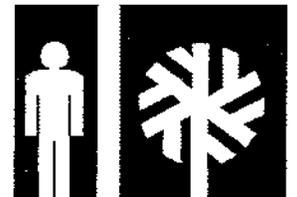
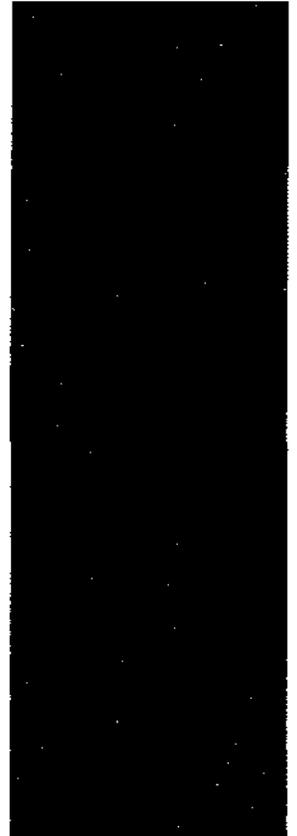
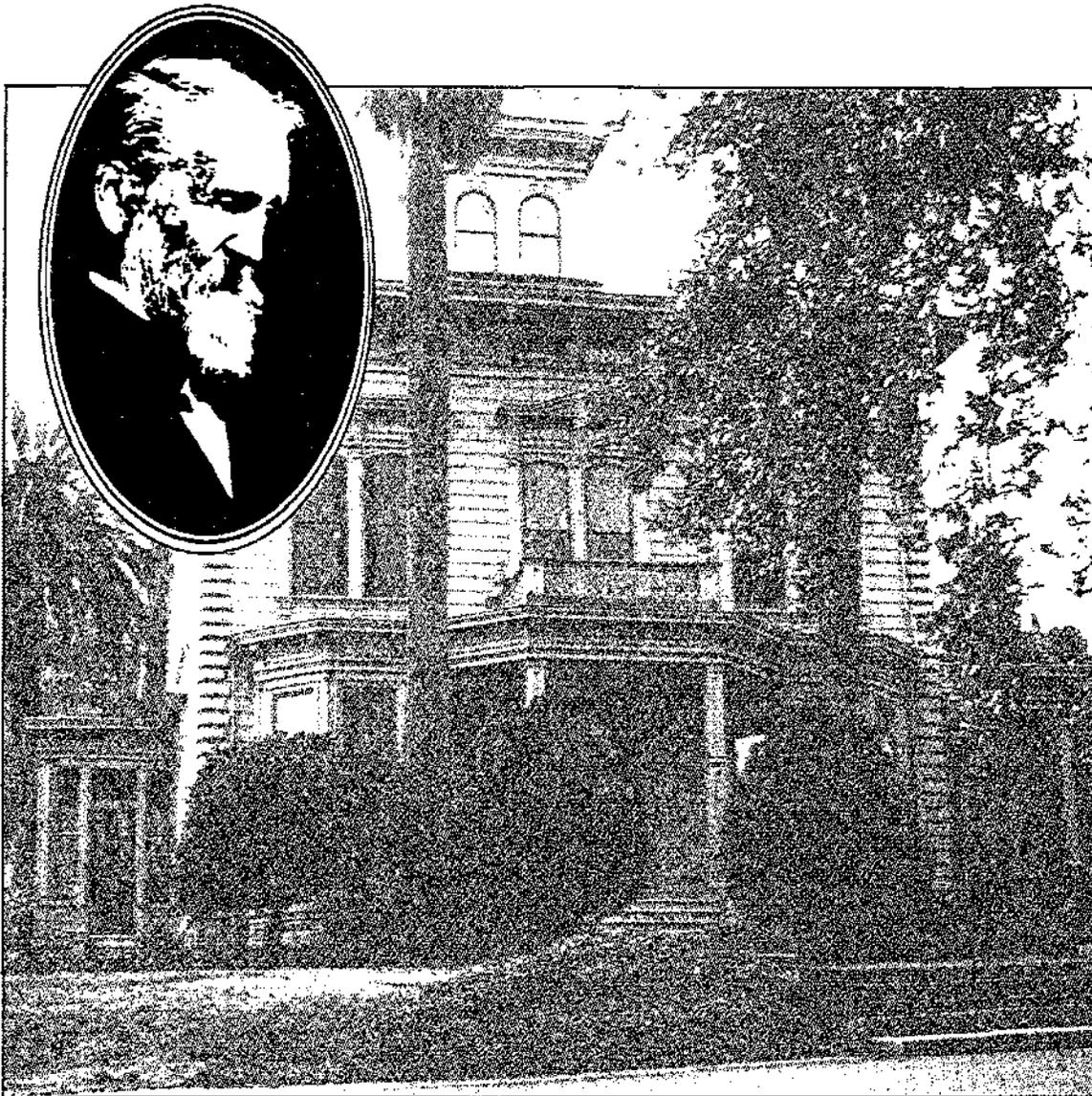


general management plan and environmental assessment

february 1991



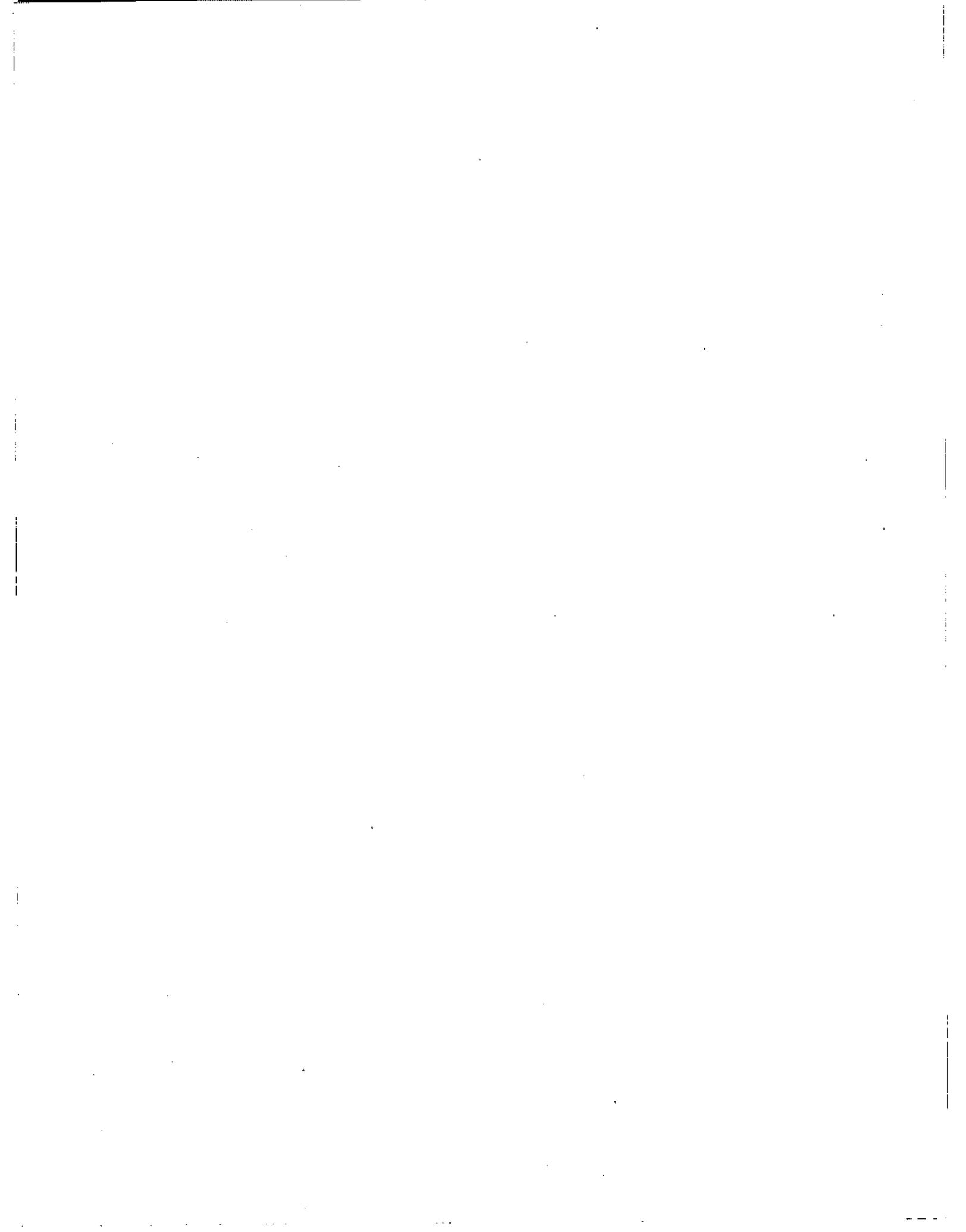
John Muir
JOHN MUIR
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE • CALIFORNIA

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**General Management Plan
and
Environmental Assessment**

***JOHN MUIR
National Historic Site***

**National Park Service
Western Regional Office
January 1991**



**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

The National Park Service proposes to approve and implement a General Management Plan for the John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, California.

The proposed action, identified as Alternative A in the draft General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment (GMP/EA), including minor modifications as discussed below, provides for fee acquisition of approximately 330 acres of private and city-owned lands and full integration of the new lands into the site's interpretive and resource protection operations. The National Park Service would provide staff and develop facilities to manage the new lands, expanding the interpretive program to include natural resource features on the new lands. An agreement would be sought with the East Bay Regional Park District to provide for cooperation in management of the added area.

Other features of the plan include expansion of the visitor center, provision of improved curatorial facilities, development of a new parking lot to serve the visitor center, further protection of the historic scene through designation of an area of concern, development of a new maintenance facility, acquisition of a less-than-fee interest in the John Muir Gravesite, and provision of expanded facilities for an environmental education program.

Two alternatives to the proposed action were evaluated during the planning process. Alternative B, the no action plan, continued the current program. Alternative C, the minimum requirements alternative, differed from the proposed action in acquiring primarily less-than-fee interests in the added land area, and continuing to focus the interpretive program primarily on the Muir home tract.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The environmental consequences of the proposal would be primarily beneficial in protecting the natural and cultural resource values of all the added lands, and providing additional protection to cultural resources already in federal ownership. Adverse impacts would be limited to temporary visual, soil, and vegetative impacts related to the minor construction projects proposed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND REVIEW

Scoping for the plan was initiated October 24, 1989. Letters announcing the initiation of scoping, and inviting comments, were mailed to groups and individuals with a known interest in the John Muir National Historic Site. Announcements were also provided to the local press. A *Federal Register* notice of the initiation of scoping was published on November 3, 1989.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DRAFT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The draft plan was made available for public review from June 13, 1990, until July 31, 1990. Individual notification of its availability was made to all participants in the scoping process, and the general public was notified through broad dissemination of a news release. A public meeting on the plan was held on July 11, 1990, in Martinez, and was attended by 35 persons. In addition, 17 letters were received regarding the plan.

The public review process indicated widespread support for the proposed action as presented in the draft plan except in two areas:

1. Residents adjacent to the Gravesite tract objected to the draft plan's proposal for development of visitor parking and erection of additional fencing on the tract. National Park Service officials subsequently met with the residents and agreement was reached on revision of the plan to eliminate visitor parking, defer fencing pending experience with security needs, and generally consult with the neighbors on matters relating to use and development of the tract.
2. The East Bay Regional Park District and two private individuals objected to the draft plan's elimination of grazing from the Mount Wanda area, citing the value of livestock grazing in control of vegetation levels and achieving desirable species composition. The plan was revised to indicate that grazing could be used as a tool in achieving vegetation management goals for the area.

In addition to the public review of the draft GMP/EA, a Notice of Availability of the draft of this finding was announced in the *Federal Register* of October 30, 1990, for a 30-day public review.

MITIGATION

All areas proposed for development of structures, trails, or parking will be surveyed for cultural resources and rare or sensitive plant species prior to construction.

Disturbed areas of soil will be promptly revegetated and erosion will be prevented. Drainage problems will be avoided through detailed engineering analysis of all improvements.

Neighbors and neighborhood groups will be closely consulted on design and timing of improvements affecting residential amenities.

SUMMARY FINDING

Based on review of the environmental assessment and comments received from review of the draft plan, and the commitment to substantially mitigate all potential adverse environmental impacts, the National Park Service has decided to implement the proposed General Management Plan, identified as Alternative A in the draft GMP/EA, and concludes that implementation of the plan does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Consequently, an environmental impact statement need not be prepared.

RECOMMENDED:

s/ Phyllis Shaw
Superintendent, John Muir NHS

12/5/90
Date

APPROVED:

s/ Lew Albert (Acting)
Regional Director, Western Region, NPS

12/12/90
Date

SUMMARY

A general management plan for John Muir National Historic Site was completed in 1976. Since that time, a number of issues have arisen regarding the site, and legislation has been passed expanding the site's boundary by over 300 acres. This updated plan is intended to guide the site's use and development over the next 15 years.

The document identifies issues and concerns and evaluates alternative strategies to address them.

ISSUES

The key issues identified during the scoping process were:

1. Management objectives for recently added lands.
2. Land protection needs.
3. Vegetation management on the new lands.
4. Visitor use facilities for the new lands.
5. Cooperative management of the added area with the East Bay Regional Park District.
6. Location of a maintenance facility for the site.
7. Supplemental parking for the visitor center.
8. Protection of the historic scene.
9. Improvement of the visitor center to better accommodate existing and future needs.
10. Facilities for the environmental education program.
11. Curatorial storage facilities.

ALTERNATIVE PLANS

Three alternative plans are considered in the document.

Alternative A

Alternative A, the proposed action, provides for full integration of the new lands into the site's interpretive and resource protection operations. The National Park Service would acquire land interests, provide staff, and develop facilities to manage the new lands, expanding the interpretive program to include the natural resources phenomena on the new lands. An agreement would be sought with the East Bay Regional Park District to provide for cooperation in management of the added area.

Other features of the plan include expansion of the visitor center, provision of improved curatorial facilities, development of a new parking lot to serve the visitor center, further protection of the historic scene, development of a new maintenance facility, acquisition of a less-than-fee interest in the John Muir Gravesite, and provision of expanded facilities for an environmental education program.

Development costs for this plan are estimated at \$ 1,825,000 while operations costs are estimated at \$ 410,000 annually.

Alternative B Alternative B, the no action plan, would continue the current program. There would be no expansion of activities to the new lands, and the existing problems identified on the site would continue to grow more troublesome over time. There would be no development costs incurred under this alternative, and operation costs would approximate \$ 300,000 annually.

Alternative C Alternative C, the minimum requirements alternative, would meet a major site objective by acquiring sufficient land interests in the added area to protect the natural quality of southerly views from the House area. It would also provide for acquisition of a trail easement through the added lands to provide continuity for the East Bay Regional Park District's proposed regional trail. It would not provide for active involvement of the site in land management or in the provision of interpretive or other visitor use activities. The site's focus would continue to be on the cultural resources on the original 9 acre tract.

Other features of the plan include expansion of the visitor center, improvement of curatorial facilities, development of a new parking lot to serve the visitor center, development of a new maintenance facility, acquisition of a less-than-fee interest in the John Muir Gravesite, and further protection of the historic scene.

Development costs for this alternative would approximate \$ 1,785,000 while annual operation costs would be about \$ 360,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Environmental consequences of both Alternatives A and C would be primarily beneficial in protecting the natural resource values of all or a portion of the added lands. Adverse impacts from these plans would be limited to temporary visual, soil, and vegetative impacts related to the minor construction projects proposed.

Alternative B would produce neither significant adverse nor beneficial impacts.

The following matrix compares the alternatives in terms of planning issues, costs, and environmental consequences.

ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON MATRIX

| | Alternative A (Integrated Operation) | Alternative B (No Action) | Alternative C (Minimum Requirements) |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Planning Issues | | | |
| Management Objectives | Integrate natural and cultural resource protection and interpretation. Mount Wanda managed both to protect historic scene and to expand visitor understanding of natural phenomena and Muir's applied philosophy. | Continue to emphasize cultural resource protection and interpretation. | Continue to emphasize cultural resource protection and interpretation. Mount Wanda primarily managed to protect historic scene. |
| Land Protection | Acquire City tract in fee. Acquire less-than-fee interest in Gravesite tract. Acquire fee interest in all Mount Wanda lands, except reservation of use and occupancy acceptable for Strain Ranch area. | No land protection action. | Acquire City tract in fee. Acquire less-than-fee interest in Gravesite tract. Acquire scenic easements and trail right-of-way on Mount Wanda. |
| Vegetation Management | Preserve natural vegetation. Undertake restoration of native vegetation as feasible on Mount Wanda. Manage the historic pear orchard at the Gravesite tract. | No additional lands acquired, and no vegetation management required. | Preserve natural vegetation on north face of Mount Wanda to preserve views from the Muir house. No restoration program. Manage historic pear orchard at gravesite. |
| Access | For gravesite, provide sign and trail to serve visitors. Provide trail staging area for Mount Wanda at City tract in near term, with eventual additional staging area at Strain Ranch area. | No access to new areas within boundary. | For gravesite, provide once a day shuttle service from visitor center. No on-site parking for visitors. Provide a single trail staging area at City tract to serve Mount Wanda. |

ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON MATRIX (CONTINUED)

Alternative A
(Integrated Operation)

Alternative B
(No Action)

Alternative C
(Minimum Requirements)

Planning Issues (Continued)

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Cooperative Management | Seek cooperative management arrangements for Mount Wanda area with East Bay Regional Park District and local fire and police agencies. | No additional cooperative management needed. | Seek cooperative management arrangements for Mount Wanda area with East Bay Regional Park District and local fire and police agencies. East Bay Parks to have primary responsibility for managing regional trail link through area. |
| Maintenance Facility | Locate maintenance facility on a portion of the City tract. | Continue to disperse maintenance storage and working areas at various locations in the House area. | Same as Alternative A. |
| Visitor Center Parking | Provide additional visitor center parking at the City tract, with access to the visitor center via the tunnel and rear entrance to the House area. Redesign existing parking lot at VC to better handle buses and provide information on the location of the supplementary lot. | No additional parking provided. | Same as Alternative A. |
| Historic Scene Protection | Formally establish a zone of concern around the House area and monitor land use regulation within that zone to achieve compatibility with the historic scene. | Continue to monitor land use regulation in the vicinity of the House. | Same as Alternative A. |

ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON MATRIX (CONTINUED)

| | Alternative A (Integrated Operation) | Alternative B (No Action) | Alternative C (Minimum Requirements) |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Planning Issues (Continued) | | | |
| Visitor Center | Redesign visitor center to accommodate need for increased administrative and visitor use space. | No changes to be made in visitor center. | Same as Alternative A. |
| Environmental Education | Provide facilities at the Strain Ranch area to conduct overnight environmental living programs. Seek cooperative funding and management for this program. | Continue to operate limited environmental education program at the House area on a day use only basis. | Same as Alternative B. |
| Costs | | | |
| Development Costs | \$ 1,825,000 | \$ 0 | \$ 1,785,000 |
| Operation Costs | \$ 410,000 | \$ 300,000 | \$ 360,000 |
| Environmental Consequences | | | |
| Cultural Resources | Acquisition of Mount Wanda would protect historic scene element. Also, designation of area of concern helps protect remainder of scene. | Historic scene continues to degenerate in the absence of land acquisition and further definition of zone of concern. | Same as Alternative A. |
| Visual Quality | Views of Mount Wanda area widely protected, both from house and from other vantage points in Martinez area. | Visual quality continues to decline through further development of natural areas. | View of Mount Wanda from House area protected. Views from other vantage points not protected, and visual quality could decline due to development. |

ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON MATRIX (CONTINUED)

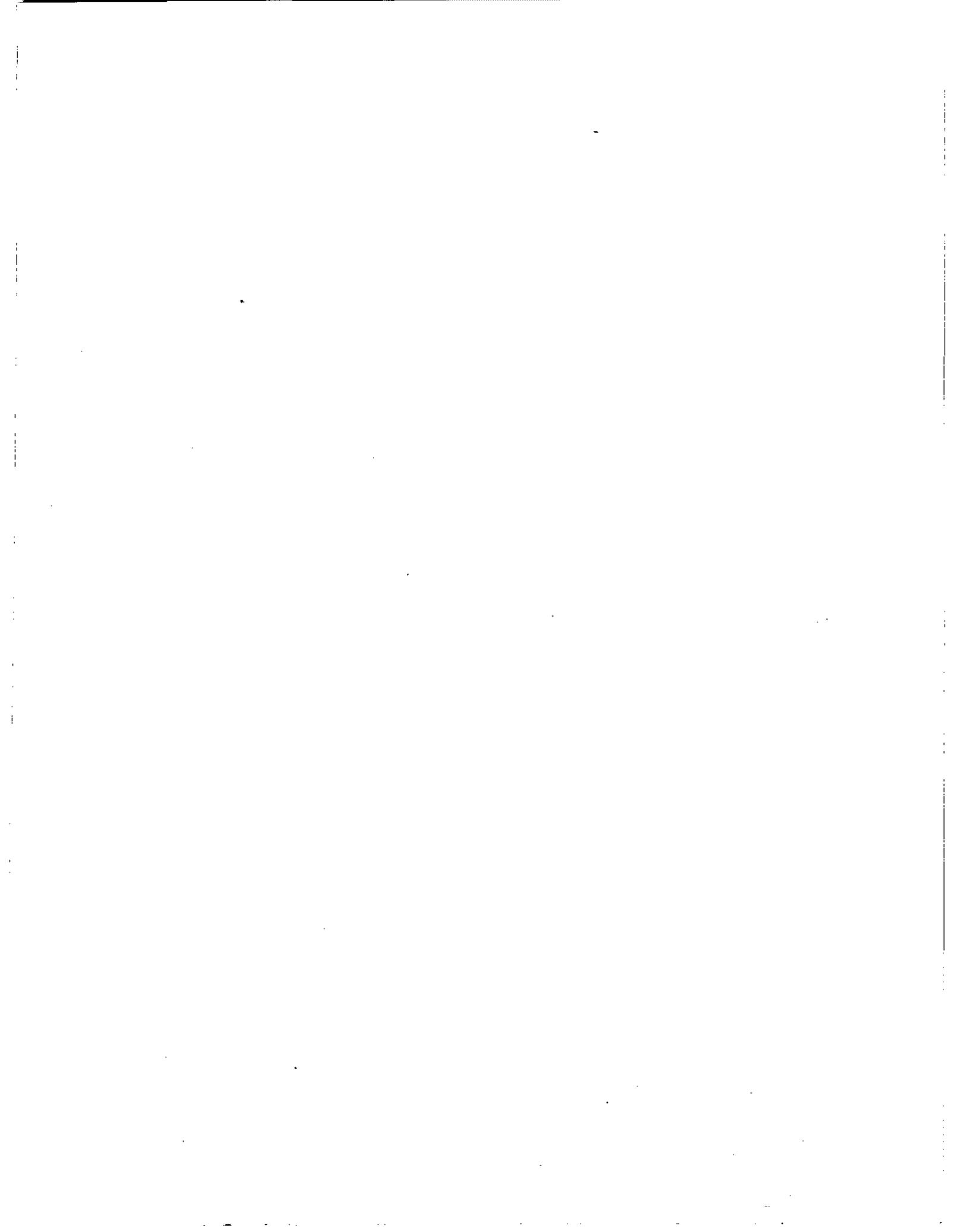
| | Alternative A (Integrated Operation) | Alternative B (No Action) | Alternative C (Minimum Requirements) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Environmental Consequences (Continued) | | | |
| Soils | All development would be sensitive to potential for soil erosion and sliding. No major developments would be placed on steep slopes. | No impact on soils. | Same as Alternative A, except that development on unprotected areas of Mount Wanda could affect soils to an unknown degree. |
| Adjacent Neighborhoods | Some additional traffic on Franklin Canyon and Alhambra Valley Roads. Visual impact from development sites on City tract and at Strain Ranch. Some additional visitor use at gravesite. | No impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. | Some additional traffic on Franklin Canyon and Alhambra Valley Roads. Visual impact from development site on City tract. Some additional visitor use at gravesite. Possible further impacts from residential development in unprotected areas of Mount Wanda. |
| Vegetation and Wildlife | Native vegetation preserved and enhanced on Mount Wanda and other tracts with benefits to wildlife. | Vegetation on Mount Wanda could be adversely affected through residential development of area. | Native vegetation on north-facing slope of Mount Wanda area protected. Balance of area could be developed with resultant adverse impacts on vegetation and related wildlife. |
| Visitor Use | Quality of visitor use improved through provision of more activities and better interpretation. | Quality of visitor experience declines as parking problems continue to mount and historic scene declines. | Visitor use enhanced through protection of historic scene, provisions of adequate parking, and some additional trail opportunities. |
| Water Resources | No significant impacts. | No significant impacts. | No significant impacts. |
| Air Quality | No significant impacts. | No significant impacts. | No significant impacts. |

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INTRODUCTION

John Muir National Historic Site was initially authorized in August 1964, with the passage of Public Law 88-47. The unit included Muir's historic home, an additional historic dwelling (the Martinez adobe), an existing modern building used as a veterinary clinic, and several surrounding acres of vineyards and orchards. Total acreage amounted to slightly less than 9 acres. Public Law 95-625, November 1978, established land acquisition and development ceilings for the site of \$ 224,000 and \$ 1,285,000 respectively.

