

| | Preliminary Alternatives for Muir Woods National Monument | |
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| | Current Conditions and Management | Connecting People with the Parks Alternative 1 |
| Overview (see alternative maps on pages 12 & 13) | <p>Muir Woods National Monument is managed to protect the primeval redwood forest in the larger Redwood Creek watershed, and to interpret the Monument’s natural history, as well as the establishment of the Monument, which had a major role in the early American conservation movement.</p> <p>One of the most well-known iconic sites in the park, Muir Woods is an international attraction and ecological treasure. With trees over 1,000 years old, it preserves a small yet towering vestige of the vast forests of <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i> that once graced the slopes and valleys surrounding San Francisco Bay. The Monument also supports an incredible diversity of flora and fauna.</p> <p>The park balances preserving the redwood ecosystem with providing access to a large number of visitors. For many, it is their initial experience with the national park system. Key park objectives include fostering a conservation ethic among visitors, preserving and restoring critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, supporting public transportation as a way to reduce congestion, and promoting a watershed perspective in land management that includes state parks, two water districts, and local communities.</p> | <p>In this alternative, the park would offer visitors the opportunity to experience and enjoy the primeval forest ecosystem and understand the Monument’s place in American conservation history through a variety of enhanced programs, facilities, and trails that access the forest and connect local communities to the park and surrounding open space.</p> <p>Although retaining much of the present system of trails through the forest, existing facilities and uses would be modified or relocated to reduce their impacts on the ecosystem and improve the park experience.</p> <p>The Monument would continue to welcome a diversity of visitors and support a range of experiences, better serving as a gateway or stepping stone to understanding the national park system.</p> <p>A shuttle system, with parking and basic visitor services off site, would be an important first point for orientation and key to sustainable access.</p> <p>Collaboration with other public land managers would continue to address watershed restoration and stewardship.</p> |
| Arrival | <p>Today, most visitors arrive by personal vehicles and commercial tour buses. Since 2005 a pilot shuttle service has been used during the summer to help reduce traffic congestion. Current parking areas are located adjacent to Redwood Creek and very near the main concentration of redwoods.</p> <p>The entrance area is located at the edge of the redwood forest adjacent to Redwood Creek. It includes a parking area, restrooms, and a small visitor information station with a book store and fee collection booth. This area is a hub of activity with a mix of pedestrians, automobiles, and buses. Additional parking areas are further down along Redwood Creek.