

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared for implementation of the proposed action as described in the *Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan and Environmental Assessment* (MLEP/EA) at the Presidio of San Francisco in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA).

The FONSI is based on the analysis of impacts associated with conducting enhancements for improving water quality, habitat and the visitor experience at Mountain Lake, as discussed in the MLEP/EA, dated October 2000, and input received during the public comment period. Comments received during the public review period for the MLEP/EA are summarized and responded to in Attachment 1 (Report Accompanying the FONSI). Minor text changes and revisions in response to the comments are provided in Attachment 2 (Errata Sheet). The MLEP/EA, the Report Accompanying the FONSI, the Errata Sheet, and the *Presidio General Management Plan Amendment Final Environmental Impact Statement* (GMPA), from which the MLEP/EA is tiered, are incorporated by reference, as supporting documents for this FONSI.

## **1 1 Summary of Proposed Action**

The MLEP/EA is the joint effort of three agencies: the Presidio Trust, the National Park Service (NPS), and the Golden Gate National Parks Association (GGNPA). Because the Presidio Trust manages the portion of the Presidio where Mountain Lake is found, the Trust is lead agency for this environmental compliance process. The overall goal of the MLEP is to improve the health of the lake and adjacent shoreline and terrestrial environments. The MLEP/EA has three interrelated objectives: 1) to improve water quality; 2) to enhance habitat; and 3) to enhance public access. The project includes habitat restoration, but does not include restoration of a full ecosystem with the reintroduction of any animal species. The proposed action (Alternative 2) includes the following elements:

- ■ Dredging of approximately 11,500 cubic yards of sediment to deepen the lake;
- ■ Mechanical aeration of the lake;
- ■ Phased removal of exotic trees from the east shore;
- ■ Revegetation with native wetland, willow woodland, and oak woodland species;
- ■ Phased removal of exotic weeds and revegetation;
- ■ Construction of an interpretive trail with three overlooks;
- ■ Development of a new overlook along the south shore; and
- ■ Future phased improvements along the east arm.

## **2 2 Public Review**

### **2.1 2.1 November 1, 2000, MLEP/EA Released**

The MLEP/EA was released on November 1, 2000 for a forty-five day public review period, which ended on December 15, 2000.

### **2.2 2.2 Environmental Assessment Mailing**

Approximately 600 copies of the *Summary of the Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan* were distributed to Presidio tenants, Presidio residents, local neighborhood organizations and groups, and project neighbors. Included with the *Summary* was a letter announcing the availability of the MLEP/EA for review and comment. Approximately 120 copies of the MLEP/EA were distributed to city, state and federal government agencies, public interest groups, neighbors, and various individuals.

### **2.3 2.3 Public Meetings and Site Tours**

A series of public meetings and site tours were conducted for the project. Notices for the public meetings were mailed to the list described above and announced in the Presidio Post. In addition, 2000 flyers announcing both the site tours and the public meetings were distributed in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the project site. Public meetings and site tours were prominently promoted at Mountain Lake's onsite bulletin board. Articles describing the Mountain Lake project and these events were included in the March, September, and October 2000, editions of *The Presidio Post*. Two formal public meetings were held in September and November of 2000 at the Park's Fort Mason Headquarters and chaired by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Citizen's Advisory Commission. These public meetings, held as part of the development and review of this environmental assessment, are described below:

#### ■ ■ March 2000 – Mountain Lake Enhancement Plan Scoping Meeting

The formal planning process for Mountain Lake began with a Public Scoping Meeting, held at the Presidio's Log Cabin. Meeting notices were mailed to the Mountain Lake mailing list described above. The challenges of restoring Mountain Lake were presented to interested attendees. Key issues identified included tree removal, visitor access, habitat enhancement, and noise from Park Presidio Boulevard.

#### ■ ■ September 2000 – Citizen's Advisory Commission Meeting

The NPS provided advance public notice regarding items to be discussed at this public Advisory Commission Meeting. An overview of the MLEP/EA was presented at this meeting.

#### ■ ■ October 2000 – Site Tours

Three tours of the Mountain Lake project site were given. The public was invited to participate. Each tour included an overview of the MLEP/EA. Approximately 120 neighbors and representatives of groups participated in the tours. Tree removal and noise from Park Presidio Boulevard were the issues most often mentioned by tour participants.

#### ■ ■ November 2000 – Public Open House

An open house and public briefing on the Mountain Lake Project was held at Saint James' Church, located in the neighborhood adjacent to Mountain Lake. The presentation included an overview of the MLEP/EA. Roughly 10 neighbors attended. Tree removal was again the most frequently mentioned issue.

#### ■ ■ November 2000 – Citizen's Advisory Commission Meeting

On November 28, 2000, the proposed action was briefly summarized and public comments on the MLEP/EA were received at the meeting. Six members of the audience spoke. Comments focused on overall support for the project, tree removal, habitat enhancements, and concerns about potential contamination in lake bottom sediment.

#### ■ ■ February 2001 – Presidio Trust Public Board Meeting

The MLEP/EA and a summary of public comments thereon were presented at this public board meeting. A resolution directing the Presidio Trust to prepare a FONSI for the MLEP/EA was passed at the end of the presentation.

