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## PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE Memorandum

L7617 (PWRO-PP)

JUN 17 2008

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area

From: Regional Director, Pacific West Region

Subject: Environmental Compliance for Dias Ridge Trail Improvements and Restoration

The finalized *Finding of No Significant Impact* for this resource stewardship/recreational use enhancement project is approved.

To complete this particular compliance effort, at the time when the park announces the decision (and makes the *FONSI* available), all individuals, organizations, and agencies that received the supporting environmental assessment (EA) should be instructed to attach the *Errata* (prepared to document minor corrections) to the EA to comprise a full record of the environmental impact analysis completed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan B. Jarvis". The signature is stylized with large loops and a cursive script.

Jonathan B. Jarvis

Attachment

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**DIAS RIDGE RESTORATION AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior  
Golden Gate National Recreation Area  
June 2008

**INTRODUCTION**

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared, in accordance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), for the Dias Ridge Restoration and Trail Improvement Project, Marin County, California. The project area is located in the Green Gulch sub-watershed, part of the Redwood Creek watershed, in the Muir Beach area of Marin County and lies within both the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and Mount Tamalpais State Park (MTSP).

The National Park Service (NPS) and California State Parks (CDPR) partnered to plan and conduct the environmental analysis for the Dias Ridge Restoration and Trail Improvement Project. A joint Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) was prepared in accordance with the NEPA and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This FONSI approves federal actions on National Park Service property only. CDPR issued a separate Notice of Determination for project actions on state land.

This document describes Alternative B, the Selected Alternative, and provides an explanation of why it will have no significant effects on the human environment. As stated in the Dias Ridge Restoration and Trail Improvement Project EA/IS, the project will realign trail segments and restore degraded areas on Dias Ridge (see EA/IS Figure 1). The project would improve the overall quality of the parkland and reduce sedimentation into the Redwood Creek and Green Gulch watersheds by removing non-designated trails, replacing or rehabilitating poorly aligned and eroding segments of the Dias Ridge Trail, and restoring areas of natural landscape. An improved trail alignment would also support existing authorized trail-use designations.

**PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION**

The purpose of this project is to improve the Dias Ridge Trail alignment and drainage and to reduce erosion on Dias Ridge between Panoramic Highway and the Golden Gate Dairy.

The project is needed because existing trail alignments in the Lower Redwood Creek watershed are causing resource damage to valuable park landscapes and resources. The present Dias Ridge Trail alignment is a former ranch road/fire road that in several areas exceeds 25% grade, has erosion problems and, in many segments, has poor alignment and drainage. Erosion on the deteriorated Dias Ridge Trail and non-designated trail segments on the Ridge are also contributing to sedimentation in Redwood Creek, degrading water quality, and impacting habitat for threatened and endangered species. As such, NPS and CDPR have identified a need to reduce erosion and sedimentation into the sensitive creek habitat to the greatest extent possible.

In addition, all user groups are not currently served on the Dias Ridge Trail and users are sometimes in conflict on multi-use segments due to poor trail conditions. Violations of trail-use designations are frequently observed. The route on MTSP lands is a designated fire road, appropriate for multi-use and currently open to bicyclists, equestrians and hikers. Some users of the Dias Ridge Trail bypass its western segment through GGNRA lands by using a non-designated trail that leads north from the top of Dias Ridge down to Frank Valley Road. This unauthorized use of non-designated trails has caused severe slope erosion, causing point source sedimentation to Redwood Creek. New trailhead informational and regulatory signage is needed at the Golden Gate Dairy and Panoramic Highway Trailheads to facilitate authorized recreational uses on Dias Ridge.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The NPS and CDPR analyzed two alternatives, Alternative A, No Action, and Alternative B, Dias Ridge Restoration and Trail Improvements.

Under the No Action Alternative, NPS and CDPR would not proceed with the Dias Ridge restoration and trail improvements; trail use would continue without the necessary upgrades. This alternative would leave the project area in its current condition, with the CDPR district and GGNRA conducting critical maintenance only, and managing visitor use at current levels. Under this alternative, existing erosion conditions on the deteriorated Dias Ridge trail alignment and other non-designated trails on Dias Ridge would increase, accelerating their decline. The eroded trails would continue to contribute sediment into Redwood Creek, degrading water quality for federally-listed Coho salmon and steelhead. Existing local gaps in the regional, statewide, and National Park Service trail plans through this area would remain.

Alternative B is described below, under Selected Alternative.

## **SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**

The National Park Service (NPS) and California State Parks (CDPR) have selected Alternative B, Dias Ridge Restoration and Trail Improvements, for implementation. No changes were made to the preferred alternative as a result of public comment; the NPS made some minor changes to the selected alternative as noted below.

