

THE PRESIDIO TRUST 2001 YEAR-END REPORT

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Moving From Vision to Reality  
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The Presidio is a unique national park. Unlike the wilderness areas or historic event sites of many other national parks, the Presidio was built and landscaped to serve the needs of an active military community. In addition, the Presidio is a national park in an urban setting. As such, it has always been entwined with the cities around it while serving its national role.

These realities of the Presidio — that it is an integral part of the city surrounding it; that it has a substantial amount of leasable property and infrastructure of its own; that it serves visitors local, national, and international — may challenge our ideas of what a national park should be. But these elements make the Presidio truly singular. We have an opportunity and a responsibility to re-establish a community in the park that can change over time and that will always care for the park.

The Trust believes that the Presidio will not only be preserved, but will thrive if people live, work, and visit here as they always have for the past 226 years. The Trust is mandated by Congress to preserve and

enhance the natural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources of the Presidio. That is the principal goal. Within that mandate is the requirement that the Presidio must be financially independent of government appropriations in the very near future.

During our first three years we have built the organization necessary to operate this complex community. We have rehabilitated 872 and leased 950 dwellings, with more than a third now occupied by people who work in the park. In other buildings we have a diverse tenancy of non-profits, businesses and public agencies in 914,998 square feet of rehabilitated space. In 2001, combined leasing revenues from these sources generated \$30.35 million, and covered 59.5 percent of the Presidio Trust's operating costs. We are establishing a solid financial base and a solid base of community — the critical steps in securing the future of the park.

During these three years we have also focused on programs for visitors to learn about the park and participate in its care. Volunteers restore and protect



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*The Trust is prepared, and is committed to protecting and preserving the Presidio as a national resource and a local treasure.*

*The mission of the Presidio Trust is to preserve and enhance the Presidio as a national park while making it financially self-sufficient by 2013.*

rare habitats, grow and plant native species, and restore grasslands. Visitors attend tours of historic buildings and exhibits at the newly renovated Officers' Club and Herbst Hall. Others attend public and private conferences and special events in many different venues throughout the park.

We have also dedicated the work of the Trust to sustainability and environmental preservation by implementing significant infrastructure upgrades and major conservation programs. During the past three years, we reduced the use of electricity from 37 kwh per square foot to 15 kwh per square foot. We have initiated innovative energy programs using cogeneration fuel cell technology. Our vehicle fleet now contains 25 non-polluting electric cars, and our clean-running CNG shuttle helps reduce auto traffic in the park. We have been recognized for our park-wide recycling effort, and also for our "green building" rehabilitation program through which our craftspeople repair and reuse the original fabric of historic buildings. Some of our rehabilitated buildings

contain as much as 80 percent recycled materials. We also use organic waste from the park to create compost that feeds our plants and trees.

The Presidio is the legacy of the generations that lived here and cared for this post; that legacy will be carried forward as a national park — with the same spirit. Our hope is to see the Presidio become home to an enduring community. We envision a place where public, private, and non-profit sectors come together and share their pursuits and resources; where educators and students explore the world around them; where artists, scientists, and storytellers pursue their passions; where parents and children play; where visitors deepen their understanding of the connections between human and natural history; and perhaps most important, where an individual, alone or in concert with others, can find peace of mind and personal inspiration.



Toby Rosenblatt

CHAIR, PRESIDIO TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The mandate for the Presidio Trust has always been clear: To preserve and protect the Presidio for the public. How we do this is driven by both financial and political considerations. We need immediate, large capital investment to transform the military post into a national park, despite diminishing federal funds and a fluctuating economy. We need to build constituencies and public consensus, despite the often competing interests of visitors, program providers, and park neighbors. Our challenge, of course, is to navigate between our needs and our constraints.

Congress established two parameters for our work. The first is that we always protect the park's scenic, natural, and historic resources. The second is that the park must pay its own way by 2013. Much has been made of the financial imperative. No other national park operates under the same stricture. If viewed alone, however, it gives a distorted picture of what the Presidio Trust must accomplish. We can achieve financial self-sufficiency in any number of

ways, but if we do so without having created the financial base to ensure the rehabilitation of the Presidio's historic buildings and landscapes and the preservation of its natural resources, we will not have accomplished the goals set forth for us by Congress. Our financial requirement cannot be understood apart from our mandate to preserve and protect the park.

The Presidio's diverse resources provide a key to the financial challenge. The best way to preserve our historic buildings is to reuse them. Their reuse, in turn, provides lease revenues that underwrite natural restoration, visitor services, and ongoing park operations. The result is a resource preservation approach to financial sustainability.

