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General Management Plan Update

Point Reyes National Seashore has significantly matured over the last forty years. The park serves over 2 million visitors annually and last year received a 100% visitor satisfaction rating according to a Park Service-wide survey. The park also contributes close to \$100 million to the regional economy. The park's staff and a cadre of partners and volunteers carry out the mission of the national park system to care for and preserve the places that Americans entrust to us.

The 80 miles of coastline, dramatic coastal bluffs, myriad life forms, and abundant recreational opportunities contribute to make Point Reyes an outstanding national park. For many visitors, because of the abundant wildlife, the park is often called "Yellowstone West."

The park also contains an abundance of significant historic resources, with 39 cultural landscapes identified for future preservation and close to 375 historic structures. The park has made great strides in developing a historic preservation maintenance team and has done major rehabilitation projects on the historic ranches, Point Reyes Light and Lifeboat Station.

Over the last ten years the Seashore has developed scientific research programs, upgraded park facilities and infrastructure, developed partnerships, and expanded learning opportunities for the public.

Every unit of the National Park system develops a General Management Plan (GMP). Point Reyes National Seashore is in the process of updating its GMP to guide future decision making. The document is the basic foundation for decision making and is developed in consultation with service-wide program managers, interested parties, and the general public.

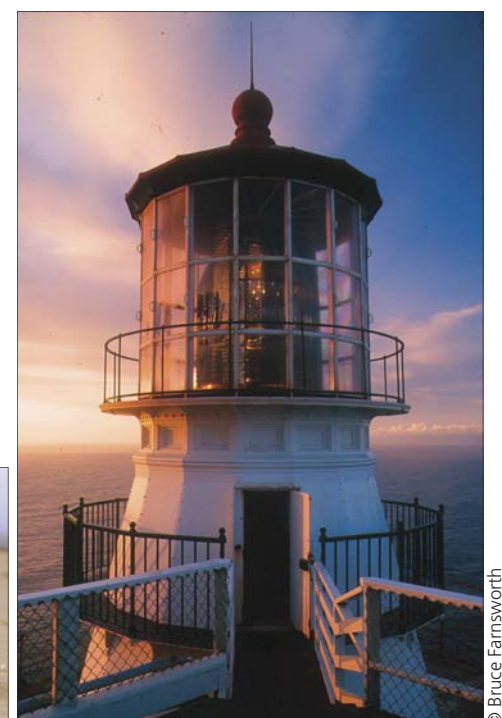
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Since 2000, NPS staff members and consultants have been working on various planning efforts that support the development of the GMP process. The process at this point has synthesized the public comments we have received over the years through various meetings and workshops. In addition, the NPS has completed studies and background information to inform the planning process; most of these efforts are now completed. With this additional information and public comment, the park has prepared for public review a draft GMP that will be released this fall/winter.



As with all planning efforts for the National Seashore, we will notify all interested parties on our mailing list when the Draft GMP/EIS is available. We will also post it on our website for easy access.

Point Reyes National Seashore is approaching the next 20 years with a strategy to meet several goals that promote leadership and innovation in facility management, research, protection and restoration of natural and cultural resources, sustainable resource use, wilderness awareness, and public outreach-partnerships. As the NPS looks forward to the park's 50th birthday in 2012 and the 100th anniversary of the National Park System in 2016, the GMP will help us prepare to meet the challenges ahead of us.



Feather on beach and historic Point Reyes Lighthouse

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Status of the General Management Plan

The draft Point Reyes National Seashore/northern district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) is nearing completion. Studies on historic structures, park economics, transportation, cultural landscapes, and other topics are now complete or being finalized. The DRAFT GMP/EIS is anticipated to be released in fall/winter 2008/09 for public review. The GMP will provide management guidance for the Point Reyes National Seashore and the North District of Golden Gate National Recreation Area for the next 20 years.

Once the draft document is released, and after the public review and comment period, a final revised GMP/EIS will be available. Public workshops regarding the draft document will be announced later this year. Using public input, the draft GMP will be revised and finalized in late 2008. The final GMP Plan will be recorded in a Record of Decision (2009).