This project would involve landscape restoration, trail improvements, new trail construction, and associated work on Dias Ridge starting at the MTSP fire gate at the west side of Panoramic Highway approximately 1,250 feet north of its intersection with SR1 and running westward to the Golden Gate Dairy. The approximate total length of this segment is 15,700 feet. Existing trail segments would be retained where practical and construction of an improved trail alignment would be implemented to eliminate poorly graded and eroding segments. The entire length of the newly restored Dias Ridge trail would be multi-use thus restoring continuous trail access for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. The restored trail would resolve user conflicts by providing a wider area for all users to use the trail concurrently. The realigned trail will become an important link in the Bay Area Ridge Trail, provide for a safer route to Muir Beach and facilitate an improved connection to the California Coastal Trail. The selected actions are grouped as follows:

## Non-designated Trail Decommissioning and Closure Actions

Informational signage will be installed to notify users that restoration actions are underway and informing them of trail closures or detours. Signage would begin no later than 1 month before construction begins, and would be removed when the old trail has been fully rehabilitated. In some areas brush and/or temporary fencing would be utilized to divert visitors from restoration and revegetation areas.

## Habitat Restoration following closure of Old Segments and Non-designated Trail Segments

The project includes the closure and restoration of old trail segments, ensuring the natural habitat of the surrounding area are restored in a manner that minimizes the potential for erosion, and support native plant habitat that is similar to surrounding areas. Restoration includes control of invasive non-native plant species populations, and stem soil erosion within the project area. Restoration techniques to restore natural contours and rehabilitate sites to natural conditions would vary by segment. Approximately 11 acres of native habitat would be restored. Habitats to be restored include coyote brush, coastal scrub/coastal grassland, grassland (wet variant), oak/bay woodland habitat. The restoration techniques to be used include:

- Ripping/Scarification: by hand with rake, mattock, digging forks or mechanically with small heavy equipment
- Light Regrading
- Heavy Regrading: in areas with large soil gullies; steep areas may require use of a ‘track walker’ to press the soil and a binder
- Erosion Control: weed-free rice straw, “rolling dip” construction, erosion control fabric, drain-dips, straw wattles, check dams, silt fencing

Proposed trail and habitat restoration activities include:

- Active Revegetation: planting and seeding using seeds and propagules collected and grown from seed collected onsite.
- Light Active Revegetation: application of previously salvaged, stockpiled native vegetation
- Passive Revegetation: allowing vegetation to self-seed from adjacent vegetation communities.

## Construction of New Trail and Reuse of Existing Segments Actions

Trail work includes constructing new sustainable trail segments, and reuse of existing trail segments where appropriate and sustainable. Specifically, actions include:

- Trail Improvements: repairing, upgrading, or replacing culverts, drain inlets, and other drainage structures, and final grading and resurfacing as appropriate. A sustainable trail tread would be established within the project area and on the surveyed alignment using a Sweco trail dozer (or similar small equipment) followed by handwork. Native grasslands would be avoided. Alternatives would be developed to avoid grasslands. All work would be in accordance with current Best Management Practices (BMP).
- Trailhead improvements: signage will be upgraded at the Dias Ridge trailhead and there will be improved signage and other appropriate trailhead furnishings at the proposed Golden Gate Dairy trailhead.

- Bridge: a twenty-eight-foot long free-spanning, multi-use wooden bridge, 5 to 6 feet in width, would be constructed to span the seasonal first order, non fish-bearing tributary named Frank Valley Creek southeast of the Golden Gate Dairy; least-toxic wood preservatives would be used, possibly manufacturer applied off-site.
- Design Standards: new trail segments will be constructed with appropriate drainage as described in State and Federal Best Management Practices (BMPs), using standards for sustainable layout including outsloping tread, drain dips, water bars, crib walls, and other structures.
- Accessibility and Grades: whenever feasible and appropriate, trail standards would follow Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas.
- Corridor Width: trail corridor width is the width within which vegetation is removed and a trail constructed. For this project, a trail corridor would be maintained that prevents encroaching vegetation from impacting the usable trail tread width and allows for the safe passage of all trail users. The final width of the corridor cleared for the new trail would vary with topography and vegetation.
- Tread Width and Surfacing: the trail would be constructed to a consistently 5 foot (1.5 meters) width, with adjustments made as needed to accommodate topography, line of sight, and the safe passage of trail users. Where a steep side slope exists, making it unsafe for users to step off the trail to allow passage between users, or where there is poor line of sight making safe passage between users problematic, the trail could be constructed to a width of up to 6 feet (1.8 meters). Trail surface would be native tread - where imported backfill would be required for repairs, only appropriate and approved soil types would be used to avoid introducing non-compatible soil types and non-native plant propagules.
- Buffers: the proposed alignments would be designed to maximize distances from existing structures and identified natural and cultural resources of concern.
- Signage: clear and concise roadway and trail signage would identify trails and bikeways, guide users to their destinations, and inform motorists of the presence of bicyclists and pedestrians.

### General Construction Sequencing, Timing, and Staging

Trail enhancement, re-alignment, decommissioning and erosion control work would be phased according to funding. Trail decommissioning and reconstruction could occur within one year or could be phased so that trail decommissioning occurs in 2009 and reconstruction in 2010. Invasive non-native plant control, revegetation and restoration actions, would continue through 2012 for approximately four years. Vegetation removal will be planned outside of landbird nesting season (March 1- July 31). Any in water work would occur during the dry season (June 1 – October 15).

Mechanical equipment would be used to regrade, recontour and restore the existing road and trail segments, and to construct new trail alignments. This phase of the project would primarily be completed by hand labor. BMPs would be employed throughout the project to protect water quality and natural and cultural resources.