The key to the political challenge is also found in one of the park's greatest resources: the people who love it. Stewardship of the Presidio carries an implicit caveat: to understand and to honor what the Presidio has meant and has come to mean to those who have enjoyed it as a refuge, a place for



# message

[ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ]

contemplation and recreation. This year we engaged the public in a planning process to define the principles for balancing financial and preservation exigencies. Nowhere has the passion about the Presidio been more clearly expressed than in the vigorous dialogue with neighbors and civic groups throughout the public comment period for the Presidio Trust Implementation Plan.

In Spring 2002, we will publish a plan that will guide the Presidio toward its tandem goals. Public input and debate have strengthened our plan by encouraging us to scrutinize our assumptions about our mission as well as our implementation strategies.

What we do today will have consequences for many years. During the past year we have continued to strengthen the park's infrastructure, to rehabilitate historic buildings, to create revenue streams, and to revitalize an aging forest. We have established cleaner and more efficient practices to preserve our resources and we are becoming recognized as a national model for resource management. With

459 federally-listed historic structures to rehabilitate, the Trust has become a leader in environmentally-sensitive historic rehabilitation.

We have also worked to communicate to a passionate public how we are facing our challenges without losing sight of our goals. We are learning to understand and adhere to the values so vividly reflected throughout the Presidio in the balance between its buildings and the landscape. The harmony adds an aesthetic dimension that reflects the idealism of the generations that have transformed the Presidio through more than two centuries of living and working here. This balance itself establishes the standard to which we aspire and by which we will judge our success.



Craig Middleton

ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## A Brief History of the Presidio

The Presidio blends natural beauty with a rich historic tradition. The magnificent lands at the Golden Gate, which first supported the Ohlone Indians, have attracted immigrants, explorers, pioneers, and conquerors from around the world. Due to its strategic location overlooking bay and ocean, the area served as a military post under three powers: first Spain, then Mexico, and finally



the United States. From the Civil War through the Cold War, the Presidio was used as a training site and a point of debarkation to foreign theaters of combat. It was the location of the strategic Crissy Airfield, and the Letterman Army Medical Center and research complex.

In 1989, the U.S. Army determined that the Presidio was excess to the needs of the military; the Sixth U.S. Army departed in 1994. Later that year, Congress named the Presidio a part of the National Park System. Since 1996, the Presidio Trust has overseen the Presidio's transition from military post to national park.

c. 700

The Ohlone Indians were the first known users of the lands at the Golden Gate.

1776

Spanish colonists established a military and civilian "presidio" – the Spanish term for "walled fortification."

1821

The Mexican Revolution results in Mexico's possession of the Presidio.

1846

War erupts between Mexico and the United States. American forces seize control of the Presidio.

1861

The Civil War establishes the Presidio as a strategic military post.

1941

The Presidio serves as a major training center for U.S. Army troops headed for World War II's Pacific Theater.

1962

The Presidio is designated a National Historic Landmark District.

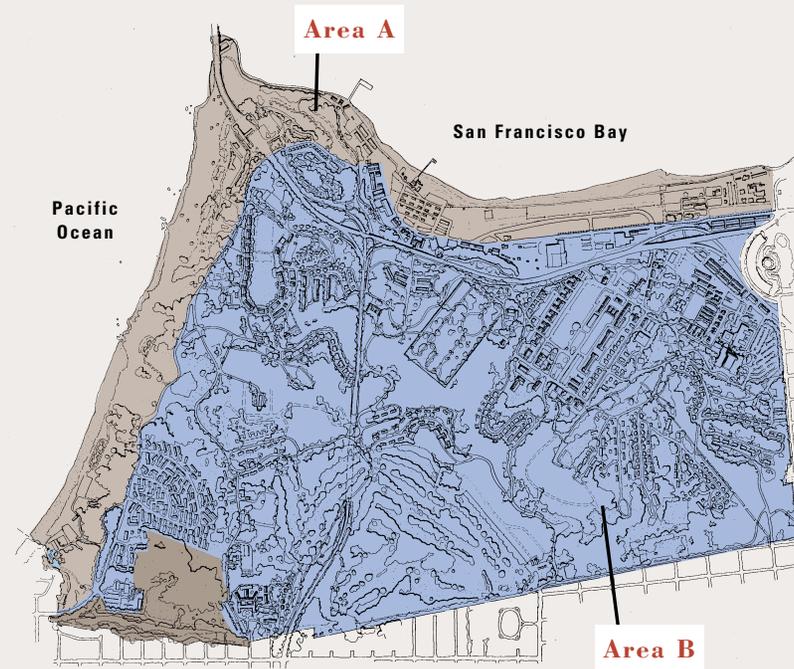
1972

Federal legislation determines that the Presidio will become part of the Golden Gate National Recreational Area should it become excess to the needs of the military.

