

Responses to Public Input

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), National Park Service (NPS) and Department of Interior (DOI) have collaborated to provide responses to public questions and comments about Point Reyes National Seashore received as part of a public open house on April 16th, 2026. This list will be updated on a rolling basis in response to public input. Comments or questions pertaining solely to the NPS can be found on their [website](#).

Updated September 2026

Category	Topic	Comment / Question	Answer
Community	Farmworkers	The Latino ranch-workers suffered disproportionately from the settlement and were largely excluded from this process. What more can be done for them? Financial compensation is not adequate to support those who lost both jobs and housing simultaneously.	The transitions required by the settlement and other ongoing housing and employment deficits in the county and region have had significant and difficult impacts on farmworkers and their families. The Latino community has carried a disproportionate share of those impacts. While long-term solutions to this reality will require sustained attention and investment in the whole region, recent losses of farmworker housing across West Marin, including in Point Reyes National Seashore, has resulted in a surge of support to address the decades-long shortage of affordable housing options in the area and to provide more employment services. Marin County, Marin Community Foundation, West Marin Fund, CLAM, and numerous other community members and groups have pooled resources to help those in need. As part of this effort, The Nature Conservancy agreed to privately fundraise roughly \$2.6 million as part of a Transition Support Plan (TSP) to provide financial assistance to the tenant and worker households leaving the Seashore and administered this in partnership with West Marin Community Services.
		Displaced ranch workers and Latino families who know the land intimately should be preferentially hired to manage the new parklands and occupy park housing.	An individual's understanding of the landscape and connection to the local community will be meaningful considerations for future hiring and contracting decisions.
	Local Food Systems	The loss of Seashore dairies threatens regional food security and the supply of organic dairy to Bay Area schools and families.	We recognize that the closure of dairies is a hardship for the local industry and supply chain. State and federal funds have been allocated to help dairies stay in Marin and Sonoma counties, and three of the departing Seashore families have applied for these funds to support their operations. We are hopeful that there will be continued investment in supporting local agriculture in the region. DOI will continue to work with the local agricultural and food supply community in the greater Point Reyes area to identify means of enhancing all sectors of the agricultural economy.
	Marin Culture	The loss of ranching has devastated West Marin's cultural identity, community cohesion, and economic diversity. Without it, the area risks becoming an unaffordable monoculture of tourism, Airbnbs, and second homes.	This is a real loss and we hear it. Agricultural and housing pressures in West Marin have been decades in the making. There are numerous local nonprofits, private businesses, neighborhood groups, county and state representatives and agencies working against these pressures to support and maintain a strong, local ranching community. As part of the settlement, all seven ranchers in the Northern District of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, managed by Point Reyes, received new 20-year leases in 2025. Two multigenerational ranching families who did not participate in the mediation also continue to operate within the Seashore.
	Meeting format	The open house format was ineffective for genuine community dialogue. Future events should use a structured format so that the community can be heard. Perhaps an oral interview project or broader reporting could help.	This is helpful feedback. Future events are being designed with this input in mind. Thank you for being direct with us.
	Meeting format	Could the open house be offered for several days to allow for more participation, and/or have future events be held across a broader portion of the Bay Area since PRNS is a national park serving a regional public?	Because Point Reyes National Seashore serves the regional and national public, broader geographic outreach is something we're considering for future events. Thank you for the suggestion.
	Ranching families	Have the ranchers been able to relocate, and where have they gone?	Out of respect for the privacy and confidentiality of the ranching families, neither TNC nor NPS are sharing specifics about individual departures or where families have gone. Each family is making decisions that fit their own circumstances—some are continuing in agriculture locally or in other areas, while others are pursuing different paths.