Following is a list of the studies completed or being finalized.

- Trail Inventory and Condition Assessment
- Comprehensive Interpretive Plan
- Cultural Landscape Report
- Regional Visitor Phone Surveys
- Transportation Management Study
- Transit Analysis For Point Reyes NS
- Fire Management Plan
- Vegetation & Wetland Delineation Map
- Archeological Overview and Assessment
- Cultural Evaluation Study for Tocaloma
- Administrative History
- Threatened/Endangered Species Evaluation and Mapping
- National Register Nominations for Olema Valley and Point Reyes Ranches as well as Radio Sites
- Economic Study

How to be Involved

Your written comments are always welcomed and encouraged. Comments can be submitted electronically or by mail as listed below.

Mail your comment letters to: Point Reyes National Seashore, General Management Plan Team, 1 Bear Valley Road, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Email comments to: poreplanning@nps.gov

Website for information: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/pore>

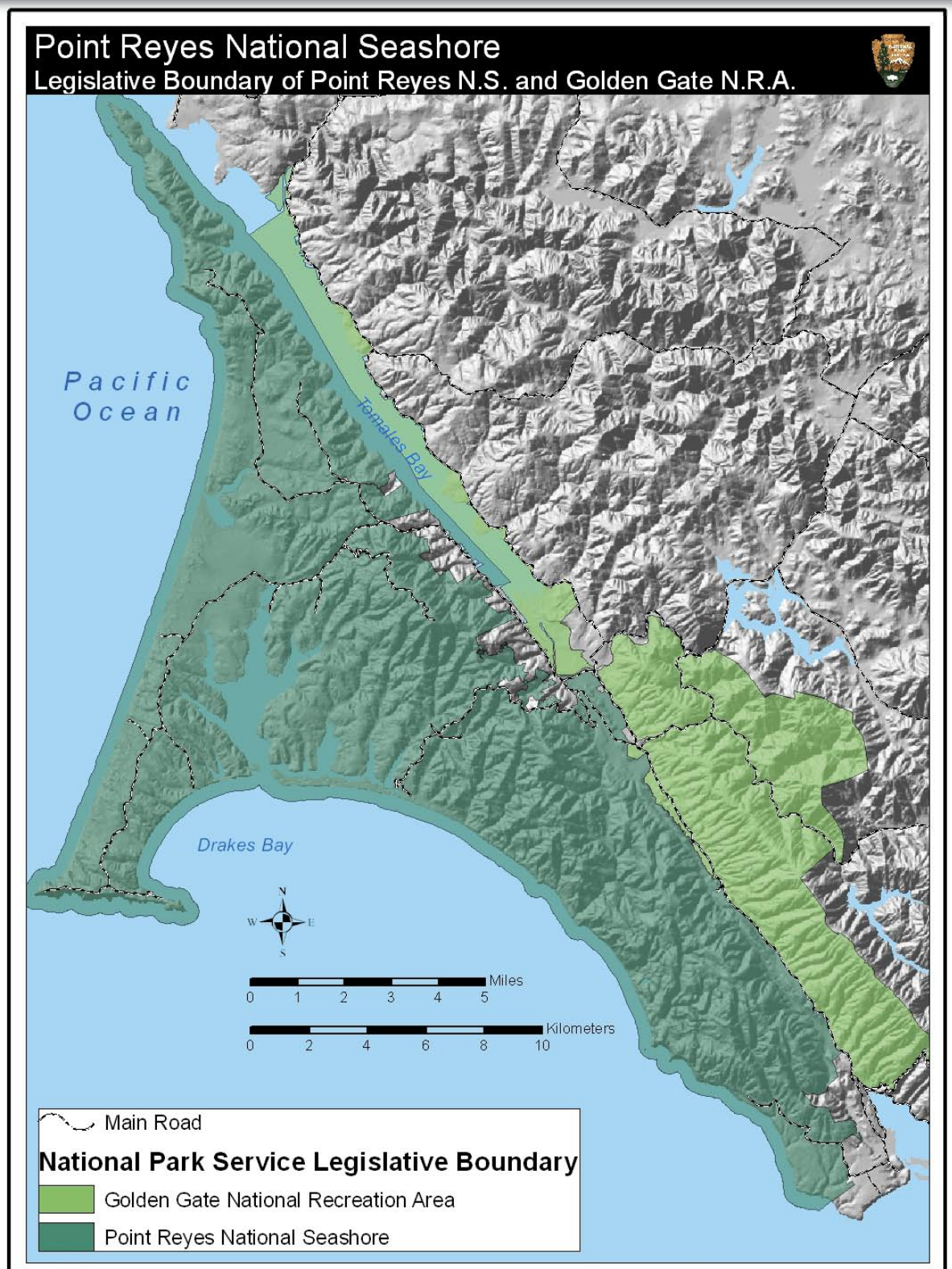
You can also visit the National Park Service's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/pore> where you will find more information on the General Management Plan and other planning efforts currently underway at Point Reyes National Seashore. Please send us a note if you wish to be on our mailing list.

