

PRNS General Management Plan Comments

The Marin Horse Council, supporting the equine community in Marin since 1981 and partners with Point Reyes National Seashore since its founding, agrees with the park superintendent and staff that the preferred alternative in the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the General Management Plan Amendment for Point Reyes National Seashore and the North District of Golden Gate National Recreation Area* best supports the NPS's ability to maintain historic resources and cultural landscapes that are integral to the park's historic districts.

Not only do the ranches continue to uphold the original intent for the creation of this national park, they are a living demonstration of our historical and cultural heritage. Marin's dairy ranches were the first commercial dairy operations to support the development of the Bay Area, and as they were of economic importance 150 years ago, they continue to be of economic importance to our county and region. Together with cattle, horses and other equines represent both the past and future of the cultural and historic landscape of West Marin.

The two main arguments to oppose continued ranching in the seashore are "to restore wilderness" and "the climate impact of the ranches." For 3000 years the region has been farmed by the local population, so a "restoration of wilderness" is a biological proposition without clear meaning, as well as one that runs contrary to the Park's mission of preserving the culture heritage of West Marin. Marin County is an international leader in an agricultural practice known as Carbon Farming—we are demonstrating the benefits of soil carbon sequestration and are working with our local ranches to be "carbon sinks" rather than "carbon emitters." Our agricultural production can be a sustainable model for agricultural practices nationwide—and we have some of the best organic dairy products to show for it!

We have recently supported the reopening of the park's Horse Camp and bolstering of the Mounted Patrol, and look forward to supporting the sustainable historic ranching at Point Reyes National Seashore—as well as the tremendous natural resources that "our park" offers. We look forward to passing on this natural beauty for generations to come. Thank you for protecting our National Seashore!

Richard Holland
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Marin County