

**Staff Report Summary of Comments from *Concepts Newsletter* Review  
Point Reyes National Seashore  
General Management Plan Update**

**Introduction**

The National Park Service is in the process of updating the Point Reyes National Seashore (71,000 acres) *General Management Plan* (1980) which will guide management actions in the future. The update includes Golden Gate NRA lands administered by the Seashore in Olema Valley and within Tomales Bay (18,000 acres).

In addition to this public process, the Seashore has been providing background information to assist park management with this update by completing the following planning studies: Trail Inventory and Condition Assessment, Comprehensive Interpretive Plan, Transportation Management Study, Transit Analysis, GIS Vegetation & Wetland Delineation Map, Cultural Landscape Report, National Register Nomination for Olema Valley Historic District, Fire Management Plan, Vegetation Map, and Threatened and Endangered Species Evaluation and Mapping.

In late November 2003, the National Park Service (NPS) released for public review the *Concepts Newsletter* for the Update to the General Management for Point Reyes National Seashore, including the North District of Golden Gate National Recreation Area administered by the Seashore. These preliminary concepts were generated from scoping meetings and were a starting point for the development of alternatives for public review in a draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

The *Concepts Newsletter* and this staff report is an interim step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process between the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare and the publication of the draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS). The initial GMP scoping for the development of the EIS was conducted for a 60 day period that ended on November 30, 1999. A staff report that summarizes public comment from this original scoping period is available on the park's website [www.nps.gov/pore](http://www.nps.gov/pore).

The *Concepts Newsletter* was available for public review until February 20, 2004. This Staff Report consolidates the major issues brought up by the public. It does not list all the specific comments made by the public. Letters and comments received have been placed in the administrative record for this project and will be used for future reference by the park's GMP Planning Team.

**Review of *Concept Newsletter* Comments**

To ensure that all comments and/or issues raised in letters or oral comments received during the review period were noted and summarized, all the letters and comments were reviewed by the GMP Interdisciplinary Planning Team on March 14, 2004. Comments from the public meeting were collected on large format sheets then typed up and consolidated into the summary list.

Comments and/or issues that shared a common theme were consolidated to the extent possible, and then listed under major issue headings.

### **Next Steps in the Planning Process**

During the coming year, the NPS project team will develop alternatives for public review in the draft GMP/EIS. These alternatives will be developed from information obtained from studies conducted, past research, and the public involvement to date. The draft GMP/EIS will be made available for public review. From public input, a final GMP/EIS will be developed and used as the long-term planning document for the National Seashore and the north district of GGNRA. The NPS projects that the draft GMP/EIS will be available in late 2005 or early 2006.

## **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT**

Following is a summary of public comments received during the public comment period on the *Concepts Newsletter* for the Update to the General Management for Point Reyes National Seashore, including the North District of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

The summary includes both written comments received during the review period and verbal comments from the public meeting held on January 14, 2004 at the Red Barn Classroom where 120 people attended. There is some overlap as individuals may have attended the meeting as well as provided written comments. Appendix 1 contains the verbal comments made at the public meeting.

Over 950 letters, emails, and faxes were received during the review period – including letters from agencies, organizations, and individuals. This included 20 letters from organizations and 957 faxes, emails, and letters from individuals.

### **Summary of Comments from the Concepts Newsletter Scoping**

#### **Land Use Planning**

The following is a summary of public comments related to relationships with adjoining public lands, park actions affecting local communities, wilderness, transportation issues, regional planning, and zoning inconsistencies.

