

Restoring West Peak

Located in the Marin Municipal Water District, on top of Mt. Tam's western-most peak, lies a 106-acre scar that even some of its most ardent fans and frequent visitors may be completely unaware of.

In 1950, during the height of the Cold War, and in a country rife with fear of a Soviet attack, the Army Corps of Engineers bulldozed Mt. Tam's highest peak to build an Air Force station. For 30 years, soldiers on West Peak watched the skies for Soviet bombers, prepared to launch jet interceptors and short range Nike nuclear missiles against an attack that fortunately never came.

Technological advancements quickly made the base obsolete, and it was closed in 1980. Some of the many buildings that made up the base were removed over the next two decades. Today, a handful of structures remain, as well as the majority of the former base's infrastructure, including numerous building foundations and a network of roads and paved areas.

Many of Mt. Tam's supporters, including Marin Municipal Water District's Board of Directors, would like to see West Peak restored, but how and to what condition remains a looming question. This project will take the first step in finding an answer by supporting an alternatives assessment to look at the scale and scope of potential restoration efforts. The study will engage a range of stakeholders so that the result is a natural outgrowth of ecological needs, community interest and input, and technical constraints.



Credit: steelblue

Mt. Tam's West Peak was razed by the military in the 1950s to create an Air Force station

ALTERNATIVES ASSESSMENT

Restoring West Peak will be a challenging task, and the scale of the effort and associated budget will expand or contract depending upon the chosen design option. It will be critical to engage the public and agencies to create a thoughtful analysis of design options that considers multiple perspectives. This initial assessment will help create a clear understanding of what can realistically be accomplished and include the public, regulatory agencies, and other interested groups.

The initial assessment will include the following steps, which are described in more detail on the back of this sheet:

- Fact finding and data collection
- Development of alternatives
- Public engagement



Credit: Gary Yost

Fences enclose the left-behind buildings, pipes, and other infrastructure that will need to be addressed as part of any restoration effort

FACT FINDING AND DATA COLLECTION



Credit: Gary Yost

The data collection phase will look at the site's specific natural and structural features and constraints to provide a solid basis for restoration design alternatives

The alternatives assessment will start with a review of comparable projects in the area, including Mt. Umunhum, Mt. Livermore, and Angel Island.

Next, data on West Peak's natural features, cultural and archaeological records, and environmental contamination will be examined. Experts in geology, soils, surveys, transportation, or other fields may also be called upon.

Once this information is gathered, consolidated, and analyzed, it will be clear if more data are needed to provide the team with a holistic set of information that captures the most current understanding of the site's technical, environmental, and cultural realities.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES



Credit: Gary Yost

Alternatives for the restoration of the entire site will be developed based on data, expert analysis, public input, and board approval

Data collected in the first phase (above) will inform a series of technical studies in which experts will help analyze data, look at the site's particular opportunities and constraints, and develop cost estimates for a series of restoration design alternatives.

The goal is to generate a set of realistic alternatives that can be shared with the public. These options will be based upon existing agency plans and site constraints, and could range from a full ecological and topographic restoration to stabilization of the base's footprint to allow safe access for visitor use and enjoyment.

The final basis of design report will be a product of these technical studies, as well as public engagement and design (see below) and board approval.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A series of docent-led public walks will share the site's history, ecology, and spectacular views. These walks will be accompanied by additional opportunities for the community to voice its ideas for the site, learn more about the findings of the technical studies, and discuss potential alternatives.

A culminating event will present design alternatives with associated costs and compliance requirements, and will offer an opportunity for public feedback. The project team will then summarize issues, consolidate input, and update plans to reflect what was heard throughout the community engagement and design process, thereby developing a preferred alternative for Marin Municipal Water District Board approval.



Credit: Carney Yeh

Community members will have the opportunity to visit the site and to share their ideas at a series of walks and workshops

FUNDING NEEDS

\$450,000

THIS FUNDING WILL SUPPORT:

\$125,000

Feasibility study scoping, data gathering, community design activities, alternatives development

\$325,000

Environmental consultant support for data analysis and alternative development

SCHEDULE

WINTER 2017

Data review and kickoff community engagement

SUMMER 2017

Release RFP and complete technical studies

SUMMER 2017

Identify alternatives and share with the community

FALL 2017

Develop preferred alternative based on agency and community review

WINTER 2018

Share preferred alternative

**ONE
TAM**

WEST PEAK

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The Tamalpais Lands Collaborative is a partnership of the Marin Municipal Water District, National Park Service, California State Parks, Marin County Parks and Open Space District, and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Lend a hand! To find out how to volunteer or donate, contact Matt Leffert at mleffert@parksconservancy.org or (415) 561-3069 or visit onetam.org



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