</p> | <p>Diverse Opportunities Zone</p> <p>To enhance the visitor experience and address congestion problems, permanent shuttle service to Muir Woods would be provided, supported by new welcome centers at Muir Woods and in the vicinity of Highway 1/Interstate 101. The welcome centers would provide orientation, information, restrooms, snacks, picnicking facilities, and a book store; the centers would connect the shuttle to regional and local transportation systems.</p> <p>Parking would be provided at the off-site welcome center; parking retained at the Monument to serve visitors during non-peak times would be modified to reduce impacts to sensitive resources.</p> <p>The existing entry road and entry area would be redesigned to enhance the arrival experience and improve safety. The existing parking closest to the entrance area (the upper lot) would be removed and the meadow would be restored to create a more natural arrival.</p> |



| Preliminary Alternatives for Muir Woods National Monument | | |
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| Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems Alternative 2 | Focusing on National Treasures Alternative 3 | |
| <p>Muir Woods National Monument and the Redwood Creek watershed are part of the UNESCO Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve--one of the world’s richest reservoirs of plant and animal life. This alternative would restore the primeval character of the old growth redwood forest. Visitors would be immersed in the forest, and could experience the natural sounds, smells, light, and darkness of the forest.</p> <p>The experience would be more primitive than it is today; the majority of the built environment—buildings, parking lots, paved trails—would be removed. The landscape would be ‘messier’ than it is today, but the forest would function more naturally: Redwood Creek would be allowed to meander across the flood plain, flooding the valley bottom, uprooting trees and opening gaps in the canopy; woody debris would accumulate in the creek and on the forest floor; floodplain processes and riparian habitat would be restored by removing, re-aligning, or re-designing trails, bridges and other impediments to natural processes.</p> <p>Where not in conflict with natural resource goals, historic trails and structures would be adapted for contemporary uses. A light-on-the-land accessible trail would reach into the heart of the forest. Visitors would engage in participatory stewardship, education, and science that further the preservation of the forest and all its parts—the creek, salmon, spotted owls, bats, natural sounds—as part of the continuing history and evolution of the land preservation and conservation movement.</p> <p>Restoration of the Redwood Creek watershed would be accelerated in collaboration with other land managers. Actions would include the removal of unneeded management roads and developments, stabilization of sediment sources, and removal of invasive vegetation.</p> | <p>One of the last old-growth forests in the world, Muir Woods National Monument is a window into the complex world of nature and conservation. This alternative would present Muir Woods as a contemplative outdoor museum where visitors would discover the primeval redwood forest and the Monument’s place in the early US conservation movement.