- Continue agricultural activities
- Supports agriculture but not grazing
- Establish Marine Protected Areas and study any impacts
- Concern over vehicle/traffic congestion

- No new wilderness designation
- Expand agricultural use in Olema Valley
- Increase wilderness areas/eliminate corridors for contiguous wilderness
- Support organic and sustainable agriculture
- Reduce cow effluent into Tomales Bay
- Develop annual ranch plans
- Support grazing management that creates parcels recognizing a percentage of native species composition
- Remove fences around park
- No ranching diversification
- Support to establish an archeological protection zone
- Concern about dairy impacts on water quality
- Return past ranch lands to grazing
- Secure livelihoods of ranch families in Seashore
- Adapt non-used buildings to overnight accommodations
- No further expansion on ranching
- Delineate grazing areas to support preservation/restoration of native habitat
- Support of changing zoning south of Five Brooks from *Natural* to *Cultural Landscape*
- Limit or phase out mariculture activities where harmful
- More clearly define "sustainable agriculture"
- Opposed to development of cultural landscape
- Against the establishment of Marine Protected Areas

### **Resource Issues**

The following is a summary of concerns/issues raised by the public. The issues include concerns related to cultural resources, prescribed fire management, management of federally threatened and endangered species, and use and management of Tomales Bay.

- Inventory and protect historic and archeological sites
- Establish Marine Protected Areas and study any impacts (also in Land Use Planning)
- Support for (even increase efforts) control of invasive species
- Support control of exotic deer
- Support further reintroduction of elk
- Support for restoration of salmon
- Restore the wetland at Wilkins Ranch
- Inventory significant historic sites
- Emphasize natural over cultural resource preservation
- Leave resource unimpaired
- Establish fire history

### **Visitor Needs**

The following is a summary of concerns/issues raised by the public. The issues include concerns related to changing visitor demographics, concession services, and visitation and visitor needs.

- Preserve trail system and restore closed trails
- Preserve Stewart Horse Camp and parking for horse trailers
- Enhance recreational uses and connect with trails in Marin County
- Do not decrease trails access for bicycles
- Expand bike access along Coast Trail

- Close trails to bicycles/support for hiking trails
- Recognize European explorers (include a trail from KPVC to Drake's Cove)
- Opposition to developed campgrounds
- Objection to any actions that would increase tourism
- Add a hostel in Olema Valley
- Restrict kayak use on Drakes Bay
- Limit horse use
- No new trails
- Expand public education opportunities
- Support for ranch activities at Pierce Point (e.g. a demo ranch)
- Don't encourage additional visitor use
- Increase horse-boarding facilities
- Against access to wilderness
- Expand shuttle services within park
- Manage uses of Tomales Bay more strictly
- Expand bike access to Gallagher Ranch (Gallagher is in private ownership)
- Allow only hiking trails at Wilkins Ranch
- Protect peace and quiet
- No bike trail in Giacomini Marsh

### **Miscellaneous Concepts**

The following is a summary of concerns/issues raised by the public:

- Develop areas of voice control for dogs (off-leash areas too)
- Establish birth control limits on exotic animals

- Review accomplishments/changes from 1980 GMP
- Supports scientific evaluation of grazing in Olema Valley
- Concept #2 doesn't go far enough
- Acquire the Vedanta property
- Support for proposed concept 6 developed by Preserve Historic Olema Valley
- Remove non-historic buildings

C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Documents\Word\GMP\GMP Summary 2004.doc

