

Chapter 5:

Administering Golden Gate National Recreation Area: “There’s a Constituency for Everything and Each Has a Voice”

Golden Gate National Recreation Area paralleled the older units of the national park system in many respects, but differed in significant ways that affected the Park Service’s ability to conceive, design, and implement programs. Urban parks offered ways to reach new segments of the public, but every group of park users and supporters, old or new, also made demands on the park and its managers. The broader constituencies of urban parks presented issues and circumstances that compelled attention from park managers and demanded the creation of new policies and practices. In particular, public participation in the park process exceeded the level of involvement to which the agency was accustomed. Urban audiences felt a proprietary interest in Golden Gate National Recreation Area and they sought to influence its action in ways that most devotees of traditional national parks did not. Before the 1970s, the Park Service had much experience with public interest groups, but it had never encountered the kinds of energetic, vocal, and proprietary local constituencies that marked urban parks such as Golden Gate National Recreation Area and its counterpart in New York, Gateway National Recreation Area.²²⁰

Constituent groups were one of the great assets of the park system. The expansive natural national parks, the system’s crown jewels, always enjoyed diverse and vocal support from a broad array of organizations, but the Park Service participated in the organization of such groups to a much greater degree than at urban parks. The National Parks Association (NPA), which changed its name to the National Parks and Conservation Association in 1972, was typical. Founded in 1919 by Stephen T. Mather, the Park Service’s first director, and run by his close friend and lifelong subordinate Robert Sterling Yard, the NPA followed the agency line in a docile, almost subservient, fashion until the 1970s. The agency became accustomed to supporters who reflected the agency’s needs to their political representatives and largely absorbed its goals and objectives. The Park Service took for granted this eager, easily maneuvered audience.²²¹

Significant differences existed between the traditional constituency of national parks and the people who saw Golden Gate National Recreation Area as their own, and the situation took the Park Service by surprise. In most cases, the people who loved the great national parks neither lived near them nor enjoyed a claim on the area that preceded the Park Service. Most of them developed their affinity for the parks precisely because they were designated as national parks and because the national parks received considerable public attention. From the inception of the Park Service, an enormous publicity machine surrounded national parks; it became catalytic in

²²⁰ Ronald Foresta, *America’s National Parks and Their Keepers* (Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, 1984), 180-81, 190-95.

²²¹ John C. Miles, *Guardians of the Park: A History of the National Parks and Conservation Association* (Washington, D.C.: Taylor and Francis, 1995), 23-70, 241; Foresta, *America’s National Parks and Their Keepers*, 37-53.

shaping public affinity.²²² At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, many park users saw lands that they had previously enjoyed incorporated within the porous boundaries of the new national recreation area and subject to the demands of its resource management goals. National parks had an almost mystical appeal that no other category of park area could match and national recreation areas were often regarded as little more than state parks, places for recreation alone rather than spiritual uplift. Flagship national parks simply enjoyed much greater cachet than other areas in the park system and without the national supporters of such parks, trained in the ideals of the Park Service, the voices that commented on Golden Gate National Recreation Area were largely local and even parochial.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area and other similar recreational parks faced different sets of questions than did Yosemite, Yellowstone, and their scenic peers. Unlike the large national parks, at Golden Gate National Recreation Area resource management became a component of a strategy that placed great significance in people management. In the large scenic national parks, people management remained an offshoot of resource management as late as the 1970s. Few national parks had to wrangle with powerful local constituencies. In most such parks, the Park Service played an enormous role in the regional economy and exerted significant influence on regional government and business policy. Local constituencies beseeched the Park Service in such places. At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the terms were reversed. In the Bay Area, where established business, ethnic, and governmental entities more than equaled the Park Service's impact on the region, the most powerful influence on park managers became the park's many and remarkably diverse constituencies.

In 1972, administering a multifaceted park in an urban area was an unfamiliar task for the Park Service. More than two generations of planning and management afforded remarkable possibilities for the administration of natural parks, historic sites, and other areas, but the emphasis of this work aimed at presenting national park areas as reflections of American culture. While Golden Gate National Recreation Area contained countless features that reflected such sentiment and clearly merited this sort of presentation, it also held equally many features that were difficult to categorize along conventional Park Service lines. In many instances, the features of the park simply did not fit together well. Under these circumstances, existing planning was simultaneously an asset and a liability, a tool for successful management and a precursor of tension with some of the many publics the Park Service encountered. The strategies on which agency leaders depended in other situations simply did not fit at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Nor was much of the experience of similar agencies elsewhere in the federal government or at the state level relevant to the complicated situation in the Bay Area. Even the most likely candidates from which to borrow management practices, other federal and state agencies that managed Bay Area parks, had little to offer the Park Service at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The difference in objective was too great; Golden Gate National Recreation Area was a federal area, reaching for national significance in ways that a municipal park such as Golden Gate Park or a state park such as Mount Tamalpais or federally administered open space did not. Nor did these areas contain the vast array of resources and resource users. On many levels, the Park Service was truly on its own at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

One primary constraint for the agency at Golden Gate National Recreation Area was its lack of a position of primacy in local affairs. At the great national parks, the Park Service was usually the region's single most important entity. In some areas, the state economy depended on

²²² Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 90-99.

the dollars that spectacular parks brought in; without the combination of salaries, sales tax revenues, hotel and motel taxes, and gasoline taxes, some states in the interior West or the upland South could not have paid their bills. In the Bay Area, the rules of this engagement were very different. Instead of being dominant, the Park Service found itself one of a number of competing interests, many of which were as powerful, if not more so, than the federal agency. Compared to the military or the port industries, the park had relatively little impact on the Bay Area's economy except in the ways that it promoted the push to tourism as one of the bases of the regional economy. The Park Service's contribution related more directly to the quality of life in the crowded metropolis than to the region's economic growth, especially after the cost of living in the Bay Area began to skyrocket in the 1970s.

Quality of life was significant, but as the primary definition of the park in the regional setting it offered two evident drawbacks for managers. Golden Gate National Recreation Area did not generate significant revenue or tax base and so did not carry the enormous political and economic clout of the military or major industries. Detractors could always argue that the park was less significant than competing development projects; it generated fewer jobs, turned over fewer dollars in the community, and contributed less to the Bay Area's prosperity. Further complicating the situation, the public and the Park Service wrangled over the definition of quality of life. The Park Service and the public often shared perspectives in these cases, but equally often the public's idea of uses of Golden Gate National Recreation Area contravened the agency's objectives, strategies, and even values. The governing policy for most day-to-day park activities, resource management, often ran counter to the desires of specific constituencies. In the charged social and political climate of California and the Bay Area, interests continuously asserted rights and privileges. At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, even dogs and cats had rights. Although some parks addressed similar issues, the NPS handbook had not been designed to solve such issues. For the NPS, the question became how to balance such uses with its traditional mission of resource management and visitor service.

Nomenclature contributed to the confusion about Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Even before the Park Service was established in 1916, national parks held a particular place in the country's mythology. The national parks were special, chosen to reflect the landscape's most grand features and to articulate the power of the nation that not only conquered the American continent, but also possessed the wisdom and foresight to set portions of it aside. Despite the remarkable physical beauty of the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and others parks, these places were organized, designed, and shaped to be revered. While some users hiked into canyons or along rivers, far more rode the trains to nearby villages and lodges that offered rustic comfort along with outstanding views. The national park had always been the pinnacle of American preservation, an idea that the nation could claim as its contribution to western civilization. National recreation areas, a newer category that came into being during the 1930s, had a different, more ordinary purpose reflected in their name. They were federal parks set up for the purpose of recreation, arguably only a little different from national forests with campgrounds or the state parks that New Deal projects transformed. While Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the first area in the category, offered beautiful coves, a stunning lake, and much pristine desert, Americans simply did not revere it as they did Rocky Mountain National Park.²²³

²²³ Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 29-80, 113-67; Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 1-14; Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 174-80.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area was perplexing if for no other reason than its features included both scenery and landscapes reminiscent of traditional national parks and the kinds of recreational features and amenities that the public expected in state or local recreational space. Marin County contained the rugged coastlines and scenic hills and mountains that the public associated with national parks. It much resembled the kinds of places that visitors came and stayed for a number of days. Fort Mason and Lands End both preserved pieces of the historic past with local and national import and also offered recreational opportunities. In the city of San Francisco, the park became a recreation destination, a place where people came to relax, to exercise, and to enjoy respite from city life. Local day use dominated. Although these two functions did not seem terribly different to the public, in Park Service history most areas had been managed primarily for one purpose or the other.²²⁴ With features that fit into both categories and constituencies that vocally supported their favorite activities and pastimes, Golden Gate National Recreation Area demanded more balance in its administration than other parks.

When William Whalen arrived to become the recreation area's first superintendent in 1972, he found himself pulled in many directions by groups that held proprietary feelings about segments of the park. People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area (PFGGNRA) rightly took much of the credit for founding the park and the organization expected an equal amount of power in determining the direction of its management. They came to represent the concerned activist conservation-oriented groups especially crucial to the park for land acquisition and resource management questions. The U.S. Army retained vast holdings that abutted the park and the establishing legislation effectively put the Park Service and the Army together as long-term managers of the Presidio.²²⁵ Neighborhood organizations, community groups, ethnic associations, and those who used the park—for activities from bicycling to birding, from hiking to kayaking—all expressed interest in shaping agency perspective. During the early years of administration, prior to the beginning of the planning process, the Park Service could do little but respond on a case-by-case basis.

Part of the problem stemmed from the realities of trying to plan a new park in an urban area. Park Service planning procedures presented a blueprint for dealing with complicated questions, but like all standardized documents they could not reflect actual conditions in the community, state, and the nation. Even as the agency assembled the data to create natural and cultural resource management plans, park staff recognized that implementation would take place in a different manner than at other parks. Park documents served as guidelines, malleable paths to objectives, tailored to local realities as circumstances dictated. Golden Gate National Recreation Area's idea that policy must be flexible was at odds with the experience of most post-World War II park managers. The Park Service had become accustomed to making the determining decisions on its own terms. The Bay Area was different; flexibility was essential if the agency was going to succeed in this complex political setting. Golden Gate National Recreation Area became a test for a new kind of management structure, a more interactive, more flexible approach to the various publics that the agency encountered.

²²⁴ Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 149-203; Hal K. Rothman, *On Rims and Ridges: The Los Alamos Area Since 1880* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 258-86.

²²⁵ Amy Meyer interview, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives; Whalen, William interview by Sara Conklin, March 27, 1993, GGNRA Oral History Interview, unedited transcript, 16.

The evolution of the Park Service's interaction with its many constituencies at Golden Gate National Recreation Area fell into three clearly demarcated phases. The first began with the park's establishment in 1972 and ended as the general management plan took shape at the end of the 1970s. During this era, the Park Service responded to the demands of constituents on a case-by-case basis, making policy at grassroots levels. Special interests that ranged from PFGGNRA to horse riders all expressed their points of view, and the combined influence of these constituencies gave them great authority together or separately. Lacking either formal resource management goals or standing derived from a power and a long history in the region, the agency allowed constituent groups greater leeway than at any time since.