The relatively small requirements for equipment and crew staging can be accommodated within the established footprint of the existing trail alignment on Dias Ridge and in two small staging areas adjacent to the top and bottom of the trail. For example, the small mechanical equipment, ATVs, and other material haulers can be staged within an approximately hundred-foot segment of the existing

Dias Ridge trail. Two staging areas will be used during the construction period; these areas are identified on Figure 1. Both staging areas will be restored after use. The Golden Gate Dairy staging area is approximately 2,000 square feet, and the one located at the Panoramic Gate is approximately 3,000 square feet.

### Modifications incorporated into the Selected Alternative

After the release of the EA/IS, the NPS made minor changes to the trail alignment to reduce the grade of the trail. Lessening the grade will provide for improved accessibility and improve the retention of soils on the trail. A map showing the new alignment is contained within the Errata.

The length of the multi-use wooden bridge was increased from 25 to 28 feet to ensure it would long enough to be a free-spanning structure, which eliminates the need to enter the channel, dewater the tributary, or capture or relocate federally listed fish.

These changes have not substantially altered the determination of environmental effect analyzed in the EA/IS. Additional mitigation measures have also been added as a result of consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

The National Park Service (NPS) has determined that the environmentally preferred alternative for this project is Alternative 1, the Preferred Alternative. The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy expressed in NEPA (sec. 101 (b)). This includes alternatives that:

- Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as a trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
- Ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.
- Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.
- Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, whenever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.
- Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.
- Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA and the NPS NEPA guidelines require that "the alternative or alternatives which were considered to be environmentally preferable" be identified (Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, Section 1505.2). Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative that best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.

The Selected Alternative meets all of the NEPA criteria and would have the greatest benefits to natural and recreational resources in the project vicinity and would best meet the requirements in Section 101 of NEPA.

Actions under Alternative B would provide erosion control, improve overall drainage conditions and reduce sediment runoff, provide for habitat restoration and protection for federally listed species, long-term stewardship actions, and improvements to the trail and trailheads that will result in an improvement to safety and sustainability of visitor access and use of federal and state parklands. The No Action Alternative would not result in any improvements to the deteriorated trail and habitat areas, visitor amenities, nor the degraded slopes and erosive soil conditions.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Public scoping was conducted between November 14, 2005 and January 6, 2006. The project was internally scoped at a GGNRA Project Review meeting on March 9, 2005.

Project information, public scoping, and dates of a public meeting and site walk was widely distributed. On November 16, 2005, a notice announcing the beginning of public scoping and announcing a public meeting and site walk for the project was mailed to approximately 1,575 people. Information was also available to the public at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> and [www.nps.gov/goga](http://www.nps.gov/goga). NPS and CDPR considered all public comments.

The public scoping meeting was held on December 8, 2005 and was attended by approximately 100 people. The public site walk was held on December 10, 2005 and was attended by approximately 20 people. In all, the lead agencies received 73 separate pieces of correspondence from the public.

Most of the commentators were supportive of the project. Comments brought up by the public generally fell into two categories: suggestions for different alternatives or suggesting a specific action be incorporated into the existing alternatives and requests that the NPS and CDPR consider specific impacts associated with the proposed actions. Among the additional alternatives suggested during scoping were to expand the project north to include other trails, to end the Dias Ridge Trail at Frank's Valley road, or to provide a different alternative route for the SR 1/Coast View portion of the project. During scoping, the project proposed construction of a State Route 1 Connector Trail and the Lower Coast View Trail Extension in addition to the actions proposed in the EA/IS. As planning for these actions progressed, it became apparent that these actions had issues that could not be resolved in a timely manner. Instead of delaying the entire project until these issues were resolved, it was decided to remove these actions, which have independent utility and can proceed separately from this project so that implementation of the Dias Ridge actions would proceed.

Scoping comments also suggested: making the trail wider or narrower than 60"; including vegetation management treatments; and incorporating trail design features such as elimination of "blind curves"; and minimizing impacts at the Golden Gate Dairy trailhead. These suggestions were reflected in the preferred alternative presented in the EA/IS for public review. Once issues were identified, they were used to refine the proposed action and to develop mitigation measures. Impact topics based on substantive issues, environmental statutes, regulations, and executive orders were selected for detailed analysis and are listed in the next section.

The EA/IS was available for public review and comment from July 5 through August 3, 2007. Public notice of the availability of the EA was provided to individuals, organizations, and agencies through notification on the park website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/goga> and [www.nps.gov/goga](http://www.nps.gov/goga)), mailing of the EA/IS (220), and a postcard/email notice (1,842). The EA/IS was available for review on the website, CDPR Northern Service Center (Sacramento), CDPR Marin District Headquarters (Petaluma), Mount Tamalpais State Park (Mill Valley), the Belvedere-Tiburon Library (Tiburon) and the Stinson Beach Library (Stinson Beach). In addition a legal notice was placed in the Marin County Independent Journal on July 8, 2007 announcing the availability of the EA/IS for review and comment.

The EA/IS was discussed at a GGNRA Park Open House at May 22, 2007. The NPS received a total of 42 pieces of correspondence the project (17 individual letters and two groups of form letters, 11 and 14 each) from individuals, agencies, and groups.