Section 5 of Public Law 100-563, approved October 31, 1988, expanded the boundary of the Historic Site to approximately 340 acres. Included within the added area are two largely undeveloped parcels currently used for grazing (Mount Wanda), a small tract owned by the City of Martinez, and a small tract containing the gravesite of John Muir. The legislative history indicates that the city-owned tract should be acquired by donation, and that the interest acquired in the gravesite should be limited to that necessary for its preservation and maintenance by the National Park Service. The legislation also provides authority for a cooperative agreement covering East Bay Regional Park District maintenance of regional trails on the added lands.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

The *General Management Plan* for John Muir National Historic Site, approved in 1976, does not deal with management of the recently added lands. In addition, a number of issues have arisen since 1976 regarding the original 9 acre site.

PLANNING ISSUES

The following primary issues relating to the added lands require resolution.

1. What management objectives are appropriate for the new lands? The added lands have the potential to protect views from Muir House, facilitate regional trail linkages, provide ecological study areas, provide recreation opportunities, provide for auxiliary parking, and provide a site for administrative facilities. The plan will determine uses of the new area and provide for management zoning.

2. What interests in lands are needed to realize the objectives? Federal land protection policy requires that the minimum interest necessary to achieve objectives be acquired. A land protection plan will determine appropriate land protection and land acquisition methods for the new area.

3. What is the appropriate vegetation management policy for the new lands? Much of the land on Mount Wanda has been grazed for many years and the current owner has expressed interest in continued grazing. Others have proposed restoration of native vegetation on Mount Wanda. The plan will establish a vegetation management policy for the area, and identify needed studies and research to support management.

4. What facilities will be required to serve the added lands to provide for parking, water supply, sanitation, entrance fee collection, and interpretation? Access will be needed both to trails on Mount Wanda and to the John Muir gravesite. The gravesite is located in a quiet residential area with narrow roads and little parking. Residents have indicated concerns about changes in the character of the site and the presence of increased numbers of visitors. The plan will outline the type, scale, and general location of these facilities.

5. What is the appropriate relationship between the National Park Service and East Bay Regional Park District in the management of Mount Wanda? The District has developed a trails master plan that includes a trail extending from Martinez south across Mount Wanda to the District's existing Briones Regional Park. The District has indicated its willingness to cooperate in the management of the lands and a cooperative arrangement is authorized in the site's legislation. The plan will define the role of the District.

In addition, several issues regarding the original 9 acre area have arisen since completion of the 1976 master plan.

1. Where can a maintenance facility be located so as to permit an efficient maintenance operation but not disturb the historic scene? There is currently no place on site for a maintenance and gardening workshop. There is also a need for a greenhouse on the site for replacement plant propagation. The plan will determine the appropriate location and scale of a maintenance facility.

2. How can visitor center parking demands be accommodated during the frequent periods of heavy use? The existing parking lot is inadequate to accommodate visitors and employees. Bus parking is extremely cumbersome. Parking in the surrounding area is in short supply, with little on-street parking available near the site. It is extremely hazardous for pedestrians to cross the busy Alhambra Avenue. The plan will recommend measures to alleviate the parking problems.

3. How can the site's historic scene be protected in the face of increasing development in adjacent areas? Although the site lies in a rapidly developing urban area, the site continues to offer a measure of rural serenity which contributes to the quality of the visitor experience. The view to the south from the house will be protected as a result of the recent boundary change. However, open lands to the west may at some point be developed, and the intensity and character of land use to the north and east may change over time. It is important that the relationship of these lands to the site be identified so that land use regulating agencies can consider the site in making decisions. The plan will identify a zone of concern around the site and indicate the park objectives for these areas.

4. What improvements are needed in the visitor center to alleviate existing inadequacies and accommodate future use increases? The existing visitor center is a remodeled veterinary hospital which is inadequate in both size and configuration to serve as a visitor center. The auditorium used for audio-visual presentations is too small to accommodate the frequent bus-loads of visitors, the small lobby is frequently overcrowded, public restrooms are small and with insufficient fixtures to accommodate large groups, and office space is insufficient to accommodate even current staff levels. Access for the disabled is unsatisfactory.

The plan will recommend changes in the visitor center complex to alleviate these problems.

5. What facilities are required to support the site's environmental education program? The site has for years provided an environmental education program for grade school classes, accommodating 30 to 35 children and their teachers and parent helpers. Until recently, the park was able to provide overnight sessions, using the Martinez adobe. Recently, use of the adobe for this program had to be discontinued due to concerns over structural stability, related both to the structure's lack of an adequate foundation, and concerns over the structure's ability to withstand seismic activity. The plan will evaluate the need for additional facilities to support this program.

6. What additional facilities are needed to interpret early farm pioneering by Muir and his relatives? The area of the historic site was the locus of much important farm technique pioneering, in which Muir and his father-in-law Dr. John Strentzel played key roles. Additional interpretation of this aspect of Muir's life is desirable and feasible. Several large items of farm equipment have been donated to the site and could be displayed to interpret early farming. In addition, there is an opportunity to interpret innovative hillside agriculture near the Strain Ranch, where these techniques were used extensively. The plan will evaluate the feasibility of providing additional interpretive facilities.

7. What additional facilities are needed to house and adequately maintain curatorial objects? The park's curatorial storage is presently located in the basement of the Muir house,

and the storage area does not meet established National Park Service standards for security and environmental controls. The plan will propose facilities to meet required standards.

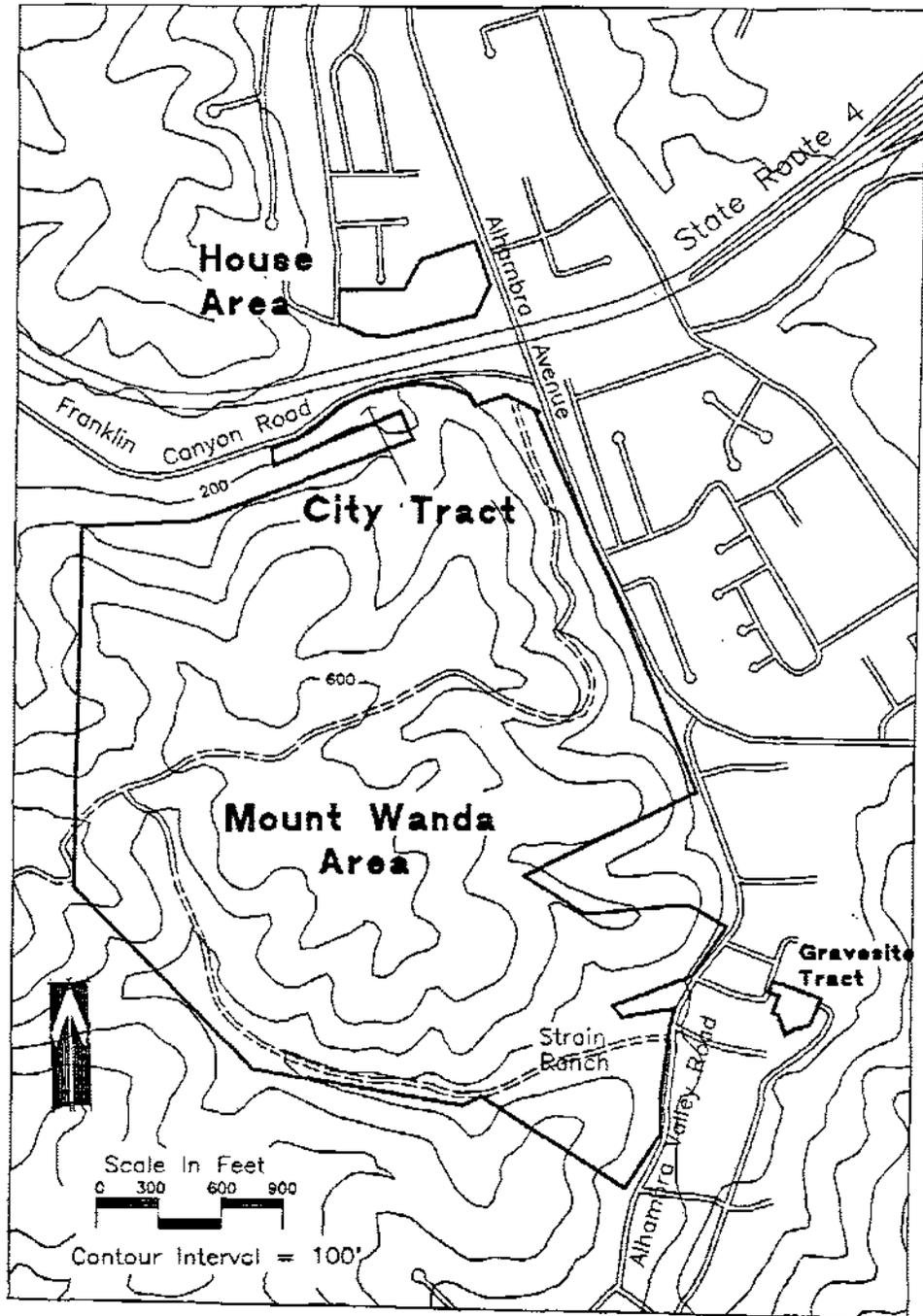
RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

Several local plans have a significant influence on land use in the site's vicinity. Much of the site is within the City of Martinez, and adjacent land uses are regulated by the city's *General Plan*. The balance of the site, including the Mount Wanda parcels and the Gravesite tract, are in unincorporated areas regulated by the Contra Costa County General Plan.

The Briones Hills Agricultural Preservation Area, located immediately to the west of Mount Wanda and consisting of several thousand acres of scenic grazing lands, was created recently by agreement among Contra Costa County and the several adjacent cities. All the cities agreed to refrain from encouraging urbanization in this area through annexation and the provision of utilities and other city services. This area protects the rural character of lands immediately to the west of Mount Wanda.

The East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan encompasses the area of the site and provides for regional parks and a network of riding, hiking, and biking trails.

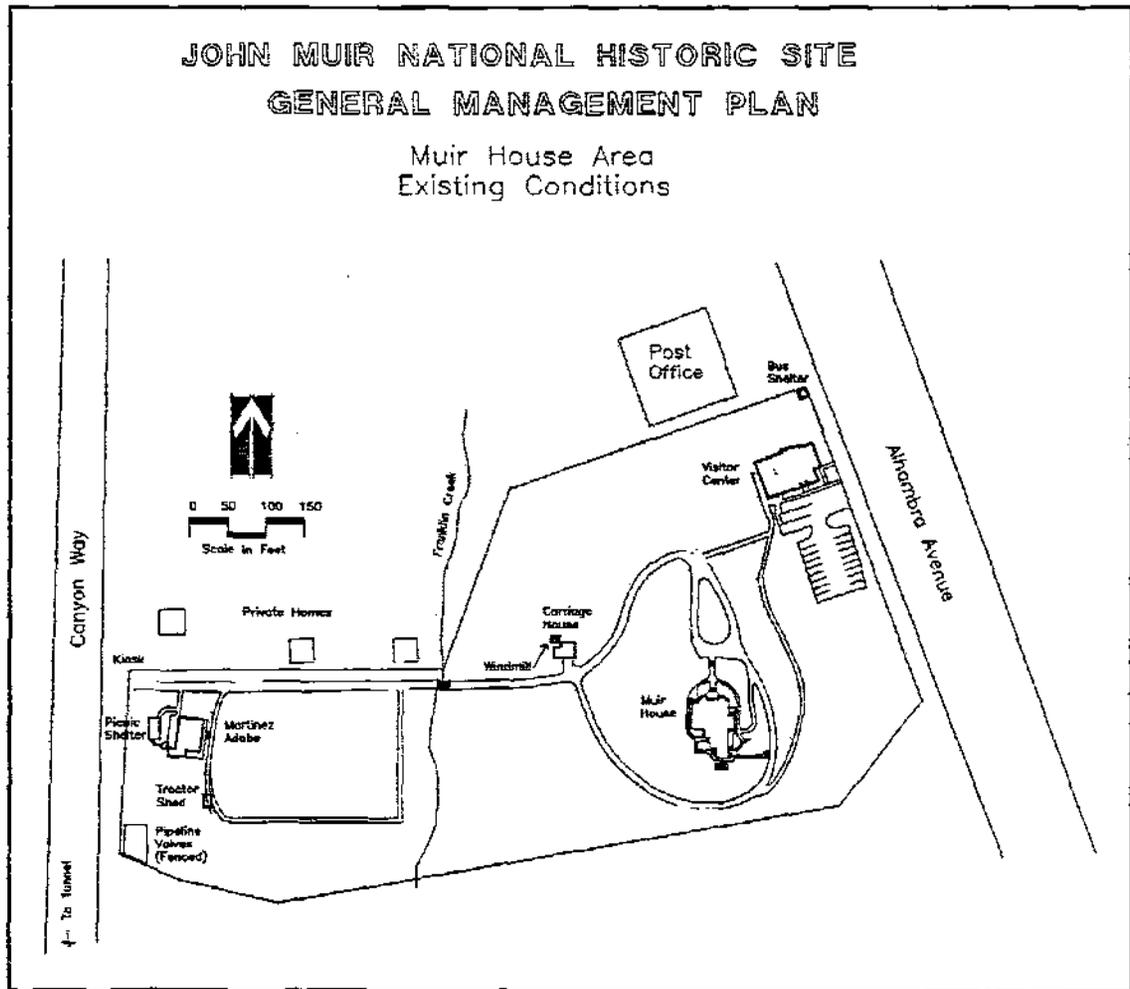
JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
General Boundary Map



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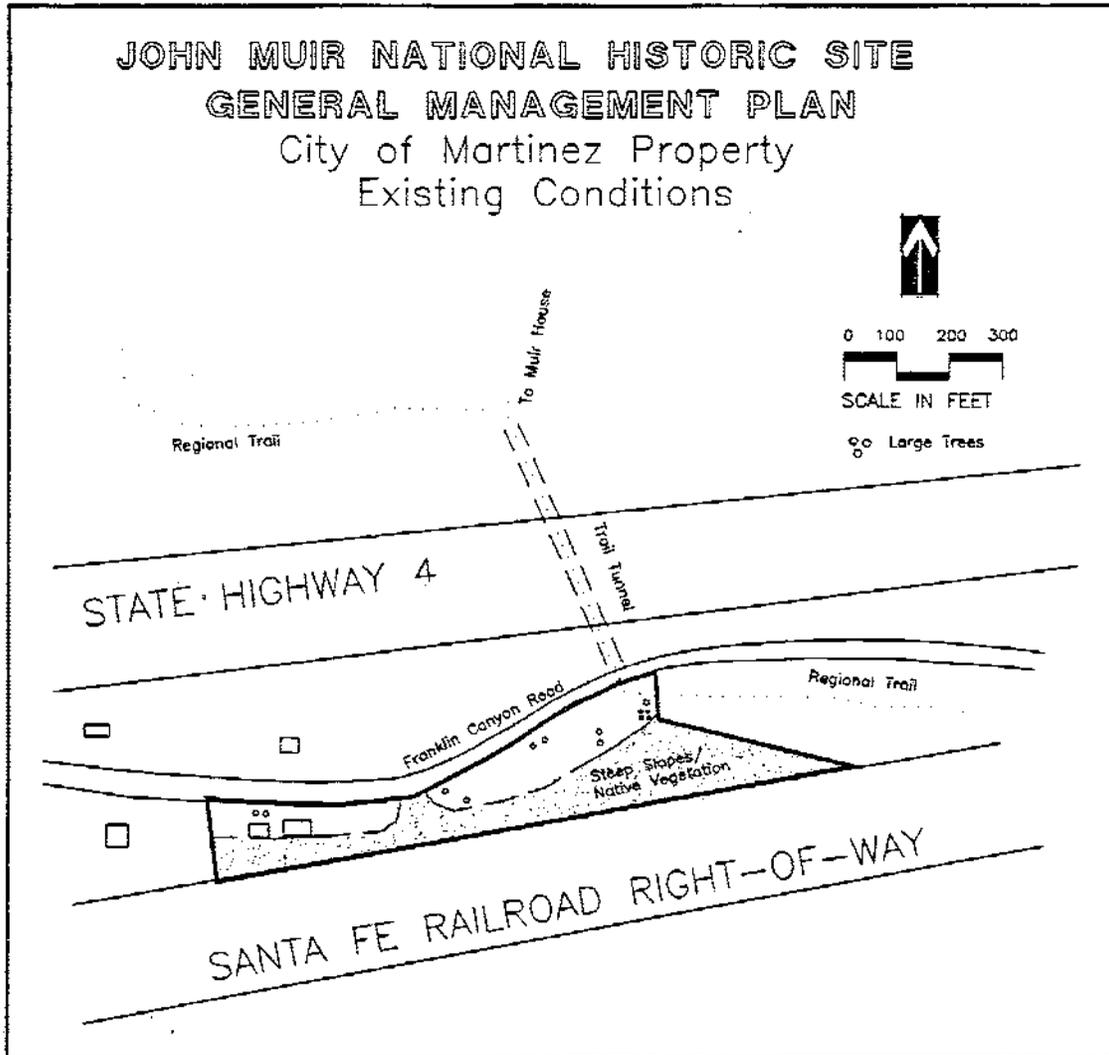
DESCRIPTION OF THE PARK

The park consists of three spatially separated sections as shown on the boundary map. The Muir home, Martinez adobe, and the park visitor center are located on a 9 acre tract north of Highway 4 and west of Alhambra avenue. There are extensive vineyards and orchards surrounding the two homes. This is the portion of the site originally authorized in 1964. It is referred to in this document as the "House area." (See Existing Conditions Map.)



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The boundary additions, none of which are yet in federal ownership, are all located to the south of the House area, on the other side of State Highway 4, which is a four-lane controlled access freeway, and Franklin Canyon Road, which is a 2-lane frontage road.

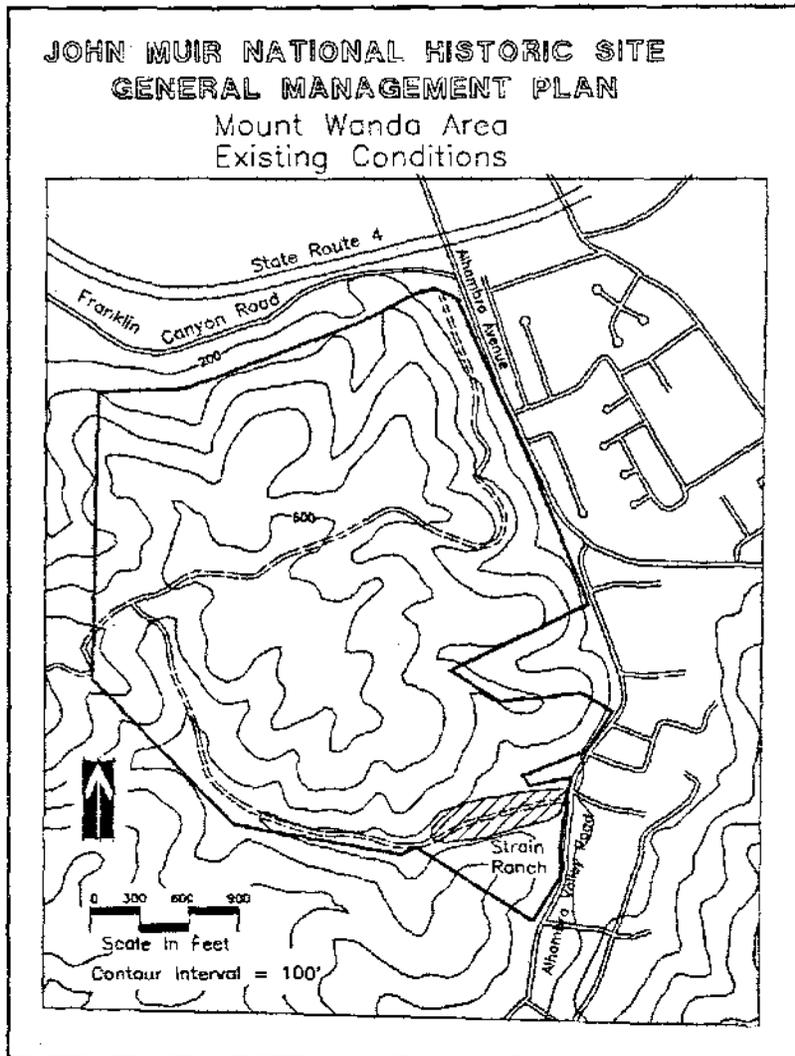


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Immediately adjacent to Franklin Canyon Road is a 3.31 acre tract owned by the City of Martinez. This tract has two structures on it, both of which appear to be post-WWII. One is a small frame building of about 800 square feet. It is in poor condition. The other building is a cinder block structure of about 1,200 square feet. It appears to be structurally sound but

the interior is in poor repair. Much of the tract is steep and densely vegetated land, but there are two level areas totalling about an acre adjacent to Franklin Canyon Road. This tract is referred to in the document as the "City tract."

The City tract slopes steeply up to the south to border the Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way. This is a currently active rail line. A small portion of Santa Fe land (less than 1 acre) where the tracks pass through a tunnel, is included within the boundary. This land is extremely steep with mixed grass and brush vegetation. It was included within the boundary primarily to ensure a physical connection between the City tract and additional lands located to the south.

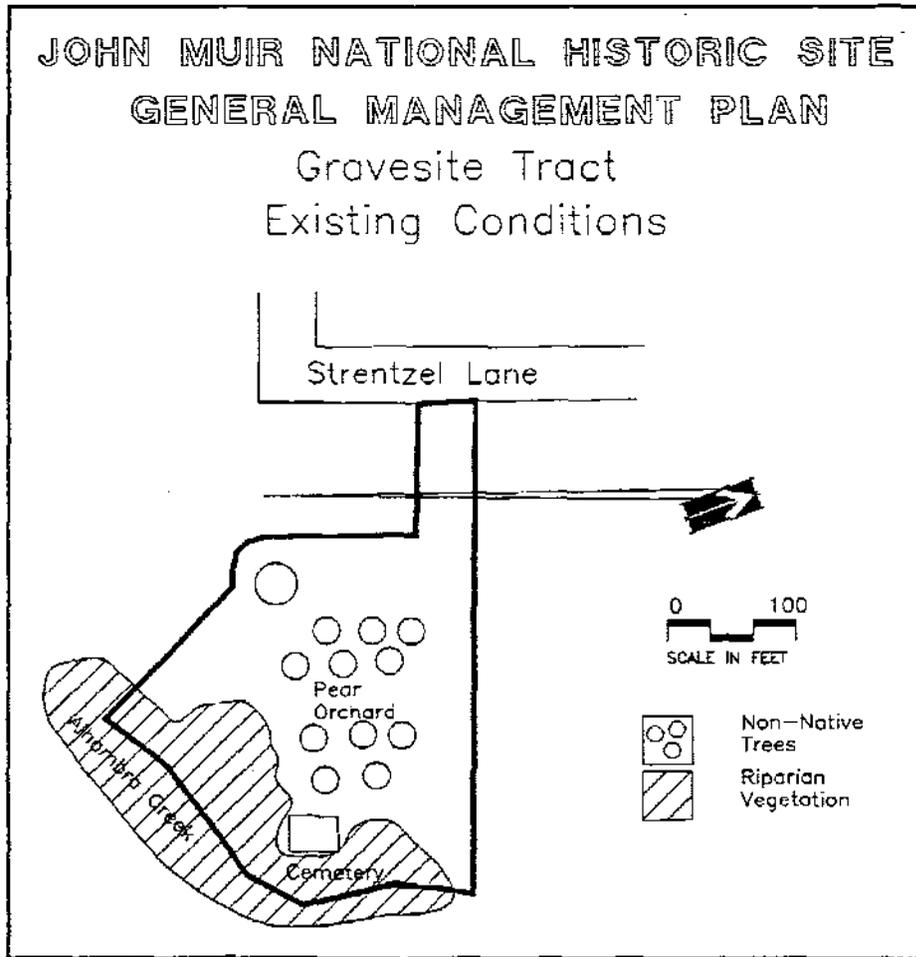


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South of the railroad line is what is subsequently referred to as the "Mount Wanda area." This consists of two large parcels totalling about 325 acres. This land is currently in grazing use and consists primarily of mixed oak woodland and grassland. One of these parcels (the Lo property) is completely undeveloped, while the other (the Strain property) includes a ranch complex consisting of 2 residences, a barn, corrals, and several outbuildings. None of the buildings date from the Muir era, and with the exception of the older residence, appear to be of post-WWII vintage. Owner Gordon Strain has a small cattle operation that includes seasonal grazing on both the Strain and Lo parcels.

Access from the House area to Mount Wanda and the City tract is provided by a pedestrian tunnel under Highway 4. The tunnel was included in the Highway 4 freeway construction several years ago to provide continuity for a section of the State Riding and Hiking Trail. It currently provides access not only for that trail, but also to the Muir House during special events when the visitor center lot is full and visitors park along Franklin Canyon Road.

The third separate land area is the "Gravesite tract." This is a 1.27 acre parcel containing a pear orchard and a small family burial area including the gravesite of John Muir. It is owned by a trust controlled by Muir's descendants. The parcel is located among single family homes in a quiet residential area. The road providing access to the parcel is a narrow unpaved lane. There is no parking on or adjacent to the tract. Limited public use in the area currently occurs as visitors come for short periods to see the gravesite.



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ALTERNATIVES

The discussion of alternatives below is organized in terms of dealing with the several issues presented in the purpose and need section. The differences in the alternatives relate primarily to National Park Service objectives on the lands recently added to the authorized boundary.