The approval of the General Management Plan in 1980 began the second phase. It allowed park management a broader range of responses than had been available, in essence moving the agency from a fundamentally reactive framework into one that allowed it to set the terms of the discourse even if it could not always enforce its objectives. The plan raised morale and created a climate in which park staff believed their goals were not only defensible but inherently possible. It was an electric time for the park. Between 1980 and the end of the decade, park officials attempted to apply the plan to deflect unwanted uses of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The document reflected a new level of administrative organization, a series of goals and objectives for the entire park. Before 1980, any constituent group could rush forward and assert the preeminence of its position. With the plan in place, the Park Service could point to clearly defined objectives, strategies, and results that could be used to focus, shape, and even deflect constituencies and their objectives. The plan helped the Park Service not only explain what the agency intended, but also to channel support for its programs and in some cases to curb overenthusiastic constituencies.

Yet the defining feature of Golden Gate National Recreation Area remained the power of constituencies. Even with the plan in place, with the clearly articulated resource management mission of the park, the agency found that its constituencies not only ignored agency planning, sometimes they even used blatant pressure to attempt to circumvent park goals. In such circumstances, the park trod very carefully, using skillful negotiation and long-standing friendships to allay concerns, to reshape the goals of constituent groups, and in some circumstances, to outwardly resist actions that either statute, policy, or the planning documents for the park excluded. The GMP became a document, an argument for specific goals that had to be hashed out with the public. In the complicated terrain of the Bay Area, each situation reassessed the efficacy of planning at the park. Each time agency goals held, the park took a step toward the kind of integrated management it sought; each time public pressure overwhelmed the park or swayed its decision making, management slipped back toward the reactivity of the 1970s.

These more sophisticated responses to the social and political environments in which Golden Gate National Recreation Area operated presaged an essential versatility that all federal agencies sought in the 1980s and 1990s. After the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan, the federal bureaucracy found itself on the defensive. Government-bashing became sport, encouraged by the White House and administration officials such as James Watt, Reagan's first secretary of the interior. Federal agencies struggled to find a place in a cultural climate that increasingly disparaged their activities, and in some cases, their very existence. The Park Service was rocked in the same way as nearly every other federal agency, and in the new environment, the agency fell back on its time-honored practices. Management documents served two purposes, as a baseline for interaction with a multitude of competing constituencies and as a barometer of the

agency perspective. Instead of dictating policy, the documents shaped and guided it into a form that was acceptable both to the Park Service and to the many publics it served.²²⁶

During the late 1980s, the General Management Plan at Golden Gate National Recreation Area helped inaugurate a third phase by permitting new dimensions in the relationship between the park and its publics. Because of the stunning amount of citizen participation in the planning process, most constituencies found themselves with a stake, sometimes a very strong one, in plan implementation. Simply put, the management plan gave most users much of what they wanted, providing them an investment in its success, sometimes at the expense of the clearly articulated goals of the various management plans. As a result, the GMP was transformed from a way to circumvent unwanted use into a tool to promote a more comprehensive and more cooperative future. By the end of the 1990s, the initial interest groups had been transformed by time, the park had become a well-established entity in the region, and the range of users greatly expanded. The plan became a blueprint, a road map, an integral part of the interaction not only between the Park Service and its constituents, but among those constituents as well.

Stakeholder relationships at Golden Gate National Recreation Area frequently turned on issues with which the Park Service had little experience. Neighborhood groups and individuals who lived in the vicinity of the park reacted to issues with the proprietary feeling of people who used parklands before the Park Service. Neighborhood groups reacted to the increase in traffic that followed the park proclamation. In an example of the NIMBY syndrome, they sought to enjoy the advantages of park status without experiencing any of its drawbacks. Individual users sought to retain their prerogatives after the park came into being and the agency set up resource management guidelines. The struggles over use that ensued were titanic in nature, ongoing and to a certain degree unsolvable. They reflected the inherent tension between resource management goals and constituency desires.

The use of the park by dogs and their owners became one of the fulcrums that articulated the tension between management policies and constituent goals. The park managed much of the open space in the city, and people had walked their dogs on its property long before 1972. Park establishment led to conflicts between users with pets—especially those not on a leash or other physical restraint—and people without pets. Pet owners believed that since they walked their dogs without a leash before the establishment of the park, their rights should be grandfathered in. “I must protest against the unreasonable enforcement of canine leash laws,” wrote Muriel T. French, a fifty-year resident of the Bay Area, in a letter typical of the people who favored dogs. “We’ve walked our dogs down there for years,” Richard Nason added, “long before anyone thought of a Rec. Area.” Others disagreed; people without pets wanted to know why a national park area did not have rules to restrict animals. “I do not believe that dogs should be allowed on a national parklands, unless in designated areas set aside for dog owners,” a Marin County resident told the superintendent. Another averred that “dog owners believe the areas are for animal enjoyment rather than people enjoyment.” Caught between two vocal constituencies, one that favored maintaining a status quo that preceded the park and another that demanded that Golden Gate National Recreation Area mirror the policies of the rest of the park system, the Park Service struggled for a response. The agency needed to take action, but as late as 1976, no specific policy existed. The park had to find its own way with little guidance. In April 1976, Whalen sent his staff a copy of the federal guidelines for pet management on federal property,

²²⁶ Hal K. Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation?: Environmentalism in the United States Since 1945* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998), 58-63.

the only official regulation applied to the situation. The document was explicit and concise, but it had little bearing on Golden Gate National Recreation Area.²²⁷

Dog control asked a fundamental, persistent, and always vexing question about Golden Gate National Recreation Area: was it a national park, an icon of American society, worthy of the same reverence and the parallel restrictions that governed places such as Yellowstone and Yosemite, or was it urban recreational space? This question had been pushed aside throughout the park system between 1953 and 1964, Conrad Wirth's directorship. That great advocate of parkways and recreational space wisely confined such development to remote areas and his parkways and recreation areas were used mostly by overnight visitors. Only with the creation of Golden Gate and Gateway National Recreation Areas in the 1970s did the agency have to answer this question when it faced powerful local constituencies with competing ideas of the use of urban recreational space.²²⁸

Dogs and their control typified the first phase of administrative issues at Golden Gate National Recreation Area and illustrated the way such issues persisted despite the implementation of comprehensive planning. The park offered countless opportunities to engage in uses that were typically outlawed in national parks but remained unregulated in national recreation areas. The absence of rules did not stem from a lack of concern. Instead the shortage of experience with questions such as hang gliding, pets on leashes, hiker-biker-horseback trail issues, and the lack of firm resource management plans confounded the Park Service. Again, the issues of an urban recreation area with a range of features and possible uses took the agency's existing rules and structures and forced rethinking not only of concepts, but also means of implementation.

The beaches of Golden Gate National Recreation Area also required that the Park Service consider the claims of competing stakeholders. For the agency, in the process of building relationships, conflicting claims meant that the agency had to take a side. Each constituency presented what its representatives considered a legitimate contention. Dog owners used the idea of "parks for the people, where the people are;" they pointed to the lack of recreational space in the urban Bay Area. People whose expectations of national park areas did not include unleashed dogs complained about their presence. Still establishing its presence in the region, the Park Service could not afford to alienate anyone, leaving it in a complicated and even perplexing situation. With the exception of PFGGNRA, as often a source of challenge as support, the agency constituency had not yet jelled. Two vocal and powerful constituencies made demands on the park and Whalen faced a dilemma. Creating a zone within Golden Gate National Recreation Area required policy that excluded some options in favor of others, but for the Park Service, negative consequences could easily exceed any positive results. The very process of defining even something so simple as rules for use of the beaches meant elevating some kinds of visitor experience over others.

Animal control issues at beaches and elsewhere remained the dominant stakeholder issue in the 1970s and Marin County provided its primary flash point. County residents long enjoyed recreational activities on what in 1972 became parklands. Many of them also owned dogs, and

²²⁷ Jerry L. Schober, "Dog Policy, April 1976"; Charles M. Sheldon to Superintendent, May 17, 1976; Douglas Weinkauff to William Whalen, June 27, 1976; Muriel T. French to Jerry Schober [*sic*], April 16, 1975; Richard M. Nason to Supt. GGNRA, April 17, 1975, all PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "GGNRA - Citizens Advisory Commission - Committee on Pet Policy."

²²⁸ Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 1-15.

they were accustomed to having their animals accompany them while hiking, horseback riding, running, and pursuing other activities. At the same time, unencumbered dogs threatened the tenets of resource management. Dogs aggressively attacked the deer population in Marin County. Reports of deer killed by dogs abounded, inciting other stakeholders, wildlife advocates and even those who simply thought deer more attractive than dogs in creating a natural-looking vista. As early as the mid-1970s, complaints of feral dogs attacking and killing deer reached the Park Service. After a summer-long drought in 1976, Ray Murphy, chief of Resource Management and Visitor Services, reported that the "dog situation is getting out of hand."²²⁹ He estimated that one deer was killed each day in the Tennessee Valley–Rodeo Beach area. The drought forced deer out of the sheltered valleys they favored and into open terrain, where they became targets for pets and feral dogs. Until that summer, the Park Service had been timid about enforcing dog policy in rural Marin County. Although some observed that dogs had been killing deer in Marin County since before the establishment of the park, national parks were not regarded as hunting grounds for either feral or domestic animals. Deer killed by dogs were more than a nuisance. The situation became a public relations problem, a challenge to the image of controlled resource management the Park Service sought to project. The park needed a forceful response but without a plan, the options were limited.²³⁰

Protecting and preserving wildlife, a classic resource management objective, turned into a question of people management rather than animal control. In October 1976, the Park Service placed "Dogs Prohibited" signs in open areas of its Marin County properties. The problem in Marin County stemmed not from feral animals but from domestic pets. For the Park Service, a policy that created clearly defined boundaries offered the best resolution. For longtime county residents, the question was less clear. Local residents responded with a variety of perspectives, usually reflecting enlightened or even base self-interest. People who did not own dogs cheered the decision; people with dogs opposed the change, and a significant number showed their proprietary feelings about the region when they tried to wrangle specific exceptions to the park's rules.²³¹

Since the establishment of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Park Service moved carefully and its response in Marin County reflected the agency's tentative position. Instead of acting directly, the Park Service relied on the community-based mechanisms it had helped establish in an attempt to avoid antagonizing any element in the community. Dogs and their domestic peers, cats, became the test case, the issue that the Park Service used to try to define both its administrative obligations and the limits of its reach. The park's lack of written policy gave the agency few ways to rule out the actions of any constituency. Existing rules offered little to help resolve the situation. Without specific policies that addressed the questions of canines in the park, the agency ran the risk of being accused of favoritism. Whalen recognized that the Park Service would benefit from the participation of intermediaries. If some people were going to be happy and others were not as a result of the decision, the Park Service would fare

²²⁹ Ray Murphy to Boyd Burnett, September 21, 1976; William Whalen to Matt Dillingham, September 29, 1976, both PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

²³⁰ William J. Whalen to Matt Dillingham, September 29, 1976; "GGNRA Dog Policy - Marin County," November 10, 1976, both PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

²³¹ Virgil S. Hollis to Silliam [sic] J. Whalen, September 7, 1976, PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

better if another organization shouldered at least part of the responsibility. Golden Gate National Recreation Area had the perfect partner for such a task. The Citizens' Advisory Commission for Golden Gate National Recreation Area was enlisted to mitigate the fray.

