



Public Comments Inform Pinnacles Planning Effort



Pinnacles Centennial Celebration.



Early Park Development, 1933.



California Condor.

Letter from the Superintendent:

Dear Friends,

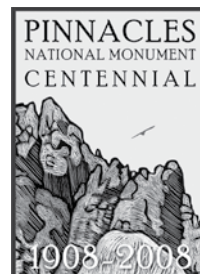
In our last newsletter we asked for your thoughts on the future of Pinnacles as we launched our General Management Plan (GMP). Many of you picked up those newsletters, attended the meetings we hosted, filled out comment forms, and sent us letters and e-mails. We appreciate the many thoughtful comments you offered, and your interest in this park. This newsletter contains a summary of what we heard from you, as well as information about what to expect next in the GMP process. You will next hear from us in late spring or early summer when we will present a range of preliminary management alternatives for your review and comment.

As always, much is happening at Pinnacles National Monument:

Celebrating 100 Years: On January 16 we formally celebrated the centennial of the monument – in 1908, local residents convinced President Theodore Roosevelt to sign a proclamation establishing Pinnacles National Monument. We will be celebrating all year with a series of events that highlight the legacy of local initiative and support that was instrumental in the preservation of Pinnacles. You can find more information on our centennial events at www.nps.gov/pinn/parkgmt/centennial.htm.

Visitor Center relocation: We have moved our primary east side visitor center from the stone building in Bear Gulch to the camp store building at the campground entrance. This change enables us to provide visitor information closer to the entrance of the park, in a less congested area, with more parking. The old visitor center will continue to be operated as the Bear Gulch Nature Center, which will be open when staffing is available.

Changes at the campground: Management of Pinnacles Campground is also changing. Some facilities have been upgraded, and we have a new reservation system. Please visit www.recreation.gov or call (877)444-6777 for campground reservations.



The staff, volunteers and partners at Pinnacles continue to work to protect the spectacular rock formations and native ecosystems in the park, and to provide a rewarding visitor experience. We hope you will continue to participate in the GMP planning process, and we look forward to seeing you at Pinnacles this season.

Sincerely,

Eric J. Brunnemann, Superintendent

Pinnacles National Monument Foundation Statement

The park's foundation statement records our shared understanding of why the park was created, and what resources and values we must protect. In the last newsletter, we published draft statements about Pinnacles' purpose and significance, and we asked for your feedback. Based on your responses, we have made some minor changes. The revised statements about Pinnacles' purpose and significance are below. We will use these statements to guide the development of the general management plan.

Park Purpose: *The purpose of Pinnacles National Monument is to protect the volcanic Pinnacle Rocks formation, talus caves, associated lands and ecosystems for their scientific, educational and cultural values, by caring for their natural processes and wild character and providing opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of these resources.*

Pinnacles National Monument is nationally significant because:

