



December 13, 2023

National Park Service
Superintendent Craig Kenkel
Point Reyes National Seashore
1 Bear Valley Road
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Dear Superintendent Kenkel,

The Save Marin's Food Community Coalition recommends the adoption of the following lease terms between the National Park Service (NPS) and agricultural lease holders at Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS). We are confident that this set of terms represents the best strategy to support an environmentally and economically sustainable farming ecosystem in the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) Ranchland Zone. Furthermore, these terms will enable the goals and mission of the Park Service to preserve natural and cultural resources while helping it adhere to the 2021 General Management Plan Record of Decision. The NPS and the farmers in the Seashore have a unique opportunity to create a model of sustainable farming that is in harmony with nature, protects natural resources, and establishes a public example of climate-beneficial agriculture. Toward that end, our community coalition strongly advocates for lease terms that enable the viability of generational farming operations in order to affect a positive future of shared environmental stewardship of PRNS.

1. Fair Market Rent that Accounts for NPS Management Restrictions

- a. Fair market rent for pasture needs should include appropriate discounts for management restrictions of pasture and range subzones. Outside of the park, dairy farmers and ranchers are encouraged to maximize productivity through animal rotations, seeding, paddock fencing, mowing for management of invasive vegetation, mowing for seasonal pasture yield maximization through silage or windrows, and through the building of soil health through organic composted manure and manure fertilizer. NPS management guidance that inhibits certain activities should be reflected in the rent reduction for all pasture and range subzones on a particular farm.
- b. NPS will compensate farms impacted by the elk herd (s) proportionately with the elk's forage impact and elk herd size through reduced pasture rent or other means. Elk in the Ranchland Zone consume pasture forage feed managed for a cow's diet. NPS shall also provide direct compensation for the cost of procuring replacement feed for farmed animals that was consumed by elk.
- c. Allow for seasonal mowing, seeding, composted manure application, and other organic-eligible invasive plant species mitigation measures that allow farmers to derive basic economic value from land in pasture and range subzones.
- d. NPS should consider how fair market rent that acknowledges the dilapidated conditions of NPS owned facilities and infrastructure.

2. Silage Harvesting in Historic Silage Farming Areas

- a. PRNS to allow and maintain acreage of silage harvesting from historic silage ground.



- b. Ranchers & dairy farmers will plant no till crops and maintain soil health through the application of organic composted manure solids and manure fertilizer in order to maximize crop productivity in silage zones.
 - c. NPS will compensate the ranches & dairy farms that utilize PRNS silage crop for costs associated with having to import increased rates of more expensive off-farm feed that is caused by elimination of silage ground at fair market rates through direct payment or rent reduction/deferral.
- 3. Building an Aesthetically Pleasing & Environmental Sustainability Infrastructure**
- a. NPS staff and farmers to develop a plan to improve farm core housing, buildings, and other infrastructure, including manure management infrastructure in collaboration with state and federal agencies and their functional experts.
 - b. NPS staff & farmers to scope out the cost of improvements with support from appropriate agencies and their functional experts (ex – USDA-NRCS).
 - c. NPS staff and farmers to coordinate on infrastructure improvements within context of grant availability for various infrastructure improvement projects.
 - d. NPS staff to invite outside federal, state, regional, and local agency support to improve infrastructure and facilities. NPS staff to support grant procurement directly or through shared staff with Marin Resource Conservation District.
- 4. Creating a Water Quality Regime that Meets Environmental Goals & Targets**
- a. Ranchland Zone water quality monitoring and improvement requirements to be fully overseen by the Regional Water Quality Control Board which will manage to EPA standards.
 - b. NPS to require farms to install methane digesters and manure composting facilities to mitigate fecal coliform risk. NPS to partner with farms to financially and administratively support the development of these projects.
 - c. PRNS staff to invite federal, state, and local agencies to support water quality project development and funding.
 - d. NPS to require total fencing of riparian areas to protect water quality and support wildlife habitat. NPS staff to work with farmers, Marin RCD, and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to receive grants and technical support for such projects.
 - e. NPS staff to conduct species-specific coliform studies to inform appropriate water quality mitigation measures for riparian zones.
- 5. Effective Management of Elk in Ranchland Zone**
- a. NPS staff at PRNS will manage Ranchland elk herds in accordance with General Management Plan Record of Decision (Section 6.6) in coordination with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR), as well as, the ranchers and dairy farmers. Management should include the herd population management as outlined in the Record of Decision NPS staff to seek farmer participation in elk reporting.
- 6. Enabling Farm Succession of Ranchland Zone**
- a. NPS to partner with farms and ranches to enable successful multi-generational transfer of farming operations in order to support a systemically functional farming ecosystem in the Ranchland zone.



- b. NPS to enable non-family succession of Ranchland Zone farming operations where family generational transfers do not exist. RFPs for new generation of tenants to be utilized to fulfill such objectives.

Sincerely,

Save Marin's Food Community Coalition

CC

Assemblymember Damon Connolly

Caroline Lobbell, JD

Congressman Jared Huffman

Congressman Mike Thompson

Marin County Supervisor Katie Rice-District 2

Marin County Supervisor Dennis Rodoni-District 4

Peter Obstler, JD

Senator Mike McGuire

U.S. Senator Alex Padilla

Save Marin's Food Community coalition is dedicated to preserving the agricultural communities of Marin. Concerned individuals, organizations, and companies are participants such as Assemblymember Damon Connolly, Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM), California Cattlemen's Association, Carbon Cycle Institute, Clover Sonoma, Coastal Health Alliance, Marin County Farm Bureau, Petaluma Health Center, Straus Family Creamery, Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA), and Western United Dairies, etc. This is a newly created coalition, and participation continues to grow. [Learn more.](#)