

A scenic view of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California. The bridge's iconic red-orange towers and suspension cables are visible against a clear blue sky. The bridge spans the Golden Gate Strait, with the city of San Francisco visible in the distance. In the foreground, there are lush green trees and foliage, including a prominent green plant on the right side. The water of the strait is a deep blue, and a small rocky island is visible in the middle ground.

What's Out There

Golden Gate National Parks

celebration of partnership



Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

The Parks Conservancy is the nonprofit membership organization created to preserve the Golden Gate National Parks, enhance the experiences of park visitors, and build a community dedicated to conserving the parks for the future. The Parks Conservancy is an authorized “cooperating association” of the National Park Service, and is one of more than 70 such nonprofit organizations working with national parks around the country. To learn more, please visit www.parksconservancy.org or call 415-561-3000.



National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) is a federal agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior charged with managing the preservation and public use of America’s most significant natural, historic, and cultural treasures. The NPS manages the Golden Gate National Parks (Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, and Fort Point Historic Site) as well as 395 other park sites across the U.S. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/goga or call 415-561-4700



The Presidio Trust

Responsible for the transformation of the Presidio from an historic army post into a premier national park that is financially self-sustaining, The Presidio Trust is leading the nation’s largest historic preservation project, restoring the park’s buildings and landscapes, and creating innovative programs. For more information, visit www.presidio.gov or call 415-561-5300.

Dear Golden Gate National Parks visitor,

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area, created in 1972, is an 80,000-acre gem with some of the nation’s most beautiful natural and designed landscapes. Bikers, hikers, joggers, birders, nature lovers and others are drawn daily to its miles of trails and paths and its parks and other amenities. This National Park is not only a place for San Franciscans to recreate and enjoy, it also provides an ideal setting for learning, helps establish a lifelong connection with nature and the environment, promotes civic engagement and a holistic stewardship ethic - all while fostering engagement with a broader national and international community. Maintaining this expansive cultural landscape, though, is complex, challenging and costly, particularly at a time when resources are lacking and years of deferred maintenance have hobbled many such places around the country.

The responsibility for making all of this nature look so natural – and publicly accessible – lies with the National Park Service (NPS) and The Presidio Trust (“the Trust”), working with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (the Parks Conservancy). Together, as forward-thinking park stewards, they have consistently sought to balance natural, scenic and cultural values, providing public access while carefully managing a vast, ecologically-diverse park system. Their pioneering efforts serve as an innovative model for park stewardship nationally and internationally, successfully securing funds, developing forward-thinking management policies and building and sustaining infrastructure. These projects are an important catalyst for Bay Area businesses, particularly landscape architects, architects, engineers and construction teams who are commissioned to design and rehabilitate the parks, trails, facilities and many other amenities.

It is because of this thoughtful management that The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) honored the Parks Conservancy, the Trust and NPS each with a Stewardship Excellence Award. The Award, created in 2001, is annually bestowed on a person, group or agency that shares TCLF’s mission of “stewardship through education,” with the goal of highlighting stewardship stories that will educate and inspire future generations of cultural landscape stewards.

Thanks to these stewards, the extraordinary park you enjoy today will serve generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a horizontal line.

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR
PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION



list of sites

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2. California Coastal Trail
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Brief History of the Golden Gate National Parks

Established in 1972, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA, or the Golden Gate National Parks) plays host to more than 16 million visitors each year.

It is one of the largest urban parks in the country and the world, encompassing 37 sites, more than 130 miles of trails and myriad natural resources. The parks, which are home to a significant number of threatened and endangered species, have been designated a “biodiversity hotspot” by UNESCO. Creation of the GGNRA resulted from a convergence of several factors, namely, a redistribution of real estate in the Bay Area, the rise of the environmental movement, and changing perspectives on urban parks and open spaces.

Following World War II, rapid development of the Bay Area increased suburban sprawl and created growing concern for the diminishing rural countryside. At the same time, the U.S. Army began to sell prime real estate made available by the closure of surplus army bases, much of it incorporating pristine open land. Plans for a large-scale construction projects on these lands prompted outcry from local environmentalists, concerned citizens and organizations including the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Agency, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, and local activist group People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Only slightly earlier, in 1956 the National Park Service initiated the “Mission 66” program to enhance and expand the national park system. A re-examination of traditional, rural parks and the country’s social upheavals during the 1960s forced the government to recognize the needs of urban populations, leading to the idea of the “urban park.”

These two separate federal considerations coalesced when the penitentiary on Alcatraz Island officially closed in 1963. Deemed surplus land, daily maintenance of the island was staggering and soon the federal government ran out of ideas for how to use it productively. In 1968, the City of San Francisco expressed interest in developing the property and began to review proposals for new uses, including one called “Golden Gate: A Matchless Opportunity,” which proposed a large, regional urban park. In November 1969, a group of Native Americans, calling themselves the Indians of All Tribes, occupied the island in protest against the federal laws and policies affecting them. The confrontation, which lasted 17 months, brought national



Photo by Tom Fox

attention to Alcatraz and forced the government to solve the future of the property. Congressman Phillip Burton pushed forward a bill calling for the inclusion of both surplus military land and non-military land to create a national park. On October 27, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed “An Act to Establish the Golden Gate National Recreation Area” (Public Law 92-589). Many of the military properties within the GGNRA (or Golden Gate National Parks) were still in use at the time, so active transfer of land into public park use was gradual.