In Alternative A, the National Park Service would fully integrate the new lands into the operations of the site. Under this scenario, the park's visitor use and protection programs would be broadened from the current emphasis on the historic homes and grounds to include cultural and natural aspects of the added lands. In contrast, under Alternative C, the interpretive program would continue to be focused on the historical buildings and grounds, with the added lands serving to reinforce existing programs. Alternative B is the no-action alternative.

ALTERNATIVE A: INTEGRATED OPERATION (Proposed Action)

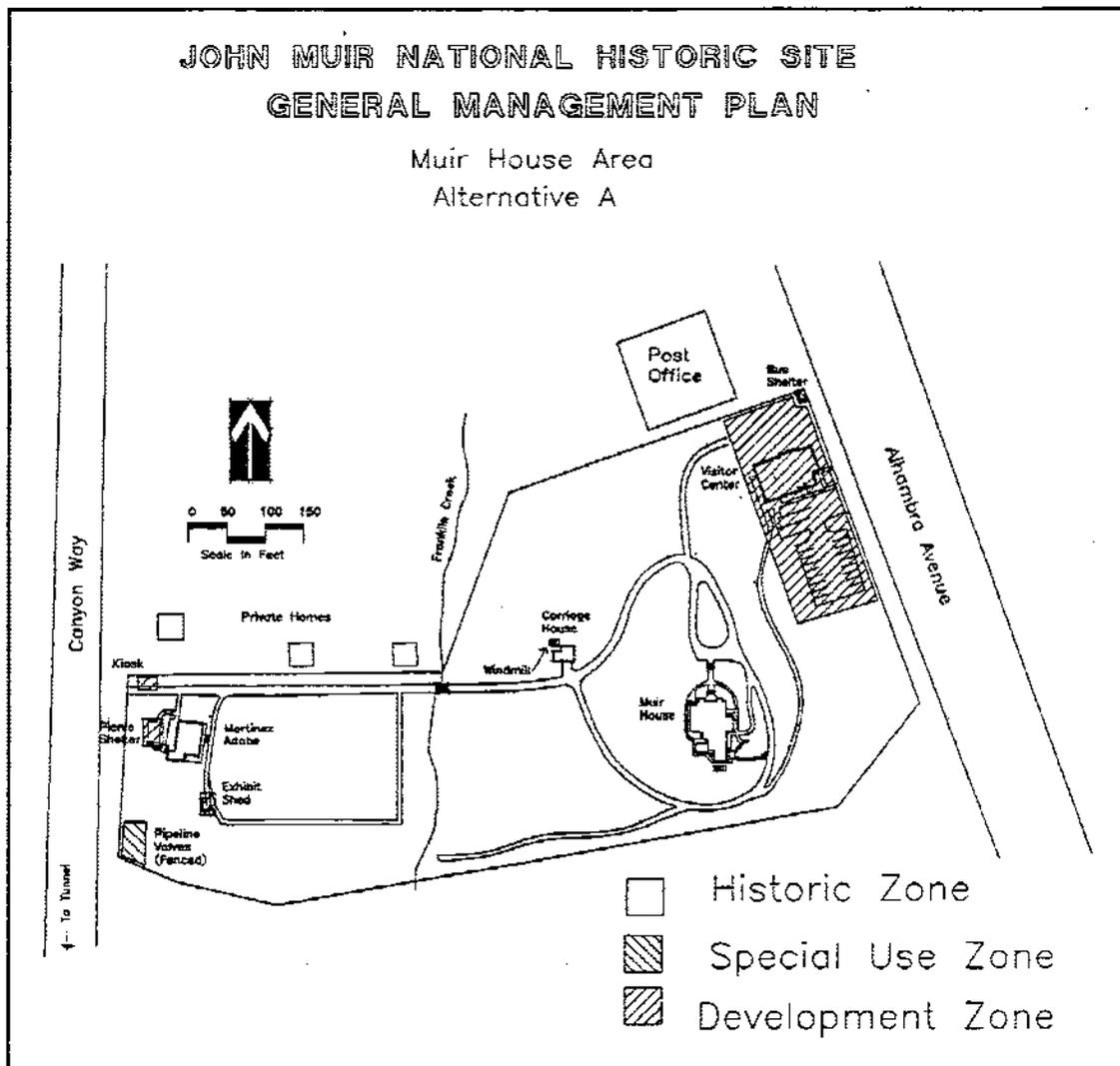
The basic concept of this alternative involves integrating the added lands completely into the site operation. The National Park Service would take an active role in resource management, interpretation, protection, and maintenance of all the new lands.

Management Objectives And Zoning

There are four different areas to be considered: the Muir House section, the Mount Wanda tracts, the City of Martinez property, and the Gravesite tract.

Muir House Section. The existing management zoning for this area would be unchanged except for the expansion of the development zone in the vicinity of the visitor center to accommodate expansion of the center complex, and the addition of a small development zone in the vicinity of the rear gate to accommodate a kiosk. See map.

Mount Wanda Tracts. This expanse of hilly oak and grassland property, undeveloped except for the Strain Ranch, would remain undeveloped and would be managed to retain its natural character as a portion of the historic scene of the

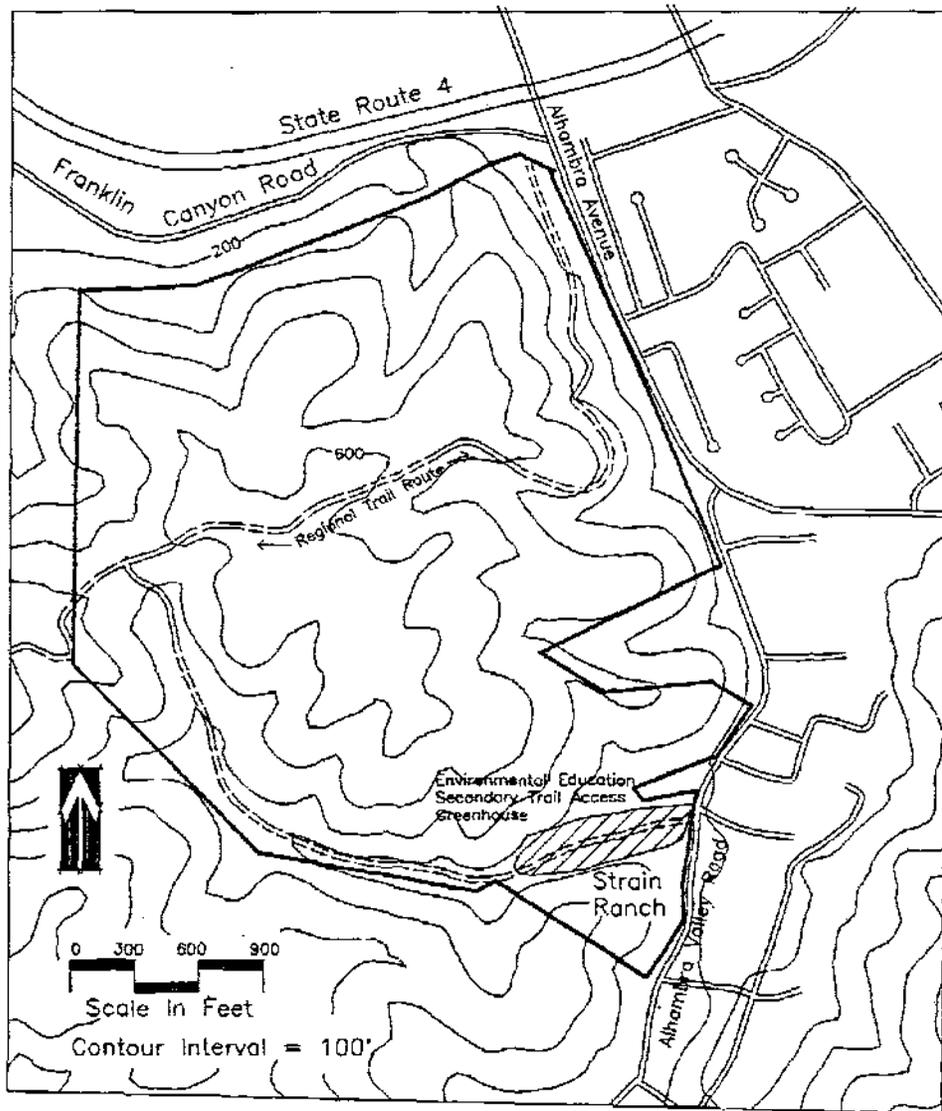


426/80,024A
WRO 12/90

Muir residence. The land would also be managed to provide for extended interpretation of the life, lifestyle, and philosophy of John Muir. Integration of the area's trails into the regional trail system would be consistent with this objective.

Prescriptive management zoning for all of this area except the Strain Ranch, would be natural. The Strain Ranch would be in the development zone, reflecting current private uses and potential future public uses of this area. Decisions on development and use of this area, including use and disposition of any structures, would be preceded by cultural resources analyses in accordance with the various provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act. See map.

JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
Mount Wanda Area
Alternative A



0 300 600 900

Scale in Feet

Contour Interval = 100'



Natural Zone

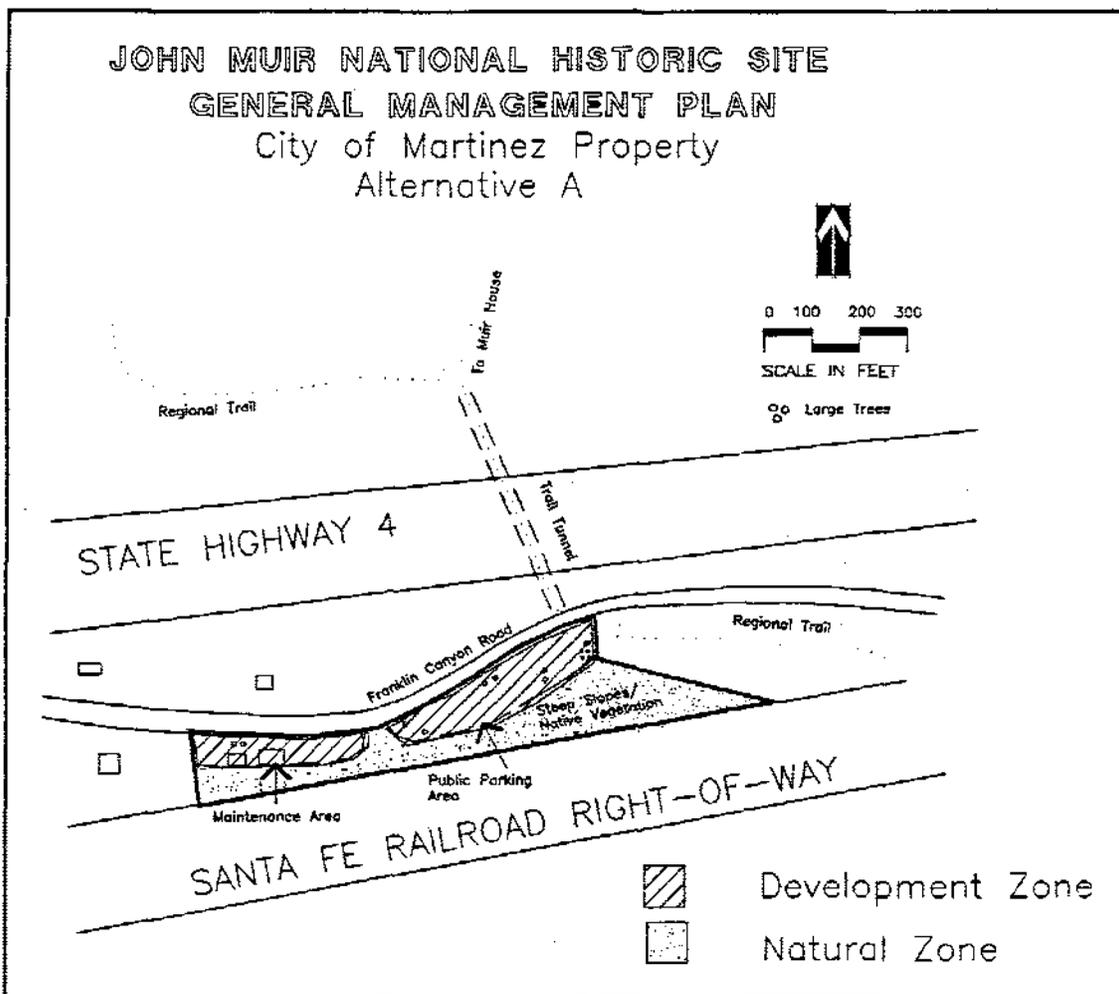


Development Zone

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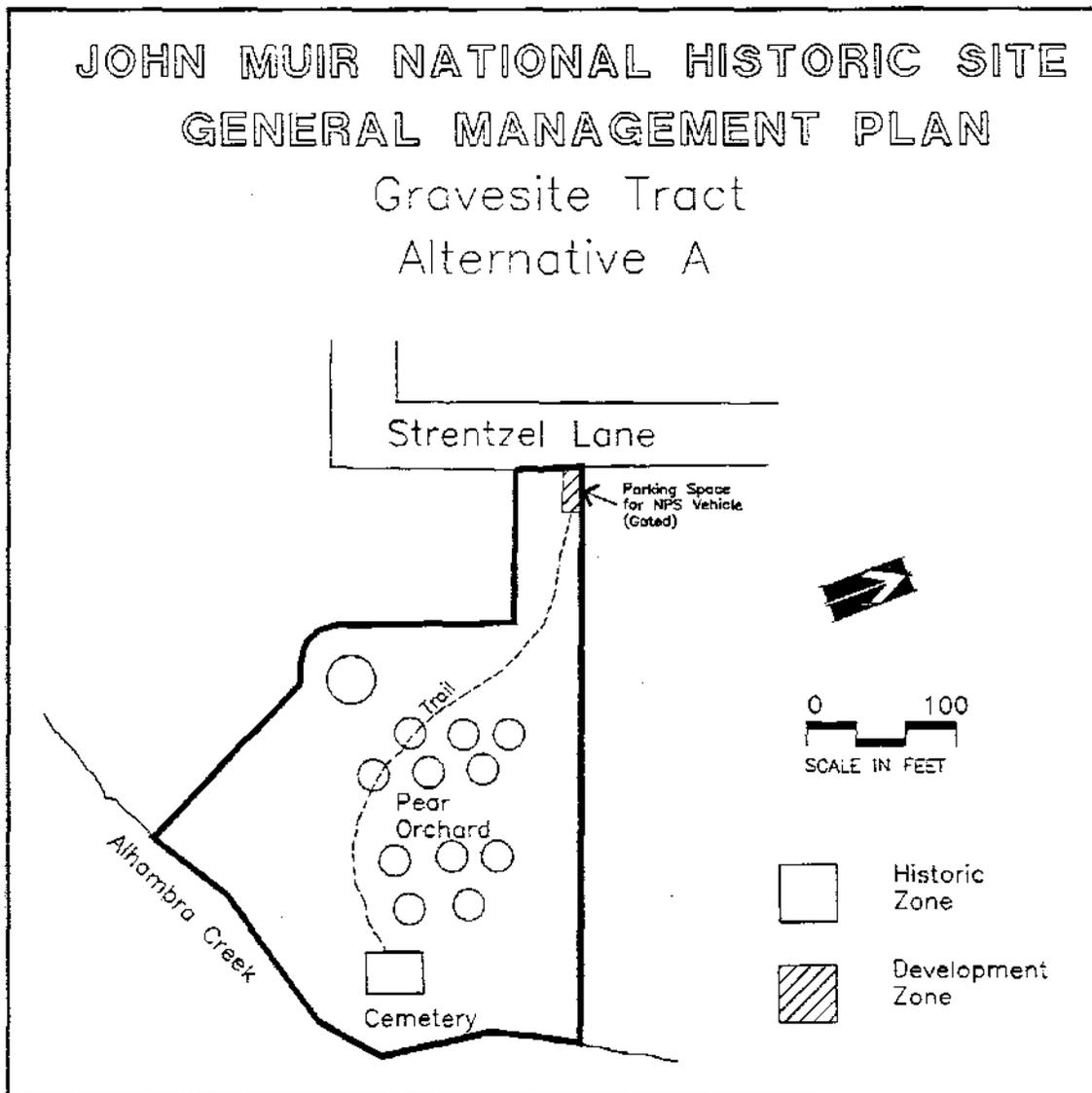
City of Martinez Property. The level portions of this tract adjacent to Franklin Canyon Road would be zoned for development and would be used for various administrative and visitor uses, including an access and staging facility for the Mount Wanda trails and a maintenance facility. Parking here would supplement the existing visitor center parking.

The steep hillside portions of this tract would be placed in the natural zone, and the natural vegetation would be retained. See map.



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Gravesite Tract. This area would be primarily managed as an historic area, with emphasis on preservation of the existing scene. Minor improvements for parking and a walkway to the gravesite would be consistent with the overall management objective. A small portion of the tract would be placed in the development zone to accommodate an access road and a small parking lot. See map.



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WRO 12/90

Land Protection A complete land protection analysis for the site is provided in Appendix 2. The conclusions and recommendations are presented below.

There are four separate areas to be considered.

Mount Wanda Tracts. These tracts are important as a visual element of the park's historic scene, as a resource for an expanded interpretive program, and as a recreational resource as a link in the regional trail system. The lands also provide a potential location for the development of an environmental education facility. Opportunities for economic uses of these tracts consistent with the objectives of Alternative A are very limited. Consequently, fee acquisition is the appropriate long term protection method. In the short term, however, a reservation of use and occupancy for the Strain Ranch area would be acceptable. Continuation of grazing at its current level under special use permit for a limited period of time would also be acceptable.

Purchase is the expected acquisition method for the Mount Wanda properties.

City of Martinez Property. The level portions of this property are intended for development of park support facilities, while the steep lands would be retained in their natural condition. There are no feasible private economic uses consistent with this use. Consequently, fee acquisition is recommended. The city has indicated its intention to donate this property to the National Park Service.

Gravesite Tract. The authorizing legislation and legislative history indicate that a less-than-fee interest, providing for protection and maintenance, should be acquired. The specific nature of the acquisition instrument will be negotiated with the family trust. The acquisition method could be donation, purchase, or a combination. The interest acquired must include provision for public road access to the parcel.

Santa Fe Railroad Tract. This area was included in the boundary to insure a physical connection between the City tract and Mount Wanda. It would be used only in the event that the planned trail connection across state lands proved impossible. No land protection action is foreseen at this time.

Protection Priorities: Following are the land protection priorities for non-federal lands within the site's boundary.

| <i>Tract</i> | <i>Priority</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Strain (Mt. Wanda) | 1 |
| Lo et al. (Mt. Wanda) | 2 |
| Gravesite | 3 |
| City of Martinez | 4 |
| Santa Fe Railroad | 5 |

Vegetation Management On The Added Lands

Vegetation management for Mount Wanda would be aimed at preserving the natural appearance of the site and encouraging the restoration of native plants where aliens have taken hold. Restoration is considered to be a long term objective that will require research and experimentation over many years. It is recognized that complete restoration to pre-Spanish conditions, particularly for grassland areas, is probably unattainable, but that more natural conditions may be achieved through management. Particular efforts will be made to restore limited areas of bunchgrass and improve oak regeneration to ensure succession.

Limited livestock grazing may be provided for in the area as a tool for natural vegetation restoration, and as a part of a comprehensive vegetation management program. Any grazing will be provided for under special use permit.

A vegetation management plan for the Mount Wanda tracts will be prepared on a high priority basis. Several studies are needed to support this plan, including vegetation and soils mapping, plant inventory, fire history, and an oak regeneration analysis.

Vegetation on the City tract would be managed consistent with landscape planning for the developments. Large existing trees on the tract would be retained unless determined to be hazardous.

The Gravesite tract's vegetation would be managed to improve the health of the historic pear orchard and combat a serious poison oak infestation.

**Public Access
Facilities
On The
Added Lands**

Facilities would be required for public access to the Mount Wanda area and to the Gravesite tract.

The City of Martinez tract would provide the primary access point for the trails crossing the Mount Wanda property. This area would also serve as trail access for users of the regional trail system, with trails extending north to the Martinez shoreline and east on the route of the State Riding and Hiking Trail. Parking would be developed here to accommodate approximately 50 to 75 vehicles. Signage would direct visitors to the different trails available, and interpretive panels would link the lands to Muir's visits to the land and to his environmental ethic. Restrooms and potable water would be developed.

A secondary trail staging area may be developed in the future at the Strain Ranch area. The need for and feasibility of a staging area in this location would depend on the pattern of use on Mount Wanda, expressions of public interest, and resolution of traffic flow problems on Alhambra Valley Road.

The existing fire roads on the Mount Wanda tract would serve as trails, and would be supplemented as needed by the development of additional trails to provide for interpretive purposes or to complete linkages in the regional trails system. Opportunities will be sought to develop trails, or portions of trails, that are disabled-accessible. A trail plan will be cooperatively developed with the East Bay Regional Park District.

Both the Mt. Wanda area and the City tract would be fenced as needed to control access and use, and to prevent visitors from straying onto the railroad right-of-way.

Access to the Gravesite tract would be limited to daylight hours and kept on a low-key basis to avoid disrupting the residential area. Improvements on the Gravesite tract will be limited to a wooden sign identifying the site as the John Muir Gravesite, an improved trail leading from the road to the gravesite, and a single gravel or "paver" hardened parking space adjacent to the road to accommodate the park maintenance vehicle. A low barrier would prevent public access to the parking space when not in use by the maintenance staff. No additional fencing would be provided initially; the need for fencing would be reviewed in future years

There is a recognized need for a greenhouse both for the propagation of orchard stock and for the propagation of native plant materials for revegetation projects on Mount Wanda. Location of this facility at the City tract would not be desirable because of the poor exposure. This facility would be located at the Strain Ranch area at such time as this area becomes available. That location offers a desirable exposure for a greenhouse, and the facility could also be used in the environmental education program. Interpretive panels would explain the greenhouse's use in gardening and resource management projects.

**Historic Scene
Protection**

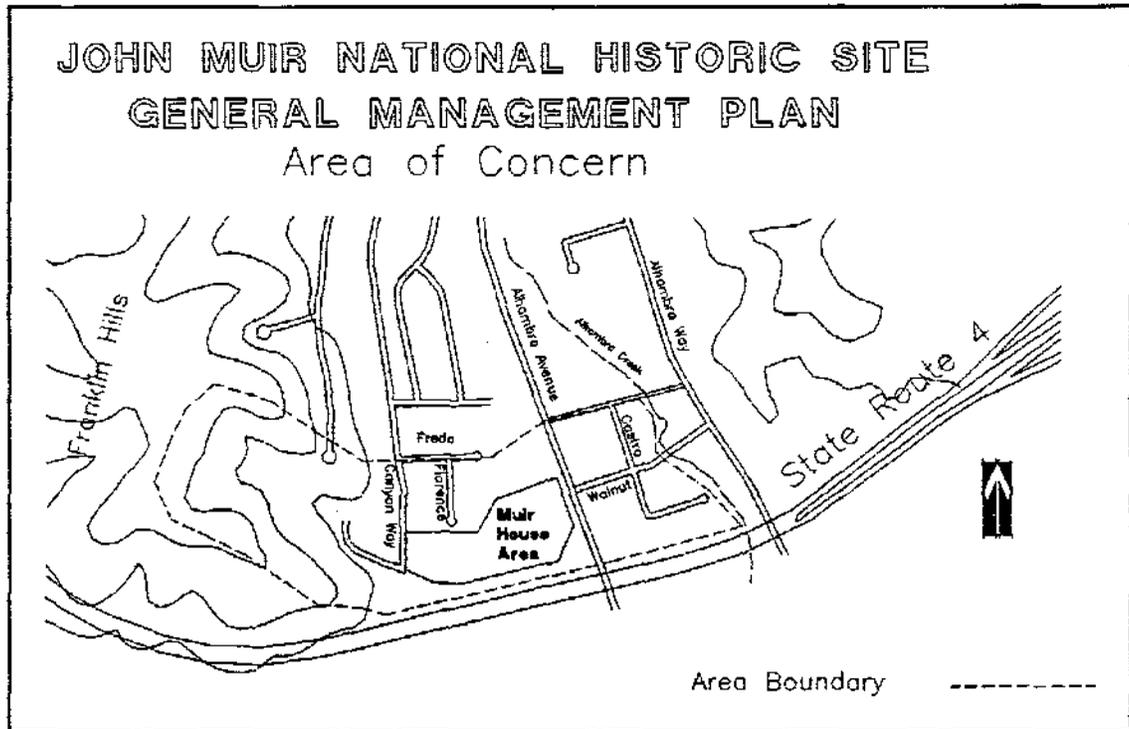
While it is impossible to completely restore the historic scene of the Muir House, it is desired to minimize the urban disruptions that impinge on the quality of the visitor experience. The City of Martinez has long recognized this need and in fact the city, in 1966, established the John Muir National Historic Site District, which encompasses a several-block area around the site. The city requires that all private development within that area be reviewed by the Planning Commission to encourage a quality of development appropriate to the historic character of the area.

The following map delineates a zone around the House area considered by the National Park Service to be especially significant in retaining the historic scene. This area encompasses the district already designated by the city, and expands it to include important viewshed areas to the west that are highly visible from major visitor use areas. Within this zone, the park staff will monitor all land use changes and keep local land use regulating agencies aware of park concerns and objectives. The park staff will also encourage other agencies and private organizations to acquire lands and scenic easements on lands within this zone of concern.