## Appendix 1

### PORE GMP Concepts Newsletter

#### Summary of Public Comments at January 14, 2004 Meeting

- The park should make better use of the internet to disseminate park information, i.e. trails info, programs provided, current events, etc.
- If the park reduces campsites in the existing backcountry campgrounds, where will those campsites be relocated?
- Enhancing the visitor experience is as important as the efforts to protect the natural resources
- Do the ranches still provide economic viability for the region?
- The plan doesn't seem to advocate a partnership between the ranches and the NPS.
- The park is more than just an island in time, this is the premise used to create the legislation to create the park. The park needs to look ahead and become a model of sustainable agriculture. The park needs to recognize and interpret the efforts of the ranchers to modernize their practices.
- The park should recognize the value of grazing as means to reduce fuel loading, this could be used as a valuable tool. Every effort should be taken to re-introduce native seed and vegetation. Rotational grazing should be prescribed or recognized, make the park a model for sustainable agriculture.
- Concept 2: there shouldn't be a conflict between natural resources protection and agriculture. Biodiversity is dependent on agriculture (grazing). Control of exotic vegetation is achieved through grazing.
- There should be a symbiotic relationship between natural resource protection and agriculture, current ranch management doesn't perform a good job at protecting the natural vegetation.
- The park should maintain a genetic pure seed stock to perpetuate sustainable vegetation.
- The plan should have a greater appreciation of community. The region has a unique community (culture) A healthy community requires continuity.
- Ranches in the park have a negative impact on the natural processes that the park is tasked to protect.
- Don't tear down any more functional buildings. They could be used for agricultural operations.
- Families managing ranches have been responsible land managers. The park and the ranchers should work collaboratively on mutual concerns.
- For the past 5 to 6 years natural resources and natural processes have improved i.e. riparian zones. Every effort should be made to avoid divisions between stakeholders.
- The park's management decisions should be in concert with the 1916 Organic Act. Decisions should be science-based. The park hasn't done a great job adhering to the NPS principles.
- There is a plea for more education, construct more kiosk and signage. Information should be disseminated in a more inclusive way. Historic events should be celebrated and shared with the park visitor. The park should provide greater opportunities for the visitor to appreciate the historic and

regional significance of the park. The visitor centers have remained stagnant for a number of years, they should provide new information and new exhibits.

- How will the reduction of wilderness campsites effect the camping experience?
- PRNSA should provide education programs addressing ranching, agriculture and the enabling legislation that made Point Reyes a National Park.
- Not interested in encouraging more visitation. Increased visitation detracts from the park experience.
- The park service is doing a good job managing the park. The park should continue to allow the Organic Act to guide our park decisions. There are successful science/ research activities taking place in the park. The equestrian presence is detrimental to the park resources and visitor experience. The park should balance equestrian and non-equestrian experience (use) in the park. Don't lease park properties to equestrian interest for profit.
- There should not be additional facility development. Rather than constructing new facilities to provide educational opportunities to the park visitor, interpretive staffing levels should be increased. Increased staffing provides a bigger bang for the buck than creating more signs, plaques etc.
- Field trips and interpretive walks provide a greater learning experience for the visitor. Contact with park staff is invaluable.
- Will trails through wilderness be abandoned?
- How will the park allow the ranchers to diversify and remain compatible with park values and mission?
- The trail sign quality diminishes as you get further from the park HQ. Be more explicit when interpreting historic events and park points of interest.
- Should scientific research be allowed to be performed in sensitive archeological sites?
- The park should rehabilitate existing trails before new constructing new. The trail system needs to be looked at comprehensively, any new additions to the park inventory needs to be strictly scrutinized.
- There should be recognition that old ranch roads are a part of the cultural landscape. Some roads can be taken out of the trail inventory and maintained as old roads.
- Ranching needs to be preserved. The park service and the park ranchers should work collaboratively. The park education programs should tell the story about the importance of agriculture.
- Ranchers are proud of their land management approach ranching. Protecting riparian zones are as important to the ranchers as they are to the park service. Ranchers work hard at protecting sensitive natural processes and sustaining park values.
- The park service should develop education programs that portray agricultural life and depicts typical ranch operations.
- The park service should develop a comprehensive inventory of unique resources of Point Reyes National Seashore, historic, natural, scenic and recreational. The plan does not mention these significant attributes. The plan needs a policy statement. "what does the park want to do?" Why is the park making the decisions it's making?