In 1981, the nonprofit Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy was established to support the interpretation, conservation, and enhancement of the Golden Gate National Parks. The Parks Conservancy’s aim is to enhance the experiences of park visitors, and build a community dedicated to conserving these parks for the future. The Parks Conservancy has worked with the NPS on hundreds of projects, including the restoration of Crissy Field, revitalization of Fort Baker, creation of the Alcatraz cellhouse tour, production of award-winning publications and products, and improvements at park sites ranging from Lands End to Mori Point. The Parks Conservancy manages and operates five native plant nurseries, the Site Stewardship Program, Crissy Field Center, Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, Institute at the Golden Gate, and a large and popular volunteer program.

In 1989 the federal government made plans to close the Presidio as a U.S. Army post. Though the legislation adopted in 1972 indicated that the Presidio would join the parklands of the GGNRA, there was no funding provision to manage its costly transition or ongoing care. In 1994, the year the post was closed, it was projected that \$1 billion in capital infusion was needed to rehabilitate its buildings and infrastructure and transition the space to public use. The Presidio Trust was created by Congress in 1996 for a dual purpose: to rehabilitate and repurpose the Presidio’s historic buildings and environmental resources, and operate the site as a vibrant public park independent of annual taxpayer funds by the end of 2012. The Trust was provided with short-term annual funding allocations and given the authority to engage the private sector to achieve its mission. The Presidio Trust has rehabilitated more than 300 historic buildings for new uses, removed Army landfills, restored acres of natural areas, revitalized the century-old forest, updated the park’s infrastructure, and provided key park improvements such as a trails program and campground, leveraging taxpayer dollars to attract private support to the park.

Text adapted from the material provided by the National Park Service, The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and The Presidio Trust

Alcatraz Gardens

Design and Construction Team:

Alcatraz Historic Gardens Project

Garden Conservancy

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Office of Lawrence Halprin

National Park Service

QuarryHouse, Inc.

Fred Reichel,
Secretary to the Warden (1930s)

Once an army fortress, the 22-acre island was converted into the nation’s first military prison in 1861. Over time, military personnel and their families transformed the barren landscape into lush gardens. A 1920s beautification project led to the planting of the Rose Terrace and hundreds of trees, shrubs, and perennials on the eastern side. In 1933 the prison was transferred to the Federal government. Led by Secretary to the Warden Fred Reichel, prisoners began to build terraced gardens on the island’s western side planted with imported Mediterranean plants which thrived in the harsh climatic conditions.

The prison on Alcatraz was closed in 1963. In 1972, after a period of neglect and a 17-month occupation by the group Indians of All Tribes, the island became a part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy commissioned landscape architect Lawrence Halprin to create a concept plan to transform the site into a public park. The plan was completed in 1988 with input from over 100 specialists, though only the Agave Trail was constructed. In 2003, the Alcatraz Historic Gardens Project was initiated through the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Garden Conservancy, and the National Park Service. A project manager and a horticulturalist worked with thousands of volunteers to restore the gardens created by those who lived on the island during its military and prison eras. The gardens are now the most popular destination within the Golden Gate National Parks with an annual visitation of more than 1.4 million.



Photo by Tom Fox



Photo courtesy the Parks Conservancy



Photo courtesy the Parks Conservancy

Photo by Marion Brenner



Alcatraz was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1986.

California Coastal Trail

In 1972, California passed legislation mandating the creation of the California Coastal Trail, to foster appreciation and stewardship of the state's scenic and natural resources. Four years later, the Coastal Act of 1976 required California jurisdictions to identify a viable route through their communities for the trail. The route was designated California's Millennium Legacy Trail in 1999 and in 2001 the California State Coastal Conservancy was charged with preparing a plan for the trail's completion. Slated to be 1,200 miles in length when finished, the trail traverses California's Pacific coastline between Mexico to the south and Oregon at its northern border. It takes a variety of forms, from paved trails and sidewalks, earthen pathways and bike trails, to the roadside shoulder where space for a separate pedestrian path is not possible.

Within the Golden Gate National Parks, the trail connects Fort Funston on the southern end through the expanse of the park to Muir Beach towards the north edge of the park. The Coastal Trail is one of three regional trails within the Presidio, winding for 2.7 miles along the coastal bluffs and caves of Baker Beach to the Golden Gate Bridge before crossing the Golden Gate to the Marin Headlands.

Design and Construction Team:

California Coastal Conservancy

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

National Park Service

The Presidio Trust



Photo by Tom Fox



Photo courtesy The Presidio Trust



Photo by Tom Fox

Crissy Field

Design and Construction Team:

CMG Landscape Architecture

Fisher Development, Inc.