</p> <p>A system of thematic trails would lead visitors into the forest to touch, see, and learn, in different ways, about the essential qualities of the forest. These include its iconic giant trees, the ecology of Redwood Creek, and William Kent’s generous donation of the forest to the American public. Rather than continue to concentrate visitation along a main trail, visitors would be encouraged to take different thematic interpretive trails, some new and some existing, to experience the different parts of the park. Other trails would link the Monument with the surrounding lands managed by other organizations.</p> <p>Visitors would continue to be drawn to the Monument to see the trees, but they would leave with a richer understanding of this precious ecosystem and how these few acres helped spark conservation across the United States. They would be motivated to return and learn more of the story.</p> <p>Collaboration with other public land managers would continue to address watershed restoration and stewardship.</p> | Overview (see alternative maps on pages 12 & 13) |
| <p>Park Operations Zone (Muir Woods Inn area)</p> <p>Throughout the year, all visitors would come to the park either by shuttle service from a transit center in the vicinity of Highway 1/Interstate 101, or under their own power. Only a small parking area would be available for accessibility. The park entrance would be relocated to the current lower parking lot and designed to accommodate a modest transit stop for the shuttle. It would also provide basic visitor services. The Muir Woods Inn and adjacent area would be used for administration and limited park operations.</p> <p>Sensitive Resources Zone (Along Redwood Creek)</p> <p>The existing main entrance area, including the entire upper parking area, restrooms, and visitor center, as well as a major portion of the lower parking lot, would be removed to restore natural conditions, including seasonal flooding.</p> | <p>Diverse Opportunities Zone</p> <p>Same as Alternative 1</p> | Arrival |



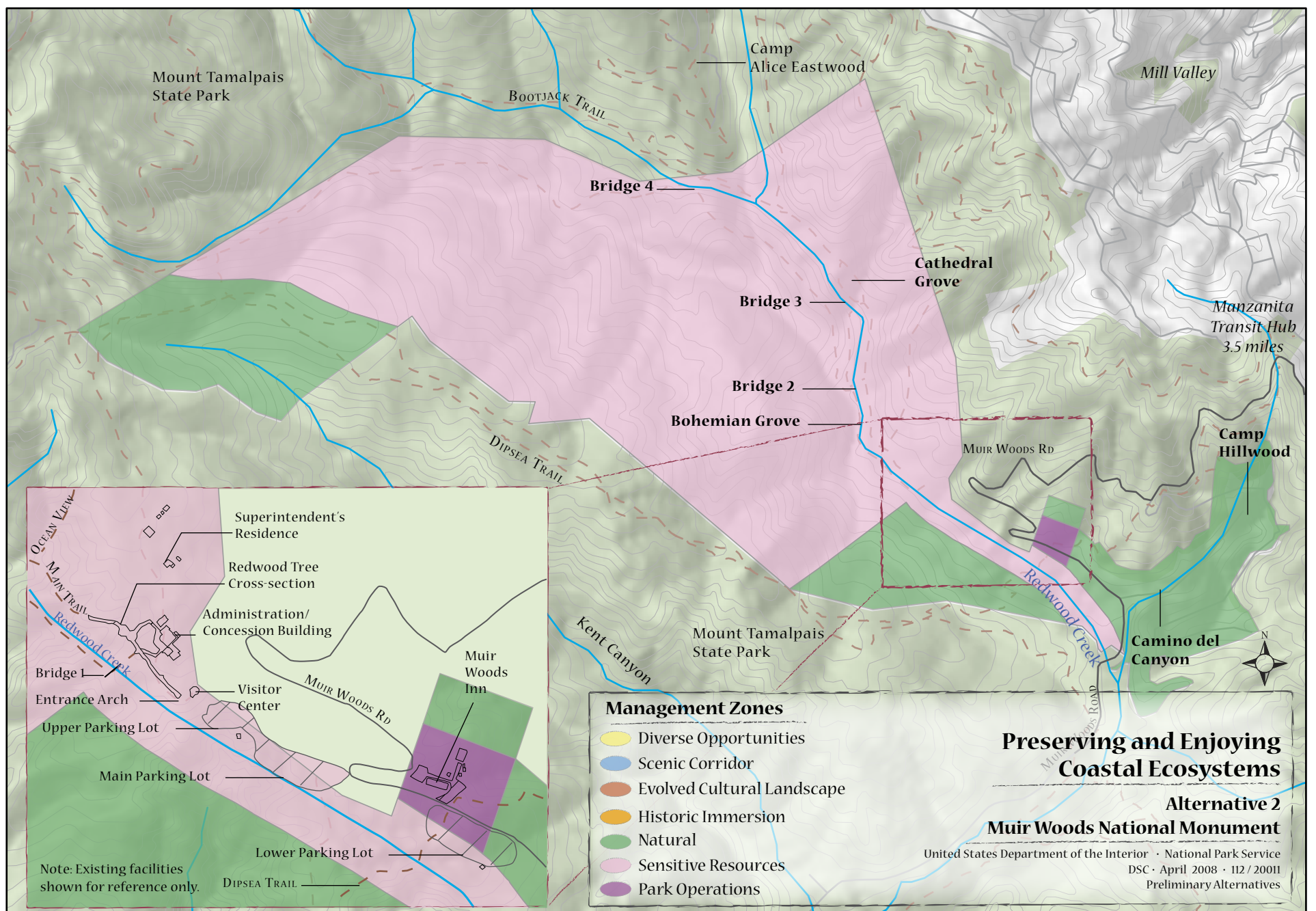
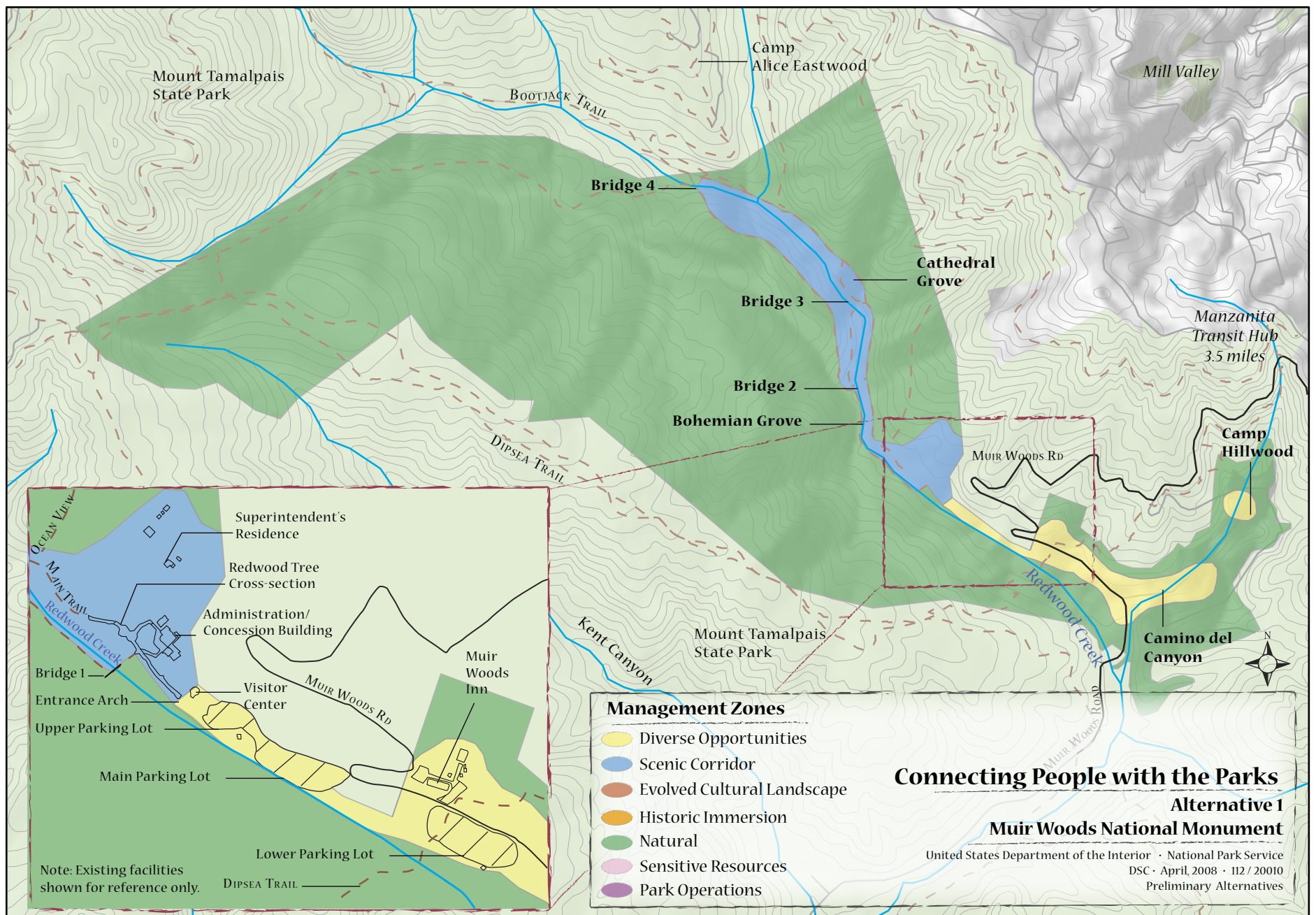
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| Redwood Forest and Redwood Creek | <p>The main trail system is a series of loops running along Redwood Creek, crossing the creek four times on footbridges. Visitors have opportunities to stroll among the groves of ancient redwoods. A variety of interpretive waysides and scheduled interpretive programs support the visitor’s discovery of the Monument’s resources. Intersecting with the main trail are other trails that provide visitors with extended hiking opportunities to adjacent public lands. The Administration-Concession Building provides food, retail services, restrooms, and park offices. The nearby historic Superintendent’s Residence and associated structures are used for park operations.</p> <p>Since the Monument was established, the National Park Service has increased its understanding of the health of a redwood forest ecosystem. Past practices of allowing visitors to picnic and camp within the forest introduced nonnative plants and animals. Natural fires have been suppressed throughout most of the 20th century and are now slowly being reintroduced to the area as a tool to enhance the health of the ecosystem. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) lined portions of Redwood Creek with rocks as a means to stabilize and contain the flow of water within the existing channel. These actions protected selected redwood trees near the creek, but eliminated the natural meandering of the stream across a wider floodplain, constraining its role in sustaining a healthy ecosystem.</p> | <p>Scenic Corridor Zone (Redwood Creek corridor including the existing wooden arch, several existing buildings, and the main loop trails)</p> <p>This area would be managed to provide a national park experience within the primeval redwood forest setting. The Administrative-Concession Building would transition to support interpretive, educational, and stewardship activities—providing a flexible classroom and program space in the woods. Experiences would immerse visitors in nature (the sights, sounds, smells of the forest) where quiet would be encouraged. Improved accessibility would ensure that all visitors could have these experiences. New restrooms and drinking water would be provided near Bridge 4 to protect resources and enhance visitor comfort.</p> <p>The historic Superintendent’s Residence and nearby structures would be used for administrative purposes. Other structures needed to support visitor uses or park operations would be rehabilitated. Non-historic or nonessential structures would be removed.</p> <p>Natural Zone (All areas beyond the Redwood Creek corridor)</p> <p>The majority of the Monument would be managed to preserve and restore natural systems and contribute to the primeval forest setting. Visitors within this zone would have opportunities for self-discovery and challenge in a more dispersed and wild park setting.</p> <p>To provide a diverse continuum of experiences, visitors would be introduced to ways of accessing the adjacent landscapes and the recreational opportunities of Mount Tamalpais State Park, Marin Municipal Water District, and Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The Ben Johnson, Fern Creek, Redwood Creek, and Dipsea trails would provide access to a variety of day and overnight recreational experiences.</p> |
| Camino del Cañon (also known as Muir Woods Addition) | <p>Over time, additional tracts of land have been acquired to support the administrative functions and visitor use of the Monument. In addition to the Old Muir Woods Inn property, other properties through an area referred to as Camino del Cañon and Conlon Avenue were acquired by the National Park Service. These properties include the rustic buildings of historic Camp Hillwood and other non-historic structures, roads, and trails. Some structures are used for park operations, housing, and a nursery, while others are under special use permits or reservation of use and occupancy or have been vacated and are planned for removal.</p> | <p>Diverse Opportunities Zone (Camp Hillwood)</p> <p>Camp Hillwood and its immediate surroundings would be adaptively used for day use or overnight educational opportunities. The historic values of the camp would be preserved while the facilities would be adapted to contemporary uses.</p> <p>Natural Zone (Other areas in Camino del Cañon)</p> <p>The majority of the area would be managed to preserve the natural setting. The landscape and streams would be restored to a natural setting. All non-historic structures would be removed. All existing operational functions within this zone (maintenance yard and nursery) would be relocated to other park sites closer to Muir Beach or in shared facilities with Mount Tamalpais State Park if feasible.</p> |