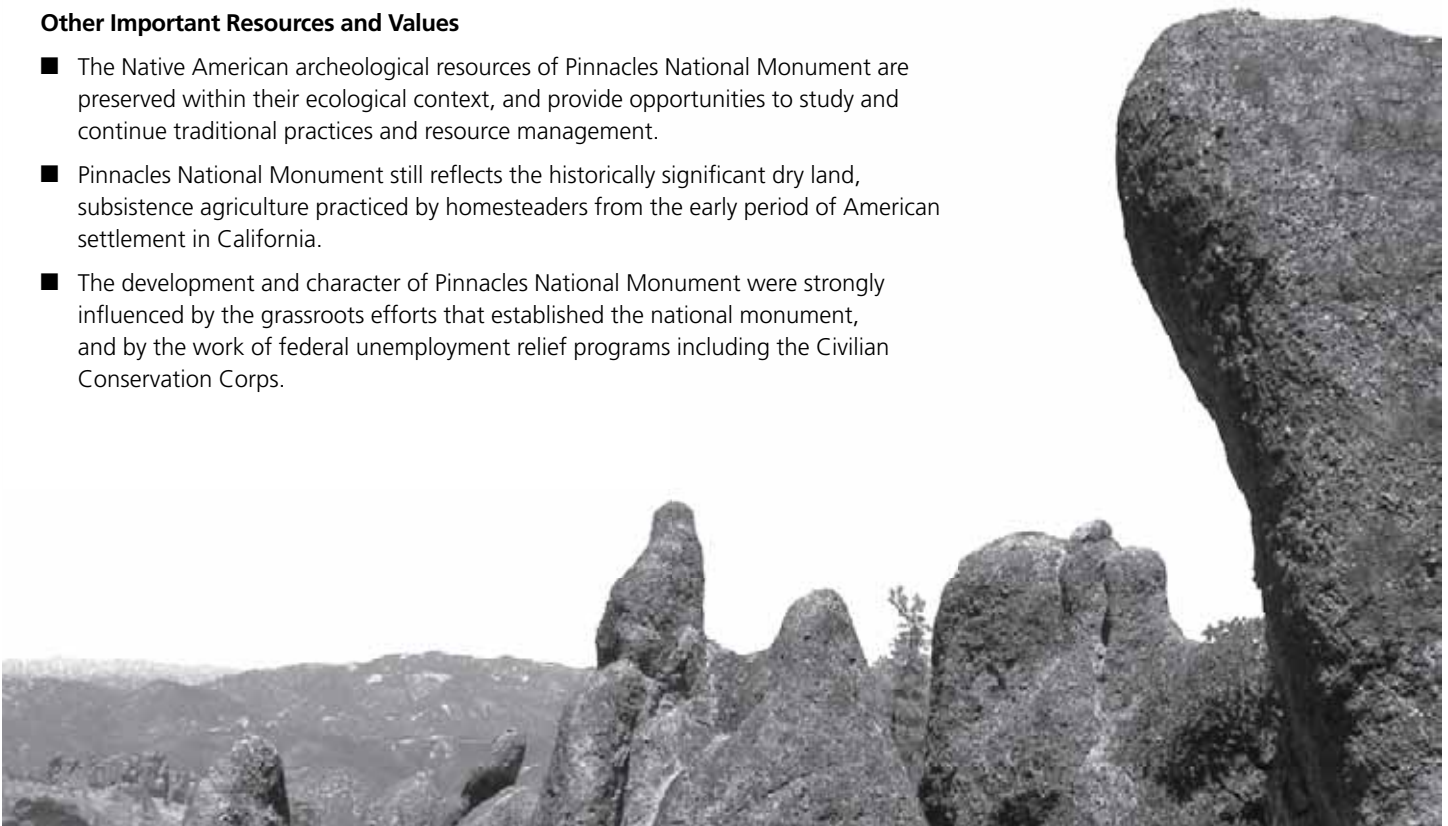
- Pinnacles National Monument contains a remnant of an ancient stratovolcano that was split by the movement of two continental plates and provided key evidence for the theory of plate tectonics.
- Pinnacles National Monument contains the most extensive assemblage of rare talus caves within the National Park System and cares for the natural processes and ecosystems within.
- Pinnacles Wilderness protects the natural character of central California's native ecosystems and provides opportunities to experience wildness in an area of expanding urban development.
- Intact ecological processes and communities of Pinnacles National Monument, including oak savanna, riparian and chaparral ecosystems, provide a refuge for the exceptionally diverse native flora and fauna within the Gabilan ecoregion.

Other Important Resources and Values

- The Native American archeological resources of Pinnacles National Monument are preserved within their ecological context, and provide opportunities to study and continue traditional practices and resource management.
- Pinnacles National Monument still reflects the historically significant dry land, subsistence agriculture practiced by homesteaders from the early period of American settlement in California.
- The development and character of Pinnacles National Monument were strongly influenced by the grassroots efforts that established the national monument, and by the work of federal unemployment relief programs including the Civilian Conservation Corps.



Pinnacles public meeting.



Summary of Public Comments for the General Management Plan

The Pinnacles National Monument General Management Plan (GMP) team launched the GMP planning process in the spring of 2007 by asking for your thoughts, ideas, and concerns about what should be addressed in the GMP. The team distributed newsletters in English and Spanish, hosted four public meetings and held additional meetings with various stakeholder groups and community organizations. Pinnacles received 110 written comments, and also incorporated comments from the 1998 GMP start-up and from Pinnacles staff. Thanks to all of you who took the time to share your thoughts with us. Your participation strengthens the planning process and helps to ensure that the GMP will serve the values of the people who love and use the park.

The following section includes a summary of issues and concerns raised during the scoping public comment period, organized by topic. The summary reflects the wide range and diversity of comments received. Issues that received the greatest number of comments include: ideas about visitor education programs and interpretation opportunities; rock climbing management approaches; support for protection of cultural and natural resources; preservation of wilderness-related values; support for outreach to communities, tribes, landowners, and schools; and ideas for visitor services and transportation, particularly on the west side and on the newly acquired Pinnacles Ranch.

