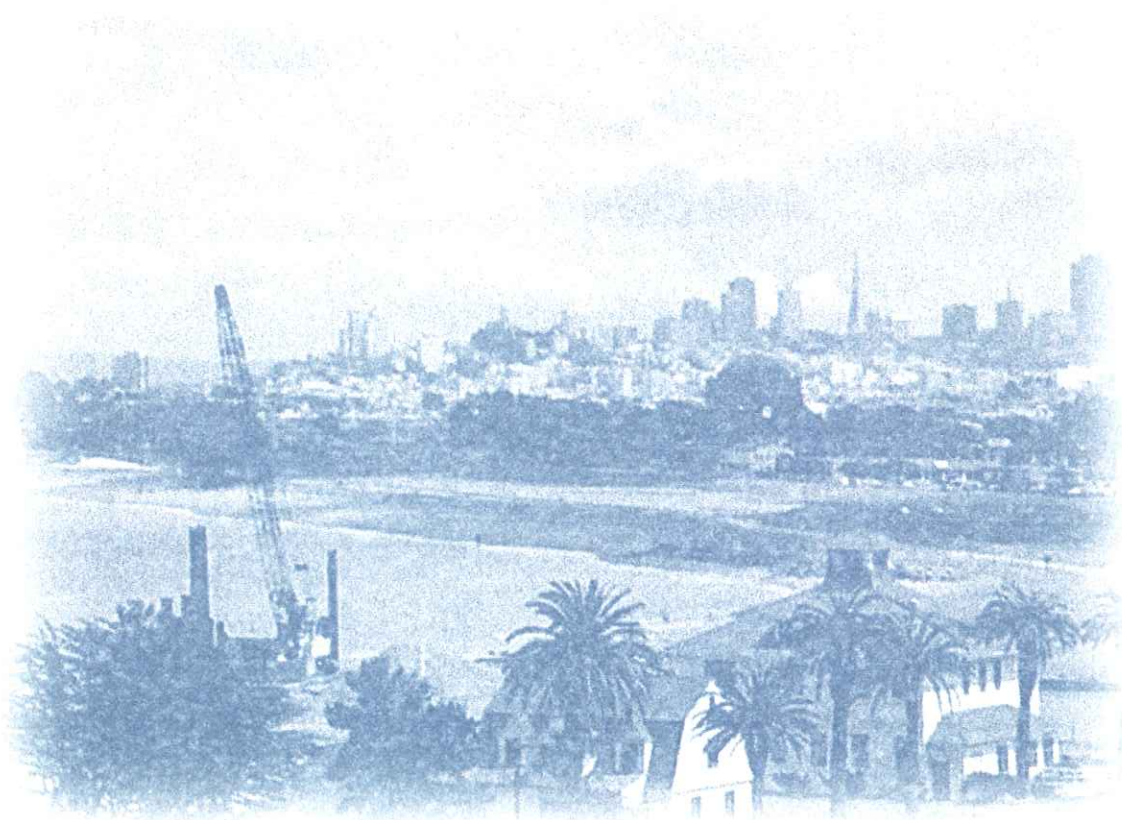


# Presidio Stories

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**Presidio Stories Symposium**  
**April 12 - 15, 2000**

*Summary Report*

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For:

Presidio Trust

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 13-15, 2000, the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service hosted *Presidio Stories: A Visitor Experience and Interpretation Symposium* on the Presidio at the Golden Gate Club. The purpose of the conference was to develop unifying concepts for the interpretation of the Presidio. It extended the work begun by the General Management Plan Amendment of 1994, the Long Range Interpretive Plan of 1998, and the focus groups convened in 2000.

The Symposium drew nearly 60 invited participants from around the country, who participated in an intense three-day program. In addition to Presidio Trust Board members, Trust staff, and National Park Service representatives, the participants included experts from a wide range of subjects, including natural resources, cultural resources, general and military history, minority communities including Native Americans, travel and tourism, and media technology, among others. A full list of Symposium participants is included at the end of the report.

The Symposium included a field tour of the Presidio, five interdisciplinary brainstorming groups, and plenary sessions at the opening and conclusion of the meeting. Rose Ochi of the Department of Justice spoke on inclusive interpretation. Addresses by NPS Director Robert G. Stanton, NPS Regional Director John Reynolds, GGNRA Superintendent Brian O'Neill, and Presidio Trust Executive Director Jim Meadows all endorsed the unique partnership of the Trust and the Park Service at the Presidio.

The energy level was consistently high and participants discussed a full range of interpretation issues. Several key themes emerged, including the complexity of the park, the necessity of "telling all the stories", the role of oral histories, the diversity of our audiences, the need to explain not only the past but also the future of this sustainable park, and the role of new media in contemporary interpretation. Participants focused on the many stories which can and should be told at the Presidio; however, it is generally agreed that even this intense three-day event could not address all the Presidio stories, and others may emerge in the future.

This Report organizes the stories that emerged into five categories:

- (1) Military History,
- (2) Crossroads of Culture,
- (3) Restoring Natural Systems,
- (4) Changing Landscapes and
- (5) Transformation: The Presidio from “Post to Park”.

The Trust and NPS staffs were energized by working together with the park's stakeholders toward a common goal. Since the Symposium, the Trust and the Park Service have begun an action plan for park interpretation. Milestones in this process included a follow-up discussion on August 23 to prioritize key stories, and a public forum on October 4, which informed the plans of the Presidio Trust and National Park Service.



*Symposium participants discuss archaeology at the Main Post.*

## INTRODUCTION

### **Visitor Experience and Interpretation at the Presidio**

Visitor experience and interpretation are essential elements of any unit of the National Park Service. The visitor experience at the Presidio is diverse and varied, due to the complex history, landscape, and resources of the site. Interpretation at the Presidio refers to telling the stories of the Presidio in a way that addresses a diverse range of visitor needs and experiences.

The Presidio of San Francisco is in a unique position as a national park. It is in a period of transition, from military use to national park. Additionally, the Presidio is also a unique unit within the National Park System, as it is administered by both the Park Service and the Presidio Trust, which is a government corporation. The Presidio Trust manages about 80% of the Presidio, and has the additional mandate of being financially self-sustainable by the year 2013. The National Park Service manages the remainder of the Presidio, and is also responsible for providing visitor orientation, interpretive services, and education programs throughout the park, in cooperation with the Trust. The National Park Service and the Presidio Trust have undertaken the challenge of developing a new model of interpretation, education and community outreach for the Presidio of San Francisco. The visitor experience at the Presidio will be educational, interactive, and accessible to a wide range of visitors.

The Presidio Stories Symposium was an opportunity for the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust to call on experts in many disciplines to develop ideas and themes for visitor experience and interpretation at the Presidio. This Report presents the results of the Symposium, and looks at the next steps for enhancing the visitor experience at the Presidio.



*Golden Gate Promenade*

## **Presidio Background Information And History**

The Presidio of San Francisco is a national park of uncommon beauty and history in the heart of a flourishing urban area. The Park encompasses 1,480 acres from the Pacific Ocean to the San Francisco Bay. The Presidio offers visitors a diverse range of resources and experiences, including forested areas, a shoreline promenade, historic buildings, and interpretive programs which reflect the Presidio's rich history. Additionally, the Presidio is home to a dozen native plant communities, and is a National Historic Landmark District.

While the Presidio was the oldest continuously operated military base in the country, the story of the site begins long before the military occupation. The history of the Presidio spans Native American settlements and over 200 years of military use by Spanish, Mexican and United States armies.

Today, the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust face many opportunities and challenges as they consider the future of the Presidio. Examples of issues include preservation of natural systems amid a recreation area in an urban environment, and creating a sustainable plan for the future tenancy and management of the Presidio. The opportunity and challenge that was the main focus of the Presidio Stories Symposium is that of creating an interpretive experience for visitors to learn about the vast and varied Presidio stories, while having the opportunity to tell their own stories and make them a part of the greater Presidio experience.

*Crossroads...of past, present and  
future, of wild and urban, of  
recreation and preservation.*



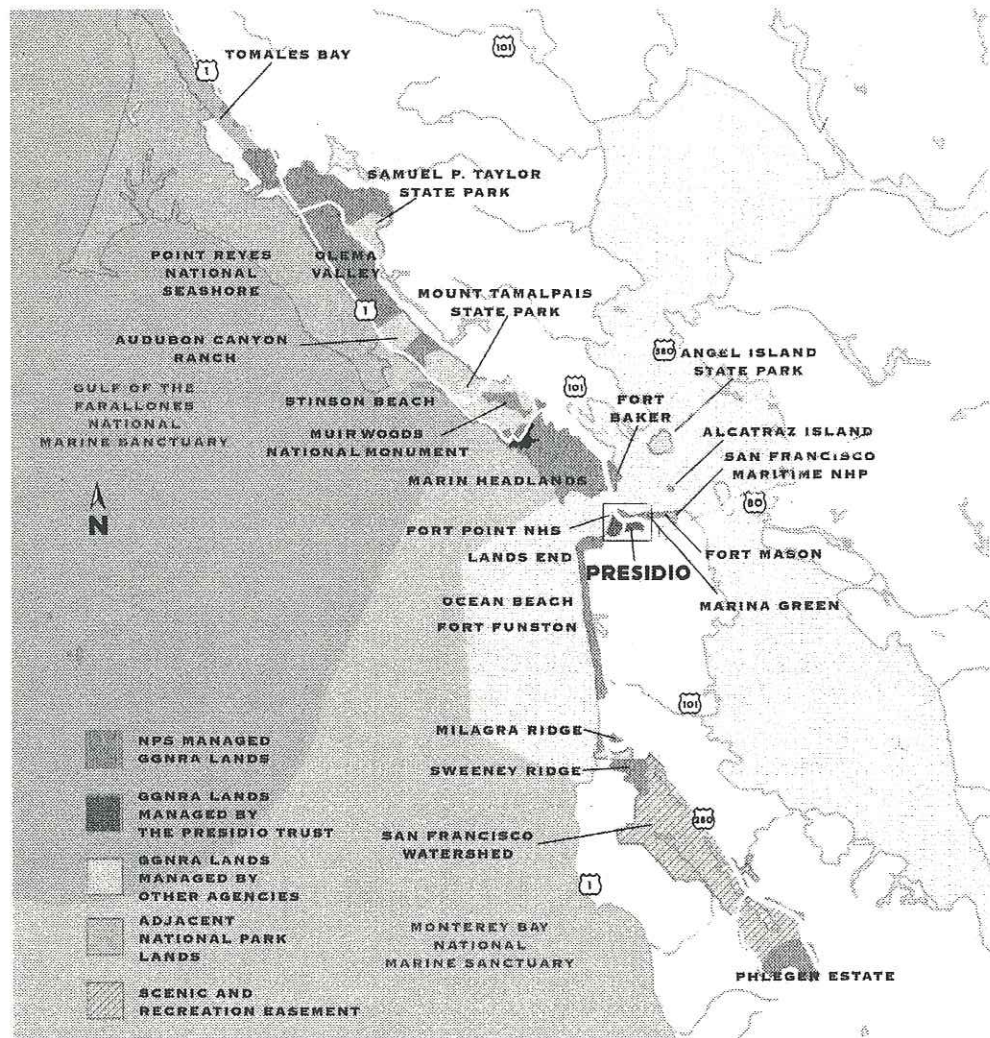
### **Location and Resources**

The Presidio is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, a national park created in 1972 that links preserved open spaces to the north and south of the Golden Gate.

The location of the Presidio has been significant throughout time. In terms of natural features, the Presidio stands at the headlands of the Golden Gate, the meeting point of the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay. The Presidio also served as a coastal defense station for the principal American port of entry on the West Coast.

The Presidio preserves natural environments within a heavily urbanized area, but unlike any other National Park, it also contains more than 750 buildings, a golf course, a national cemetery, and a full range of recreational and community services on its 1,480 acres.

This map locates the Presidio of San Francisco within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.



### **Presidio Transition: From Post To Park**

The Presidio was one of the longest-used military bases in the United States. The Spanish, Mexican and United States armies each occupied the Presidio. Due to its location at the Golden Gate, the Presidio provided 200 years of coastal defense, and marked the western frontier for the United States military.

The Presidio was included in Congress's 1972 authorization of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The law stated that the post was to be transferred to the National Recreation Area when the Army determined that the base was excess to their needs. In 1989, as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure Act, the Army announced that the post would be closed. In 1990, the National Park Service began planning for the conversion to a national park. This process culminated in the General Management Plan Amendment for the Presidio issued in 1994. In October 1994, jurisdiction of the Presidio was transferred from the United States Army to the National Park Service. In 1996, Congress established the Presidio Trust, which assumed administration of 80% of the Presidio in July 1998. The transformation from a military post to a self-sustaining national park is a singular experience within the national park system. This presents unique and diverse opportunities for Presidio visitors.

Thus, the military stories of the Presidio will play an integral role in the visitor experience. Additionally, the military stories are linked with other facets of the transformation of the Presidio, such as the changes to the natural environment, and the stories of the people who inhabited the Presidio over time.

*“One of the great challenges of interpretation is to deliver a message that is truthful, balanced and as fair as we can make it.”*  
--NPS Director

### **National Park Service and Presidio Trust Partnership**

The Presidio Trust and the National Park Service, in partnership, are responsible for the preservation, enhancement, maintenance and operation of the Presidio. The Trust manages the interior non-coastal areas of the Presidio, while the National Park Service is in charge of the coastal areas. The Trust and the National Park Service work together to provide educational, resource management, public safety, interpretive and visitor services throughout the park.

In addition to the services provided by the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust, numerous community organizations also work to support education, conservation and sustainability programs at the Presidio.

Robert Stanton, National Park Service Director, and Jim Meadows, Director of the Presidio Trust, spoke at the Presidio Stories Symposium. Their speeches outlined the roles of the two organizations and the partnership between the NPS and the Trust.

This excerpt from Director Stanton's speech illustrates the role of the NPS at the Presidio regarding the visitor experience:

*“The overriding, unifying role of the National Park Service here at the Presidio is our responsibility to tell the story of this place in all its varied parts for those who come here from down the street or around the world. The telling of the story is what we call interpretation... The National Park Service plays an important role in shaping the environment, civic life, cultural heritage, economy, and future of the nation's cities and the communities ... This role must be based on sound stewardship of resources and an accurate understanding of the relationship between people, parks, and their environment.”*

Presidio Trust Director Jim Meadows' remarks explained the complementary roles of the Trust and NPS in enhancing the visitor experience at the Presidio:

*“The National Park Service brings great traditions, a knowledge base, planning, concepts and a national perspective, while the Trust brings fresh perspectives, new technologies, funding, implementation and a Presidio focus ... Each organization's strengths, when combined in partnership, can achieve what neither organization could do by itself.”*

## THE PRESIDIO STORIES SYMPOSIUM

### Planning Process for the Presidio Stories Symposium

#### Purpose And Goals Of The Symposium

##### *Purpose*

The National Park Service and the Presidio Trust are charged with preserving the resources of the Presidio, and ensuring that they are accessible to visitors. The interpretive information that is available must effectively convey the significance of these resources.

The Presidio Stories Symposium was an important step in enhancing the visitor interpretive experience at the Presidio. At the Symposium, participants worked together to help identify the most meaningful stories that are represented in the natural, historical, architectural and cultural resources of the Presidio, to find new and innovative ways to tell these stories, and to give Presidio visitors opportunities to tell their own stories.

With the results of the Symposium, the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust will build on the Presidio General Management Plan Amendment planning process and move forward to incorporate new opportunities into the development of the Presidio's interpretation and visitor experience programs.

*“What should the big picture of the Presidio be?  
Where is the vision that will stir our blood, that  
will be commensurate with the unique quality,  
beauty and inspiration of this world-class site?”*

*– Former NPS Director William P. Mott, Jr.*

## *Goals*

The Presidio Stories Symposium Planning Committee developed a list of goals for the outcome of the symposium. The Planning Committee determined that unifying concepts are needed to address diverse visitor experiences, and tell the stories of the Presidio in a compelling way. The goals for the Presidio Stories Symposium were:

- 1. Identify the special places and messages which convey the historical, cultural, and natural stories of the Presidio.*
- 2. Articulate the desired visitor experience(s) at the Presidio and generate ideas on how the Presidio should serve a broad and diverse local constituency, national and international visitors.*
- 3. Provide recommendations for Presidio tenants, Trust and National Park Service managers to enhance interpretation and educational opportunities.*
- 4. Explore links to other related interpretive, visitor service and educational efforts.*
- 5. Enhance public interest in the value and relevancy of the Presidio.*
- 6. Create an interpretive model for the Presidio as a National Park of the twenty-first century.*

## **Evolution Of The Symposium**

Citizens' concern for the future interpretation and visitor experience at the park provided an impetus for the Presidio Stories Symposium. NPS and Trust staff also recognized the need for organizing and presenting the many stories that are intrinsically part of the past, present, and future of the Presidio. To assist in creating a more complete visitor experience, and to help formulate an interpretive plan for the Presidio which could fully engage myriad and diverse visitors, the Trust and the Park Service decided to draw upon a broad pool of expertise, both local and national, to participate in the Symposium.

The Presidio Stories Planning Committee worked together to create the Presidio Stories Symposium. The Planning Committee was comprised of a core group of Presidio Trust staff, National Park Service staff, and the Symposium facilitators. The Planning Committee developed a list of participants, all of whom are interested in the future of the Presidio and the visitor interpretive experience.

The Presidio Stories Symposium builds on past planning efforts and focuses on implementation. Building on the Presidio General Management Plan Amendment, an interdisciplinary team of NPS and Presidio Trust staff conducted three internal workshops on interpretation and the visitor experience for three specific sites: Letterman Complex, Public Health Service Complex and the Main Post. Additionally, the Presidio Trust sponsored a public workshop on interpretation and visitor services in September 1999. The results of these workshops began to identify some of the key stories of the Presidio, and to identify new interpretive tools.