## The Presidio Trust

The Presidio Trust is a federal corporation and executive agency created by Congress in 1996. The Trust works with the National Park Service to preserve and enhance the Presidio as a national park site. The Presidio Trust manages the interior 80% of the park lands (Area B), while the National Park Service maintains jurisdiction over coastal areas (Area A).

Six presidential appointees and a designee of the Secretary of the Interior serve on the Presidio Trust's Board of Directors. An executive director reports to the board, and oversees a professional staff with expertise in a broad range of fields including environmental and wildlife preservation, forestry, sustainability, historic preservation and restoration, and cultural programming.



**1989**

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission designates the Presidio for closure.

**1994**

The Sixth U.S. Army departs the Presidio. The National Park Service assumes management of the area.

**1996**

Federal legislation creates the Presidio Trust.

**1998**

The Presidio Trust assumes management responsibility for non-coastal areas of the Presidio.

**2001**

The historic Presidio Officers' Club is re-opened as an event venue and world-class exhibition center.

The Trust also introduces a draft plan to guide the future of the park.

Enhancement and restoration projects begin at Mountain Lake and the historic Presidio Forest.

**2013**

The Presidio must achieve financial self-sufficiency by this year, as mandated by Congress.



*Many of our natural areas are in need of restoration... Financed by the Trust and supervised by National Park Service and Trust employees, crews of volunteers devote countless hours to renew and maintain the Presidio's vegetation and habitat.*

# The Presidio Trust: A Preservation Organization

BY AMY MEYER, PRESIDIO TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Presidio Trust is guided by the legislative mandate that underlies the management of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area: to preserve the outstanding natural, scenic, historic, and recreational values of the Golden Gate for public use and enjoyment.

Conserving the historic fabric of the Presidio, a National Historic Landmark District, is expensive. Our historic buildings need extensive rehabilitation and restoration, from the Officers' Club whose walls contain pieces of "El Presidio" dating from after 1812, to structures built during the World War II era. Homes, office buildings, and warehouses must be updated to meet current building codes, and continually maintained to assure their longevity.

As the Presidio Trust and its tenants rehabilitate and occupy the buildings, interactive groups of working tenants are becoming visible. As Presidio housing units are modernized and occupied, a residential community is emerging. The revenue generated

from Trust leasing activities supports additional building rehabilitation, ongoing maintenance, events, programs, and landscape renewal. The Trust also helps sponsor programs of archaeological research that shed light on the lives of past Presidio residents, such as the Ohlone Indians who hunted and fished here as far back as 700 A.D.

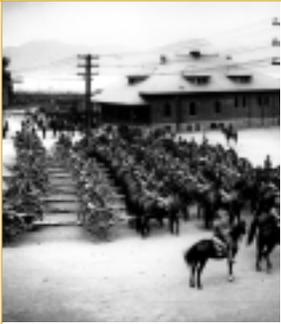
Many of our natural areas are in need of restoration. Some have been imperiled by invasive non-native plants such as cape ivy and broom that have overrun areas formerly dominated by native species. Financed by the Trust and supervised by National Park Service and Trust employees, crews of volunteers devote countless hours to renew and maintain the Presidio's vegetation and habitat. Restoring and enhancing the vast and wonderful resources of the Presidio is a challenge that the Trust is accomplishing in partnerships with individuals, organizations and agencies that have joined in our commitment to the long-term preservation and public use of this National Park land.



# preservation

[ RESOURCE ]

Preserving the vast and wonderful resources *of the Presidio is a challenge that can only be accomplished in partnership with individuals, organizations and agencies that are committed, as we are, to the long-term sustainability of this park.*



**BUILDING 210:**

**AN HISTORIC BUILDING BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE**

Over its 100-plus years of use, Presidio Building 210 has been a military guard house, a post office, a bank, and a property management office. Prominently located at

the base of the parade ground, the building is an architectural anchor of the Main Post.

When restoration became essential, Trust planners and architects based their work on archival photos and drawings. “We wanted to retain the building’s historic character, and to restore the porch that was part of the original building,” said Chandler McCoy, project manager. “The new porch is a faithful reproduction of the original that was built in 1899.”