Natural Resource Management

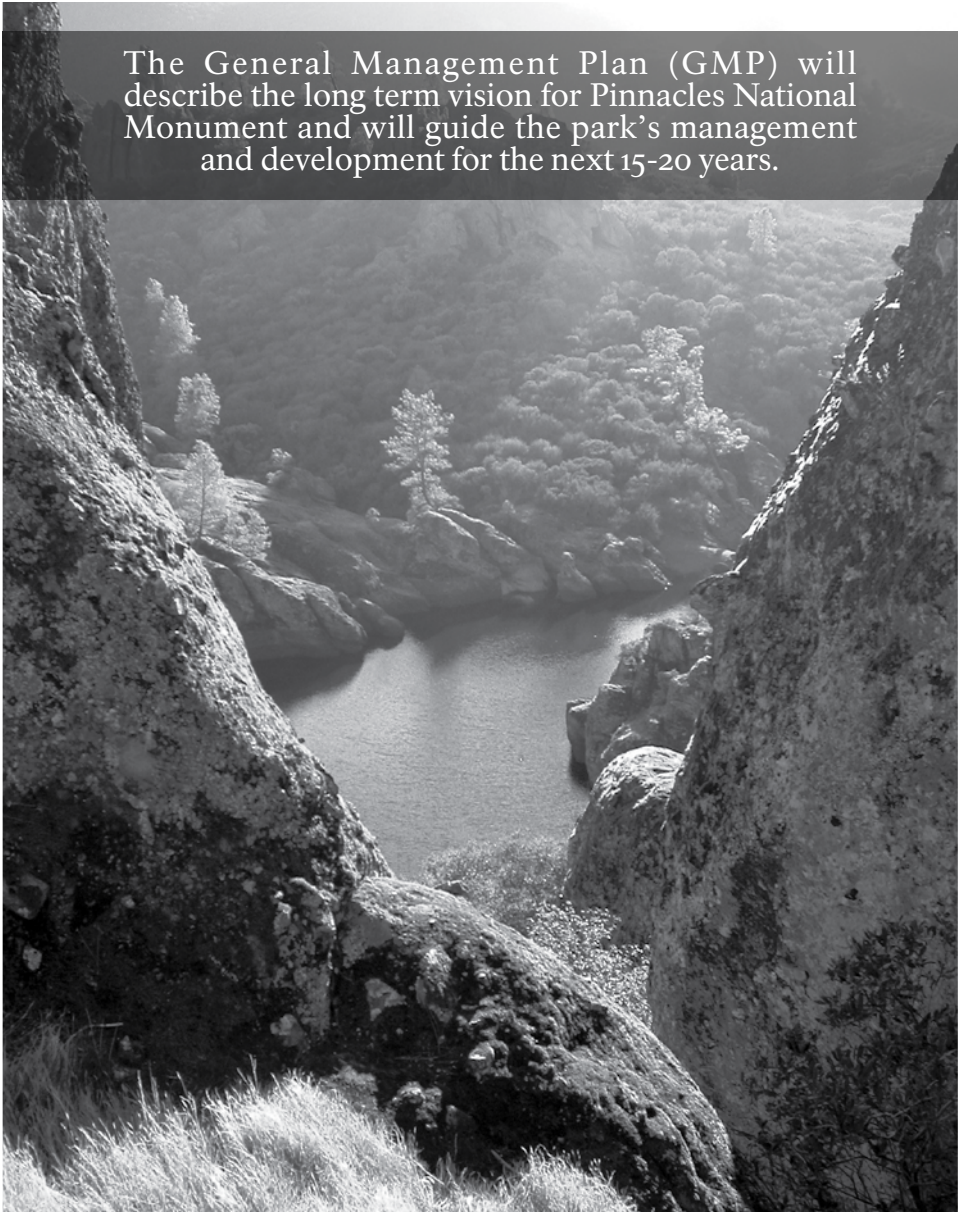
Wildlife

- Wildlife diversity is an important component of the park experience.
- Protect ecosystem processes, consider reintroductions of extirpated species, and work collaboratively to preserve wildlife corridors on adjacent lands.

- Protect raptors, other birds, tarantulas, bees, and deer, as well as endangered species such as the California condor and the Townsend big-eared bat.
- Pinnacles Ranch lands have been farmed, so less constraints regarding threatened and endangered species.
- Limit access to certain areas or activities to protect wildlife. Sensitivity to nesting raptors, condors, and bats is a priority.
- Keep closures to a minimum.
- Provide condor sighting opportunities and owl walks.
- Establish active monitoring programs.
- Concerned about reintroduction of bears.
- Keep non-native red foxes out.

Geologic Features

- Do not close caves. Visitors are responsible for their own safety.
- Make better use of Balconies Caves



The General Management Plan (GMP) will describe the long term vision for Pinnacles National Monument and will guide the park's management and development for the next 15-20 years.

Bear Gulch Reservoir.

A Summary of What We Heard From You, continued

- Reexamine cave management policies
- Geologic formations are important resources for visitors and climbers.

Native Plants

- Restore native plant communities through fire, reintroductions, and/or plantings.
- Manage for the health of plant communities and wildlife will benefit.
- Lichens are important park resources.
- Need standards and guidelines for identification and protection.

Invasive Species

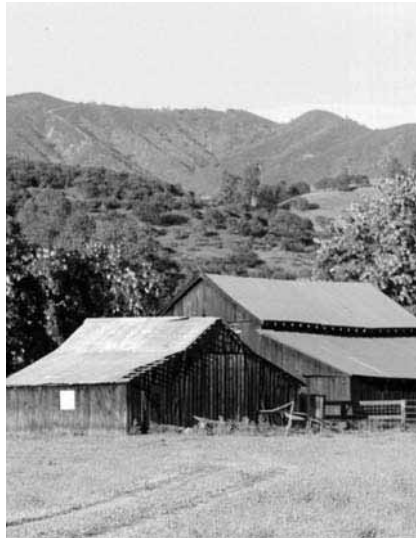
- Eradicate non-native species such as feral pigs and noxious weeds.
- Experiment with grazing at Pinnacles Ranch to remove exotics.
- Allow feral pig hunts.
- Expand the pig fence to include newly acquired lands.
- Pig fences are unnecessary.
- Focus on developing the most cost-effective control methods through research and monitoring.
- Consider weed spread in all project planning documents.