### **Stakeholder Focus Groups**

As part of the planning process for the Presidio Stories Symposium, the Planning Committee held stakeholder focus groups in January and February, 2000. The focus groups were held as a way to prepare for the Symposium, and many of the same questions regarding how to tell the Presidio stories were presented. Focus groups met to consider the goals for Presidio interpretation and visitor experience, identify areas of concern, and provide recommendations for the Symposium.

Each of the focus groups had unique comments on the Presidio interpretive experience. Following is a listing of the focus groups, and some of the main observations of each group:

- 1) **The Golden Gate National Recreation Area Staff of natural and cultural resource managers** had many resonant responses and concrete suggestions. They saw the post in its (1) historic, (2) natural, and (3) recreational dimensions.
- 2) **The Environmental Interest Group** stressed the need to manage watersheds and plant communities as ecological systems. They called for partnerships with local educational institutions for research and classes. They also urged "artistic interpretations."
- 3) **The Tourism and Travel Group** had a strong response to the natural beauty of the post and expressed a great sense of surprise at discovering so many historic buildings here. They also mentioned the experience of getting lost in the park. The Tourism Group noted that the Presidio is marked by "segmentation - you can't go from here to there - it is confusing." This group also stated that "the scope of the Presidio is too big of a problem."
- 4) **The Museum and History Group** had a strong sense of the Presidio as a lived Army experience, and also of the role of hierarchy and ritual in military life. This group stressed the geopolitical "big picture" in the founding and expansion of the post. They advocated a major museum at the Presidio.
- 5) **The Presidio Tenants Group** saw the park in its present state and sensed that the park/post is historic and wanted more historical interpretation. There was a sense of a new community evolving here.



- 6) **The Presidio Interpreter Focus Group** also had specific knowledge and gave concrete suggestions regarding essential elements to be included in the visitor interpretive experience.

The focus group participants provided valuable input about the visitor interpretive experience at the Presidio and began the process of organizing the multitude of stories associated with the site.

Appendix B of this report contains a list of focus group participants and summarizes the participants' input.

### **SYMPOSIUM DESCRIPTION**

The Presidio Stories Symposium was a three-day event, which was held April 13-15, 2000. The main sessions were held at the Golden Gate Club (Building 135), at the Main Post of the Presidio. The format of the Symposium included speeches and presentations, facilitated plenary sessions, which were graphically recorded, and facilitated small, interdisciplinary working groups.

In addition to the sessions held at the Golden Gate Club, Symposium attendees participated in a field tour of the Presidio, an evening reception, and had the option to participate in events held in San Francisco, such as trips to Alcatraz and Point Bonita Lighthouse.

Approximately 60 people attended the Symposium. The attendees are experts in their fields, and comprised a diverse and knowledgeable group, including historians, artists, community activists, ecologists, museum professionals, and educators.

## **KEY PRESENTATIONS OF THE SYMPOSIUM**

There were many informative presentations given during the Presidio Stories Symposium. This report contains brief summaries of the key points of the speeches. Full transcriptions of most of the speeches are available in Appendix A of the report

### **Amy Meyer**

#### **Member of the Presidio Trust Board of Directors**

Amy Meyer gave introductory comments on Thursday, April 13, with a speech entitled “Interpretation at the Presidio: A Presidio Trust Perspective.” Ms. Meyer began her speech with a description of the Presidio as a “palimpsest,” a tablet that has been written on several times, and imperfectly erased, so that traces of earlier images are still visible. The idea of the Presidio as a palimpsest carried through the Symposium, and helped to feed ideas about Presidio stories and themes.

Ms. Meyer gave a history of the Presidio over the last thirty years, including the efforts to save the Golden Gate for public use and the subsequent creation of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Her speech also emphasized the unique and special qualities of the Presidio, and asked the Symposium participants to help to “shape an image of the Presidio that is multi-faceted and yet readily understandable.”

**John Reynolds**

**Regional Director of the Pacific West Region of the National Park Service**

John Reynolds also presented introductory comments on the morning of Thursday, April 13. Mr. Reynolds' speech gave a brief history of the Presidio as part of the National Park System, and accentuated the Presidio as "a place of national, cultural and military significance of the highest order."

Additionally, Mr. Reynolds asked the Symposium participants to use their vision to create a direction for the park that will include all visitors, and to "create a link between what is here and the promise to humankind to use this place not just for secular activities, daily recreation and entertainment, but for inspiration and hope, for the application of intellect and creativity that can last beyond our time in the ideals of future generations."

**Rose Ochi**

**Director of the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service**

Also on Thursday, Rose Ochi delivered a moving speech on the subject of Inclusive Interpretation, or telling all of the stories. Ms. Ochi explained that as director of the federal government's race relations arm, she has a special interest in advancing the sentiments and trends that can affect diverse racial and ethnic communities in this country. Following the Symposium's theme of telling stories, Ms. Ochi told the story of how Manzanar, a former internment camp for Japanese Americans during World War II, became a part of the National Park System. Ms. Ochi's speech also emphasized that in considering the future of the Presidio, it is important to consider ways that the National Park System could be more relevant to all ethnic groups, particularly minorities, which generally have a low participation rate in the National Parks. One of the most important messages in Ms. Ochi's speech is that "whether developing themes for the Presidio Trust, or interpreting all stories, developing integrating themes must include the basic core principles upon which this country was founded: equality, opportunity, and fair play."

*"Themes must include the basic core principles upon which this country was founded: equality, opportunity and fair play."*

**Robert G. Stanton**

**Director of the National Park Service**

On Friday, April 14, Director Robert G. Stanton delivered a speech entitled “National Parks in the Twenty-First Century.” Director Stanton discussed the role of the National Park Service as caretakers of a nation’s heritage, as well as having the responsibility to tell the *full stories* of America’s special places, which symbolize much of what is valued about this country. Mr. Stanton also identified the role of the National Park Service at the Presidio “to tell the story of this place in all its varied parts for those who come here from down the street or around the world. The telling of that story is what we call interpretation.” Interpretation is integral to the National Park System, since it fosters the understanding that makes preservation possible. Director Stanton also lauded the effective partnership between the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust in making the Presidio of San Francisco a sustainable national park.

**Jim Meadows**

**Director of the Presidio Trust**

On Wednesday, April 12, at an evening reception at Trust House, Executive Director Jim Meadows welcomed the Symposium participants. Mr. Meadows noted that while many people see the Presidio Trust as a real estate operation, it is truly a **preservation organization**. The purpose of the Trust is to responsibly preserve the Presidio as a national park in perpetuity.

On Friday, April 14, the concluding day of the Symposium, Mr. Meadows sketched the economic realities involved in converting the Presidio from an Army post to a national park. He then outlined the respective roles of the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service in meeting the challenge of converting the Presidio of San Francisco from a military post to a national park. He presented a series of complementary pairs of strengths and values that each organization brings to this task:

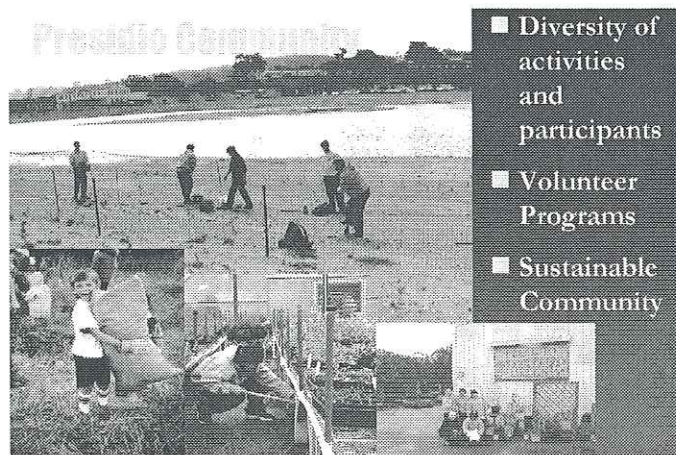
<u>National Park Service</u>	<u>Presidio Trust</u>
Great Traditions .....	Fresh Perspectives
Knowledge Based .....	New Technologies
Planning .....	Funding
Concepts.....	Implementation
National Focus .....	Presidio Focus

Mr. Meadows indicated that the two organizations' strengths, when combined in partnership, could achieve what neither organization could do by itself.

**Carey Feierabend**

**Planning Manager of the Presidio Trust**

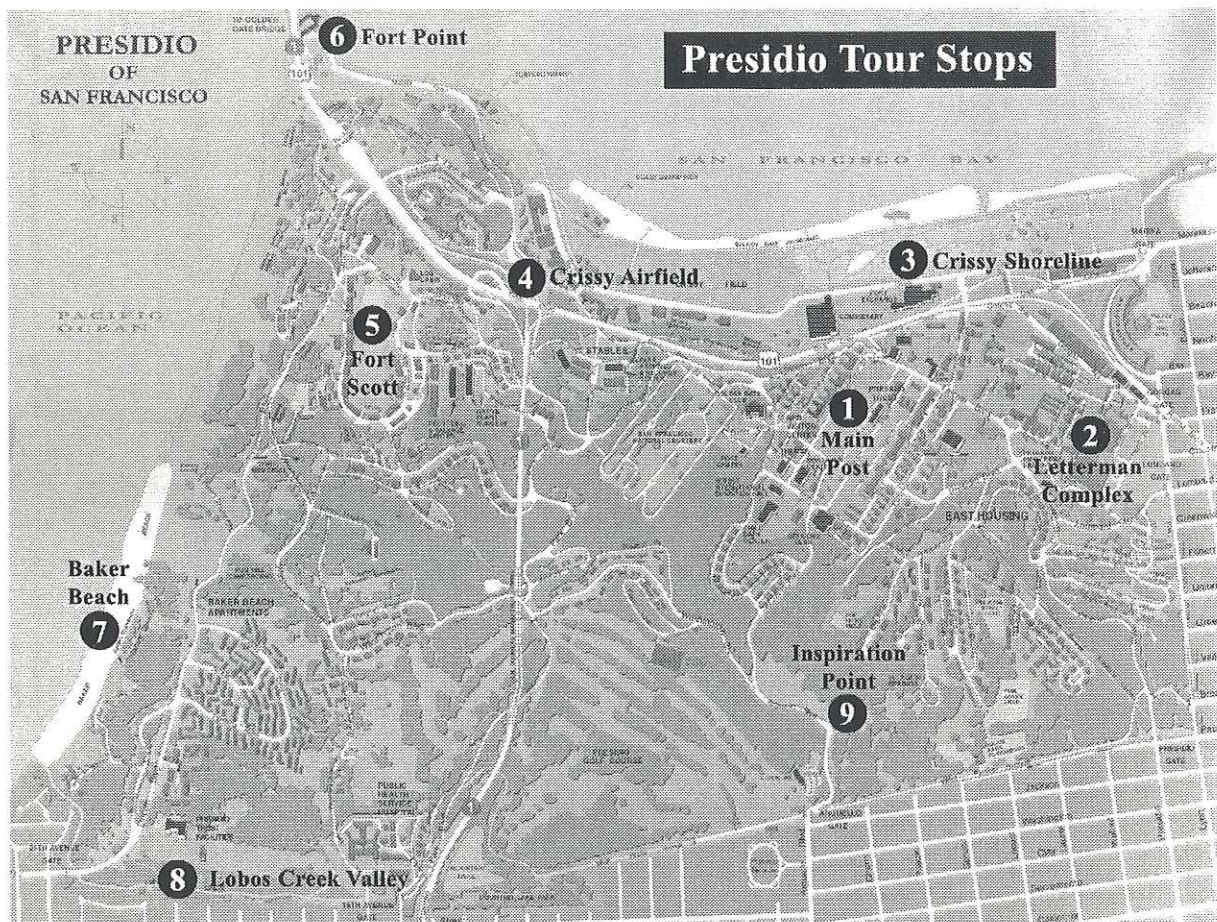
Ms. Feierabend used a slideshow to present a virtual tour of the Presidio, highlighting many of the Presidio’s main features, such as the Main Post, Letterman Complex, Calvary Stables, the Golden Gate Bridge and Fort Point. Additionally, the presentation noted many of the Presidio resources, such as historic sites, ecological resources, recreation areas and places to live. After the slideshow, Symposium participants went on the field tour of the Presidio, visiting many of the sites that Ms. Feierabend had discussed. Following are examples of slides from the presentation.



### PRESIDIO FIELD TOUR

On Thursday, April 13, symposium participants took a bus tour of the Presidio, visiting nine areas of the park. Participants were provided with a *Field Tour Workbook*, which provided information about each of the sites as well as space to record observations, impressions, and ideas for future interpretive programs and activities.

This map illustrates the nine stops on the Presidio bus tour.





Symposium participants discussed their impressions of the Presidio tour and made suggestions for interpretation and the visitor experience at a plenary session held immediately after the tour.

The following section provides a brief description of each site and highlights from the discussions and ideas inspired by each of these unique resources.

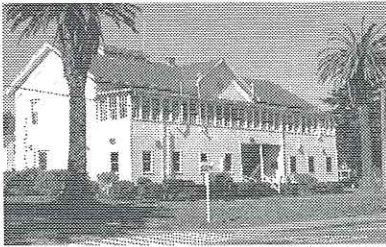
Unifying concepts that apply to many or all of the sites include:

- Preservation and reuse at the Presidio
- Military history and societal implications
- Interaction of the built and natural environments
- Experiences of all cultures
- Oral/video history projects: helping people tell their own stories
- Significance of volunteerism
- Spectacular views



*Symposium attendees during the field tours of the Presidio.*





*Buildings 36 (above) and 50, the Officers' Club (below), are among the historic buildings on the Main Post.*



## Main Post

### *Site Description*

The Main Post is the heart of the Presidio of San Francisco, taking visitors back through 200 years of military history, beginning with the El Presidio site in 1776. Its unique concentration of US military architecture – from the 1820s to recent times – includes resources such as the Officers' Club (1820s, 1934 & 1972), Montgomery Street Barracks (1890s), Chapel of Our Lady (1864, 1952 & 1970s), Funston Avenue Officers' Row (1862), and Post Office (1900). Other landmarks include Pershing Square, the flagpole, and the two Parade Grounds. Today, buildings at the Main Post are leased to tenants, such as those in the film and technology industries. The Main Post also houses the Presidio Visitor Center, continuing its tradition as the area's "community center."

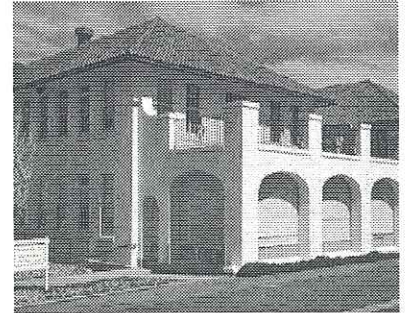
### *Impressions*

Those who visited the Main Post recognized the importance of the historical resources at the site, particularly its connection to US military history. Many also felt that the Presidio should integrate the experiences of various ethnic groups, such as the Ohlone. Suggestions for providing such interpretation included: oral history kiosks, walking tours with audiotapes, continued archeological research, and a library/museum. Participants also suggested using the parade grounds for reenacting traditional military ceremonies, and for concerts, film festivals, and other activities. To improve the historic feel of the Main Post, it was also suggested that parking and traffic be diverted elsewhere. The Officers' Club, with its excellent views of the Presidio, was cited as a good location for a new museum.

## Letterman Complex

### *Site Description*

Founded in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, the Letterman Complex provided medical services to military personnel and their families into the 1990s. Many Presidio visitors who served in the Army have a direct link with this facility, once the largest military hospital in the West. The Letterman Complex is a gateway to the Presidio, adjacent to the main park entrance at the Lombard Street Gate. The site also features views of the 1915 Palace of Fine Arts, Victorian Officers' quarters on O'Reilly Avenue, and World War I warehouses on Gorgas Avenue. The Old Letterman Hospital and outbuildings, dating from 1900-1924, have been partially rehabilitated for new uses. The Thoreau Center at the complex houses approximately 50 non-profit organizations and is a model of sustainable design. A digital arts center has been proposed for the 23-acre former Letterman Army Medical Center and Research Institute site.



*Part of the rehabilitated historic Letterman Hospital, now the Thoreau Center for Sustainability.*

### *Impressions*

While visitors were taken with the mission and innovative design of the Thoreau Center, they suggested making the displays more prominent, including more photographs and visual displays, and providing more information about the resident non-profit groups and trumpeting their accomplishments. The Thoreau Center provides a link to the history of medicine at Letterman through its commitment to social change and as an example of how partnerships between government, the private sector, and citizens have evolved over time. Letterman's contributions to the annals of medicine could be highlighted through a museum display and oral histories. Such an exhibit should integrate the contributions of women – without setting women's history apart from the whole. The existing historic photographs are an excellent resource on the history of medicine at Letterman, and can be complemented with new graphic presentation techniques and films. The Presidio's connection to the digital arts provides a unique opportunity to create innovative displays.

*Letterman Army Medical Center, to be demolished.*



## Crissy Shoreline

### *Site Description*

Once a Native American gathering place, the Crissy Shoreline has long been a center of recreational activity at the Presidio. The site features the Golden Gate Promenade, a 2.5-mile walk along the bay shore with dramatic views of San Francisco Bay, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Presidio. The shoreline also provides premier boardsailing opportunities. The Crissy Shoreline is an excellent example of environmental restoration, with a recreated marsh and native plant restoration at beaches and dunes. The Crissy Field Center, a community environmental education center, provides an important link to the natural history of the Presidio area.



