

Golden Gate

National Recreation Area
California

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Park Next Door

Less than 200 years ago, the entire Bay Area was open space. For centuries, the land had remained unchanged by its inhabitants; no one anticipated the rapid growth that would soon begin. Today, the Bay Area contains almost 5 million people, a result of 125 years of continuous immigration. Ships and crews of all nationalities have sailed through the Golden Gate. A vast cultural parade—Spanish explorers, Mexican ranchers, Asian and European gold seekers—has passed this spot, eventually adding their influence to a changing landscape and society.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area finds its meaning in this sequence of urban growth. The park protects the land as it once was and the history it represents; now, more than ever before, people need this diminishing source of relaxation and beauty.

The past gives the park its richness. Thousands of years ago, geologic forces created the terrain; towering coastal redwoods, as well as second growth forests and grasslands provide habitats for a variety of wildlife. Human history—archeological sites, old sailing ships, ranch houses, and military fortifications—demonstrates this land's importance to the region's early livelihood and protection.

The future gives the park its promise. Golden Gate National Recreation Area represents an

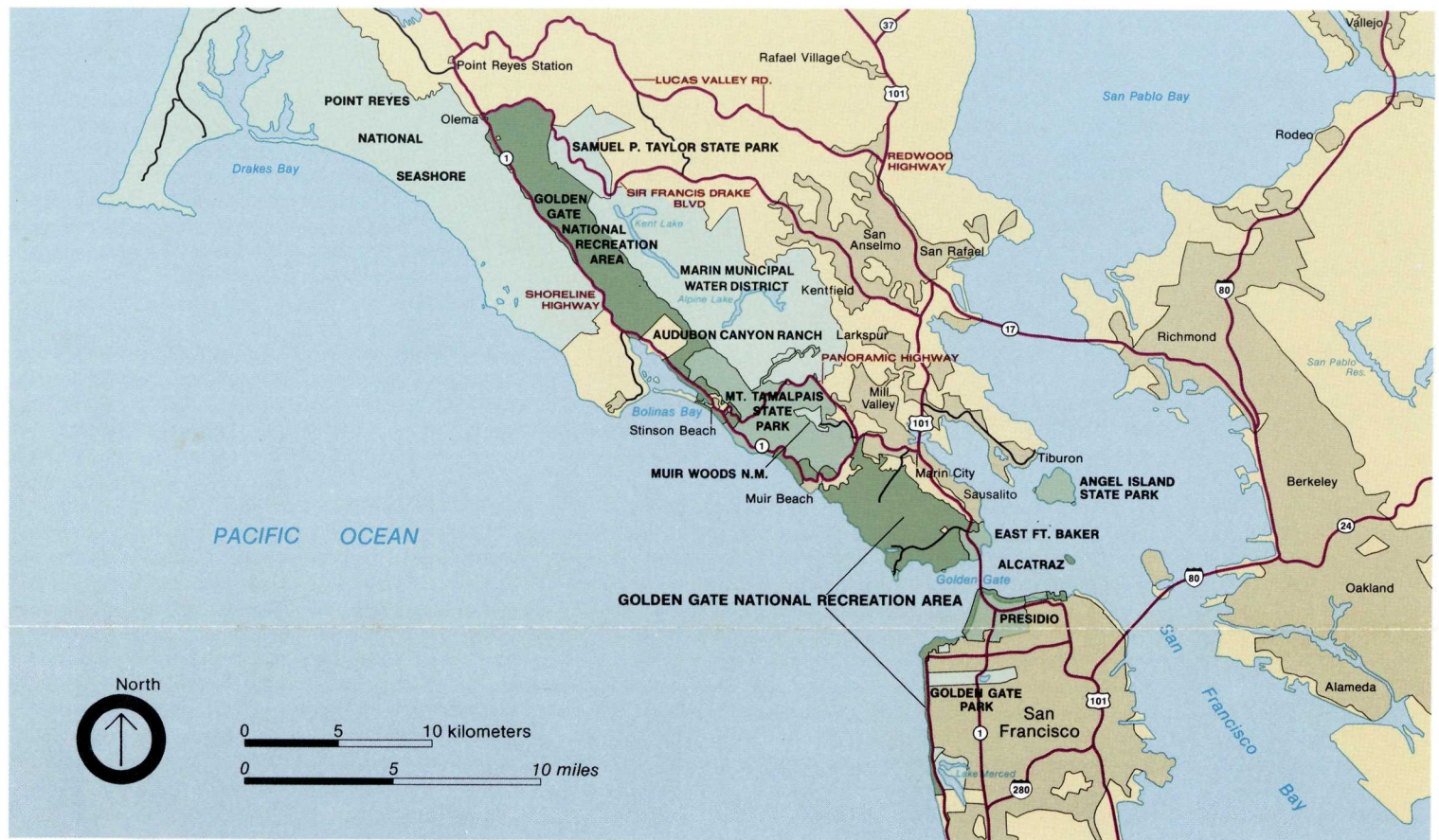
effort to put parks where people live and work. Since its establishment in 1972, the park has already grown—not in substance, but meaning. As urban growth continues, as gasoline prices rise, and as living density increases, GGNRA eagerly anticipates its growing service to people of all cultures and backgrounds.

