pages 20-23*)
2. **Management zones** – the lands and waters of the park are zoned differently for each alternative. The zones provide a set of desired conditions that the NPS would work to achieve over next 20 years. (*Poster and Summary Edition pages 14-19*)
3. **Written descriptions** – short narratives for the major areas of the park to help better explain the proposal.

What are the major elements common to all action alternatives?

(*Summary Edition pages 12-13*)

- Boundary adjustments (see maps)
- Climate change policy
- Facilities not directly related to the park mission
- Facilities for maintenance, safety and collection storage
- Native American engagement
- Ocean stewardship policy
- Park collections
- Partnerships
- Trails
- Transportation
- User capacity (see Chapter 9, Volume III)

What are the major ideas behind the NPS preferred alternative?

- For Muir Woods and Alcatraz: Focus management on the resources and stories of highest significance
- For Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties: Connect the various areas of the park to people in the surrounding communities

What are the major ideas behind Alternative 1 “Connecting People with the Parks”?

- Attract and welcome people to the park
- Reach out and engage the community and other potential visitors in enjoyment, understanding and stewardship of park resources
- Connect visitors with the park resources and promote understanding, enjoyment, preservation and health
- Provide visitor opportunities that are relevant to diverse populations now and in the future

What are the major ideas behind Alternative 2 “Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems”?

- Preserve, enhance, and promote dynamic and interconnected coastal ecosystems
- Recreational and educational opportunities allow visitors to learn about and enjoy the coastal and marine environment
- To help visitors gain an understanding of the region’s international significance and history

What are the major ideas behind Alternative 3 “Focusing on National Treasures”?

- Focus on the park’s most significant natural and cultural resources and recreation opportunities
- Visitors are able to explore a wide variety of experiences that are associated with many different types of national parks – all in this park
- Other resources would be managed to complement the nationally significant resources and visitor experiences

Why are plans for Muir Woods and Alcatraz Island more detailed than plans for other areas?

A more detailed level of planning was required for both Muir Woods National Monument and Alcatraz Island due to:

1. high levels of visitation in concentrated areas
2. the finer scale and complexity of their natural and cultural resources
3. the national and international recognition they receive

What other park planning relates to the GMP?

The following plans are being coordinated with the GMP and will be incorporated as appropriate.

1. Headlands Institute Campus Improvement and Expansion Plan/EA
2. Marin Headlands and Fort Baker Transportation Infrastructure and Management Plan/EIS
3. Wetland and Creek Restoration at Big Lagoon/EIS
4. Marin Equestrian Stables Plan/EA
5. Extension of San Francisco Municipal Railway’s Historic Streetcar/EIS
6. Draft Dog Management Plan/EIS

What is the status of the Draft Dog Management Plan/EIS?

Where can I walk my dog on- or off-leash?

The GMP does not directly address that activity, but will continue to be coordinated with the Draft Dog Management Plan/EIS. Decisions on where dog walking is permitted are being made through the Dog Management Plan process. There will be a future opportunity to comment on that plan. (*See www.parkplanning.nps.gov/goga.*)

How does the GMP relate to America’s Cup?

America’s Cup is a new event that was not considered during the development of this plan. Information about the event can be found at www.parkplanning.nps.gov/goga and at www.americascupnepa.org.

“The National Park Service and USCG will conduct the environmental impact analysis of the America's Cup Event on NPS lands and waters, and those of the San Francisco Bay and coastal waters under the United States Coast Guard's jurisdiction in cooperation with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Presidio Trust. This environmental impact analysis will serve as documentation of the federal agencies’ compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 for this proposed project.”

How does the GMP relate to the Marin Equestrian Stables Plan/EA?

The GMP provides direction for retaining equestrian facilities at the GG Dairy, Tennessee Valley and Fort Barry. Decisions being made through the Marin Equestrian Stables Plan address more detailed, site-specific analysis and requirements. There will be an opportunity to comment on the plan later this year. (*See www.parkplanning.nps.gov/goga.*)

What about Costs? How will this be funded?