Fire

- Use prescribed and natural fires to restore and protect native vegetation.
- Minimize the impacts of fire suppression.
- Prevent fires by reducing fuel loads, especially on the west side, and maintaining fire breaks.
- Ensure visitor safety during fire events with evacuation plans and fire shelters.

Air Quality

- Clean air should be a management priority.
- Concerned about air pollution from increased traffic.
- Don't restrict visitor use based on minor air quality impacts.



Butterfield Homestead.



Gray Pine, *Pinus sabiniana*.



North Wilderness Trail.

Cultural Resource Management

Cultural and Historic Resources

- Develop standards and guidelines to protect and interpret historic structures, artifacts, and cultural landscapes, including the recently acquired homesteads. Emphasize prehistoric use, the Spanish period, pioneer history, banditos in the caves, Mission 66, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and ranching.
- Interpret homestead sites that predate the park.
- Maintain CCC structures.
- Use grazing as part of the cultural landscape.
- Update the list of classified structures and upgrade the storage of and access to museum collections.
- Increase the funding and staffing devoted to the protection and interpretation of cultural resources, including Native American sites and stories.
- Reuse historic structures in ways that best preserve them.
- North Chalone fire tower is now eligible for National Register of Historic Places.
- Establish a cultural management division.

Native Americans

- Partner with the Amah Mutsun tribe for assistance with interpretation and documentation of traditional practices, including native plant uses.
- Protect Native American sites and acquire additional nearby sites.
- Restore a Native American condor ceremony.
- Document and interpret the relationships between prehistoric and historic land uses.
- Create a Native American or ethnographic management district.
- Hire a Native American specialist.
- Use the San Diego County Master Plan as a model for cultural resource information.

Visitor Use, Experience, and Facilities

Hiking

- Build new trails utilizing recently acquired lands, accommodating multiple user types, and making connections between existing facilities.
- Need comprehensive trail planning.
- Use new trails to disperse crowds away from core areas.
- Improve existing trails including providing accessibility, interpretive elements, signage, and access to restrooms and water.
- Keep the trail system unchanged.
- New trails should have few structures and cause minimum impact. Minimize signage on trails and climbing routes.
- Specific ideas for trails include paved accessible trails at Pinnacles Ranch, short viewpoint trails, self-guided trails, pig fence trail, McCabe Canyon, Bear Valley, airstrip ADA trail, homesteading sites, south wilderness loop, campground connector, Mt. Defiance, Old Pinnacles ADA segment, connecting the high peaks with the new visitor center, and more west side trails.

Bike and Equestrian Trails

- Prohibit or limit horseback riding and/or mountain biking on trails due to resource impacts and use conflicts.
- Allow horseback riding and/or mountain biking, especially on the newly acquired ranchlands, along roadways, and in previously impacted areas.
- Provide horse and/or bicycle rentals.
- Make the park more bicycle-friendly to draw people out of their vehicles and speed up travel.

Climbing

- Rock climbing is an important and historic activity at the park. Pinnacles provides a unique climbing experience.
- Need climbing safety regulations.
- Additional restrictions are not necessary. Climbers are responsible stewards and impacts are negligible compared to other uses.
- Address big group policies and bolting practices, especially in wilderness areas.
- Develop a process for permitting new routes.
- Maintain and formalize access trails.
- Partner with climbing groups to maintain trails, establish routes, and formulate policy.
- Seek comments from Bay Area climbers.

Value of the Natural Setting

- Keep the park natural and pristine.
- Protect dark skies.
- Preserve the natural quiet and peacefulness. Address noise from large groups and the campground.
- Park visitors value the wildlife diversity, solitude, clean air, scenery, historic buildings, trails, and wilderness.

Wilderness

- Protect wilderness values, including solitude, scenery, and wildlife habitat.
- Create a wilderness management plan.
- Manage newly acquired lands as wilderness.
- Study and propose additional wilderness designations. Consider designating all undeveloped land as wilderness.
- Protect the wilderness characteristics of backcountry areas adjacent to designated wilderness.
- Do not designate newly acquired lands as wilderness, keeping management options flexible.

Crowding and Carrying Capacity

- Limit large groups due to noise and resource impacts.
- Create a new contact station and/or relocate visitor center to relieve congestion and impacts in core of the park.



School group at Bear Gulch Reservoir.



Camping at Pinnacles National Monument.



West side trailhead and parking.



Pinnacles Ranch, Bacon Homestead.

A Summary of What We Heard From You, continued

- Control crowding by establishing carrying capacities and reservation systems as necessary.
- Use parking availability to control overuse.
- Disperse visitors to newly acquired lands and Chalone area.

Park Hours

- After-hours use may discourage illegal activity.
- Consider providing evening programs.
- Keep park as day-use only to benefit wildlife.

