

Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) – Citizen Actions Guide



A Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) Bull Tule elk with Barbed Wire Caught in His Antlers

THANK YOU for your interest in taking action to restore and protect Point Reyes National Seashore. Our best chance to defend nature in this national park is CITIZEN ACTION.

We MUST safeguard our public land, water and ocean coastline by removing destructive large-scale ranching and its looming agri biz expansion. Please help raise awareness – Call, write, share, organize, donate & speak out to Protect Wildlife and OUR Public Lands!

[SIGN THE PETITION TO ENSURE NPS PROVIDES ADEQUATE DRINKING WATER & HABITAT FOR TULE ELK](https://aldf.org/article/california-urge-the-national-park-service-to-ensure-tule-elk-have-drinking-water/)

<https://aldf.org/article/california-urge-the-national-park-service-to-ensure-tule-elk-have-drinking-water/>

WATCH:

[*The Shame of Pt. Reyes*](#) – Skyler Thomas, White Shark Video

[*The Betrayal of Point Reyes*](#) – Tony Sehgal, Silver Reaction Media

VISIT, LEARN, DONATE:

[Point Reyes Rewilding Network](#)

[Resource Renewal Institute](#)

[Forelk.org](#)

[naturebasedteaching.com](#)

[Restore Pt. Reyes Seashore](#) (Learn it all here!)

[The Shame of Pt. Reyes](#)

[Western Watersheds Project](#)

[SavePointReyesNationalSeashore](#)

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES:

Carey Feierabend, Acting Superintendent PRNS, carey_feierabend@nps.gov Tel: 415-623-2100

Cc: Cicely Muldoon: Superintendent PRNS, cicely_muldoon@nps.gov

Point Reyes National Seashore, 1 Bear Valley Rd., Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Woody Smeck, Western Regional Director, woody_smeck@nps.gov cc:PORE_Info@nps.gov Tel:415-623-2100

National Park Service 333 Bush St., Suite 500, San Francisco, CA 94104-2828

Kristin Denryter, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Tule Elk & Pronghorn Coordinator,

Kristin.Denryter@wildlife.ca.gov (916) 801-0649 cc: Krystal.Ho@wildlife.ca.gov (916) 373-8826

Raul Grijalva, Chair, Natural Resources Committee: nrdems@mail.house.gov (202) 225-2435

Representative Jared Huffman, <https://huffman.house.gov/contact/email-me> (415) 258-9657

SAMPLE LETTERS, TALKING POINTS:

When calling, write up a brief script or have reference info handy beforehand. Call the local or national offices. If you are a constituent, say that. Talk/write about why you like Point Reyes National Seashore, and why you insist that OUR national park be protected from cattle ranching and agri biz!! Have them listen to how we want our Point Reyes National Park restored, protected, and managed for nature, public health and the future of our climate. Ask why such an impactful local controversy with global climate implications isn't being covered in the news! Use some of these talking points, or other facts and data you find below:

TALKING / WRITING POINTS:

When emailing or writing a letter, strengthen your action by referring to some of these talking points, researching your own verifiable facts and data, or expressing personal experiences of the harmful land, water, and air degradation at PRNS.

Sample letter1 - General

Dear _____:

The National Park Service (NPS) recently said during its recent GMP Amendment environmental review majority that public opinion how the Seashore is protected and managed does not matter. We say that public opinion is VERY important because as taxpayers we are the owners of this land. The federal government weakens public participation across the board, gutting significant environmental laws, and becoming less transparent by the hour.

We are pushing back, insisting our comments as voiced by the vast majority of management plan options respondents be fully considered and implemented. The NPS opined "this is not a vote," while mandated by federal laws and regulations to take care of this public jewel on the Pacific Coast, and to conserve and protect native coastal prairies and wildlife in the Seashore. But NPS leadership and staff at Point Reyes are clearly not following either NPS or the Seashore's governing law. These are substantive, provable, factual omissions and commissions by the NPS. As demonstrated by the vast majority of over 7, 600 public comments, many see the NPS catering to a narrow for-profit group of a dozen or so private commercial-scale livestock operators who were paid millions of dollars by taxpayers decades ago to find alternative private ranchlands and exit the Seashore. These ranchers continue to flout the will of the people by staying on our parklands, and worsen already traumatized wildlands and wildlife.