Comments on the EA/IS were supportive of the project. CDPR and NPS responded to all commenters. Many letters contained simple statements of support. Other letters provided design suggestions, such as increasing or decreasing signage; requested clarification on components of the project or discussions in the EA/IS; highlighted the importance of safety for bicyclists, requested that trails be six feet in width and that disturbance be kept to a minimum. There was some concern from a Muir Beach resident regarding cumulative impacts with the projects planned for Big Lagoon or completed at the Banducci site. Other support letters expressed interest in addressing safety issues on Highway 1 as soon as possible.

A group of 14 letters all expressed support for the project but requested that tread width and surfacing for the trail need not be “in accordance with the terms of a legal settlement between CDPR and the Tamalpais Conservation Club (DPR 2004).” Although the settlement was solely negotiated with State Parks, the Dias Ridge Trail crosses both NPS and MTSP land. In order to create a safe and consistent trail through both jurisdictions, the NPS and CDPR decided to adopt this standard and build trails to a minimum of 5 feet in width.

Minor changes made to reflect public comment and responses to public comment are documented in an Errata prepared as a technical attachment to the original EA/IS.

## **AGENCY CONSULTATION**

### ***U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service***

Under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act as amended, PL 93-205, 87 Stat. 884, 16 USC §1531 et seq., federal agencies are required to consult with the USFWS if their actions, including permit approvals, could adversely affect an endangered or threatened species, or its critical habitat. The NPS initiated formal consultation with USFWS on the project on February 8, 2008 with submittal of a Biological Assessment. The USFWS issued a Biological Opinion (BO), which included an Incidental Take Statement, on May 1, 2008 [File #: 81420-2008-F-1066]. The Conservation Recommendations, as stated in the BO are included in the Mitigations for the project.

### ***National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)***

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is responsible for the stewardship of the nation's living marine resources and their habitat. Under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act as amended, PL 93-205, 87 Stat. 884, 16 USC §1531 et seq., federal agencies are required to consult with NOAA Fisheries if their actions, including permit approvals, could adversely affect an endangered or threatened species, or its critical habitat. The NPS initiated formal consultation with NMFS on the project on February 8, 2008 with submittal of a Biological Assessment. In a letter dated May 9, 2008, NOAA Fisheries concurred with the NPS determination that the project, with a dry season work window of June 1 to October 15, is not likely to adversely affect listed salmonids or their designated critical habitat.

### ***California Coastal Commission***

In accordance with the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, on February 13, 2008, GGNRA submitted a request for the California Coastal Commission's concurrence with a Negative Determination that actions will not affect coastal zone resources. On March 26, 2008, the Coastal Commission sent correspondence to the GGNRA stating that the Commission concurred with the negative determination that the project will not adversely affect coastal zone resources [ND-010-08].

### ***Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and California State Historic Preservation Officer***

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended PL 89-665, 80 Stat. 915, 16 USC §470 et seq. and 36 CFR 18, 60, 61, 63, 68, 79, 800, requires federal agencies to consult with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding undertakings that may affect properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1992, Golden Gate National Recreation Area entered into a Programmatic Agreement with the ACHP and the SHPO which allows park staff from the GGNRA Preservation Assessment Group to review undertakings for National Historic Preservation Act conformance as long as such undertakings are found to have No Effect or No Adverse Effect on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Selected Alternative was reviewed and certified by the Preservation Assessment Group on June 20, 2007. SHPO was notified of this determination and it was included in GGNRA's annual report to the SHPO.

### ***U.S. Army Corps of Engineers***

Consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board was not needed because the project would not discharge any dredged or fill material into the Waters of the U.S., including wetlands. The wetlands (seeps) that were found in the project area are isolated and not connected to any "Waters of the U.S." and are not currently subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction.

### ***San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)***

Section 402 (p) of the Clean Water Act regulates storm water discharges under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Part of this system regulates storm water discharges from construction sites that disturb land equal to or greater than one acre and less than five acres. As such, the RWQCB issues either an individual or a statewide General Permit for stormwater discharges associated with construction (clearing, grading, disturbances to the ground such as stockpiling, or excavation). The Dias Ridge Restoration and Trail Improvement Project qualify for a General Permit. The General Permit requires: development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution

Prevention Plan (SWPPP) which specifies Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will prevent all construction pollutants from contacting storm water and with the intent of keeping all products of erosion from moving off site into receiving waters; elimination or reduction of non-storm water discharges to storm sewer systems and other waters of the nation; inspection of all BMPs; and development and implementation of a monitoring program.

To obtain coverage, the NPS must file a Notice of Intent with a map, fee, and SWPPP to the RWQCB prior to commencement of construction activities. All requirements are included as mitigations for the project and will be met prior to construction.

A Section 401 Water Quality Certification is not needed from the RWQCB because the project does not involve dredge or fill discharge into any jurisdictional Waters of the U.S.

### **WHY THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

The NPS used the following NEPA criteria and factors defined in 40 CFR §1508.27 to evaluate whether the Selected Alternative would have a significant impact on the environment.

***Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts that require analysis in an EIS.***

Whether taken individually or as a whole, the impacts of the project do not reach the level of significance. Most of the adverse impacts would be temporary and occur during construction. Mitigations and Best Management Practices are incorporated into the project to ensure any adverse impacts would be less than significant. Adverse impacts to water quality during construction would be minor and short-term. Impacts related to temporary increase of hazardous materials onsite or increased fuel load would be negligible and minor. Impacts to the soundscape and air quality would be minor and short term during construction. The project would have both long and short term, minor adverse impacts to wetlands and vegetation, and moderate impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife habitat.