It is important to note that implementation of the approved plan, no matter which alternative, will depend on future NPS funding levels and servicewide priorities, as well as on partnership funds, time, and effort. The approval of a GMP does not guarantee that funding and staffing needed to fully implement the plan will be forthcoming. Full implementation of the plan could be many years in the future.

What Happens Next?

After this public comment period, the planning team will evaluate comments from other federal agencies, tribes, organizations, businesses, and individuals regarding the draft plan and incorporate appropriate changes into a final plan. The final plan will include a summary of any substantive comments received and NPS responses to those comments.

Following distribution of the Final General Management Plan/EIS and a 30-day no-action period, a record of decision (ROD) approving a final plan will be signed by the NPS, Pacific West Regional Director. The record of decision will document the selection of an alternative for implementation. With the signing of the record of decision, the plan can then begin to be implemented. All of the actions in the selected alternative will require more detailed study and implementation planning.

Handy Tips for Open Houses

- We are here to listen, not to defend park decisions, NPS policies, or the planning process. If people complain about something, ask them to describe their concern and what they would like to see happen instead. Then record it.
- People often ask questions instead of offering opinions or concerns. Respond to a question like “What is the park going to do about overcrowding at the campground?” with something like, “What would you like to see us do about crowding at the campground, how has it affected your enjoyment in the past?”
- People often offer solutions instead of problems. For example, if someone says, “The park needs a bigger boat dock.” Ask, “Why do you think we should have one? What problems are associated with the existing dock?”
- If people at your station start discussing or arguing with each other, you should record the concerns/views expressed and check in with them on whether you've captured their views.
- Accept and record all comments—even if they seem outrageous or offensive. People are entitled to their opinions, and we are there to listen. You can accept comments and remain noncommittal and nonjudgmental, with: “Thank you for that information,” or “OK, let’s write that down,” or “So, what would you like to see happen if...”
- Sometimes people ask which alternative you prefer or what your opinion is on an issue. A good response is, “What I think doesn't matter, I’m here to listen to your ideas and opinions.” If they persist, you can always say you haven't formed an opinion yet.
- Thank them for taking the time to come and talk with us.
- Help people to express complete ideas on flip charts.

Highlights From the Superintendent's Cover Letter

In Marin County (including Muir Woods)

- Renovations to outdated visitor facilities at **Stinson Beach and Tennessee Valley** that would also incorporate restoration of the natural landscape.
 - Stinson Beach would involve adaptations for sea level rise and discussions with the community about parking and transit.
 - Tennessee Valley work would remove the lower (bullfrog) pond, the nursery, overhead power lines, and integrate the park horse patrol with the larger stables operation.

- Improvements to the entrance of **Muir Woods National Monument**, including reorganizing parking and pedestrian paths, repurposing a historic building for use as an education center, and formalizing continued operation of the successful shuttle with development of an off-site intercept facility.
 - The off-site intercept is conceived of as modest in scale, in the vicinity of the Manzanita Park & Ride.
 - We would work to reduce congestion and parking along Muir Woods Road (Mt. Tam State Park) and explore possibilities for expanding capacity in parking lots off the road. Parking on the road shoulder is damaging the Redwood Creek environment, and contributes to traffic congestion and conflicts between pedestrian and vehicles.
 - Landscape restoration and some preservation of structures at Druid Heights in Camino del Canyon/Conlon Avenue would be undertaken.
 - The potential for thematic trails would be explored to interpret the Woods history as well as the magnificent forest.

- Improvements to better serve visitors in the **Marin Headlands**, such as a visitor facility combining information and food service at Rodeo Beach.
 - The visitor facility could be modeled on the Crissy Field “*Warming Hut*”.
 - Features from military periods, like Battery Townsley, would be carefully preserved and interpreted.
 - The Headlands would remain an important location for park partners. This will involve more detailed planning.

- Solutions to long-standing inadequacies for park operations, including construction of a **centralized maintenance facility** in the Marin Headlands and dedication of a public safety office at Fort Baker.
 - This proposal is the result of a focused planning exercise that examined numerous alternatives to improving the efficiency of park operations. The **public safety hub** at would be located at Building 507 in Fort Baker.