- Create a model ranch that explores innovative ways of managing agriculture and protecting the natural resources. Park-based science/education/ academic partnerships are critical to the future of the park.
- Use the on-going ranch operations as a model of resource stewardship.
- Enhance public access to research.
- Tell the story of ranching in Point Reyes.
- Use the park newsletter more and use the web to share park information.
- Expand the docent program and celebrate the successes of the program. Nobody outside the park knows about the program.
- Interaction with the park and the community needs to be expanded. The current relationship is not as positive as it could be.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Century history is missing from park interpretation.
- Plan should explain why park exists referencing enabling legislation, including ranching component. Agriculture works with park, keeps rural character of area - symbiotic relationship with park/agriculture/community.
- Plan is prioritizing among good options. Intent of enabling legislation: ranching, history, preserve area.
- Importance of keeping sustainable agriculture in park in order to support viability of agriculture in area. Agricultural viability tied to ecological viability in West Marin.
- Concept #2: Concept of adding wilderness negatively effects some recreation, would rather see designation (federal protected area) which allows such use.
- Would like to see least further development to park.
- Education displays: Needs some explanation of ranching interaction with land. More on history of ranching
- Using ranches and agriculture as important education resources. Park could be model of sustainable agriculture so people can learn to make wise choices on food.
- The NPS system has preservation as main theme. Agriculture must move and change to keep up. Culture of park agriculture is family. Without culture, no sustainability.
- Concept #5: Wilkins Ranch ecological developed. Use as model for ranching in park. Park and public do not see livestock as vegetation management tool. Livestock keeps vegetation mosaic in the park, reduces invasives.
- Sustainable agriculture moving ahead, streams and wetlands are being protected. Important ideas in sustainable agriculture. Park is already involved in this.
- State parks use "single moment of time" for interpretation - at Fort Ross, now use flow of history as interpretive structure.
- Add on to previous comment: Flow of time goes into future as well. Park could be used as laboratory to determine how to live in a sustainable future.

- Culture changes over time. Human relationships and understanding change.
- Concept #1: The current management concept is most comfortable. Park should look to support sustainable agriculture. The park is doing very little interpretation of agriculture to public. Want more positive education/interpretation of agriculture in the park.
- There is little difference between the concepts except for #2.
- Used to walk through Laguna Ranch - now overgrown and impassable. In support of renewing agricultural leases, instead of retiring them. Park should allow new people to take over lease.
- Areas where agriculture needs to be removed, but not on the scale of alternatives.
- Kehoe Ranch could be used as demo/model of best management practices.
- Sensitive habitat needs to be protected - Educational opportunity for the public.
- Next generation of ranchers wants to know they have a future on family lease. Need this assurance to plan/invest for future.
- Livestock keeps variety of mosaic in park. Need cattle to keep mosaic open, not by mowing. Mowing brings invasives. Cattle are useful for fire and vegetation management and managing exotics.
- Possible to have it all at PORE - agriculture, wilderness, etc.
- Marine waters: wants to see park do studies on fisheries and take measures to conserve marine resources.
- Concept #2: Can we keep agriculture and yet improve bio-diversity?
- Concept #2: Only way to see park would be by foot or horse.
- Park should work up cooperative agreement with US Department of Agriculture to manage agriculture in consistent manner. Develop model to manage agriculture.
- Importance of ranches to food chain.
- On some level park should be investing in new technology for sustainable agriculture.
- Concern that park investment would lead to park control over ranching operations. Ranchers have the experience.
- Predator issues need to be looked at.
- Ranchers need to co-exist with predators. Need to learn more about species and how they can fit in with agriculture.
- USDA has more structure to build and bring in new technology for agriculture, compared to DOI/NPS.
- Park unique in its ability to look at having production and bio-diversity. Opportunity to be model on subject.