Specific park-related concerns in this zone include:

1. Overall visibility from the site, including building heights, colors, night-lighting, signs, etc. The objective is to retain as much of the natural quality as possible in currently open land, and avoid visually obtrusive development in existing urban areas.

2. Avoidance of intrusive noise into the House area. While a certain degree of background noise is already present, and is unavoidable in an urban area, it is desirable to limit noise to the minimum. The park hence will encourage adjacent land uses that generate relatively little noise.



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WRO 12/90

Visitor Center The existing visitor center requires substantial modification and expansion. Restrooms, the auditorium, visitor lobby, storage areas, and offices all need to be expanded to accommodate the increasing numbers of visitors and staff required to accommodate them. An employee parking lot is also badly needed. All facilities need to be made accessible for the disabled. A plan will be completed to provide for these expanded needs generally in the location of the current building, extended as needed to the north toward the post office. A small employee parking area will also be provided in this area.

based on security considerations and cooperation with neighbors.

**East Bay
Regional Park
District Role**

The National Park Service would cooperate with the Park District in the management of the Mount Wanda area, and the staging area at the city property, recognizing the District's interests in integrating this area in its regional trail system. Cooperation would include law enforcement, interpretation, maintenance, and fire suppression. The National Park Service would be responsible for overall planning for the site, including facility development and resource management planning.

**Auxiliary
Parking For
The House
Area**

Supplementing the visitor parking for the House area would require several steps. First, the parking lot near the visitor center would be redesigned as described below under *Visitor Center*. Cars entering the visitor center lot and finding the lot to be filled would be directed to the new parking lot on the City tract. They would then proceed to the House area via the existing tunnel under Highway 4. A crosswalk and other supplementary road-crossing safety features as needed would be provided on Franklin Canyon Road, and the trail from the tunnel to the site would be improved for all-weather use.

Visitors parking at the new lot would enter the House area through the back gate. This entrance would be manned at heavy use periods by an employee occupying either a new kiosk or the back room of the Martinez adobe, which could be adapted to serve as a small reception office. (Use of the latter is preferred but its feasibility depends on the results of the historic structure report currently being prepared and scheduled for completion in FY 91.) A telephone and electronic gate system could be employed at other times to admit prospective visitors arriving at the back gate.

**Maintenance
Facility**

A maintenance facility would be developed at the west end of the city property. Included in this facility would be offices for the Chief of Maintenance/Gardener, maintenance workers, and the ranger assigned to the Mount Wanda area. A workshop and storage for park vehicles and other equipment would also be provided in this area. The existing cinder-block building would be incorporated in the plan for this facility, if feasible, with additional space developed to accommodate park vehicles and equipment. The maintenance area would be fenced for security purposes.

Approximate space required in the new visitor center would be:

| <i>Function</i> | <i>Square Footage</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Lobby | 900 |
| Office Space | 1,250 |
| Auditorium | 1,000 |
| Restrooms (Public and Staff) | 350 |
| Curatorial Workspace | 300 |
| Curatorial Storage | 600 |
| Library | 300 |
| Miscellaneous | 300 |
| Total Space Required | 5,000 |

While the public parking lot adjacent to the visitor center will not be enlarged, it does need to be redesigned as a "flow through" facility to better accommodate bus maneuvering and to facilitate the routing of visitors to the new parking lot on the City tract when the lot is filled.

Environmental Education

Environmental education has been an important program at the Historic Site for many years. The minimum long-range park objective is to be able to restore the overnight sessions of the Environmental Living Program, which is aimed at elementary school classes of from 30 to 35 students. However, there may be opportunities for expanding the environmental education function to serve other age groups and institutions.

It is expected that the facilities for this program would be developed and operated on a cooperative basis, with substantial financial assistance from private, non-profit groups. The availability of such assistance will significantly affect the character and scope of the program.

Facilities required to serve the environmental education function would include dormitory space, kitchen facilities, and a classroom. The Strain Ranch area offers the ideal location for an environmental education facility. Either acquired structures would be used or new buildings would be constructed. Any new buildings constructed in this area would be designed to harmonize with the area's farming and ranching history.

Because of the uncertainty of the timing of acquisition of the Strain Ranch area, the timing of this program is uncertain. In the short term, the park will continue to operate a day program using facilities in the House area.

**Historic
Farming
Interpretation**

The Historic Site will soon have several items of historic farm equipment to display, including an historic horse-drawn sprayer (already on the site), a wagon, and a harrow. At such time as the site's maintenance facility is moved to the City tract, and the tractor is relocated to that area, the existing tractor shed will be removed and replaced with a rustic, open-sided farm shed to house the equipment.

In addition, interpretation will be provided at the Strain Ranch area of the pioneering efforts of Muir and his relatives in the development of hillside agriculture in the Martinez area. Areas historically used for hillside orchards and vineyards would be identified for the visitor through photos and maps, but the few remnant trees would not be maintained and orchards and vineyards would not be replanted. Displays may include interpretive panels and items of historic farm equipment, especially those adapted for hillside farming use. Any development of this area would be subsequent to and contingent on the findings of a cultural resources survey as required under the National Historic Preservation Act.

**Operational
Changes**

Management of the new areas will require additional manpower, equipment, and supplies.

A new ranger position will be required to oversee law enforcement and natural resource management needs on the Mount Wanda area. An additional maintenance position will also be required to provide maintenance at the gravesite, Mount Wanda, and the City tract. Finally, two new interpreter positions will be needed to provide programs on the Mount Wanda area, provide coverage at the new rear gate entrance, and assist with the environmental education program.

Major new equipment needs associated with the new lands include a four-wheel drive pickup truck equipped with a pumper tank, and either a radio system or a cellular phone system to provide for communication on Mount Wanda.

Law enforcement on the site would be coordinated with the East Bay Regional Parks District and local police. Currently,

law enforcement in the area is divided between the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department and the Martinez Police Department. Following the expected annexation of the Mount Wanda area by the City of Martinez, the entire site will be under the jurisdiction of the Martinez police.

Arrangements for fire suppression would be coordinated with the East Bay Regional Park District and the Contra Costa Consolidated Fire District.

Boundary Adjustments

This plan is intended to deal exclusively with lands within the Congressionally authorized boundary, and no adjustments to these boundaries are proposed at this time. However, in the event Congress should reconsider the site's boundary at some future time, Appendix 4 provides a brief description of some options for consideration.

ALTERNATIVE B: NO ACTION PLAN

Management Objectives And Zoning

Under this plan, no additional lands would come under the control of the National Park Service. The park staff would continue to urge local land use regulating agencies to consider park values in land use decisions. All the added lands would be placed in the Special Use Zone, recognizing management by others for other than park purposes. Management zoning on the House area would be unchanged.

Land Protection

No lands or interests in lands would be acquired. As indicated above, local land use controls would continue to provide some protection for park values.

Vegetation Management On The Added Lands

The National Park Service would not be in a position to manage vegetation on any of the tracts added to the boundary.

Public Access Facilities On The Added Lands

No access facilities would be provided to serve the added lands.

East Bay Regional Park District Role

The Park District would continue to seek a connecting trail route across the Mount Wanda tracts to serve the regional trail system.

| | |
|---|---|
| Auxiliary Parking For The House Area | No changes in parking would be made. |
| Historic Scene Protection | The park staff would continue to work with city and county planning and zoning officials to ensure that the concerns of the park for visual and sound intrusion are considered in local land use decisions. |
| Visitor Center | No changes would be made in the visitor center to remedy current problems and deal with anticipated future growth in visitation. |
| Environmental Education | The environmental education program would continue at its current level on a day-use basis. |
| Farm Equipment Display | There would be no structure made available to house the existing sprayer or other equipment that might be donated to the site. |
| Operational Changes | There would be no changes in staffing or overall operation of the site. |

ALTERNATIVE C: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

**Management
Objectives
And Zoning** There are four different areas to be considered: the Muir House area, the Mount Wanda tracts, the City of Martinez property, and the Gravesite tract.

Muir House Section. The existing management zoning for this area would be unchanged except for the expansion of the development zone in the vicinity of the visitor center to accommodate expansion of the center complex, and the addition of a small development zone in the vicinity of the rear gate to accommodate a kiosk.

Mount Wanda Tracts. The primary objective for this area would be protection of the historic scene from the House area. The oak and grassland would be retained in all areas visible from the House area. A secondary objective would be to contribute to the linking up of the regional trails system.

the site staff would work with local land use planning agencies to seek to minimize adverse effects of development on the trail through careful location of development sites and creation of scenic buffers.

City of Martinez Property. The level portions of this property are intended for development of park support facilities, while the steep lands would be retained in their natural condition. There are no feasible private economic uses consistent with this use. Consequently, fee acquisition is recommended. The city has indicated its intention to donate this property to the National Park Service.

Gravesite Tract. The authorizing legislation indicates that a less-than-fee interest, providing for protection and maintenance, should be acquired. The specific nature of the acquisition instrument will be negotiated with the family trust. The acquisition method could be donation, purchase, or a combination.

Santa Fe Railroad Tract. This area was included in the boundary to insure a physical connection between the City tract and Mount Wanda. It would be used only in the event that the planned trail connection across state lands proved impossible. No land protection action is foreseen at this time.

Protection Priorities: Following are the land protection priorities for non-federal lands within the site's boundary.

| <i>Tract</i> | <i>Priority</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Strain (Mt. Wanda) | 1 |
| Lo et al. (Mt. Wanda) | 2 |
| Gravesite | 3 |
| City of Martinez | 4 |
| Santa Fe Railroad | 5 |

**Vegetation
Management
On The
Added Lands**

The scenic easements acquired for the north slopes of the property would require that the existing vegetation be retained and preclude its modification. The interest acquired would not permit the National Park Service to actively manage vegetation in this area.

Vegetation on the City tract would be managed consistent with landscape planning for the developments. Large existing trees on the tract would be retained unless determined to be hazardous.

The Gravesite tract's vegetation would be managed to preserve the existing situation.

**Public Access
Facilities
On The
Added Lands**

Facilities would be required for public access to the trail crossing the Mount Wanda area and to the Gravesite tract.

The City of Martinez tract would provide a primary access point for users of the regional trail. Restrooms and potable water would be available here.

An alignment to connect the regional trail across the property would be determined in cooperation with the East Bay Regional Park District.

Access to the Gravesite tract would be limited to daylight hours and kept on a low-key basis to avoid disrupting the residential area. Improvements on the Gravesite tract will be limited to a wooden sign identifying the site as the John Muir Gravesite, an improved trail leading from the road to the gravesite, and a single gravel or "paver" hardened parking space adjacent to the road to accommodate the park maintenance vehicle. A low barrier would prevent public access to the parking space when not in use by the maintenance staff. No additional fencing would be provided initially; the need for fencing would be reviewed in future years based on security considerations and cooperation with neighbors.

**East Bay
Regional Park
District Role**

The District would have the primary role in the development, operation, and maintenance of the trail across the Mount Wanda tract.

**Auxiliary
Parking For
The House
Area**

Supplementing the visitor parking for the House area would require several steps. First, the parking lot near the visitor center would be redesigned as described below under *Visitor Center*. Cars entering the visitor center lot and finding the lot to be filled would be directed to the new parking lot on the City of Martinez property. They would then proceed to the House area via the existing tunnel under Highway 4. A crosswalk and other supplementary road-crossing safety

Prescriptive management zoning for the portion of this area visible from the house, and for the area required for the regional trail system, would be natural. The portion necessary for the trail alignment, along with a reasonable buffer area, would also be zoned natural. The remainder of this area would be zoned special use, with the expectation that it would remain in private hands for use or development as appropriate under local land use regulations.

City of Martinez Property. The level portions of this tract adjacent to Franklin Canyon Road would be zoned for development and would be used for various administrative and visitor uses. The developed areas would include an access and staging facility for the trails on the added lands and as a location for support facilities inappropriate for location in the vicinity of the Muir house. Parking here would supplement the existing visitor center parking.

The steep hillside portions of this tract would be placed in the natural zone, and the natural vegetation would be retained.

Gravesite Tract. This area would be primarily managed as an historic area, with emphasis on preservation of the existing scene. Minor improvements for parking and a walkway to the gravesite would be consistent with the overall management objective. A small portion of the tract would be placed in the development zone to accommodate an access road and a small parking lot.

**Land
Protection**

A complete land protection analysis for the site is provided in Appendix 2. The conclusions and recommendations are presented below.

There are four separate areas to be considered.

Mount Wanda Tracts. Scenic easements would be acquired on the north slopes of these tracts to retain the natural vegetation and protect the historic scene from the Muir House. Approximately 75 acres of such easements would be acquired. In addition, a trail right of way would be acquired through the property to provide continuity for the regional trail. The right-of-way would consist of a 50 to 100 ft. wide strip of land with the trail at the centerline. No real property interest would be acquired on the balance of the property. However,

features as needed would be provided on Franklin Canyon Road, and the trail from the tunnel to the site would be surfaced.

Visitors parking at the new lot would enter the House area through the back gate. This entrance would be manned at heavy use periods by an employee occupying either a new kiosk or the back room of the Martinez adobe, which could be adapted to serve as a small reception office. (Use of the latter is preferred but its feasibility depends on the results of the historic structure report currently being prepared and scheduled for completion in FY 91.) A telephone and electronic gate system could be employed at other times to admit prospective visitors arriving at the back gate.

**Maintenance
Facility**

A maintenance facility would be developed at the west end of the city property. Included in this facility would be the office for the maintenance chief, a workshop, and storage for park vehicles and other equipment. The existing cinder-block building would be incorporated in the plan for this facility, with additional space developed to accommodate park vehicles and equipment. The maintenance area would be fenced for security purposes.

**Historic Scene
Protection**

While it is impossible to completely restore the historic scene of the Muir House, it is desired to minimize the urban disruptions that impinge on the quality of the visitor experience. The City of Martinez has long recognized this need and in fact the city, in 1966, established the John Muir National Historic Site District, which encompasses a several-block area around the site. The city requires that all private development within that area be reviewed by the Planning Commission to encourage a quality of development appropriate to the historic character of the area.

The area of concern is the same as that identified previously under Alternative A. It includes the area already designated by the city, and expands it to some degree to include important viewshed areas to the west. Within this zone, the park staff will monitor all land use changes and keep local land use regulating agencies aware of park concerns and objectives. The park staff will also encourage other agencies and private organizations to acquire lands and scenic easements on lands within this zone of concern.

Specific park-related concerns in this zone include:

1. Overall visibility from the site, including building heights, colors, night-lighting, signs, etc. The objective is to retain as much of the natural quality as possible in currently open land, and avoid visually obtrusive development in existing urban areas.
2. Avoidance of intrusive noise into the House area. While a certain degree of background noise is already present, and is unavoidable in an urban area, it is desirable to limit noise to the minimum. The park hence will encourage adjacent land uses that generate relatively little noise.

Visitor Center

The existing visitor center requires substantial modification and expansion. Restrooms, the auditorium, visitor lobby, storage areas, and offices all need to be expanded to accommodate the increasing numbers of visitors and staff required to accommodate them. An employee parking lot is also badly needed. All facilities need to be made accessible for the disabled. A plan will be completed to provide for these expanded needs generally in the location of the current building, extended as needed to the north toward the post office. A small employee parking area will also be provided in this area.

Approximate space required in the new visitor center would be:

| <i>Function</i> | <i>Square Footage</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Lobby | 900 |
| Office Space | 1,250 |
| Auditorium | 1,000 |
| Restrooms (Public and Staff) | 350 |
| Curatorial Workspace | 300 |
| Curatorial Storage | 600 |
| Library | 300 |
| Miscellaneous | 300 |
| Total Space Required | 5,000 |

While the public parking lot adjacent to the visitor center will not be enlarged, it does need to be redesigned as a "flow through" facility to better accommodate bus maneuvering and

to facilitate the routing of visitors to the new parking lot on the City tract when the lot is filled.

**Environmental
Education**

The environmental education program would continue at its current level on a day-use basis.

**Historic
Farming
Interpretation**

The Historic Site will soon have several items of historic farm equipment to display, including an historic horse-drawn sprayer (already on the site), a wagon, and a harrow. At such time as the site's maintenance facility is moved to the City tract, and the tractor is relocated to that area, the existing tractor shed will be removed and replaced with a rustic, open-sided farm shed to house the equipment.

**Operational
Changes**

Management of the new areas will require some additional manpower, equipment, and supplies.

An additional maintenance position will be required to provide maintenance at the Gravesite, Mount Wanda, and the City tract. An additional interpreter position will also be needed to transport visitors to the gravesite and provide coverage at the new rear gate entrance.

Operation of a daily shuttle to the gravesite would necessitate the purchase or lease of a van.

Because the site would not have an active management role on Mount Wanda under this alternative, it would not be necessary to establish a law enforcement ranger position. Law enforcement on the added lands would be provided by the East Bay Regional Parks District and local police. Arrangements for fire suppression would be coordinated with the East Bay Regional Park District and the Contra Costa Consolidated Fire District.

**Boundary
Adjustments**

This plan is intended to deal exclusively with lands within the Congressionally authorized boundary, and no adjustments to these boundaries are proposed at this time. However, in the event Congress should reconsider the site's boundary at some future time, Appendix 4 provides a brief description of some options for consideration.

THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Land Use John Muir National Historic Site is located on the outskirts of the City of Martinez. Martinez is the county seat of Contra Costa County and a rapidly growing small city with a population of approximately 30,000. Contra Costa County had a population of approximately 790,000 in 1989.

Lands immediately surrounding the House area are in a mixture of commercial and residential uses, with commercial uses located on Alhambra Avenue and residential uses on the side streets adjacent to the site.

The new additions to the boundary are located across Highway 4 in a more rural setting. The City tract is immediately adjacent to Franklin Canyon Road, and faces north across the road toward Highway 4, which is a major east-west freeway. A railroad right-of-way borders the tract to the south, separating it from the Mount Wanda area. Lands to the east are undeveloped remnants of state land acquired for the freeway construction, while to the west are low density residential developments fronting on Franklin Canyon Road.

The Mount Wanda area consists of largely undeveloped oak woodland/grassland hills, whose current use is exclusively cattle grazing. The Strain Ranch is the only developed area on this 326 acre area. The ranch area consists of approximately 3 to 4 developed acres including two residences and several outbuildings. The Mount Wanda area is bounded on the north by the railroad right-of-way, on the east by Alhambra Avenue, on the south by Alhambra Valley Road and a few residences, and on the east by large undeveloped parcels currently used for grazing.

There are no known hazardous wastes within the authorized boundary. There are, however, three plugged natural gas wells on the Mount Wanda area, the most recent of which was drilled in 1954. None of the wells produced. There have been no gas leaks from these wells, and they have been regularly inspected by the state. The plugging accomplished on these

wells does not, however, meet current Department of the Interior standards.

The City of Martinez is gradually expanding south to encompass the Mount Wanda area and adjacent large parcels. Similar lands in the area are in the process of being subdivided into planned unit residential developments. While this area is not now within the city limits, it is within the Martinez sphere of influence and at some time is expected to become part of the city.

The Gravesite tract is located in a rural subdivision of homes on large lots.

Road System

Roads in the vicinity of the site are heavily used during both weekday and weekend periods. Highway 4 is a major 4-lane freeway connecting Interstate 80 to the west and Interstate 680 to the east. Alhambra Avenue is a major 4-lane Martinez artery connecting the city to Highway 4 and to the City of Pleasant Hill. North of Highway 4 it is a commercial strip with many businesses. Alhambra Valley Road, which borders the Mount Wanda area on the south, is a 2-lane rural road increasingly stressed from serving traffic generated by suburban growth to the west. Franklin Canyon Road, which borders the City of Martinez tract, serves scattered residential development and has fairly light traffic at most times.

Regional Park System

The East Bay Regional Park District, which encompasses most of Contra Costa and adjacent Alameda Counties, operates a number of large parks and is responsible for planning and coordinating the implementation of a regional trails system. Major units in the vicinity of the Historic Site include Briones Regional Park, located about 2 miles south of the House area, and Martinez Shoreline Park, located 2 miles to the north. The District's master plan for trails calls for the completion of a trail link between these two parks through the Mount Wanda area. The connection north of the site has already been firmly determined, and the District is in the process of acquiring the necessary real property interests. The connection south of the site has not been firmly determined at this time. To some extent this will depend on the course of land development between Mount Wanda and Briones Regional Park.

A pedestrian tunnel under Highway 4 facilitates continuity for this regional trail.

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Prehistory And History

The foothills and wetlands of Martinez have long provided a rich resource base for human habitation. The environment was more varied and moist in the time of the native Ohlone Indians than it is today. The shoreline was host to seabirds, mussels, abalone, salmon, and abundant shoreline life, so intensive use of the savannahs, grasslands, and oak-bay forests was not needed. The Ohlone diet was supplemented by acorns, grass seed, tule, and a variety of wild roots, bulbs, and greens. Elk, antelope, deer, eagle, rabbit, giant condor, grizzly bear, bobcat, foxes, mountain lions, and other animals were plentiful before the coming of the Spaniards.

The first Spaniards entered the Martinez area in 1772 and the face of the land quickly changed with the founding of the great mission ranches. The Spanish established agriculture and irrigation and introduced new grasses that replaced native perennials. Native Americans became the work force for the ranches, and the Ohlone way of life was radically altered.

With the coming of Mexican rule, California opened up to more settlers and traders. Cattle ranches expanded, and alien forage plants and weeds further invaded the natural pastures.

Statehood, gold, and ferryboats led to a significant population increase after 1850, and a corresponding demand for agricultural products. One of the leading agricultural pioneers of the area was Dr. John Strentzel. Strentzel arrived in the area about 1853, intent on purchasing land suitable for the dry farming of grain, a major agricultural activity in Contra Costa at that time. But Strentzel's interest turned ultimately to the raising of fruit, and his wide ranging experiments with varieties and techniques laid the foundations for large-scale fruit ranching. With a land base of 2600 acres in the Martinez area, including the area of the Historic Site, Strentzel introduced many fine varieties of European grapes into hillside viticulture for the first time in California. He also grew more than 60 varieties of peaches, and even more varieties of pears.

As lands were converted from cattle grazing and grain to orchards, the old land grant was cut up into ever smaller parcels and much of the native vegetation was removed.

However, the hills to the south of the Muir house were not used for agriculture. In an 1871 diary entry, Mrs. Strentzel admired the "dark green of the buckeye, laurel, and live oaks," and envisioned the time when "other generations will be here to enjoy the scene."

In 1880, John Muir married Louie Strentzel and began to play an important role in ranch operations. He refined and managed ranch practices, emphasizing financially productive viticulture and developing the market for bartlett pears. He expanded acreage planted to vines and within ten years made the ranch a paying proposition. As a ranch manager, Muir was sensitive to conservation, using only a few mineral sprays, forbidding the killing of animals by gun or poison, and using the technology of hillside viticulture to lessen erosion.

Muir continued to preserve the hills to the south for their natural beauty and botanical variety and maintained it as a preserve for frequent walks and botany excursions with his daughters, friends, and university professors. The views from atop Mt. Wanda, "delightful in color like a fairyland," held the old mountaineer fast, and on clear days the Sierra were outlined on the rim of his vision from his hilltop perch.

A plat of 1891 shows the Mount Wanda area as open land, except for about 15 acres of hillside vineyards in the area of the present Strain Ranch. Orchards and vineyards were planted up and down the other side of the valley, including the area around the gravesite. There is no evidence that Muir raised cattle or hay in the Mt. Wanda area, although according to oral history statements, some of the hilltops may have been planted to hay in the years following Muir's death.

After Muir's death, most of the land was sold and the land was broken up into ever-smaller sections.

**Cultural
Resources**

The House area is rich in cultural resources, including major historic structures, historic orchards, and a large collection of historic artifacts. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Gravesite tract includes the historic cemetery and also historic orchards.

A preliminary reconnaissance of Mount Wanda and the City tract revealed no significant archeological or historic resources. However, these lands were once part of the Muir family estate, and because of the extensive stands of oaks, may have been used as acorn gathering grounds in prehistoric times by the Ohlones. Hence there may be some as-yet undiscovered cultural resource phenomena on these lands.

In accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, complete historic and archeological surveys, coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer, will be conducted to locate, inventory, and nominate any resources on these tracts that might qualify for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Preliminary consultations with the State Historic Preservation Officer on this project have occurred.

In addition, a Traditional Use Study will be conducted by a qualified ethnographer in consultation with local Ohlone organizations to determine the presence of any ethnographic resources in the park area.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Topography, Geology And Soils

Regional geology of the area consists of uplifted and eroded marine sediments. Hills in the vicinity range up to about 1500 ft., with valleys at near sea level. Soils are generally clay and clay-loam. Rock is soft siltstone, sandstone, and mudstone. The soils will slide when undercut on moderate to steep slopes, and there is significant local history of slope failure in developed areas.

The Muir House and Gravesite areas are generally flat valley land, with the exception of the low knob occupied by the Muir House. Both areas have deep, rich, clay and clay-loam soils. Both areas have a long history of cultivation.

The City tract is located immediately adjacent to the base of the hills that constitute the Mount Wanda property. Approximately a third of the tract is level, and appears to have been cultivated at times in the past. The remainder of the tract is very steep land. See map of City tract.