This intermediary role had become one of the hallmarks of the CAC. The organization had been designed to undertake precisely this task, to simultaneously stand in for the agency and facilitate citizen input as the planning process took shape and to absorb any negative aftershocks. After a slow start, when no one was appointed to the commission until the end of 1973, the CAC came into its own as a valuable entity. By the time cats and dogs became an issue in the mid-1970s, CAC members had considerable experience at creating constructive feedback out of the chaos of competing interests. The commission's meetings were public and usually well attended. For controversial issues or even ones that simply stoked local passions, hundreds turned out. The CAC held public hearings on disputed issues, trying to create a climate in which passionate but civil discourse could take place and to simultaneously discern public sentiment and placate the most adamant advocates on both sides. In essence, the CAC quickly assumed the role of broker, listening, summarizing, and providing feedback for park staff on a wide range of questions as policy developed.²³²

Until it had a written policy that it could enforce, the Park Service could not genuinely administer the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Different kinds of users intersected in ongoing chaos and the Park Service could only react. Pets became the focal point of tension, the single most likely source of conflict between differing user groups. Prepared for intense debate that might anger some constituencies or not, the staff at Golden Gate National Recreation Area initiated the dialogue. In 1977, Rolf Diamant, the park's environmental coordinator, circulated a draft dog policy for the San Francisco portions of the park. "This is a thankless task," Diamant admitted as he tried to negotiate the questions that stemmed from people's perception of their rights in public space. The issues were subtle and often confused. Feral dogs were sympathetic creatures, shaggy canines who reminded many of the dogs in the stories of Jack London, one of the Bay Area's most well-known writers. Others saw the animals in different terms. "There is a world of difference between a well-fed dog killing a deer in Marin County and a coyote killing a deer in Yosemite," chief of Resource Management and Visitor Services Ray Murphy observed. "The coyote is earning his living; the dog is not."²³³

Pet management forced the Park Service to consider the separation of people and their animals from other users of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The results illustrated another of the ongoing tensions of park management, the proprietary feeling that many neighbors held about parklands. In late 1977, the Park Service considered a trail in Marin County exclusively for obedience school-trained dogs certified by a local kennel club. Marin Unit manager Richard B. Hardin thought such a program would encourage responsible pet owners and allow the Park Service to exclude unruly pets and to cite their owners. Since the governing policy, the federal code for pets, required all pets to be restrained by leash or other mechanism, the Park Service felt that allowing obedience-trained dogs to roam off leash on specific trails

²³² John A. Godino, "Changing Tides at the Golden Gate: Management Policies of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Role of the National Park Service in Urban America" (M.A. thesis, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1988), 37-42; "Pet Policy Hearing, June 14, 1978," PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

²³³ Ray Murphy to Boyd Burnett, September 21, 1976; Rolf Diamant, "Draft Dog Policy for San Francisco Unit, October 18, 1977," both PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

represented an enormous concession to pet owners. Dog owners felt otherwise, seeing in the attempt to restrict their access the curtailment of their long-established prerogative.²³⁴ Local ire persuaded the Park Service to reconsider and eventually abandon the proposal. Staff members learned that ad hoc approaches that did not involve the community as a whole were unlikely to succeed. The best, and most likely only, solution to the Park Service's dilemma was a clear and well-defined policy shaped through dialogue with the many sectors of the public concerned about pets in the park.

The CAC became the catalytic entity, the organization that created the context for a set of recommendations to resolve the complicated questions concerning pets at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Everyone who observed the discussions recognized that no decision would make every constituency happy all the time, but open and sometimes lengthy dialogue helped develop a vested interest even for groups and individuals who did not get what they wanted. At least somebody heard them, some of these groups suggested, and that willingness to listen went a long way toward lessening potential rifts. The pet discussions continued for more than two years. The initial efforts required much tinkering, as the various interests sought to achieve as much of their objectives as they could. As was typical of such arrangements, many ideas were offered and most were rejected when one or more of the stakeholders opposed them. In some cases, the Park Service rejected ideas. Dogs under "voice control" initially seemed viable but Richard Hardin pointed out that the language was too vague for any kind of systematic enforcement.²³⁵ In January 1978, the CAC formed a pet policy committee with Amy Meyer, one of the founders of PFGGNRA, at its head. The committee held hearings in San Francisco and Marin County in the spring and early summer to simultaneously collect information and disseminate ideas to which the public responded. In the end, these ongoing discussions shifted the terrain on which the debate took place. As the talks continued, everyone involved recognized that firm policy governing animals was the goal, and the longer the dialogue persisted, the more everyone understood that a policy decision was imminent. Giving up dreams of getting every desire, each group scrambled to carve out a position its members could tolerate.

The results of the process set a pattern for Golden Gate National Recreation Area: different subunits of the park were managed in different ways. This policy became codified in the GMP and subsequent resource management plans, as the park broke up into different zones and subzones. After public hearings on May 23 and June 14, 1978, the CAC drafted a proposed policy, describing specific regulations for each part of the park. The proposal for San Francisco required leashes for dogs at Sutro Heights, the Golden Gate Promenade near Crissy Field, at Fort Mason, and at Aquatic Park and Victorian Park. Dogs were excluded from Alcatraz and the historic ships. Elsewhere, dogs were expected to be under voice control. Leashes were required on weekends and holidays and on other crowded days, and signs that read "please pick up dog litter" were placed along most trails and paths. The commission approved the report with a unanimous vote, establishing principles for administration and paving the way to a permanent policy.²³⁶

²³⁴ Richard B. Hardin to Nancy L. Simpson, November 8, 1977, 1976; Robert L. Chiappari to Jack Wheat, December 10, 1977, both PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

²³⁵ Golden Gate National Recreation Area Advisory Commission Minutes, May 23, 1978, 4, PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy"; Richard Hardin to Amy Meyer, September 14, 1978, PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

²³⁶ "Advisory Commission Proposed Rules for Pet Dogs in San Francisco, Lands of Golden Gate National

Early in 1979, the CAC finalized its policy for San Francisco; soon after Marin County followed. The pet regulations created three categories of domestic animals: unmanaged, managed, and voice or leash control. Unmanaged animals were not permitted in the park. Managed animals, those controlled by voice or leash, were permitted at specific times in most of the park. Voice or leash control provided a flexible system. While dogs were the obvious target of policy in Marin County, pets in San Francisco were considerably more diverse. All kinds of pets lived in the city and the CAC determined that with two exceptions, any pet that was uncontrolled was banned from the park. The lexicon, "unmanaged pets," was a little clumsy, but clearly understood. Only the existing cat colonies, which enjoyed powerful public support, the cats who kept down the rodent population around the historic ships, and animals who assisted the disabled were excepted from the rule. The policy was cheered; the unanimous vote signaled consensus. A month later, the recommendations for Marin County passed on another unanimous vote and in May 1979, following the trend, similar recommendations were passed for Point Reyes National Seashore.²³⁷

Policies did not resolve hard feelings or deter persistent advocates, and throughout 1979 a parade of speakers appeared at CAC meetings to urge further changes in pet policy. Several groups, including the San Francisco Dog Owners Group Inc., applauded the process and supported the new policies. John Kipping, a biologist at the Audubon Canyon Ranch, advocated even greater restrictions, a point of view echoed by Superintendent John L. Sansing of Point Reyes National Seashore, who noted that one of the park's purposes was to permit people to see wildlife, a traditional use of national parks. They were far more likely to do so when dogs were not present. In August, Kathy Reid of Marin County Supervisor Gary Giacomini's office recommended stricter enforcement of leash laws. Others advocated new limits on animals, on or off leash. Self-interest continued to be the measure for some. Park patron Christine Hoff of San Francisco favored new areas for dogs; she preferred hiking with her dog. Others suggested dogs intimidated criminals and made park patrons feel more safe, while some thought humans were a greater threat to wildlife than domestic or feral animals.²³⁸ Special interest groups of all kinds proposed a number of exceptions to the policy, asking in effect to overrule it on a case-by-case basis. The coalitions seemed firm. Dog owners generally favored greater leeway for animals; scientists, wildlife advocates, and people who did not own dogs advocated stricter policies. The CAC once again found itself in the familiar position of listening, its members fully aware they could not make everyone happy.

The General Management Plan, approved in 1980, did not specifically address pet policy, but it did present a blueprint for public use of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. By defining the desired purposes of every park sector, the plan simultaneously illustrated a vision and drew clear and distinct boundaries. It divided the park into areas for recreational use, for

Recreation Area," to June 14, 1978; "Citizen's Advisory Commission Minutes, 1978," September 27, 1978 and November 18, 1978, both PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

²³⁷ Golden Gate National Recreation Area Advisory Commission Minutes, January 10, 1979, February 24, 1979, May 12, 1979, all PFGGNRA I, Box 1, Citizen's Advisory Commission Minutes, 1979.

²³⁸ Golden Gate National Recreation Area Advisory Commission Minutes, August 1, 1979, 6, PFGGNRA I, Box 1, Citizen's Advisory Commission Minutes, 1979; Florence Sarrett to Lynn Thompson, January 17, 1979; John Kipping to Golden Gate Citizens' Advisory Commission, May 9, 1979; John L. Sansing to Frank Boerger, April 20, 1979, all PFGGNRA I, Box 1, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

preservation, and for development. These distinctions helped articulate the differences between recreational day use and the more traditional kinds of national park uses. Some of these suitably accommodated pets; others just as clearly excluded them. Not a perfect set of distinctions, the plan offered the beginning of a firm and consistently defensible policy.²³⁹

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the question of dogs in both Marin County and San Francisco continued to be in the forefront of park administration. Despite a public education campaign through television and radio announcements and policy pamphlet and signs, restrictive policy remained controversial. The lines of division did not change; in 1985, people stood where they had been a decade earlier. Guided by the goals of the plan, scientists, people without dogs, and organizations of dog owners and trainers who felt that roaming dogs compromised their claim to the park had an investment in orderly use of park property. They participated in the process of reaching consensus and favored the policies that resulted. Quickly, the park and many of the dog training and advocacy organizations developed close relationships, merging opponents with supporters through a process of buy-in that let pet enthusiasts enjoy parts of the park with their animals. As the park used the plan to bring reasonable opponents into agreement, the opponents of the plan were seen as extreme. Individualists who felt unfairly constrained by the policies opposed the rules, others who could not imagine how their dogs affected other people's experience, and especially in Marin County and at Point Reyes National Seashore, residents who had difficulty negotiating the transition from rural open space to parkland, remained recalcitrant.

