



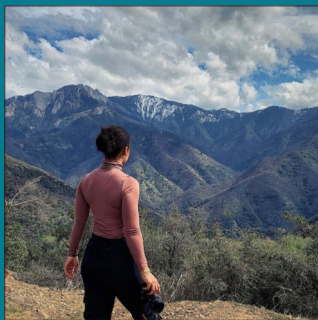
Volume 7 / Winter 2021

Environmental Justice

What is Intersectional Environmentalism?

“This is an inclusive version of environmentalism that advocates for both the protection of people and the planet. It identifies the ways in which injustices happening to marginalized communities and the earth are interconnected. It brings injustices done to the most vulnerable communities, and the earth, to the forefront and does not minimize or silence social inequality. Intersectional environmentalism advocates for justice for people + the planet.”

~ Leah Thomas, founder [Intersectional Environmentalist](#)



Environmental Allies Dialogues Address Climate Justice

The racial justice protests in Summer 2020 put an urgent focus on social equity, spurring constructive conversations among National Park Service staff about how best to engage with our diverse visitors on issues such as climate change.

Communities of color continue to be at the highest risk for health impacts of local air and water pollution, as well as the deadly impacts of climate change like flooding and triple digit heat. According to [Yale Climate Communication](#), African American and Latinx communities care about the environment and climate change more than their white counterparts. They're also more likely to get involved.

Why do people of color then seem underrepresented in some climate solutions and “environmentalism”? And how can Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) shift messaging around climate, the environment, and natural resources to be more inclusive of Black, Latinx and Indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups?

The GGNRA Green Team worked with [Allies for Inclusion](#) facilitators to craft a unique internally-focused dialogue series at the intersection of these topics. Successful communication about sustainable solutions by park staff depends on acknowledging diverse perspectives and backgrounds, and celebrating what visitors are already doing within their means. As a part of this process several park staff were interviewed to discuss their perspectives about how they have experienced “environmentalism” as people of color.

The ultimate goal of this intersectional work is to find ways to talk about solutions that are equitable and meet people where they are.

Dissolving biases and building trust around these complex issues takes time and intention. GGNRA and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy are committed to continuing that work through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committees, outreach programs, cross-departmental relationships, and hosting regular dialogues like the Environmental Allies.

Three rounds of Environmental Allies Dialogues have been held so far; the first round in late summer, one as a part of the One Tam Summit, and now as a deep dive in the Allies for Inclusion repertoire of dialogues.

Laura Castellini, GGNRA’s Sustainability Coordinator, sums up the intent behind these efforts: “We shouldn’t be talking about environmental solutions without also talking about social justice issues. We need as diverse of a coalition as possible to address both these topics.”

To read more about GGNRA’s efforts see [this more in depth article](#).



Ranger Fátima, shown leading an interpretive program, grew up with her Salvadorian family in the Mission District of San Francisco. They used public transit, frequented thrift stores, and reduced waste by repairing their belongings. Yet they never used the title “environmentalist.”



Transit

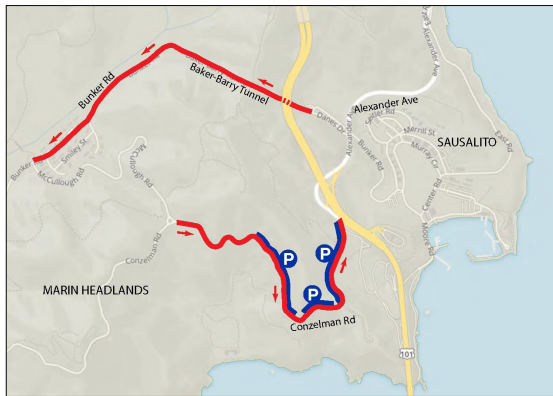
Marin Headlands Bike and Circulation Improvements

The Marin Headlands has become an increasingly popular place to visit over the last decade and has seen an increase in both motorized and cycling traffic. During peak season, traffic congestion was severe enough that cars would be stuck in traffic for several hours exiting the Headlands. Part of the challenge is the narrow, winding roads and the one-way Baker-Barry Tunnel with a 5-minute red light.

GGNRA worked with Caltrans, Golden Gate Bridge District, and other agencies over the last several years to pilot changes to the traffic flow and bike lanes in an effort to reduce congestion and improve access. This has resulted in several permanent improvements that will benefit both cars and bikes.



Recent changes to Conzelman Road include creating a one-way flow for cars downhill, adding parking, and creating a wider, protected uphill bike lane



The biggest change has been to create a one-way flow for cars downhill on Conzelman Road, which allows for extra parking to view the stunning vistas. This has also allowed for a wider, protected uphill bike lane that was designed and installed in collaboration with the local biking community. These efforts are part of a larger plan to encourage biking and make it safer throughout the Marin Headlands. The next project will focus on the interchange with Hwy 101 and Alexander Avenue, a high-traffic area that is very popular with both commuter and rental bikers.