The Mount Wanda property consists basically of one large, rounded hill, with steep slopes on the sides and an expanse of fairly level terrain in the center. There is evidence that the lands in the center were graded at some time, possibly in the 1920's, to facilitate hay production. Soils on this property are loam and clay-loam, 1 to 3.5 feet to bedrock. They are quite impermeable, subject to erosion, and can slide when undercut.

Hydrology

There are no perennial streams within the site's boundary. Franklin Creek, which flows west to east, crosses the House area. This streamcourse collects runoff from the House area, the City tract, and the north slopes of the Mount Wanda property. There is a past history of flooding from this stream in the House area, but drainage improvements completed several years ago have alleviated the problem. The balance of the Mount Wanda property and the Gravesite tract drain directly into Alhambra Creek. There has been a history of flooding in residential areas adjacent to the south side of the Mount Wanda property. Runoff from minor drainages on Mount Wanda has at times left the stream channel and produced sheet flows through adjacent residential properties. There has also been an occasional problem with flooding on and around the Gravesite tract, where runoff produces sheet flows en route to Alhambra Creek.

Although residents have complained to local authorities about floodflows for years, there are no projects underway to remedy the situation.

Domestic and irrigation water supply within the boundary comes from wells and municipal systems. There have been no quality or quantity problems other than the regionwide restrictions imposed during periods of sustained drought.

No portions of the site are located in either a designated floodplain or a wetland, and consequently Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, which regulate Federal activities in such areas, are not applicable.

**Vegetation
And Wildlife**

Vegetation on the House area and the gravesite area is largely alien, with the exception of the native plant garden and riparian growth along Franklin and Alhambra Creeks. Most of the vegetation on these two tracts consists of orchards, with also a sprinkling of introduced ornamental species.

Wildlife frequenting these areas includes a wide range of resident and migratory species of birds, and animals such as ground squirrels and raccoons that can exist in an agricultural/suburban environment.

Vegetation on the city property consists of alien and natural vegetation in fairly distinct zones. The flat areas have a history of cultivation and their vegetation now consists primarily of alien grasses, interspersed with a few old and very large eucalyptus trees. There are also several large grafted walnut trees at the north end of the property, apparently the remnant of a once-larger orchard.

The steep areas of the City tract have natural vegetation. Trees include bay, live oak, black walnut, and buckeye. There are also numerous shrubs and vines in the area, producing a dense understory of vegetation. Animal life in the area includes the broad range of wildlife associated with Bay Area oak woodland/grassland areas, including black-tailed deer, gray fox, opossum, skunk, and numerous bird species.

Vegetation on the Mount Wanda area is a mixture of grassland, savannah, woodland, and forest.

Grassland accounts for roughly one-third of the total Mount Wanda area. It includes the level area at the top of the hill, and an area surrounding the Strain Ranch. Grasses in this area are primarily alien wild oats, wild barleys, bromes, and ryes. However, there are some remaining wild grasses remaining. Other plants include numerous wildflowers, and weed species such as yellow star thistle and artichoke thistle.

Savannah covers about one-half of the Mount Wanda area. Tree species include blue oak, valley oak, and buckeye, with an understory of grasses and herbs.

Woodland and forest cover the balance of the area. Woodland includes dense stands of coast live oak, bay and buckeye, with an understory of grassland. Forested areas, located in drainages and where groundwater is plentiful, have tree species such as bigleaf maple, madrone, coast live oak, bay, buckeye, and willow. Some forested areas have also been invaded by dense stands of the alien tree of heaven. The understory is dense with shrubs such as thimbleberry, wild blackberry, and California wild rose.

Animal life in the area includes the broad range of wildlife associated with Bay Area oak woodland/grassland areas, including black-tailed deer, gray fox, opossum, skunk, and numerous bird species.

**Threatened
And
Endangered
Species**

There are no federally listed threatened and endangered species expected to be encountered within the authorized boundary. However, the Fish and Wildlife Service has indicated the possibility that five candidate species (Category 2) could be present in the area. These are:

Pacific western big-eared bat
(*Plecotus townsendii californiense*)

California tiger salamander
(*Ambystoma tigrinum californiense*)

California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*)

Alameda striped racer (*Masticophis lateralis euryxanthus*)

Diablo rock-rose (*Helianthella castanea*)

The state of California also maintains lists of threatened and endangered species. The Alameda striped racer, listed above, is also listed as a state threatened species.

VISITOR USE ANALYSIS

Existing Use

The primary visitor use at John Muir National Historic Site consists of interpretive tours for individuals and groups. Typically, the visitor is greeted at the visitor center by park staff and provided the opportunity to view a movie about Muir. He/she then takes a self-directed tour of the house and grounds, with stops at the Muir House, Martinez adobe, and the carriage house. All of these features are interpreted, as are the orchards.

Visitor use of the park has increased steadily since its creation and in 1989 totalled 34,500. Table 1 displays use since 1976.

Table 1. Annual Visitation, John Muir NHS.

| YEAR | TOTAL USE |
|------|-----------|
| 1976 | 39,700 |
| 1977 | 30,400 |
| 1978 | 26,700 |
| 1979 | 26,400 |
| 1980 | 28,700 |
| 1981 | 28,600 |
| 1982 | 34,900 |
| 1983 | 30,200 |
| 1984 | 34,300 |
| 1985 | 36,000 |
| 1986 | 39,700 |
| 1987 | 35,500 |
| 1988 | 37,800 |
| 1989 | 34,500 |

The park has for years conducted an Environmental Living Program (ELP) for elementary school classes. The program is intended to provide the students with an appreciation of their natural and cultural surroundings. The scale of the ELP has been significantly reduced in recent years, first in the early 1980's due to budget constraints, which reduced the annual sessions from 22 down to 11, and more recently from an overnight to a day-only program due to concerns about the structural safety of the Martinez adobe. The adobe was used in the past to house students for the overnight session. The eleven ELP sessions in 1988 accommodated some 280 students.

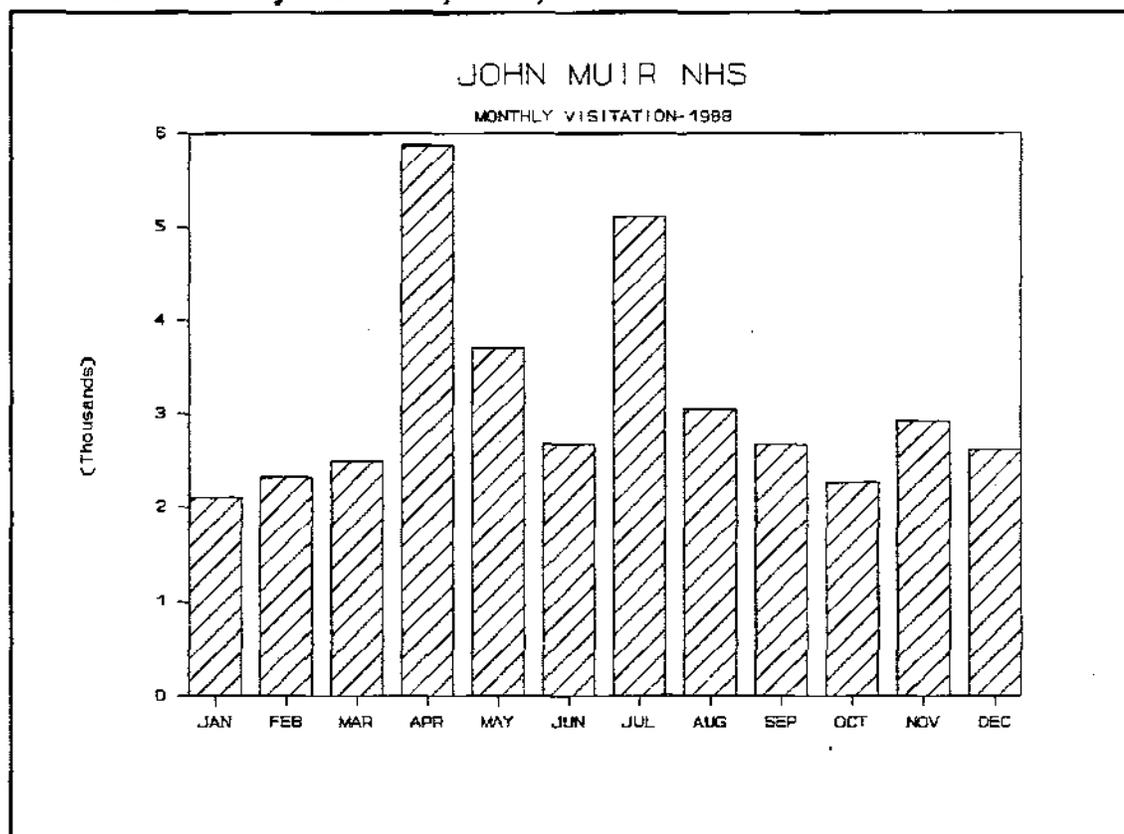
The park hosts two special events during the year. The largest is the John Muir Birthday Celebration, which is held annually near the end of April. In 1988, some 2,100 people attended. The December Victorian Teas, another annual event, served 480 visitors in 1988 and 459 in 1989.

Sunday is the busiest day throughout the year with average visitation approaching 200 during the peak season.

As indicated in Table 2, use is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year. The bulges in April and July are the result of large special events.

The breakdown of visitation by point of origin is roughly 31 percent local, 33 percent regional, 32 percent national, and 4 percent international. The average length of stay for visitors is 1.5 hours.

Table 2. Monthly Visitation, 1988, John Muir NHS.



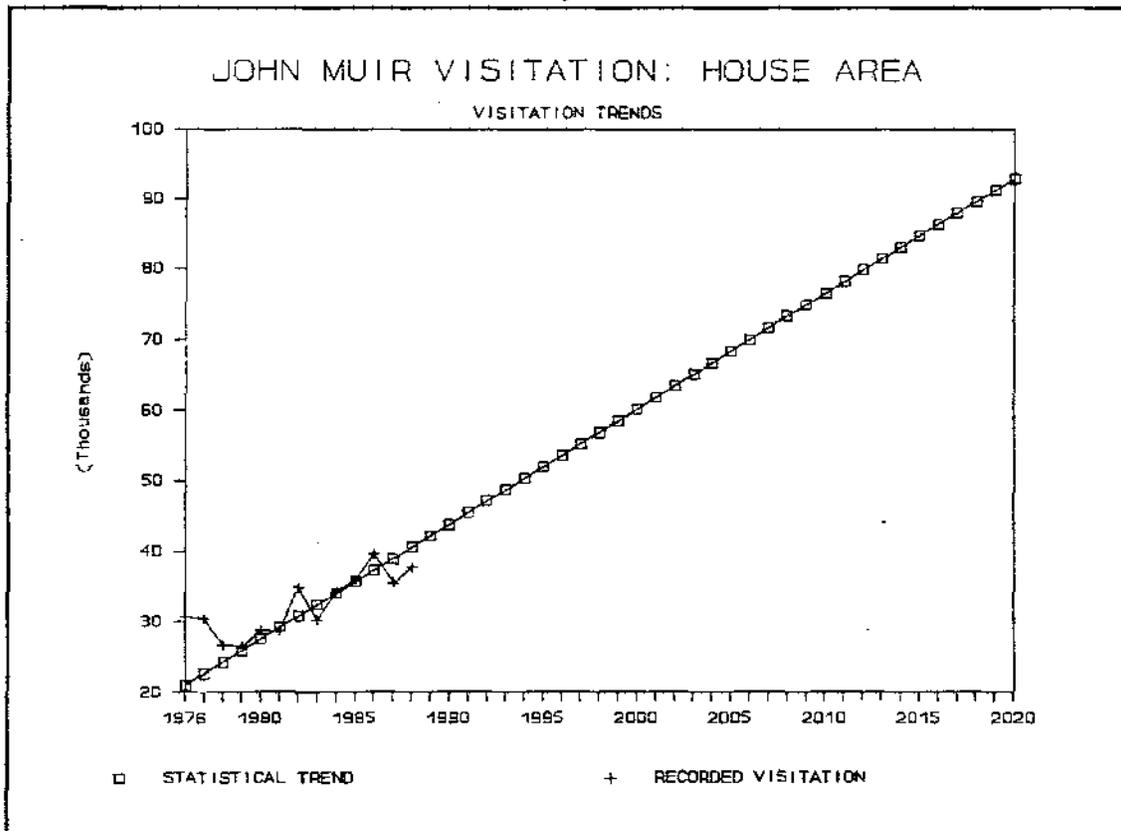
Projected Use Use has been steadily increasing over the past several years, and interest in John Muir continues to be strong. State legislation passed in October 1989, designated April 21 of each year as John Muir Day. The legislation encourages public schools and other institutions to undertake programs

about Muir and his contributions to the environment. These programs may significantly increase visits to the site by local school classes.

Use at the House area is projected to reach 60,000 by the year 2000, based on historical trends, and may well triple by 2020. Table 3 shows use projections.

Addition of the Mount Wanda and Gravesite tracts to the park will produce some additional visitor use. The amount depends to some extent on the level of access, facilities, and programs provided, but should be similar to visitation patterns at nearby Briones Regional Park. Annual Mount Wanda use is expected to approximate 20,000 visitors initially, increasing to 40 to 50,000 visitors in 2020. Visitation to the gravesite is expected to be modest, averaging from 5 to 10 per day initially, likely doubling by 2020.

Table 3. House Area Visitation Projection, John Muir NHS.



Carrying Capacity

Neither the historic resources in the Muir House section nor the natural resources on the recently added lands would be adversely affected by visitation levels forecast at least through the period 2020. The park has successfully managed visitor use loads in the Muir House section which are far in excess of the current average loads experienced now and expected during the next thirty years. In addition, the established 80-person fire limit for the house is well below the capacity of the house to provide non-damaging use.

For the Mount Wanda area, the expectation is that visitor use levels will roughly correspond with the relatively light use pressure experienced at nearby Briones Regional Park.

The primary limitation on the capacity of the area to provide for visitation lies in the availability of support facilities, principally the visitor center and on-site parking, and staffing. The existing 17-car parking lot is filled and overflowing onto adjacent streets during special events and on most weekend days, and even at certain times during the week. The visitor center itself becomes overcrowded whenever a busload of visitors arrives. At such times there is generally a long line of visitors in the small lobby waiting for use of the limited restroom facilities.

Staffing limitations in recent years have forced significant cutbacks in service, e.g. both group tours and other special programs are provided at levels far below demand.

FACILITY ANALYSIS

Muir House Section

Non-historic roads and trails include the 17-car parking area, a combination service vehicle access and pedestrian path that cuts across the park to the Martinez Adobe following an historic route, an easy access trail that goes from the visitor center to the Muir House, and a paved service area behind the visitor center.

Non-historic buildings and facilities include the visitor center/administration building of approximately 2,000 square feet, a 400 square foot tractor shed located near the Martinez Adobe, and a ramada behind the Adobe with two picnic tables. There is also a bus stop shelter in the northeast corner of the site.

Electric, water, gas, sewer and telephone service are provided by the City of Martinez and by commercial sources. There are also two dug wells on the Muir house section, one of which has been equipped with a replica windmill tower. The well provides irrigation water for the orchards.

Historic structures on the List of Classified Structures are the John Muir house, the Martinez Adobe and the carriage house. The two dug wells also date from ranching days.

City Tract There are two small buildings, apparently of post-WWII vintage, located on this tract. One is an 800 SF wood-frame structure in poor repair while the other is a 1200 SF cinder block building apparently structurally sound but in poor repair internally. A gravel driveway and parking lot are located adjacent to the cinder block structure.

There is a functioning well on the tract, and sewage disposal is via septic tank. Commercial electric and phone service are available.

Mount Wanda The only structures on the property are located at the Strain Ranch, and include two houses, a barn, and several miscellaneous outbuildings. Utilities available to this area include municipal water and sewage, and commercial power and telephone service.

There are approximately 2 miles of graded unsurfaced roads in this area.

Gravesite Tract There are no structures on the tract other than the fence enclosing the cemetery plot. No utilities are present although they are available nearby.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

ALTERNATIVE A: INTEGRATED OPERATION (Proposed Action)

Cultural Resources

The primary impact of this alternative on cultural resources would be beneficial, since it would result in the protection of an important aspect of the site's historic scene, the undeveloped lands to the south of the Muir home. Positive impacts would also accrue to the historic scene from the designation of an area of visual concern and review by the site's staff of local land use regulation in that area.

The relatively minor construction projects associated with the plan would not be in areas of known cultural resource sensitivity. Nevertheless all ground-disturbing activity and any designation or development of trail routes will also be preceded by archeological clearance. Any development or use in the Strain Ranch area would also be preceded by an appraisal of historic values, including an evaluation of National Register significance for all structures.

Visual Quality

The plan would have beneficial impacts on visual quality through protection of the historic scene, as outlined above.

Minor temporary adverse visual impacts would occur as a result of vegetative disturbance during construction projects on various parts of the area. These impacts would be mitigated in the long term through revegetation of construction areas with either natural vegetation or historical landscaping. Minor permanent adverse impacts would occur on the City of Martinez tract as a result of the development of a maintenance complex and parking lot. Design of improvements would be such as to blend with surroundings.

Soils

Soils would be disturbed through several minor construction projects. With the exception of the trail development on the Mount Wanda area, all construction would be on virtually level ground with little potential for creating erosion or slope instability. Exposed soils would be revegetated, generally with native species except in the House section, where the existing landscaping is ornamental or orchard/vineyard. The new trail development, located in wooded areas and on sloping terrain, would consist of foot trails adhering closely to natural

topography and lying "lightly on the land." Close attention to drainage and replanting of disturbed areas with native vegetation would minimize adverse impacts.

**Adjacent
Neighbor-
hoods**

The primary impacts on adjacent neighborhoods would accrue to residents adjacent to the gravesite area, to the Strain Ranch, and to the city property.

The inclusion of the gravesite in the Historic Site will likely have the result of increasing visitation to the gravesite. However, the proposed plan does not call for encouraging visitation to the gravesite and only modest increases in visitation are expected. The plan includes parking on the Gravesite tract only to accommodate administrative use.

The Strain Ranch area is identified as a future trail staging area, and as the location for facilities for the environmental education program. On a general neighborhood-wide basis, these uses could stimulate some additional traffic flows on Alhambra Valley Road. This road currently carries heavy traffic loads relative to its rural design, and is considered by local residents to be dangerous and congested. The proposed plan makes any facilities and operations at this area contingent on improvement of traffic conditions.

There are two developed tracts adjacent to the Strain property fronting on the north side of Alhambra Valley Road. Residents on these two tracts, which include a total of five residential dwellings, could be affected by visitor use on the Mount Wanda area. Trespass by park visitors is conceivable and sights and sounds from the proposed staging area could impact residents on the tract immediately adjacent.

Efforts would be made by the park to clearly mark the park boundary and prevent inadvertent trespass onto these two properties. Also, planning of any staging or environmental education facilities in the Strain Ranch area would consider means of limiting impacts on the adjacent property through location, screening, and design.

Traffic on the easternmost portion of Franklin Canyon Road would be moderately increased by Historic Site and regional trail visitors using the parking lot. This additional traffic could at times result in additional delays at the Franklin Canyon/Alhambra Avenue intersection.

The area proposed for the maintenance facility is most directly adjacent to the three homes. The area would change considerably in appearance with the modification and expansion of the cinder-block building, and the fencing of the area. There would also be increased activity in this area by gardeners and maintenance workers, including some use of power equipment.

Design of the area would consider opportunities for minimizing adverse impacts on adjacent residents through the use of landscaping and choice of building materials. Given the current abandoned and disheveled appearance of the area, and its frequent use by transients, the project should have a beneficial impact on the neighborhood.

The proposed parking lot is not immediately adjacent to any residences.

**Vegetation
And Wildlife**

Vegetation and wildlife will be affected by the proposed minor construction projects and related visitor use, and by proposed vegetation management changes on the Mount Wanda area.

Additional information will be gathered relating to the possible presence of endangered, threatened, and candidate plants and animals within the park area. The protection afforded candidate species will be equivalent to that afforded the listed species.

Construction on the House section in the vicinity of the visitor center will affect only alien vegetation consisting of non-native lawn grasses. No significant related impacts on wildlife are expected.

Construction of the parking lot and maintenance facility on the city property will result in the removal of approximately .75 acres of vegetation, which consists generally of non-native grasses and a sprinkling of native shrubs that have naturally germinated since the tract was abandoned. Wildlife associated with this vegetation would be adversely affected. Construction of the improvements on this tract would be preceded by a survey for any threatened or endangered plant and animal species. None are known to be present.

Construction of staging facilities and environmental education facilities in the Strain Ranch area would be in an area of

existing development where vegetation consists almost entirely of introduced non-native grass species. Wildlife values are low and no significant impacts would occur.

New trail development would occur in the more densely vegetated portions of the Mount Wanda area where there is a wide diversity of plant species providing important habitat. Prior to the construction of any trail route, surveys would be made for rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species.

The proposed plan for vegetation management could significantly affect the plant species composition on that portion of the Mount Wanda area, approximately 100 acres, that now consists of annually grazed non-native grasses. Long term management would be aimed at reducing the importance of these grasses and encouraging the return of native plants. Conversion to more natural conditions is seen as a long term process with minor incremental changes from year to year. A vegetation management plan for this area will be completed to evaluate in detail the methods to be used in restoration of native plant communities.

Visitor Use Visitors would benefit from this alternative in having a broader range of activities, e.g. they would be able to hike on Mount Wanda and appreciate some of the natural phenomena that Muir observed and enjoyed. Visitors would also be able to more readily view Muir's gravesite. Finally, the current parking situation at the visitor center may presently deter some visitors; development of the proposed auxiliary parking lot would go far to alleviate this problem.

There are some potential hazards associated with trail use on Mount Wanda, e.g. rattlesnakes, poison oak, grazing cattle, and abandoned gas wells. However, park management would make visitors aware of the natural hazards, and continue to obtain periodic safety inspections of the gas wells. The wells, in any event, are not in a location likely to receive much visitor use.

Water Resources The proposed actions, e.g. the greenhouse, management of the historic pear orchard at the Gravesite tract, etc., will produce some minor increases in demand for water from existing wells or from the municipal system.

Proposed developments will be designed to avoid exacerbating flood conditions. Any development in the Strain Ranch area will avoid significant impacts on percolation rates or the diversion of water from natural flow patterns. Likewise on the Gravesite tract, any grading or facility development will be done in such a way as to avoid the creation of flood problems. It may be possible in both areas to improve drainage in concert with broader regional solutions.

- Air Quality** The proposed project should have no significant impact on air quality. Any construction activities and future vegetation management activities will closely adhere to local and regional guidelines.
- Short Term Uses And Long Term Productivity** The project would produce very minor adverse impacts on visual quality in the short run. In the long term, the project would have a beneficial impact on the environment through preserving and restoring natural conditions, making new areas available for visitor use and appreciation, and encouraging the understanding and appreciation in the general population of the Nation's cultural and natural heritage.
- Commitments Of Resources** The project makes virtually no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources other than the labor and capital invested in various features.

ALTERNATIVE B: NO ACTION PLAN

- Cultural Resources** This plan could allow significant negative impacts on cultural resources. In the absence of land acquisition in the Mount Wanda area, these properties may be developed for residential use. Depending on the subdivision plan, and the requirements established by local land use regulating agencies, the development could affect the wooded hillside facing the House area, thereby impacting the historic scene.
- This plan would also fail to take steps to identify a zone of concern around the House area. The result would be less recognition by regulatory agencies of the protection needs of the Historic Site.
- Visual Quality** Visual quality from the House area could be affected as discussed above under *Cultural Resources*. Since there would be no new National Park Service construction

associated with this alternative, there would be no on-site construction-related short term adverse impacts on visual quality.

Development of Mount Wanda for residential uses could have significant impacts on visual quality through the removal of native vegetation. The extent of such impacts would depend in large part on the nature and design of the development.

Soils There would be no soil disturbance associated with National Park Service activities under this alternative. However, there could be substantial impacts resulting from residential development of the Mount Wanda area.

Adjacent Neighborhoods The neighborhoods adjacent to the gravesite and near the Strain Ranch area on Alhambra Valley Road would be unaffected by National Park Service activities under this alternative. However, there could be additional traffic on Alhambra Valley Road as a result of residential development on Mount Wanda.

Residents and businesses in the vicinity of the House area would be increasingly impacted by the overflow parking from the House area.

Vegetation And Wildlife Vegetation and wildlife on the Mount Wanda tract could be adversely impacted by the residential development that may occur there in the absence of land acquisition. The extent of such development, and the degree to which it would impact different vegetative communities and related wildlife, is unknown.

Visitor Use Visitors would continue to experience difficulty at times in finding parking at the House area, and some may be deterred from visiting the site. The range of activities and interpretation of Muir would remain unchanged.

Water Resources There would be no impact on water resources.

Air Quality There would be no impact on air quality.

ALTERNATIVE C: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Cultural Resources

The primary impact of this alternative on cultural resources would be beneficial, since it would result in the protection of an important aspect of the site's historic scene, the undeveloped lands to the south of the Muir home. Positive impacts would also accrue to the historic scene from the designation of an area of visual concern and review by the site's staff of local land use regulation in that area.

The relatively minor construction projects associated with the plan would not be in areas of known cultural resource sensitivity. Nevertheless all ground-disturbing activity will be preceded by archeological clearance. Designation of trail routes and any development of new routes will also be preceded by archeological clearance.

Visual Quality

The plan would have beneficial impacts on visual quality through protection of the historic scene, as outlined above under *Cultural Resources*.