Building 210 is now shared by two tenants, the U.S. Post Office and First Republic Bank. The building has recovered its historic image and original orientation to the parade ground, and has also been adapted and upgraded to meet the needs of our time. Its restored interior finishes do not reveal the embedded structural steel, sprinklers, fire detection systems and other elements that have been added to make the building safe, code-compliant, and ADA compliant. “An historic building has been rehabilitated and given new life for the 21st century,” McCoy said. “This is the essence of stewardship.”



**THE PRESIDIO FOREST:  
SCIENCE AND SCENERY**

The Presidio’s historic forest is aging and showing signs of deterioration. In planning the revitalization of the 250-acre Presidio forest, one key goal is to plant young trees that will preserve the historic character of the forest, such as Monterey pine, Monterey cypress, and eucalyptus trees.

The spread of pitch canker fungus throughout the region has raised the issue of whether the Monterey pine, a stately tree that once grew along much of the California coast, should be included in future plantings. Researchers are looking for ways to stop pitch canker, and the Presidio will serve as a natural laboratory to help advance these efforts.



Scientists from UC Berkeley have placed “traps” around the Presidio forest to collect insects and tree parts in order to determine how the fungus spreads. Taking another approach to the

problem, researchers from UC Davis are focusing on developing a strain of pine that is resistant to pitch canker. They are testing trees in the Presidio for resistance, and hope to use the information to develop a resistant tree strain that could be used in reforestation efforts.

**PETER EHRLICH** loves trees. He is currently growing nearly 500 seedlings in containers around his home. “My wife thinks I’m crazy,” he smiles. “But I’m passionate about trees, and about leaving a green legacy around the San Francisco Bay.” Ehrlich has been working with trees since he graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in forest resource management. He joined the Presidio Trust from the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, where he served as Urban Forester. In this position, he is credited with restoring

## RESOURCE PRESERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP: CARING FOR PARK WILDLIFE

The California quail, our state bird, once roamed the Bay Area in large numbers. But the ground-dwelling bird is now on the “Watchlist” of the Audubon Society, and in San Francisco, it is on the threshold of extinction.

The Trust has coordinated a stewardship project to help improve the odds for the quail. The project has brought together the Audubon Society, Presidio residents, local schools, and other volunteers from surrounding communities. The hands-on habitat restoration program includes constructing protective brushpiles and planting native flora that benefit quail. In addition, people who live and work in the park are educated about how to co-exist with this sensitive species.

In the coming year, the Golden Gate Audubon Society will release a city-wide Quail Recovery Plan in which the Trust will be a major participant along with the National Park Service, the Golden Gate National Parks Association, and the city of San Francisco. “The Trust has taken a lead role in this effort,” said Terri Thomas, Trust natural resources program manager. “As stewards of this land, we will continue to protect its more delicate residents in every way possible.”



## MOUNTAIN LAKE UPDATE

Mountain Lake was once a pristine well-spring, and a vital water source for early inhabitants of the Presidio. Over the years, changes such as roadwork and the planting of non-native trees compromised the quality of the lake and its environment.

The Mountain Lake Enhancement Project is a joint venture of the Trust, the National Park Service, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, and the Golden Gate National Parks Association. Several community groups are also involved, including the Friends of Mountain Lake Park and the California Academy of Sciences, which is using Mountain Lake as an educational site. Much of the funding for the project has come from the San Francisco International Airport.

There has been tremendous progress at Mountain Lake. More than 11,000 native plants have been propagated at the Presidio Native Plant Nursery for replanting at the site. Tanks, pumps, and a pump house left by the Army were removed. Non-native eucalyptus that have been contaminating Mountain Lake have been removed. Over the next several years, the lake will be dredged to increase its depth and remove additional contamination, and eucalyptus will be replaced with willow and oak woodland. The lake will be deep and clean, and the area will support a diverse habitat of birds and other wildlife.



much of the aging forest in Golden Gate Park. He is an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture. In his position for the Trust, Ehrlich is challenged by the age and declining health of the historic Presidio Forest, and his charge to reforest the park within 60 years. “The goal will be to create a forest made up of unequally-aged trees through phased replanting,” he said. “Then our successors will not be faced with what we face now: an old forest that is declining as a whole, at the same time.”



*This year has seen tremendous progress in key environmental restoration projects such as Mountain Lake and the Presidio forest.*



*In the Trust Act, Congress established a unique vision for the Presidio. It also specified the operational priorities we should embrace as the park moves toward realizing that vision. No priorities are more prominent or clear in their directive than the requirement for the prudent and effective use of the public's funds, and the requirement for financial self-sufficiency by 2013. Solid financial management will allow the Trust to successfully address all of the costs associated with the other important mandates provided by Congress.*