### *Impressions*

The progress and mission of the restoration project impressed tour participants. Through its community partnerships, the project has been much more than an environmental restoration. It fulfills the Park Service mandate to protect resources and to educate the public, and is a unique example of how the built and natural environments can coexist harmoniously. In particular, the contribution of community volunteers has been outstanding. The names of volunteers should be documented so that future generations can recognize these contributions. Participants also felt that the cultural resources of the site should be highlighted further, suggesting that descendants of the Ohlone Yelamu tribe be consulted in developing the visitor center and the Crissy Center. Also through the Center, Crissy Shoreline can become an “outdoor classroom” for children to learn about environmental stewardship.



*Two views of the restored Crissy shoreline, including the wetlands.*

## **Crissy Airfield**

### *Site Description*

Crissy Airfield contributed to the development of air transport, both military and civilian, during aviation's pioneering days in the 1920s and 30s. Crissy Field witnessed several aviation firsts, such as the "Dawn to Dusk" transcontinental flight and the first flight around the world. During World War II, Crissy Airfield was the site of the Military Intelligence Service Japanese Language School. Today, the historic airfield has been restored for interpretive purposes, and connects to the Golden Gate Promenade/San Francisco Bay Trail, with its scenic views of San Francisco and the 1915 Palace of Fine Arts. Buildings at the site host the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, and the State of the World Forum.

### *Impressions*

The airfield witnessed great technological leaps in aviation. Crissy Airfield can be used to highlight advances in technology, and could host trade shows and exhibits on the newest technologies. The connection with the language school provides an opportunity to present the history of Japanese-American soldiers during World War II. Building 640 was suggested as a site for "quiet reflection" on the Japanese American experience. Oral histories of Japanese Nisei who served at the Presidio would also provide a moving narrative of how they contributed to the war effort, even as their families were held in internment camps.

## **Fort Scott**

### *Site Description*

Situated near the gun batteries of the coastal bluffs, Fort Winfield Scott was established in 1912 as a “post within the post” to serve as headquarters for the Coastal Artillery Corps in the San Francisco Bay Area. This site is known for role it played in coastal defense. Fort Scott is also notable for its architecture. The first Mission Revival style buildings of the Presidio characterize the fort, and its U-shaped parade ground breaks from the traditional rectangular design. Nearby environmental resources of interest include a planted forest from 1882, a native plant nursery, and coastal bluffs with native vegetation.

### *Impressions*

Fort Scott provides an opportunity to examine the history of coastal defense. In particular, some participants felt the theme, “200 years of fear,” would resonate at an interpretive center here. Participants also reacted positively to the efforts planned for the Presidio Institute. Through such an organization, activities at Fort Scott could provide a deeper level of analysis and thinking than presentations at the main visitors’ center. For example, the center could focus on the philosophical implications of war, and how war has shaped technological and social histories. Another suggestion focused on present day implications of war – the decommissioning of military posts and their conversion to civilian use.

## Fort Point

### *Site Description*

In 1794, the Spanish cut down the bluff at Fort Point to build *El Castillo de San Joaquin*, and outfitted it with 13 brass cannons. By the Civil War, a newly constructed brick fort guarded the Golden Gate from the point, but it was subsequently replaced by gun batteries on the bluffs and underwater mines. Today, the Fort offers spectacular views of the world-renowned Golden Gate Bridge, constructed between 1934 and 1937, and across the Golden Gate to the Marin headlands. It is also a popular destination for surfing, fishing, jogging, and other recreational activities.

### *Impressions*

The Golden Gate Bridge attracts tourists from all over the world and is a famous international icon. A film, slide show, or kiosk at the main visitor center would be an appropriate interpretive medium for this site, with additional written material that visitors could take with them. Oral histories might highlight the significance of the Golden Gate Bridge to international visitors. The plaza roundhouse is an ideal location for an interpretive facility. The juxtaposition of Fort Point and the Golden Gate is interesting because one is a barrier to entry, while the other is a portal into the United States. The bridge has created an important connection in many ways, partnering business and government interests during construction, connecting San Francisco to Marin, and today, bringing visitors together from around the world.



*Fort Point and the Golden Gate Bridge*

## **Baker Beach**

### *Site Description*

Baker Beach faces the vast Pacific Ocean and provides panoramic views of the Golden Gate Bridge, the Marin Headlands, and Lands End. The sandy beach, rocky shoreline, and the bluffs above harbor some of the most intact natural habitat at the Presidio. Battery Chamberlin (1902) contains a small museum and a “disappearing” gun that is demonstrated one weekend a month. Baker Beach also attracts recreational uses, such as picnicking and hiking along the California Coastal Trail.

### *Impressions*

Participants were impressed with the group participation in the raising of the gun, and supported maintaining and rehabilitating the gun batteries. The batteries could be opened over time to show visitors. The present exhibition battery could be tied into the general theme of the impact of war on society. Some batteries could also be rehabilitated and used for archival/storage purposes. Although relevant to the history of coastal defense, other sites may be more appropriate for a coastal defense museum.



*Coastal scrub dunes at Baker Beach.*



## Lobos Creek Valley

### *Site Description*

The Lobos Creek Valley is an important natural resource at the Presidio. Lobos Creek is the last free-flowing stream in San Francisco and is the Presidio's water source. Oak woodland riparian habitat supports a variety of plant, animal and bird species. And, thanks to recent volunteer work, native plant communities with rare and endangered plants species have been restored in the area. An accessible boardwalk built from recycled plastic provides opportunities for people to get close to sensitive habitat.

### *Impressions*

The Lobos Creek Valley is yet another excellent example of volunteer commitment to the Presidio which should be highlighted. Interpretation of biological resources would be provided best by docent-led walks and self-guided tours, with signs for plant names and descriptions. The values of biodiversity should be emphasized, potentially in the context of cultural diversity. For example, delineate how Native Americans have valued biodiversity. It was also suggested that the "natural landscape" theme be taken throughout the park, with native plantings incorporated at historic sites.



*The new boardwalk among the restored Lobos Creek dunes.*

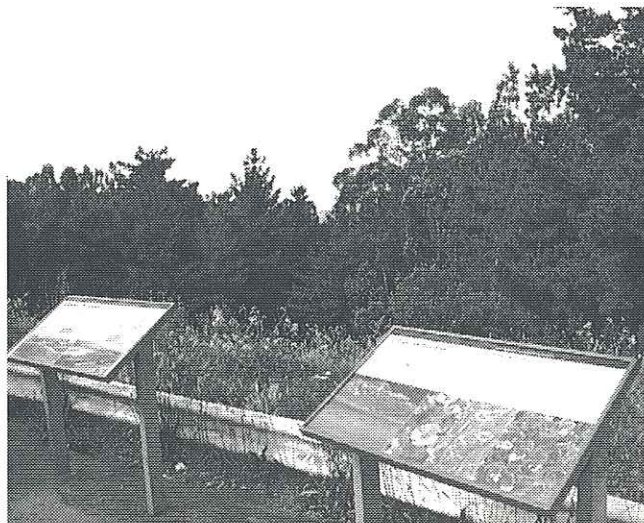
## Inspiration Point

### *Site Description*

Prior to the planting of the historic forest, Inspiration Point was characterized by sweeping views of San Francisco Bay. Under a plan envisioned by Major W.A. Jones, the Army, starting in 1883, planted trees “to crown the ridges, border the boundary fences, and cover major areas of sand and marsh waste.” The forest acted as a windbreak, beautified the post, and visually emphasized the separation between Army and city lands. Recent selective tree removals have reopened some view corridors. Tree removals also allowed for expansion of the serpentine grassland native plant community. Inspiration Point connects to recreational trails, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the Ecology Trail.

### *Impressions*

The dedication of volunteers has been instrumental in environmental restoration at this site. To show others how much has changed, a section of asphalt parking lot or remnant of the built environment should be left in place. Symposium participants also suggested providing identification signs to describe views and their historical significance, as well as improved orientation.



*Existing interpretive signs at Inspiration Point.*



THE PRESIDIO TRUST and THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

- LET IT BE COMPLEX
- DEPTH OF MEANING
- COMPLEX LAYERS
- OVERVIEW
- LOCATED ON HEADLANDS OF WEST COAST
- 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CENTURY OF RECONCILIATION
- A PLACE, PROCESS OF PEOPLE GETTING TOGETHER
- STRATEGIC LOCATION
- BAKER BEACH
- DIFFERENT HISTORY PLACE OF CONVERGENCE OF MOVEMENTS
- IMMEDIATE HISTORY
- WHAT IS PROCESS NOW WHERE IS AT
- HOW TO DAY OUT PLACE TO EXPLORE COMPLEXITY OVER TIME
- A VILLAGE ON DISPLAY LOCAL USERS WILL HAVE AN INVESTMENT IN THE PLACE
- PARADOXICAL SERIES HISTORY
- TELLING/READING ALL STORIES IS THE POWER

**Presidio Stories**  
A VISITOR EXPERIENCE and INTERPRETATION SYMPOSIUM

- GET OUT STORIES IN MULTI-LANGUAGES PRINT, ORAL
- MORE WANDERING WAS FOR PEOPLE NOT CARS
- WHAT STORIES WHO'S STORY IS IT? TENSION'S COMPLEXITY
- PLACE WHERE PEOPLE COME TO TELL THEIR STORIES
- DON'T PACKAGE OTHER PEOPLE'S STORIES
- LET PEOPLE TELL THEIR OWN STORIES

**5 FORT SCOTT**

- A CROSSROADS CONNECTIONS OF OVERLAYS/SYSTEMS LINK PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT, ECO SYSTEM
- INTERCONNECTION OF SOCIAL & BIOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS EVOLUTION
- CAPTURE FEEL & EXPERIENCE OF PLACE AT THE TIME
- TEACH RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLACE EACH OTHER

**6 PORT POINT**

- BRIDGE AND FORT POINT A POWERFUL PLACE
- GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - FORT
- PIECE OF PARTICIPATION

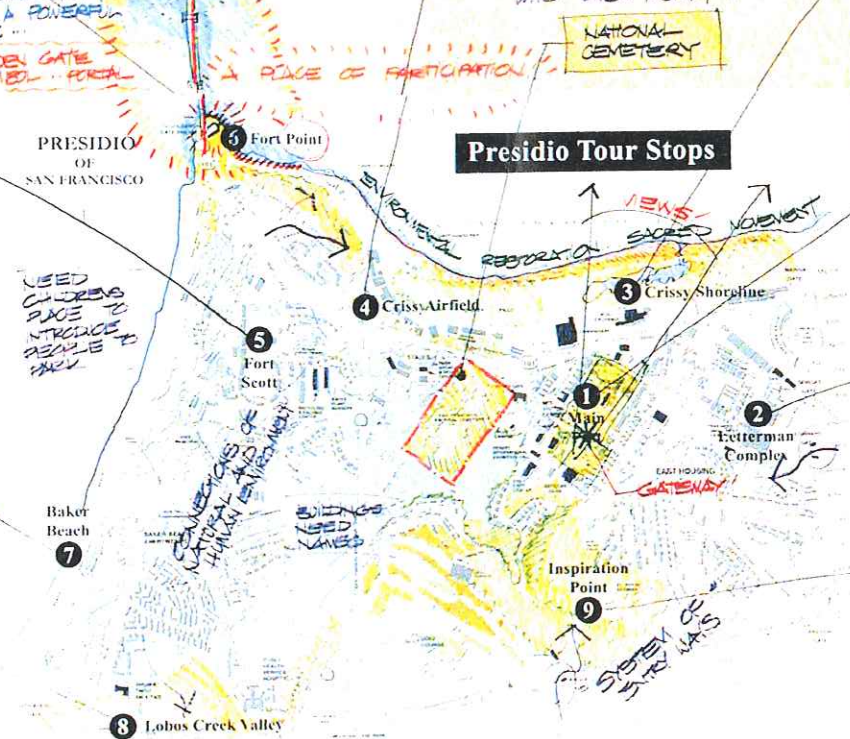
**4 CRISSY FIELD**

- NEED TO SAVE ORAL HISTORY EXPERIENCE OF PEOPLE WHO LIVED HISTORY HERE
- COMMUNITY PARTICIPATED IN CREATION OF PLACE

**3 CRISSY SHORELINE**

- NEED TO TELL WHY THESE THINGS ARE/WHERE DONE THE PROCESS
- NEED TO TELL STORY OF CHOSE PEOPLE AND WHAT HAPPENED
- SIDE BARS TO NARRATE ON SOCIAL STORIES
- MILITARY HISTORY A MAJOR THEME! AN IMPORTANT PART OF HISTORY
- CONTRADICTIONARY STORIES FOR MANY PEOPLE! COMPLEXITY
- CHANGE NAME? TO UNDERSTAND PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS
- CHOLERA PARK? PLACE ITSELF IS A NATIONAL LANDMARK
- PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE
- DIVERSITY - COMPLEXITY - MAINTAIN DIVERSITY INTO THE FUTURE
- NEED MULTI-OWNED SPACES AND ENTRY TO THE PARK TO MAINTAIN DIVERSITY
- NEED TO CAPTURE ORAL HISTORY OF PEOPLE
- ON GOING DIALOG OF STORIES, INTERACTIONS
- NEED A PROCESS TO CAPTURE THESE STORIES ON GOING PROCESS - NO ONE FINAL PRODUCT
- TELL STORIES TALK, RETALES

DAY TO DAY LIVES SOCIAL HISTORY OF PEOPLE



**1 MAIN POST**

- NEED TO EXPLAIN BETTER ORIGINAL PRESIDIO NOW HIDDEN
- PLACE TO TELL OVERALL HISTORY A SMALL HUMAN STORIES - A FAMILY VILLAGE WITH CHILDREN - NON MILITARY PEOPLES
- COMPLEXITY OF ARCHITECTURE HIS CENTER OF ACTIVITIES
- OPERATIONAL PLACE CENTER - PIANO MUSIC HEART OF ACTIVITY
- NEED CENTRAL GATEWAY FOR VISITORS
- ORAL HISTORY LOOK TO LEAVE STORIES
- NOTE: NEED DEFINITIONS TO EXPLAIN SPECIAL TERMS OF MILITARY HISTORY

**2 INSPIRATION LETTERMAN COMPLEX**

- PART OF MILITARY POWER/AUTHORITY
- ALSO EVERYONE TO TELL THEIR STORIES & PROCESS TO ENQUIRE TO MAINTAIN DIVERSITY
- EVERYONE TO TELL THEIR STORY (NOT ONE ORGANIZATION)
- NEED A PROCESS TO CAPTURE THESE STORIES ON GOING PROCESS - NO ONE FINAL PRODUCT
- TELL STORIES TALK, RETALES

**9 INSPIRATION POINT**

- KEEP THEM NOT SHUTTED OR CLEANED UP

**TOUR IMPRESSIONS**  
APRIL 13, 2000

## INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKING GROUPS

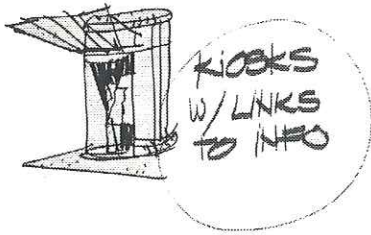
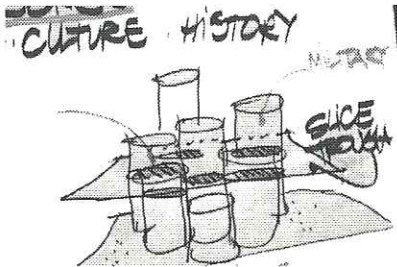
During the Symposium, participants broke into interdisciplinary working groups to discuss two items central to the Symposium: unifying themes for the Presidio, and ways to tell the Presidio stories.

There were five groups with approximately 12-15 participants in each group. The groups consisted of people with different areas of expertise to ensure that each group would have a diverse range of backgrounds and ideas. Symposium participants took part in facilitated working group discussions on Friday, April 14 and they presented the results of their discussions at the closing session on Saturday, April 15.

The wall graphics from the facilitated discussions are available at [www.presidiotrust.gov](http://www.presidiotrust.gov). Following are the main ideas from each of the group working sessions.

*As you discuss the future of the Presidio  
Trust and the National Parks in the next  
century, you need to be bold, you need to  
be honest, in creating a system that tells  
all the stories.*

*--Rose Ochi*



## Group A

Group A introduced many key themes of the Presidio, including:

- The importance of maintaining a sense of place
- The Presidio as a place of healing
- A self-sufficient entity
- A gateway
- 200 Years of Fear
- Preservation of memories
- A catalyst for ideas and exchange of ideas
- Many conflicting/overlying stories
- The Presidio as a place for social exchange to take place

This group also presented the idea of the Presidio stories as columns through time, which can be opened and the individual layers examined. Other important ideas that this group developed were the importance of interactive technologies at the Presidio, including interactive kiosks with links to information, and links to the Presidio on the internet. These technologies can be used to help visitors understand the stories of the Presidio, as well as develop and tell their own stories.



*Members of Group A*

## Group B

Group B developed a unifying concept for the Presidio:

*The Presidio of San Francisco is a place where visitors will go on a journey to discover the continuing biological and social evolution of the humanity and the evolution of various flora, fauna and ecosystems. The layers of this journey unfold through the history and many voices that inhabit the area. Processes or programs that engage people will be implemented to facilitate this journey.*

This group identified the need to develop a mission statement for the Presidio, which incorporated the themes of biological resources, cultural resources, and evolution. Additionally, this group brought forth the idea of an orientation and interpretive center, which would serve the purpose of facilitating discovery for visitors to the Presidio.