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Hargreaves Associates

National Park Service

Project FROG

This linear waterfront park along the northern shoreline of the Presidio was created from through an extensive environmental reclamation project implemented by the National Park Service and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy from 1998 to 2001. Originally, the land underneath the one-mile long park was a saltwater estuary; it was filled in 1912 to make room for a grand-prix racetrack for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. After the exposition closed in 1921, the site was converted into an airbase where a number of significant developments in aviation occurred. Due to its proximity to the newly constructed Golden Gate Bridge, the air strip was closed to most military aircraft in 1936. The land, which had become a contaminated landfill for the adjacent Presidio residential compound, became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1972. In the mid-1980s, the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund supported a study to determine how to convert the land into a public park. After the Presidio closed as a base in 1994, the National Park Service hired Hargreaves Associates to lead the site's redesign. With support from the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and over 3,000 volunteers, hazardous waste and rubble were removed, an 18-acre portion of the tidal estuary was restored, and a pedestrian promenade was constructed along the shoreline. Hargreaves' plan also included a series of curvilinear earthen mounds which add variation to the flat groundplane and programmed recreational areas. In 2009, the Crissy Field Center was relocated to accommodate construction of a new 1.5 mile Golden Gate Bridge approach, with building design by Project FROG and landscape by CMG Landscape Architecture.



Photo by Tom Fox



Photo courtesy of Hargreaves Associates



Photo courtesy of Hargreaves Associates

Between 1919 and 1936, military pilots pushed the limits of flight at the Presidio's Crissy Field. The first successful attempt to cross the country in a single day – a “dawn to dusk” journey - concluded there in June 1924.

Photo by Tom Fox



Funding for the project was provided in part through generous supporters including Mr. and Mrs. Matthew R. Barger, The James Irvine Foundation, The Kingfisher Foundation, and an agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board.

Photo by Christina Dikas



El Polín Spring

El Polín Spring sits at the heart of the Presidio's largest watershed, Tennessee Hollow. The spring has supplied fresh water to birds along the Pacific Flyway and people living in the area for thousands of years and is a significant cultural and ecological resource. In 2002, Stanford University archaeologists working with Presidio staff identified on the spring's site the foundation of what is thought to be the Briones and Miramontes homestead, the first known colonial residence in San Francisco outside the walled fortification of El Presidio and Mission Dolores. This discovery, along with the ecological importance of the site, and strong public use and stakeholder interest fueled a creative, multidisciplinary design effort to chart its future.

The result was the transformation of El Polín into a vibrant restored habitat area and outdoor classroom, including an accessible trail, elevated boardwalk, composting toilets, restored native habitat, 7,000 square feet of new wetlands, interpretive signage and features that convey the human history of the site. Works Progress Administration era channels were restored, wooden benches were made from Presidio trees, and plants were grown from seeds harvested within the park.

Completed in 2011, the revitalization of El Polín was a partnership between The Presidio Trust and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. The project is part of a larger "springs-to-bay" restoration program envisioned for the entire 270-acre Tennessee Hollow Watershed.

Design and Construction Team:

Campbell Grading, Inc.

John Northmore Roberts and Associates

Michael Lamb, Historic Landscape Architect for The Presidio Trust, with input from Trust staff and consultants



Photo by Amy Deck, courtesy of The Presidio Trust



Photo by Amy Deck, courtesy of The Presidio Trust

Fort Baker & Cavallo Point

Design and Construction Team:

Architectural Resources Group

Flack + Kurtz

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

LMS Architects

National Park Service

Nelson-Nygaard

Office of Cheryl Barton

URS Engineers

WorldBuild

Situated immediately north of the Golden Gate Bridge this 335-acre site was acquired by the U.S. Army in 1866 to fortify the north side of the Golden Gate. The fort, encompassing a sheltered cove and jetty, was more formally established between 1901 and 1910, with the creation of a parade ground surrounded by 24 Colonial Revival-style buildings. In 1972 the fort became part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; the Army continued active use of the site until 2002, when it was officially transferred to the park. Fort Baker was the ninth and final “Post-to-Park” conversion in the Golden Gate National Parks Plan.

Today the site consists of Horseshoe Bay and its jetty, now home to the Presidio Yacht Club and Travis Sailing Center; a number of historic gun emplacements; and trails and forested areas climbing gently up from San Francisco Bay. The site’s historic buildings have been repurposed for a variety of institutions, including the Bay Area Discovery Museum and the Institute at the Golden Gate. Cavallo Point, which occupies 40 acres in the center of the fort around the old parade ground, has been converted to a resort hotel and convention center. Designed using innovative stormwater management techniques by the Office of Cheryl Barton, the grounds incorporate restored coastal scrub habitat generated from native seed found on site, open lawn edged with local stone walls, and small gathering areas discretely placed throughout the site.