The Selected Alternative would also have long-term, minor to major beneficial effects on visual, cultural, and visitor resources; wetlands; vegetation; soils and geology; and water quality. It will also reduce public safety hazards by creating safe trails.

#### ***Degree of effect on Public Health or Safety.***

Adverse impacts on Public Health and Safety would be negligible and related to a slight increase in fire hazard or use of hazardous materials. Current public safety hazards exist due to steep and unstable eroding trails. The project would benefit visitor safety as the final trails would be constructed to GGNRA trail standards and would include signs to promote safe trail use. The removal of non-designated trails, the stabilization of erosion areas, and the removal of debris would also reduce overall potential hazards to visitors.

***Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.***

The project does not contain prime farmland, farmland of local or statewide importance or wild and scenic rivers. All cultural resource sites will be avoided. The area does contain seeps that are considered Cowardin wetlands, but minor impacts from construction will be offset by the major beneficial impacts of wetlands from the restoration work. The newly aligned trail will be designed to avoid wetlands/seeps areas. Construction of the new trail will remove 3.2 acres, which could be upland habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog, but restoration activities will result in the creation of approximately 11 acres of native habitat. Mitigations and Best Management Practices will protect the creek and tributaries that run through the project site.

***Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.***

The project actions have not generated public controversy and are not likely to be controversial. Almost all of the public comments received on the EA/IS were favorable and in support of the project.

***Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.***

The potential impacts are well defined and analyzed in the EA/IS and regulatory agencies have concurred with the impact assessment for species and topics under their jurisdiction through consultation. The degree or possibility that the effects on the human environment will be highly uncertain or will involve unique or unknown risks is remote.

***Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.***

The Selected Alternative will not predetermine or establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects at the site or within the watershed and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. Future actions, such as the proposed construction of a State Route 1 Connector Trail and the Lower Coast View Trail Extension will proceed independently of this project and will receive a separate environmental analysis.

***Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.***

The EA/IS considered the cumulative impacts of the Selected Alternative with several past, present and ongoing future projects and the analysis for all impact topics indicated that the Selected Alternative could result in minimal and not collectively significant cumulative adverse effects. The CDPR and NPS portions of the project will be completed concurrently as one project. Most other projects will not occur at the same time as the selected action, but there will be some concurrent excavation and haul of fill associated with the Wetland and Creek Restoration at the Big Lagoon project. This will increase traffic (via truck trips) but this impact is expected to be minor and not significant. This selected action, when examined cumulatively with other actions in the project area, will have beneficial cumulative effects on erosion, sedimentation, visitor experience, and species habitat.

***Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.***

The EA/IS found that the project will not adversely affect any cultural resource. The three cultural resource sites in the project area will be avoided and delineated as “off limits” during construction and mitigations will be enacted in the event of a cultural resource, archeological or human remains discovery.

***Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat.***

The USFWS determined in a Biological Opinion that the project is not likely to adversely affect the endangered Myrtle’s silverspot butterfly, the endangered mission blue butterfly, or the threatened northern spotted owl. They did find while the proposed action will restore habitat for the threatened red-legged frog, actions may adversely affect the frog, but is not likely to jeopardize its continued existence. Conservation Recommendations identified in the BO will be implemented to reduce impact to the species. NOAA Fisheries has determined project actions are not likely to affect the listed endangered Central California Coast coho or threatened steelhead.

***Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, state, or local environmental protection law***

Implementing the Selected Alternative would violate no federal, state or local environmental protection laws. Assessment of the proposed action has been performed pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires consideration of environmental protection laws and regulations.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES**

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### **Visual Resources**

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**Aesth-1:** Project proponents will revegetate cut and fill slopes for stability to control erosion and to re-establish the visual continuity of vegetative cover through the duration of the project.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

**Aesth-2:** Trail edges and any retaining walls along the new hillside trail south of Golden Gate Dairy will be vegetated using appropriate medium-to-tall coastal sage scrub species, where consistent with adjacent vegetation, to screen views of the trail from the dairy ranch complex.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

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### **Air Quality**

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**Air-1:** All active construction areas will be watered at least twice daily during dry, dusty conditions. Water used for this purpose will be obtained outside the project area.

All trucks hauling soil, sand, or other loose materials on public roads will be covered or required to maintain at least two feet of freeboard.

All equipment engines will be maintained in good condition, in proper tune (according to manufacturer's specifications), and in compliance with all State and federal requirements.

Excavation and grading activities will be suspended when sustained winds exceed 25 miles mph, instantaneous gusts exceed 35 mph, or dust from construction might obscure driver visibility on public roads.

Earth or other material that has been transported onto paved streets and shoulder by trucks, construction equipment, erosion, or other project-related activity will be promptly removed.

Speed limit signs limiting vehicle speed to 15 mph or less at construction sites will be posted every 500 feet.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

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## **Native Plant Communities**

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**Bio-1:** In areas of new trail construction where actions will impact sensitive native plant communities, these communities will be restored in kind in locations identified by NPS and CDPR.