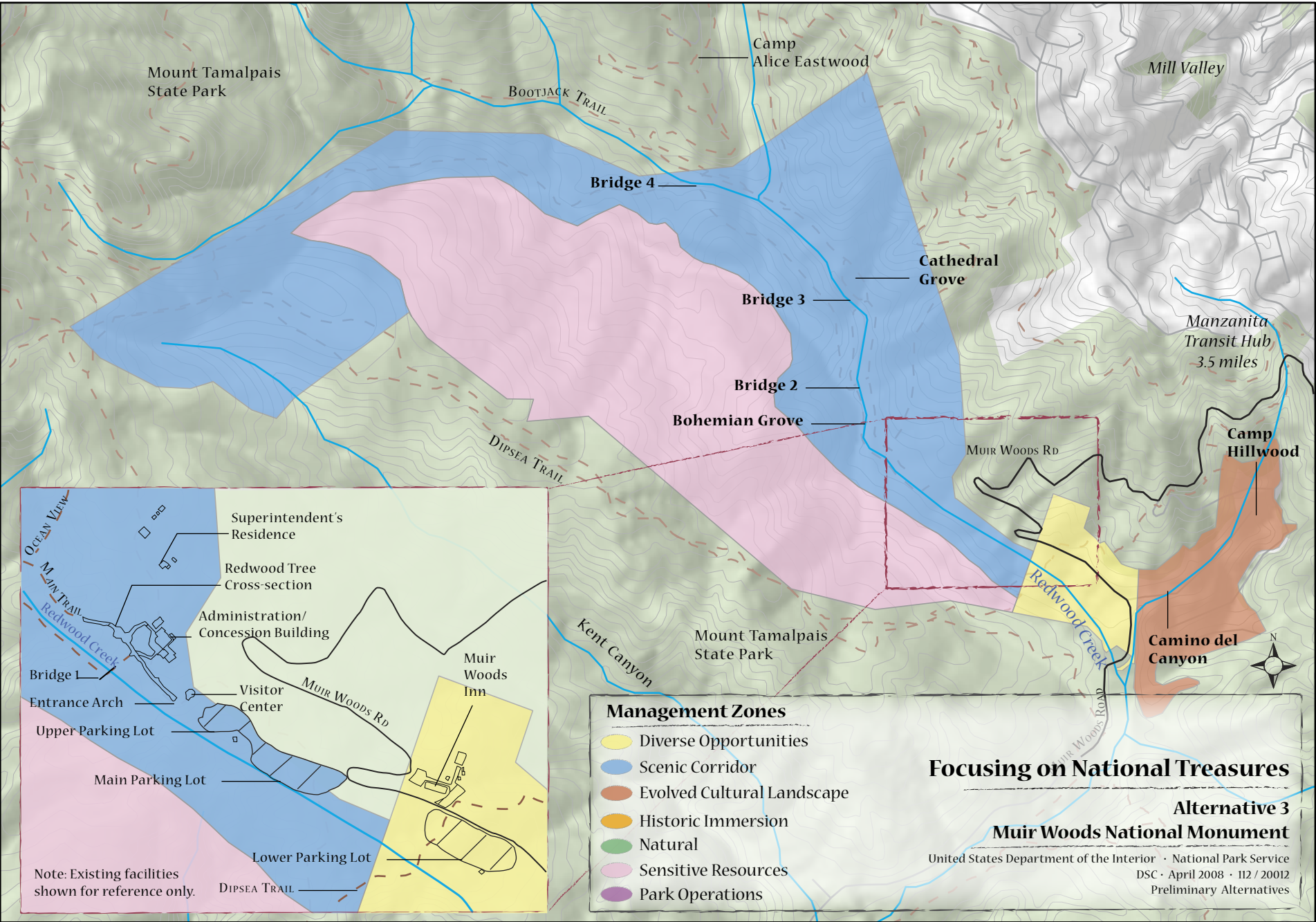
***Note:** A more detailed level of planning was required for both Muir Woods National Monument and Alcatraz Island due to their size, the complexity of their natural and cultural resources; and the national and international reconition they receive.*



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| Preserving and Enjoying Coastal Ecosystems Alternative 2 | Focusing on National Treasures Alternative 3 | |
| <p>Sensitive Resources Zone (Majority of the Monument)</p> <p>The old growth redwood forest would be managed to achieve the highest level of natural resource integrity. The visitor experience would promote an intimate relationship with the natural resources of the primeval redwood forest. Visitor access would be highly controlled and limited to designated areas and activities. The visitor would have the opportunity to engage in participatory stewardship, and educational and science activities.</p> <p>The natural conditions of the redwood forest and Redwood Creek would be restored and allowed to continue unimpeded. Floodplain function would be restored along the valley bottom.</p> <p>Visitor services would be relocated to the transit center. In consultation with the state historic preservation office and other stakeholders, the existing buildings and other major infrastructure would be removed and the sites restored to their natural conditions. All buildings, except the Muir Woods Inn, would be removed, including the historic Superintendent’s Residence and the Administration-Concession Building.</p> <p>The trail system would be redesigned to accommodate fewer visitors in a more intimate and appropriate setting. A light-on-the-land accessible trail would reach into a portion of the old growth forest. The existing main trail along the creek would be relocated out of the floodplain, and other trails and bridges may be removed, relocated, or redesigned to allow and promote natural processes. Paved surfaces would be removed.</p> <p>The trail system throughout the Monument would be designed to connect to other trails that would allow it to extend from the redwood forest to the ocean, highlighting the connection between the uplands and the ocean and the role that watershed restoration plays in maintaining healthy ecosystems. A reroute of the Redwood Creek crossing of the Dipsea Trail will be explored to find a more appropriate location with less impact to the natural functions of the creek; the rest of the Dipsea Trail would be maintained along its historic alignment.