Photo courtesy of the Parks Conservancy



Photo courtesy of the Parks Conservancy



Photo courtesy of the Parks Conservancy

Fort Baker was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

Photo by Tom Fox



The waterfront festival that revealed this multi-layered collaboration in 2012 attracted 250,000 people, demonstrating the importance of the Golden Gate Bridge in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Photo by Marion Brenner



Golden Gate Bridge Plaza, Pavilion & Trail

Formerly the site of a military outpost, this commemorative project featuring a new pavilion, expanded plaza, and enhanced trail network was unveiled along the southern edge of the historic Golden Gate Bridge at its 75th anniversary in 2012. The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District partnered with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, the National Park Service, The Presidio Trust, and the City and County of San Francisco to complete these improvements. The project pays tribute to the bridge as a cultural icon, provides a meaningful way for people to connect with the bridge and each other, and strengthens connections between the bridge and the national parks that frame it to the north (Marin Headlands) and south (Presidio).

The 35,000-square-foot Bridge Pavilion, designed by Project FROG and Jensen Architects, flanks the plaza to the southeast and serves as a visitors center containing interpretive exhibits, rare photographs, and historic artifacts. Improvements also included restoration of the 1938 Art Deco Round House, boasting 270-degree panoramic views. The centerpiece of the park, Golden Gate Bridge Plaza & Trails, was conceived by SURFACEDSIGN INC. While some historic features and plantings of the original plaza were retained, the new design also expands the main gathering area over portions of old roadway, leading out to the statue of the bridge's creator, and dropping down to subsequent viewing terraces. Trail enhancements address safety and accessibility concerns, and provide unique pathways for the park's various users.

Design and Construction Team:

City & County of San Francisco

Fisher Development, Inc.

Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Jensen Architects (Bridge Pavilion)

National Park Service

The Presidio Trust

Project FROG (Bridge Pavilion)

SURFACEDSIGN, INC. (Plaza & Trails)



Photo by Tom Fox



Photo by Charles Birnbaum

Lands End



Photo by Marion Brenner

Situated on San Francisco’s rocky and windswept coast, the park is located southwest of the Presidio. The site has attracted visitors for centuries, from indigenous people to 19th century settlers to present day area residents and tourists. The Cliff House, which opened in 1863, was purchased in the 1880s by Adolph Sutro, who planned to develop the western headlands into a major recreation area. By the late 1890s the area included the Cliff House restaurant, the Sutro Baths, Sutro Heights Park, numerous shops and restaurants, a carnival midway - Merrie Way - built for the 1894 Midwinter Fair, and a steam train to carry the thousands of visitors from downtown to Lands End. In 1925, major landslides stopped rail service and the area began a slow decline. The Sutro Baths closed in the 1960s and were destroyed by fire in 1966.

The National Park Service began planning for the area in the 1980s, as part of a final master plan for connecting with the California Coastal Trail. The trail connection was completed by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy in 2005. Other improvements include a Visitors Center; promenade and trailhead at Merrie Way; a one-half mile handicap accessible trail; and four scenic overlooks along the Coastal Trail, which follows the old rail line linking the Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum, the ruins of the Sutro Baths, Sutro Heights Park and the recently renovated Cliff House.

Design and Construction Team:

Campbell Grading, Inc.

EHDD

Fisher Development, Inc.

Ghilotti Bros. Construction

Golden Bay Construction

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

National Park Service

Office of Cheryl Barton

Plant Construction

SURFACEDSIGN, INC.

Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects



Photo by Tom Fox



Photo by Tom Fox



Photo by Stephen Wheeler

Letterman Digital Arts Campus

Design and Construction Team:

Gensler Associates

HKS Architects

Office of Lawrence Halprin

The Presidio Trust

Webcor Builders

Valley Crest Landscape Development

The Letterman Army Medical Center, a 550-bed, 10-story hospital was built in 1968 near the Lombard Gate to replace an outdated, pavilion-style hospital dating from the 1890s. Between 1971 and 1976, the Army added the Letterman Army Institute of Research to the new campus. The center treated American casualties of the Vietnam War and later served as a regional medical center for the military before closing in 1994.

In 1999, The Presidio Trust, newly formed, undertook its first development project and initiated plans to replace the Letterman Army Medical Center with a new facility that would complement both the architecture and the mission of the Presidio. Lucasfilm Limited won the rights to develop the 23-acre property into a digital arts campus. The group's winning design, by Gensler Associates and the Office of Lawrence Halprin, created a 17-acre public garden at its center by locating parking underground. The garden incorporates two stone plazas with overlooks and views across a sloping central meadow and beyond to the Golden Gate Bridge and the Palace of Fine Arts. The architecture recalls the historic architectural forms, materials, and colors of the Presidio. There are four separate, interconnected buildings in place of a tall building like the earlier Medical Center. Halprin graded the site to create hillocks and planted groves of trees, further reducing the mass of the large buildings. The campus opened in 2005.