Qualified NPS and/or CDPR staff will identify appropriate reference sites for coastal prairie, coastal scrub and wetland habitats within the watershed. Botanical specialists in the agencies will determine plant palettes for direct seeding and revegetation actions, with seed collected within the watershed and plants grown in the NPS native plant nurseries.

NPS will grow replacement plants from local seed sources, to result in no net loss of native plant communities. Project proponents will monitor revegetated areas and invasive plant species controlled, as part of the on-going vegetation management program

Plants will be propagated off-site, transported to the revegetation areas by truck and/or all-terrain vehicle where appropriate, and planted by hand labor.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

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## **Exotic Plant Species Control**

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**Bio-2:** NPS and CDPR will monitor control strategies and performance measures for invasive non-native plants for up to 5 years. Performance measures for planted natives will also be monitored for up to five years.

Guided by these strategies and measures, NPS and CDPR restoration staff will conduct monitoring of invasive non-native plants and native plantings for up to five years following the project's implementation.

## **Wildlife**

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### **Bio-3: Nesting Raptor Species**

If construction is planned during the breeding seasons (January 1 – July 31) for any raptors a pre-construction survey to locate any potential raptor nests will be conducted in and around the project area. If a nest is located near the project area, then construction will not occur within 500 feet or an appropriate distance as defined by an NPS or MTSP wildlife biologist of the active nest until after the young have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting as determined by an agency-approved biologist.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager*

### **Bio-4: Sensitive Bat Species**

A bat habitat assessment and survey will be conducted by project proponents prior to construction in order to determine what species are present in trees identified for removal, and whether they are used for day, night, or maternity roosts. Trail alignments will be adjusted, where practicable, to avoid the removal of tree roosting habitat.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

### **Bio-5: Landbird Nesting**

Vegetation removal will be planned outside the landbird breeding season (March 1 – July 31). Nest surveys will be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to vegetation removal during the breeding season. If nests are located, a suitable non-work buffer determined by a qualified biologist based on species and habitat characteristics, will be established and remain in place until birds could successfully fledge and move from the area.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

### **Bio-6: California red-legged frog**

- Because dusk and dawn are often the times when red-legged frogs are most actively foraging and dispersing, all construction activities should cease one half hour before sunset and should not begin prior to one half hour before sunrise.
- Prior to and during construction activities, a biological monitor will search all work localities for the presence of red-legged frogs. The search area will encompass a 50-foot radius around the work sites. Vegetation that will be disturbed within the project area will be removed during these surveys to aid in observations of the species. To prevent direct injury to California red-legged frogs, removal of vegetation within suitable frog habitat will be accomplished by a progressive cutting of vegetation from the overstory level to ground level to allow frogs to move out of the work area.
- Should any frogs be observed, activities will cease until the animal is removed and relocated by a Service-approved biologist. Captured frogs shall be relocated to suitable habitat outside of the construction zone, either upstream or downstream of the construction zone by a qualified or permitted biologist. For the California red-legged frog, a qualified biologist means any person who has completed at least four years of university training in wildlife biology or a related

science, has demonstrated experience with handling amphibians, and has demonstrated field experience in the identification and life history of this threatened species.

- Nets or bare hands may be used to capture red-legged frogs. Service-approved biologists will not use soaps, oils, creams, lotions, repellents, or solvents of any sort on their hands within two hours before and during periods when they are capturing and relocating red-legged frogs. To avoid transferring disease or pathogens between aquatic habitats during the course of surveys or handling of red-legged frogs, Service-approved biologists will follow the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force's "Code of Practice." Service-approved biologists will limit the duration of handling and captivity of red-legged frogs. While in captivity, individuals of these species shall be kept in a cool, moist, aerated environment, such as a bucket containing a damp sponge. Containers used for holding or transporting adults of these species shall not contain any standing water.
- If erosion control materials are used, only tightly woven fiber netting or non-binded materials (e.g., rice straw) shall be used for erosion control or other purposes at the project site to ensure that the red-legged frog does not get trapped. No plastic mono-filament matting shall be used for erosion control.
- Training will be provided to construction staff in order to inform workers of the presence of federally listed anadromous fish species (i.e. coho salmon and steelhead), California red-legged frogs, and northern spotted owl in suitable aquatic and upland habitats, and the necessity for implementing BMPs. This training will also identify boundaries of construction zones and identify proper disposal of construction debris and the proper response to fluid spills. The training for California red-legged frogs shall include the following: a description of the species and its ecology and habitat needs; an explanation of its legal status and protection under the Endangered Species Act, and an explanation of the measures being taken to avoid or reduce the effects to the species during the project. The education program may be conducted in an informal manner (e.g. ranger and field personnel in a rural setting).
- Any injured California red-legged frogs must be cared for by a licensed veterinarian or other qualified person such as the on-site biologist; dead individuals must be placed in a sealed plastic bag with the date, time, location of discovery, and name of the person who found the animal and the carcass should keep kept in a secured freezer. Incidences must be reported to the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Fish and Game as noted in the Biological Opinion for the project, 81402-2008-F-1066.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

#### **Bio-7: Sudden Oak Death**

All project components impacting Sudden Oak Death host or carrier plants will follow the "Sudden Oak Death Best Management Practices in Zone of Infestation Regulated Areas, Assembled by the Management Committee of California Oak Mortality Task Force, 2002".