Dog control became the archetypal urban park administrative issue. No matter what the Park Service decided, the issue never came to an end. Instead it followed cyclical patterns: policy was implemented, local residents responded to efforts to control their behavior, the Park Service or the CAC attempted to split the difference by distinguishing between animals on leash and off leash and by clearly demarcating zones where animals were permitted and where they were not, the issue quieted down, and then a new round of discussions began. Throughout the 1980s, at Muir Beach, at Muir Woods, at Crissy Field, in the Olema Valley, near Bolinas Ridge, an ongoing discussion about dogs, they and their owners' rights, the rights of other users, and the prerogatives of the managing agency continued. At Crissy Field in the late 1980s, development plans caused dog owners who used the Golden Gate Promenade to fear restrictions of their off-leash privileges. At Ocean Beach, dogs threatened the snowy plover, an endangered species.²⁴⁰ The intersection between urban and rural, between preservation and use, between resource management and individual prerogative, remained unclear at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Managing the many beaches included in Golden Gate National Recreation Area led to similar kinds of issues. Only a very few parks in the system offered beaches, limiting the Park Service's experience. Those that did, such as Lake Mead National Recreation Area, enjoyed greater control of ingress and egress than did the former city beaches included in Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Cape Cod National Seashore, which entered the park system in 1966, shared issues with Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Before 1970, parks with beaches were not a priority of policymakers. Their very attractions precluded a primary position in agency

²³⁹ *General Management Plan and Environmental Analysis, Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore, September 1980* (San Francisco: National Park Service, 1980), 37-49, 95-99.

²⁴⁰ *MIJ* May 31, 1987, A3, "News Clippings - February 1982"; Frank C. Boerger to Roger F. Sobel, February 10, 1987; Golden Gate National Recreation Area Advisory Commission Minutes, January 10, 1979, both Box 2, PFGGNRA II (1985-92), "Pet Policy."

strategy in a time when the parks reflected cultural impulses more thoroughly than recreational ones. As they did in so many other ways, urban park areas forced a reassessment of agency emphasis. Golden Gate National Recreation Area included a number of widely used beaches. Ocean Beach, Muir Beach, Stinson Beach, Rodeo Beach, Phelan Beach (now called China Beach), Baker Beach, and many other coastal areas were a recreational responsibility. The park filled a function previously offered by other entities, diminishing the conceptual distance and managerial distinctions between Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the state and local park areas that preceded it. Since the park's establishment, NPS lifeguards have served at Stinson Beach. Aquatic Park housed lifeguards between 1978 and 1985. It was more difficult for a Park Service lifeguard in a bathing suit than for an interpretive ranger to make the claim that the park elevated the human experience.

Beaches offered another of the innumerable situations in which different users were bound to intrude upon each other's experience. The finite space at any beach and the range of possible uses exacerbated the problems that such situations presented. Anarchy was not an option. In the small spaces of most beaches, the demand was consistently great and the Park Service's primary obligation became people management. Even in open space, the potential for conflict between uses—and their users—remained considerable and beaches, attractive to almost everyone, needed regulation. The possible problems were endless. Too many people made the beach a congested experience, not pleasurable and hardly different from typical urban daily endeavor such as driving in traffic. Unleashed animals at the beach interfered with other patrons; "it is not conducive to picnicking at the beach," San Francisco resident Douglas Weinkauff wrote to William Whalen, "when a loose dog defecates nearby."²⁴¹ Beaches also held powerful symbolic status as the representation of leisure for all. Their management presented a series of issues far more like those of beaches elsewhere than of most national parks.

Beaches posed additional management problems. As more people enjoyed the time and leisure to visit the ocean, the beaches became congested. Typically surrounded by homes and other private property and reached by narrow, winding two-lane roads, the beaches became sources of tension between local communities, park managers, and the enormous constituency for their use throughout the Bay Area. Communities next to beaches often held proprietary feelings about the waterfront and they organized active groups to further their ends. In some cases, they regarded nearby public beaches as de facto private property. Planning became the catalytic factor in balancing the demands of various constituencies. Again the Park Service shaped its policies after receiving input from the entire spectrum of users and residents. Policy making was the first step in an ongoing reevaluation of agency management goals, practices, and sometimes standards. Once again, the realities of urban park management dictated that no decision was ever final; reassessment was a crucial feature of managing beaches at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

San Francisco's diverse cultural climate made the Park Service beaches symbolic of the complicated process of bringing agency standards in line with local norms. The Bay Area easily accepted practices that would have been thought offensive elsewhere. One of these, clothing-optional beaches, illustrated the region's degree of tolerance and the Park Service's ability to be flexible. In Marin County before the park's establishment, policy allowed people to swim without attire at some beaches. That pattern of behavior, essentially a cultural choice, spread

²⁴¹ Weinkauff to Whalen, June 27, 1976, PFGGNRA I, Box I, "Citizens' Advisory Commission, Committee on Pet Policy."

from Marin County south to Baker Beach and Lands End.²⁴² The agency was again forced to address an issue that was well beyond the experience of most park managers. The Park Service fashioned a Solomonic response. In a policy that evolved over a decade, the Park Service determined that it would respond to complaints about clothing-optional beaches, but without a complaint park workers would not initiate action against nude bathers. This decision reflected the Bay Area's openness, a growing cultural tolerance, and the sensibilities of individual freedom that dominated the last quarter of the twentieth century. It sanctioned diplomacy as policy, an ethic that served the agency well in the region's convoluted politics.

Although such a policy could be disconcerting, it made considerable sense in the context of the many users and users of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Picture the scene early on a Saturday morning at the end of summer 1998, approaching Muir Beach. The road winds down from Chevron stations and diners, McDonalds and well-appointed homes tucked neatly into the irrigated foliage of Marin County. Down from the hills to the narrow coastal plain, the view was exquisite; fog rolled gently in but the sun soon melted it away. It was a breathtaking visit. Even though it was early, a few people were already on the beach. Families with small children, dogs galore, couples, and a few extreme athletes in the bright tones of postmodern Thinsulate waterwear made a glorious crowd. A woman sat on a rock reading a book; it seems wonderful way to spend a Saturday with a community of shared values—people doing what they enjoyed in a beautiful setting without disturbing one another. Hiking past one rock abutment that made a natural barrier was a different world, coexisting in parallel space. North of the rocks were a collection of sunbathers, mostly men, mostly nude. It was a de facto clothing-optional beach, but its feel was different. Not quite meat market, not quite the couples environments to the south of the rocks, the people here had self-selected for their presence. They were comfortable, even as an outsider, might not have been. I retreated, recognizing that I was not part of this place. The beach on the other side of the rocks showed tolerance—on the part of regional culture, bathers, and park managers. Regional culture sanctioned a wider array of behavior in public than most other places tolerated and flexible management allowed easy coexistence. Park managers agreed not to initiate action, bathers tacitly agreed to stay on their side of the rocks, and as a result, a wider range of practice coexisted in small, carefully divided space. Yet the scenario also illustrated one measure of difficulty in the park's "don't volunteer, respond only to complaint" policy. If an outsider, who stumbled across a line likely well known to locals, complained, someone might have to do something. Presumably they might have suggested a visitor return across the de facto barrier of the rocks, but still, the presence of an intruder could have easily changed the moment for all.

The growth of recreation as an industry in the 1970s and 1980s also challenged resource management goals and policy at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Park Service history again did not provide a blueprint; "demand for recreation at the park is divided between people who want structured activities and facilities," one observer wrote in a succinct assessment of the issues in 1979, "and those who want to go their own way."²⁴³ Creating rules for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders was no easier than negotiating pet policies or the various constituencies of beach users. Various issues, including personal security, competition for trails and other

²⁴² Ivan Sharpe, "The City's Unofficial Nude Beach for Gays," *SFE*, June 16, 1981.

²⁴³ State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, *Mount Tamalpais – General Plan* (Sacramento: The Resources Agency, 1979), PFGGNRA II, Box 12, GGNRA Archives.

resources, sanctioned and unsanctioned activities, and permitted uses by the military and others all forced the Park Service to broaden the role to which it was generally accustomed.

Hiking had been one of the most important recreational activities in Park Service history and the inclination of people in the Bay Area spurred the importance of trail management and development. Hiking had always been a staple park activity. In the Bay Area, the tradition of recreational walking dated back nearly a century to John Muir and the founding of the Sierra Club. To the people of the region, this activity stood out as one that defined the special local relationship to the physical world that so many claimed as one of the distinctive features of Bay Area life. Between 1972 and 1979, the agency developed trails throughout the park, adding links between different areas, improving existing pathways, and generally facilitating hiking and walking in urban and rural parts of the park. It also participated in the development Pacific Coast Trail, the Bay Trail, and the Golden Gate Promenade, taking the lead role in countless situations.

Trails seemed one of the fastest ways to reward the constituencies, such as PFGGNRA, that helped establish the park as well as a way to build relationships with every constituency in the Bay Area. In the home of Sierra Club, hiking was more than exercise or recreation; it was a symbolic activity that connected the people of the region.

The popularity of regional trails required vigilance, and beginning in 1979, security for hikers became a pivotal local issue. A sociopath called the "Trailside Killer" stalked the Bay Area. After killing a woman and wounding her male companion in a Santa Cruz state park, the killer became one of the many hazards of city life. Unlike the city's Zodiac Killer of the decade before, the Trailside Killer seemed somehow predictable. His killings seemed planned instead of random; they followed a pattern that included parks and trail locales. Lincoln Park near Lands End was the location of one of his murders; he killed two women in Point Reyes National Seashore late in 1980. In response, advisories that warned people, especially women, not to hike alone, were everywhere. The Park Service significantly increased security for hikers, but faced the problem of a limited ranger force and an enormous area to patrol. When David Carpenter, a fifty-year-old industrial arts teacher with a speech impediment and a history of sexual crime, was finally apprehended late in 1981, he had maps of Mount Tamalpais in his possession.²⁴⁴ After Carpenter's capture and eventual conviction, the perceived need for trail security diminished, but remained an ever-present concern. In the Bay Area, home at the time to more than three million people, security for hikers who sought solitude required a strategic response from the Park Service.