Photo by Christina Dias



Photo by Christina Dias



Photo by Nancy Slade

Main Post

The Main Post is the Presidio's oldest district, home to El Presidio, where the original modest adobe fort was established in 1776. The full spectrum of the Presidio's long history is reflected in the buildings, landscapes, and archaeological sites of the district. Since the creation of The Presidio Trust, the Main Post's history and cultural landscape have been studied extensively, buildings and grounds have been rehabilitated and reused, and archaeology digs have uncovered the original fort's foundations and other artifacts, offering a better understanding of how early Spanish and Mexican troops occupied the site.

Numerous projects have been completed and are underway to restore, interpret and revitalize the area. A landscape treatment at El Presidio uses stone and adobe block to partially delineate the outline of the original fort. The 19th century Funston Avenue landscape has been rehabilitated, restoring many of its original features and revitalizing the landscape to complement its row of Victorian-style officers' houses. In 2011, a seven-acre asphalt parking lot was removed to reestablish the Main Parade in front of the Montgomery Street Barracks. The Inn at the Presidio, formerly a 23-room bachelor officer quarters, was converted to a hotel in 2012, complete with memorabilia and art that celebrates the Presidio's natural and cultural history. The rehabilitated Montgomery Street Barracks, originally built between 1895 and 1897 to support the Spanish-American War, are now home to the Walt Disney Family Museum and other diverse venues. The 235-year-old Officers' Club was renovated and reopened as the Presidio Heritage Center in 2013.



Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust

Design and Construction Team:

The Presidio Trust

Main Post Buildings and Landscapes

Bauman Landscape and Construction

Centric Construction

Andrea Cochran Landscape Architects

Eggle Landscape

Herrero Construction

Michael Lamb, Historic Landscape Architect for The Presidio Trust

McGuire and Hester

Office of Cheryl Barton

Oliver & Company

Plant Construction Company

Shooter and Butts Landscape Contractors

Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects

Don Wihlborg Design

Muir Woods welcomes more than 800,000 visitors per year. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2008, coinciding with its centennial celebration.

Photo courtesy of the Parks Conservancy



Muir Woods Boardwalk

Muir Woods was designated a National Monument in 1908 in order to preserve one of the last remaining stands of old-growth coastal redwood forest for public use and enjoyment. Incorporated into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1972, the 560-acre park now contains breathtaking natural resources and reflects the cultural values of the American conservation movement.

The paths and walkways at Muir Woods have evolved over time, reflecting changes in the health of the woodland, increased understanding of ecological systems, and growing demand for public access. The Muir Woods Boardwalk demonstrates the park’s commitment to sustaining balance between ecological health, continued public use, and positive visitor experience. Under the direction of former park maintenance foreman Jim Boucher, the boardwalk was created to make the woodlands ADA-accessible while simultaneously reversing the negative soil and drainage impacts from 1970s-era paving and fencing. Beginning in the late 1990s, construction of the raised, reclaimed redwood boardwalk reduced forest floor compaction and re-aligned the trail system to historic paths and away from sensitive riparian areas. The replacement of fencing with curbs keeps crowds on the trails while allowing visitors the feel more connected with nature. Since then, John Northmore Roberts & Associates has designed a new main entrance and an enhanced boardwalk design which has been implemented by NPS trail crews and extended to Pinchot Grove in the center of the park.

Design and Construction Team:

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Jim Boucher, maintenance foreman of
Muir Woods National Monument

National Park Service

John Northmore Roberts & Associates



Photo courtesy of the Parks Conservancy



Photo courtesy of the Parks Conservancy

Muir Beach & Redwood Creek

Design and Construction Team:

California Coastal Conservancy

California Department of Fish & Game

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Marin County Department of Public Works

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

National Park Service

Public Lands Highways Program

San Francisco Zen Center

State Coastal Conservancy

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wildlife Conservation Board

Encompassing 8.9 square miles, the Redwood Creek Watershed flows from Mount Tamalpais through Muir Woods before emptying into the Pacific Ocean at Muir Beach. A century of agriculture, recreation, and development led to the gradual decline of the watershed’s hydrological system, narrowing channels, disconnecting pools, decreasing habitat, and interrupting spawning grounds for steelhead trout and coho salmon. Following a decade of planning, a 46-acre restoration project was begun as a joint effort of the National Park Service, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Marin County Department of Public Works, and numerous local and regional partners. Focused on the mouth of the Redwood Creek Watershed at Muir Beach, restoration will improve visitor access and return the creek to a functional, self-sustaining ecosystem by re-aligning the creek and restoring the wetland system.

Five carefully sequenced construction phases that began in 2009 allow the existing ecosystem to function while new site enhancements are made. Completed work includes restoration of an existing tidal lagoon to a native brackish wetland, lagoon expansion to encourage fish habitat, creation of an emergent wetland frog habitat, and reconfiguration of the southern end of the parking lot to increase natural creek function and reduce flooding. After the creek flow was rerouted, a 225-linear foot pedestrian bridge connects visitors from the parking lot to the beach and adjacent trails.



Photo courtesy of the Parks Conservancy

Muir Beach welcomes more than 250,000 visitors to the park each year.