The NPS should respond and act affirmatively to all the individual comments demanding more nature, and removal of all ranching and agri biz.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Sample letter R. Grijalva

Send to:

Raul Grijalva, Chair of the Natural Resources Committee: nrdems@mail.house.gov More info at: <https://naturalresources.house.gov/contact/contact-us?1>

Dear Chairman Grijalva,

Firstly, thank you for the tremendous work you're doing on so many fronts. I am inspired by your steadfast resolve to adhere to a more just and ethical approach to defending our society's most vulnerable and our nation's resources. And, I especially admire your vision towards a cleaner and more environmentally sound future.

For these reasons, I appeal to you for help in a local battle to save our only National Seashore on the West Coast of the U.S. I'm sure you're aware of the ongoing conflicts between ranching and conservationists at Point Reyes National Seashore and I implore you to intervene in any way possible to ensure that this small piece of wilderness be protected. It has been called our Yosemite on the coast and is one of the most diverse natural environments in California, housing 15% of all California biodiversity. It is home to 1500 species of plants and animals, including 200 life forms found nowhere else in the world. Almost half of all bird species known in the Americas can be spotted within the park. It is the largest protected coast south of Alaska and yet... **the NPS management plan aims to extend privately owned ranch leases to an unprecedented term of 20 years, allowing for unbridled expansion of the cattle ranching activities** which already pollute the watershed and beaches, destroy the natural habitat, kill off the wildlife, and are the number one cause of carbon emissions in the locality through methane and industrial emissions, and loss of carbon-sequestering native plants and healthy soils.

A small group of ranchers have benefitted from heavily discounted grazing fees, paying zero dollars in property taxes and enjoying water waivers that allow them to pollute our national seashore. **The park service is in the process of exacerbating all of these problems in perpetuity.** By law, the National Park Service is mandated to manage all national parks in a manner which provides maximum protection, restoration, and preservation of the natural environment for generations to come.

Why is this being permitted? Is there no oversight to the NPS at Point Reyes?

I am part of a grassroots coalition of activists, biologists, conservationists, former NPS rangers, people from all walks of life. We have educated ourselves on the complexities in all areas of this debate, hosting webinars and calling on legal counsels and experts and inviting the public to increase awareness. We've appealed to Dianne Feinstein and Jared Huffman who both refuse to discuss this matter, deferring to the ranchers as 'historic' and 'culturally significant.'

Ranchers and local politicians like Rep. Huffman have long claimed that the public overwhelmingly supports cattle grazing in these parks but they have never offered any evidence to substantiate that claim, which is false. The public comments on the move to extend the leases to two decades wholly contradict that assertion. Thousands of people told the NPS in no uncertain terms they want the park service to protect the park, the wildlife, and the climate. **An analysis by park advocates found that fully 91.4% of the public comments opposed ranching and killing elk in the national park.**

There is a larger context to this environmental depredation. Urbanization, livestock grazing, logging, and agriculture have fragmented many of California's native landscapes. Less than one percent of California's grassland is still intact today. Remnants of once-vast coastal prairies still exist at Point Reyes National Seashore and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, with the potential to recover the rich biodiversity that has been lost to decades of cattle operations. **Removing cattle operations from the Park, which was the original deal when it was created, will provide refuge for wildlife, restore habitats for threatened and endangered species, improve water quality, provide educational, recreational and volunteer opportunities, sustain cultural traditions of native peoples, and preserve America's natural heritage—is this not what our national parks were created for?**

The 1916 NPS Organic Act which applies to all units of the national park system states its purpose "...to provide for the enjoyment of the scenery, natural and historic objects, and wildlife in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Will you please help us reclaim this land? We have contacted our local officials to no avail. We need someone to step up for our National Seashore. Please help in any way you can.