</p> | <p>Scenic Corridor Zone (Large corridor around Redwood Creek and up the south-facing slopes of the canyon)</p> <p>This area would be managed to create an outdoor museum-like experience where visitors discover and interact with the features and setting of the primeval redwood forest. Each trail within the Monument would unveil a different story and experience. The trails would be rehabilitated or relocated and each would be individually designed and managed to provide visitors with opportunities to learn, explore, and become immersed in the resources that illustrates a particular theme.</p> <p>An ecology-themed trail would use interactive exhibits so visitors could examine the forest canopy high above or the dynamic hydrogeology of the creek. A history-themed trail would highlight how Muir Woods has been shaped by more than a century of park managers and could quietly usher visitors into Cathedral Grove. A self-discovery trail would encourage visitors to see, touch, and smell, and possibly taste parts of the forest, providing a very personal and sensory experience. Some trails would start in a restored meadow where the upper parking lot now exists, and highlight the main redwood groves along the creek. Others would bring visitors down into the woods from higher in the canyon along historic traces.</p> <p>The historic Dipsea Trail and other trails from Mount Tamalpais State Park also would be highlighted, offering opportunities for self-discovery. The experience would be further reinforced through ranger led activities that engage the visitor with the Monument’s natural and cultural resources. The Administration-Concession Building would be rehabilitated as a traditional park visitor center.</p> <p>The structures and features that represent the conservation movement would be preserved and rehabilitated, and used to support visitor programming and services. These include the historic Superintendent’s Residence, Administration-Concession Building, trails, creek stabilization rock work, monuments, and named groves.</p> <p>Sensitive Resources Zone (Northeast facing slopes of the canyon)</p> <p>This large area would be managed to preserve the redwood forest and natural sounds that provide a backdrop to the adjacent scenic corridor. Visitor access to this area would be carefully managed and limited to retain the pristine setting and protect its resources.</p> | Redwood Forest and Redwood Creek |
| <p>Natural Zone</p> <p>The area would be managed to restore native habitat and natural processes with emphasis on removal of unneeded roads and development, stabilization of sediment sources, re-establishment of natural drainage patterns, restoration of the tributary creek, and removal of invasive vegetation that has escaped from developed areas.</p> <p>All structures, including the native plant nursery, would be removed. Water and sewer systems could be relocated to appropriate sites using best technology practices.</p> <p>All other park operations and stewardship support facilities (including the native plant nursery) would be relocated to more suitable areas within the Redwood Creek watershed outside the Monument boundaries.</p> | <p>Evolved Cultural Landscape Zone</p> <p>The area would be managed to provide educational activities and overnight accommodations for small groups. This area also could include some park operational facilities balanced with the preservation needs of the area’s natural resources. The character of development in this area would be rustic.</p> | |







Your notes