Photo courtesy of the Parks Conservancy



Significant groves in the forest are being replanted as the old trees die or blow over, but native plants are also being restored to outlying areas where the forest has expanded out of its original boundaries.

Photo by Jay Graham, courtesy of The Presidio Trust



Presidio Historic Forest

The Presidio’s ridgeline historically was a windswept hilltop with sandy dunes and an open view to San Francisco Bay. Beginning in the 1880s, the Army planted a vast eucalyptus, pine, and cypress forest atop the ridges and at the entrances, following Major William A. Jones’s “Plan for the Cultivation of Trees upon the Presidio Reservation.” Jones’s plan proposed foresting the area in order to provide the fort with a buffer from battering winds and create an imposing barrier between the post and the city that was growing around it. No other military installation in the nation has ever undertaken landscape planning on such a grand scale, and the transformation of the Presidio from mostly open dunes to a richly forested and designed setting is one of the Army’s most impressive accomplishments in landscape architecture. Today, the 300-acre forest is the largest element within the Presidio’s National Historic Landmark District.

Because the trees were planted over a relatively short period, many are declining at the same rate. To remedy this, The Presidio Trust is creating a more sustainable forest by reforestation in stages. Between 2001 and 2013 more than 3,500 trees were planted.

Design and Construction:
Major William A. Jones,
Landscape Engineer, 1800s
The Presidio Trust



Photo by Jay Graham, courtesy of the Presidio Trust



Photo by Jay Graham, courtesy of the Presidio Trust

Presidio Overlooks & Memorials

Inspiration Point Overlook

Design and Construction Team: Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects; QuarryHouse, Inc.; The Presidio Trust crews

Inspiration Point was named in the 1880s when the Presidio forest was planted to frame the views of San Francisco Bay seen from this location. After a century of growth blocked those celebrated views, tree removals in 2000 restored the site's panorama and habitat for the endangered Presidio clarkia plant. Inspiration Point offers views of Alcatraz, Angel Island, and the East Bay, along with Tennessee Hollow's rare serpentine grasslands, historic homes, eucalyptus canopies, and Andy Goldsworthy's *Spire*, a site-specific art installations to the Presidio forest. *The project was made possible by a gift from the James R. Harvey Presidio Restoration Fund.*

Immigrant Point Overlook

Design and Construction Team: Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects; QuarryHouse, Inc.

The stone plaza at this overlook high above the Pacific Ocean and the Golden Gate is dedicated to our nation's generations of newcomers. Red-tailed hawks soar above Woodrow Wilson's words carved on the overlook's stone wall: "We opened the gates to all the world and said, 'Let all men who want to be free come to us and they will be welcome.'" *The project was made possible by a gift from the Sarlo Foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund.*



Immigrant Point Overlook: Photo by Stephen Wheeler



Immigrant Point Overlook: Photo by Tom Fox

Inspired by the tradition of scenic overlooks in national parks, The Presidio Trust in partnership with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy has built a network of overlooks and vistas throughout the Presidio. Using simple forms, materials, and landscape that reflect the immediate environment, these overlooks create a rich experience of the park.

Inspiration Point Overlook: Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust



Crissy Field Overlook

Design and Construction Team: Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects; QuarryHouse, Inc.; The Presidio Trust crews

The Crissy Field Overlook was designed to leverage one of the Presidio’s more urban views. The site offers vistas to the San Francisco skyline, Palace of Fine Arts, Alcatraz, Angel Island, and the former Coast Guard station, as well as Crissy Field’s own restored marsh, trails, historic grass airfield, and former hangars and warehouses that now welcome visitors for recreation and play. *The project was made possible by a gift from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.*

National Cemetery Overlook

Design and Construction Team: Rania Rayes, Landscape Architect, The Presidio Trust; QuarryHouse, Inc.

Situated off the Bay Area Ridge Trail, this quiet overlook sits above the San Francisco National Cemetery and its dramatic slope of uniform white headstones. It provides a beautiful setting to honor the service of the more than 30,000 soldiers buried there, including Civil War generals, Medal of Honor recipients, Buffalo Soldiers, a Union Spy, and Congressman Phillip Burton and Dr. Edgar Wayburn, who together championed the creation of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The approach to the overlook is framed by a series of stone walls inscribed with lines from an Archibald MacLeish poem, “The Young Dead Soldiers.” *The project was made possible by a gift from Robert and Kathy Burke.*

Lobos Valley Overlook

Design and Construction Team: Bauman Landscape and Construction; CMG Landscape Architecture; Presidio Natural Resources Division

Located at the western edge of the Public Health Service District along the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, this overlook is named for Lobos Creek, the last free-flowing stream in San Francisco and the Presidio’s primary water source. Famed 20th century photographer Ansel Adams, who grew up in this area, wrote about his childhood explorations there. The overlook is nestled into the slope to provide a protected spot to rest and enjoy the view. For more than a decade volunteers have worked to restore this rich valley, which stretches to the Pacific Ocean. *The project was made possible by a lead challenge grant from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund and matching funds from many others.*