The Planning Area

The new General Management Plan will address NPS-administered lands within the legislative boundaries of Point Reyes National Seashore and the northern district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The map depicted here illustrates the boundaries of the areas under consideration for the new updated GMP.

Point Reyes Facts

Administer over 90,000 acres
28 federally listed threatened or endangered species are found in the park
39 cultural landscapes
374 historic structures
Two historic ranching districts
516,000 museum collection items
147 miles of trails
Three research centers
Two education centers
Four backcountry campgrounds
Two beach campgrounds
One of the most biologically rich areas in the world
Three visitor centers
124 archeological sites
27 water systems
55 sewage treatment facilities
Over 100 miles of roads
33,000 acres of Wilderness
Over 900 species of flowering plants
Over 480 species of birds seen





Alamere Falls

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Parks Purpose

The following purpose and significance statements for Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area are based upon the enabling legislation and an analysis of park resources. These statements convey the reasons Congress and the President established the parks and why each park is distinctive. These statements form the foundation for developing general management plans.

Point Reyes National Seashore was created on September 13, 1962 to “save and preserve for purposes of public recreation, benefit, and inspiration, a portion of the diminishing seashore of the United States that remains undeveloped (Public Law 87-657).”



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Golden Gate National Recreation Area was created in 1972 “to preserve for public use and enjoyment certain areas . . . possessing outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values, and . . . to provide for the maintenance of needed recreational open space necessary to urban environment and planning.” In the management of the recreation area, the NPS shall “preserve the recreation area, as far as possible, in its natural setting, and protect it from development and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area (16 USC §460bb).”

Olema Valley looking south

Parks Significance

The significance of a park is summarized in statements that capture the essence of the park’s importance to our nation’s natural and cultural heritage. The significance statement describes the park’s distinctiveness and identifies why it is important within regional, national, and global contexts. Significance statements are not the same as an inventory of significant resources. While a resource inventory specifies the resources and values that must be protected unimpaired within a park, the significance statements describe the importance of the aggregate of resources in a park. The following bullets comprise the significance statement for Point Reyes National Seashore.

Point Reyes National Seashore is located at a rich, complex convergence of land and sea, culture and nature, urban and rural. This is where continental and oceanic plates of the Earth’s crust collide, creating the unique geological formations of the San Andreas Fault. The Seashore’s dynamic geologic foundations produce extraordinary biodiversity, where the rivers of the coastal range meet the sea, and where marine, estuarine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems overlap.

The Seashore lies within an area recognized locally, nationally, and globally as a center of biodiversity. The Seashore hosts more than 800 native plants, over 490 resident and migratory birds, rare and elusive amphibians, and a unique assemblage of mammals.

For over 2,000 years humans have inhabited the Point Reyes Peninsula, employing its rich resources and modifying aspects of the landscape to meet their changing needs.