Minor temporary adverse visual impacts would occur as a result of vegetative disturbance during National Park Service construction projects on various parts of the Historic Site. These impacts would be mitigated in the long term through revegetation of construction areas with either natural vegetation or historical landscaping. Minor permanent adverse impacts would occur on the City of Martinez tract as a result of the development of a maintenance complex and a parking lot, and on the Gravesite tract due to construction of a parking lot and installation of fencing. Design of improvements would be such as to blend with surroundings.

Major negative visual quality impacts could occur as a result of residential development on Mount Wanda in areas not protected by scenic easements.

Soils

Soils would be disturbed through several minor construction projects. All construction would be on virtually level ground with little potential for creating erosion or slope instability. Exposed soils would be revegetated, generally with native species except in the House section, where the existing landscaping is ornamental or orchard/vineyard.

Soil disturbance of an unknown magnitude could occur as a result of residential development occurring on those portions of the Mount Wanda area not acquired or protected under this alternative.

**Adjacent
Neighbor-
hoods**

The primary impacts on adjacent neighborhoods would accrue to residents adjacent to the gravesite area and to the city property.

The inclusion of the gravesite in the Historic Site will likely have the result of increasing visitation to the gravesite. However, the proposed plan does not call for encouraging visitation to the gravesite and only modest increases in visitation are expected. Further, under this alternative visitors would not be permitted to drive to the gravesite but would be conveyed to the site once daily by National Park Service operated van. The plan includes parking on the Gravesite tract to accommodate the van and a maintenance vehicle.

There would be no development at the Strain Ranch area under this alternative, and hence no traffic impacts or other visitor-use related impacts on neighborhoods.

The development of the city property to serve as a maintenance facility and as a visitor parking area would have some affect on the neighborhood. Three houses are located in the immediate vicinity.

Traffic on the easternmost portion of Franklin Canyon Road would be moderately increased by Historic Site and regional trail visitors using the parking lot. This additional traffic could at times result in additional delays at the Franklin Canyon/Alhambra Avenue intersection.

The area proposed for the maintenance facility is most directly adjacent to the three homes. The area would change considerably in appearance with the modification and expansion of the cinder-block building, and the fencing of the area. There would also be increased activity in this area by gardeners and maintenance workers. There would be some use of power equipment by these workers and hence additional noise generated for short periods.

Design of the area would consider opportunities for minimizing adverse impacts on adjacent residents through the use of landscaping and choice of building materials. Given the current abandoned and disheveled appearance of the area, and its frequent use by transients, the project should have a beneficial impact on the neighborhood.

The proposed parking lot is not immediately adjacent to any residences.

Potential residential development on the unprotected portions of Mount Wanda could increase traffic on Alhambra Valley Road.

**Vegetation
And Wildlife**

Vegetation and wildlife will be affected by the proposed minor construction projects and related visitor use.

Vegetation and wildlife may also be affected to an unknown extent by residential development occurring on portions of the Mount Wanda area not acquired or otherwise protected under the plan.

Construction on the House section in the vicinity of the visitor center will affect only alien vegetation consisting of non-native lawn grasses. No significant related impacts on wildlife are expected.

Construction of the parking lot and maintenance facility on the city property will result in the removal of approximately .75 acres of vegetation, which consists generally of non-native grasses and a sprinkling of native shrubs that have naturally germinated since the tract was abandoned. Wildlife associated with this vegetation would be adversely affected. Construction of the improvements on this tract would be preceded by a survey for any threatened or endangered plant and animal species.

The regional trail located on the Mount Wanda property would be aligned on existing fire roads, and there would be minimal physical impacts on vegetation and related wildlife, and minimal disturbance to wildlife from the presence of human due to the expected light use.

Visitor Use Visitors would benefit from this alternative in having a broader range of activities, e.g. they would be able to hike on portions of Mount Wanda, within the trail easement, and appreciate some of the natural phenomena that Muir observed and enjoyed. Visitors would also be able to more readily view Muir's gravesite. Finally, the current parking situation at the visitor center may presently deter some visitors; development of the proposed auxiliary parking lot would go far to alleviate this problem.

There are some potential hazards associated with trail use on Mount Wanda, e.g. rattlesnakes, poison oak, and grazing cattle. Park management would make visitors aware of these natural hazards.

Water Resources Proposed National Park Service developments will produce only minor increases in demand for water from existing wells or from municipal systems.

Proposed developments will also be designed to avoid exacerbating flood conditions.

Residential development on Mount Wanda may have an impact on the area's drainage. However, the impacts depend on the design of the development and the extent to which drainage improvements are considered in the plan.

Air Quality The proposed project should have no significant impact on air quality.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT PROPOSAL AND IN THE PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SCOPING

Scoping for the plan was initiated October 24, 1989. Letters announcing the initiation of scoping, and inviting comments, were mailed to groups and individuals with a known interest in the John Muir National Historic Site. Announcements were also provided to the local press. A *Federal Register* notice of the initiation of scoping was published on November 3.

Afternoon and evening scoping sessions were held at the Historic Site on November 13 and 15. Approximately 35 persons attended.

Many of the attendees encouraged the protection and improvement of the natural qualities of the Mount Wanda area. Several indicated particular interest in restoration of native vegetation. Views on retention of grazing were mixed.

Interest was expressed in further use of the site for environmental education programs. The restoration of the site's overnight Environmental Living Program was encouraged and expansion of the scope of the program was encouraged to permit accommodating larger school groups.

Other suggestions included the development of springs on Mount Wanda to provide water for trail users, and development of interpretive trails and trail guides. Use of trails for horseback riding was supported.

Major concerns were expressed by neighbors of the John Muir gravesite regarding the increased public use and its impact on the neighborhood. Minimization of public use and new facilities were encouraged.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the development of public use facilities in the vicinity of the Strain Ranch. This could produce impacts on an adjacent residence, and would also add to traffic problems on Alhambra Valley Road, which is considered by residents to be a particularly hazardous roadway. There is also concern that any developments at the Strain Ranch area not interfere with or increase drainage flows from the Mount Wanda area.

LIST OF AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WHOM COPIES OF THE DRAFT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WERE SENT

Elected Officials

Senator Alan Cranston
Senator Pete Wilson
Congressman George Miller
State Senator
State Assemblyman
Mayor, City of Martinez
Chairman, Board of Supervisors, Contra Costa County
County Supervisor Nancy Fahden

Federal Agencies

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State Agencies

California Department of Parks and Recreation
California State Historic Preservation Officer
California Department of Fish and Game
California State Clearinghouse
Regional Water Quality Control Board

Local Agencies

City of Martinez
Contra Costa County Planning Department
East Bay Regional Park District
Martinez Unified School District
Bay Area Air Quality Management District

Organizations

Alhambra Valley Improvement Association
Martinez Land Trust
Sierra Club
John Muir Memorial Association
Martinez Chamber of Commerce
California Historical Society
Contra Costa Historical Society
Martinez Historical Society
National Park and Conservation Association
Martinez Unified School District
East Bay Trails Council
California Native Plant Society
Mt. Diablo Unified School District
Benicia Unified School District
Diablo Valley College
Friends of the Franklin Hills

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The draft plan was made available for public review from June 13, 1990, until July 31, 1990. A total of 17 letters were received regarding the plan. In addition, a public meeting was held on July 11 in Martinez. This meeting was attended by 35 persons.

Public Meeting Statements

Sixteen statements were presented at the public meeting. Except as discussed below, the speakers supported the concepts of Alternative A, and encouraged early fee acquisition of open space lands on Mount Wanda. Several indicated particular support for the development of an environmental education facility. Issues raised by the speakers are characterized below, and responses are provided.

**Public
Meeting
Comment 1**

The provision of visitor use facilities at the Gravesite tract will attract undesirable levels and types of use and detract visually from the neighborhood. Facility development may also exacerbate flooding problems.

The existing situation is workable. If it is necessary to make further provision for public use, the National Park Service should either make arrangements for public parking at the nearby elementary school, or provide shuttle service from the visitor center.

Response to Public Meeting Comment 1. The plan has been revised to eliminate proposals for fencing and on-site visitor parking. A single parking pulloff, hardened with gravel or pavers, will be provided at the entrance to the tract to provide a pulloff for the park maintenance vehicle. A low, movable barrier will be used to block public access to this parking spot. A small rustic wooden sign will be placed on the tract indicating the nature of the area and its relationship to the Historic Site. (No signs will be placed on Alhambra Valley Road.) A foot trail will be developed across the tract to the cemetery.

Public parking at the school is not feasible much of the time because of existing heavy loads. The situation at the gravesite will be monitored, and if use levels produce neighborhood problems, a shuttle program will be instituted.

No site development will occur that will affect drainage. The National Park Service will cooperate with the neighbors in seeking solutions to flooding problems in the area.

**Public
Meeting
Comment 2**

The proposed expansion of the visitor center is not adequately justified by the data presented, which show little overall increase since the Historic Site was established.

Expenditures for an expanded visitor center should have low priority compared to land acquisition.

Response to Public Meeting Comment 2. The visitor use data show a bulge of use in the first two years, then a decline, and then steady growth over the last few years. This steady growth is expected to continue and was projected into the future using standard statistical methods. The visitor center is a converted veterinary hospital, and has been marginally acceptable as a visitor center from the beginning. Particular problems have been experienced in the last few years as the number of bus tours has increased. These tours present the facility with a sudden large load which it is not equipped to handle.

Funding for land acquisition and development at units of the National Park System are handled separately in Congress. It appears likely that early funding will be available for land acquisition; expansion of the visitor center may not occur for some time.

**Public
Meeting
Comment 3**

The plan should include greater expansion of the park boundary to include lands in the Franklin Hills to facilitate an open space corridor extending between the site and the Bay shoreline.

Response to Public Meeting Comment 3. The National Park Service does not have authority to acquire lands outside its authorized boundary. Congress would need to revise the boundary to permit any land acquisition beyond that outlined in the proposed plan, including the four immediately adjacent tracts discussed in Appendix 4.

While lands in the Franklin Hills are important to the site from the standpoint of protection of the historic scene, their protection through land use regulation or acquisition by local agencies is considered preferable to their incorporation into the Historic Site boundary.

**Public
Meeting
Comment 4**

Termination of grazing on the Mount Wanda lands may allow the proliferation of undesirable vegetation and may result in increased fire danger.

Response to Public Meeting Comment 4. The plan proposes to actively manage the Mount Wanda vegetation toward a more natural condition. It is recognized that because of existing disruptions in the natural system, nature cannot be allowed initially to "run its course" because that could result in the creation of unnatural concentrations of alien grasses and brush. The goal, ultimately, for the grassland portion of the area, is to restore at least some of the original native bunchgrass association. This type of vegetation is considerably less of a fire threat than the existing alien grasses because it is less dense, producing less flammable material, and remains green much later in the fire season.

The plan has been revised to recognize the potential for using carefully timed and controlled livestock grazing as a tool in restoring more natural vegetation. Other possible tools include prescribed fire and mechanical reduction.

**LETTERS OF COMMENT ON THE
DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

HULET HORNBECK LAND NEGOTIATOR CO.

535 MAIN STREET
MARTINEZ, CA 94553
(415) 228-6321

July 16, 1990

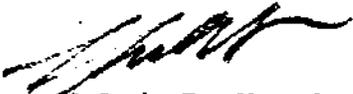
United States Department of the Interior
National Parks Service - Western Region
450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063
San Francisco, CA 94102
Attn: Dan Olson, Planner
Western Regional Office

Re: General Management to Plan and Environmental Assessment for
John Muir National Historic Site - Public Meeting July 11, 1990;
John Swett Elementary School, Martinez

Dear Dan:

Enclosed is a record of my comments of July 11, 1990. I thought
the meeting went quite well. I look forward to continued progress.

Very truly yours,



Hulet C. Hornbeck

cc: Robert Doyle

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESS-
MENT FOR JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

(Presented at a Public Meeting at the John Swett
Elementary School, July 11, 1990)

I am consultant for and representing the East Bay Regional Park District tonight concerning the General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment and tonight's hearing.

The District compliments the National Park Service staff in the continued processing of this project. The District share with the National Park Service concerns for the protection and enhancement of our key naturalist's home environment - while it is still possible of preservation.

To that end the District will restate the ways it considers most reasonable for the National Park Service to proceed.

1. [(1) Plan to accept the offers from the East Bay Regional Park District and from the City of Martinez:
 - (a) That the trail corridor (as a part of a very key Bay Area trail) will be operated and managed by the East Bay Regional Park District; and
 - (b) Donation of title to city owned property for a staging area and overflow parking lot.
2. [(2) Acquire 164, more or less acres from the Strain interest and acquire the Lo interest.
3. [(3) Coordinate with the property owner and the City of Martinez:
 - (a) Plan for some period of time for continued grazing of the property; and
 4. [(b) Allow for the annexation of the area by the City of Martinez.

Thus encouraging comity and cooperative negotiation with the property owner and the city as distinguished from possible adversarial negotiations.

In Conclusion:

This District was instrumental in the Federal legislation that recognized this property as essential to the public understanding of John Muir. This includes the passage of the enabling legislation; its signature into law by the then president; the appropriation of adequate first phase money; and the passage of that budgetary item into law by the current president. The District's Board of Directors and staff will continue to support your endeavors as you proceed in this way in the public interest to fulfill that legislative mandate.

Response to Hulett Hornbeck

1. The National Park Service plans to work closely with the East Bay Regional Park District and the City of Martinez in implementing the plan for the Historic Site.
2. The National Park Service proposes to acquire the entire Strain and Lo properties as funds become available and purchases can be arranged.
3. Grazing on Mount Wanda may be continued at its present level for a limited period of time, and some grazing may occur in future years in concert with other measures to restore native vegetation.
4. No decision has been made at this point on the matter of annexation to the City of Martinez. The National Park Service does recognize some potential advantages related to joint provision of services for the area.

**Advisory
Council On
Historic
Preservation**

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|---|
| WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE |
| JUL 13 '90 |
| RECEIVED |
| ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION |
| WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE |
| 450 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102 |
| TELEPHONE (415) 775-1000 |
| FAX (415) 775-1000 |
| WWW.NPS.GOV |

The Old Post Office Building
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW #809
Washington, DC 20004

Reply to: 730 Simms Street, #401
Golden, Colorado 80401

July 10, 1990

Stanley T. Albright
Regional Director
Western Region
National Park Service
450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063
San Francisco, CA 94102

REF: Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment
for the John Muir National Historic Site, California

Dear Mr. Albright:

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (GMP/EA) for the John Muir National Historic Site, California, to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for review, in accordance with the Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement (PMOA) for National Park Service (NPS) planning efforts affecting historic properties.

The GMP/EA has been reviewed by the Western Office of Project Review, and we have no comments at this time. If the National Park Service's preferred proposal includes any undertakings on properties eligible or included in the National Register of Historic Places, we would appreciate the opportunity to comment as specified by the above referenced PMOA. In particular, our Section 106 review may be required if Strain Ranch, located within the Mount Wanda area, is determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and this area is acquired by NPS for inclusion in the John Muir National Historic Site.

Please keep us informed as the planning effort progresses on this interesting and challenging project.

Sincerely,


Claudia Nissley
Director, Western Office
of Project Review

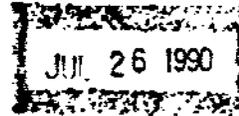
Response to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

All provisions of the Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement will be complied with in implementation of the proposed plan. Regarding the Strain Ranch, this area was not an historic feature of the Muir period and with one exception, the structures are post-WWII and without apparent historical value. Additional documentation on this facility would be collected prior to any development or modification.

Resources Building
1416 Ninth Street
95814
(916) 445-5656
TDD (916) 324-0804

California Conservation Corps
Department of Boating and Waterways
Department of Conservation
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Forestry
Department of Parks and Recreation
Department of Water Resources

GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN
GOVERNOR OF
CALIFORNIA



THE RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Air Resources Board
California Coastal Commission
California Tahoe Conservancy
California Waste Management
Board
Colorado River Board
Energy Resources Conservation
And Development Commission
San Francisco Bay Conservator
and Development Commission
State Coastal Conservancy
State Lands Division
State Reclamation Board
State Water Resources Control
Board
Regional Water Quality
Control Boards

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
ATTN: John Cherry
4202 Alhambra Avenue
Martinez, CA 94553

July 25, 1990

Dear Mr. Cherry:

The State has reviewed the Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, John Muir National Historic Site, Contra Costa County, submitted through the Office of Planning and Research.

We coordinated review of this document with the California Highway Patrol, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Departments of Conservation, Fish and Game, Food and Agriculture, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation.

None of the above-listed reviewers has provided a comment regarding this proposed project. Consequently, the State will have no comments or recommendations to offer.

Thank you for providing an opportunity to review this project.

Sincerely,


for Gordon F. Snow, Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Resources

cc: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(SCH 90040090)

Community
Development
Department

County Administration Building
651 Pine Street
4th Floor, North Wing
Martinez, California 94553-0095

Phone: 646-2035

Contra
Costa
County



Harvey E. Braggdon
Director of Community Development

| | |
|---|-----|
| WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE Community Development | |
| JUL 23 1990 | |
| Reg Dir | |
| Com Plan Dir | |
| GIS Operations | |
| Pub. Rel. Inq. | |
| GRD. Admin. | |
| Comm. Eval. | |
| Public Affairs | |
| EEO | |
| Budget | |
| Personnel | |
| VRP | DAN |
| Action Taken: | |

July 20, 1990

Mr. Stanley T. Albright
Regional Director, Western Region
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mr. Albright,

I wish to thank you for the opportunity to review the General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for John Muir National Historic Site.

As you are aware, the existing nine acre John Muir National Historic Site is incomplete and subject to further encroachment of incompatible urban uses. The only way to provide permanent protection to the viewshed to the south is with public acquisition of Mount Wandy as called for in Alternative A. The No Action alternative won't protect the site and Alternative C may provide limited visual protection but won't enhance the facility or allow for a greater range of activities that Alternative A will. Only Alternative A will meet the intent of Congress.

The only aspect of the project on which I have concerns is the desire to add parking at the Gravesite Tract. While acquisition of a governmental interest in the site would be desired to insure permanent protection, the provision of parking to allow for longer visits to the site may be counter productive. It may increase police protection needs in the area. Regulation of the times of day when parking will be allowed will be difficult and costly to implement. Acquisition of an easement or development rights may be sufficient to provide permanent protection to the Gravesite Tract as an alternative for simple acquisition.

We look forward to working with you on implementing a plan for this important site.

Sincerely yours,

James W. Cutler
Assistant Director,
Comprehensive Planning

JC/rw
cjc9/albright.ltr

**Response to Contra Costa County, Community
Development Department**

See response to Public Meeting Comment 1.



City of Martinez

525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, CA 94553-2394

WESTERN REGIONAL
OFFICE

JUL 27 1990

July 26, 1990

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|-----------------|
| Gen. Inv. Div. |
| ARB. Cont. Div. |
| ARB. Rep. Div. |
| ARB. Adm. Div. |
| ARB. Insp. Div. |
| Public Affairs |
| CEO |
| Director |
| Manager |
| ✓ <i>RP</i> |
| <i>DAN</i> |
| Not to Taken |

Stanley Albright
 Director, Western Region
 National Park Service
 450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063
 San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: John Muir Historic Site

Dear Mr. Albright:

The City of Martinez staff has the following comments on the draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment.

1. In general, we think the Plan is comprehensive, well done and discusses environmental issues adequately. With the comments as noted below, we would endorse Alternative A.
1. 2. We feel that the priorities of the Plan should be more clearly emphasized. First priority should be to acquire the Strain and Lo properties. We understand that the East Bay Regional Park District has an option on most of the Strain property, at a price below what your appraisers came up with. This opportunity to save taxpayer money should not be lost. We note that the Plan discusses acquisition of the 20 acres of the Strain property which he proposes to retain as a homestead. While this may be desirable in the future (assuming a willing seller), that part of the site is not essential to the historic site expansion, and acquisition of the remainder of the Strain and Lo property should not be delayed because of it.
2. 3. Acquisition of the post office site, and the upper reaches of the scenic canyon to the west would also be desirable, but again only as future phases when additional funding is available.
4. The Plan correctly notes that the City has offered to dedicate 3.3 acres of land along Franklin Canyon Road to the expanded park site. It should be noted that this offer is contingent on acquisition of the Stain and Lo property (excluding the Strain 20 acre homestead).

We urge you to proceed quickly with acquisition of the property as discussed above. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Richard Pearson
 Community Development Director

RP:nb.251.221

cc: City Manager
 S. Fiala, E.B.R.P.D.

Response to the City of Martinez

1. First land protection priority in the plan is acquisition of the Strain property, and the second priority is the Lo property. The National Park Service is unable to make use of the option acquired by the Park District on the Strain property because it is required by federal law to offer the property owner the fair market value of his property as indicated by a fair and adequate appraisal.

The plan recognizes that the "ranch" portion of the property may not be available for purchase immediately and indicates that its purchase may be deferred. Deferred acquisition of this area would not delay acquisition of the remainder of the property on Mount Wanda.

2. None of the areas identified are within the park boundary and hence could not be acquired without further authorization and funding.



East Bay Regional Park District

July 27 1990

11500 SKYLINE BOULEVARD, OAKLAND, CA 94619-2443 TELEPHONE (415) 531-9300 FAX: (415) 531-3239

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 JAMES H. DUNCAN, President
 KAY PETERSEN, Vice President
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 HARLAN KESSEL, Treasurer
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 JOHN O'DONNELL
 TED RADKE

PAT O'BRIEN

July 26, 1990

Superintendent
 John Muir National Historic Site
 4202 Alhambra Ave.
 Martinez, CA 94553

Subject: Environmental Assessment for the John Muir National
 Historic site

Dear Superintendent:

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| JOHN MUIR N.H.S. | SEND |
| Supr. | |
| Adm. C. | |
| Martinez | |
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The EBRPD has reviewed the subject document and offers the following comments. The subject document (p. 9, paragraph 4) asserts that the elimination of livestock grazing in the Mt. Wanda area would result in the reestablishment of "natural vegetation". The experience of the EBRPD is that in the absence of grazing, the fertile soils of this area undergo ecological succession to a vegetative cover of primarily non-native (European) annual grasses, herbs, and brushland.

1. This is a matter of concern to the EBRPD in the context of the stated program which would rely (in part) upon the District to assist in the control of wildfires. Uncontrolled growth of these non-native herbs and grasses would tend to increase the probability and severity of wildfires. Therefore, EBRPD management of nearby similar parklands uses controlled grazing as a primary resource management tool. The most likely alternate fire control methodology in ungrazed grasslands would include extensive discing of fire breaks. This kind of fire control program carries with it adverse impacts associated with erosion and siltation. There also would be secondary adverse impacts upon the flooding characteristics of Alhambra Creek (through downtown Martinez) and upon the extent of wetlands at the mouth of that creek (in the EBRPD's Martinez Regional Shoreline). These primary and secondary impacts are not discussed in the Environmental Consequences portion of the subject document (pp. 29 to 32).
- 2.

Notwithstanding the above comments, the Management Plan includes a number of elements which would be important positive contributions to local parks and recreation efforts. These include a possible staging area to serve the State Riding and Hiking Trail on the City of Martinez property. This would also contribute to the development of the Bay Area Ridge Trail encircling the San Francisco Bay Metropolitan area and to a Regional Trail link between the Martinez Regional Shoreline and Briones Regional Park.

The EBRPD will be pleased to continue its cooperation with the National Park Service to provide the public with park and recreation opportunities consistent with the historic and natural resources of the NHS site.

Very truly yours,



T. H. Lindenmeyer
Environmental Specialist

THL:ns
t1062790

cc: Pat O'Brien
Tom Mikkelsen
Bob Doyle
Maxine Turner
Kevin Shea
Joe Rubini
Ray Budzinski
Steve Fiala
Linda Prat

Response to the East Bay Regional Park District

1. The plan proposes to restore native vegetation through a program of active management. It is not proposed to allow alien grasses, forbs, and brush to take over the area in an uncontrolled fashion.

It is recognized that carefully timed and controlled livestock grazing may have some utility in a program for restoring native vegetation on Mount Wanda. The draft plan was overly restrictive in its language on this subject and has been revised to recognize grazing as one of several tools that might be employed in an overall plan. The plan provides that grazing would be regulated under special use permit.

2. Extensive discing, with the attendant potential for erosion and the stimulation of noxious alien species such as star-thistle, is not the only fuel reduction alternative to extensive grazing, and is not proposed. It should be recognized that grazing may also excessively reduce vegetative cover and produce erosion. Prescribed burning and mechanical reduction of vegetation may be used as needed to control fuel levels in conjunction with wildfire control and vegetation management plans.

JUL 25 1990

0661 X 700
JUL 25 1990

National Parks and Conservation Association

Phyllis Shaw
Superintendent
John Muir National Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Avenue
Martinez, California 94553

July 18, 1990

Dear Superintendent Shaw:

On behalf of the 150,000 members of National Parks and Conservation Association I would like to submit the following comments relative to the draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (GMP) for John Muir National Historic Site.

1. Our primary concern relates to the proposed management objectives for this National Historic Site. John Muir NHS is a cultural resource of national importance and in keeping with the area's legislative mandate, it should be managed with an emphasis on cultural resource protection and interpretation. While we support an holistic approach to the management of the natural and cultural resources as discussed in the draft GMP, decision making should be driven by the need to protect and interpret the historic scene and not in providing additional recreational opportunities to the regional community. We believe that protection of the views from the Muir house and management of the cultural landscape associated with the Muir property should be of paramount concern.