The park's spectacular scenery, historic past, and natural qualities are an important part of the special magic for which San Francisco and the Bay Area are so well known. It contains places people have enjoyed and cherished for years—Ocean Beach, the Cliff House, Aquatic Park, Muir Woods, and Stinson Beach. Now, the park is everyone's to enjoy—a place to understand what we were and enjoy what we are, a place to renew our relationships with friends and the world around us.

Getting There GGNRA is easy to reach, within walking distance to an hour's drive from San Francisco. A day's trip will provide enough time to visit any park area of your choice. In San Francisco, the Municipal Railway bus system (MUNI) provides frequent service from downtown to shoreline destinations, especially Aquatic Park, the Cliff House, and Ocean Beach. MUNI also connects to other Bay Area transit systems: Golden Gate Transit (GGT) from Marin County; Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Alameda/Contra Costa Transit (AC Transit) from East Bay; and Southern Pacific Railway and San

Mateo Transit (SAM TRANS) from the Peninsula area. Ferries provide transportation to Alcatraz and Angel Island. Golden Gate Transit buses offer the best service to and within Marin County, reaching Muir Woods (#61), Mount Tamalpais (#63), Stinson Beach (#63), and Point Reyes (#64). From San Francisco, these trips may involve a transfer: from bus to bus (Mount Tamalpais and Stinson Beach) or from ferry to bus (Larkspur ferry to Muir Beach and Muir Woods). Most routes operate only on weekends; some provide only a few trips daily. Charter buses provide service to Muir Woods.

Be sure to check with transit agencies about their current service. Because service changes seasonally, routes indicated on this brochure may become outdated. Despite the need for this extra planning, bus travel to some areas of GGNRA has its advantages. Warm weather weekends or weekday commuter hours often mean bad traffic: expect more than the usual number of cars taking the same road or searching for the same parking place. At these times, traffic is worst on Bay Street and Marina Boulevard in San Francisco; the Golden Gate Bridge; Shoreline Highway (California 1), Panoramic Highway, and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in Marin. The more northern access routes to Olema Valley and Point Reyes offer less busy, alternate routes.



GGNRA in Marin

The Marin areas of GGNRA offer a vast expanse of wild and open terrain: rolling hills covered with shrub, grasses, and wildflowers; small coves, large beaches, and rocky coastal cliffs; forested ridges and redwood valleys. Each bend in the road or turn in the trail offers another vista of San Francisco; yet the sight of wildlife is as common as the views of the city.

Marin Headlands Close to San Francisco in distance and time but many moods apart, the Marin Headlands provide a quick departure

from urban activity. Wind-swept ridges, protected valleys, and beaches offer nature's best on the city's doorstep. For the adventurous, hiking trails traverse the terrain. From the many defense batteries near the Golden Gate, you can enjoy a magnificent view of San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Pacific Ocean. Ranger station and information: 561-7612.

