



The Parks Conservancy in Marin County

The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy is a Bay Area nonprofit organization. This fact sheet provides information on its history, current activities, and plans for the future in Marin County.

What is the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy?

The “Parks Conservancy” is a local Bay Area nonprofit organization that supports parks and public lands in San Mateo, San Francisco, and Marin Counties. We strive to meet our vision—“Parks for All Forever”—through projects and programs that will assure the preservation and conservation of these incredible places now and forever, and provide for their public enjoyment.

What do you actually *do* to achieve your vision?

We help our public agency partners preserve natural habitats and protect endangered species, organize volunteers and community events, deliver programs to introduce children and their families to nature, facilitate research through community science, build and maintain park paths and trails, and operate visitor centers. More than 14,000 Bay Area residents are members of the Parks Conservancy, and almost 30,000 individuals volunteer each year to help steward and protect these beloved places.

What parks and public lands do you support in Marin?

Since the 1980s, we have worked hard to protect the lands that are part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. In Marin, this includes Muir Woods, the Marin Headlands, Fort Baker, and Tennessee Valley, as well as areas farther north around Olema Valley and Bolinas Lagoon. More recently, our work has extended to include the public lands on Mt. Tam.

Who do you work with in Marin?

The Conservancy does not own any land and does not create policies or regulations for the parks or protected areas we help support. Instead, we work collaboratively with the public agencies that manage these lands on behalf of the American public. In Marin, we work very closely with the National Park Service, California State Parks, Marin County Parks, and the Marin Municipal Water District. We also engage local communities to support and protect these lands.

CONSERVANCY INITIATIVES & INVESTMENTS IN PARKLANDS IN MARIN COUNTY

- ✓ **Restoring Natural Habitats** throughout southern Marin’s watersheds, including Redwood Creek, Oakwood Valley, and many other sites, and managing facilities, growing plants, and delivering programs at the Muir Woods, Tennessee Valley, and Marin Headlands native plant nurseries.
- ✓ **Supporting Conservation Research and Citizen Science** to help species such as the coho salmon, northern spotted owl, and mission blue butterfly, and monitoring birds of prey through the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory.
- ✓ **Providing Public Access to Parks** by building and rehabilitating over 40 miles of trails for hikers, bikers, and equestrians.
- ✓ **Providing Park Information and Interpretation** through funding, renovating, and helping to operate the Muir Woods and Marin Headlands Visitor Centers.
- ✓ **Serving Youth** through a variety of environmental education programs and volunteer programs, and by supporting the Conservation Corps North Bay.
- ✓ **Engaging Volunteers** to help support park interpretation and conservation.
- ✓ **Launching and Operating the Institute at the Golden Gate**, a Marin-based program focused on advancing environmental stewardship and human wellbeing.
- ✓ **Launching the One Tam Initiative** to engage the community in the long-term care of Mt. Tam.

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If you don't own the land, what is your role?

As a nonprofit organization, the Parks Conservancy helps engage the community in the care and enjoyment of these treasured places. In concert with our partners, we deliver programs for volunteers, youth, and park visitors. In the same spirit of philanthropy that William Kent applied to save Muir Woods, we secure grants and donations from individuals, foundations, and public funding sources. We are able to add staff capacity to support agency restoration and community engagement priorities, and we can bring together other nonprofits and governmental agencies to share and leverage these funds and human resources.

How much support have you given to the parks and what level has benefited parks and public lands in Marin County?

To date, the Conservancy has provided over \$360 million in support to park projects and programs within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. We have helped provide *more than \$50 million* in support to parks, public lands, and local communities in Marin County over the past 30 years.

So where does the Parks Conservancy's funding come from?

The Conservancy receives its funding through philanthropic contributions, visitor services and programs, and partnership funds. Members and donors provide general support as well as contributing to specific projects and programs. Interpretive programs and services at Alcatraz, the Golden Gate Bridge, and various park visitor centers also generate funds. With our agency partners, we frequently "cost share" the implementation of projects and programs.

Does the Parks Conservancy make money at Muir Woods?

At the Muir Woods Visitor Center, operated by the Conservancy, we collect park entrance fees on behalf of the National Park Service. The funds collected from the entrance fees go to the National Park Service, minus a small percentage to the Conservancy to cover direct costs of the fee collection. The Muir Woods Visitor Center generates a very modest income, all of which is reinvested in park support.

Is the Parks Conservancy taking money out of Marin County?

No. The Conservancy invests far more money in Marin than we earn there. In 2014, we invested several million dollars on projects and programs in Marin, while only generating a small fraction of that support there.

What are the Parks Conservancy's future plans in Marin?

The Parks Conservancy is proud to have supported the national parks in Marin for the past 30 years through community science and educational programs, volunteer stewardship, and restoration projects large and small. We plan to continue these efforts to steward and protect Marin parks and open spaces for current and future generations. Recently, we helped launch a new initiative called One Tam, which is an exciting and innovative new collaboration with the four land management agencies on Mt. Tam. We invite you to check out our website (www.onetam.org) or email us at info@onetam.org to learn more.

Isn't the Conservancy really a San Francisco organization?

The Conservancy's central office is at Fort Mason, located with our primary agency partner, the National Park Service. However, throughout our history, we have had and continue to have offices and operations in Marin County. In fact, our earliest operations were at Muir Woods. Many of the Conservancy's staff, board, donors, and volunteers live in Marin County.

If I want more information about the Parks Conservancy, how can I reach you?

Visit our website (www.parksconservancy.org), email tellmemore@parksconservancy.org, or call 415-561-3054.