Crissy Field Overlook: Photo by Stephen Wheeler



National Cemetery Overlook: Photo by Tom Fox



Lobos Valley Overlook: Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust



Golden Gate Overlook: Photo by Tom Fox



Pacific Overlook: Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust



World War II Memorial: Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust

Golden Gate Overlook

Design and Construction Team: Marta Fry Landscape Associates; Sherwood Design Engineers; Rutherford and Chekene Consulting Engineers; Campbell Grading

Commissioned by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, this overlook sits at the convergence of three major trails and is sited to reveal the two towers of the Golden Gate Bridge aligned with each other, appearing as one. The overlook incorporates a bike bath that connects with the Presidio Bike Path, stairs, and a multi-use trail. *The project was made possible by a gift from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund and the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation.*

Pacific Overlook

Design and Construction Team: Rania Rayes, Landscape Architect; Campbell Grading

This overlook’s view encompasses Lands End to the Golden Gate Bridge. It is at the nexus of numerous trails, with bike lanes and hiking paths along Lincoln Boulevard and access to the California Coastal Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail, and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. There is also a trail connecting to Rob Hill Campground, which makes the overlook easily accessible to campers there. *The project was made possible by a gift from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.*

World War II Memorial

Design and Construction Team: Hervey Parke Clark and John F. Beuttler; Office of Lawrence Halprin; Bauman Landscape and Construction

This memorial, also known as the West Coast Memorial to the Missing, was built in the late 1950s high above the Pacific Ocean to honor members of the Armed Forces who lost their lives in the coastal waters. The names of 412 service men and women are inscribed on the curved California granite wall that sits behind a statue of Columbia, the female personification of America often used in wartime imagery. The Columbia statue was made by sculptor Jean De Marco in New York City. There are plans to make the site more accessible and to restore some of the vegetation that originally framed the memorial.

The Presidio Trust's success will be measured by the timely rehabilitation and reuse of the Presidio's historic buildings and landscapes, the quality and quantity of open spaces that are created and enhanced, and the extent to which the park is enjoyed by the public. – Presidio Trust Management Plan



Presidio Trust Management Plan

The Presidio Trust oversees the interior 80 percent of the Presidio, known as Area B, which includes most of the historic buildings, historic forest, and infrastructure. The National Park Service manages the Presidio's coastal areas, known as Area A. *The Presidio Trust Management Plan: Land Use Policies for Area B of the Presidio of San Francisco* (PTMP), adopted by the Trust in 2002, sets out a strategy for transforming the historic military post into a 21st century national park site that uses its built resources to generate the funds necessary to operate and sustain it. The principles of park management identified in PTMP overlay resource preservation, conservation, human use, and financial sustainability.

PTMP divided the Presidio into seven districts: Letterman, East Housing, Main Post, Crissy Field, Fort Scott, Public Health Service Hospital, and South Hills. Projects and improvements have been underway in each of these districts since 1996 to build trails and overlooks, restore natural areas and replant forest, remediate landfills, rehabilitate and reuse housing, reclaim and preserve cultural resources, replant gardens and improve the connections throughout the park.

The Presidio's varied landscape includes rugged coastal bluffs and dunes, a saltwater marsh and three complete watersheds, and rare natural areas. The Presidio is also a cultural landscape with its ceremonial parade grounds and formal streetscapes, a 300-acre forest planted in the 1890s, and formal and domestic gardens. PTMP incorporates the Vegetation Management Plan developed by the Trust and the National Park Service to establish restoration and management goals for the Presidio's diverse landscapes.

The plan sets ambitious environmental sustainability goals for building and landscape rehabilitation, operations, and traffic-demand management. The transportation demand management plan is periodically updated based on changing conditions and new transit developments. PTMP also identifies building demolition, new construction, and total square footage caps (based on the original 5.96 million square foot base built by the U.S. Army), with the goal of concentrating built space and creating more open space.

Finally, PTMP outlines how the Presidio will welcome and serve the public and involve community stakeholders in the decision-making process. The Trust partners with the National Park Service, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and park tenants, as well as with educational and cultural institutions to engage the public in diverse ways. Programs, educational activities, events, stewardship, and recreation bring more than five million people a year to the Presidio (Areas A and B).

The Presidio Trust Management Plan was developed by The Presidio Trust, SMWM, and Sasaki Associates, Inc.

Presidio Historic Neighborhoods

Design and Construction Team:

Presidio Boulevard

Bauman Landscape and Construction

The Presidio Trust trades and staff, with Subcontractor support

Rania Rayes, Landscape Architect for The Presidio Trust

Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects

Wihlborg Design Landscape Architecture

Infantry Terrace

Bauman Landscape and Construction

The Presidio Trust trades and staff, with Subcontractor support

Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects

Storey Avenue

Egglı Landscape

FineLine Construction

Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects

People have lived at the Presidio for more than two centuries. The park's dwellings, once used as military housing, are an essential feature of its landscape and character and have been rehabilitated by The Presidio Trust. The former fort's homes and residential landscapes represent the evolution of military, social and domestic life there, from the Civil War-era Funston Avenue quaint Victorian houses and grander Queen Anne style homes, to the enlisted men's housing above Baker Beach which was built in the 1950s and 1970s. Rare ornamental plantings have been saved and historic gardens have been rehabilitated with a contemporary sensibility, often with drought tolerant native plants. The Presidio Trust's restoration efforts are represented in three of the historic neighborhoods, Presidio Boulevard, Infantry Terrace, and Storey Avenue, all built between 1910 and 1933. The restored communities reflect the high quality of craftsmanship used in their rehabilitation.