Hiking remained a favored activity of park users, leading to a proposal for a "Bay Area Ridge Trail," which surfaced during the late 1980s. The trail proposal accomplished a number of important political goals as well as promoting an interlocking network of trails throughout the Bay Area. The idea came from neighborhood activists, prominent among them Doris Lindfors, a retired schoolteacher who previously led the Sweeney Ridge Trail Committee, and Dave Sutton of the South Bay Trails Committee. Enthusiasts envisioned a complete network of trails inside Golden Gate National Recreation Area that would join with trails outside the park to create a ring around the Bay. The trails were expected to extend more than 400 miles, to nearly every corner

²⁴⁴ Jennifer Foote, "Hikers Not Deterred By Killings," *SFE*, May 3, 1981, John E. Douglas, *Journey into Darkness* (New York: Pocket Books, 1997), 101-02; Grover M. Godwin, *Hunting Serial Predators: A Multivariate Classification Approach to Profiling Violent Behavior* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2000), 234-38.

of the three-county area, and allow easy access to hiking trails from almost anywhere in the Bay Area.²⁴⁵

The combination of dedicated activists, a powerful federal presence, and the sense that trails improved the quality of life made the project hard to resist. "Quality of life" environmentalism became an issue of considerable significance, both as an indicator of the area's attractiveness as well as a source of positive identity for communities. The Bay Area Ridge Trail meant considerably more than a place to hike, ride a horse, or walk a dog. It also signaled a commitment to the region's population to provide the kinds of amenities that made urban space pleasurable. After the trail system's dedication in September 1989, it received acclaim from a number of sources. "It's a wonderful project," opined the *Marin Independent Journal* when the project was dedicated, "with the advent of the Ridge Trail, there's something to look forward to."²⁴⁶

The Ridge Trail also gave equestrians, long a presence in Golden Gate National Recreation Area, another opportunity for a continued presence. Private organizations had stables within the park, some preceding the establishment of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The Golden Gate Stables at Muir Beach, the Presidio Stables at Rodeo Valley, the Miwok Valley Association Stable in the Tennessee Valley, and other buildings meant that horses were a frequent presence on park trails. The Park Service and the U.S. Park Police also used horses for their mounted patrols and the Park Police kept a stable at Fort Miley. The result was a typical situation for the Park Service at the park, another of the endless situations of managing competing claims and constituencies.

Equestrians enjoyed a proprietary sense of the park, and some groups seemed not to recognize that the advent of the park might compel them to change their practices. In 1977, the Miwok Valley Association, an equestrian group that leased a private stable in the Tennessee Valley that preceded the park, initiated a series of improvements without consulting the Park Service. A flurry of activity, including a water supply project, attracted NPS attention. The association had been grandfathered into the park, but after negotiations, its leaders agreed that they would leave when their permit expired at the end of 1977. The dollars and effort the organization expended on development suggested no thought of departing and the activities caused environmental damage. Park technician Jim Milestone observed considerable erosion, construction without Park Service supervision, and other signs of permanence and proprietary behavior. "The MVA is entrenching themselves into a very ideal situation for running their private equestrian activities on public land," Milestone observed. "Investing large sums of monies into the project insures continuation of their activities." Milestone recommended better NPS supervision if the agency thought the activities had only a minimal impact on the park and its plans. If the impact was deemed considerable, then Milestone recommended close scrutiny and a new policy for managing the operation.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Mike Mewhinney, "Planning Begins for 'Ring Around the Bay' Trail System," *The Progress*, February 17, 1988.

²⁴⁶ "Ridge Trail Here at Last," *MIJ*, September 25, 1989, A8; Maura Thurman, "Bay Area Ridge Trail: 'This Is Only a Start,'" *MIJ*, September 25, 1989, A3.

²⁴⁷ Jim Milestone, "Field Report on the Miwok Valley Association Land Use Activities," Spring 1977, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Natural Resources Management Records, Department of Operations/Activities 1980-1984, Environmental Issues 1980-1990, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives.

Horses represented precisely the kind of class-based recreation that could influence park policy. Elites comprised much of the riding population; many were longtime friends of the Park Service, and horse riding enjoyed a long history in national parks. Equestrian clubs engaged in the kind of activity that the Park Service recognized, validated, and understood, and in most circumstances, horse riders enjoyed an easy camaraderie with the Park Service. Even though horses could severely damage trails, leave mountains of waste, and intimidate hikers and other users of the park, a combination of agency predisposition for the activity, historic use of the park by horses, and the class, power, and status of many riders made the Park Service unlikely to sanction horses. The Park Service could embrace horses and their riders because they shared a value system and a vision, and it was easy for park managers to see the impact of horses as part of the cost of running an urban area park. As a result, despite the concerns of scientists, administrators, and CAC, horses found a place in the various management documents of the park and the agency assiduously cultivated equestrians.²⁴⁸

The park's recreational features were attractive to another constituency, bicyclists who used the roads and later the trails for recreation, transportation, and exercise. When Golden Gate National Recreation Area was established in 1972, bicyclists made up only a small percentage of park users. Bicycling was then considered mainly a child's activity. Among adults, only the unusual, adult commuters, and enthusiasts rode bicycles. As Americans aged, bicycles fell by the wayside. Between 1975 and 1985, Judith Crown and Glenn Coleman observed, "many aging buyers of ten-speeds hung up their road bikes in garages, not far from the fondue pots and Pocket Fishermen."²⁴⁹ American bicycles were largely made by Schwinn and Huffy, suitable for youngsters but hardly the raw material of adventure. Even the famous Raleigh ten-speed was little more than a basic transportation device. The advent of mountain biking in the early 1980s revolutionized bicycling and created a new sport with much symbolic cachet. Mountain bike races became cultural events that expressed a heightened individualism and the races helped build constituency. Mountain bikes were carefree and even anarchic, and they allowed baby boomers a taste of the freedom of their youth, symbolically located in the carefree and anti-authoritarian 1960s. To the generation raised on environmentalism, mountain bikes offered another advantage; they gave riders a claim to environmental responsibility as well.

Mountain biking had its genesis in the Bay Area, which Gary Fisher, Joe Breeze, Charlie Kelly, Michael Sinyard, and Tom Ritchey, who together founded the sport, called home. Mount Tamalpais was the center of the universe to mountain bikers, the place from which their cultural ethos sprang. Converting bicycles to hard, off-road work meant going back a generation to the sturdy, thicker bikes of the 1950s with their balloon tires. Known affectionately as "clunkers," these became the progenitors of mountain bikes. By 1977, Joe Breeze had already built a frame tailored to mountain riding; within one year, Fisher and Kelly were selling items called "mountain bikes" for \$1,300 apiece. By 1982, Michael Sinyard and his Specialized Bicycle Components had produced the Stumpjumper, and sold 500 of them at a New York trade show in February 1982. The "Rockhopper," an inexpensive version of the Stumpjumper at \$399, quickly became the most popular of the new bicycles. By the middle of the 1980s, mountain biking had

²⁴⁸ Judd A. Howell, "Impact of Miwok Horse Concession on Trails in the Tennessee Valley," January 28, 1981, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Natural Resources Management, Department of Operations/ Activities, 1980-1984, Box 1, Environmental Issues, 1980-1990.

²⁴⁹ Judith Crown and Glenn Coleman, *No Hands: The Rise and Fall of the Schwinn Bicycle Company, An American Institution* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 114-15.

become a fad with particular attraction for disaffected youth, the prototype for what later became called "Generation X."²⁵⁰

At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, mountain bikes presented a new dimension to the ongoing questions of park and constituency management. Adjacent to Mount Tamalpais and with the state park in its legislative boundaries, Golden Gate National Recreation Area was close to the center of the mountain-biking universe; bikers quickly discovered the park and their presence challenged other users. Their new technology visibly redefined outdoor experience and etiquette; instead of being green, brown, and understated, the Generation-X mountain bikers seemed loud and adorned in bright blues, reds, and yellows. Mountain bikes freed cyclists from the roads, allowing them to ride the same trails where people rode horses or hiked. To those who had long enjoyed the trails, mountain bikers seemed to crash through the woods without respect for others. This led to the inevitable, a series of ongoing clashes between users with equally valid claims to park trails, but little tolerance for one another. The Park Service was a natural ally of hikers, but many in the park were avid mountain bikers as well.²⁵¹ Another clash of cultures in which the Park Service was to serve as referee began.

The hikers and horse riders quickly gained the upper hand in the hiker-biker wars, as they came to be called. Hikers and equestrians were a familiar constituency to the Park Service, and they tended to be far more sedate than bikers. They dressed in earth tones, were quiet and moved at a pace to which the Park Service—and each other—were accustomed. Hikers and equestrians seemed to be of the age and class of the people who set park policy, who served on the CAC and who attended meetings. Mountain bikers by contrast seemed out of control. They were young, wore bright colors, and raced around with abandon. The parallel between younger mountain bikers and Generation-X skateboarders, with their plaintive "skateboarding is not a crime" slogan was clear; the difference between constituencies was age and inclination. If hikers in their lightweight garb represented the back-to-nature ethos of appropriate technology that stemmed from the 1960s, best exemplified by Stewart Brand and the Whole Earth Catalogue, young mountain-bikers represented a new future, the embrace of technology to free the self in nature.²⁵²

The Park Service found affinity with hikers and equestrians, no surprise in its circumstances. A little staid by the 1980s and unsure of itself during the Reagan-era assault on the federal bureaucracy, the Park Service held close its oldest friends, those who fashioned the park system and who prized it for its democratic purposes, which they casually translated as their own perspective. In a social and technological climate that tilted toward new values, the Park Service possessed few of the intellectual and cultural tools to sort out the new terrain. Despite its efforts to shape a future in urban parks, much of agency policy still focused on the crown jewels, the expansive national parks of lore. When faced with new and adamant constituencies, the Park Service relied on its past. This decision may have been a tactical reflection of the agency's fears instead of its hopes, for by the middle of the 1980s, the Park Service was in chaos. The Reagan years had been hard for all federal agencies. Without adequate resources, a chance for the new parks that remained the lifeblood of agency constituency, and under the leadership of new

²⁵⁰ Crown and Coleman, *No Hands*, 116-30; Frank Berto, *The Birth of Dirt: Origins of Mountain Biking* (San Francisco: Van der Plas Publications, 1998), 21-27.

²⁵¹ Bartke to Haller, March 5, 2002.

²⁵² Gilbert Chan, "Rangers Battle Cyclists on Mount Tam Trails," *MIJ*, March 25, 1986, A3; Jill Danz, "Hey (Hey!) You (You!), Get off of My Trail," *Outside Magazine* August 1999, 26-35; Andrew G. Kirk, "Appropriating Technology: Alternative Technology and Environmental Politics," (unpublished paper, courtesy of the author).

director William Penn Mott, who had been a potent adversary as head of the California state park department, the Park Service felt exposed and vulnerable. Only its old friends, the ones who had always saved it, could bring the agency back from the morass into which it appeared to slide.²⁵³ Organized and influential equestrians and similar users seemed far more dependable allies than anarchic young mountain bikers.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area was different, a test case for the development of a new park ideal, and the existing formulas did not apply as well with the regional neighbors of the Bay Area. The tensions that the hiker-biker conflict created illustrated one of the primary issues that always seemed to return to haunt park managers: at Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Park Service continuously faced the uncomfortable situation of having to divide up different kinds of uses on essentially qualitative, that is to say value-based, terms. Although the Park Service closely measured the impact of activities on park resources, the qualitative nature of decisions, the simple ranking of values, intruded. As long as American society accepted specific ideas about the hierarchy of values—when common culture asserted that a certain kind of experience was expected from national parks areas—these distinctions were easily made and upheld. As cultural relativism, the idea that values were all the same, became one of the byproducts of the 1960s upheavals, the certainty of earlier definitions became much harder to sustain. A national recreation area had many of the same features as a national park, but its purpose was different. Technologies changed the nature of possible experience and sorting those differences became the Park Service's nightmare.