Thank you very much.

**Best regards,
your name
address**

Sample letter W. Smeck

Send to:

Woody Smeck, Regional Director National Park Service

333 Bush Street, Suite 500

San Francisco, CA 94104-2828

CC: David Vela, Deputy Director

Email: woody_smeck@nps.gov cc: PORE_Info@nps.gov and also submit here:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1180/contactus.htm>.

Dear Mr. Smeck,

I am writing in regard to the imminent decision regarding the General Management Plan for PRNS: I urge you NOT to sign PLAN B, which would expand private ranching in the park and cull Tule elk, which have just recovered from near extinction. Pt. Reyes is the only National Park in the U.S. where they live and they are native species. Please don't allow the NPS to kill them in the name of private enterprise "historic culture." Plan F is the only plan alternative that fulfills the mission of the park, allowing the native ecosystem to recover and thrive for all citizens--now and in the future--to enjoy.

As the NPS regional director, you have the authority and opportunity to clean up and restore the Point Reyes National Seashore, a national treasure. During the public comment period for the revised management plan, over 90% of comments favored removal of ranching on protected lands, and against the culling of native Tule Elk. Only 2% of comments favored continuing the ranching/dairy operation status quo.

I am reaching out to you because it has been disheartening to listen to Congress Huffman share his support of the ranchers to remain on this federally protected land when his decision does not reflect the overwhelming the majority of his constituents voices. Unfortunately, he is siding with the ranchers, against scientific evidence. This is why I appeal to you to use your position to reflect what the people want, do what is best for the future health of our planet, and the historic gem that is Pt. Reyes National Seashore.

The park's visitors --local and international--go to see elk, not cows. There is plenty of ranch land in west Marin and many of the ranchers in the park own land tracts outside the park. The NPS staff should not be focused on issues of the ranchers but rather should be doing as mandated to protect wildlife, landscape and the native flora and fauna.. The bottom line is that the national park belongs to the public, not to private enterprise. The ranchers were well paid for their land and have had more than enough time to relocate. It's time for them to go.

You have the opportunity to take the park in a healthy direction that benefits the wildlife, the land, and future generations. Please use this opportunity well. It is a gift.

There are 335 million Americans who are the rightful owners of Point Reyes National Seashore, and 7 million of them live in the nearby Bay Area, an area starved for available public lands for recreation. The National Park Service should not continue to manage Point Reyes National Seashore for the private profit of 13 ranches, including large corporations, while neglecting the public interest to manage these lands for conservation and public enjoyment. It is time to end the extension of Park Service leases on Point Reyes for livestock grazing.

I am also especially concerned, during COVID-19 times, that polluted water and crowded cattle operations might be a petri dish of infectious diseases that could harm human health in our national park. These are our public lands--the mission of the NPS is to protect them, not allow private enterprise to destroy their ecosystems.

Sincerely,
Your name
Address

Sample letter C.Feierabend, C. Muldoon

Mail to: Point Reyes National Seashore, 1 Bear Valley Rd., Point Reyes Station, CA 94956 Tel: 415-623-2100

Carey Feirabend: carey_feierabend@nps.gov Cc: Cicely Muldoon, Superintendent, Point Reyes National Seashore
cicely_muldoon@nps.gov,

Dear Superintendent _____,

I am a concerned citizen who has loved and frequented Point Reyes National Seashore for many decades. I am also a member of the Friends of Point Reyes, a large group of people asking the park service to protect the park's wilderness, wildlife, open space, beauty and health as we plan for its future.

Point Reyes National Seashore is under increasing threat from the expansion of the commercial cattle industry. The National Park Service is conducting a General Management Plan environmental review considering alternatives for managing the Seashore going forward. The National Park policy statement "The national parks belong to all Americans" recognizes that citizens are the rightful owners of this public land, and thus have a stake in its future. An initial public comment period in the fall of 2019 elicited over 7,600 comments from the general public, as required by the environmental review process. A large majority of the comments clearly favored moving the ranches, preserving the elk herd and the native wildlife. Yet these comments were dismissed by [park] planners as "not part of the vote."