Kiosks throughout the Presidio could feature internet connections hyperlinking to offer all applicable narratives, such as the stories of ecology, the Ohlone, and the U.S. Army. The kiosks will allow users to dig deeper into their personal experiences, continue learning, keep coming back, and continue to develop a growing affection for the area. Additionally, members of Group B generated the idea of scavenger hunts, which will allow visitors to get to know the park, and different hunts can be organized according to the interests of the visitors.

Group B presented the idea of hands-on research participatory programs. Many discovery activities were also presented, including ceremonies and rituals, a Fort Mason-like cultural center, audio and video tours, CD-ROM interactive activities, a Presidio quest, and an opportunity for visitors to “imagine themselves in history.”

An additional component of the Presidio experience that this group presented was that of enhanced circulation and wayfinding throughout the park, through an internal shuttle loop that would connect the far-flung features of the park.



*Lou Hexter, Group B facilitator and recorder.*



*Members of Group B discuss methods of telling Presidio stories.*

## Group C

Group C brought forward the overall themes of building trust and building communities, creating a sense of place, and engendering stewardship to care for the land and the people as integral processes of telling the Presidio stories.

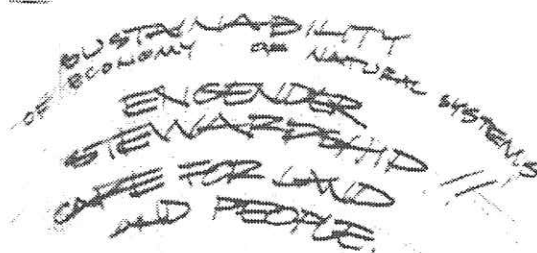
Group C presented a variety of ideas regarding the visitor experience and interpretation. Some of the major concepts that emerged were: the Presidio as a storied place, the connectivity and complexity of the Presidio, and the Presidio site as it developed through history. The idea of “the Presidio through time” was also suggested.

This group also brainstormed many different ways to tell the Presidio stories. One important idea that emerged is the connection between the virtual world and the physical world when telling the Presidio stories. Pre- and post- visits are possible through virtual means.

Group C presented community involvement as an essential part of the Presidio experience, in terms of involving everyone in telling their stories.

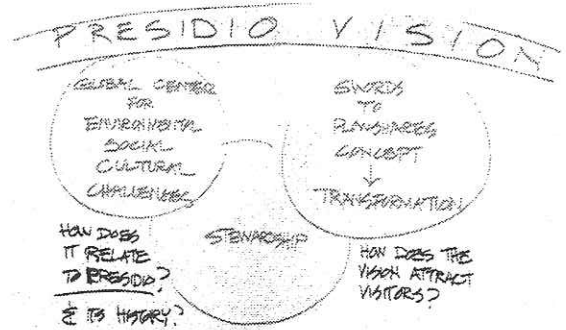
Some key principles of telling the Presidio stories are:

- Emphasize the value of local stewardship
- Use technology, don't be ruled by it
- Establish a governance structure that recognizes all key facets of the Presidio
- Develop a process that connects all of the people involved with the Presidio
- Provide staff development activities to all Presidio tenants



## Group D

Group D presented the idea that Presidio stories can be told in a variety of ways. During the telling of the stories, there are threads of interpretation and unexpected twists which can surprise the visitor. Additionally, the idea was presented that nature, culture and history are all linked, and that the Presidio serves as a gateway to and a link between these themes. It is important that the visitor experience at the Presidio include the linkages between these themes.

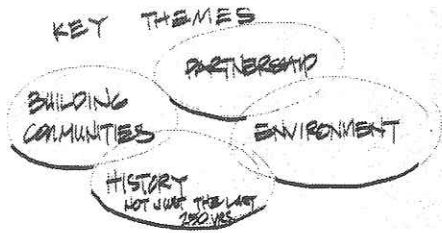


When telling the stories of the Presidio, important links include: the Pacific Frontier, the Presidio as a Sentinel, crossroads, multicultural stories and journeys. Additionally, the Presidio is a place of reconciliation, change and continuity, transformation, and new beginnings.

This group connected the visitor experience to the ideas of Change and Continuity, and to transparent layers of history. This theme could be developed through interactive media, with layers added or changed to reflect individual visitor interests.

Another theme that this group presented is that of Conflict and Transformation. Over time, the Presidio has been a place of many different types of transformations, such as transformations of landscape, changes in populations, and changes in consciousness. These transformations are an important part of the Presidio visitor experience, as are the conflicts that occurred over time.





## Group E

This group developed many themes for the Presidio visitor interpretive experience. One important theme is the acknowledgement of the native people of the area. It is important to communicate to the visitor that the Ohlone people were at the Presidio and the community continues into the present.

Additional key concepts for the visitor experience are those of building communities, partnership, environment, and history (not just the last 250 years).

Ideas for enhancing the visitor experience and allowing for stories to be told include:

- Use personal stories to tell the larger story
- Use a variety of events to draw people to the park, such as links with various historical events
- Provide places for eating and drinking
- Open the Officers' Club to the public
- Compile an oral history, and encourage visitors to contribute to it
- Provide an integrated timeline
- Develop and follow guidelines for lessees and tenants

Some key components of the visitor experience include:

- Stories as links and touchstones, which will direct visitors to other stories
- Orientation and wayfinding
- Directions and links to other sites
- Pre-visit information
- Transportation to and within the Presidio
- Provide visuals and maps to support interpretive information
- Provide take-away information
- Layered information to reach various people

## THE PRESIDIO STORIES

### Key Concepts

An overall goal of the Presidio Stories Symposium was to gather input on unifying concepts for the Presidio which will help to address diverse visitor experiences and tell the stories of the Presidio in a compelling manner.

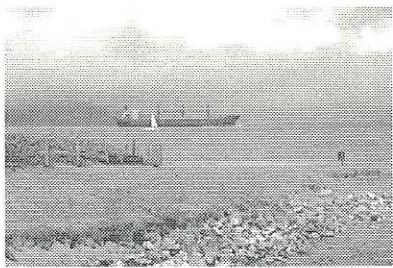
It became apparent during the Symposium that the Presidio is an extremely complex entity, and that much of its value is inherent in its complexity and diversity. As a result, Symposium participants came to the conclusion that it is difficult to develop a single unifying concept for the Presidio visitor experience. However, many ideas emerged as being integral to the visitor experience and interpretation of the Presidio. These ideas are different from stories in that they are larger, overarching concepts, whereas stories are focused on more specific aspects of the Presidio. This is a dynamic list of concepts, and is not a complete list. During the process of planning for the Presidio, the list will surely change and grow.

Key concepts that emerged from the Presidio Stories Symposium (in no particular order) include:

- **Environmental, social and cultural challenges:** The complexity of the Presidio presents many challenges, but also diverse opportunities for the visitor experience.
- **Stewardship:** One of the main goals for the Presidio is to engage the public in the stewardship and preservation of the park's history and ecology.
- **Sustainability:** The Presidio is becoming a model of environmental, cultural and financial sustainability.
- **Moving from conflict towards consensus:** Though the Presidio has been associated with war and conflict for the past two centuries, the transfer to the National Park Service ended the Presidio's military role, moving it into a new era of civilian service.
- **Reconciliation:** The Presidio is an integral part of the San Francisco urban heritage. It represents a forum for diverse groups to work together for a better future.



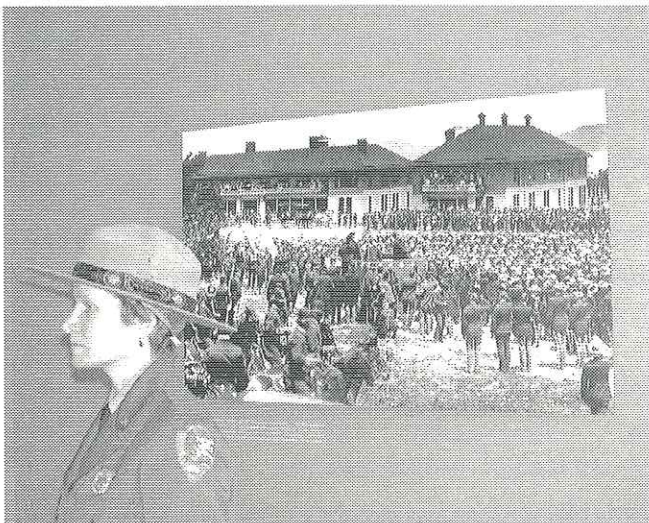
*The new Crissy Field Center, as seen across the restored wetlands.*



*The view of San Francisco Bay across Crissy Field.*

- **Transformation, change and continuity:** The landscape, population and uses of the Presidio have changed over time, yet the site has remained a place of tremendous beauty and resources.
- **Complexity and diversity:** Complexity and diversity are core strengths of the Presidio. These assets should be embraced to create a more complete visitor experience for a range of visitors.
- **Palimpsest, or layers history through time:** The Presidio has many stories that build upon and are strengthened by connections to previous eras and generations.
- **Past → Present → Future:** The Presidio represents the past but is also relevant to today's community and will be significant for future generations.
- **Building communities and community involvement:** The future of the Presidio will help to strengthen communities within the Presidio and nearby. Community involvement and volunteerism are essential to the future of the Presidio.
- **Partnerships:** In order to best utilize the resources available within the Presidio, it is essential to form partnerships with community groups, as well as to maintain the strong partnership between the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust.
- **Crossroads:** Today, the Presidio is facing different types of crossroads: social, physical, cultural and economic. The convergence of these crossroads may be utilized to create the interpretive experience at the Presidio.
- **Gateway:** The Presidio is a gateway to the Pacific Ocean, to the Bay, and to the United States.
- **Sense of place:** To be a successful National Park, it is essential to convey a sense of place and identity at the Presidio.
- **Place of beauty:** The Presidio is a site of incomparable beauty, with unique natural, historic and cultural resources, as well as inspiring views of the Bay Area.
- **Environment:** The Presidio is home to a diverse ecosystem, with rare and endangered species and valuable natural resources. Habitat restoration is underway throughout the Park.

- **Unique national park:** The Presidio is unique within the National Park System. It is the only Park that will be financially self-sufficient. It can make a new role for a National Park by creating a global center dedicated to the world's most critical environmental, social and cultural challenges.
- **Preservation:** This concept encompasses both the preservation of the valuable resources that are present at the Presidio, as well as preserving the visitor experience for future generations.
- **Survival and resilience:** Historically, the people of the Presidio have demonstrated strength and resilience. The Presidio will continue to have a strong atmosphere and presence in the future
- **Renewal and new beginnings:** The Presidio is moving in new directions, socially, culturally, physically and economically. This time of renewal for the Presidio represents an opportunity to repair the natural environment so that it exists in harmony with the built environment.
- **Accessibility:** To create a fulfilling experience, the experiences and opportunities at the Presidio must be accessible to a diverse range of visitors.



*Park Ranger Margaret Styles commenting on the historic photos in the Thoreau Center.*

*The Presidio has an amazing sense of place, culture and identity with wonderful stories and legacy.*

### **Presidio Stories**

During the Symposium participants worked together to identify the most meaningful stories embodied in the vast Presidio resources. As a result, participants generated a myriad of interesting and diverse stories that the interpretative experience at the Presidio should convey to the visitor.

Most of the stories that were suggested fell into five major categories:

1. ***Military History.*** Military history is an integral component of the Presidio, and there are many military stories to be told as part of the visitor experience. Additionally, many of the military stories provide links to other stories at the Presidio.
2. ***Crossroads of Culture.*** Throughout history, the Presidio has acted as a cultural gateway, both physically and socially. This category illustrates the role of the different cultures associated with the Presidio throughout history. Crossroads of culture also includes the personal stories of the Presidio, and interactions between different cultures.
3. ***Restoring Natural Systems.*** The Presidio is home to diverse natural resources within the urban setting of San Francisco. The visitor experience provides an opportunity to foster education and awareness of species diversity, natural resources and the value of open space. One of the most unusual and interesting aspects of the Presidio is how much the natural landscape has changed over time, and the restoration of the original landscape.
4. ***Changing Landscapes.*** The stories in this category describe the history of human habitation of the Presidio, as well as the interaction between people and the natural and built environments.
5. ***Transformation: The Presidio: From Post to Park.*** This category encompasses the continuing story of the Presidio, including the future or “the next chapter” for the Presidio. Additionally, the process of the transformation from military use to national park is included in this category.

These categories are not mutually exclusive. Many of the stories are complex and are included in more than one category. Additionally, the

Presidio Stories list is dynamic, and will receive further attention as the Park Service and the Trust, with community partners, develop plans to enhance the visitor experience and interpretation.

Symposium participants discussed several important components for telling the Presidio stories. These include:

- The **place** – the location in the Presidio where the story can be integrated as part of the visitor experience.
- The **program** – the provision of the visitor experience. Examples of the program might be an activity, a class, a display or a cultural event. Many of the suggestions for programs are educational, such as holding learning programs for children and adults, or cultural, such as reenacting a historical event.
- The **medium** – the method of communication through which the visitor learns about the Presidio stories. Examples of media include audio tours, interactive kiosks and ranger-led programs.

The following section discusses the stories within each of the five major categories.



*Pershing Square and the post flagpole on the Main Parade Ground.*



*Presidio military cemetery.*

## Military History

The Presidio is known for its rich historical background and resources. Since 1776, the Presidio bears a distinctive military history, as one of the longest continuously operating military posts in the country, occupied by Spain, Mexico and the United States.

The stories that emerged from the Presidio Stories Symposium indicate that much of the military history of the Presidio is interconnected with the natural environment, as well as cultural resources. Stories that relate to preserving military history include the following:

- Spanish Military/Spanish Colonialism
- Mexican Military
- Military culture at the Presidio including continuous military use, and the military's role in preservation
- Changing functional role of the military throughout history
- First American Military Occupation
- Bear Flag
- Coastal Defense
- Aviation and army airfield
- Military Medicine
- Buffalo Soldiers
- Japanese American Story, including Language School, internment, the link to Angel Island, evolution of attitudes toward Asian peoples
- Base Closure
- Veterans' Stories
- Rituals and Ceremonies
- Pacific Expansion
- Coast Guard
- 1906 Earthquake
- Indian Wars
- Mexican American War
- Civil War: Fort Point and California's role in the Civil War
- Spanish American War
- Siberian Intervention
- World War I
- World War II
- Korean War
- Vietnam War
- Cold War
- Persian Gulf War

## Crossroads Of Culture

One of the recurring themes of the Presidio Stories Symposium was that of telling the stories of the people associated with the Presidio, as well as giving visitors to the Presidio the opportunity to share their own personal stories, and thus become part of the interpretive experience.

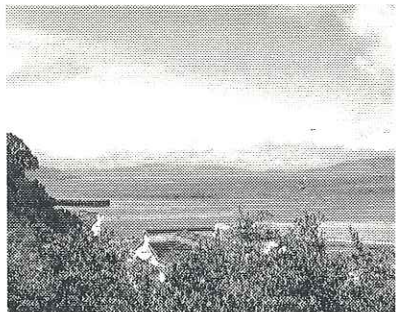
Additionally, the Presidio is unique because it has served as a gateway for many different cultures, and many different populations have interacted within the context of the Presidio.

Following are some of the main cultural stories to be shared as part of the Presidio visitor interpretive experience.

- Native Peoples: continuing and evolving story
- DeAnza Expedition
- Spanish Soldiers
- Mission Indians
- Californios
- Explorers
- Western Expansion/ Gold Rush
- Sea Exploration, trade and the San Francisco Harbor
- Yankee Migration
- Peruvians
- Sonorans
- African-Americans
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Panama-Pacific International Exposition
- Cultural change, including evolution of cultures, diversity of cultures, and evolving values regarding diversity
- People from different regions of the United States
- Pacific Basin
- Europeans
- South Americans
- Filipinos
- Hawaiians

*People from different cultural communities should be involved in telling their own stories and histories.*





*View west over Crissy Field to the Golden Gate*

## Restoring Natural Systems

The Presidio is home to diverse natural resources within the urban setting of San Francisco. The visitor experience provides an opportunity to foster education and awareness of species diversity, natural resources and the value of open space. Many of the stories involve this theme of the Presidio's natural environment and resources.

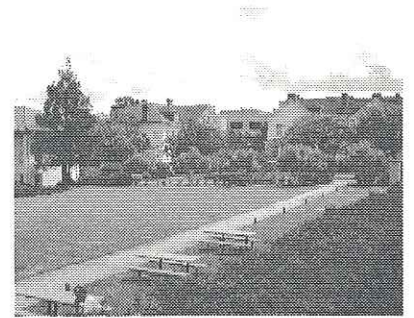
Some of the major natural environment stories that emerged at the Presidio Stories Symposium are:

- Geology
- Original Environment:
  - Dunes and Scrub
  - Serpentine Grasslands
  - Original Environment of the Presidio
  - Salt water and fresh water
  - Riparian areas
- Human Impacts on the Natural Environment
- Restoration Process
- Evolving Environmental Values
- Climate: weather and fog
- Golden Gate
- 1880s Forestation
- Crissy Marsh
- Lobos Creek
- Mountain Lake
- Vegetation Management Plan
- Endangered Species
- Birds
- Ecology
- El Polin Spring
- Water Systems, including wetlands, the Pacific Ocean and the Bay

## Changing Landscapes

The rare and beautiful setting of the Presidio contributes to its value as a unique national park. The Presidio is known as the guardian of the Golden Gate, and through history it has served as a physical and cultural port of entry, and a gateway to the settlement of the west coast. The following are stories that relate to the cultural landscape and the physical environment of the Presidio.