Education and Interpretation

- Use living history and adaptive reuse of historic structures to interpret CCC structures.
- Link natural resources with cultural interpretation. Construct an ethnobotanical trail or garden.
- Explore the use of technology to expand educational services, including virtual field trips, videos, and slide shows.
- Displays should be accessible.
- Promote amateur astronomy.
- Minimize the visual impact of interpretive signs and displays.
- Emphasize education and expand partnerships with educational institutions and other agencies and parks.
- Expand educational services to off-site programming and curriculum

development, including for home schools.

- Ideas for new opportunities include providing a roster of on-duty specialists, career and life choice education, and more mid-week programming, as well as interpreting cultural sites and facilitating student research.
- Focus interpretation efforts on Native American history, cultural sites, homesteading history, resource stewardship, chaparral, sensitive species, invasive species, wilderness philosophy/use, and/or reaching children.
- Establish a learning center or conference/training facility.
- Establish educational facilities on the west side.
- Have public meetings to discuss park management.

Diverse Communities

- Engage in “common ground” projects with diverse cultural groups.
- Provide programming, maps, and displays in multiple languages.
- Establish a satellite presence in local communities through media, events, or a mobile information center.
- Address the interests, needs, and perspectives of multiple cultures.

Ranger-led Programs

- Provide more programming on the west side, including night hikes.
- Keep ranger programs and visitor center in Bear Gulch.
- Use the Pinnacles Ranch for a small contact facility and guided walks.
- Provide more scheduled guided walks with rangers, including at the Pinnacles Ranch. Provide interactions with botanists.

Camping

- Consider backcountry camping. This could include a permit system.
- Backcountry camping will require more staff.
- The fire tower at North Chalone, the west side, and the old campground are possible low-impact camping areas. Only allow in the less sensitive areas.
- Provide youth group camping opportunities. Designate youth group sites at the existing campground, the Soledad picnic area, or the fire tower.
- Continue to allow camping on the east side. Current campground is quiet and convenient.
- Keep the campground store and pool open.
- Reconfigure the east side campground for efficient use of space, restoration of riparian areas, or to create a simpler, less expensive campground.
- Reestablish walk-in campsite access.
- Address campground noise and lack of privacy between sites.

A Summary of What We Heard From You, continued

- Upgrade facilities with food storage boxes, shade structures, and/or separate RV sites with water and electricity.
- Construct a new campground on the west side similar to the previous low-impact site.
- Don't replace west side campground in the floodplain.
- Keep camping out of the west side to preserve peace and quiet.
- Create backcountry/walk-in camping opportunities at both park entrances and front country camping at Pinnacles Ranch.
- Provide overflow camping and picnic areas for busy periods.
- Expanding overnight use would cause less impact by reducing day trips.
- Assess camping fees "per site", not per person.
- Provide advance reservations of campsites.
- Establish a west side community advisory group.
- Provide more visitor services on the west side, including more parking.
- Consider placing some visitor services in Soledad.
- Consider additional visitor experiences on the west side such as group picnicking, camping, learning, and accessibility.
- Give greater attention to invasive plants, ecological conditions, viewsheds, and/or law enforcement
- The higher population on the west side creates more opportunities for education and partnerships.
- Complete west side developments from previous plans.
- Park rangers should live on premises for visitor safety.

Visitor Center

- Expand visitor center offerings and space.
- Put a visitor center on each side of the park.
- No need for a grandiose visitor center.
- Move east side visitor center to park entrance to provide information at initial contact.
- Locate visitor center(s) with goal of dispersing visitors.
- Locate west side visitor center toward park boundary.
- Concerned about the impact of the planned west side visitor center on the meadow and wildlife habitat.
- Improve the visitor center(s) to accommodate more services, including ranger-guided services, accessibility, and environmental education facilities.
- Keep Bear Gulch visitor center as an information center.

West Side

- Don't develop the west side at all. Keep the current development and parking.
- Provide accessible trails and features.
- Remove all facilities from the west side.

Pinnacles Ranch

- Disperse visitor use by creating new trails, including paved accessible and historical interpretation trails.
- Provide picnicking with shade structures near the homestead sites.
- Consider a new campground.
- Preserve Butterfield and Bacon homesteads as cultural landscapes.
- Replant valley oaks and native grasses.
- Keep airstrip. Add helicopter pad for emergencies.
- Conduct "early California" cultural landscape inventory.
- Remove structures without visitor use or resource management potential.



Park shuttle.

Other Park Facilities

- Consider amphitheater in Condor Gulch.
- Encourage family gatherings with group picnic areas.
- Address parking to prevent congestion.
- Need more benches and interpretive displays. Picnic areas need shade.
- Redesign Peak's view picnic area. Reopen Chalone picnic area.
- Improve and/or provide restroom facilities at group sites, popular sites, the reservoir, and in the backcountry.
- Replace portable toilets with composting/vault systems.
- Need cell phone support.
- Develop a refuse transfer station for the area.
- Need trash receptacles.
- Upgrade water supply. Provide water at Chalone picnic area.
- Do not chlorinate water.
- Treat sewage outside of park.