In 1962 when the park was established, taxpayers funded the multi-million dollar buyout of the ranches. Ranchers signed leases set to expire in 1987, giving them years to move their operations to private lands. [Today,] Ranch supporters (including many of our local politicians) promote a plan that will extend the leases and allow much of the GGNRA to continue to run beef and dairy ranches, and to expand them to include other commodity animals such as pigs, goats, chickens and commodity crops. With this expansion, wildlife will face more barbed wire fences, traps, insecticide and pesticide pollution, and certainly hunting as any wildlife is seen as a threat to the bottom line. This will only increase under the park's preferred plan.

Although ranchers and their allies claim that cattle grazing is sustainable, upon inspection we witness the stark contrast between the natural prairie and the ranching lands.

In the grazing areas we see manure piles, "poop ponds," eroded areas filling the streams, creeks marshes and water bodies with polluted waters and sediment. All of this ends up in the ocean where it impacts fish, shore birds, and marine mammals including seals, sea lions, porpoises, and elephant seals. And yet, NPS continues to grant "waivers" to ranches to improve impaired water quality despite the fact that the State Water Resources Control Board reports that the waters of Point Reyes teem with e-coli and rank as one of the most polluted in the nation.

The PRNS prairie is one of the most naturally biodiverse landscapes in the world, teeming with interdependent species of native plants, grasses and shrubs that form deep roots and fight climate change by acting as a carbon sink. It supports a huge variety of native animals including the tule elk, which now exist only here in the park. These are being "culled" to keep them from "interfering" with "grasses intended for the cattle." Keeping them penned in to stop them from roaming has caused 200-250 elk to die of thirst. A tiny percentage of the original herd remains, although they need larger numbers in order to maintain the biological diversity necessary to survival.

NPS policy clearly mandates natural resource conservation, and states that the land must be managed in such a way that future generations find it in better condition than it is now. The public has spoken about this issue, strongly favoring conservation and restoration.

As the final decision is expected to come from the Park Service sometime this spring, the public is wondering if the special interests backing a few dozen commercial enterprises will outweigh the park's own mandate to protect and preserve this precious treasure that belongs to all of us. We will continue to ask our representatives to side with us as we demand honesty and transparency in the democratic process that guides these critical public lands decisions. We insist that the park service do what it is supposed to do: protect Point Reyes National Seashore.

Sincerely,

Your name, address

WANT TO DO MORE? Copy/paste your letter to all of these to reach a broader audience: [San Francisco Chronicle](#), [Marin Independent Journal](#), [Press Democrat](#), [Argus Courier](#), [Sonoma News](#), [Point Reyes Light](#), [Pacific Sun](#), [East Bay Express](#), [San Jose Mercury News](#), [Sacramento Bee](#), and other numerous local, regional, and national online and print media – news, political, science, nature, environmental, parks & rec, hiking, surfing, camping, etc. Refer to this recent San Francisco Chronical article by its Lead Science Reporter Peter Fimrite to encourage more press. [“At Point Reyes, the contest is elk vs. agriculture. The people vote for the elk.”](#)

FURTHER QUESTIONS?

The following individuals have generously made themselves available for questions and events:

Skyler Thomas
White Shark Video
<https://shameofpointreyes.weebly.com/>
Skyler@whitesharkvideo.com

Laura Cunningham
Point Reyes Rewilding Network (WWP)
pointreyesrewild.org
lcunningham@westernwatersheds.org

Julie Phillips
Nature Based Teaching
naturebasedteaching.com
tuleelk@comcast.net

Chance Cutrano
Restore Pt. Reyes Seashore / RRI
RestorePtReyesSeashore.org/
ccutrano@rri.org

Diana Oppenheim
For Elk.org
forelk.org
action@forelk.org

Diane Gentile
Citizen Advocate
707-347-6703
diane@savepointreyesnationaleseashore.com
SavePointReyesNationalSeashore.com

Social Media:

Please share, like and retweet content about conserving and restoring Point Reyes National Seashore, and saving tule elk on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Use: **#RestoreTheShore**, **#savethetuleelk** **#savetheelk** to build momentum around this effort.