- City Planning/Human Habitation
- Archaeological History
- Native Peoples
- Spanish/Mexican Occupation
- El Presidio
- How the site and the environment shaped historical development
- Relationship to the City of San Francisco
- Cemeteries (Ohlone burial sites, National Cemetery, Merchant Marine Cemetery, Pet Cemetery)
- Coastal Defense System
- Architecture and site design
- Changing landscape
- Panama-Pacific International Exposition
- National Historic Landmark
- Architectural History
- Buildings
- Roads
- Fortifications
- Land planning (from the past, to the present, to the future)
- Doyle Drive
- Golden Gate Bridge (technology and communications)
- Golf Course
- Recreation Areas



*Restored landscape, Thoreau Center  
(old Letterman Hospital)*

### Transformation: The Presidio from Post to Park

This category encompasses the future of the Presidio. As previously mentioned, the Presidio is unique in its transition from the longest continuously used military post in the country to a National Park. Symposium participants suggested many story ideas, which capture this transformation.

- Managing an Urban Park
- “Post to Park”: Saving the Presidio and making an urban park
- Process of transforming into a National Park (political and legislative history)
- History and reasons for the transformation
- The New Presidio Community
- Tenants
- Sustainability
- Community based stewardship, ownership and participation
- Evolving an unfinished story
- Tourism
- Museums
- Visitor Feedback
- Recreational Programs
- Residential Uses
- Economic Self-Sufficiency
- Golden Gate National Parks Association



*The transformation from a military post is an important part of the visitor experience.*

## NEXT STEPS

The Presidio Stories Symposium served as a primary milestone in the process of developing and enhancing the visitor experience and interpretation at the Presidio. It was organized through the partnership of the National Park Service and Presidio Trust, as well as many community participants. The concepts and themes that came out of the Symposium will be developed through the same kind of partnership process.

Next steps in refining and implementing these concepts include a work session to review the stories and themes developed at the Symposium, held August 23, 2000, and a public workshop to review the results, held October 4, 2000. Results from these sessions are given in the next section. In addition, this report will be provided to the Symposium participants, and will help to maintain the dialogue among all the partners.

Through the primary partnership of the NPS and the Trust the Presidio Interpretive Plan will be developed. Both short-term and long-term goals will be noted in this implementation framework, which will identify opportunities and available resources.

### **WORK SESSION – AUGUST 23, 2000**

On August 23, 2000 the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust conducted a work session as a follow-up to the Presidio Stories Symposium that was held in April, 2000. The participants at the Presidio Stories Symposium in April generated many potential stories to be included in the Presidio visitor experience. The participants in the follow up work session built on the work that was done in April, and worked to consolidate and categorize these stories. A main purpose of the work session was to prioritize the stories in order to help the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust to develop an implementation program over the next several years.

Visitor experience and interpretation are essential elements for any unit of the National Park Service. The visitor experience at the Presidio is diverse and varied, due to the complex history, landscape, and resources of the site. The National Park Service and the Presidio Trust have undertaken the challenge of developing a new model of interpretation, education and community outreach for the Presidio of San Francisco.

Approximately 20 people attended this work session. The participants were from various organizations, including the National Park Service, the Presidio Trust, the Presidio and Fort Point Historical Association, the Golden Gate National Parks Association, and the Smithsonian. Howard Levitt of the NPS gave a brief welcome and introduction and explained the purpose of the work session. Carey Feierabend of the Presidio Trust gave a brief slideshow presentation to review the Presidio Stories Symposium and to give an overview of the connection between the Presidio Stories process and the Presidio Trust Implementation Plan (PTIP). Naomi Torres, also of the National Park Service, presented the interpretive projects that are currently underway at the Presidio. Daniel Iacofano and Paul Tuttle of Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG) Inc. facilitated and graphically recorded the work session.

This chapter summarizes the discussion and results of the work session. The products of the work session included:

- *Common thematic elements of Presidio stories*
- *Presidio story categories*

- *Criteria for prioritizing stories*
- *Preliminary stories prioritization and suggestions of people to work on programs for prioritized stories*

Photoreductions for the wallgraphics from the work session are available at [www.presidiotrust.gov](http://www.presidiotrust.gov).

## **Major Concepts**

There are several concepts that are common through much of the Presidio history, and are represented in many of the Presidio stories that were generated by Symposium and work session participants. While the Presidio stories relate to specific events, people, or periods in history, many of them are encompassed by these larger concepts, that help to tell the overall story of the Presidio and the people associated with it throughout history.

The major concepts common to many of the Presidio stories are:

- Materials and artifacts
- Personal stories
- Demographics
- Colonialism and imperialism
- Technology and communication
- Money and power

## Presidio Stories

The work session participants reviewed comprehensive lists of the Presidio stories, and developed five major categories for the stories. This portion of the meeting was a brainstorming session and provided an opportunity for the participants to consider all potential Presidio stories, before prioritizing the stories for inclusion in the interpretive experience. Following are the five major categories of Presidio stories, as suggested by work session participants. An important idea that emerged from the work session is that all of these categories are related; the stories are linked to each other within and between categories.

1. **Military History.** Participants in the work session agreed that Military history is an integral component of the Presidio, and that there are many military stories to be told as part of the visitor experience. Additionally, many of the military stories link to other stories at the Presidio. Participants also suggested that there could also be linkages to other NPS and state park sites to tell the military history stories that are part of the Presidio history. It was also suggested that while the U.S. Army no longer has jurisdiction over the Presidio site, they are a vast resource that can be used to help integrate the military stories as part of the visitor experience.
2. **Crossroads of Culture.** Throughout history, the Presidio has acted as a cultural gateway, both physically and socially. This category illustrates the role of the different cultures associated with the Presidio throughout history. Crossroads of culture also includes the personal stories of the Presidio, and the interactions between different cultures.
3. **Restoring Natural Systems.** The Presidio is home to diverse natural resources within the urban setting of San Francisco. The visitor experience provides an opportunity to foster education and awareness of species diversity, natural resources and the value of open space. Two of the most unusual and interesting aspects of the Presidio are how much the natural landscape has changed over time, and the ongoing restoration of the original landscape.

4. **Changing Landscapes.** These stories in this category describe the history of human habitation of the Presidio, as well as the interaction between people and the natural and built environments.
  
5. **Transformation: The Presidio from “Post to Park”.** This category encompasses the continuing story of the Presidio, including the future or the “next chapter” for the Presidio. Additionally, the process of the transformation from military use to a new national park is included in this category.



### **Criteria for Prioritization**

After determining the major categories of Presidio stories, the work session participants then began the task of prioritizing the stories. This is an essential component of creating the visitor interpretive experience at the Presidio, because the stories that are given high priority will be included in developing programming for the visitor experience in the immediate future. Additionally, since all of the Presidio stories are significant and important, this is a very difficult and complex task.

To assist with the task of prioritizing the Presidio stories, work session participants developed a list of criteria for stories to receive a high priority.

1. **Significant and compelling story.** The story should be interesting and accessible for a wide range of visitors, and should reflect the cultural diversity of the visitors as well as of the Presidio history.
2. **Available resources.** The program to tell the story should maximize available resources. This includes financial resources as well as existing programming, artifacts and materials, and staff and volunteers.
3. **Potential funding sources and additional resources.** There may be additional resources available to tell the stories.
4. **Unique to the Presidio.** It is important to focus on stories that can only be told at the Presidio, or can be told best at the Presidio.
5. **Meets visitor and user needs.** The program to tell the story must meet the needs of a broad range of visitors and users.
6. **Effective and functional use of space and time.** The program helps the visitor “make the most” of his or her time at the Presidio.

Utilizing the above criteria and considering the broad categories of stories, the work session participants then began the task of prioritizing the Presidio Stories. The meeting participants undertook this task in two stages; first by creating a list of stories with a high priority, and then further narrowing the list down. Additionally, the participants suggested

possible people who would be able to work on creating programs to include the stories as part of the visitor experience.

Prioritization of the Presidio stories represents an important step forward in the process of telling the stories. The next step is to develop programs to tell the stories as part of the Presidio Interpretive Plan. To continue with the process of developing the visitor interpretive experience for the Presidio, the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust held a meeting on October 4, 2000, to present the suggested Presidio Stories to members of the public. At this meeting, citizens had the opportunity to comment on the progress of the Presidio Stories, and gave input to the Presidio visitor interpretive experience. This input will be incorporated into the Presidio Interpretive Plan.

## **PUBLIC WORKSHOP – OCTOBER 4, 2000**

As part of the continuing process to develop the visitor experience at the Presidio, the Presidio Trust and National Park Service held a Public Workshop on October 4, 2000 at the Log Cabin to present the results of the Stories Symposium and to present the lists of prioritized stories for inclusion in the visitor experience.

An additional purpose of the meeting was to gather input from the public to help develop a framework that describes how the various Presidio stories connect with one another, and where and how the stories can best be told. The framework will include a prescription—with priorities, a timeline, and funding options—of actions for the Presidio Trust, the National Park Service, Presidio tenants and the greater community to take to enhance Presidio interpretation and the overall visitor experience.

At the workshop, participants confirmed that both the major categories and the priority stories within each category were appropriate, validating the work done in the April Symposium and August work session.

The stories at the workshop were presented in the five thematic areas that emerged from the Presidio Stories Symposium and the follow up work session in August:

- Military History
- Crossroads of Culture
- Restoring Natural Systems
- Changing Landscapes
- Transformation: the Presidio from Post to Park

Graphic displays illustrated the location of the stories within the themes, gave a theme overview and presented brief descriptions of each of the prioritized stories. A summary of the information contained on each of the graphic display boards is on the following pages.

## MILITARY HISTORY

### Theme Overview

The Presidio of San Francisco was the "Defender of the Gate" from 1776 to 1994. One of the longest-garrisoned posts in the country, the Presidio reflects more than 200 years of military history under three flags: the Spanish empire, the Republic of Mexico, and the United States of America.

### Spanish and Mexican Presidio

When it was established as a "Presidio" or "garrison" by the Spanish in 1775, El Presidio represented the northernmost extension of the Spanish Empire in California. The Presidio's history is inextricably linked with that of San Francisco, and its Spanish and Mexican roots can be seen through archaeological projects, as well as place names and architecture.

### Aviation

There are few places in the country that played a more important role than the Presidio in the rise of military and civil aviation. To this day, Crissy Field dramatically reveals its aviation history.

### Changes in Military Culture

Flags were raised and lowered, officers and enlisted men came and went; all the while military life and the people who lived it changed dramatically over 225 years.

### Civil War Period

While most people think of the Civil War as an "East of the Mississippi" conflict, the Presidio played an important but little understood role in that war. Physical evidence and compelling stories of the Civil War can be found throughout the Presidio.

### History of Military Medicine

From the establishment of Wright General Hospital at the Presidio in 1862 through the Letterman Army Medical Center and Letterman Army Institute of Research in the 1960's, 70's and 80's, the Presidio was on the leading edge of military medical research and treatment.



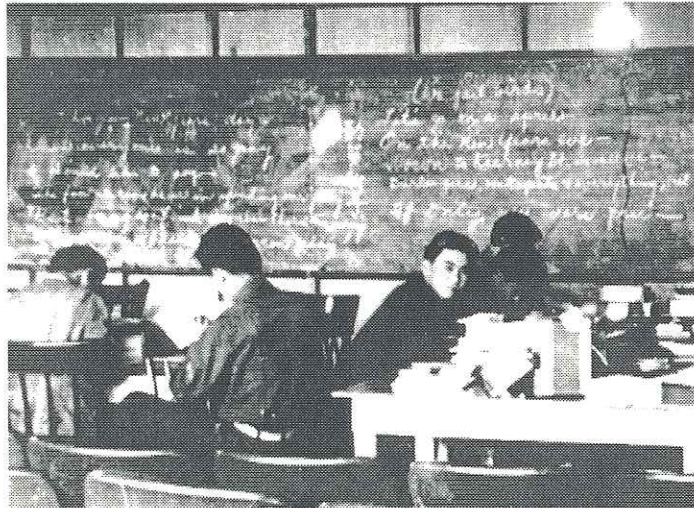
*Reenactment of a soldier at Fort Point.*

## U.S. Army on the Western Frontier and Pacific Expansion

From the Presidio, the U.S. Army carried out campaigns to subdue the Indians in the west and, beginning with the Spanish-American War, to project the power of the United States across the Pacific.

## Japanese Americans

Two of the most poignant stories of the Presidio are those of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Intelligence (Japanese Language) School and the Internment of Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor. These stories lead to other stories about Asian Immigration and attitudes towards Asians.



*Japanese classroom.*

## CROSSROADS OF CULTURE

### Theme Overview

The Presidio, anchor of the Golden Gate, became a crossroads of cultures and gateway to immigration and settlement of the West Coast. The Presidio provides a perfect opportunity for exploring the stories behind these many journeys. From its prominent position guarding the harbor, the Presidio has witnessed and played an integral part in the exploration and settlement of the American West, the rise of San Francisco and the cultural evolution of central California.

### Native Peoples

Before this land became the Presidio, it was within the Aboriginal homeland of the Yelamu, one of the dozens of politically distinct but linguistically and culturally related tribes within the territory of Ohlone peoples. Their land stretched as far south as the Monterey Bay Area. While there are no known living descendants of the Yelamu, descendants from the broader Ohlone community are developing a range of public programs to preserve native archeological sites in the Presidio and interpret Yelamu and Ohlone history and culture.

### Exploration and Colonization

European exploration and Spanish Colonization had a profound influence on the development of the Presidio and San Francisco itself. The impacts of colonization still persist in the cultural expressions of present day California.

### Immigration, Migration and Opportunity

Whether one departed Russia to seek a fortune in trade, left home in search of gold, or crossed the Pacific Ocean to escape the political chaos of China, many came through the Golden Gate in search of opportunity and survival.

### Cultural Change

Beginning with Native Peoples, the Presidio has been a participant in cultural change and evolution. The history of the Presidio offers an opportunity to examine the lessons of cultural and racial prejudices and the potential rewards of global interdependence.

## RESTORING NATURAL SYSTEMS

### Theme Overview

In a world of diminishing biological diversity, the Presidio represents an island of refuge for biological communities in an urban environment. The park provides an opportunity to foster awareness of the importance of species diversity, the value of open space, and human stewardship for natural lands.

### Geology

Some of the key stories of the Bay Area's varied geology can be told right here in the Presidio. The region's most spectacular remnant of greenish serpentine (our state mineral) dramatically faces the Golden Gate. And nearby one can still walk amidst remnants of ancient sand dunes that once covered 14 square miles of San Francisco, formed from the melting glaciers of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

### Natural Landscape

Over thousands of years the Mediterranean climate and varied topography of the Presidio landscape resulted in a diverse biology in the Presidio. Early European scientists were impressed by the diversity of life they encountered here. Throughout the park one can see remnants of the mosaic of landscapes that once covered San Francisco.

### Human Impacts

The Spanish created a fundamental shift from Ohlone methods of managing the landscape for subsistence by introducing European grasses and grazing animals. The urbanization of 90% of the park in the 20<sup>th</sup> century tells a significant story that distinguishes the Presidio from other national parks.

### Restoration and Ecological Values

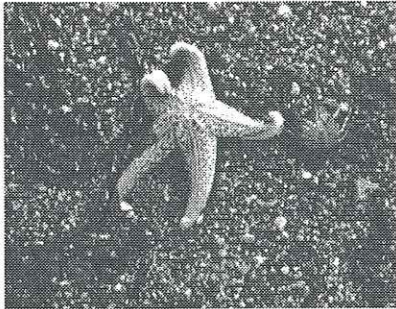
With its status as a national park the Presidio has entered a new chapter of human relationship to the land and the biodiversity that survives here. Every week volunteers young and old from local and global destinations lend their hands to help restore over 150 acres of native natural areas, and in so doing directly participate in the living natural history of the park.



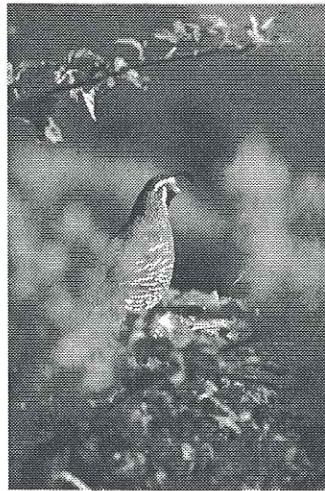
*Volunteers working on restoring the Presidio's natural environment.*

### Plant and Wildlife Diversity

Among large urban parks worldwide the Presidio is extraordinarily rich in native wildlife and plant diversity. The biodiversity here offers visitors opportunities to learn about and enjoy the oldest living heritage of the park and city. There are over 250 species of native plants including 12 with rare or endangered status. There are several hundred species of wildlife, including 170 species of birds that find refuge in the park's open space.

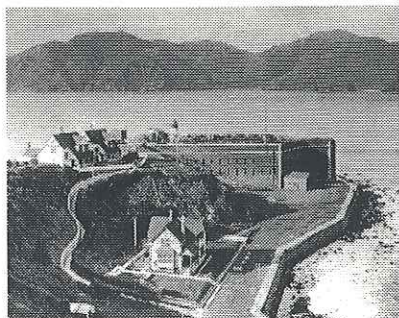


*A quail and a starfish, examples of wildlife diversity at the Presidio.*





## CHANGING LANDSCAPE



*A view of Fort Point before the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge.*

### Theme Overview

The Presidio's landscape reflects more than 200 years of the merging of people and place. This *cultural landscape* represents an evolution of physical development influenced by the site's geography, local and national historical events, changing social values, and technological advances over time. These human-made changes in the Presidio's land constitute a mosaic of many stories.

### Human Habitation

The lands of the Presidio have been occupied since the Ohlone and Costonoans arrived in the northern California peninsula around 2500 B.C. Changes in the landscape have occurred since that time. Today, the landscape we see largely reflects the response of military planners to the often harsh environment and from the intent to distinguish the Presidio from San Francisco and other military places.