Public response revealed this fundamental difference in perception. By 1985, Mount Tamalpais had become a battleground between mountain bikers, the state park system, and other park users. The conflict spilled over into Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Harold Gilliam, a Bay Area columnist, agreed that bicycles should be allowed in Golden Gate National Recreation Area, but advocated excluding mountain bikes from the designated wilderness in Point Reyes National Seashore. The Wilderness Act of 1964 banned mechanical traffic in wilderness areas, but the original 1965 United States Forest Service regulations defined "mechanical" as not powered by a living source. As a result, bicycling was permitted in wilderness areas and bicycles did travel wilderness trails in Point Reyes National Seashore until 1985. That year, the Park Service followed a Forest Service revision of the rules that banned all "mechanical transport" from designated wilderness. The ruling set off a storm; administrative discretion ruled out an activity with twenty years of legal sanction, it seemed to biking advocates, precisely because the activity became more popular. The number of off-road bikes, as mountain bicycles were then called, changed the terrain, Gilliam averred, and bikers needed to abide by the rules and restrictions that governed public conduct.²⁵⁴

Gilliam's columns took the battle from the state park to Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Although Gilliam's perspective reflected a legitimate interpretation of statute, biking

²⁵³ Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation?*, 58-63; Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 68-73; Godino, "Changing Tides at the Golden Gate," 59-66.

²⁵⁴ Jacqueline Frost, "Wilderness Biking Ban Gets Airing," *MIJ*, February 4, 1985; Sharon Lewis Dickerson, "Bikers vs. Hikers on Wilderness Trails," *California Bicyclist*, April 1985; Harold Gilliam, "Wheels and the Wilderness," *SFC*, March 3, 1985; Gary Sprung, interview by Hal Rothman, February 19, 2000; Barbara Boxer to G. Ray Arnett, September 21, 1984, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, OCPA Records, Box 7, Trail Bike letters, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives; 36 Code of Federal Regulations, 4.2.C, 4.3; 16 U.S.C. 1133(c).

enthusiasts responded as if their very sport was under attack. Despite the official designation, "Point Reyes and Golden Gate National Recreation Area are not wilderness areas in any sense," observed June L. Legler of Oakland in a response. "You have mountain bikes confused with motorcycles," Bob Shenker pointed out in a sentiment typical of biking advocates. "We are not a group of oil drillers," another averred, linking the mountain bikers to the environmentalist ethic of the park.²⁵⁵ The lines were clearly drawn; despite support for the bikers in the newspaper, the Park Service had uneasy relations with a constituency that was crucial—in its demography and future voting patterns—to the future of open space in the United States.

The transformation was driven by changes in mountain bike technology. While racing initiated the development of the new bicycles, the aging of the people who might ride them contributed greatly to their popularity. Mountain bikes had larger gear ratios and more gears than the conventional three- or ten-speed machine, making it easier to climb hills and removing just enough of the physical difficulty from the activity to convert it to a recreational pastime. In essence, mountain bikes did what mass technologies had always done for the recreation user: they made an activity easier to enjoy by making it less physically demanding. For the baby boomers who seemed to want their youth to continue forever, the mountain bike answered a deep need. It contributed to a sense of undiminished vigor, the illusion that age did not need to slow anyone even a little bit.

Most mountain bikers were law-abiding adults who enjoyed the sport as recreation and supported park policy, but like any technology that promoted speed and daring, the new bikes appealed to youth, especially young males, the prototypes of Generation X. They could be found careening down the roads of Marin County at breakneck speeds and soon were riding "single-track" trails and paths in Golden Gate National Recreation Area as well as Mount Tamalpais. The etiquette and culture of Generation X was different than that of the baby boomers, and they became a source of contention that illustrated the difficulties of managing a national park area in an urban setting. To many of the park's conventional users, mountain bikers did not respect nature or other users of the resource. Despite organizations such as the Bicycle Trails Council of Marin, a mainstream organization that sought to bridge the gaps between mountain bikers and hikers and other constituencies, the tension in the Bay Area about the appropriate use of open spaces mounted.

The Park Service generally sided with traditional users, effectively casting the new technologies and their users aside. Mountain bikes had become popular with far more people than the brightly colored racers who defined the sport to the public and shaped park opinion about mountain biking in general. By the mid-1980s, bicycling had been reinvented as a widespread pastime. As cyclists spread through the population, a series of decisions cast their activity out of one of the primary open spaces in the Bay Area. In 1987, the National Park Service ruled that all trails in national park areas were closed to bicycles unless park officials designated them as open. The Park Service had long been a centralized agency and this ruling gave park administrators considerably greater leeway than before on an important policy issue, allowing managers to respond to local needs but simultaneously creating inconsistency in the national park system. It left Golden Gate National Recreation Area in one of the circumstances that management plans did not address. Worse, two active and vital constituencies disagreed and resource management and other guidelines did not offer a clear solution.

²⁵⁵ Harold Gilliam, "More on Wheels and Wilderness," *SFC*, April 14, 1985; Rhonda Parks, "Park Panel Reopens Bike Ban Decision," *PRL*, February 7, 1985.

At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, in the middle of the heart of mountain biking country, park staff made a concerted effort to fairly assess the impacts of different kinds of use. In a series of meetings and memos in early 1988, the natural resources staff assessed the impacts they believed they could attribute to different kinds of use. Dogs chased and killed wildlife, marked territory and possibly affected wildlife behavior, bothered people, and left waste. Horses started new trails off of formalized trails, left manure on trails and in other use areas, accelerated erosion on and off trails, and deteriorated riparian areas. Bicycles and their riders widened and deepened minor social trails, made their own trails, caused ruts and water channeling in tire tracks, rode through endangered and rare plant habitats, scarred areas too steep for other users, and caused severe loss of top soil. Hikers and other pedestrians also created social trails, disturbed sensitive flora, initiated erosion, poached, and left garbage.²⁵⁶ Assessing the collective impacts from a resource management perspective and regulating use presented an enormous challenge.

Local discretion forced the Park Service's hand. Despite the effort to broadly assess impact, the park remained captive of its most powerful constituencies, the environmental groups that had been its mainstay since PFGGNRA helped found the park in 1972. These were the single most consistent supporters of the park, the ones who backed it year after year. After three years of assessing possible programs, the park followed Park Service history and the tacit inclinations of park personnel. In the Marin Trail Use Designation Environmental Assessment Staff Report of October 24, 1990, Golden Gate National Recreation Area banned bicycles from all but designated trails in the Marin Headlands and Point Reyes National Seashore. The response was entirely predictable. Protests abounded. Bikers and their friends howled at the ruling, seeing it as class and cultural warfare. "Dog owners: the GGNRA staff plans to restrict you next! Help us stop them!" read one mountain biker broadside that sought to identify other constituencies threatened by the ruling. Mountain bikers thought that they were persecuted by a confederation of older, wealthier users. "Some hikers and equestrians can't get used to a new user group," observed Tim Blumenthal of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), a group formed in 1988 in Bishop, California, to promote responsible riding. "Bikes go faster and are more colorful, so it's easy to see how they can be unsettling." Statistics failed to demonstrate to Blumenthal's satisfaction that mountain bikes were hazards on the trails and he could not accept the restrictions. The lines were drawn, as clearly as ever.²⁵⁷

The resolution of this issue became another question of politics instead of management by objective. Again the letters poured in; again a combination of self-interest, enlightened and otherwise, and concern for the condition of the resource dominated the perspectives. Hikers felt threatened by mountain bikers, and many of those who sought limits on bicycle use were people of power and influence. Their complaints addressed to the park usually were forwarded to United States representatives, senators, and other political leaders. Hikers also used bicycles in the park.

²⁵⁶ Minutes, Natural Resources Meeting, February 18, 1988, "The Impact of Dogs, Horses, Bikes, and People on the Natural Resources of the Park;" Memorandum, Natural Resources Staff to General Superintendent, March 31, 1988, Natural Resource Management Records, Box 3, Correspondence 1988, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives.

²⁵⁷ "Golden Gate National Recreation Area Marin Trail Use Designation Environmental Assessment, October 24, 1990"; Marc Beyeler, "Trail Mix: Bikers Challenge Hikers on Narrow Mountain Paths," *California Coast and Ocean*, Fall 1991, 37-44; "This Trail Closed to Bikes: Don't Let This Happen. Fight Back!," PFGGNRA 1985-1994, Box 3, Correspondence, 1991; Sprung interview, February 18, 2000.

Many of their letters supported the new policies but asked for specific exceptions for the writer's favorite biking trail. Equally as many angry letters from bike advocates reached the agency, and the ban put the Park Service in the position of siding with one constituency against another, anathema in the complicated politics of the Bay Area.²⁵⁸

The sheer volume of concern forced Golden Gate National Recreation Area officials to reevaluate their policy. After long and tortured deliberations, in December 1992, the final mountain bike policy at Golden Gate National Recreation Area was announced. The policy kept much of the park closed to mountain bikes. In the view of Jim Hasenauer, IMBA president, the final policy was "virtually unchanged" from the original proposal. "It cuts existing riding opportunities by half," Hasenauer observed. The Park Service offered its decision as a compromise, but many among the mountain bikers regarded the policy as victory of privilege over ordinary people. While PFGGNRA and the Park Service showed that 64 percent of the 72.6 miles of trails in Golden Gate National Recreation Area were open to biking, mountain bikers pointed out that every single-track trail, the narrow tracks mountain-bikers favored, in the park was closed to them. Mountain bikers thought that the rules discriminated against them; they were even excluded from some fire roads that NPS trucks traveled, eliminating even the widest trails within the park. The Park Service countered by pointing to erosion that bikes caused on fire roads. "There's no good reason to ban bikes in the GGNRA," Hasenauer exclaimed, rallying the mountain biking constituency.²⁵⁹

The different sides had become polarized during the fray and the final policy, an attempt at compromise, satisfied no one. Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Mount Tamalpais evolved into the "most extreme mountain biking conflict ever," Gary Sprung, IMBA communications director, recalled a decade after the scrape. "It was ironic that it happened in the birthplace of mountain biking." The Bicycle Trails Council of Marin (BTCM), which in 1989 organized volunteer mountain bicycle patrols to help educate bikers in Mount Tamalpais State Park and also developed a "Trips for Kids" program to take inner city children on bicycle trips, took the lead in battling the new policy. Working with IMBA, the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay, and other bicycling organizations, BTCM spearheaded a lawsuit that charged that the "Designated Bicycles Routes Plan" violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area authorizing act. According to the suit, the decision was reached with insufficient public involvement and did not meet the demands of statute, and it requested an injunction to prevent implementation of the plan. The contention of the suit was rejected by the courts, reaffirming that, in a legal sense, there is no significant difference between a national park and a national recreation area.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ William Henry Malcolm to Brian O'Neill, November 19, 1990, Bob Howell to Ed Wayburn and Amy Meyer, October 23, 1991, PFGGNRA 1985-1994, Box 5, Letters to Amy Meyer, 1991-1994; Robert Howell to Senator Alan Cranston, October 3, 1991, Sarah Donnelly, November 17, 1990, Dick Galland to Brian O'Neill, November 13, 1990. Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives.

