



A Park For The People

In a time when the population of the San Francisco Bay Area was increasing rapidly, corporations were seeking to build new developments and roadways in many areas. Bay Area citizens and local agencies, outraged at the prospect of losing their much-loved open spaces, considered alternatives to development projects.

A local activist group, the “People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area”, founded by Amy Meyer and Dr. Edgar Wayburn, were motivated to organize by the proposal of a National Archive at Fort Miley. This group, together with the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Agency, the San Francisco Park and Recreation Department and Congressman Phillip Burton, began to ask the question: What if the land was established as a national park?

After years of activism and political pressure: the City of San Francisco turned over 91.5 acres of city parklands involving Fort Miley, Lands End, and portions of Lincoln Park to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

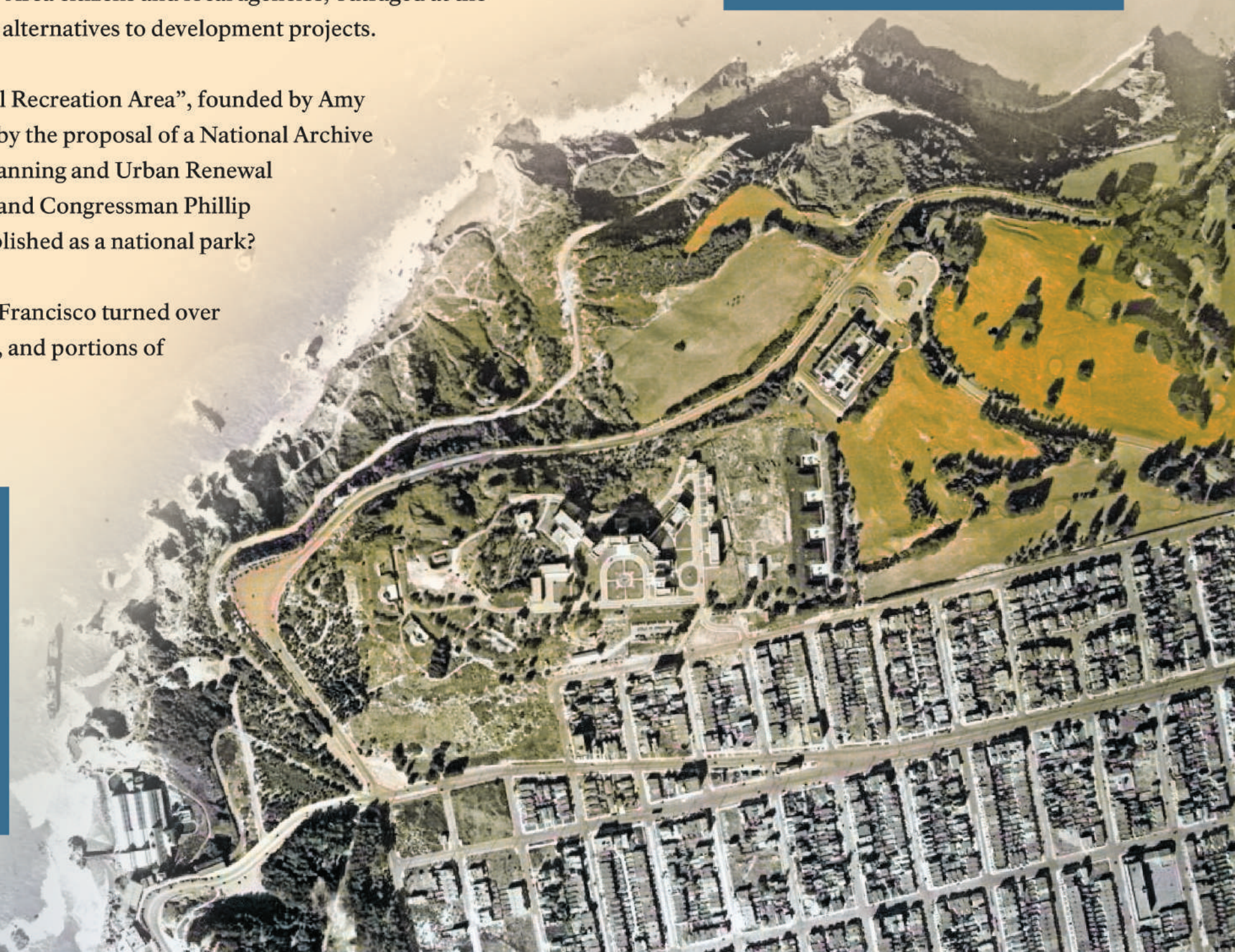
Aerial view of Fort Miley and the Land's End Areas in 1937, taken by the 91st Observation Squad.



Rebels With A Cause

How can individual actions make a difference? More than 50 years ago, on October 27, 1972, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) was officially established as a National Park. Today, GGNRA encompasses 84,000 acres of coastal land and it is the most visited national park in the region.

Colorized photo of Amy Meyer welcomes hikers to the Presidio, 1971. GGNRA Park Archives





The City That Almost Happened

Imagine a city of 20,000 residents, complete with high-rise buildings, businesses and light industry, on these open slopes of the Marin Headlands. It almost happened.

Marincello, proposed in the 1960s as a “planned community,” was narrowly approved by the county board of supervisors in 1965. The supervisors and many Marin residents believed that development of these lands, then privately held, was inevitable. Despite fierce opposition from open space advocates, and lawsuits and petition drives to stop the project — portrayed as suffocating Marin’s quality of life—construction began.