- The preferred alternative would seek to enhance **Slide Ranch** as an environmental and farm education center.
 - In 2008 the park received numerous comments against relocating/removing the facility as proposed in preliminary alternative #2. This is still a valid alternative to have considered; however, it is not the preferred alternative.

In the City and County of San Francisco (including Alcatraz Island)

- Enhanced connections for visitors along the **San Francisco Bay Trail** between Aquatic Park (San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park) and Fort Mason Center.
 - The alternative incorporates ongoing transportation improvements planned for the area like the Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit line and extension of the historic streetcar through the tunnel under Fort Mason.
 - Another aspect of the plan could involve landscape and garden restoration around the Officers' Club.

- A course of action on **Alcatraz Island** that highlights all eras of its rich history, rehabilitates the Main Prison and historic barracks (which could include new exhibits and modest dorm-like overnight accommodations for volunteers) and opens the parade ground that overlooks the San Francisco Bay. It also expresses the park's ongoing commitment to protect nesting water bird colonies, including the shoreline and offshore area.
 - The focus would be on preserving the tangible historic resources of the **National Historic Landmark** (NHL) to provide visitors with an immersive experience.
 - We expect there may be some sensitivity among certain special interest groups about potential **impacts to bird populations** as a result of changes in management. Implementation of the plan will need to be developed in consultation with experts to minimize impacts and will likely be incremental and adaptive, taking several years.
 - The plan includes a commitment to adaptively managing impacts by visitors, employing a system of **Indicators and Standards**. (*See Volume 3, Chapter 9. A similar approach is taken for Muir Woods.*)

- Collaboration with the City of San Francisco, California State Coastal Conservancy, and others to create and implement a long-range master plan for the **Ocean Beach corridor**—looking beyond the park's narrow boundary.
 - The park would continue to promote and manage for ecological as well as recreational values in this area with substantial public infrastructure and exposure to changing coastal conditions.
 - The NPS has been participating with the City and other agencies in the **Ocean Beach Master Plan** effort being led by **SPUR** (SF Planning Urban Research). Their website has a lot of project information: www.spur.org/ocean-beach. The next public workshop is tentatively scheduled for late October 2011.

- Consolidation of **museum collections** into historic buildings in the Presidio.
 - The proposed location is the Cavalry Stables complex – near the existing Archives. A formal agreement with the Presidio Trust about this has not been completed.

In San Mateo County

- Management guidance and improvements for new parklands, including a broad concept for **Rancho Corral de Tierra** that **retains equestrian uses**, restores habitat, and looks to create a sustainable system of public trails and trailheads that will serve future visitors.
 - We anticipate that the transfer from POST to NPS will occur **later this year**.
 - The GMP tries to establish the **broadest level of land use and visitor experiences** at Rancho. We are working to understand and resolve several other issues at this time. Please refer thorny questions to Nancy, Brian, or Alex.
 - No decisions have been made in the GMP or elsewhere about the location of **trailheads** or parking areas. We are committed to working with the local community to site these and to avoid directing visitors through neighborhoods.
 - Many local residents **walk their dogs on- and off-leash** on the property, and there is a high level of community interest in changes under NPS management. This is **not a GMP issue**, but is being addressed by the Dog Management Plan process. Please refer thorny questions to Nancy, Brian, or Alex.

- Partnerships to explore a shared **multi-agency visitor center**.
 - Several sites have been suggested, including one near Montara Lighthouse and others in Pacifica, but the Draft GMP does not identify a preferred location.

- New areas to be added to the park boundary, which include important small parcels and larger areas, such as the **tidal zone along existing park sites**, will enhance our ability to cooperate with other agencies in resource conservation and management.
 - One of the higher priority boundary adjustments is the 206-acre Gregerson property which would help us better manage Rancho as well as preserve resources.
 - We list several properties that could be included in the park's legislative boundary that were identified through the "**Golden Lands, Golden Opportunities**"/FOCUS regional planning processes led by the Bay Area Open Space Council in 2009.