

## Inspiration Point Habitat Restoration - Next Steps

Beginning in July 1997, visitors enjoying the pathways below Inspiration Point will note various improvements being made to the area. These changes will give visitors an opportunity to witness the complex but exciting restoration of local native plant habitats.



*Presidio clarkia*

## Ecological Islands

Since the Spanish arrived in 1776, dramatic changes in the Presidio landscape have occurred. Most of the native scrub oak, riparian oak forest, and serpentine grasslands are gone. The stately and historic forest, planted by the U.S. Army in the 1880s, now dominates the landscape. Sadly, just a few "ecological islands" remain.

Inspiration Point is one of the most important and biologically rich of these islands. It contains a very diverse collection of native plant species -- including the endangered Presidio clarkia. This delicate annual pink wildflower is protected under the Endangered Species Act. It is found in only one other location in the world. The Inspiration Point area also contains the last vestige of the once-extensive serpentine grasslands that stretched in a band across much of San Francisco. In addition to the Presidio clarkia, serpentine grasslands support an impressive number of other native plant species.



*The serpentine grasslands at Inspiration Point viewed from the southeastern section of Quarry Road in Spring 1997, after tree removal phases I and II. (Inset - Wildflowers, including the coastal onion *Allium dichlamydeum*, have already established themselves following previous restoration work.)*

## Metamorphosis

Most of the Presidio's forest will be protected as an historic landscape. Some trees that have crowded out native plant habitats will be removed. Three years ago, the National Park Service began this habitat restoration process at Inspiration Point. The metamorphosis has already been stunning. This July, the next phase will begin.



## What Will Occur

In this, the third phase of the Presidio clarkia habitat enhancement project at Inspiration Point, staff and volunteers will together remove approximately thirty non-native trees from potential clarkia habitat. Following this removal effort, native plant seeds or seedlings will be planted throughout the area. During the winter and early spring, the clarkia and other native plants will germinate and grow, resulting in a beautiful and colorful floral mosaic. Within a year, the natural grandeur of the grassland area will once again be evident, and this phase of the transformation will be well underway.



*The serpentine grasslands at Inspiration Point viewed from the southeastern section of Quarry Road in full bloom, after tree removal phase III -- May 1999 (Simulation).*

## Join Us

Here at the Presidio we rely on the efforts of a dedicated group of park volunteers: residents, neighbors, students, and anyone interested in meaningful community work. Restoring natural habitats can be invigorating, inspiring, educational, and fun. If you would like to join the hundreds of people who volunteer as Presidio Park Stewards, please call (415) 668-9765. For more information on the Inspiration Point Habitat Restoration project, call Sharon Farrell or Marc Albert at (415) 668-4392.



*Community involvement is essential to restoring the unique flora of the serpentine grasslands.*



*Park Steward Amy Lambert working with Presidio youth.*