In 1967, financial disputes and legal action between the project partners abruptly halted the work. The lawsuits were settled three years later, but by then the parkland idea was taking hold.

In 1972, the Nature Conservancy bought the land and soon transferred it to the National Park Service to become part of the newly established Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Now home for bobcats, deer, hawks and butterflies, the park protects scenic open space, natural systems and historic sites for public enjoyment.

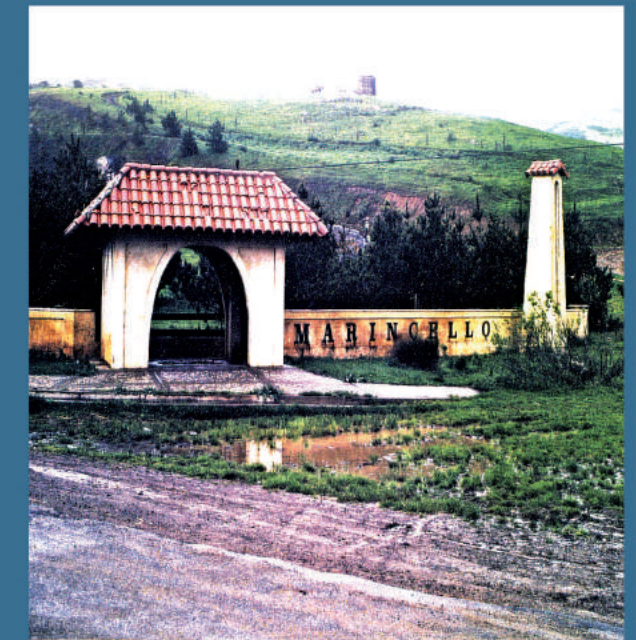
Photos: National Park Service

Rebels With A Cause

As the Western Director of The Nature Conservancy, Huey Johnson, led the effort against land development in Marin. After several visits to their head offices, he finally convinced Gulf Oil Corporation to abandon Marincello. Negotiating the more than \$12 million deal on notebook paper – his actions led to the park lands we enjoy today.

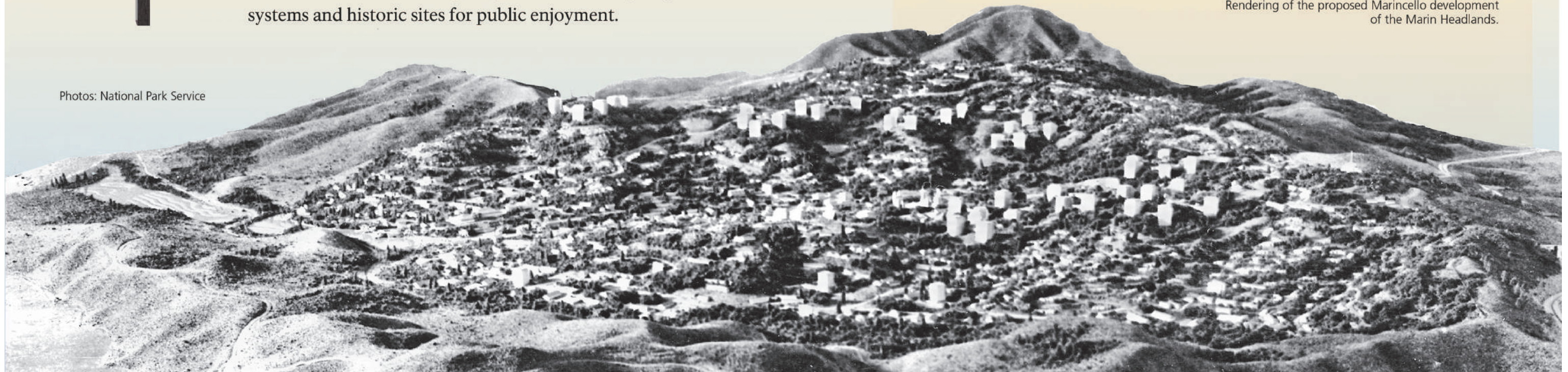
A Model City

As seen in the rendering below, Marincello would have blanketed 2,138 acres of steep headlands hills with 16-story apartment towers, single- and multi-family housing, industrial zones, businesses, schools, garages and a landmark hotel at its highest ridge.



In the 1970s, you would have seen a pair of stucco entry gates, flanking a wide swath that was to be a main thoroughfare into the new city, “Marincello”. The gates were removed in 1976. The would-be boulevard is now the Marincello Trail.

Rendering of the proposed Marincello development of the Marin Headlands.





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Golden Gate National Recreation Area... would be a remarkable opportunity to establish a unique national park reserve that will save for the people [and] the world a magnificent open space immediately adjacent to one of the major metropolitan regions of the United States.

- Congressman Phillip Burton, 1971

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From 1969 to 1971, Native American activists occupied Alcatraz Island, a watershed moment in the history of Alcatraz; the Native American civil rights movement, and our nation.

Also in 1971, Amy Meyer created a People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area (PFGGNRA) at her kitchen table. Motivated to stop large-scale development of coastal lands: PFGGNRA, along with local politicians and activist groups began lobbying to protect much-loved open spaces.

With international attention on Alcatraz and political pressures, the Nixon administration was compelled to visit the proposed park areas on September 5, 1972.



September 5, 1972 President Richard Nixon and his wife, Pat board the ferry docked at Torpedo Wharf.

In preparation for this well-publicized tour, Torpedo Wharf was repaired to support his presidential ferry ride around the bay. A visit that reportedly cost \$10,000.

On October 27, 1972, President Richard M. Nixon signed the Golden Gate National Recreation Area into existence.