	Spanish interpretation	Spanish interpretation and outreach surrounding the April 16th event were inadequate and felt like an afterthought.	We apologize if this is how Spanish interpretation and translation efforts were received, as it was not our intention. Flyers for the event were published in both English and Spanish, as were survey forms for feedback. In addition, two interpreters were available on-site for the full event.
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and indigenous people	Fire	Cultural fire and traditional ecological knowledge should be formally integrated into the restoration plan. Indigenous stewardship practices represent the most proven long-term approach to managing these lands.	In accordance with the government-to-government partnership agreement between the National Park Service and Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, consultation and coordination are critical to ensure that the Tribe's views and traditional ecological knowledge are part of the management of the Point Reyes National Seashore. TNC is working within this framework and using its own science-based approach to conservation to co-steward this landscape. Cultural fire is part of the medium-to long-term vision for the park and will be evaluated as the stewardship plan develops in collaboration with the Tribe. This type of cultural fire requires substantial planning, coordination and risk management, all in consultation with the Tribe.
Governance and policy	Dairy Proposal / Expanded Ranching	We should endorse locally driven initiatives to sustain agricultural and grazing activities at Point Reyes National Seashore.	We recognize that the local community has a stake in the management of Point Reyes National Seashore and DOI, NPS, and TNC are all committed to considering public input on the targeted grazing program and other aspects of Point Reyes management.
	Land Stewardship	As it relates to the concept of regenerative agriculture, how will management change with The Nature Conservancy's involvement compared to what was allowed before?	The Point Reyes ranchers were able to keep ranching going at Point Reyes for over 150 years, but were severely constrained by the relatively small sizes of each individual ranch. With the settlement, the majority of Point Reyes ranching lands can now be managed as a coherent and synergistic whole. The Nature Conservancy will be supporting a variety of efforts that include research, monitoring, restoration, and targeted grazing. The grazing will be conducted with ecological benefits as the primary objective. This includes a focus on minimizing invasive plants, supporting native plant communities (particularly rare species and habitat), supporting wildlife corridors, improving water quality, reducing impacts on sensitive habitat and managing for wildfire risks. Based on the terms of the settlement, there will be fewer cattle than before, no more concentrating of livestock around dairy facilities and a new ability to manage the landscape as a whole system versus a collection of parts.
Grasslands and Grazing	Cattle risks	Using cattle to restore land damaged by cattle is contradictory. Non-cattle alternatives (prescribed fire, volunteers, goats, mowing) should be prioritized.	Coastal grasslands are an important and increasingly rare habitat that evolved with disturbance from wildlife grazing and fire. Current populations of elk are well below their historic levels, and prescribed fire is currently not an option at scale due to the extensive planning that's necessary for burning. Without vegetation management, this landscape would naturally convert to shrubland and forest, resulting in the loss of important grassland habitat and associated species. Grazing is just one option for vegetation management. Fire, mowing, and volunteer work are in the toolbox as well, but at a scale of 17,000 acres, grazing is the most practical tool. Grazing with goats or sheep could happen in addition to cattle, but this has some practical challenges related to predatory pressures, economics relative to cattle and technology restrictions with virtual fencing.
	Elk	How do NPS/TNC experts respond to the argument that free-roaming elk can reduce fire danger without the trampling impacts of cattle?	Current elk populations are widely dispersed and well below the carrying capacity of this landscape, so wildlife grazing alone is not enough to adequately address fuel loads and reduce the risk of wildfires. Targeted livestock grazing allows managers to apply disturbance where it's most needed and to restrict where cattle can roam to limit impacts to sensitive habitat.
		Should there be controlled studies comparing cattle-grazed and elk-grazed areas to inform restoration?	This is a valuable research question. Comparative studies between cattle-grazed and elk-grazed areas would help articulate the relative influence of each on the landscape and ability to meet desired resource conditions within the project area. While it is possible to control where cattle graze, for how long, during what seasons, and at what concentrations, a controlled study of elk grazing is not possible in the same way. However, there are areas in the park with relatively high elk concentrations where there are no plans for cattle grazing that could be studied.
		Fencing should be removed as it has been to the detriment of elk and other wildlife by preventing their free movement, genetic mixing and access to water.	Removing barbed wire cross-fencing and the elk fence is a key part of the targeted grazing plan, both to allow free wildlife movement and to prepare for expanded public access. Virtual fencing will be the primary tool used in the longer-term grazing plan to move cattle precisely through the landscape without creating barriers to elk and other wildlife. Perimeter fencing along roads will remain to protect both visitors and cattle.
	Fire	How will the risk of wildfires be controlled?	Wildfire risk is a critical management consideration. The short-term targeted grazing on F and G Ranches in 2026 is explicitly designed to reduce invasive vegetation and fuel loads. Future grazing efforts will limit fine fuels, and mowing is also a complementary option. While prescribed fire requires substantial planning, coordination and risk management, it's part of a medium- to long-term vision for landscape management.