²⁵⁹ Jim Hasenauer, "IMBA Joins Lawsuit Against National Park Service," *IMBA Trail News*, January 1993; Jim Hasenauer, "They're Your Trails, Too - Get Involved," *IMBA Trail News*, January 1993.

²⁶⁰ Sprung interview, February 18, 2000; Ranger Activities Specialist to General Superintendent, November 20, 1990, "Trail Bike Use," PFGGNRA II, Box 14, Mountain Bikes; Hasenauer, "IMBA Joins Lawsuit Against National Park Service."

The mountain biking community was split into three broad categories: radical riders who flouted the system, mainstream riders who sought to work within the system, and bikers who engaged in other activities and sought to bridge gaps between the different groups. Responses to the park policy varied according to the groups' political stance. Angry cyclists cut "guerrilla trails," unauthorized paths through areas that the park designated as off-limits to cyclists. The pinnacle of this was the "New Paradigm Trail," a trail initiated in 1994 that was an overtly political statement. The trail was built in secret without government authorization and kept hidden from all but those in the mountain biking community. Cyclists used the trail for two or three years until Marin Municipal Water District discovered and destroyed it. The trail became a cause *célèbre* for Bay Area cyclists, who regarded its development as civil disobedience and its destruction as perfidy. Wilderness Trail Bikes, which built its own bicycles, had been involved in bicycle advocacy since the beginning of fat tire bicycling. The company issued a widely reproduced broadside that championed the cyclists' cause, arguing for a strong relationship between cycling and environmental ethics.²⁶¹

The New Paradigm Trail was guerrilla theater as well as a bike trail; the energy, enthusiasm, and clearly articulated perspective of its advocates signaled a constituency that the Park Service could and likely should have cultivated. The link between cyclists and environmentalism offered a new and potentially powerful constituency for the Park Service, but the agency and its friends rejected the concept. In response, the Sierra Club joined the agency against the renegade mountain bikers, furthering polarizing the situation and alienating mountain bikers. Although the bicycling groups lost their lawsuit against the park, the implications for park management were clear.²⁶² At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Park Service could expect challenges from activity constituencies it chose not to accommodate. Anywhere in the park system such a situation presented a political risk, but in the politics of the Bay Area, its dimensions were accentuated.

The mountain biking situation represented the limits of policy. In part because the GMP did not address bicycling and in part because mountain bikers did not form the kinds of groups that other constituencies did, the agency could not bring enough mountain bikers into the process to achieve the kind of buy-in that made planning a success at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Even though Commissioner Rich Bartke remembered that the mountain bike issue as a "simple decision of what roads and trails could be specified for bike use by the Superintendent under national park policies without damaging the resource," the tension continued. Unlike the conservation and environmental groups and even the kennel clubs, mountain bikers did not respond to the invitations to participate that the agency offered. Their reticence and the close ties between the Park Service and mountain biking opponents left the cyclists outside the loop. "After four public hearings, two-thirds of the park's roads and trails were designated for mountain biking. Bartke remembered. "Most bikers accepted that. A handful continued their polemics, to little effect."²⁶³ Some mountain bikers were happy outside the system.; they could

²⁶¹ Charlie Cunningham, Patrick Seidler, Steve Potts, and Mark Slate, "Civil Disobedience and the New Paradigm Trail," copy courtesy of Gary Sprung; Sprung interview, February 18, 2000.

²⁶² Amy Meyer to Deborah and Sandy, "Bicyclist Lawsuit vs. the National Park Service, Declaration for the National Parks and Conservation Association, February 1, 1993, PFGGNRA II, Box 5, Amy Meyer Correspondence, 1993-1994; Maura Thurman, "Mount Tam Bicycle Patrols to be Rangers' 'Eyes and Ears,'" *MIJ*, January 20, 1989; "Sierra Club Can Intervene in Bicyclists' GGNRA Lawsuit," *MIJ*, February 19, 1993; Edgar Wayburn and Amy Meyer to James Ridenour, October 10, 1991, PFGGNRA II, Box 3, "Correspondence 1991."

²⁶³ Bartke to Haller, March 5, 2002.

engage in Edward Abbey-like anarchism, challenging the system in a sophomoric manner without any responsibility for the results. But the disintegration of relationships meant that the issue continued in an adversarial fashion, a less than optimal result.

The Park Service felt the need to sanction only one activity other than mountain biking that took place in the park, hang gliding. This new sport resembled mountain biking, for its genesis came from new technologies and seemed to the Park Service to flout the conventions of the park system. Like mountain biking, hang gliding had a sense of reckless individual daring about it. It too could be seen as irreverent and maybe even disrespectful of the park and the values for which it stood. Hang gliding was also dangerous; fliers strapped in metal framed contraptions with brightly colored fabric wings ran downhill and caught a favorable wind that carried them out over the ocean. They sailed down in front of the sandstone cliffs at Fort Funston, angling for a landing on the beach; sometimes they reached it. In comparison with another similar activity the Park Service long sanctioned, rock climbing, hang gliding seemed arbitrary. When a rock climber fell, it usually resulted from their own shortcoming; when a hang glider got into trouble, mere fate often seemed the cause. Although legal and permissible, hang gliding required the deployment of agency resources in case of accident or emergency. It had been forbidden in national forest wilderness by the Forest Service's 1984 policy statement, establishing a precedent for barring the activity from the park. After considerable protest, the Park Service negotiated restrictions with hang-gliding associations, yielding to their needs but exacting promises that the activity would be run safely and that the organizations would police their own members. By 1987, the process worked so well that in plans for East Fort Baker, the Park Service proposed that sailboarders, windsurfers, sea kayakers, and other water sports organizations be enticed into similar arrangements.²⁶⁴

Golden Gate National Recreation Area also experienced another kind of use with the potential to impact park values. The military retained a close relationship that included a significant number of ongoing uses of the park for training purposes. Initially, the military continued its activities as if there had been no transfer of Presidio and other former military land. Although military activities usually remained low profile during the six years that followed the park's establishment in 1972, some park officials found the prospect of a continuing military presence unnerving. Others recognized considerable value in the military's ongoing presence and its ability to apply its resources to all kinds of management problems. On June 17 and 18, 1978, several military branches staged a mock amphibious assault, MINIWAREX-78, also called Operation Surf and Turf, on the Marin Headlands. Two units, named the "Blue" and "Orange" forces, battled each other as visitors watched in astonishment. Park rangers warned some visitors on the Headlands and restricted the movement of others. Although the event took place with both the consent and cooperation of the Park Service, the arrival of reserve units from Marine Corps, the Navy, the Army, the National Guard, and the Coast Guard became a source of consternation. Most of the operation took place at night in the Rodeo Valley subdistrict. By midmorning the following day, the operation was over and the Park Service reported little damage to its property.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Jan Silverman, "Fort Funston Treks Offer History, Wild Nature Scenes," *Oakland Tribune*, February 27, 1987; "Staff Report on Proposed Relocation of the Fort Point Coast Guard Station to East Fort Baker," January 15, 1987, PFGGNRA II, Box , "Correspondence, Early File, 1978-1986."

²⁶⁵ Boyd Burnett to Acting Unit Manager and Other Interested Parties, MINIWAREX-78, June 20, 1978, SOA II, Box 2, L30, "Military Operations;" Bartke to Haller, March 5, 2002.

Operation Surf and Turf prompted important questions about the relationship between the park and the military. Since the park's establishment, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area staff sought to minimize the visible presence of the military within park boundaries. In part, this was an issue of perception. Much of the park had belonged to the Army, and after the 1974 transfer of three forts, Barry, Cronkhite, and Baker, the Park Service needed to show the public that it ran the areas formerly administered by the military. From the Park Service perspective, the public perception that the agency and not the military administered the region was significant. Yet cultural differences that made it hard for the NPS to implement its objectives persisted. "To me, the tensions that existed were based upon the 'culture' of the two agencies involved," Rich Bartke remembered. "Park Service employees were professional 'nice guys' who were trained to negotiate, and cooperate. The military, particularly Army brass, were trained 'tough guys' whose mission was to take and control land, and who took no heed of public opinion other than congressional appropriations committees." Park ranger Boyd Burnnett observed that the June 1978 training operation was the largest he had seen in almost five years at the Marin Headlands; if the Park Service genuinely sought to diminish the military presence in the park, Burnnett believed, the operation was "a step backwards." In the aftermath of Operation Surf and Turf, Associate Regional Director John H. Davis decided that the time had come to "lay some ground rules" about military endeavors inside the park.²⁶⁶ Clearly the relationship between the Park Service and military had begun to change. At the inception of the park, the Army and the other branches retained primacy in the relationship with the Park Service. As the decade ended, the Park Service no longer simply accepted a junior role and seemed willing to confront the military in new ways.

Military training operations continued inside park boundaries, in part in a spirit of cooperation and in part the result of the cold reality of the power disparity between the two organizations. The park encouraged the military to stay, "partly to help pay the bills," Bartke recalled, "and partly because the park was made up of former military bases whose cultural resources were deep in military history. The presence of uniforms on the former bases was seen as a real plus by many involved in park planning." This sentiment reflected only one point of view. Some NPS people were glad to still see *uniforms*, but many preferred uniforms to real soldiers with their real issues. In the recollection of one long-time park employee, "manikins with uniforms might have been preferable as long as they could fire the salute cannon at 5:00." Golden Gate National Recreation Area contained, reflected, and interpreted the military past, through its operation of various former Army posts. Also, each October a Navy festival, Fleet Week, took place, which typically included an aerial demonstration by the Blue Angels, the service's flight demonstration team. The pattern of occasional land use also continued. In 1979, the Marin Headlands were closed for another amphibious landing exercise; in 1981 at Fort Cronkhite, intentional explosions and tear gas were used during training.²⁶⁷ As late as 1999, the Marine Corps planned a landing at Baker Beach or Crissy Field, both heavily used by visitors.

²⁶⁶ Burnnett to Acting Unit Manager and Other Interested Parties, MINIWAREX-78, June 20, 1978; John H. Davis to General Superintendent, July 12, 1978, "Daily Operations, Golden Gate National Recreation Area," both SOA II, Box 2, L30, "Military Operations;" Bartke to Haller, March 5, 2002.

²⁶⁷ Teresa Allen, "Fort Cronkhite Weapons Blasts Draw Concerns," *MLJ*, October 9, 1984; National Park Service Press Release, "Military Invasion Force to Strike Golden Gate National Recreation Area: Marin Headlands Closed Sunday Morning But Public Invited to Watch," October 30, 1979, SOA II, Box 2, L30, "Military Operations;" Bartke to Haller, March 5, 2002.

