

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Public Review Begins on Dias Ridge Trail Realignment

SACRAMENTO – The National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation announce the availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment / Initial Study (Draft EA/IS) for the Dias Ridge Restoration and Trail Improvement Project at Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Mt. Tamalpais State Park, Marin County.

Project Purpose and Need

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

The route on Mt. Tamalpais State Park lands is a designated fire road, open to bicyclists, equestrians and hikers. Some users of the Dias Ridge Trail bypass its western segment through GGNRA lands by using a “volunteer” trail that leads north from the top of Dias Ridge down to Frank Valley Road. This unauthorized use of non-designated trails has caused severe slope erosion, causing point source sedimentation to Redwood Creek. New trailhead informational and regulatory signage is needed at the Golden Gate Dairy and Panoramic Highway Trailheads to facilitate authorized recreational uses on Dias Ridge.

Alternatives

The Draft EA/IS analyzes the “No Action” Alternative and the Action Alternative/Preferred Action. The No Action alternative describes the action of continuing the present management operation and condition; it does not imply or direct discontinuing the present action or removing existing uses, developments, or facilities.

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Under this alternative, existing erosion conditions on the deteriorated Dias Ridge trail alignment and other non-designated trails on Dias Ridge would increase, accelerating their decline. The eroded trails would continue to contribute sediment into Redwood Creek, degrading water quality and impacting habitat for Federally-listed Coho salmon and steelhead. Existing local gaps in the regional, statewide, and National Park Service trail plans through this area would remain.

The Action Alternative/Preferred Action involves landscape restoration, trail improvements, new trail construction, and associated work on Dias Ridge starting at the Mt. Tamalpais State Park fire gate at the west side of Panoramic Highway approximately 1,250 feet north of its intersection with SR1 and running westward to the Golden Gate Dairy. Under this alternative, existing trail segments would be retained where practical and construction of an improved trail alignment would be implemented to eliminate poorly graded and eroding segments of the Dias Ridge Trail between Panoramic Highway and the Golden Gate Dairy. The approximate total length of this segment is 15,700 feet. The trail segment analyzed in the EA would continue to be shared or multi-use (hikers, bicycles, and equestrians) and would provide an identified desired link in the Bay Area Ridge Trail system.

Public Review and Comment:

The EA/IS is available for public review from July 5 to August 3, 2007. Comments must be received by August 3 to be included in the final record. You may review and comment on the EA/IS online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/goga> (click on the project title and then "Open for Comment"). The document is also available at http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=981. Comments may also be mailed to: Environmental Coordinator, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Northern Service Center, One Capitol Mall, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814

If you have any questions regarding this project, wish to receive a CD of the EA/IS, or would like a list of libraries where copies of the EA/IS are available. Please contact: Patricia DuMont, Environmental Coordinator at (916) 445-9081 or email CEQANSC@parks.ca.gov with 'Dias Ridge' in the subject line. Questions regarding this project may also be directed at any time to Steve Ortega (415) 561-4841, or email at steve_ortega@nps.gov.

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