### Changing Technologies

Evolving site plans, building materials and architectural styles reflect local, regional and national influences, as well as technological advances in these trades, on the Presidio's landscape. Building form, scale, massing and materials changed with the advancement of available materials and military mission.

### The Golden Gate

The Golden Gate's geology and geography had a great effect on the Presidio's development. The post's location and its fortifications are directly related to this landform and its role as guardian of the Gate.

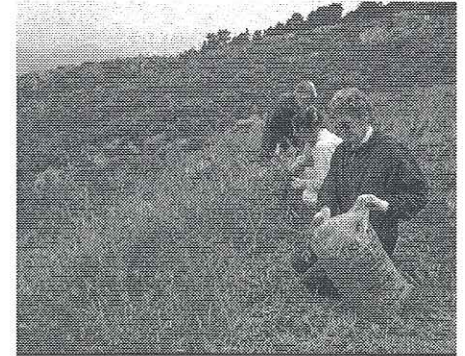
### Temporary Tales

The Presidio's landscape bore witness to many transient uses over time, reflecting further the notion of a changing landscape. Temporary buildings were often erected in short order and then were removed after the pending need expired. These temporary uses ranged from wood framed barracks, to temporary encampments, refuge tents, to the famous and grand 1915 Panama Pacific International Exhibition.

## TRANSFORMATION OF THE PRESIDIO

### Theme Overview

Planning for the Presidio's shift from post to park began in 1990 in order to protect the natural, cultural, and scenic values of the Presidio in perpetuity. In 1994, the General Management Plan Amendment was completed and the Army transferred the Presidio to the National Park Service as part of the GGNRA. In 1996, the Presidio Trust, a federal corporation, was established to preserve and enhance the park while achieving financial self-sufficiency by 2013. The NPS manages the coastal areas of the Presidio, and the Presidio Trust manages the interior, including open space and 770 buildings. The NPS and the Trust are working in partnership to transform the Presidio from a military post to a national park, a story all its own.



*Stewardship of the Presidio.*

### Sustainability

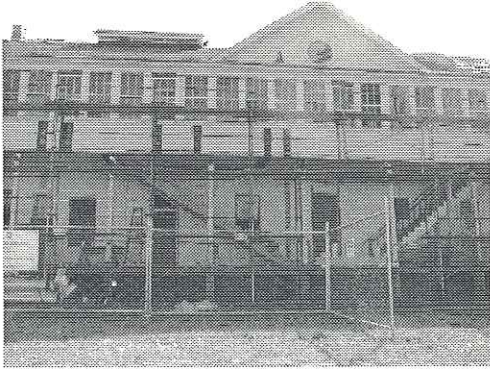
The Presidio will be a model of environmental, historical, cultural and American people. Historic preservation activities, cultural programs, and environmental sustainability projects (recycling, green buildings, etc.) offer unique opportunities for education and interpretation.

### The New Presidio Community

The Presidio Trust is responsible for leasing the 3 million square feet of non-residential space in the park (2/3 in historic buildings), and the 1,116 housing units in the Presidio. The Presidio community includes a diverse mix of tenants, with many services to offer. The Presidio will eventually host 5,000 people working in various non-profit and commercial organizations and have 2,400 residents in order to achieve a jobs-housing balance.

### Community Participation

The National Park Service and the Presidio Trust are committed to community stewardship and participation in the planning, maintaining, and enjoyment of the park.



*Transforming former military buildings to meet the needs of new users.*

## Volunteers/Presidio Park Stewards

Many Presidio programs, including the planting of native plants at Crissy Marsh and Lobos Creek, are the work of dedicated park volunteers.

## From Post to Park

A very important and unique Presidio story is the transformation from post to park. This transformation is ongoing and is reflected in restoration and environmental clean-up, and building rehabilitation through the Presidio.

- **Building Rehabilitation**

The rehabilitation of buildings using environmentally sustainable materials is an ongoing and very visible part of the transformation from a military post to new park uses.

- **Crissy Field and Crissy Air Field Restoration**

This spectacular area has recently been improved with a \$32 million restoration project including a 20-acre tidal marsh and shoreline dunes, and a restored historic grass airfield, replacing a 40-acre asphalt parking lot.

- **Lobos Creek Watershed and Habitat Restoration**

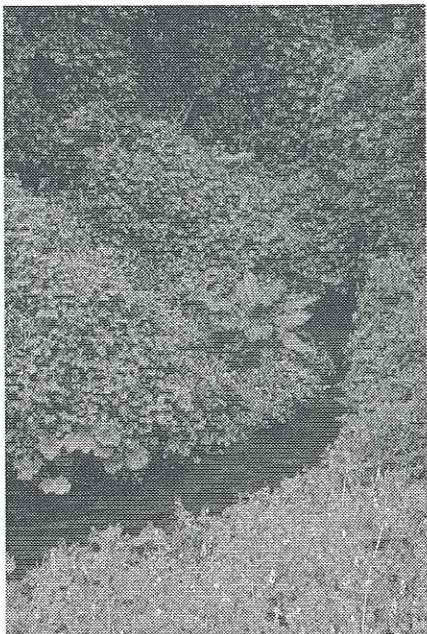
The NPS and Trust are enhancing one of the last free flowing streams in San Francisco (and the Presidio's water supply) with native plants to create a habitat for rare wildlife.

- **Environmental Remediation**

In 1999, the Trust secured \$100 million from the Army for Presidio-wide environmental remediation currently underway.

- **Vegetation Management Plan**

In 2000, the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust expect to complete a long-range management plan to maintain a rich tapestry of native plants, historic forest and landscaped areas.



*A view of Lobos Creek.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Presidio Symposium was part of a dynamic process to create the visitor and interpretive experience for the Presidio of San Francisco. The input gathered at the Symposium was creative, diverse, visionary, and essential to the future of the Presidio. It is hoped that the Symposium participants will continue to lend their expertise and be integral parts of the planning process.

## **SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS**

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Mr. Don Taylor  
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National Parks Conservation Association

Mr. Richard White  
Byrne Professor, History Department, Stanford University

Ms. Linda Yamane  
Rumsien/Ohlone Descendent

**Many thanks to all of the participants who worked to make this  
Symposium a successful step forward for the Presidio.**



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**GROUP PHOTO OF SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS**



**Presidio Stories: A Visitor Experience and Interpretation Symposium  
April 13, 14, 15 2000 San Francisco, CA**

## INTERPRETIVE PLANNING TEAM

The National Park Service and Presidio Trust also wish to acknowledge the following participants in the Presidio interpretive planning process, including those who helped to plan the Symposium and those who are providing ongoing support.

Ms. Beatrice Ammann, Presidio Trust  
Ms. Kristin Baron, National Park Service  
Ms. Mai-Liis Bartling, National Park Service  
Ms. Jane Blackstone, Presidio Trust  
Ms. Laura Castellini, National Park Service  
Dr. Randolph Delehanty, Presidio Trust  
Mr. Will Elder, National Park Service  
Ms. Carey Feierabend, Presidio Trust  
Ms. Adena Friedman, Moore Iacofano Goltsman  
Ms. Theresa Griggs, National Park Service  
Mr. Steve Haller, National Park Service  
Mr. Daniel Iacofano, Moore Iacofano Goltsman  
Mr. Howard Levitt, National Park Service  
Ms. Cindy Nielsen, National Park Service  
Mr. James Osborne, National Park Service  
Ms. Chris Ottoway, Presidio Trust  
Ms. Heather Pribyl, National Park Service  
Mr. Damien Raffa, Presidio Trust  
Ms. Michelle Ríos, National Park Service  
Ms. Mary Scott, National Park Service  
Ms. Naomi Torres, National Park Service  
Mr. Paul Tuttle, Moore Iacofano Goltsman  
Ms. Kay Voyvodich, Presidio Trust  
Mr. Rich Weideman, National Park Service

**APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTIONS AND GRAPHICS**

**Symposium Presentations**

**Graphic Materials**

## SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATIONS

### **Rose M. Ochi, Director of the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service**

Good morning. You mentioned that I was a schoolteacher. For those of you who came in late, can you come in and take a seat, please? When I arrived this morning, I had a choice of going to that gathering over here, and when I saw your coffee table, when I saw organic and herbal tea, I say this is the right place.

John, I've been introduced a lot, and I really appreciate your kind remarks. I want to applaud here, publicly, your leadership in the Western region, and particularly, your championing the Manzanar National Historic Site for a millennium grant. Thank you so much.

I'm pleased to be invited today by the Presidio Trust to speak on the topic of telling all the stories, inclusive interpretation. I understand that during this symposium, you are going to be formulating themes that will guide future interpretation and presentation of the Presidio to the public. So I need to issue a disclaimer before I start. I'm no expert on national parks or on historical interpretations, yet, I have gained some experiences, insights, perspectives, from my life, my career, and my work on the Manzanar Historic Site campaign that might be helpful to the task at hand.

I work in Washington DC for the Department of Justice. As I drive to work, I pass the National Archives, and on the wall on Pennsylvania Ave., there is an inscription: What is passed is prolonged. I first noticed this plaque when I was heading up to the hill to testify on behalf of the City of Los Angeles for the Manzanar bill. An interpretation of that quote could be helpful in what you'll be doing in the next few days.

One of the reasons for understanding our history is to avoid repeating past injustices. American History contains great achievements, but also ugly and horrendous tragedies, as well. When one reviews particularly regrettable periods, you'll find many of them have a connection to racial and ethnic exploitation and oppression. Racial intolerance doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's fueled by inflammatory policy debates. It's nurtured in a climate of bigotry, and a failure of all of us who remain silent and immobilized. So as we stand on the brink of a new millennium – you probably thought you weren't going to be hearing that phrase any more after “Bulworth” – it's kind of hard for me to say it with a straight face.

We need to think about our country's history and how the national park system can provide an important vehicle to tell stories that not only give us pride in our heritage, but also acknowledges our past racial injustices, such as towards Native Americans, slavery, economic exploitation of indentured immigrant workers, and racially targeted governmental wrongdoings. All of us want to

move our country forward, united, embracing our diversity. However, sadly, in the headlines daily, we see accounts of racial conflicts. Whether it's church arson, hate crimes, racial profiling, law enforcement use of excessive force; what did we learn? For an Asian American, it's been a particularly difficult time. Although we have made great progress, there are times it feels almost like "Yellow Peril II", what with the bashing and trade policies with Asian countries, the targeting of Asian fundraising and Chinese espionage. I want to make clear that Asian-Americans are not apologists for Asian countries. But the tenor, tone, and intensity of the coverage and the debate is suspect.

Personally, there are days in Washington I feel like I did as a young girl, going to school on Pearl Harbor day, feeling very anxious, frightened, and angry. It's guilt by association, all over again. I've been down this path before, as John has mentioned. My family, along with one hundred and twenty thousand persons of Japanese Ancestry was arbitrarily deprived of our liberty without due process during WWII. I spent my formative years growing up behind barbed wire with guard towers and armed sentries. I spent 6 months living in the Santa Anita horse stables. This negative experience in my personal history has served to guide my career and community endeavors. As director of the federal government's race relations arm, I take special interest in advancing sentiments and trends that can affect diverse racial and ethnic communities across America.

Our mission, as John described, has recently taken us from church arson to racial unrest in the wake of police uses of excess force in Los Angeles and Riverside and New York City; and communities that are fractured in the aftermath of a hate crime, as for example, in Jasper, Texas, following the brutal dragging death of James Bird, Jr. This weekend, today, we are busy trying to ensure peaceful protests around the transfer of Elian Gonzalez. We're involved in trying to maintain calm around the confederate flag issue in a number of communities. Washington is very busy with the protest demonstrations around the WTO meeting, so our plate is very, very full. Some of it is a consequence of our Nation's failure to come to grips with bias and discrimination.

I feel very, very fortunate that I have the opportunity to serve in this role, when both the president and the attorney general are making race and hatecrimes a top priority. Both these issues fall squarely in the purview of our agency. The president in his second term inaugural address talked about his vision of one America, a place where people of diverse backgrounds can come together to live and work harmoniously, and that it is his hope that through this initiative, it will engage community leaders, such as you, to reach out to the American people, and touch their hearts and minds. The first step in the healing process is for each of us to examine our own feelings about race.

Two years ago, I accompanied the president to Little Rock, Arkansas, to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the desegregation case involving Central High. CRS' role is that we were appointed by Judge Susan Webber-Wright to mediate the outstanding educational issues. While I was there, I

made a personal pilgrimage to Rower, when I was interned. And Rower does not have any structures – there’s a graveyard and some monuments, but pretty much the area has returned to cotton fields. But as I walked through the cemetery, it brought back some memories. Some of them were of some very joyful times, and others were quite painful. I remember being lined up one day to be renamed. My parents had given me a beautiful name: Takayo, which means a child with high ideals. But the well-meaning ladies in Arkansas decided to give me an American name, Rose. Today, when I think about it, I do feel fortunate, because, just think, I could’ve gotten Petunia.

Each of us has a story to tell. This is a necessary part of the honest conversations taking part across the country, spurred by the president’s initiative. Telling our personal stories can make us whole. Telling all the stories can make the country, and the American people whole. So let me share one story, and that is how Manzanar, a former internment camp, became a part of the National Park System. It’s a journey over twenty years, a story about hatred, hostilities, and opposition, and a story about racial reconciliation, understanding and healing. My involvement began in 1972, when I had just graduated from law school. I was a public interest attorney at Western Center on Law and Poverty. The Manzanar Committee approached me and asked me to serve as their legal advisor. Prior to this time or thereabout, there had been a very contemptuous fight to establish Manzanar as a part of a state historic landmark program, and the designation resulted in a lot of division, particularly in the valley. It was over the wording: “Manzanar Concentration Camp.” These same words recently triggered a backlash from the Jewish community, when the National Park Service mounted an exhibit at Ellis Island entitled, “America’s Concentration Camp.” But that conflict created an opportunity for people to come together. Japanese-American community met with the Jewish community leaders, and they came to understand we were not comparing death camps to what the Japanese-Americans had experienced. They – the Jewish community – came together and helped organize the event, and it was quite a success. This is an example, when there is a misunderstanding people can talk together and work through the issues.

Back to the campaign, in 1974 I went to work for Mayor Bradley in the city as a legislative coordinator. At that time the Park Service was looking at naming Manzanar and then the same issue surfaced, but time was of essence – they needed to pour the plaque – and some people said you can’t say internment, some people said it must say concentration. If you’ve been up there, and you look at the plaque for the National Historic Landmark location, you’ll see it says, and I made this decision unilaterally – Manzanar. I didn’t want to be delayed with any more bickering.

A few years later (I wish he were here) Dan Olson, on the Western region staff, was assigned the responsibility of conducting a feasibility study at Manzanar as part of an effort to study sights associated with the Pacific Campaign. He somehow got my name and asked if I could intervene with the Department of Water and Power. Water and Power owns the land where Manzanar sits, and with the Inyo County Board of Supervisors. I wrote the board, inviting them to sit down and talk. A reporter told me that my letter triggered a derogatory comment from one of the board

members who said, “I served in the Pacific War, and why would we want to commemorate the Japs?” I went up there to Independence and had lunch with him, and others. I pulled him aside and I said to him, look, what don’t you want? And I said to him, “What do you need? You need some economic development. Manzanar will help promote tourism.” Let’s not be sidetracked by those things that divide. Let’s work together, Japanese-American community, Inyo County, in making a park that will benefit us all. Well, I want you to know that this declared opponent worked really hard to gain votes on the other side of the aisle in Congress, and to reach out to community residents to earn support. In the process, we’ve become very good friends.

Another story on the national level, someone who was very instrumental and in an important position, Senator Alan Simpson, who was so important to securing passage of the Japanese Redress and Reparations bill. When he was a young boy, he told me this story – we were both on the immigration committee under Carter – as a Boy Scout, he used to go past barbed wire fences to play with Japanese-American boy scouts at Heart Mountain. One of those boy scouts was Norman Moneda, and they maintained a pen-pal relationship for many, many years and then many years later, reunited on the Hill. Their friendship made quite a difference in bringing about the passage of the Redress legislation. This illustrates that personal relations often shape our history.

This legislative campaign for Manzanar was very different from most. The Hill was a slam-dunk. However, there was opposition on two fronts – one in the Valley, a lot of it is, as I said, the vestige of the state designation fight, and in City Hall. The Parks Service convened a briefing in Enyo to explain their intentions, and invited community residents. I brought along two Japanese-American WWII veterans. When I met them for breakfast, and I saw them and they were in jackets with ribbons with their American Legions hats and all, I said, isn’t that a bit much? But as we approached Independence City Hall, we crossed paths with a gentleman named Vernesconi, and he was a veteran of WWI, and he was sent to oppose the site. But I will tell you, when his eyes caught the medals, the American Legion stuff, he seemed very surprised. We greeted him and went in. When he got up, he had been designated to speak against the project, he said he didn’t know that Japanese-Americans fought on the American side – the same side – and it seems with this little bit of facts, his resolve to fight the effort just melted away. This was an amazing transformation; it was just really inspiring to watch. It’s reassuring to see that hate and anger can dissipate in the face of truth.

My husband, he’s a fisherman, and we go up to the Sierras a lot, and he said, you know, you guys are so busy doing your story, you’re not thinking about how other people react. And it was his idea, actually, as we move up and down on highway 95; he noticed at a restaurant a blue star highway designation. And what that plaque indicates is that young men volunteered to fight in wars from that area. So it was his idea that we get a blue star highway designation in front of Manzanar, and it’s there. So that maybe, people will understand that it wasn’t just enemy aliens, but Americans of Japanese ancestry who were interned.