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

#### **Bio-8: Northern Spotted Owl**

- Project activities will be conducted outside of the spotted owl breeding season and between dawn and dusk, outside the daily foraging activity period.
- Removal of woodrat nests will be the minimum necessary to complete the project. Immediately prior to construction actions, the project area would be surveyed and any occupied woodrat nests would be avoided if feasible.

- Training will be provided to construction staff in order to inform workers of the presence of the federally listed northern spotted owl and the necessity for implementing BMPs. This training will also identify boundaries of construction zones and identify proper disposal of construction debris and the proper response to fluid spills.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

### **Bio-9: Salmonids**

If any work becomes necessary in the channel, it will occur during the time the tributary is dry. The work window for dry season is June 1 to October 15.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

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## **Cultural Resources**

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**Cult-1:** Prior to the start of construction, a State Cultural Resource Specialist will review construction limits on the ground with the State Representative assigned to the project and mark (e.g. with flagging and/or plastic mesh construction fencing) the avoidance area. Specifically, site CA-MRN-567H, new site 60131-01, and elements of Ranch M will be designated “off-limits” during all construction activities. Neither mechanical equipment nor workers on foot will be allowed within the site boundaries. A State Cultural Resource Specialist will review construction limits on the ground with the State Representative assigned to the project and mark (e.g. with flagging and/or plastic mesh construction fencing) the avoidance area prior to the start of construction. All grading activities for new trail construction or old trail restoration near the flagged areas will be specifically monitored by a qualified Cultural Resource Specialist or his/her designee.

*Responsible Party: C DPR Cultural Resource Specialist and NPS Project Manager*

**Cult-2:** Cultural Resources, Discovery Provisions. In the event that previously unknown cultural resources are encountered during project construction by anyone, they will be treated in accordance with 36 CFR 800.13 (Protection of Historic Properties: Post-review discoveries). The archeological resource will be assessed for its eligibility for listing on the NRHP in consultation with the SHPO and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (if it is an indigenous archaeological site) and a determination of the project effects on the property will be made. If the site will be adversely affected, a treatment plan will also be prepared, as needed, during the assessment of the site’s significance. Assessment of inadvertent discoveries may require archaeological excavations or archival research to determine resource significance. Treatment plans will fully evaluate avoidance, project redesign, and data recovery alternatives before outlining actions proposed to resolve adverse effects.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

**Cult-3:** Cultural Resources, Discovery Provisions. In the event that human remains are discovered, work will cease immediately in the area of the find and the project manager/site supervisor will notify the appropriate C DPR and NPS personnel. Protocols under federal law will apply for discoveries on federal land. For discoveries of native human remains on state land, these would be handled by C DPR in accordance with state burial laws. The find will be secured and protected in place. The Marin County coroner will be notified in accordance with §7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be notified within 24

hours of the discovery if the Coroner determines that the remains are Native American. If a determination finds that the remains are Native American and that no further coroner investigation of the cause of death is required, they will be treated in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Regulations at 43 CFR 10.4 (Inadvertent Discoveries).

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

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## Geology and Soils

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**Geo-1:** Erosion Control - Prior to project construction, CDPR will prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP will identify all pollutant and sediment sources that may affect storm water discharges from the construction sites, identify and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion and runoff, and reduce or eliminate these pollutants and sediments during construction and post-construction, and develop a maintenance schedule for post-construction BMPs.

BMP erosion control methods include trail design strategies such as rolling grade dips and out-sloping to encourage sheet flow across a trail surface. In wet areas measures may include surface reinforcing (e.g. cobbles in combination with geotextile or sheet drain materials), boardwalks, and drainage lenses. Other measures include locating new trails to avoid steep and/or erosive slopes. The BMPs established for post-construction erosion control will be assessed annually and maintained as needed for a period of three years following construction.

Site-specific revegetation plans will utilize native species indigenous to the site for locations that are being rehabilitated. Quickly establishing vegetative cover on areas denuded from construction activities will minimize the potential for sediment production.

Prior to the start of construction, training will be provided by a qualified biologist to construction staff in order to inform workers of the presence of federally listed species (e.g. Coho salmon, and steelhead) in area streams and the necessity for implementing BMPs. This training will also identify boundaries of construction zones and identify proper disposal of construction debris and the proper response to fluid spills.

Implement Measure Haz-1 (see below).

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

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## Hazardous Materials

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**Haz-1:** Prior to the start of construction, the contractor will inspect all equipment for leaks and regularly inspect thereafter until equipment is removed from park premises.

Prior to the start of construction, CDPR and/or NPS will prepare a Spill Prevention and Response Plan (SPRP) as part of the SWPPP and maintain a spill kit on-site throughout the life of the project. This plan will include a map that delineates construction staging areas, where refueling, lubrication, and maintenance of equipment will occur. This plan will identify and employ best management practices (BMP) as appropriate and necessary to contain, collect and dispose of hazardous materials

and sediment. This plan will also identify lawfully permitted or authorized disposal destinations outside of park boundaries.

Refueling, lubrication, and equipment maintenance areas will be located at least 100 feet from any bodies of water, including but not limited to Redwood Creek.