#### **2.4 2.4 Public Comments and Response**

Oral comments were received from two organizations and four individuals at the November 2000 public meeting. Written comments were received from 9 organizations and 12 individuals during the 45-day comment period. A total of 15 individuals and 9 organizations provided written or oral comments on the MLEP/EA. Some people/organizations presented both written and/or oral comments. All written and oral comments were evaluated and responded to in Attachment 1, which was summarized at the February 2001 Presidio Trust Public Board Meeting. In response to public comment, a number of minor modifications of the proposed action were also presented at the Board Meeting (Attachment 2). The modifications include acceleration of the later phased tree removal along the east shore, replacement of fence along West Pacific Avenue, planting of trees along the golf course edge, and working with Caltrans to relocated storm drains and create a better noise buffer along Park Presidio Boulevard.

In a unanimous vote, the Presidio Trust Board recommended approval of the proposed action, as modified, and completion of a FONSI.

### **3 3 Alternatives**

In addition to the proposed action (Alternative 2) described above, the MLEP/EA described and analyzed three other alternatives, two action alternatives and a no action alternative. Alternative 1 called for less dredging, partial removal of exotic trees along the east shore, more limited removal of exotic weeds and revegetation, no development of an interpretive trail with overlooks, and no future improvements to the east arm. Alternative 3 called for more dredging, full removal of exotic trees along the east shore in the first phase, more extensive removal of exotic weeds and revegetation in the first phase, a longer interpretive trail, and improvements to the east arm in the first phase, including exotic tree removal. The MLEP/EA analyzed the site-specific environmental consequences of implementing each alternative.

Seven other possible alternatives for achieving the project objectives were considered but rejected in the MLEP/EA. These alternatives were: 1) adding fill along the south shore beach; 2) re-introduction of special-status species; 3) creating visitor access into existing native habitat areas; 4) dredging of the north and east arms; 5) no dredging; 6) deeper dredging; and 7) leaving all exotic trees along the east shore. These alternatives were rejected from further consideration because they would not result in fewer environmental impacts than the proposal or because they were not considered feasible. The proposed action was chosen because it is more consistent with the concept identified in the GMPA and best meets the interrelated project objectives.

### **4 4 Disposition of Environmental Effects**

The following discussion presents the reasons why the proposed action will not have a significant impact on the human environment. A more detailed analysis supporting this conclusion is included in Section 4 of the MLEP/EA.

Potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives were evaluated in the MLEP/EA, including impacts on land use, slope stability, water resources and quality, biological resources, cultural resources, recreation, transportation, air quality, noise, human health, safety, and the environment, scenic resources, and cumulative impacts. From the analysis in the MLEP/EA, the Trust determined that there will not be significant impacts on any of these resources. Implementation of the proposed enhancements to

Mountain Lake will not result in significant adverse impacts on the environment, because the project has been carefully designed to avoid impacts and the plan incorporates mitigation measures for potential adverse impacts.

## **5 5 Measures to Minimize Potential Adverse Environmental Impacts**

All practicable mitigation measures identified in the MLEP/EA to avoid or minimize environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the selected alternative will be incorporated into the project. These mitigation measures are discussed in greater detail in the MLEP/EA. As part of the decision to implement Alternative 2, the Trust is adopting a Monitoring and Enforcement Program (MEP) to monitor actual impacts once the project is begun. The MEP assures the implementation of the mitigation measures as proposed in the MLEP/EA. The MEP describes the actions that must take place as a part of each measure, the timing of these actions, the individual who is responsible for implementation, and the agency responsible for enforcing each action. The MEP is appended to this FONSI as Attachment 3. It provides the following information:

- ■ *Impact* - Taken from the MLEP/EA
- ■ *Mitigation Measures* – Taken from the MLEP/EA
- ■ *Reporting Stage and Responsibility* – Applicable milestone or phase and agency/individual who will carry out mitigation measures;
- ■ *Responsibility for Compliance* – Agency/individual who will ensure that the mitigation measures are accomplished;
- ■ *Method of Implementation* – How actions will be implemented;
- ■ *Enforcement* – How implementation of actions will be enforced; and
- ■ *Checkoff* – Verification of implementation.

The Presidio Trust has ultimate control over and responsibility for the implementation of most of the measures identified in the MEP. Therefore, the Presidio Trust Construction Manager for the MLEP/EA is the assigned chief monitor. If responsibility for the implementation of a specific mitigation measure resides in another agency, the Project Manager will oversee a process to ensure coordination with these other agencies in monitoring and enforcement. The Project Manager will track the overall progress of each action, and will make available to the public the results of relevant monitoring upon request.

## **6 6 Finding**

In response to comments received during the public review period, as well as public input received at the November 28, 2000, GGNRA Advisory Commission meeting, the Trust has further considered the range of alternatives, the significance of the potential impacts that may be generated by the proposed action, and the possible need to prepare a site-specific Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed action, as modified. Based on this detailed review, as reflected in the Report Accompanying the FONSI and the MLEP/EA, the Trust concludes that appropriate alternatives to the proposed action have been analyzed, and that the proposal will not generate any significant new or different environmental impacts requiring preparation of an EIS.

In conclusion, the proposed MLEP/EA does not constitute an action that would normally require the preparation of an EIS. It is tiered off of and is consistent with the GMPA/EIS. The proposal will not have a significant impact on the human environment. There are no significant unmitigated adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local law. Therefore, in compliance with the National Environmental Compliance Act, an EIS will not be prepared.

For further information concerning this decision, contact John Pelka, NEPA Compliance Coordinator, at (415) 561-5300, or at The Presidio Trust, 34 Graham Street, P.O. Box 29052, San Francisco, CA 94129-0052.

Dated: March 21, 2001

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
James Meadows  
Executive Director, Presidio Trust

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_