- Park has opportunity to educate on fact it is unique in its ability to look at having production and biodiversity.
- Impacts to park may be external which has more effect than internal impacts.
- Don't be afraid to work together - agriculture and environmentalists must work together to make it work.
- To be successful rancher, must be an environmentalist.
- Request comments should be made available. Comments should be printed verbatim.
- In all concepts, park will continue work to conserve resources that is important.
- Define terms in GMP newspaper to avoid confusion.
- Concept #5: Add marine protection to this concept.
- Concepts #2 & #4: I, H, K, L, J Ranches need to be considered cultural resources.
- Concept #2: Four ranches shouldn't be taken out.
- Concept #1: Drakes Estero not currently wilderness – clarify current v. potential wilderness
- Design MPA systemically.
- Concept #6 create a concept combining #2 & #5 – pull out elements from both and combine.
- Concept #2 cultural/ranch landscape needs to be same as #1.
- Preserve ranching community permanently.
- Trail access for hikers, horse riders in wilderness.
- Concept #5 support ranching community culture.
- Archeological and wilderness zones are the same and should be combined.
- Concept #3: 4 Marine Protected Areas (MPA) should be added to concept 5.
- Final concept needs to include how we are going to support ranching on the Point – maintain economically viable ranching in the park in order to support ranching in West Marin - permits and fees.
- Include MPA in all concepts.
- Support Concept #2 – Most important to protect natural resources.
- As long as there is ranching in the park there needs to be support for ranchers to protect natural resources.
- Ranching needs to be guaranteed, otherwise NPS can pressure ranchers to get natural resources and force ranching out.

- Support Concept #1 but add MPA.
- Likes relative balance of cultural and natural currently.
- No change in visitors types & uses – do not develop car camping.
- Bolinas Ridge different from Point.
- No need to have sustainable agriculture center in park.
- Most important to restore biodiversity.
- Ranching must support biodiversity, should be encouraged/supported as sustainable.
- Ranching should not be preserved in perpetuity.
- Concept #5 sustainable agriculture means maintain economically viable ranching – allow diversification.
- Concept #2 shouldn't imply that natural resource sacrificed by ranching (or vice versa).
- Park has unique opportunity to demonstrate/educate that agriculture and natural resources are compatible.
- Ranching should continue in perpetuity – plenty of people interested in jumping in if original families leave.
- Park is a good place to remember where their food comes from.
- Supports human use of marine/bay, but needs to be watched, limits to protect resources.
- Concept #3, likes emphasis on balance and sustainable agriculture.
- Likes sustainable agriculture – expand to include diversification.
- May need to limit ranching in sensitive areas if equitable compensation is made to the operation, e.g., land elsewhere.
- Concept #3 agriculture zones need to be looked at carefully – why some areas not brown - others are - no reduction in total area?
- Ranching in park important to infrastructure outside park – critical mass is needed (e.g., veterinary services, feed, etc.).
- Support Concept #1 with an additional MPA.
- GMP must answer conflicts between natural resources and agriculture - identify most important conflicts and solve them..
- Supports emphasizing archaeological resources.
- GMP needs to identify complements between natural resources and agriculture.
- Ranchers need to be worked with to allow them economically viable operations.

- Plan should identify mechanism for ranchers to participate in park management.
- Landscape formed by integrated natural and cultural resources.
- Look realistically at what can be restored to wilderness and not exaggerate.
- Consider seasonal grazing rather than complete closure to grazing.
- Concepts are vaguely written – matched by very specific maps - why?
- Concepts shouldn't set up false conflicts – should be different levels of both natural and cultural.
- Balance is important – 1/3. 1/3. 1/3 wilderness, natural, ranching is good.
- Local food sources are important.
- Point out difference in beef/dairy operations in plan.
- Concept #2 wilderness – if its going to be there get rid of roads and holes.
- Concept #2 can't set in stone areas where ranches might continue or not – generational change needs to be reflected in flexible map.
- Historic value of point is ranching – ranching makes it look the way it is - grazing is very important.
- Concepts need to reflect interdependent values – i.e., plant species dependent on ranching.
- Remove "no action" from #1 title - like balance of areas.
- All areas (natural, cultural, visitor experience) can be improved – not mutually exclusive.
- Park not an island, loss of 30,000 acres of agriculture in park would have drastic effect on agriculture in West Marin.
- Plan needs to address effects of all actions on surrounding area.
- Is there data supporting increased wilderness as a positive effect on species? Don't remove agriculture from an area, only to find that agriculture was necessary to support the species.
- Ranching is already trying to accommodate environmental concerns
- Continue ranching – park should lease to others in the community when current tenants leave
- Comments based on what was heard in meeting - need time to review
- Hard to assimilate 5 concepts. Not comfortable to evaluate plans. Confusing.
- Title are erroneous. Example, title for preservation concept (#2) takes out more land for preservation than cultural concept (#3).
- Comfortable with Concept 1. Some of title are erroneous and need clarification.
- Glad to have opportunity to create new concept and to combine ideas from others.