In the Field

EV trucks get the green light!



Grounds crew working with EV trucks in Fort Mason during Summer 2020

The Fort Mason Grounds crew is now sporting two electric utility vehicles. They acquired the first one in 2016 and got the chance to acquire another one in 2019. The two vehicles work internally around Fort Mason and can reach a maximum speed of 25 mph. Replacing two gasoline-fueled trucks, the new electric trucks are silent and can carry mulch, soil, wood chips and tools. The electric trucks represent a major shift for operations, as well as an overall emission cut from our off-road fleet. They are safest for the operator and for the environment. They even have heating! The trucks are charged with a regular plug during the night and can work up to 12 hours with one charge.



In the Field

Highlights from Golden Gate's Environmental Audit

Environmental Audit Overview

The National Park Service developed the Environmental Audit Program (EAP) in order to review park management of and adherence to federal and state environmental regulations.

The EAP focuses on:

- Compliance with environmental requirements and identification of liabilities
- Identification of environmentally sustainable opportunities
- Increasing employee awareness of environmental management responsibilities

During the week of February 3rd, 2020 an Environmental Audit was performed across GGNRA. The audit included site visits to all GGNRA facilities, interviews with program managers, and documentation reviews. The site visits were designed to review adherence to environmental laws such as solid waste management, hazardous/universal waste management, water/wastewater management, etc.

The ultimate goal of the program is to promote environmental stewardship by

the parks and encourage sustainable actions.

The audit resulted in a list of findings that ranged from minor issues such as unlabeled containers and handling of universal and hazardous waste, to more long-term programmatic findings involving water and wastewater compliance. A dedicated team of park staff will be working to correct these findings before the next audit is held 5 years from now.



Environmental auditors want to ensure that Globally Harmonized System (GHS) labels are on secondary chemical containers, flammable materials are kept in flammable lockers, and that proper spill containment is in place



Park staff working at the Trails shop in Fort Miley to achieve environmental compliance

Positive Findings from 2020 Environmental Audit

In addition to documenting conditions of non-compliance, the auditors documented positive observations unique to the park. These exceed the regulatory requirements for protection of the environment. A few examples that show responsible environmental management in the park:

- Grounds maintenance **reduced the amount of pesticides** applied within Fort Mason in 2019 by using a park volunteer landscaping program to manually pull weeds.
- Park personnel are **reducing excess hazardous materials on site** by using online purchasing tools that enable smaller quantity purchases, rather than the traditional model of buying in bulk.
- GGNRA Park Headquarters set up a **recycling bin for markers and highlighters** (which are infrequently recycled) to be recycled as asphalt and shingles, and for energy recovery.



Editorial

A Note from our Editor:

It goes without saying that 2020 was a challenging year: all park operations at GGNRA were affected, including substantial impacts to the park’s sustainability program.

Last year in [this newsletter](#) we reported that the park had achieved carbon-neutral park operations, thanks to a grant from our non-profit partner the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. Unfortunately due to significant revenue loss by GGNPC that grant is no longer available to support the purchase of carbon offsets.

Likewise, our dedicated and passionate interns, who help advance many of our sustainability programs, were let go when shelter in place started. We miss working with them and having the infusion of new ideas and energy that they bring to the park.

And while our parks and open spaces have been more important than ever to local residents, it has been challenging maintaining visitor services such as trash collection and clean restrooms.

Yet with these challenges comes the opportunity to reflect and readjust. One example where we are changing gears is with our renewed commitment to provide safe and sustainable ways to access park lands, such as promoting biking and walking. Look for future updates in this newsletter as we continue to create improved bike paths, install more bike racks, and work with partners to increase access.

And we are confident that the new year will bring an increased focus on climate change response and sustainability. Despite the setbacks of 2020, we have the groundwork and systems in place to engage in these efforts and re-double the park’s commitment to achieving our climate and sustainability goals.

Sustainability Outreach

2020 Sustainability Summit

GGNRA held its 4th biennial Sustainability Summit on April 29, 2020. Originally intended to be an in-person event, the Summit was switched to a virtual platform with COVID shelter in place.

While we missed having the opportunity to meet other sustainability practitioners and learn from each other in person, the virtual platform did allow for broader participation from people who might not have been able to attend otherwise.

You can watch videos on YouTube [here!](#)

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Golden Gate National Recreation Area

SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT
Virtual 4th Biennial Summit hosted by the GGNRA Green Team,
Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and The Presidio Trust

April 29, 2020 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Patrick Gonzalez
Ph.D., Principal Climate Change Scientist, National Park Service

Ellie Cohen
CEO, The Climate Center

GGNRA 2020 Sustainability Summit was held virtually and featured Dr. Patrick Gonzalez and Ellie Cohen as its keynote speakers

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