To this end, Mount Wanda should be classified and managed as a cultural resource and considered part of the historic scene associated with the Muir residence. The GMP states that "there is no evidence that Muir raised cattle or hay in the Mt. Wanda area" (page 21). Since the area was not a ranch at the time of Muir's occupancy, it should be purchased in fee and native vegetation restored.

2. The GMP discusses in great detail the need to relocate the maintenance facility and provide additional parking at the City tract. It also discusses the need to expand the visitor center to accommodate increased administrative and visitor use space. We would support relocation of maintenance and administrative facilities out of the core historic area. Consistent with NPCA's long held view that development zones should be a minimal size necessary to attend to visitor needs, we urge you to give serious consideration to not expanding the current visitor center parking area but rather, seek to provide additional visitor parking outside of the historic area, preferably on the City tract. In order to facilitate additional visitor parking in the vicinity of the visitor center, you may wish to consider relocating employee parking out of the visitor center lot in order to make room for additional visitor parking needs.



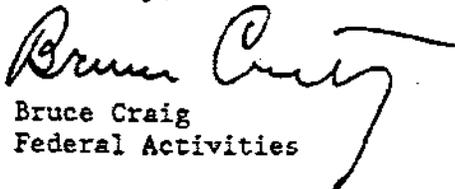
1015 Thirty-First Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007-4406
Telephone (202) 944-8530 • Fax (202) 944-8535

3. Vegetation management on the lands proposed to be added to the unit is also of concern. We note on page 9 that mention is made to "restoration to pre-Spanish conditions." The objective of all vegetation management at the site should be to restore the area to its condition and appearance at the time of Muir's association with the site, not to "pre-Spanish" conditions.

4. Finally, with regard to access to the John Muir grave site, we support preserving the site in its present undeveloped condition. Visitor access should provide only a minimal number of parking spaces to accommodate the needs of small number of people who wish to visit the gravesite. Furthermore, we urge you to work closely with people in the adjacent neighborhoods so that their concerns regarding additional traffic in residential neighborhoods are adequately addressed.

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to comment on this draft GMP. I look forward to receiving a copy of the final plan.

Sincerely,


Bruce Craig
Federal Activities

Response to National Parks and Conservation Association

1. The focus of the proposed plan is on the primary cultural resource values of the site. The natural and cultural are inextricably mixed on Mount Wanda since the area was, during the Muir/Strentzel era, valued as a natural feature and was not economically exploited. Its management as a natural zone, hence, is consistent with protection of the historic scene.

The proposed plan does not include any provisions for recreational use of the Mount Wanda area other than trail use on the regional trail, which is specifically referenced in the legislative history, and use of interpretive trails, which will be used to jointly interpret natural and cultural phenomena.

2. The proposed plan does not contemplate expansion of the visitor center parking lot. Rather, as suggested, additional visitor parking will be provided at the City tract. At least a portion of employee parking will also be provided at the City tract in conjunction with the maintenance area.

3. The plan's vegetation management objective for Mount Wanda involves generally attempting to restore native species to the area. This is recognized as a potentially difficult and complicated effort, considering the existence of vigorous, well-adapted alien species and the multiple opportunities for seed transport from nearby areas. Considerable research will be needed to guide this effort. As it is generally understood, the incursion of alien species began during the Spanish period and over time these introduced species and other alien species have become dominant in grassland areas. The extent to which this dominance may have been already achieved during Muir's time is not now known and may be difficult to determine. Hence, from a practical standpoint, it may be impossible to fine-tune the vegetation in the area to fully achieve either "pre-Spanish" or "Muir-era" conditions.

4. See response to Public Meeting Comment 1.

Friends of the Franklin Hills
P.O. Box 425
Martinez, CA 94553
August 3, 1990

Phyllis Shaw
John Muir National
Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Avenue
Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Ms. Shaw:

The following is our response to the Draft General Management Plan and Environment Assessment (June 1990) for the John Muir National Historic Site.

We are in strong favor of purchasing the 325-acre Mount Wanda lands, as described in Alternative A. We feel this is the best way to secure these lands for public enjoyment and scenic preservation.

1. [We believe, in addition, that the gravesite tract be purchased outright to ensure public ownership (and access to) this important historic site. In our opinion it is not appropriate to build parking spaces, which would encourage visitors to drive to the gravesite. This would both annoy the neighbors and be intrusive on the site. An alternative would be to have visitors park at the nearby John Swett School and provide a small footpath to the gravesite.

2. [Due to the lack of detail, it is not possible for us to provide much comment on the expansion of the Visitor Center (as shown in Alternative A). We do believe that, should this plan be adopted, care should be exercised in this expansion so that the Visitor Center does not intrude on the scenic atmosphere established by the house and grounds.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this draft plan. We are pleased to see the plans to expand this historic site moving forward.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Hicks

Sharon Hicks
Friends of the Franklin Hills

Response to Sharon Hicks

1. The authorizing legislation provides for acquisition of only a less-than-fee interest, rather than "outright" purchase of a fee interest.

See response to Public Meeting Comment 1 regarding concerns about development.

2. Expansion of the visitor center should not impact the historic scene. Basically it will be expanded around the current developed area, with expansion away from the house and toward the post office. Careful design should make the new center less of an intrusion than the existing one.

July 29, 1990

Dear Phyllis,

I like "Plan A" very much.
I think we should ^{first} concentrate
on getting the land before
some developer gets ideas.

1. There should be some
grazing to keep the weeds
down. I have seen the tall
grass when there wasn't much
grazing and we worried about
fire.

2. Wouldn't a fence around
cemetery acre spoil the charm
& "woody look?" Couldn't it be
tried without a fence & see
how that works out. However
a fence should be on the
border of the Figuerido property
so no one would walk on their
rightaway (sp?)

I'll see you soon. Welcome
back, Sherry

Response to Sherry Hanna

1. See response above to East Bay Regional Park District.
2. The plan for the Gravesite tract has been revised to minimize development. Fencing will not be provided unless indicated by security problems and/or neighborhood problems. The plan proposes the placement of a simple footpath from the road to the cemetery which should direct visitors away from adjacent property.

July 13, 1990

Superintendent
John Muir Historic Site
Alhambra Avenue
Martinez, CA 94553

| | N.P.S. | READ |
|---------|--------|------|
| Supr. | | |
| Adm. D. | | |
| Interp. | | |
| | | |
| Grads | | |
| Stg. | | |
| Trng. | | |
| | | |

Dear Sir:

It was my pleasure to attend the meeting at John Swett Elementary School on Wednesday evening, July 11, to discuss the alternative actions on the proposed acquisition of lands to the Historic Site. I am in favor of Alternative A, but was pleased to hear that any combination of alternatives could be used and that the National Park Service is interested in accommodating the neighbors whenever possible.

My particular concern, and that of many people present, was with the Gravesite Tract. I am in favor of a trail from the parking lot that services John Swett Elementary School to the gravesite. With such a trail there would be no need for a parking area or a fence encompassing the 1.27 acre parcel. The neighbors would like as little intrusion as possible - no signs on Alhambra Valley Road, for example, directing people to the site, but rather information at the Visitor Center if people ask about the whereabouts of Muir's grave.

It's not too difficult to presume that Muir would want his land to be kept in its most natural state. I think that he would abhor a fence around a portion of his property, as well as abhor a paved street and a parking lot there, however small.

Again, thank you for allowing us to voice our feelings, and we look forward to working with the NPS in the development of its new lands and particularly with the development, or rather, minimal development of the Gravesite Tract.

Sincerely,



Harold L. Olson
President, Alhambra Valley Improvement Association

Response to Harold S. Olson

See response to Public Meeting Comment 1.

6/23/90

To Phyllis Shaw Supt

Re General Management Plan

Your invitation to comment is
irresistible!

The five preparers deserve
an A+ and I look forward to
being a volunteer on site as the
plan is implemented!

My comment derives from my
volunteer effort thus far, and is
focused on the location of the
maintenance facility.

1. As you know, there are presently
three places where ^{gardening} tools used
by volunteers are located on the
site: The Visitor Center, G.M. House
& Martiney Adobe. If all these
tools are concentrated at the
proposed site, volunteers will
do a lot of trudging to obtain
& return the tools needed on site.
Most outside volunteer help will
still be on the present site & having
the tools to do the job nearby will
be desirable. John Lovel

Response to John Lowe

1. Tools needed for gardening and various maintenance operations in the House area will continue to be stored at convenient locations in that area. The proposed new maintenance facility will allow the removal of heavier mechanical equipment, vehicles, bulk storage, and maintenance offices from the sensitive House area.

JR 12 1990

July 10, 1990

Park Superintendent Phyllis Shaw
John Muir National Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Avenue
Martinez, Ca

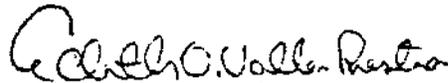
Dear Ms. Shaw:

In the July 7 issue of the CONTRA COSTA TIMES, I read of the proposed purchase of additional land for your site, and of the public meeting to be held tomorrow. Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the meeting and wish to express my opinion by this letter.

I think it is vital that as much land as possible be purchased as soon as possible. Our open spaces are disappearing at an alarming rate and the proper setting for John Muir's home is to be surrounded by open land, not subdivisions. I am afraid you will encounter much opposition from cattle people because they fear the loss of grazing land. But I am sure that will ultimately be lost to subdividers in any event - it is just a matter of time.

The other recommendations in the plan are all excellent and worth pursuing.

Sincerely,



Edith O. Valle-Riestra

140 Cora Court
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Response to Edith O. Valle-Riestra

1. Acquisition of the open space lands on Mount Wanda are first priority in land acquisition under the proposed plan.

JUL 10 1990

190 Sheryl Lane
Martinez, CA 94553

Superintendent
John Muir National Historical Site
4202 Alhambra Ave
Martinez, CA 94553

Ladies & Gentlemen:

This is in response to your letter of June 13, 1990 in which you enclosed a copy of the Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment.

My concern is with the granite tract. My home is located on the northside of the tract but we are vehemently opposed to any changes. Leave the area in its present condition.

Enclosed are copies of your letter of June 23, 1980 and my response. My letter pretty well expressed my feelings today as well as 10 years ago. Point 3 in that letter, re flood problems, is noted on pages 22 and 23 of your draft.

We are leaving for a 2 week trip to Oregon on July 11 and will be unable to attend the public meeting at John Sweet school that evening.

Please keep the area as it presently is.

Sincerely,
Annabel Hubbard Corsetta

Winton J. & Annabeth Hubbard
190 Strentzel Lane
Martinez, CA 94553

July 28, 1980

Ms. Phyllis P. Shaw
Superintendent
John Muir National Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Avenue
Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Ms. Shaw:

We are writing in response to your letter of June 23, 1980, asking for comments on your feasibility study for the preservation of the John Muir grave site.

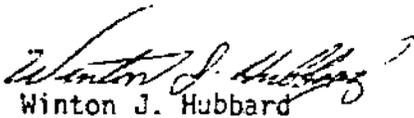
Our home is located immediately adjacent to the subject property and we are vehemently opposed to any developments to the site which would attract the public in any way other than the present few casual visitors. Your projected gravesite visitation figures on page 8 of the study lists cemetery visitation of 500 or more per month. In the 6 years we have lived here, I don't believe there have been over 500 visitors in a year.

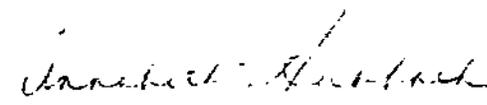
There are several reasons for our extremely strong feelings in this matter:

1. Any increase in visitors above the present level would be an unacceptable intrusion on our privacy.
2. Any improvements which would encourage picnicking, other recreational use or extended visitation would inevitably bring litter and other maintenance problems beyond the means of the Park Service.
3. The area in general and our property in particular has incurred winter flooding problems (the dollar amount of such damage to our property last winter was approximately \$8,000) and we have retained an attorney who is presently working with the County Flood Control to see what can be done to solve this problem. Any Park Service plans to improve Strentzel Lane and/or Wanda Way would have to include extensive flood control work.

If you do not wish to leave the area in its present natural state, we feel the most appropriate and feasible alternative would be to relocate the grave site to the John Muir Historic Site on Alhambra Avenue.

Sincerely,


Winton J. Hubbard


Annabeth Hubbard

Response to Annabeth Hubbard Commetta

See response above to Public Meeting Comment 1.

MARTINEZ REGIONAL LAND TRUST

JUL 31

July 30, 1990

Stanley Albright
Regional Director, Western Region
National Park Service
450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063
San Francisco, Ca. 94102

Dear Mr. Albright,

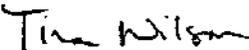
In response to the Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment of the John Muir National Historic Site, I would like to submit the following comments:

Alternative A is the preferable alternative for the following reasons; as stated on page 2 of the Management plan, " Although the site lies in a rapidly developing urban area, the site continues to offer a measure of rural serenity which contributes to the quality of the visitor experience."

The "rural serenity" of the John Muir National Historic Site is becoming an invaluable natural resource in the Bay Area. The fact that the original lands that once belonged to John Muir are not developed and are available for acquisition is unusual. The opportunity for acquiring these properties exists now. The National Park Service should pursue Alternative A and direct its planning staff to study the area surrounding the proposed Strain acquisition, specifically open lands to the west of the Strain property. Part of the Strain property and the neighboring Almond property lie within the Briones Hills Agricultural Preserve, a county designation that seeks to preserve the unique and scenic agricultural lands within this region. To the south of the Strain property lies the John Swett (Millgirt) ranch. Many of the original ranch buildings still exist and a 40 acre hill contiguous with the Strain property has never been grazed.

The Martinez Regional Land Trust urges the National Park Service planning staff to pursue Alternative A of their Draft Management Plan and to work with local agencies in studying the entire region where John Muir lived and farmed.

Sincerely,



Tina Wilson
Board Chair
Martinez Regional Land Trust

Response to Martinez Regional Land Trust

See response to Public Meeting Comment 3.

July 29, 1990

Stanley Albright, Regional Director
John Muir National Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Ave.
Martinez, CA 94553

RE: Draft General Management Plan and Environmental
Assessment

Dear Mr. Albright:

1. [It is with great interest that I reviewed the Draft
General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for the
John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez. Ever since
the National Park Service secured a \$2 million appropriation
to purchase the Strain and Lo properties, I thought the
matter was resolved provided the sellers were willing. It
amazes me that the National Park Service would sit on that
amount of money appropriated for a specific purpose.

2. [Consequently, I whole-heartedly support Alternative A
which proposes to acquire through donation and purchase the
properties in the Mount Wanda area. The rapidly urbanizing
region surrounding the John Muir House warrants quick action
to protect the integrity of the historic site. The
opportunity is there now and may not present itself again.
The beautiful oak woodlands and steep hillsides offered John
Muir the inspiration he needed to launch the conservationist
movement and should be preserved as open space.

I encourage your agency to move quickly to implement
Alternative A and to work with other local and regional
agencies to share management responsibilities if necessary.

Sincerely,

Nancy Schaefer
Nancy Schaefer
623 Sherree Dr.
Martinez, CA 94553

Response to Nancy Schaefer

1. The National Park Service has not been "sitting" on funds appropriated for land acquisition. All agencies using monies from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for land acquisition are required to develop management plans and systematically evaluate needed land interests through completion of a Land Protection Plan prior to acquiring land. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that public funds are not wastefully expended on land interests not required to meet established objectives.

2. The land protection plan component of the subject plan indicates the need for fee acquisition of Mount Wanda properties and acquisition efforts will proceed once the plan is approved.

MUWEKMA INDIAN TRIBE
COSTANOAN/OHLONE INDIAN FAMILIES OF SANTA CLARA VALLEY
1845 THE ALAMEDA SAN JOSE, CA 95126 TEL. 408-293-9956

July 27, 1990

Linda Moon Stumpff
Acting Superintendent
U.S. Dept. of the Interior
National Park Service
Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Ave.
Martinez, CA 94533

Dear Ms. Stumpff,

On behalf of the Ohlone/Costanoan Muwekma Tribe I would like to thank you for sending us a copy of the draft General Management Plan for the John Muir National Historic Site.

As stated on page 33, under Alternative C: Minimum requirements, Cultural Resources—"relatively minor construction projects associated with the plan would not be in areas of known cultural resource sensitivity." The Muwekma Tribe believes and advocates for preservation of culturally sensitive sites.

In your area our business arm Ohlone Families Consulting Services has worked in conjunction with East Bay Regional Park District for the preservation of park lands and have an on-going positive working relationship as it relates to the preservation of culturally sensitive areas. As a result, East Bay Regional Park District has developed guidelines for protecting archaeological sites, with Muwekmas input in order to address sensitive areas within their park lands Master Plan. This new policy addresses the state laws in place, as well as, involves most likely native american descendants of that geographical area.

If you would like to further discuss and meet to talk about this issue please call me so that we can meet. I can be reached at (408)293-9956.

Sincerely,



Rosemary Cambra
Chairwoman of the
Muwekma Tribe

Response to Muwekma Indian Tribe

1. The National Park Service will contact the East Bay Regional Park District regarding its guidelines and will also plan to work with your organization further as plans for the new area are further refined.

AUG - 2 1990

July 31, 1990

Ms. Phyllis Shaw
Superintendent, John Muir NHS
4202 Alhambra Avenue
Martinez, California 94553

Dear Ms. Shaw:

This letter is in response to Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for the John Muir NHS dated June 1990 and the meeting regarding the same on 11 July 1990.

I want to commend you and your staff for the foresight and hard work you've put into this project. As one who tries to avoid being surrounded by City like "ticky-tack", seven years ago, I chose to be a neighbor of Mr. & Mrs. Muir and family and purchased the house at 194 Strentzel Lane which is probably the closest property to the gravesite as described in your draft. From the first time I saw the property and through the present and I hope the future, I've been in love with the natural surroundings of the property.

I feel the preservation of land with this history and its relation to today's diminishing open spaces is of vital importance, but just as important and maybe even higher priority, is how the land is used after it is preserved.

I would like to address the gravesite only at this time and will keep it brief. My concern and that of my neighbors is the approach your draft takes in that the gravesite has a high visitation rate and that there is a need to upgrade the existing grounds with paths, parking/turnarounds, and, God forbid, cyclone fence. Doesn't this seem a little contrary, if not sacrilegious to Mr. Muir's direction and dreams of preservation of natural land for future generations to appreciate? We, as Mr. Muir's neighbors have purposely not put up fences because we feel they would take away from the natural beauty and now the force behind this preservation is recommending fences -- I don't understand!

I would like to list my concerns regarding your draft in relation to the gravesite property:

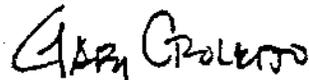
- We feel additions as described in your draft would infringe on the privacy of residents adjacent to the gravesite.
- The "pear orchard" has survived on its own although is of very old cuttings and is slowly dying a natural death -- the only poison oak I'm aware of is along side the creek bank and visitors should not be on the creek side.

Ms. Phyllis Shaw
John Muir NHS
July 31, 1990
Page 2

- We question the National Park Service survey and evaluation of the existing drainage problems along Strentzel Lane in regards to locating a parking facility or "turnaround" in this area. Does the \$80,000 estimate include total and complete drainage and distribution of hardcap run off or just reroute the existing problem?
- Does the \$80,000 include the van to shuttle visitors?
- It's been our experience that visitation to the gravesite is closer to 5 to 10 people per month than 5 to 10 per day as the draft states.

Please do not interpret the above as though we are against visitors to the gravesite. We have and plan to continue helping and directing visitors to the gravesite should they request assistance. It's just that we do not wish to have a carnival like atmosphere in our back yards nor do we feel that was Mr. Muirs intent. It seems as though your attempting to fix something that is not broke. We feel that the gravesite should be included in the acquisition (a better use of the \$80,000) of land and management plan but should be left as it is - it works and we feel it works as Mr. Muir would have wanted it to.

Thank you for your time,



Gary Croletto
194 Strentzel Lane
Martinez, California 94553

Response to Gary Croletto

See response to Public Meeting Comment 1.

LIST OF PREPARERS

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Phyllis Shaw, Superintendent, John Muir National Historic Site

Linda Moon-Stumpf, Chief Interpreter, John Muir National Historic Site

Dan Olson, Planner, Western Regional Office

James Huddleston, Regional Environmental Coordinator,
Western Regional Office

APPENDIX





APPENDIX 1

Authorizing Legislation



Public Law 88-547

AN ACT

To provide for the establishment of the John Muir National Historic Site in the State of California, and for other purposes.

August 31, 1964
[H. R. 439]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That the Secretary of the Interior may acquire on behalf of the United States the land, improvements thereon, and interests therein situated in the county of Contra Costa, State of California, and described as follows:

John Muir National Historic Site, Calif. Establishment.

Beginning at a point marked by a post that bears south 24 degrees 30 minutes east 257.40 feet from the northwest corner of lot E of division numbered 1 of the Rancho El Pinole; thence north 70 degrees 00 minutes east to a point in the westerly right-of-way line of Alhambra Avenue;

thence southward along the said westerly right-of-way line of Alhambra Avenue to a point on the right-of-way line of the freeway survey delineated in the California State Division of Highways, district IV, appraisal map numbered A-655.34, dated November 21, 1962, said point also being in line with station (28+81') on the "M" line of said freeway survey;

thence following the right-of-way line of said survey south 71 degrees 09 minutes 19 seconds west 2.0 feet to a point;

thence along the said right-of-way line of the freeway survey the following two courses; south 18 degrees 50 minutes 41 seconds east 59.54 feet to a point, on a curve to the right, radius 1,958.0 feet, delta angle 2 degrees 1 minute 6 seconds, a distance of 68.97 feet to a point;

thence south 16 degrees 49 minutes 35 seconds east about 112 feet to a point;

thence south 31 degrees 55 minutes 10 seconds west about 160 feet to a point;

thence south 80 degrees 08 minutes 57 seconds west 741.66 feet to a point;

thence north 77 degrees 12 minutes 60 seconds west 132.68 feet to a point;

thence north 65 degrees 53 minutes 54 seconds west 78.75 feet to a point in the center line of the Franklin Canyon Road;

thence northward along the said center line of the Franklin Canyon Road to a point (which is south 9 degrees 24 minutes east along the center line of Franklin Canyon Road 281.43 feet and thence south 1 degree 50 minutes west 304.98 feet from the point common to the center line of the said Franklin Canyon Road and a north line of that certain 44.87-acre tract of land described in the deed from Daniel L. Parsowith to Pearl Parsowith, dated November 18, 1931, and recorded November 18, 1931, in Volume 290 of official records, at page 359);

thence north 88 degrees 28 minutes 15 seconds east 418.01 feet (north 87 degrees 45 minutes 30 seconds east 421.70 feet-deed), as surveyed by the California State Division of Highways, district IV, appraisal map numbered A-655.34, dated November 21, 1962, to a point in the center of Franklin Creek;

thence north 23 degrees 25 minutes 01 seconds east 121.15 feet (north 23 degrees 30 minutes east 120.56 feet-deed) as surveyed by said California State Division of Highways along Franklin Creek to a point;

thence north 17 degrees 30 minutes east 132 feet continuing along Franklin Creek to a point;

thence leaving Franklin Creek north 70 degrees 0 minutes east 320.10 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning; containing approximately 9.2 acres.

SEC. 2. The property acquired under this Act shall be designated as the John Muir National Historic Site and shall be set aside as a public national memorial to John Muir in recognition of his efforts as a conservationist and a crusader for national parks and reservations. The Secretary of the Interior shall administer, protect, and develop such national historic site in accordance with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes," approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented, and the Act entitled "An Act to provide for the preservation of historic American sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance, and for other purposes," approved August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666), as amended.

SEC. 3. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated not more than \$300,000 for land acquisition and restoration of the buildings thereon.

Approved August 31, 1964.

16 USC 1 et
seq.

16 USC 461-467.
Appropriation.

PUBLIC LAW 100-563 [H.R. 3408]; October 31, 1988

COLORADO RIVER STORAGE PROJECT

An Act to authorize additional appropriations for the Central Utah Project, to implement a settlement with the Strawberry Water Users, to expand the John Muir Historic Site, to prohibit the expansion of any reservoir within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SEC. 5. BOUNDARY CHANGE FOR JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE. 16 USC 461 note. CALIFORNIA.

(a) **MAP; LAND ACQUISITION.**—The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire (by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange) lands and interests in land within the area generally depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, John Muir National Historic Site" numbered 426-80,015B and dated July 1988. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Lands and interests in lands, within the boundaries of such area which are owned by the State of California or any political subdivision thereof, may be acquired only by donation or exchange. The Secretary of the Interior shall acquire only such interests in the John Muir grave site (as depicted on the map referred to in this subsection) as may be necessary to preserve the site in its present undeveloped condition and to provide all maintenance of the site by the Secretary of the Interior.

Gifts and property.

Public information.

(b) **INCLUSION WITHIN HISTORIC SITE.**—The lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of the area depicted on the map referred to in subsection (a) shall be administered as part of the John Muir National Historic Site established by the Act of August 31, 1964 (78 Stat. 753; 16 U.S.C. 461 note).

(c) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—For purposes of acquiring the lands and interests in lands within the area depicted on the map referred to in subsection (a), there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary.