What had been military land in 1971 had become a park resource in 1999 and the Department of Defense had to seek a permit for its action. The Presidio Trust denied permission, but military use of the park continued to be one of the recurring issues at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

The park also grandfathered in vestiges of the military era, practices and other functions that existed before the founding of the park. East Fort Baker had long been used for Army Reserve functions. This continued until 2000, and the military's final departure was expected as the new century began. Officers quarters remained in use at Fort Mason, as late as December 1998, the Fort Mason officers' club remained in service, and the Army chapel at Fort Mason only closed its doors in 1997. Beginning in 1998, planning for the transformation of the central post of Fort Baker to park use became a major project of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and GGNPA.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area also contained numerous inholdings, areas of private property located within the park boundaries. These privately held lands were typically anathema to the Park Service, a source of management difficulty because owners could make individual decisions about their lands and could impact not only the experience of park visitors but in many circumstances, the ecology, natural setting, and sometimes even the viability of portions of parks. In many situations, inholdings became the single most vexatious issue for park managers, the sole set of circumstances that many parks could not manage to their satisfaction.²⁶⁸ But inholdings at Golden Gate National Recreation Area were less troublesome to managers than at parks without a recreational mission. In the Bay Area park, designed to accommodate many uses at the same time, the conflicts about landownership became a question of constituent needs and desires. Often, despite the diversity of their perspectives, inholders were less problematic than competing interest groups.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area surrounded perhaps the most unique inholding in the national park system, the Green Gulch Ranch, a Zen Buddhist retreat. The ranch had been the property of George Wheelwright III, the scion of a Massachusetts family who worked with Edwin Land on the invention of the Polaroid Land camera in 1948. Wheelwright and his wife, Hope, came to Marin County in 1945, bought the Green Gulch Ranch, and started a boy's riding school. The Wheelwrights raised cattle, supplementing their income with money George Wheelwright earned by consulting. In 1966, the Wheelwrights became involved in Synanon, a system for living founded by Chuck Dederich that showed remarkable success treating drug addicts. When Hope Wheelwright was stricken by cancer, her will included a gift of Green Gulch ranch to Synanon. After her death, Dederich and Synanon planned to sell the lower portion of the ranch to raise money for another project, an eventuality that made Wheelwright rethink the bequest. In a complicated series of maneuvers, he and his attorney, Richard Sanders, were able to nullify the gift.²⁶⁹

After the nullification, Wheelwright sought an appropriate recipient for the ranch he loved. Determined to make a gift of the ranch, he considered many offers. At one point, he planned to give it to the local school district; but one of the school board members made what a close confidant of the Wheelwrights, Yvonne Rand, described as "uncharitable" comments about

²⁶⁸ Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 65-66; Everhart, *The National Park Service*, 85-86.

²⁶⁹ Yvonne Rand interview, by Sara Conklin, July 23, 1993, GGNRA Oral History Interview; Grover Sales, "The Man Who Gave Away the Green Gulch Ranch," *PS*, April 26, 1985.

Wheelwright, and that arrangement came to an end. In another often told story, a group of Native Americans sought the property, but after a disagreement among themselves, they failed to sign the transfer papers. Soon after, Wheelwright departed on an extended trip, and Sanders was left to arrange the gift of the property. Sanders sought advice of a number of people involved in land conservation in the Bay Area. Both Huey Johnson, then the western region director of The Nature Conservancy and founder of the Trust for Public Land, and Stewart Brand of the Whole Earth Catalog suggested the San Francisco Zen Center. Suzuki Roshi, the founder and moving spirit behind the San Francisco Zen Center, died in December 1971 after a brief illness, and his successor, Richard Baker, recognized the Green Gulch Ranch as the embodiment of Roshi's principles. Baker spearheaded a drive to purchase the ranch, which occurred with Johnson's guidance. In the end, the upper part of the ranch went to the Park Service for Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the lower part to the Zen Center. Wheelwright found the precepts of Buddhism appealing, the faith was, he often said, the rare major religion that "didn't make war on nonbelievers."²⁷⁰ One of two Zen Buddhist retreats inside a national park area in the United States, the Green Gulch Ranch became a fixture.

The Green Gulch Ranch represented an array of similar entities inside the park and once more illustrated the complicated precepts of management at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. More than at any traditional national park area, Golden Gate National Recreation Area staff spent their time managing constituencies of all kinds, meeting, discussing, negotiating, cajoling, responding and otherwise seeking to shape the terms of discourse to reflect the values of the park system and its managers, the National Park Service. The degree of difficulty involved in this crucial endeavor was enormous. Even as the park moved from reactive response to planned, proactive initiative following the approval of the GMP in 1980, the pull of the vast number of constituencies and their desires remained the single most powerful influence on day-to-day park management.

The GMP gave the Park Service a set of plans, but even the formalized participatory planning process could not always yield the respect for agency goals that the agency sought. After the plan, the Park Service had high goals and more clearly articulated plans, and in many situations, this swayed recalcitrant elements of the public. Yet there were limits. Not every constituency respected the goals of the Park Service and when they did not get what they wanted, even when they participated in the process, constituent groups were apt to ignore agency objectives and fight for pure self-interest. In part this resulted from the fractious politics of San Francisco and the Bay Area, in part from proprietary feelings about parklands, and in part from growing disrespect for the federal government and its agencies. Even the plan, even careful cultivation of supporters and participation in setting goals could not always yield the results the Park Service needed.

The most tendentious question the agency faced remained the definition of the purpose of a national recreation area. Because Golden Gate National Recreation Area could truly be all things to all people all of the time, the most difficult task the Park Service faced was to define appropriate and inappropriate uses of the park. In its interaction with constituent groups, the agency repeatedly encountered individuals and organizations that could define their activity as recreation and muster political and often grassroots support for their perspective. In the age of weakening federal institutions that followed the election of 1980, the realities of this situation prompted the Park Service in sometimes uncomfortable ways. Even statutory obligations and agency policies such as resource management did not always provide the Park Service with

²⁷⁰ Sales, "The Man Who Gave Away the Green Gulch Ranch;" Rand interview, July 7, 1993.

cover from the desires of constituents. Even when agency obligations dictated otherwise, the agency gave in to constituencies simply because they were able to muster influence or attract so much press attention that adherence to planning documents cost more in long-term positioning than it was worth to the agency. Park Service actions always seemed designed to further the process of winning public approval, and as constituent groups bought into agency plans their proprietary sense of objectives pushed the agency even harder. With the clarity of mission for the agency as a whole diminishing and in the least clearly defined category of area, a national recreation area, the managers at Golden Gate National Recreation Area grappled with the purpose of their park on a daily basis.

By the mid-1970s, the Park Service faced challenges to its discretion on a number of fronts. In the decade since George Hartzog, Jr. installed the tripartite management structure that defined each park as natural, historic, or recreational, and arrangement for management in accordance with such values, the Park Service lost considerable autonomy. New federal legislation and a changing cultural climate hamstrung the agency. The National Historic Preservation Act, NEPA, the Endangered Species Act and other pieces of environmental legislation curtailed agency management prerogative, compelling the Park Service to document and defend its actions while proscribing specific patterns of management. The Park Service had counted on its friends in the public since the days of Stephen T. Mather, but the cultural revolution of the late 1960s created and empowered a more critical public. Private citizens and even organizations such as the National Parks and Conservation Association increasingly criticized agency policy and opposed decisions. Dependent on its public, the Park Service needed to re-evaluate its policies and practices.²⁷¹

Even as the agency undertook such measures, the very nature of what constituted a national park was changing. Until the 1960s, national park areas had generally been created through a cooperative process between the Department of the Interior, the Park Service, Congress, and in the case of national monuments, the president. By the mid-1970s, Congressman Phil Burton, the founder of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, had become a power in Congress. One of his primary tools to persuade recalcitrant opponents to vote with him was to give them a little of what politicians call "pork," projects that brought federal revenue to their districts. Burton became the master of what came to be known as "parkbarreling," the process of obviating opposition by proposing a national park area in the opponent's district. In two major bills, the first of which passed in 1978, Burton dramatically increased the number of units in the park system almost entirely without consulting the agency.²⁷² As a result, the Park Service managed a broader and more diverse mandate, making existing regulations increasingly archaic.

At the same time, the Park Service remained ambivalent about recreation, but increasingly found it thrust upon the agency. The agency ultimately emerged victorious from its battle with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation during Stewart Udall's tenure as secretary of the Interior in the 1960s, but in winning, made itself the federal agency in charge of recreation by default. This triumph yielded a problem: having claimed recreation as its turf and successfully battled to prove it, the agency had to do something with it. Recreation had been an afterthought since the creation of Boulder Dam Recreation Area, now Lake Mead National Recreation Area,

²⁷¹ Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1991), 89; Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 68-80; Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation?*, 58-63.

²⁷² Jacobs, *A Rage for Justice*, 363-79.

in 1936, and as late as 1970, remained peripheral to main currents of agency policy. As the nation grappled with urban uprisings, empowered constituencies, and as the need for outdoor space of all kinds became dire, recreation finally demanded the agency's full attention.

This combination of factors made the tripartite management that George Hartzog embraced obsolete. The Park Service had lost much of its power with its supporters and a great deal of its cachet. It needed to prove its worth to its old friends, make new ones, and maintain its relationships with Congress. Even though Burton failed in a bid for majority leader of the U.S. House by one vote, he remained a powerful advocate of urban, historical, and other kinds of parks. The Park Service recognized that the faux wilderness parks were more a part of its past than its future. Burton created dozens of small historical parks, the agency embraced the urban mission at the core of the "parks to the people, where the people are" ethos, and soon, the agency found itself with a large recreational component among its parks. Policy had to respond, and the codification of the three management books into one, in which all park areas were governed by the same doctrine, followed. The agency maintained flexibility by allowing management by zone within parks, so that areas that had obvious primary values could be managed in accordance with those features.

At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the new mandate contributed to the broadening of the park's management philosophy. Despite its many natural attributes, Golden Gate generally had been managed first as recreational space. The new directives demanded more comprehensive management of the park, much more attention to resource management, and far greater cognizance of the difference between various areas of the park. Master-planning at Golden Gate quickly reflected the decentralized management by zone at the core of the new program. The park was spread-out and diverse and no Park Service policy better suited it than the ability to divide the park into discrete areas and management accordingly. The new program simultaneously increased the importance of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and helped create a management structure that reflected the park's needs. The end to the isolation of the recreational category helped prepared the park for its role as a premier urban national park area.

Thus, the remarkable public interest—indeed investment—in the park also yielded great benefits. The uproar could pillory the Park Service, its managers, their policies and plans, and even statute; it could just as easily back them against all manner of outside threats. In the complicated and sometimes precarious management situation in the Bay Area, the Park Service experienced and recognized circumstances that could work for and against it. The agency's remedy—planning and the implementation of its results—helped create the basis of ongoing management by principle and goal. In as many ways as the variety of constituencies challenged the park, they supported its goals with equal vigor.