General

- More concessions lead to more congestion.
- Do not allow motorized recreation.
- Revisit pet policy.
- Don't allow dogs in the park.
- Provide new and diverse activities, especially on acquired lands
- Designate areas for photography and wildlife viewing.
- Consider organized sporting activities.



West side parking lot.

Transportation

Roads

- Limit personal vehicle access.
- Close internal roads to all but bikes, shuttles, and people with disabilities.
- Address traffic flow and circulation.
- Don't improve roads to accommodate RV's.
- Do not connect east and west sides with a road.
- Consider a road connecting east and west sides, utilizing expansion area or adjacent lands.
- Widen roads for buses and increased winery traffic on the west side.
- Encourage visitors to hike and bike.
- Use clean fuel vehicles.
- Improve signage to eliminate confusion.

Shuttle

- Difficult to tell where shuttle stops are.
- Provide more shuttles and drivers, including late shuttles.
- Long wait lines on holiday weekends.
- Select east and west shuttle lots.
- Shuttle concentrates use on Bear Gulch.
- Without a shuttle, there is more dispersal and less ranger contact.
- Need more alternative transportation, including shuttles.
- Need shuttle system from Soledad on weekends.
- Integrate Alternative Transportation Plan into GMP.

- Work with adjacent communities to connect with bus systems and complement transportation plans.

Parking

- Relocate east side lots closer to Hwy 25.
- Increase the amount of available parking.
- Keep the existing parking footprint.
- Remove the Moses Spring and Bear Gulch lots.
- Disperse impacts with small lots for individual trails.
- Provide more space for parking at the access gate on Hwy 25.
- Provide parking opportunities at the Pinnacles Ranch.

Park Development and Land Use

Park Development

- Consider different management focus for east and west sides.
- Limit development. No new roads, structures, camping, RV sites, trails, restrooms, etc.
- Concentrate development near boundaries.
- Don't develop the west side.
- Seek ways to reduce existing non-historic development.
- Don't change east side or developed areas.

- Move development out of riparian areas.
- Expand Chalone development to accommodate more visitors.
- Use existing footprints for new development.
- New developments should incorporate CCC design character.
- Continue using wooden signs.
- Use sustainable development practices such as green materials, porous paving, alternative energies, and water reuse. Be a model of sustainability.
- Cave gates and erosion fencing are visually offensive.
- Minimize carbon footprint. Use mass transit and clean fuel options.
- Consider viewsheds when planning developments.

Administrative Facilities

- Consider moving administrative facilities to local communities.
- Consider sharing administrative space with BLM in Hollister.
- Move facilities out of Bear Gulch and the floodplain.
- Need only one east side entrance sign/station.
- Need permanent and seasonal housing for resource and visitor protection. Eliminate temporary housing and replace with permanent structures.
- Consider off-site park housing.
- Need adequate space for administrative tasks.



Campground store and visitor center.



Ranger-led program.



Chalone Peak Trail.

A Summary of What We Heard From You, continued

- Move administrative facilities from the park core. Consider relocating to Pinnacles Ranch.
- Replace Resource Management office with CCC compatible design.
- Implement plan for entrance and contact station on west side.
- Upgrade west side water, restrooms, sanitation, electricity, and other services.

Park Operations

Park Operations

- Address illegal dumping.
- Minimize regulatory signage. Emphasize self-regulation
- Need better boundary signage.
- Provide cultural competency training for staff.
- Address high staff turnover.

Law Enforcement and Safety

- Place signs to alert hikers that no through roads exist.
- Easements are needed for emergency access.
- Need better communications and cell towers.
- Eliminate ticketing for late exit.
- Avoid over-regulation based on the misdeeds of a few.

Entrance Fees, Reservations, and Permits

- Consider a reservation system.
- Avoid a reservation system.
- Allow permitted use of fire tower.
- Consider a minimum-impact bivouac permit for sleeping on High Peak rocks.
- Manage informal groups through permits.
- Need fee structure. A park fee of \$5-10 is reasonable.
- Reduce special use fees.
- Charge higher fees to meet park costs.
- Consider hiking reservations.
- Consider lower fees for shuttle users and youth.

Adjacent Lands and Gateway Communities

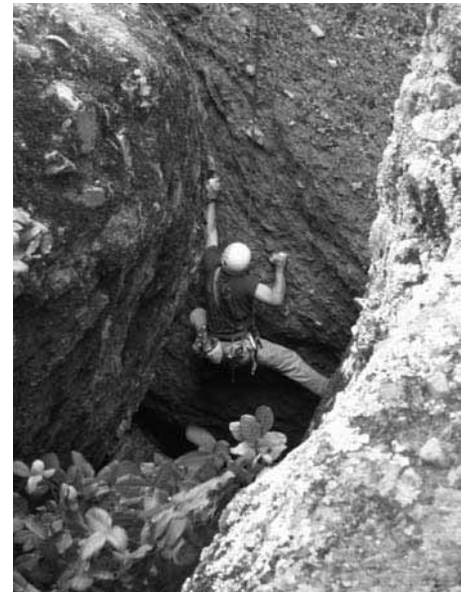
- Explore off-site areas for camping, including partnerships with private landowners.
- Address impacts to vistas from external development.
- Maintain fire breaks around park.
- Address external threats due to development, light pollution, air quality, water, and over-flights.
- Address private power line that has no easement.
- Consider partnerships to manage adjacent lands and establish buffers through agreements.