Presidio Boulevard/East Terrace: East Terrace, which supported Letterman Hospital, is one of three Presidio neighborhoods the Army constructed before World War I to provide housing for officers and their families. The large family homes had floor plans consistent with standard Army housing, while their exteriors, with red clay tile roofs and 'Presidio white' stucco over concrete walls, were Mission Revival style, a nod to the Spanish Colonial heritage of the area.

Infantry Terrace: Infantry Terrace officers' homes, built during the Presidio's largest expansion leading up to World War I, supported the Main Post and were built in 1910, largely in the Mission Revival style. Their newly restored lawns and gardens rise steeply above the contours of Arguello Boulevard and meet the forest on the ridges behind them. In 2006, The Presidio Trust introduced a redwood grove in the neighborhood.

Storey Avenue: Sixteen Storey Avenue duplexes were built in 1933 as enlisted family housing for soldiers serving at the Presidio's Fort Scott District. Situated in a more secluded area of the park and smaller than the officers' homes on Infantry Terrace and Presidio Boulevard, they nonetheless boast beautiful historic details.

Housing in the Presidio's historic neighborhoods is leased to Presidio employees and other San Francisco residents

Photo by Christina Dikas



The Public Health Service District was the first neighborhood in the U.S. to achieve LEED for Neighborhood Design (LEED-ND) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust



Public Health Service District

Located in the southwestern quarter of the Presidio between Lobos Creek Valley and Mountain Lake, this area was developed in 1875 as a U.S. Marine Hospital for sailors and merchant marines arriving in the Port of San Francisco. The Georgian-revival campus dates from 1932 when its name was officially changed to the Public Health Service Hospital. The buildings and grounds became derelict after it was closed in 1982.

Following completion of the *Presidio Trust Management Plan*, the Trust began planning the area's rehabilitation. In 2004, the Trust engaged Forest City Enterprises to rehabilitate the main hospital building for apartments, while directly coordinating work for other buildings on the site, including improvements to infrastructure and utilities, buildings, and the extensive landscape. In addition, two landfill sites required environmental remediation. The Trust hired CMG Landscape Architecture to design the majority of the campus landscape, while Steven Wheeler Landscape Architects took on the Wyman Avenue houses, a residential area formerly occupied by hospital surgeons. The Wyman Houses were rehabilitated inside and out, with landscape design that complements the historic buildings and creates an appropriate context.

Throughout the area sustainability was a focus, with stormwater management designed to reduce reliance on the City's stormwater system. The once-extensive lawn was replaced with drought-tolerant, native plants to reduce irrigation. Site lighting was carefully designed to keep light levels low at night to avoid light pollution. The project was completed in 2010.

Design and Construction Team:

Bauman Landscape and Construction

Centric Construction

CMG Landscape Architecture

Forest City Enterprises

McGuire & Hester

The Presidio Trust

Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects



Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust



Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust

Rob Hill Campground

Design and Construction Team:
Bauman Landscape and Construction
DPR Construction
The Presidio Trust staff in collaboration
with Roth LaMotte Landscape
Architecture
Stephen Wheeler Landscape Architects

Rob Hill is located at the Presidio’s highest point, within a towering eucalyptus grove. In 1852, U.S. Army engineers planned a small fort, known as a “redoubt,” on the hill. While the fort was never constructed, the Army did operate a lookout station on the site, by then known as Telegraph Hill, which was used to spot incoming ships. The name “Rob Hill” was derived from the station’s survey marker “Redoubt, Telegraph Hill.” From 1898 through World War II, nearby gun batteries defended against enemy warships. After the war, the Army created a campground on the hilltop site for Boy Scout troops.

In 2007, Rob Hill Campground saw a number of improvements - its capacity was doubled and it was redesigned for accessibility and enhanced to national park standards. A “green” bathhouse, indoor-outdoor “great room,” and a group campfire circle were built using recycled and reclaimed materials, including cypress milled from trees removed by the Presidio reforestation program. Rob Hill is the only overnight campground in San Francisco and it welcomes groups of all kinds. It is home to the Camping at the Presidio (CAP) program, which each year provides thousands of youth from underserved Bay Area communities with a first camping experience.



Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust



Photo by Christina Dias



Photo by Christina Dias

The Rob Hill Campground improvements were made possible by a generous gift from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.

Photo courtesy of The Presidio Trust



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Cover image: Photo by Tom Fox

Opposite: Photo by Michal Venera courtesy of the Parks Conservancy



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