In the event of any spill or release of any chemical in any physical form at the project site or within the boundaries of Mount Tamalpais State Park or GOGA during construction, the contractor will immediately notify the appropriate staff (e.g., project manager, supervisor, or State Representative) and implement appropriate spill containment procedures, as identified in the SPRP and SWPPP.

Equipment will be cleaned and repaired (other than emergency repairs) outside state and national park boundaries. All contaminated water, sludge, spill residue, or other hazardous compounds will be contained and disposed of outside park boundaries, at a lawfully permitted or authorized destination.  
*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

**Haz-2:** Prior to the start of construction, the contractor will develop a fire safety plan for NPS and CDPR approval. This plan will include the emergency calling procedures and any required employee training.

Spark arrestors or turbo-charging (which eliminates sparks in exhaust) and fire extinguishers will be required for all heavy equipment.

Construction crews will be required to park vehicles away from flammable material, such as dry grass or brush. At the end of each workday, heavy equipment will be parked over mineral soil, asphalt, gravel, or concrete to reduce the chance of fire.

Fire suppression equipment (fire extinguishers, fire hoses, etc.) will be available and located on park grounds. CDPR staff will be required to have a State Park radio on site, which will allow direct contact with the CDF and a centralized CDPR dispatch center, to facilitate the rapid deployment of control crews and equipment in case of a fire.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

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## Water Quality/Hydrology

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**Hydro-1:** The following measures will be included in the SWPPP for erosion control:

- Construction activities will not be planned during the rainy season, but if storms are anticipated during construction or if construction must occur during the rainy season (October 15 – April 15), “winterizing” will occur, including the covering (tarping) of any stockpiled soils and the use of temporary erosion control methods to protect disturbed soil.
- Temporary erosion control measures (BMPs) will be used during all soil disturbing activities and until all disturbed soil has been stabilized (recompacted, re-vegetated, etc.) in order to control soil and surface water runoff during construction activities. CDPR-approved BMPs, such as silt fences,

weed-free fiber rolls, mulch or other applicable techniques will be utilized. Information on example BMPs can be found in the Stormwater Best Management Practice Handbook for Construction, available on-line at [www.cabmphandbooks.com](http://www.cabmphandbooks.com).

- Permanent BMPs for erosion control will consist of properly compacting disturbed areas and revegetation of appropriate disturbed soil areas with native species using seed collected locally, where possible. If local native plant seeds are not available, a weed-free native mixture may be used with prior approval of the State's Representative.
- Final project design plans will include permanent BMP measures to be incorporated into the project.

*Responsible Party: NPS and CDPR Project Managers and Contractor(s)*

**Hydro-2:** The NPS will file a Notice of Intent with a map, fee, and SWPPP to the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board prior to commencement of construction activities. The General Permit requires: development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) which specifies Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will prevent all construction pollutants from contacting storm water and with the intent of keeping all products of erosion from moving off site into receiving waters; elimination or reduction of non-storm water discharges to storm sewer systems and other waters of the nation; inspection of all BMPs; and development and implementation of a monitoring program.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and NPS Environmental Compliance Specialist*

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## Noise

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**Noi-1:** Construction activities will be limited to the daylight hours, Monday – Friday. If weekend or holiday work is necessary, no work will occur on those days before 8:00 a.m. or after 6 p.m.

Stationary noise sources and staging areas will be located as far away from sensitive receptors as possible. If they must be located near sensitive receptors, stationary noise sources will be muffled to the extent feasible and/or, where practicable, enclosed within temporary sheds.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager and Contractor(s)*

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## Traffic and Circulation

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**Traffic-1:** Because the turn-off of Highway 1 into the project area is on a narrow and steep section of Hwy 1, a Construction Management and Traffic Control Plan will be required. This plan will require implementation of an appropriate construction signage program, and traffic control as required by Caltrans.

*Responsible Party: NPS Project Manager*

## IMPAIRMENT

## IMPAIRMENT

In addition to reviewing the list of significance criteria, the National Park Service has determined that implementation of the Selected Alternative and mitigation measures will not constitute any impairment to GGNRA's resources and values. There would be no major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is 1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the park's establishing legislation; 2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park; or 3) identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the environmental impacts described in the Environmental Assessment/Initial Study, the mitigation measures, agency consultations, considerations of the public comments received, relevant scientific studies, and the professional judgment of the decision-maker guided by the direction in NPS Management Policies 2006.

## CONCLUSION

Implementation of the Selected Alternative for the Dias Ridge Restoration & Trail Improvement Project will not have significant impacts on the human environment. The determination is sustained by the analysis in the EA/IS, agency consultations, the inclusion and consideration of public review, and the capability of mitigations to reduce or avoid impacts. Adverse environmental impacts that could occur are negligible to major in intensity, duration, and context and less-than-significant. As described in the EA/IS, there are no highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence. There are no previous, planned, or implemented actions, which in combination with the selected alternative would have significant effects on the human environment. Requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act have been satisfied and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The GGNRA will implement the Selected Alternative as soon as practical.

Recommended:



Brian O'Neill, Superintendent

Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service

6-13-08

Date

Approved:



Jonathan B. Jarvis, Regional Director

Pacific West Region, National Park Service

6-16-08

Date