

1 [Opposing Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s Draft Dog Walking Access Policy]

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3 **Resolution opposing the Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s (GGNRA) currently**  
4 **proposed preferred alternative for dog management; and urging the GGNRA to adopt a**  
5 **different approach.**

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7 WHEREAS, Approximately 110,000 households in San Francisco own dogs that  
8 require regular exercise; and

9 WHEREAS, San Franciscans and their dogs have traditionally enjoyed access for  
10 generations to various properties under the present oversight of the Golden Gate National  
11 Recreation Area (GGNRA), such as Crissy Field, Ocean Beach, Ft. Funston, Lands End, Ft.  
12 Baker, Ft. Mason, Baker Beach and Sutro Heights Park; and

13 WHEREAS, The GGNRA was established, among other things, “to create an area that  
14 concentrates on serving the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area;”  
15 and

16 WHEREAS, In 1975, the City and County of San Francisco transferred Fort Funston,  
17 Ocean Beach, and other city-owned lands to the federal government to be included in the  
18 GGNRA and administered by the National Park Service after being given assurances that  
19 recreational access and usage would be continued and protected; and

20 WHEREAS, The voters required that the deed transferring any City-owned park lands  
21 to the National Park Service include the restriction that said lands were to be reserved by the  
22 Park Service in perpetuity for recreation or park purposes with a right of reversion upon  
23 breach of said restriction; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1979, after an extensive period of public comment including public  
25 hearings, the GGNRA determined that voice-controlled dog walking would have no negative

1 impact on the natural environment or on other park visitors when conducted on one percent of  
2 the GGNRA land, and the GGNRA therefore determined that dogs could be walked under  
3 voice control on that one percent of its land; and

4 WHEREAS, People, dogs, birds, plants and other species have been co-existing in the  
5 GGNRA for decades, consistent with the recreational purposes of the GGNRA; and

6 WHEREAS, On January 15, 2011, the GGNRA released a “Dog Management Plan”  
7 that would severely restrict off-leash, voice-controlled dog walking and create large areas  
8 where dogs would not be allowed at all in areas that currently allow off-leash, voice-controlled  
9 dog walking at Fort Funston, Crissy Field, Ocean Beach, Lands End, and Baker Beach; and

10 WHEREAS, On April 26, 2011, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted  
11 Resolution No. 183-11, putting the City and County of San Francisco on record as opposing  
12 the GGNRA’s proposed preferred alternative for a “Dog Management Plan,” calling for a  
13 thorough study of the GGNRA proposal’s impact on San Francisco and particularly on  
14 neighborhood parks if severe restrictions on off-leash dog access in GGNRA result in an  
15 increase of off-leash dog activity in City parks, and opposing the plan’s compliance-based  
16 management strategy; and

17 WHEREAS, Public comment on the 2011 GGNRA Dog Management Plan was  
18 overwhelmingly opposed to the GGNRA plan, and, in response, the GGNRA announced that  
19 it would release a revised version of the Dog Management Plan; and

20 WHEREAS, On September 6, 2013, the GGNRA released a “Supplemental Dog  
21 Management Plan” that included only minor changes to the original plan, and that still would  
22 severely restrict off-leash, voice-controlled dog walking and create large areas where dogs  
23 would not be allowed at all, including restrictions in areas where off-leash, voice-controlled  
24 dog walking is currently allowed; and

25

1           WHEREAS, The Supplemental Dog Management Plan would still significantly reduce  
2 in the GGNRA a main group of recreational park users – people who recreate in the GGNRA  
3 with their dogs; and

4           WHEREAS, The Supplemental Dog Management Plan still does not include any  
5 consideration of the benefits of off-leash, voice-controlled dog walking, including providing  
6 needed exercise for people and dogs, nor does it include any consideration of the benefits of  
7 the social communities that have developed and flourished at GGNRA units such as Fort  
8 Funston, and all other locations where dogs are currently walked off-leash and under voice  
9 control; and

10           WHEREAS, A significant reduction in dog access at GGNRA will have negative  
11 impacts on many residents of San Francisco; and

12           WHEREAS, The Supplemental Dog Management Plan in its preferred alternative  
13 proposes restrictions on off-leash, voice-controlled dog walking access at GGNRA that are  
14 inconsistent with the purposes of the GGNRA to promote urban, recreational uses by San  
15 Franciscans; and

16           WHEREAS, The Supplemental Dog Management Plan does not contain a thorough  
17 analysis of impacts of the plan on San Francisco neighborhood parks as requested in  
18 Resolution No. 183-11; and

19           WHEREAS, The Supplemental Dog Management Plan still contains a compliance-  
20 based management strategy that, even though no longer automatic, nevertheless creates a  
21 process that penalizes all dog owners and walkers through progressive diminution of access  
22 to the already limited recreational space available, rather than citing and penalizing individual  
23 offenders; and

24           WHEREAS, By severely reducing access to places where people can recreate with  
25 their dogs in the GGNRA, the Supplemental Dog Management Plan does not reflect or

1 support the National Park Service’s “Healthy Parks, Healthy People” initiative, introduced in  
2 2011, which was designed to improve the health and fitness of an increasingly obese and unfit  
3 population by encouraging people to recreate in their local parks and recreation areas; and

4 WHEREAS, The GGNRA Draft General Management Plan, released in September  
5 2011, calls for the vast majority of its land, including the southern two-thirds of Ocean Beach  
6 and most of Fort Funston, to be managed as “nature zones” that provide “backcountry types  
7 of visitor experiences,” defined in the plan as “a sense of remoteness and self-reliance,” “low  
8 visitor use,” “controlled access,” few amenities, where “challenge, risk, and testing of outdoor  
9 skills would be important to most visitors;” and

10 WHEREAS, A “backcountry types of visitor experience” is not appropriate as the  
11 dominant use for a national recreation area located in a highly urban area such as the  
12 GGNRA; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco opposes the GGNRA’s  
14 proposed preferred alternative for a Supplemental Dog Management Plan and urges the  
15 GGNRA to modify the Plan to allow for greater access to recreational opportunities such as  
16 dog walking, or alternatively to adopt the No Action alternative that would continue the current  
17 usage for off-leash, voice-controlled dog walking in: (i) those places where it was allowed in  
18 the 1979 Pet Policy, and (ii) on GGNRA lands (San Mateo County properties) acquired after  
19 1979; and, be it

20 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco reiterates its belief  
21 that the GGNRA is an urban recreation area and not a remote national park and that the  
22 GGNRA should be managed with the needs of recreational users very much in mind; and, be  
23 it

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1           FURTHER RESOLVED, That given the complexity and length of the Plan, additional  
2 time for comment and analysis (until early 2014) should be allowed before the GGNRA takes  
3 action on the Plan; and, be it

4           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the GGNRA should create a regular recreation  
5 roundtable through a private public partnership, where different user groups can address and  
6 resolve visitor concerns; and, be it

7           FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this legislation be sent to GGNRA  
8 Superintendent Frank Dean, National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, National Park Service  
9 Pacific-West Regional Director Christine Lehnertz, San Francisco Recreation and Park  
10 Director Phil Ginsburg, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Commission, U.S. Senator  
11 Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, U.S. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi,  
12 Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Chairman of the U.S.  
13 House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Rob Bishop, Ranking  
14 Minority Member of the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public  
15 Lands Raul Grijalva, Chairman of the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Doc  
16 Hastings, and Ranking Minority Member of the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee  
17 Peter DeFazio.