	Land Stewardship	How will NPS and TNC deal with invasive non-native plants like poison hemlock, wild radish, onion grass (<i>Romulea rosea</i>) and others? Is there a better way than using cattle?	Invasive plants are among the greatest threats to these grassland habitats. The best method for addressing them depends on the specific plant in question. For example, some plants can be effectively hand-pulled whereas most others cannot. As such, targeted grazing—used in specific places at specific times—can address invasives that livestock consider palatable. In other cases, mechanical treatment (mowing, mastication), prescribed fire and, in limited scenarios, limited herbicide treatment are options. Each tool has tradeoffs, and TNC and NPS will strategically integrate them across the landscape.
	Planning Process	How long will TNC's planning and studies take? There's an urgency to manage invasives and shrub encroachment.	We share this urgency. TNC and NPS are co-developing longer-term stewardship plans now, with a target of late-summer 2026 to share the first set of materials for public feedback. The most immediate priorities include infrastructure updates to enable targeted grazing at scale. The short-term targeted grazing contract which began in March 2026 is the first response to invasive plants and shrub encroachment, while longer-term planning continues in parallel. A longer-term, landscape scale grazing program to manage invasive species and shrub encroachment will begin in early 2027. Restoration and research plans may take another year or two to fully develop.
	Targeted Grazing	Who will take care of and pay for the cattle to be shipped in to manage fuel loads, now?	Contract grazing has begun on F and G Ranch allotments, which is managed through a grazing contract with a local cattle operator. Future targeted grazing in Point Reyes will be run by grazing operators who will be responsible for shipping and managing their cattle. Managing fuel loads will be a key consideration for livestock management. TNC will manage the targeted grazing contracts in close coordination with NPS, per the terms of its agreement with NPS.
The Nature Conservancy	Land Stewardship	TNC's use of cattle grazing is inconsistent with its mission and the organization should reconsider its position in Point Reyes National Seashore.	TNC's view is that grazing operations can be managed in ways that support ecosystem health through strategic, adaptive management of livestock — mimicking the dynamics of the historic herds with which these landscapes evolved. TNC brings decades of conservation-based land management experience, including more than 1.2 million acres of land in the United States where we collaborate with grazers to achieve natural resource goals. At Point Reyes National Seashore, grazing management will be conducted in consideration of wildlife herds and striking a balance with those populations. Our vision of success is to foster a diverse mosaic of healthy habitats and waterways; enhance public access and recreation; and collaborate with partners on restoration, research and integration of traditional ecological knowledge.
		TNC should publish a detailed, science-based restoration plan with transparent milestones and regular data reporting. 'Regenerative ranching' claims need to be backed by peer-reviewed science.	The \$2.7M WCB planning grant is specifically funding four science-based plans: a long-term targeted grazing plan, a restoration plan, an infrastructure plan, and a research/monitoring plan. Drafts will be shared publicly for review and feedback. Baseline measurements are being gathered and monitoring efforts will help to track outcomes and inform management decisions.
	Settlement process	TNC made decisions behind closed doors without genuine community input. The settlement was not transparent and TNC does not represent the best interests of the community that actually lives here.	TNC was invited into a confidential mediation process to facilitate a settlement of existing litigation. Confidentiality is typical in legal mediation and was necessary for the parties to reach a resolution. Moving forward, the stewardship planning underway will include public feedback, including in-person meetings.
		TNC should be praised for its role in the ranch transition and hold firm to the terms of the Settlement Agreement.	Thank you. TNC is committed to honoring the Settlement and following through on what was promised to the departing ranching families through the buyout, to workers and tenants through the Transition Support Plan, and to the public through the conservation work ahead.
	Volunteer engagement	Please organize large-scale community volunteer workdays to remove non-native species and plant natives — this would build trust and community investment while advancing restoration. How can we (the public) help to protect this park for trails and wildlife protection?	TNC, NPS and PRNSA have been in discussion about establishing volunteer programs at the Seashore. We'll share those opportunities broadly as they become available.

Wildlife	Birds	Grassland birds (red-winged and tri-colored blackbirds, raptors) have already left the park due to habitat changes.	Point Reyes National Seashore hosts the highest recorded bird diversity of any other National Park unit. Habitat changes associated with a reduction in grazing pressure have only been underway for a matter of months to a year, and certain bird species have likely responded to this change. Some bird species will shift again in response to the implementation of a targeted grazing program. TNC and NPS will monitor grassland bird species over the coming years to track changes over time. Conservation goals include supporting a mosaic of coastal dune, wetland, grassland, and scrub habitat to support a wide range of biodiversity, including bird species. An adaptive management approach to the targeted grazing program will allow for maximum benefit to birds, with attention to be paid to focal species such as grassland dependent birds.
	Cattle risks	What can be done to reduce the risk of cows being a vector for spreading diseases, like avian influenza, that could impact wildlife?	It will be a requirement in targeted grazing contracts that all cattle receive proper vaccinations to reduce the risk of their carrying and transferring diseases. To our knowledge, avian influenza has been only found spreading within dairy herds and there are no instances of beef cattle contracting, carrying and/or spreading the disease. Further, future targeted grazing plans include far fewer cattle and electric/virtual fencing to keep livestock away from sensitive habitat.
		Cattle do not belong in a publicly owned national park and cause ecological damage to soil, waterways, and native habitat, and compete with elk for forage.	The case for targeted grazing is that coastal grasslands evolved with disturbance from grazing and fire, and in the absence of large-scale prescribed fire and sufficient wildlife grazing at this time, livestock are currently the most practical tool for providing that disturbance at the scale needed. Through targeted grazing, cattle location, timing and intensity can be controlled to reduce the tradeoffs that are the sources of concern.
	Recent Benefits	There have been visible, positive results from the closure of dairy and beef operations: elk roaming freely, less manure odor, reduced effluent in Abbott's Creek, improved habitat.	These observations match what we and our partners expect to see over time and are among the conservation outcomes the settlement was designed to enable. We will continue water quality and other monitoring efforts.