

Nixon to Dedicate

Uncreated Park

By William Thomas

Although Congress has yet to create what promises to be the greatest urban park in the nation, President Nixon will stop in San Francisco to dedicate it tomorrow.

What the President likes to refer to as "Gateway West" is a brilliant compilation of federal, city, state and private lands in San Francisco and Marin counties.

It is 34,000 acres of shoreline and mountain, farmland and city, which is expected

to cost the United States government \$118 million.

To the House of Representatives, which will vote on the park about September 18, it is bill number H.R. 16444 "to establish the Golden Gate Urban National Recreation Area" by Congressman Phillip Burton of San Francisco. (Co-authors are, Republican Congressmen William Mailliard and Don Clausen.)

As proposed in this legislation "Gateway West," or the

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Golden Gate Urban National Recreation Area, or Juan Manuel de Ayala park (as Burton once named it for an early explorer) is a concept of immense ambition.

In San Francisco, the Gateway West includes all the coastline from Aquatic Park, around the Presidio and Lands End, to the San Mateo county line.

Under the proposal the state's maritime museum becomes a federal maritime museum, Fort Mason, the Marina Green and Yacht Harbor, and a strip equally wide through the Presidio including Crissy Airfield will become park.

CLIFFS

The western cliffs and Baker's Beach in the Presidio also become part of the park, as does a 2000-foot strip along the southern border of the military installation (except for the Presidio Golf Course).

The bill accomplishes several objectives long sought by San Franciscans concerning the Presidio:

The military cannot build anything new without the permission of the Secretary of Interior.

Construction in the open space on the southern side of the Presidio (where the Board of Education tried unsuccessfully to put two schools) would no longer be possible.

The park takes in the state beaches below Sea Cliff and Lincoln Park. It then swings around Lands End to Sutro Baths, Cliff House, and Sutro Heights Park.

PURCHASE

The bill provides \$10 million to buy the private property at Sutro Baths and the Cliff House (city voters turned down a \$5 million bond issue to buy the cove at Sutro Baths) provided city and State donate their San Francisco lands to the park.

The park then goes south, taking all of Ocean Beach, and finally terminates at Fort Funston, an abandoned military post at the San Mateo county line.

Addressing itself to San Francisco Bay, the legislation resolves the future of Alcatraz by including it in the park. Also included is Angel Island, now a state park.

MARIN

In Marin county the park would include all the military forts and state park land just north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

The legislation also resolves the conservationist campaign to prevent subdivision of the Marinello hills: they become part of the park.

So does every piece of agricultural land west of the mountain ridgeline that dissects Marin county — more than 16,000 acres of open space would be preserved at a purchase price that could go as high as \$50 million.

Three towns along the coast are left out of the park — Bolinas, Stinson Beach and Muir Beach. People who live in homes outside this area can reside in them for their lifetime.

Also included are Mt. Tamalpais State Park and Muir Woods National Monument. The park terminates at Olema after running up the farmland of the Olema Valley between Point Reyes National Seashore and Samuel P. Taylor State Park.

INTENT

With one master stroke of the legislative brush the Burton bill seeks to solve the open space and recreational development problems of the two counties, or, as the preamble to the legislation declares:

"In order to preserve for

public use and enjoyment certain areas of Marin and San Francisco counties (and) to provide for the maintenance of needed recreational and open space necessary to urban environment and planning . . ."

The arrival of President Nixon indicates how far "Gateway West" has gone since it was stillborn three summers ago in Washington, D.C.

It was originally intended by then-Secretary of Interior Walter Hickle to be the western companion to New York City's "Gateway East" recreation area.

Together they would be the first federal urban parks outside the nation's capitol.

BURIAL

Unfortunately for "Gateway West," the secretary quit and the President's budget advisers buried the plan.

But Bay Area conservationists organized the People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area, chose Amy Meyer and Dr. Edgar Wayburn as co-chairmen, and began to lobby vigorously.

Several years later President Nixon sent a message to Congress proposing "Gateway West" and a number of other parks. By then the Interior Committee of the House of Representatives was preparing for final hearings on the recreation area plan.

It was not until August 16 that the committee hammered out the final legislation and Burton introduced a bill which represented the committee's decision.

SPONSORS

The bi-partisan list of co-sponsors, headed by Mailliard and Clausen, is impressive and the House of Representatives is expected to approve it sometime this month.

The area still requires approval of the Senate but there is great optimism this will occur before Congress adjourns.

That optimism was obviously shared by President Nixon who is willing to dedicate "before the fact.