Tennessee Valley This narrow valley is entirely secluded from urban sounds and scenery. A gentle 3.2-kilometer (2-mile) trail meanders

through the valley ending at a small beach with a powerful surf. Ranger station: 383-7717.

Muir Woods "This is the best tree-lovers monument that would be found in all the forests of the world," so declared conservationist John Muir when describing this grove of majestic coastal redwoods. The tranquility of the forest of towering coastal redwoods and canyon ferns is available to everyone; follow a gentle loop trail and enjoy the scenery at your own pace. Information: 388-2595.

Mount Tamalpais Area For years, this area has been a favorite destination for hikers. No wonder! Trails offer a variety of environments from creekside to mountainside, open meadow to forest. Or sit back and take in the view from picnic spots and lookouts. State Park information: 388-2070.

Muir Beach and Stinson Beach Both beaches offer a chance to relax and enjoy the coastal scenery. Muir Beach is a semi-circular cove, while Stinson Beach stretches beneath the

steep hills rising to Tamalpais with vistas out to sea and up into the hills. Ranger station: 868-0942. Weather: 868-1922.

Angel Island If you enjoy being near the water, Angel Island State Park is your kind of place. The bay is constantly in view from the ferry, along trails, or on the island's beaches. Take the ferry from Fisherman's Wharf or Tiburon. State Park information: 435-1915. Harbor Carriers: 546-2805/2815. Angel Island State Ferry (Tiburon): 435-2131.

Olema Valley This pastoral landscape includes historic farm buildings, forested canyons, tree-lined ridges, and open grassy slopes. The valley's good weather, trails, and scenery offer a hiker's paradise. Most trails are long and many are steep, ascending to ridgetops for ocean views. The valley remains undeveloped with few restrooms and picnic tables. (This area is not shown on map.) Information: 663-1092.

See map for more specific information on facilities, hours of operation, weather, and safety.



What To Expect The weather of northern GGNRA varies seasonally, even hourly. Wear clothes you can adjust to changing climate. Fog and wind are usually heaviest at areas closer to the Golden Gate, especially during summer. Fall

brings the best weather. The ocean is dangerous and swimming is rarely advised. Those fishing or walking on shoreline rocks can be swept off by sudden large waves or trapped by changing tides.

Hiking Trails cross lands owned by many different public agencies. Ranger stations (such as Pan Toll and Rodeo Beach) provide the most detailed trail information. Hikers

should remember to carry drinking water. Many trails are steep, traversing coastal ridges. Avoid climbing cliffs; they are prone to landslides and covered with poison oak.

Mount Tamalpais Area State Park information is provided at Pan Toll. Reservations are needed for Alice Eastwood group camp; first come, first served camping at Pan Toll. Audubon Canyon Ranch is open 10 a.m.

to 4 p.m. weekends/holidays March 1 to July 4 for viewing nesting egrets and great blue herons. State Park information: 388-2070. Audubon Canyon Ranch: 383-1644.

Muir Woods Self-guided nature walk. No picnicking. Parking can be limited

on Sunday weekends. Hours: 8 a.m. to sunset. 388-2595.

Muir and Stinson Beach Swimming is permitted only at Stinson Beach from late May to mid-September when lifeguards are available.

Both beaches are open 9 a.m. to 1 hour after sunset. Information: 868-0942. Weather: 868-1922.

Tennessee Valley Park at trailhead; walk to beach, chemical toilets at trailhead and

beach; no other facilities. Ranger station: 383-7717.

Marin Headlands General information and guided walks at Rodeo Beach ranger station. Reservations needed for Kirby Cove group camp; day camp areas also available.

Hostel at Fort Barry Parade Grounds. Viewpoints on Conzelman Road. Ranger station: 561-7612. Hostel: 561-7277.

Angel Island Ferries land at Ayala Cove; 8-kilometer (5-mile) hike around the island. Group facilities are only available at East Garrison. Hours: Open 8 a.m. to sunset daily, but ferry service is only available daily during summer and on winter weekends. Information: 435-1915.