Over 100 Coast Miwok archaeological sites document a culture that was an integral part of the ecosystems that we call native today. Coast Miwok people managed native plant communities with selective cultivation and seasonal burning resulting in a landscape which European, Mexican, and American ranchers later found ideal for grazing beginning in the early 1800s. Ranching continues in the Seashore in two large ranching historic districts.

The unique geography of the Point Reyes Peninsula, stretching almost ten miles into the Pacific Ocean from the adjacent coastline, encouraged local development of a rich maritime and radio communications history. The Seashore preserves the site where Sir Francis Drake careened his Golden Hind in 1579, the first shipwreck on the Pacific Coast of North America in 1595, the 1870 Point Reyes Lightstation, and the 1926 Lifesaving Station. It was from here on the Point Reyes Peninsula that the Marconi Company sent the first wireless communication across the Pacific in 1914.

The following comprises relevant sections of the significance statement for **Golden Gate National Recreation Area**:

The founders of Golden Gate National Recreation Area intended to bring national park experiences to urban populations. The park’s diverse and extensive collections of “outstanding natural, historic, scenic and recreation values” not only fulfill this purpose, but represent an exceptional range of nationally important resources. Collectively, the value of these resources is enhanced, due to their proximity to the San Francisco Bay area.

Subsequent legislation also requires “the property acquired by the Secretary under such sections shall be administered by the Secretary without impairment of its natural values, in a manner which provides for such recreational, educational, historic preservation, interpretation, and scientific research opportunities as are consistent with, based upon, and supportive of the maximum protection, restoration, and preservation of the natural environment within the area. . .”

Golden Gate National Recreation Area was created in 1972 “to preserve for public use and enjoyment certain areas . . . possessing outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values, and . . . to provide for the maintenance of needed recreational open space necessary to urban environment and planning.” In the management of the recreation area, the NPS shall “preserve the recreation area, as far as possible, in its natural setting, and protect it from development and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area (16 USC §460bb).”

The convergence of the San Andreas Fault, San Francisco Bay at the Golden Gate, and the California coastline creates a dynamic landscape and environment of exceptional scientific value.

The undeveloped remnant coastal corridor of marine, estuarine, and terrestrial ecosystems supports exceptional native biodiversity and provides a refuge for one of the largest concentrations of rare, threatened, and endangered species in the national park system.

The park includes the largest and most complete collection of military installations and fortifications in the country, dating from Spanish settlement in 1776 through the 20th century. This long period of military presence has yielded one of the most extensive collections of historic architecture in the national park system.

Alcatraz Island is the site of pre-Civil War fortifications, served as the nation’s first military prison, later became the most notorious maximum security penitentiary in the United States, and subsequently was the site of the occupation that helped ignite the movement for American Indian self-determination.

The headlands of the Golden Gate and its scenic vistas, and coastal environment are internationally recognized as the panoramic backdrop to the San Francisco Bay area.

The continuum of park resources at the doorstep of the San Francisco Bay area provides an abundance of recreational and educational opportunities.

Parklands are within the traditional homelands of Coast Miwok and Ohlone people. They contain indigenous archaeological sites with native heritage, historic, and scientific values.

Climate Friendly Parks Program - Guiding Future Planning

A critical force causing change in National Park Service lands is climate change. Climate change is defined by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as “a change of climate which is attributable directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.” Observed rising temperatures over the past 100 years have resulted in physical and ecological impacts such as sea level elevations and coastline retreat, altered frequency of extreme weather events, declining Arctic sea ice and glacier loss, and changes in the seasonality and distribution of plants and animals as predicted by global warming models. These changes are attributable in large part to large releases of greenhouse gases (GHG) worldwide.

As a participant in the Climate Friendly Parks Program, a network of parks that are putting climate friendly behavior at the forefront of sustainability planning, the Seashore completed an emissions inventory in 2005. Park emissions totaled 7,663 metric tons of carbon equivalent (MTCE) in 2005, of which 78% resulted from sources other than energy, transportation and waste. The sources of the vast preponderance of Seashore GHG emissions, 5,971 MTCE, are from dairy wastes (or manure) in the form of methane gas. Secondary in importance is the emission of 25,506 pounds of carbon monoxide, 1,727 pounds of nitrous oxide, 35 pounds of particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), from transportation sources, comprising 18.9% of the park’s GHG emissions.

