



# Foundation Document Overview

## Muir Woods National Monument

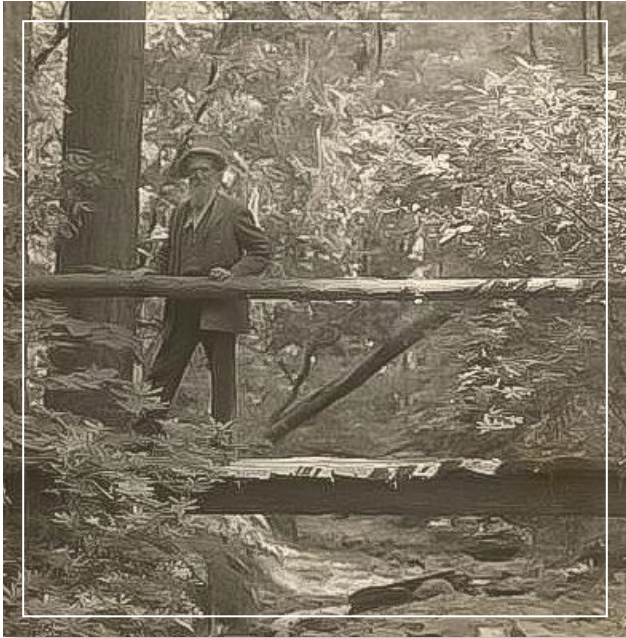
California



### Contact Information

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## Purpose



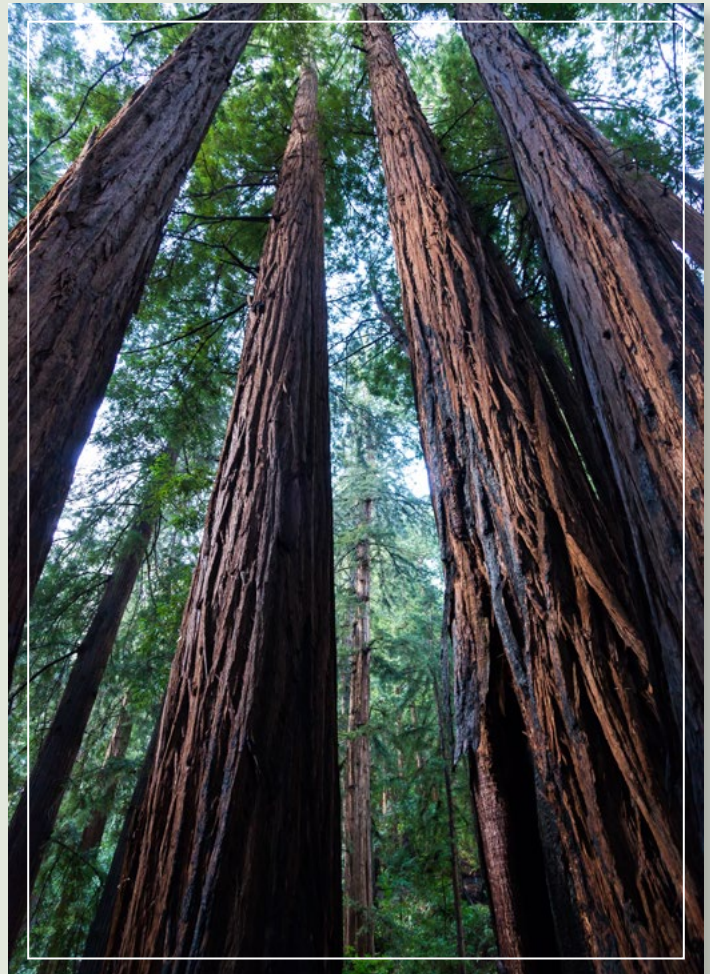
*The purpose of MUIR WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT is to preserve the primeval character and ecological integrity of the old-growth redwood forest for scientific values and inspiration.*



## Significance

Significance statements express why Muir Woods National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Muir Woods National Monument preserves the last remnant old-growth redwood forest in proximity to metropolitan San Francisco that retains its primeval character.
- The establishment of the monument is an important demonstration of early 20th-century American conservation history.



## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Old-Growth Forest.** Muir Woods National Monument preserves plant and animal species and the natural processes associated with the once abundant coastal redwood ecosystem.
- **Conservation Movement.** The efforts of the people who ensured the preservation of this old-growth redwood forest continue to inspire conservation and stewardship actions today.



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

Completed in 2014, the *Golden Gate Long Range Interpretive Plan* identifies the following six interpretive themes that encompass stories and resources of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, and Fort Point National Historic Site.

- **Geological Forces**
- **Islands of Refuge**
- **Ohlone and Coast Miwok Peoples**
- **Military Legacy**
- **Freedom, Justice, and Equality**
- **Scenic Landscapes**

The following interpretive theme has been identified for Muir Woods National Monument in the park's general management plan (2014):

- The majestic, primeval old-growth redwoods of Muir Woods invite visitors, in the words of namesake John Muir, to “come to the woods, for here is rest.” The forest ecosystem of these towering trees and the creek beneath them supports an abundance of life. This remnant of the Bay Area’s once abundant redwood forests inspires visitors through its seminal conservation story, today welcoming travelers from around the world to have what is, for many, their first wildlands experience.



# Description

Muir Woods National Monument is in Marin County, California, just a few miles north of San Francisco. The 558-acre monument preserves one of the last remaining ancient redwood forests in the Bay Area. Some of the redwoods are nearly 1,000 years old and reach heights of more than 250 feet.

Until the 19th century, an abundance of redwood trees were found in the many coastal valleys of northern California; however, the logging industry removed most of them to supply the demand for building materials for a growing population. In 1905, when William Kent and Elizabeth Thacher Kent realized that Redwood Canyon, a popular hiking and recreation destination, contained one of the last uncut stands of old-growth redwoods in the San Francisco Bay Area, they purchased the land comprising the core of the forest and donated it to the U.S. government. President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed the area Muir Woods National Monument in 1908. The proclamation states that the tract contains “an extensive growth of redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*)” that was “of extraordinary scientific interest and importance because of the primeval character of the forest in which it is located, and of the character, age and size of trees.” At Kent’s suggestion, the monument was named for conservationist John Muir. Due to circumstances surrounding its founding, Muir Woods National Monument holds a significant place in conservation history. It was the 10th national monument to be designated under the Antiquities Act of 1906, the first to be in proximity to a major city, and the first to consist of formerly privately owned lands.

Today, Muir Woods National Monument is home to more than 380 different plants and animals, including 27 species of mammals, 50 species of birds, 12 species of reptiles, and 5 species of amphibians. Redwood Creek, the principal stream in the monument, runs clean and clear beneath the towering trees. Its waters are home to coho salmon and steelhead trout—keystone species in many Pacific ecosystems.

Muir Woods National Monument is managed as a distinct park unit within Golden Gate National Recreation Area. More than 1 million visitors per year come to enjoy the monument and marvel at the redwood forest and its wildlife. Visitors typically start at the visitor center and then set out to explore the forest on 6 miles of boardwalks and paved and natural surface trails, some of which connect to neighboring park lands and Pacific beaches.