Links To Articles, Letters, Comments - *Here are just a few of the many articles addressing PRNS:*

Concern Growing over Health of Tule Elk at Point Reyes National Seashore

<https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2020/08/concern-growing-over-health-tule-elk-point-reyes-national-seashore>

A New Vision for the Coast – Robert Johnston 7/2020

<https://www.ptreyeslight.com/article/new-vision-coast>

A Disservice To The Community; Rely On The Science Instead

<http://www.thewildlifeneeds.com/2020/07/24/a-disservice-to-the-community-rely-on-the-science-instead/>

Tule elk are at the center of an epic conservation battle on Point Reyes National Seashore

<https://roadtrippers.com/magazine/point-reyes-national-seashore-tule-elk/>

The Impacts Of Livestock Grazing On Biological Soil Crusts (And Climate Change) L. Cunningham

<https://nobullsheet.net/2020/05/31/the-impacts-of-livestock-grazing-on-biological-soil-crusts-and-climate-change/>

Proposed Ranch Plan for Point Reyes Seashore Draws Public Fire:

<https://www.sonomacountygazette.com/sonoma-county-news/proposed-ranch-plan-for-point-reyes-seashore-draws-public-fire>

At Point Reyes, The Contest Is Elk Vs. Agriculture. The People Vote For The Elk.

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/environment/article/At-Point-Reyes-the-contest-is-elk-vs-15203706.php>

San Francisco Chronicle – Peter Fimrite, April 15 2020

Point Reyes Livestock Hinders Soil Carbon Banking

<https://www.ptreyeslight.com/article/point-reyes-livestock-hinders-soil-carbon-banking>

Pt. Reyes Light – Laura Cunningham, December 4, 2019

The Big Lie: Point Reyes National Seashore And Ranching

<https://jimcoda.com/2019/04/22/the-big-lie-point-reyes-national-seashore-and-ranching/>

Jim Coda, April 2019

Point Reyes Ranchers Shouldn't Be Favored Over Wildlife

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/Point-Reyes-ranchers-shouldn-t-be-favored-over-13381520.php>

San Francisco Chronicle – Barbara J. Moritsch, November 2018

New Point Reyes Management Plan Riles Up Environmentalists

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/environment/article/New-Point-Reyes-management-plan-riles-up-14291769.php>

San Francisco Chronicle – Peter Fimrite, August 2018

Beef of Burden

<https://www.bohemian.com/northbay/beef-of-burden/Content?oid=2948337&showFullText=true>

North Bay Bohemian, March 2016

Wild Meets Mild

<https://www.bohemian.com/northbay/wild-meets-mild/Content?oid=2702207>

James Knight, March 2015

Point Reyes National Seashore; Fencing Harmful to Wildlife

<https://jimcoda.com/2014/07/26/point-reyes-national-seashore-fencing-harmful-to-wildlife/>

Jim Coda, July 2014

Commercial Beef Cattle In America's National Parks Are You Serious? <https://www.npca.org/articles/83-commercial-beef-cattle-in-america-s-national-parks-are-you-serious> National Parks Association 2012

TALKING POINTS For Letters to the Editor

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avored moving the ranches, preserving the elk herd and the native wildlife. Yet these comments were dismissed by [park] planners as “not part of the vote.”

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pointreyesrewild.org/ or RestorePtReyesSeashore.org/

Thank You for caring about OUR Point Reyes National Seashore.

Together, we MUST reach critical mass in

Public awareness and direct actions to protect this National Park treasure!

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