- Need simpler way to differentiate between concepts.
- Glad north district (of GGNRA) is included in plan. Wants to make it permanent.
- Trying to learn more.
- Not enough time to comment. Trying to learn more.
- Looking at housing in plan.
- Favors concept 2 but there is an overlap. Priority 1 – preservation of natural resources. 2. Cultural resources. 3. Agriculture compatible with wildlife. 4. Not add new things because of funding constraints. Don't add new facilities but maintain what we have.
- Break out budget for each program – set priorities and fund top priorities.
- Inverness Ridge Association has not taken a position yet. Transportation issues need to be discussed.
- Cultural landscape is a misleading term. Concerned about the development zone plan.
- Will archeological areas be as accessible as the original wilderness areas?
- Overlay the zones.
- Cultural landscape – tell it like it is. Any development that sacrifices what is here should be scrutinized closely.
- Keep system flexible and combine concepts. Better define how cultural will transition into natural and of cultural landscape. More emphasis on education, access to learn about land stewardship, school groups on farms.
- Is there a difference in the development zones in the concepts? 23 dots on the general plan, more than any other concept.
- Should indicate if there are existing buildings in a development site proposed.
- Next round of concepts should take into account general and specific ideas.
- Develop physical, program and management categories are unclear. Need to explain more thoroughly differences.
- All concepts don't take into account acquisition of private lands on the boundary.
- Need to state if not going to acquire lands outside the boundary.
- All plans talk about adding trails. Park not able to maintain existing trails. Not add to burden not able to maintain now.
- Take care of what we have. Not have to fiddle with it a lot. Restoration and take care of cultural resources. Plan for future trails now.
- Critical mass need of agriculture in the County. Preserve agriculture in park to preserve in County.

- Interrelation between agriculture inside and outside of park.
- Consider agriculture interest and other people who live around park and who take care of it.
- Changes in agriculture will effect school district.
- Collaborate well with national groups who could have input on the plan. Make sure national groups are well-versed on concepts.
- Park should consider whether it plays a bigger role in housing for park employees.
- Need to improve understanding of agriculture and its relationship with the parks.
- We should be supportive of agriculture.
- Ranches were key to park. Keep agriculture alive on borders of park and in park. Way to square the circle.
- Not just dairy ranches – also beef.
- Need information of leases.
- Look at original intent of park – educational seminar – foundation for this (GMP) process.
- Develop capacity prior to expansion of services – what are limitations? Minimize new development in park (Concept 3).
- If expand park, then will need to expand infrastructure – facilities.
- Look at how management plan will affect and encourage viability of agriculture – explicit in plan.
- No RV campgrounds.
- Do not add more trails or campgrounds.
- What is the future of the elk herd at Limantour? Will it expand over the whole park? Is the park going to let the herd grow over the next 20 years?
- Need to consider where trails are located so as not to cause more erosion. Some trails need to be put to bed.
- White deer are a growing problem – agricultural use? Innovative program for agriculture.
- Protect stream conservation areas in agriculture lands and to protect agriculture – goes both ways.
- Second generation ranchers are looking at new kind of agriculture. Have a wonderful opportunity ahead of them.
- Add preamble to concept. Include that park was established when the cost of land was higher; A-60 zoning to help control property costs.
- What is going to happen to the Giacomini Wetlands? Cannot tell from concepts.