(d) **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.**—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service, is authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement with the East Bay Regional Park District of Oakland, California, for the operation and maintenance by such District of trails on lands within the John Muir National Historic Site.

SEC. 6. YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no Federal lands may be used for the expansion of the capacity of any reservoir which is located within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park unless Congress enacts specific statutory authorization after the date of the enactment of this Act for such expansion.

Approved October 31, 1988.



APPENDIX 2

Land Protection Alternatives



INTRODUCTION

On May 7, 1982, the Department of the Interior published a policy statement in the *Federal Register* (47FR-19784) concerning the use of the federal portion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The policy requires that, in carrying out its responsibility for land protection in federally administered areas, each agency using the Fund will:

1. Identify what lands or interests in land need to be in federal ownership to achieve management unit purposes consistent with published objectives in the unit.
2. Use to the maximum extent practical cost-effective alternatives to direct federal purchase of private lands and, when acquisition is necessary, acquire or retain only the minimum interests necessary to meet management objectives.
3. Cooperate with landowners, other federal agencies, state and local governments and the private sector to manage land for public use or protect it for resource conservation.
4. Formulate or revise as necessary plans for land acquisition and resource use or protection to assure the sociocultural impacts are considered and that the most outstanding areas are adequately managed.

In response to this policy, the National Park Service is preparing a Land Protection Plan for each unit of the National Park System containing non-federal land, which has an active program for protection of the unit's resources.

The purpose of these plans is to identify methods of assuring the protection of the natural, historic, scenic, cultural, recreational or other significant resources and to provide for adequate visitor use. The plans must be prepared in compliance with relevant legislation, other congressional guidelines, executive orders and Department and National Park Service policies. The plans are prepared with public participation and with consideration of the many alternatives available for land protection requirements. Once plans have been approved, revisions or updates will be made as necessary to reflect changing conditions.

For John Muir National Historic Site, land protection is one of several elements in the General Management Plan. This appendix provides additional detail and background on land protection requirements and policies, and the analysis applied to the Historic Site leading to the land protection recommendations for each of the alternative plans.

NON-FEDERAL OWNERSHIP AND USE

There are five non-federal tracts within the authorized boundary of the John Muir National Historic Site. They are:

| <u>Owner</u> | <u>Acres</u> | <u>Use</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Gordon Strain | 186.45 | Residence/grazing |
| Lo et al. | 139.80 | Grazing |
| City of Martinez | 3.31 | Vacant |
| Muir-Hanna Family Trust | 1.27 | Family Cemetery |
| Santa Fe Railroad | <1.00 | Rail Line |

(Official tract numbers have not yet been assigned for these properties.)

PROTECTION ALTERNATIVES

A number of land protection measures have been considered in arriving at the recommended methods. Factors influencing the methods considered and selection of the recommended plan include cost-effectiveness, long-term goals, compatibility of private ownership, the type of jurisdiction, and consideration for long-time owners. The preferred alternative for land protection must assure preservation and restoration of the natural environment, protection of historical values, and enhance the ecological values and public enjoyment of the site.

Land Use Regulation

Local land use regulations control the type and density of land use and development on private property. Such regulations can prevent the development of unsafe and unsanitary conditions on private lands. They can also, in

some cases, serve to protect vistas considered to produce broad public benefit. For example, ridgeline protection ordinances have become common in the Bay Area in recent years as communities strive to preserve some of their natural amenities while recognizing the need for further development.

Regulation is intended generally to provide for the control of economic uses and to mitigate as far as possible the adverse effects of such uses. In the case of the Historic Site, a primary objective for both Alternatives A and C involves protection of the historic scene from the vicinity of the Muir House. Another important objective for both alternatives is the routing of a regional trail link across the Mount Wanda area. For Alternative A, additional major objectives are public recreational use of the Mount Wanda area and restoration of the area's natural systems. For Alternative A, any further intensification of private uses on Mount Wanda, regardless of how closely it might be controlled and regulated, would be inconsistent with this objective. On the other hand, for Alternative C, further economic uses could occur on Mount Wanda as long as they did not affect the historic scene and/or preclude the development of a link in the regional trail system.

Land use regulation would clearly not provide adequate protection to meet Alternative A objectives for Mount Wanda. However, they might well provide adequate protection to meet the objectives of Alternative C, particularly if supplemented with the selective acquisition of scenic easements in critical areas. The extent to which protection would be provided by land use regulation alone is difficult to assess at this point since site development planning and approvals for steep, difficult areas such as Mount Wanda are generally extended, interactive efforts involving numerous development concerns and interest groups. The adjustment of site development plans to recognize scenic vista concerns and the routing of regional trails is not unusual in Contra Costa County.

For the Gravesite tract, both Alternatives A and C seek to protect the undeveloped nature of the area. Since land use regulations would permit residential development of this tract, they are clearly not workable land protection tools in this case.

Because of the plan under both Alternatives A and C for facility development on the City tract, regulation would not be a useful method in that case.

**Less-than-fee
Acquisition**

Less-than-fee acquisition means acquisition of a partial estate, e.g. an easement, right-of-way, lease, etc. Less-than-fee acquisition is most likely to be feasible when some, but not all, private use is compatible with resource management and visitor use plans.

For the Mount Wanda area, less-than-fee acquisition presents a useful possibility for Alternative C. Scenic easements could be acquired to prevent land disturbance in visually sensitive areas, and a trail easement could be acquired to permit routing of the regional trail across the property. The balance of the property could be developed. Less-than-fee acquisition would not be a useful land protection method for Alternative A, where natural system restoration and public recreational use are proposed, and economic development and uses would present significant conflicts.

For the gravesite area, the legislative history indicates clearly that less-than-fee acquisition will be the protection method. Acquisition of either easements or a long-term lease for this area should provide adequate protection for this tract under both Alternatives A and C.

Less-than-fee acquisition would not be appropriate for the City tract, which is proposed for facility development under both Alternatives A and C.

**Fee
Acquisition**

Fee acquisition is generally the protection method of choice when there are no realistic options for compatible private economic uses.

Fee acquisition is the only protection alternative that would provide the Service with the capability for completely preserving and restoring lands on Mount Wanda, and making them available for public use. Hence it would best serve the management objectives of Alternative A. Provision of a reservation of use and occupancy for the owner for the ranch area could provide for continued residence by the owner and family members while ensuring ultimately the availability of this area for park uses.

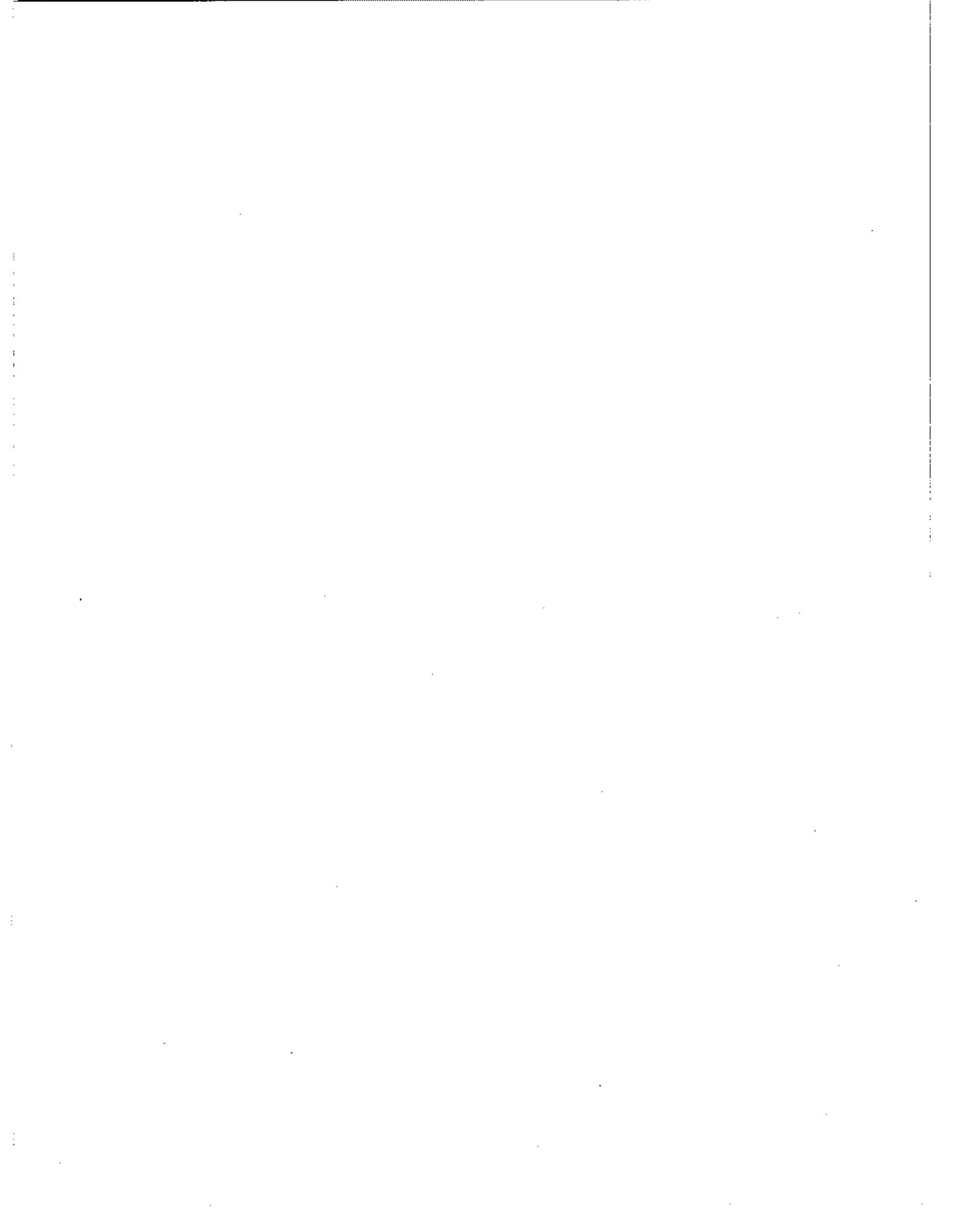
Fee acquisition is also the only protection method that would permit the development of visitor and administrative facilities on the City tract.

ACQUISITION ALTERNATIVES

When acquiring land, federal agencies must follow the policies of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, which require them to offer to acquire land at not less than its approved appraised fair market value. However, at the same time the Government may receive donations of the full or partial value of the land. Opportunities for obtaining donated rights to land will be explored.

The National Park Service may also acquire lands or interests in lands by trading available land or interests already under federal jurisdiction. Exchange provides an opportunity to consolidate or acquire needed interests in land without using appropriated funds. It should be noted that exchanges frequently involve substantial complications arising from the involvement of multiple parties and the administrative costs in some cases may be high. Hence exchange is regarded as an available and potential alternative, but not a panacea for acquiring significant acreages without expenditure.

Purchase is also an acceptable acquisition alternative.



APPENDIX 3

Implementation Schedule and Cost Estimates



ALTERNATIVE A: INTEGRATED OPERATION (THE PROPOSED ACTION)

The key implementation items necessary to achieve this alternative are outlined below. The completion dates for the actions represent ideal conditions and assume that funds will be appropriated and available as needed.

1. Acquire lands and interest in lands as outlined in the general management plan. (FY 90 and 91)
2. Develop memorandum of understanding with the East Bay Regional Park District to provide for cooperative management of the Mount Wanda area and facilitate completion of the regional trail link.
3. Construct visitor parking area and maintenance facility on City tract. The development of a visitor staging area for the Mt. Wanda area will be urgently needed once the lands are acquired and the public is aware of the new trail opportunities. Cost is estimated at \$ 465,000. (FY 91)
4. Construct visitor entrance at rear gate to the House area. A facility is needed at the rear gate to collect fees and otherwise regulate visitor flow at the entrance. This facility may either be a small, free-standing kiosk or the rear addition to the martinez adobe. Uses of the adobe are currently being analyzed in a detailed historic structure study. Cost is estimated at \$50,000. (FY 91)
5. Construct parking space with barrier and place a sign at the Gravesite tract. Estimated cost is \$ 5,000. (FY 92)
6. Remove existing tractor shed on House area and replace with a rustic, open shed of the same dimensions to house donated farm equipment. Cost will approximate \$ 15,000. (FY 93)
7. Construct interpretive trails on Mount Wanda area. Short trail(s) would supplement the longer regional trail alignment in providing nature interpretation possibilities. Cost is estimated at \$ 40,000. (FY 94)

8. Develop new visitor center and parking lot. Project will provide additional space in the visitor center for public and administrative use. Parking lot modification will not provide additional parking but will facilitate bus maneuvering and include an information display to aid visitors in private vehicles in locating the auxiliary parking lot on the City tract. Cost is estimated at \$ 1,250,000. (FY 94)

9. Develop environmental living facilities and public access at the Strain Ranch area. There are too many unknowns at this point to project a time and estimate costs. Use of this area will be contingent on when the area is available for use and to what extent non-profit groups will be willing to assist in the development and management of an environmental education program.

ALTERNATIVE C: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The key implementation items necessary to achieve this alternative are outlined below. The completion dates for the actions represent ideal conditions and assume that funds will be appropriated and available as needed.

1. Acquire lands and interest in lands as outlined in the general management plan. (FY 90 and 91)

2. Develop memorandum of understanding with the East Bay Regional Park District to provide for cooperative management of the Mount Wanda area and facilitate completion of the regional trail link.

3. Construct visitor parking area and maintenance facility on City tract. The development of a visitor staging area for the Mt. Wanda area will be urgently needed once the lands are acquired and the public is aware of the new trail opportunities. Cost is estimated at \$ 465,000. (FY 91)

4. Construct visitor entrance at rear gate to the House area. A facility is needed at the rear gate to collect fees and otherwise regulate visitor flow at the entrance. This facility may either be a small, free-standing kiosk or the rear addition to the Martinez Adobe. Uses of the Adobe are currently being analyzed in a detailed historic structure study. Cost is estimated at \$50,000. (FY 91)

5. Construct parking space with barrier and place a sign at the Gravesite tract. Estimated cost is \$ 5,000. (FY 92)

6. Remove existing tractor shed on House area and replace with a rustic, open shed of the same dimensions to house donated farm equipment. Cost will approximate \$ 15,000. (FY 93)

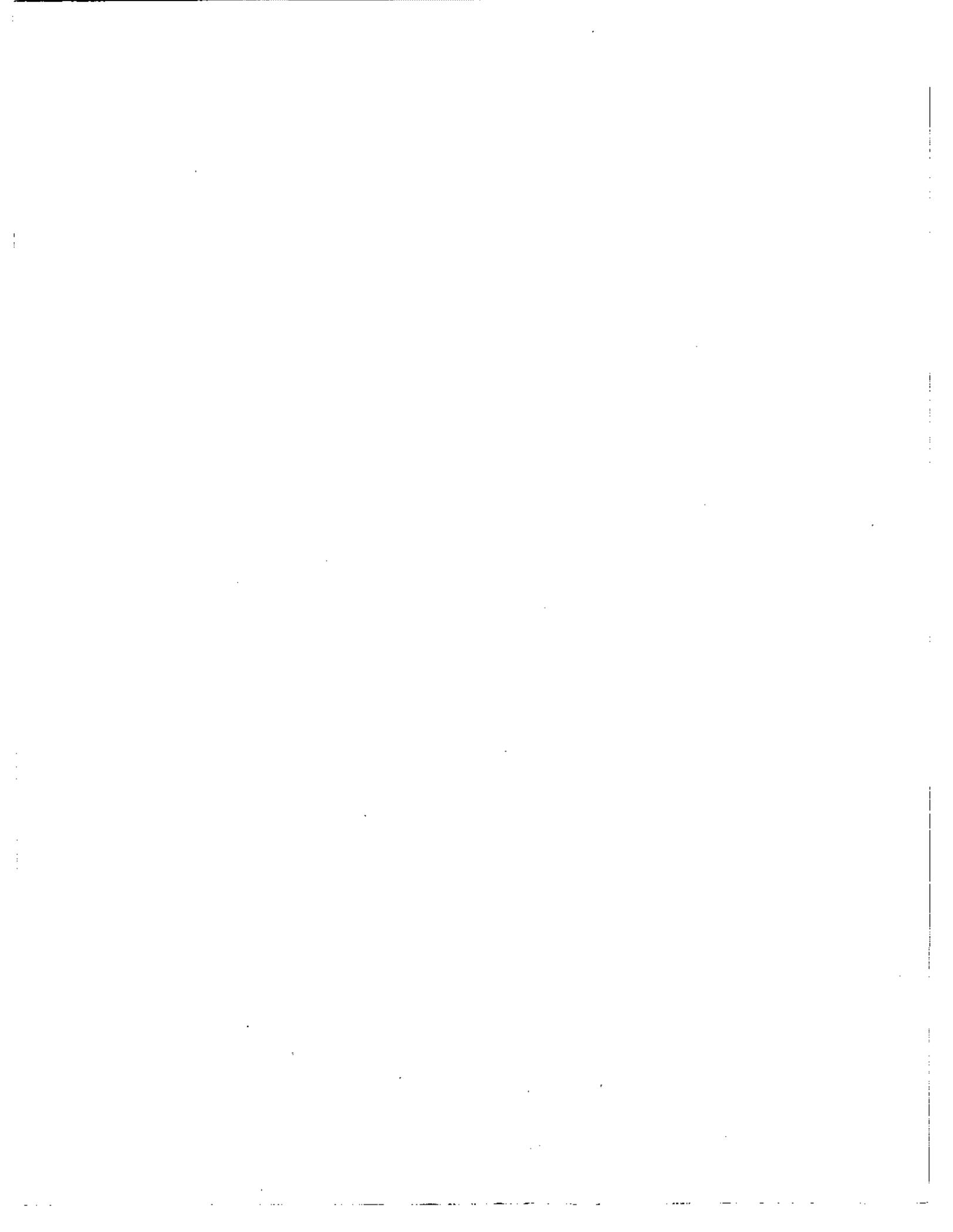
7. Develop new visitor center and parking lot. Project will provide additional space in the visitor center for public and administrative use. Parking lot modification will not provide additional parking but will facilitate bus maneuvering and include an information display to aid visitors in private vehicles in locating the auxiliary parking lot on the City tract. Cost is estimated at \$ 1,250,000. (FY 94)

ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT COSTS AND PHASING SCHEDULE

| Development Item | Gross Construction Costs | Advance and Project Planning Costs | Total Project Costs |
|---|--------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| <i>Alternative A: Integrated Operation (Proposed Action)</i> | | | |
| 1. Construct visitor parking area and maintenance facility on City tract. (FY 91) | 390,000 | 75,000 | 465,000 |
| 2. Construct visitor entrance at rear gate to House area. (FY 91) | 42,000 | 8,000 | 50,000 |
| 3. Construct parking space, trail, and install sign at gravesite. (FY 92) | 4,000 | 1,000 | 5,000 |
| 4. Remove tractor shed from House area and replace with farm equipment display shed. (FY 93) | 12,500 | 2,500 | 15,000 |
| 5. Construct interpretive trails on Mount Wanda. (FY 94) | 33,000 | 7,000 | 40,000 |
| 6. Develop new visitor center and parking lot. (FY 94) | 1,050,000 | 200,000 | <u>1,250,000</u> |
| Total Alternative A Costs | | | \$ 1,825,000 |
| <i>Alternative C: Minimum Requirements</i> | | | |
| 1. Construct parking area and maintenance facility on City tract. (FY 91) | 390,000 | 75,000 | 465,000 |
| 2. Construct visitor entrance at rear gate to House area. (FY 91) | 42,000 | 8,000 | 50,000 |
| 3. Construct parking space, trail, and install sign at gravesite. (FY 92) | 4,000 | 1,000 | 5,000 |
| 4. Remove tractor shed from House area and replace with rustic farm equipment display shed. (FY 94) | 12,500 | 2,500 | 15,000 |
| 5. Develop new visitor center. (FY 94) | 1,050,000 | 200,000 | <u>1,250,000</u> |
| Total Alternative C Costs | | | \$ 1,785,000 |

APPENDIX 4

Potential Boundary Changes



The boundaries of National Park System units are established by legislation, and significant changes to those boundaries require amendatory legislation. The General Management Plan is confined to dealing with the authorized boundaries, and does not propose alteration of those boundaries.

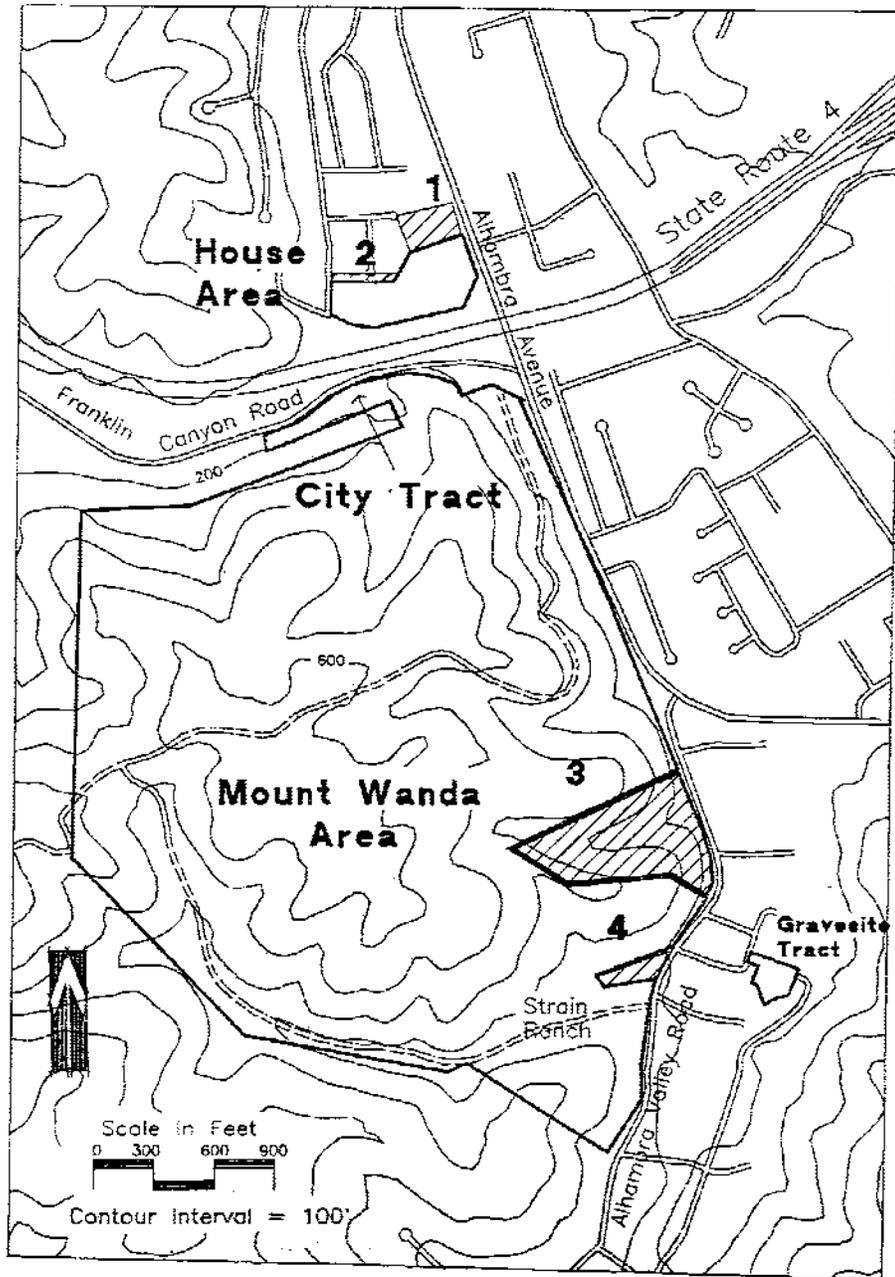
Nevertheless, in the event Congress should at some time reconsider boundaries for the John Muir National Historic Site, four areas adjacent to the National Historic Site were identified during the planning process as having potential for contributing to the achievement of the site's management objectives. They are identified on the following attached map and described as follows:

1. **Post Office Property.** This area is located immediately adjacent to the site's existing visitor center. The property, and possibly the existing structures, could be used as the location for the site's visitor center, allowing the removal of the existing non-historic structure and permitting the restoration of the historic scene. This would be a desirable addition to the site in the event the property should become surplus to the Postal Service' needs.

2. **Adjacent Homes.** Three homes adjacent to the north boundary of the House area are located extremely close to the boundary fence, which is itself located within a few feet of the historic pathway between the Martinez Adobe and the Muir House, a route traveled by a large percentage of the site's visitors. The homes represent a significant intrusion on the historic scene. Efforts have been made to screen the area with vegetation, but with only limited success because of the height of the homes and their proximity to the property line. Acquisition of these three properties, and removal of the structures, would provide an important contribution to the visitors' appreciation of the historic setting.

3. & 4. **Mount Wanda Peninsulas.** With the exception of these two areas, shown as #3 and #4 on the map, the Mount Wanda area is clearly defined by Alhambra Valley Road from its intersection with Alhambra Avenue to the west boundary of the Gordon Strain property. The existence of these two peninsulas will somewhat complicate marking and public understanding of the boundary. Trespassing by park visitors may result. This may be a particular problem in the northerly, undeveloped portions of area #3. Public use activities in the Strain Ranch area may also conflict to some extent with residential use area #4.

JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
Potential Boundary Changes



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WRO 12/90