I wanted to make efforts to reach out to all sectors in the Valley, to gain their support, so I would meet with Native Americans... We had a gathering with early-settlers' descendents, what do they call them – pioneers? And what I did was, and I didn't have the authority to do it, but since I had approached Malevine to do the bill, I just figured, what the heck? And I told them, I promise you, your stories will also be told. And I'm proud to tell you that the final bill language provides to do just that. And the archeological report that was done by the National Parks Service includes artifacts from all periods of the occupation, prehistoric, settlers, and the Manzanar camp. Not about DWB.

So, we didn't want to leave any stone unturned. One time my husband and I were going up to go fishing, and we stopped for breakfast at a coffee shop in Lone Pine, Bobos. As we were sitting there, in walks a Japanese-American, and he moves through and starts kibitzing with everybody, and I told my husband, hey, look, someone that knows folks here – he can help us garner support. And then the guy goes behind the counter, gets his own coffee, and seems to be schmoozing with all the town's big shots. So I say, look, give me one minute, I'm going to go over there, talk to this guy. My husband says, the fish are jumping, no, let's go. Anyway, I run over to him, and I say, hi, I'm Rose Ochi, I'm with the Mayor's office and the Manzanar Committee, and we're doing this, that and we need your help and blah, blah, blah. I say, here's my card, and do you have one? I have to run. And I said, what do you do? You seem to know everyone. And he says, I'm the dishwasher. Anyway, didn't want to leave any stone unturned.

Our biggest hurdle in passing this bill was really in City Hall, and it was a tough battle, because some very powerful figures were trying to stand in the way, but in short, what was being pushed as ostensible water rights interests was essentially a thinly veiled, racially motivated resistance. And the enlightened city leadership really could see through this, and cast it aside, and the Mayor signed off on the bill.

What I learned from this struggle was when ugly, indefensible intentions come to light, people of goodwill do what's right. Bringing to fruition the Manzanar Committee's dream of keeping the memory alive had finally come to pass. And this memorial will teach the American people about how government can in times of crisis abridge constitutional protections, and at the same time, it will give us reason for pride, in knowing that only in America, a great country, would offer a presidential apology and reparations. The fact is, the unfair treatment of Japanese-Americans could never have occurred without the long history of pervasive racial prejudice and actual discrimination by law in this country. We need to reflect on what is the larger meaning of this sad chapter. For us as individuals, as part of a larger society and as a nation, in order that this tragic blot on our nation's history not be allowed to happen again. The racial differences and conflicts, which surfaced in the sight approval process, mirror the disputes that arise daily in our communities. The win-win victory after a contemptuous path is testimony to how honest and constructive conversations can lead to racial understanding and reconciliation.



So I would say to you, as you discuss the future of the Presidio Trust, and the National Parks in the next century, you need to be bold, you need to be honest, in creating a system that tells all the stories. I would encourage you to think about how the Park System could be more relevant and sensitive to African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, first Americans, and other ethnic groups. As part of the President's initiative, he charged all the departments to convene dialogues. The Department of the Interior was among the most successful. One of their projects involved the Underground Railroad. I personally convened a number of dialogues. A common concern was the need to fairly and accurately depict history, particularly in as much as many stories are not told. When I met with some first Americans in Tucson, they said to me, it's not good for Indian children or white children to only see Indians as savages, or victims. This suggests that we need to make certain that we include all people's historically significant points, and that they're not buried, ignored, or distorted.

I understand minorities generally have a low participation rate in the Parks System, and that could be for many reasons, but how do you explain in instances where parks are easily accessible and even involve their specific history and there is low participation? Could minorities stay away from certain sites because they are offensive in their depiction of their history? Is there a need to take a look at reinterpreting messages in keeping with post-civil rights sensibilities and self-interpretation? At the same time, you do not want to give only an ethnic-specific presentation, without supplying foundation information that will promote understanding rather than stir antagonism from the majority culture. When the Smithsonian Institution, and I see we have in our midst Michael Hamen, put a marvelous exhibit, *A More Perfect Union* together, the Japanese-American community was very pleased that this chapter was being told at the national level. Recently I spoke to a National Park official, and they told me that that particular exhibit has generated a lot of negative comments and backlash. So, I would want you to keep in mind, how can we tell a compelling story, without creating misunderstanding and backlash? So I ask you to keep that in mind. You need to ask; what glaring gaps exist about race-specific events in the history of America, including such places of interest which certainly draw under-served groups. Recently, I went to a History Channel preview of the story of the internment of Italian-Americans from the West Coast, from Fisherman's Wharf, nearby. They didn't round up Italian-Americans on the East Coast, who were concentrated in the cities in great numbers. But here was someone that had been involved in the Japanese-American movement and was not aware that this had taken place.

There's something else that I wanted to note. When I did go to the Ellis Island exhibit and all, you know, you read all the messages around Ellis Island, the refrains around welcoming the teeming masses to America's shore from Europe. And then you need to contrast and think, what kind of messages are we saying about Angel Island? I remember when I was on the Immigration Commission someone showed me some poems that were written in Chinese on the walls at Angel Island Detention Facility. And one went something like, "Black marks on a sheet of paper separate me from my loved ones."

People from races from around the globe have made America strong and prosperous, and we need to find ways to appropriately recognize all of them. There have been some tragic episodes in our nation's history. Teaching future generations about our mistakes is a uniquely American capacity. We need to acknowledge our past injustices in order that we can heal, and move forward together. The last link in the unfinished agenda, after the gains of the Civil Rights period, is to forthrightly address America's unresolved issues with race. And as long as our national creed is deeply rooted in concepts of equality, opportunity, and fair play, progress on civil rights will ultimately be the measure of our civilization. So, let's mark this point in our history with pride in our accomplishments and purpose in the task that lies before us. From this experience we may come to discover that we all have a stake in racial understanding. It resonates to enlighten self-interest.

In closing, therefore, whether developing themes for the Presidio Trust, or interpreting all stories, developing integrating themes must include the basic core principles upon which this country was founded: equality, opportunity, and fair play. I want you to know that I am hopeful. It's a real challenge for America, and that is reclaiming American conscious, and the Park Service can work to help advance these aims. There's a lot of reason to be hopeful – certainly, if a girl that was interned by her own country can serve on President Carter's immigration commission to fight for fair and equitable immigration policies; and whose parents - my parents – were subject to deportation when they were released from the camps; where I can help the Japanese-American community fight for redress and be invited by President Reagan to the signing ceremony, and who now can be tapped by President Clinton to head up the federal government's Race Relations arm, I think we have every reason to be hopeful. And I want you to know that Takayo is very hopeful.

Thank you very much.

## **Robert G. Stanton, National Park Service Director**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends and Guests, thank you for coming today. A special thanks to Jim Meadows and Brian O'Neill for extending a gracious invitation to give me this opportunity to be with you on this very special occasion.

The Presidio is a great and storied place with a long and honored history reaching back to the days before European colonies and centuries before there were major human conflicts we would call "World Wars." These grounds reflect continuity and they show change. They encompass the loveliness of San Francisco's last free-flowing stream and the last refuge of some native plants and animals long gone from other parts of this peninsula. And yet the telltale signs of the electronic age, portable phones, hand-held computers and more are commonplace on these grounds.

But through it all, there has been The Presidio. So imbedded is this place in American thinking that many are wholly unaware that a "presidio" is defined as "A garrison, especially a fortress of the kind established in the southwest United States by the Spanish to protect their holdings and missions." But the Presidio of San Francisco has a place in the American memory that no other presidio can touch. It is that pre-eminence that makes this one "The Presidio."

It is that pre-eminence that makes "The Presidio" a part of America's National Park System and its preservation and interpretation a partnership with the Presidio Trust.

The National Park Service has a special role. We are caretakers of a nation's heritage. Entrusted to us are the chosen places of our human and natural history, the ones selected for their special qualities, worthy of protection, preservation, interpretation, and perpetuation.

On this occasion – at this very special place – our first Director Stephen Mather would remind us: "He or she is a better citizen with a keener appreciation for living here in the United States who has toured the National Parks."

The Service has a special place in American's regard for public agencies and public servants. We are respected in large measure, for the places that have been entrusted to us. But we are respected, as well, in my judgment, for the honesty, and integrity with which we tell the stories, the full stories of these places. Of everything handed down to us, nothing is as important to pass on in our legacy than that same reputation for truth and balance. It is at once the most precious and the most fragile of the treasures in our hands.

The over-riding, unifying role of the National Park Service here at the Presidio is our responsibility to tell the story of this place in all its varied parts for those who come here from down the street or

around the world. The telling of that story is what we call interpretation, and it lies at the heart of today's program.

We must tell the stories of Native Americans and generations of Asian immigrants seeking hope and opportunity. We must recount the accomplishments of the Buffalo soldiers, black troops who garrisoned both this post and the early California parks – Yosemite, General Grant and Kings Canyon – and the rich Hispanic heritage and contributions.

We must relate the hopes and fears of young military recruits and their commanders off to battles in distant places and those of courageous veterans, returning with the weight of lessons learned and battles fought. We must help visitors understand how a place came to symbolize order, discipline, history and direction.

We cannot skew the stories of our heritage to suit our own agenda. One of the great challenges of interpretation is to deliver a message that is truthful, balanced, and as fair as we can make it. A story worthy of public interest needs exposure, not distortion, to make it work.

The goal of preserving some of the nation's most precious resources is the foundation of National Park System management, law, and policy and it inspires Americans. As expressed by President Theodore Roosevelt: "Nothing short of defending this country during wartime compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us."

The National Park Service plays an important role in shaping the environment, civic life, cultural heritage, economy, and future of the nation's cities and communities. I'm not sure it is a role we sought; I am sure it is a role we have. This role must be based on sound stewardship of resources and an accurate understanding of the relationship between people, parks, and their environment.

This is not simply a challenge for the new millennium. We should be thinking in terms of what will be here for the 22<sup>nd</sup> century and the 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will have dishonored our legacy if we are not prepared to protect it, preserve it, and pass it on to succeeding generations.

We have a monumental obligation to the future. If any action brings risk, then inaction brings a bigger risk. It is our duty to point the way in this new millennium. The job will go on long after we, collectively and individually, have departed the stage. But the direction it goes will be determined in very important ways by what we do!

Therefore we must also better educate our employees, visitors, park neighbors, educators, civic government and business leaders about the places, values and resources of the National Park System. We must ensure that the Park Service attracts the best-trained, motivated and diverse professional staff possible.

I am given to the belief that our national parks provide opportunities and experiences that awaken the potential in each of us to become better stewards. Our third President, Thomas Jefferson, perhaps said it best – “The strength and character of our Nation are determined by how we care for our resources.”

I submit that we all are stewards of our heritage resources – at home, in the community, at work, and in your national parks. But I also believe that these pieces of our common heritage that we call parks are touchstones for all Americans. These are the places we share and honor as a nation.

It has been said that “without history, there is nothing.” So it is with the National Park System. Our history is a story often told with images of sewing: a patchwork quilt in which each piece has a special story but the full effect is only achieved when they are sewn together. Or, in another version, a tapestry of interwoven strands of every hue and color, forming patterns of great beauty.

I like those images, because they tell a story of the real America.

The real America is a vast American Indian civilization that built complex cliff dwellings and developed the culture that built cities and villages and fought bravely to protect their own home lands, cultures, and liberties.

It is the historic homes of civil rights, political, and corporate leaders. It is the lands of the poor, struggling to build lives for themselves on a Nebraska homestead claim. Even the forts that dot the Park System symbolize different things. There are the great fur-trading posts. We also have the way stations on the migration routes of a dynamic, expanding nation.

It is places where we honor and preserve the rich cultural resource and traditions of native people of Hawaii, Alaska and Guam.

There are battle sites from the Revolutionary and Civil Wars—including the key surrender fields of both great conflicts.

In the national parks we can climb steep ladders into the communities ancient civilizations constructed at Mesa Verde.

We can stand at Minute Man, close our eyes, and hear the shot that was figuratively heard round the world, igniting the spark of independence of our great Nation.

We can understand the values of human dignity, thirst for education, and a responsibility to our young people through the legacy of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune.

We can visit Manzanar and contemplate the fragility of constitutional rights when the societal fabric is stressed.

We can absorb the resonance at Little Big Horn Battlefield of 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural conflict and its relevance to contemporary society.

We can be humbled and appreciative of the courage and accomplishments of the World War II Tuskegee Airmen overcoming great odds in segregated military forces amid racial discrimination.

We can marvel at the genius and innovations of Thomas Edison.

We can celebrate the texture of rich Hispanic cultures and the historic achievement of international diplomacy that created Chamizal National Memorial.

We can retrace the gold rush of the Klondike and reflect on the toughness of the human spirit and endeavors reflected there.

We can learn how the commanding voice of Frederick Douglass eloquently spoke out against the inherent inequality between our Declaration of Independence and the human bondage of four million Americans.

We can commemorate the voyages and explorations of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo.

It takes an all-out effort to preserve human works, whether they are forts, battleships, historic homes, petroglyphs, or artifacts.

And new parks with new challenges are very much a part of today's National Park System. We cannot be held captive to a static past, even as we manage this nation's legacies of human history.

The preservation of cultural resources demonstrates the values of community and diversity that link us with the heritage of our predecessors and our legacy to our successors.

We cannot have resource preservation without public support. We cannot have support without public concern, or concern without understanding. Interpretation fosters the understanding that makes preservation possible.

Interpreters are well known for their abilities to find creative solutions to solving park problems and for being able to reveal previously unknown meanings residing in park resources. The challenge of 21<sup>st</sup> century park interpretation is to make America understand that those resources offer unchanging values deserving of our continuing attention and concern. Freeman Tilden in his book, Interpreting our Heritage, would remind us that interpretation aims not to do something for the listener, but to provoke the listener to do something for himself. To this end we expand and improve upon our educational role and continue to increase the involvement of young people in the programs of the National Park Service.

The special places symbolize much of what we cherish about our country; accomplishments in war, but pride in peace; honor for cultures nearly lost and inventors who saw into the future; the continuing dream that every American can aspire to leadership; and the undying values of open space and personal renewal through recreation, education, and cultural enrichment.

The Presidio is a fitting member of this family. It also fits because it reflects another reality of the National Park System: going all the way back to Steven Mather, our first director we have always known that this task is bigger than we are. We have always worked with partnerships and volunteers who shared an interest and desire to assure that our legacy is passed on improved, just as Theodore Roosevelt counseled us to do.

A decision was made by Congress some years ago the Presidio was one of those special places that symbolize and represent the heritage of this nation. The American people have entrusted it to our care – truly entrusted it – because they think we can assure that it will be a worthy legacy, a grand inheritance for future generations of Americans.

Parks are to be managed with the understanding that they have great and continuing value in a growing, changing nation. They are not static parts of a fading past, but dynamic pieces of exciting, evolving future. It is up to us to provide this special place the protection, preservation, education, and perpetuation. Wherever we fall short, we diminish the inheritance of coming generations.

Over the next few days, I am sure there will be a wealth of opportunity to discuss the challenge of interpreting the richness of the Presidio. But don't ever lose sight of the fact that our prime responsibility is to those who will pass this way long after we have gone our separate ways.

It is an inspirational opportunity. I wish you well. We owe this place nothing less.

In closing, please permit me to share a work of wisdom by one of this nation's great conservationists, Mardy Murie, who in 1998 was honored by President Clinton with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our nation's highest civilian award.

I had the grand opportunity and privilege to meet Ms. Murie when I first worked with the National Park Service in 1962 in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. I was then a college senior. I benefited from her counsel and support then and we remain friends to this day. She said that "My father told me if you take one step with all the knowledge you have – there is a usually enough light at the end to take the next step."

You have a great deal of knowledge at this symposium – now let us together take the next step in furthering the preservation and interpretation of the rich legacy of the Presidio as a part of our National Park System – our collective heritage. Thank you!

**John Reynolds, Regional Director of the Pacific West Region of the National Park Service**

Ah, here we are...Baghdad by the Bay!

The Presidio of San Francisco. The western anchor to a whole continent. Where Manifest Destiny ends and America looking west across the Pacific begins.

El Presidio de San Francisco. Where Spanish America established itself as a power on the North American West Coast.

Before Spanish and English names, home to the Ohlone for hundreds, thousands of years.

Before any human language joined the noises of the sea, mantle rock pushed from the depths of the earth, ancient rock born from the greatest of earth forces, standing here today.

The stories of this place we call the presidio are stories of nature's beauty and sublimity, nature's power and variety; and stories of the work of man here and across the world.

The Presidio of San Francisco—one of nature's most beautiful and stunning creations a homeland to first peoples, and a place of national, cultural and military significance of the highest order. A place whose future, as a part of our national park system is being formed every day...a place the future of which is so important we have asked you all to come here and think together. We are asking you to help determine the future of the Presidio, its relevance and worth to people here and abroad and how to communicate that to actual and virtual visitors from all over the world.

The Presidio was first envisioned as a part of the National Park System in 1972, when Congressman Phil Burton included a sentence in the legislation creating Golden Gate National Recreation Area that ensured the Presidio would become a part of the National Park System should it ever become excess to military needs.

And then the nearly unthinkable happened. The Presidio, in its entirety a National Historic Landmark since 1962, became part of the United States National Park System and Golden Gate National Recreation Area on October 1, 1994. And so it is today.

As you go about your work these next three days, keep in mind what the congress said in 1994 when it created the presidio Trust. It said it means to use this great piece of a wondrous national park as:

- A reflection of the great nations whose histories have root here...Ohlone, Spain, United States.