Partnerships and Public Involvement

- Expand volunteer programs.
- Work with local and regional recreation groups.
- Establish more “Friends” organizations.
- Coordinate park planning with county.
- Improve communication with neighbors.
- Park Day event involves the community.

Boundary Adjustments

- Expand the park by acquisitions of lands to the north, of riparian areas, of any available adjacent lands, and/or surrounding large ranches.
- Buffer the park with conservation agreements.
- Do not acquire new lands.
- Collaborate with others to protect the 5,000 acre parcel recently considered for development on the west side.



Rock climbing.

Note:

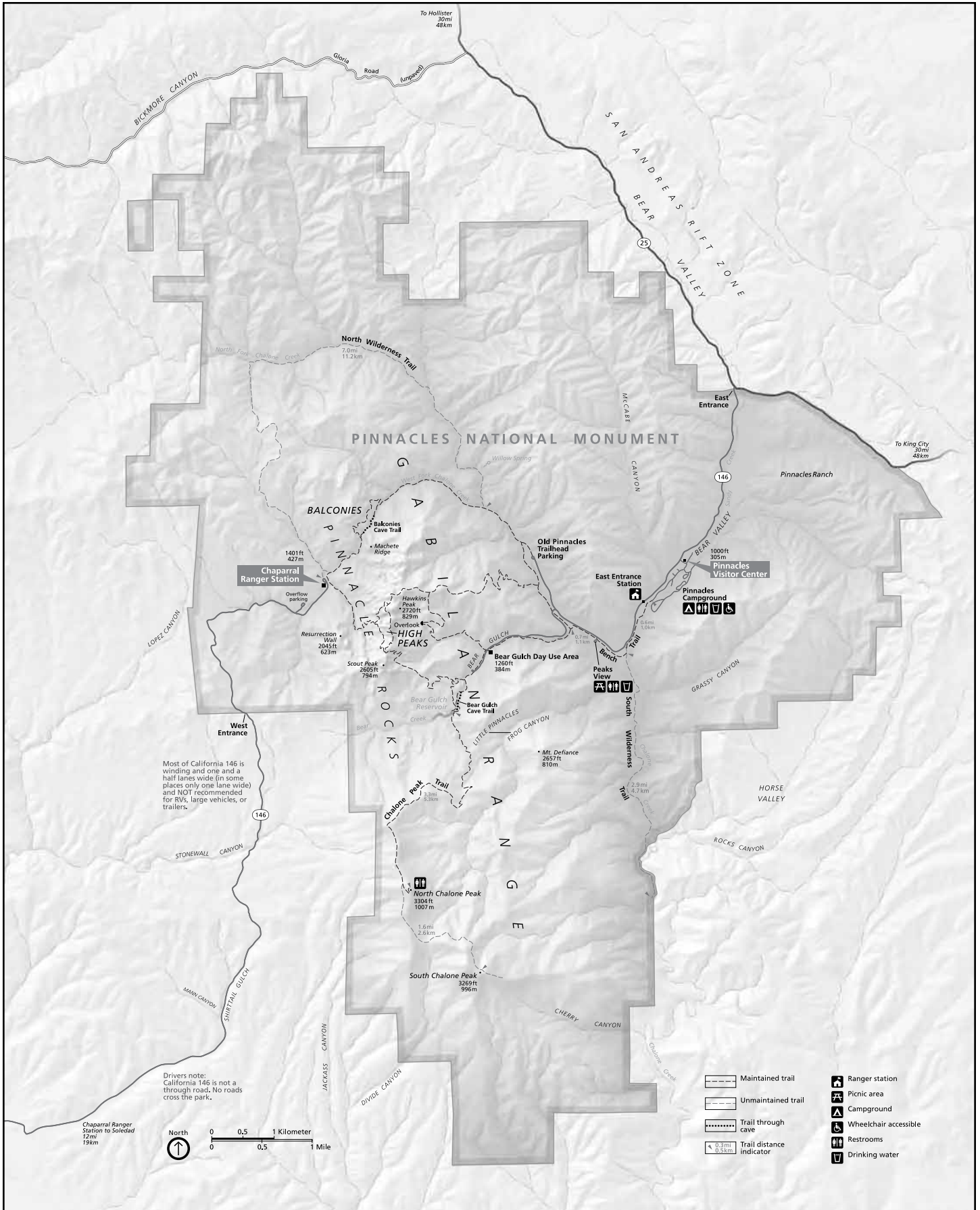
A more detailed compilation of the comments received can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/pinn/parkmgmt/planning.htm> or by contacting the park.



Park entrance sign.

Park Map

Pinnacles National Monument



How Will My Comments Be Addressed in the GMP?