Mitigation involves reduction of the carbon footprint of the Seashore where possible through energy conservation, sustainable design and construction practices, and the use of greener technology to reduce GHG emissions. Carbon sequestration is also an important component of reducing carbon footprint by removing CO₂ from the atmosphere and binding it in plants and soil. The EPA definition of carbon sequestration is:

“Terrestrial carbon sequestration is the process through which carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere is absorbed by trees, plants and crops through photosynthesis, and stored as carbon in biomass (tree trunks, branches, foliage and roots) and soils. The term “sinks” is also used to refer to forests, croplands, and grazing lands, and their ability to sequester carbon. Agriculture and forestry activities can also release CO₂ to the atmosphere.”

Therefore, a carbon sink occurs when carbon sequestration is greater than carbon releases over a time period. Through resource stewardship, the Seashore will continue to manage plant communities and land and estuarine use practices to maintain or improve the ability of park soils and vegetation (e.g. in forests, marshes and eelgrass beds) to sequester carbon. At present, the park, because of its vast forests and vegetation, is a major sink for carbon (-30,800 MTCE).

In 2008, the Seashore became a Climate Friendly Park and supports the NPS Climate Leadership in Parks (CLIP) program. Continued support of the program may involve, among other strategies, use of technology to reduce methane, currently the predominant GHG produced in the Seashore. Reducing vehicle miles traveled, improving vehicle efficiency and using alternative fuels can significantly reduce the Seashore’s emissions. All new infrastructure projects will incorporate design solutions for use of new technologies to resolve energy needs. The Seashore has developed a Climate Action Plan to lay out the actions the park will take to meet the stated goals in emission reductions. The park has performed and will perform emission inventories to monitor progress. The primary goal of the Seashore’s Climate Action Plan is to significantly reduce GHG emissions over time.

The Seashore has developed a Climate Action Plan to lay out the actions the park will take to meet the stated goals in emission reductions.

Giacomini Wetlands Restoration

Phase II of the Giacomini Wetland Restoration Project began in June 2008. The National Park Service (NPS) and Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA) are finalizing the design and securing permits for construction of Phase II. Construction will begin as early as June, 2008, except for revegetation work, which will continue into December 2008.

We wish to thank the local community and park visitors for their support of our project

and their patience during construction. While construction does cause some impacts to residents and visitors, we are hoping that they will find the results of our efforts worthwhile, particularly after we finish construction of Phase II in 2008. We also hope that you become part of the restoration project by joining one of our drop-in community or organized group planting days this fall.

Our goal is to effectively disseminate information to the public so that community residents and visitors know what to expect during construction. Lessons learned from Phase I are being incorporated into Phase II in terms of how to minimize impacts for residents and visitors. Once the construction schedule and specifications are finalized, the Park Service and PRNSA will release information to the public

about the anticipated construction schedule; construction and hauling routes; any anticipated traffic delays from construction, and schedule for temporary or permanent closures of trails. The public outreach effort will include regular updates, as well as other means such as flyers, meetings, press releases, and knocking on doors.

PRNSA helped to raise most of the funds for this project and is managing the construction portion in collaboration with the Park Service. PRNSA has engaged Winzler & Kelly (Santa Rosa, CA) to manage construction during Phase II. The Park Service will provide environmental monitoring during the project to ensure that impacts to valuable natural resources such as wetlands, riparian habitat, and special status species are minimized to the extent possible.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Point Reyes National Seashore manages over 90,000 acres of coastal resources. Created in 1962, the park contains phenomenal natural and cultural resources and serves over two million visitors annually. The park’s resources are part of the Central California Biosphere Reserve and one of the top 25 most biologically rich, but threatened areas of the world.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



The Giacomini Wetlands and Tomales Bay

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