- A learning center, a university, a place of discovery—not just of facts but, of the full diversity of ideas and philosophies, ways of life, understanding earth forces, appreciating aesthetics, creating dreams and ethics for the future.
- A legacy...a legacy of human caring about both the past and the future; a legacy of intellect and philosophy and altruism and patriotism; a legacy of a future as uplifting as that of the past.
- A real place, an authentic place, not just a shell in which activity not related to the place could become more important than humankind's altruism and dreams of our ability to uplift ourselves.
- A place with amazing stories, large and small, of our cultural past and our natural base, which add to our unique and still evolving American experience.
- A place that projects the best of the American ideal.
- A place where preservation matters because of a nationally significant past which enriches our future.
- A place that not only is but feels as though it belongs to all of us, that is inviting, that is inclusive.
- A place where partners working together create a whole bigger than the sum of their parts.

The general management plan for the Presidio, created with great public participation, possesses an altruistic vision for the future worthy of the past that unfolded here, worthy of the setting of the place, worthy of the future. The vision of this place is reflected in the Congressional findings of the Trust Act, in the place itself, and now in all of you, gathered here to create...to create the basis and the direction for relating this place to all who come, to create the link between what is here and the promise to humankind to use this place not just for secular activities, daily recreation and entertainment, but for inspiration and hope, for the application of intellect and creativity that can last beyond our time in the ideals of future generations.

The Presidio can do that if allowed to do so by your work, your vision.

As you get to know this place feel for its heartbeats, let the flow of time and events envelop you and become part of you, open yourselves to possibilities yet unsaid.

**Amy Meyer, Member of the Presidio Trust Board of Directors**

I'm going to start with a fairly arcane image for the Presidio. It describes exactly how I look upon this place: the Presidio is a palimpsest. That word of both Greek and Latin origin means a tablet that has been written upon a few times and imperfectly erased, so the earlier images are still visible. Indeed as we lead the Presidio into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ghostly images of the past are everywhere around us.

You will see many pieces of the past as you traverse the Presidio during this conference. There are relics of prehistoric and Native American peoples, of Spanish and Mexican armies, and of the United States Army. However, I am only going to talk about the last thirty years of the Presidio's immediate past history, and I hope to take you to the Presidio Trust and National Park Service times of today.

Thirty years ago, the Interior Department wanted "to bring parks to the people where the people are," to give people in urban areas the chance to experience a national park. That spurred some San Francisco and Marin County residents to decide "to save the Golden Gate for public use in perpetuity." Cuyahoga Valley and Gateway National Recreation Areas, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and a few other urban-area national parks by the people were established about that time. The abbreviation for this park is GGNRA. Because the park also includes Fort Point National Historic Site in the Presidio and Muir Woods National Monument in Marin County, we now also say "Golden Gate National Parks."

Thirty years ago, development threatened the hills on both sides of the Golden Gate. Although a National Historic Landmark, the Presidio was the place most endangered. The Food and Drug Administration wanted an office building, the city of San Francisco wanted two schools, and the Army itself wanted to build hundreds more units of housing—after World War II the Army had already built more housing than in all the previous years of the post's existence. People were angry and scared. They knew the special beauty of the Golden Gate could disappear.

With veteran Sierra Club leader Dr. Edgar Wayburn, I started People for a Golden Gate national Recreation Area. Originally, a dozen people articulated the park dream. We enlarged the 8000-acres Interior Department park plan to save the land at the Golden Gate, and included much of west Marin County and part of San Mateo County because we knew that otherwise this treasured open space would disappear. Our organization spread the word and developed the broad support that is the foundation of the park's advisory commission. After several park bills over a number of years, the Golden Gate National Parks encompass 75,000 acres in three counties. The park is dedicated to Congressman Phillip Burton, the legislator who, above all, made this possible.

My role in this group was to facilitate making these dreams for the Golden Gate a reality. Everyone in this campaign, except employees of other organizations, worked as a volunteer. I ran the daily

campaign from a dinette counter, originally designed so my husband and I could have Sunset Magazine buffet dinners for our friends. The only dish on that counter is for my lunch sandwich next to the phone.

The Presidio did not have especially important military use in 1970. Local residents saw the Presidio as a stunningly beautiful, underused federal asset, except for those who saw it as potentially valuable real estate. Congressman Burton knew there had been several attempts to close the Presidio, beginning in the 1920s. He placed the entire Presidio, although an active Army post, entirely within the boundary of the GGNRA, in the legislation which established the park in 1972. Soon after, the Army transferred jurisdiction over 45 acres of Crissy Field and 100 acres of Baker Beach to the NPS. In 1978 Congressman Burton added a provision the Trust honors today, called “one up, one down.” If we construct new buildings, equivalent ones must be identified for demolition.

Our group kept the Army from building defacing structures on both sides of the Golden Gate, before and after the park was established. In 1972, with NPS help, we prevented the telephone company from erecting two fifteen-foot cubes of cinder block to house equipment on Fort Point and Fort Baker. Two doorways to underground facilities are all that remain. In 1985-86, the Army tried to construct a one-stop shopping center on Crissy Field, in defiance of the park’s enabling legislation that required any construction be essential to Army needs. The Sierra Club’s “Burger King lawsuit” and a Congressional oversight hearing saved Crissy Field from a fast food restaurant, barracks, and a regional post office.

I imagined I would be watching events from a rocking chair if the Army ever decided to give up the Presidio. But the Presidio was slated for closure in 1989, under the Base Realignment and Closure Act. It was the only military post out of the 86 that closed that was already protected as part of a national park.

The National Park Service assumed jurisdiction over the Presidio in 1994. The NPS had already completed a General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA)—so called because it amended the park’s General Management Plan—with extensive public input through the park’s Advisory Commission. The GMPA is the foundation of the Presidio’s future. Because of the unique nature of the Presidio, a special entity to assist post-to-park conversion and park administration was anticipated in the GMPA, and this became the Presidio Trust.

Congress enacted the Presidio Trust legislation in 1996. It took three years for Congress to pass the bill, and Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi fought off tow attempts in Congress to sell the Presidio. The Trust’s legislation is not duplicated in the national park system, and in its entirety in should not be. Because the Presidio is uniquely expensive, in 1996 Congress decreed that the Presidio must become self-sufficient by 2013 or be sold.

While the Trust's efforts may, in various ways, be useful to other parks, the Presidio Trust entity is not a model for other parks. Since 1998, the coast of the Presidio—about 20%—has been administered by the National Park Service, and the central 80% by the Presidio Trust. Despite this division of jurisdiction, both the NPS and the Trust want the Presidio to be seen and understood as an undivided whole within the Golden Gate National Parks.

Section 1 of P.L. 92-589, establishing the GGNRA, mandates preservation of the natural, historic, scenic and recreational values of the park, and its recreational and educational opportunities. It states that the Secretary of Interior shall maintain the scenic beauty and natural character of the area. This mandate is repeated in the Trust Act, and governs all efforts of both Golden Gate National Parks and Presidio Trust managers.

Why is this place different? The Presidio is unique, in part, because it is the only unit of the national park system that requires conversion of its land and buildings from military to civilian use and also requires self-sufficiency. The Presidio's 1480 acres are exceptionally valuable, yet require extensive upgrades—extensive remediation and rehabilitation—to make the resources safe, functional and available for future enjoyment. The costs involved in this conversion are unparalleled in the national park system. In contrast, America's other National Parks came into the system requiring relatively small expense for protection of resources and provision of visitor services.

Before the Presidio Trust got underway, the Department of Defense, the National Park Service and tenants spent over \$115 million dollars on rehabilitation of the Presidio. This included water, sewer and electrical system repairs, other infrastructure and building repairs, and capital investments in buildings and sites.

Since the Presidio Trust assumed jurisdiction over the central area of the Presidio in 1998, it has spent approximately \$10 million on infrastructure. With 470 historic structures, and because the Presidio is a National Historic Landmark district, the Trust must meet high standards for historic preservation. Historic—and newer—buildings require rewiring, retrofitting of plumbing, seismic stabilization, lead paint and asbestos abatement, and accessibility improvements in order to meet current codes, as well as enhancement for contemporary uses. Expensive capital improvements include replacement of decayed infrastructure for utilities, modernization of irrigation, electrical systems, and telecommunications, and repairs to roads. Implementing a vegetation system management plan will cost the Trust and NPS several million dollars over many years. These investments are needed to bring the Presidio up to current standards.

The Army originally offered the NPS \$36 million over 30 years for remediation of contamination contained in landfills and dumps. The Trust negotiated \$100 million of contamination remediation money, to be appropriated over four years. Army representatives announced this agreement with smiles on their faces, and said they hoped it would be a model for other military cleanups.

The Presidio is a work in progress. It presents outstanding opportunities to implement new technologies and be a laboratory for sustainable practices. The Trust's facilities management recognizes "sustainability," as a significant theme of GMPA for the Presidio. From development of an extensive on-site salvage and recycling program, to creation of "Sustainable Building Guidelines," the Presidio is taking a leadership role in this area. The Presidio is a testing ground for new energy management programs, alternative-fuel vehicles, and "green" building materials. The trust implements practices that maximize energy, water, and resource conservation and reduce waste. The Trust views the great challenges of upgrading the site as an opportunity to be an environmental leader.

Why have we asked you to come to this conference? I would like you, the participants, to help the Trust and NPS shape an image of the Presidio that is multi-faceted and yet readily understandable. This image should encourage people to visit the park—actually—by taking a walk or participating in a program, or virtually—by reading an article, or by searching the Presidio web site for information, so they appreciate why the Presidio is important, much as they understand such national parks as Bandolier, Yellowstone, Valley Forge, or Ellis Island. We seek your ideas about how to tell the stories of the Presidio. Here are some themes:

- The Presidio is an extraordinary site, encompassing outstanding park resources, which need to be protected, rehabilitated and renewed, and with a rich history of many cultures.
- The transformation of the Presidio from a military post to a self-sustaining part of a national park is a story not replicated elsewhere in the national park system. Park visitors should learn how we remediate contaminated areas, and why and how we restore—and sometimes demolish—the multi-generational buildings and infrastructure of the Presidio, and why sometimes we must build something new.
- The Presidio's change from Native American to military to civilian use gives us opportunity for insight into the transformation of American attitudes about our land and society:
  - The Army preferred gardens and regimented forests to sand dunes and native plants. Today we also value native plants and more natural-appearing forests, and also will restore parts of the Army's garden landscape.
  - The Presidio's history contains a microcosm of the evolution of America's social attitudes toward men and women in the military, and the place of the military and veterans in our society.
  - There were thousands of soldiers at the Presidio when it was a bastion of conquest and defense. Soon, thousands of people here will devote time to peaceful work and causes. The Presidio is becoming a cooperative, collaborative community.

- The Presidio is part of the national park system, an American idea copied around the world. One of the Presidio's stories is the belief of people and their legislators that it would be possible to save this historic place within a national park, and their use of the political means of a democracy to get the park established.

How do we tell the stories of the Presidio? Here we are and our task is to conceive of how we will carry out the interpretation. I called the Presidio a palimpsest, one which is now saved for national and international park enjoyment and use. Some of its history is visible, but in some places that history is obscured. The tablet is about to receive a new layer of writing as the Presidio changes from an inherited park into a future park. The National Park Service, the Presidio Trust and the new and prospective tenants—Swords to Plowshares, The Film Centre, Alexa Internet, George Lucas' Digital Arts Center, the Cultural Conservancy and the others—the new Presidio community—are now part of the story. So may be the new ways in which we tell the Presidio's stories, and take advantage of new media to attract and educate.

We hope you will help us interpret the Presidio through programs that will help exhibit the special beauty and natural values of this place, show what people used to do here and what they do now, and help people as they recreate, to achieve "re-creation" here. We need your assistance in telling the Presidio's stories, and to help us shape the means by which we can share our knowledge with others.

## **APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUPS**

### **Focus Group Participants**

Note: Six Focus Groups met and submitted results. Group Leaders compiled a list of participants where available.

#### **Museum and History Focus Group**

Group Leaders: Peter Owens and Diane Nicholson

Bill Strobridge, Historian Emeritus

Marianne Babal, Curator—Wells Fargo Bank Historical Services

Donald B. Gray, Executive Director—Crissy Field Aviation Museum

Gray Brechin, Historian

Lional Ashcroft

Glenn David Matthews, AIA, Patri-Mercker Architects

Gordon Chappell, Historian—National Park Service

Bob Chenoweth, Curator/Veteran—Nez Perce National Historic Park

Jark Arndt

Richard Clarkson, Col.

Robert L. Menist, Major General Retired

Steve Haller, Historian

Martin Mayer, Archaeologist

Paul Scolari, Historian/Indian Liaison

**Interpretation Focus Group**

Group Leader: Naomi Torres

Galen Dillman, VIP Docent

Carolyn Nuite, VIP Docent

Eric Heinz, VIP Battery Chamberlin

Susan Tasaki, GGNPA Publications

Jon Plutte, GGNPA Media

Tom Daley, GGNPA Presidio Bookstore Manager

Lisa Hillstrom, Presidio Trust

Nancy Caplan, Education Coordinator

Margaret Styles, Interpretive Ranger

Marcus Combs, Visitor Center Manager

Janice Cooper, Volunteer Coordinator

James Osborne, Interpretive Ranger

Theresa Griggs, Interpretive Supervisor

Mary Karraker, Interpretive Ranger

Will Elder, Interpretive Ranger

Lynn Fonfa, Interpretive Ranger

Sharon Farrell, NPS Plant Ecologist



Travel and Tourism Focus Group

Group Leader: Rich Weideman

Kay Voyvodich, Presidio Trust

Carolyn Horgan, Blue and Gold Fleet

Craig Smith, San Francisco

John Lawler, Discover Town Tours

William Newton, ITMT

Kevin Dwarka, Presidio Trust

Mark Helmbrecht, Presidio Trust

Ilana Hirsch, San Francisco Tour Guide Guild

Anthea McGoldrick, Gray Line

## Focus Group Summary

Similar to the Symposium participants, Focus Group participants had many diverse ideas regarding stories to be told at the Presidio. The following stories were compiled from each Focus Group and represent their collective response to a facilitated exercise, which directed each individual in each group to:

*Describe three stories you think are important to tell about the Presidio. They can be anything – personal stories, folklore, military stories, natural history. Be as specific as you can.*

The stories are naturally divided into major thematic categories, similar to the categories of stories that emerged at the Presidio Symposium.

### 1. WHERE EDGES MEET

- Literally: where the land meets the sea
- Geologically: tectonic plates and earthquakes,
- Formation of the bay and the Golden Gate
- Globally: North America meets the Pacific and Asia
- Culturally: where peoples have met in conflict and cooperation
- Politically: public lands in an urban area

### 2. THE EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES:

- Native American practices
- Europeans settle at harsh site for strategic reasons
- Army conquers dunes by planting forests
- Present day remediation of pollution and restoration of
- Native plants and ecological health
- Biosphere Reserve
- **Rare and endangered species**
- Botanical exploration - plants tell stories over time
- "Extinction before our eyes"
- Importance of natural corridors
- Encourage an ethic of land stewardship

### 3. GEOPOLITICS: The Presidio is part of a larger picture of the United States and the Pacific

- Began with the Spanish occupation in 1776,
- Continued under the Mexican Republic (1821 to 1846), and culminated in US expansion after 1846
- First the Presidio was the control center for the Indian Wars campaigns, then,
- The United States reached out across the Pacific to Asia.
- Other great powers visited San Francisco Bay including the British and the Russians (Fort Ross)
- Explores colonialism, American expansion, and imperialism

### 4. PRESIDIO WAS A "SUPERPOST": The command headquarters for the Western United States

- Historically, there were five posts at the Presidio:
  - Main Post
  - Fort Point
  - Letterman Hospital
  - Fort Scott
  - Crissy Airfield
- The Presidio contained a wide range of army installations:
  - Infantry
  - Cavalry
  - Light and Heavy Artillery
  - Medical
  - Administrative

### 5. NATIONAL PARKS AND THE ARMY: Full circle: first the army cavalry protected national parks, now the National Park Service cares for former army posts.

- Ohlone and the Spanish
- Indian Campaigns
- Mexicans and Californios
- Japanese Internment

- Japanese Language School
- Changes in the composition of the army over 150 years
- Hierarchy in military life
- Truman's desegregation of the military
- Role of women in the army
- Family life on the post

As part of another exercise, Focus Group Participants were asked to respond to the question,

*Think about your first visit to the Presidio. What was your first impression?*

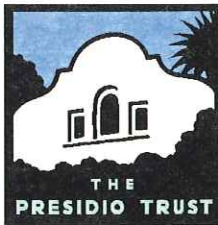
Following are some of the responses to this question.

- "A beautiful place conflicted with its purpose"
- Nice houses and green lawns
- Solitude: like I was the only one there
- I did not realize the depths of history here
- I got lost on first three tours
- A place of solitude and beauty
- Presidio is a separate world from SF
- Age and mystery of Fort Point
- Solemn ritual of witnessing a burial in the cemetery
- A returning Vietnam POW found the Presidio paradise

In an additional exercise, focus group participants were asked to name the most significant places in the Presidio, and to describe what these places represent. Participants mentioned nearly every location in the Park, ranging from the El Presidio Site to the Golden Gate to Crissy Field. The variety of responses illustrates that all of the sites within the Presidio are important and hold significant interpretive experiences for visitors.



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interest of all our people, by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.



Created by Congress in 1996, the Presidio Trust is charged with preserving the Presidio's natural, historic and scenic resources while making the park financially self-sufficient by 2013. Six Presidential appointees and the Secretary of the Interior or her designee sit on the Board of Directors and oversee management of 80 percent of the Presidio lands.



The Golden Gate National Parks Association is the official non-profit partner of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. This membership organization is dedicated to preserving the Golden Gate National Parks, enriching the experiences of its visitors and promoting community stewardship.

*The National Park Service and the Presidio Trust thank the Golden Gate National Parks Association for their support of the Presidio Stories Symposium.*