The GMP will establish a future vision for Pinnacles and will provide general guidance on how to achieve that vision. Your comments help us define the vision and direction for the park's future. Pinnacles staff have reviewed and analyzed your comments. Your comments will be considered in decision-making and will be incorporated into possible visions for the future (called alternatives). Some comments provided specific ideas for preserving what's important and providing better visitor services and programs. These more detailed ideas could either be implemented by the park at any time or could be used in future plans (such as trail site planning) that will implement the GMP. Your ideas and suggestions will help us serve you better now and after completion of the GMP.

Next Steps

The GMP planning team will be gathering information to help identify ways to address the planning issues.

This information, the foundation statement, and your comments will help the team to develop possible management alternatives. The alternatives will be consistent with the foundation statement, address management issues, and comply with all applicable laws and policies.

We would like your participation in the development of the alternatives. Later this spring we will send you a newsletter with some preliminary alternative concepts for your review and input. The "alternatives" newsletter will also provide additional information on how you can participate in shaping these alternatives.

Did we miss anything?

If you would like to add any thoughts and ideas to the summary of issues presented, please send us your thoughts. Please see the contact information on the back page.



Moses Spring Trail.

Future Opportunities for your Participation

Planning Activity	Dates	Public Involvement Opportunities
1 Scoping - Set the stage for planning: Reaffirm purpose, significance, and identify ideas, concerns or issues to be addressed in the GMP. Summarize scoping comments and report back.	Spring to Summer 2007	Review newsletter and send us your ideas or concerns on the comment form provided or through our planning website.
	Winter 2008	Attend public meetings and voice your ideas and concerns.
WE ARE HERE		
2 Develop and present preliminary alternatives: Outline different possible futures for the park and provide opportunities for review and comment by the public, agencies, tribes and other park stakeholders.	Winter to Summer 2008	Review alternative concepts newsletter and send us your ideas and concerns. Attend workshops to comment on preliminary alternatives.
3 Prepare and distribute a Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement for review and comment by the public, agencies, tribes and other park stakeholders.	Winter to Summer 2009	Review the Draft GMP/EIS and provide written comments. Attend public meetings to learn more about the draft document and to voice your ideas and concerns.
4 Revise draft and publish Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement: Analyze comments, respond to comments, revise draft document, distribute to the public.	Fall 2009 - Spring 2010	Review the Final GMP/EIS.
5 Implement the approved plan: Prepare and issue a "Record of Decision" finalizing the plan. Begin to implement the plan as funding allows.	Summer 2010 and beyond	Work with the park to implement the GMP. Specific implementation plans and projects will include further public involvement opportunities.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

General Management Plan Team
Pinnacles National Monument
5000 Highway 146
Paicines, CA 95043



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Contact Information

Mail:

Pinnacles National Monument GMP
5000 Highway 146
Paicines, CA 95043

Phone:

Carl Brenner, GMP Information:
(831) 389-4485 x 265

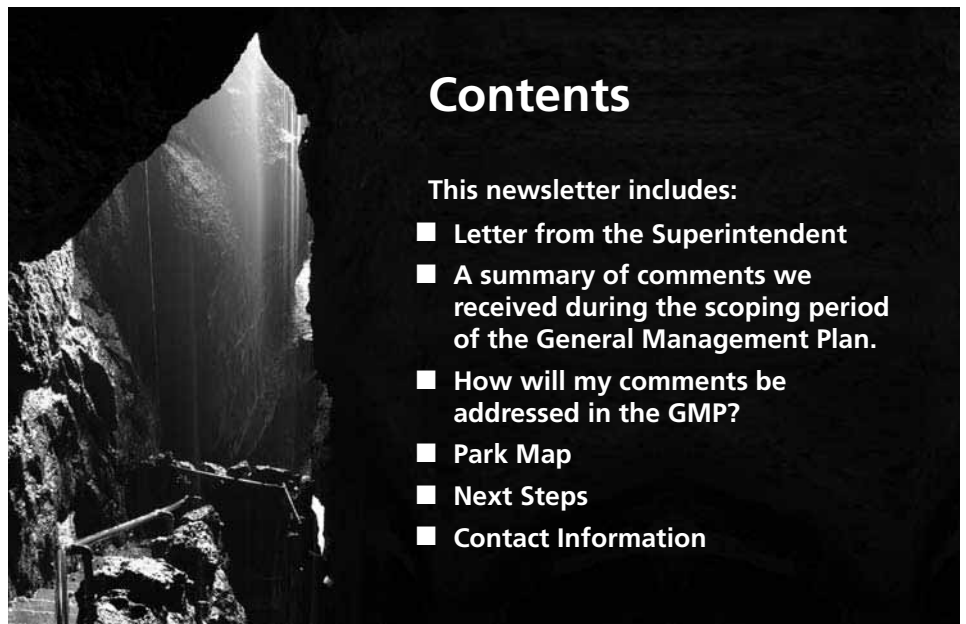
Martha Crusius, Project Manager:
(510) 817-1447

Park Web Site:

<http://www.nps.gov/pinn>

E-mail:

pinn_gmp@nps.gov



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