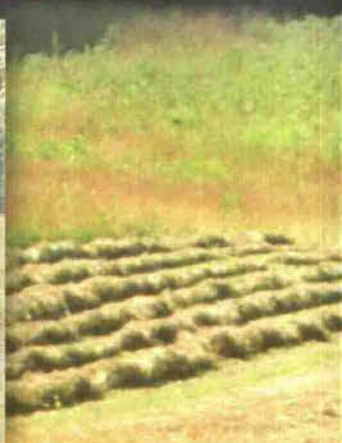




Stewardship Begins with People

An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products



This report is the fourteenth in the Conservation and Stewardship Publication Series produced by the National Park Service Conservation Study Institute. This series includes a variety of publications designed to provide information on conservation history and current practice for professionals and the public. The series editor is Nora J. Mitchell, director of the Institute. This volume was published in cooperation with the National Park Service Northeast Region, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Shelburne Farms National Historic Landmark, Eastern National, and Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment.

The Conservation Study Institute was established by the National Park Service in 1998 to enhance leadership in the field of conservation. A partnership with academic, government, and nonprofit organizations, the Institute helps the National Park Service and its partners to stay in touch with the evolving field of conservation and to develop more sophisticated partnerships, new tools for community engagement, and new strategies for the twenty-first century. The Institute is based at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park within the Northeast Region of the National Park Service.

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Stewardship Begins with People

An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT:

National Park Service Northeast Region

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

National Park Service Conservation Study Institute

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Stewardship Begins with People

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Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve



Introduction

This *Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products* is a guide to the work of friends and neighbors of U.S. national parks, heritage areas, and national historic landmarks who are practicing a stewardship ethic and demonstrating a commitment to sustainability. Their work and the products they make contribute to the preservation of authentic traditional cultures and significant cultural landscapes. These stories come from two dozen national park areas ranging from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Hawaiian Islands, and were selected as illustrative of many similar efforts and enterprises. As our title notes, stewardship begins with people, and the people in this *Atlas*—and others like them—deserve both recognition and encouragement.

Stewardship Begins with People: An Atlas of Places, People, and Handmade Products offers a fresh perspective on the sustainability of national parks and their neighboring communities, and illustrates the many different ways parks and protected areas are working in partnership with local people to strengthen natural and cultural heritage. The continuity and vitality of cultural systems and traditional production have, over time, influenced characteristic patterns of land use, the biodiversity of plants and animals, community development, and a distinctive sense of place. However, many of these traditional land uses and their related products—which less than a generation ago were taken for granted by parks and protected areas as timeless and immutable—are being rapidly destabilized and displaced. Escalating land values, falling commodity prices, and competition from global markets are all contributing to the unraveling of traditional social and economic relationships to the land. The speed and scope of this change is unprecedented.

These challenges require rethinking the conventional relationships between parks and protected areas on one hand, and local communities and producers on the other.

It is no longer enough to strive for a friendly “coexistence.” All parties need to be more intentional and proactive in defining their mutual interests and crafting new, more cooperative strategies that contribute to some measure of sustainability and long-term conservation. This *Atlas* represents one such strategy.

This publication marks the culmination of a multi-year research project on heritage-based products that began with planning for the historic Mount Tom forest at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. A significant cultural landscape, the Mount Tom forest is the oldest professionally managed woodland in the U.S. The park continues to manage the forest in a contemporary context

It is no longer enough to strive for a friendly “coexistence.” All parties need to be more intentional and proactive in defining their mutual interests and crafting new, more cooperative strategies that contribute to some measure of sustainability and long-term conservation.

that is sensitive to historic character, relevant to the local community, and environmentally responsible. Recent third-party certification of the park’s forest practices by the independent Forest Stewardship Council stimulated a broader investigation of certification systems and issues associated with the branding of products.

Concurrent with these discussions at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National

Historical Park, there has been a growing conversation between national parks and partners on ways to enhance the cultural and economic sustainability of their distinctive regional identities. One tool that has generated particular interest is the use of branding as part of larger certification systems that make transparent the connection between products and responsible social and environmental practices. This enables individuals and organizations to make informed purchasing choices in direct support of good stewardship. Congress recently demonstrated its interest as well, asking the National Park Service to explore viable ways



Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

to encourage the sale of traditional products in national parks that “reflect, educate, and celebrate the unique history, spirit, culture, and natural treasures of the designated region and individual park.”¹

This interest encouraged Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park to join the National Park Service Conservation Study Institute and a growing circle of national parks and partners to share experiences and learn more about how these strategies are being used in other places. This inquiry extended abroad, initially involving an exchange of ideas with park managers in Italy and the Czech Republic. A bilateral workshop, “Local Typical Products: Parks and Communities Working Together for a Sustainable Future,” was convened in 2002 by the Italian Nature Conservation Service, the Lazio regional parks, and the U.S. National Park Service. Sessions were held in Cinque Terre National Park and several protected areas around Rome. At Cinque Terre, participants studied the recovery and economic revitalization of a World Heritage cultural landscape of steep coastal vineyards that produce the traditional *Sciacchetrà* wine. Cinque Terre is developing one of the world’s most comprehensive programs in sustainable tourism, based largely on creating an environmental quality brand for products and services.

In 2006, the National Park Service participated in another bilateral workshop, “Marketing and Promotion of Local Heritage Products,” convened in the Czech Republic by the Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment in cooperation with the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation, Traditions of the White Carpathians, and Regional Environmental Center Czech Republic. The workshop, which was preceded by a seminar hosted by the United States Embassy in Prague, focused on innovative strategies to conserve cultural heritage, including promoting sustainable tourism, establishing certification systems, and building regional networks of protected areas and traditional producers.

Lessons learned from these exchanges are being considered and carefully applied in the U.S. This *Atlas*, for example, takes inspiration from two Italian versions of an atlas or, in Italian, *atlante*. One was prepared for traditional products of national parks and one for the parks of the Lazio Region.² Both publications illustrate the extraordinary array of authentic traditional food products associated with



Sue Conley
Cowgirl Creamery

Point Reyes National Seashore

CALIFORNIA



Anchoring the western shore of Marin County, Point Reyes National Seashore preserves the natural ecosystems and cultural resources of one of the most spectacularly beautiful coastal landscapes in the United States. The Point Reyes peninsula has long been associated with the early history of dairy farming in California, and its panoramic landscape is shaped by characteristic features such as windbreaks, stock ponds, open pastures, and rolling fence lines. A number of the ranches in the park's pastoral zone have been in continuous operation since the 1860s.

Point Reyes is also an important part of a larger regional landscape and economy. Marin County's three dozen dairies, including the park's historic nineteenth-century dairies, provide 20 percent of the milk for the San Francisco Bay area. In 1994, the Straus farm became the first organic dairy west of the Mississippi. Today, Sue Conley and Peg Smith's Cowgirl Creamery produces a wide array of award-winning fresh and aged cheeses made only from Straus farm milk. They own two retail stores in San Francisco, one of them in the newly renovated Ferry Building. Cowgirl Creamery, together with Marin French Cheese Company and Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company, help identify the region as America's "Normandy."

The county is well known for its oyster aquaculture. A half-dozen companies annually produce about 20 percent of California's oysters. For example, Hog Island Oyster Company in Marshall grows several types of North American oysters: Pacific, European, Kumamoto, Atlantic, and a trademarked Hog Island Sweetwater.

Local producers and regional consumers recognize Point Reyes and West Marin as places of quality production and authentic foods. An unusual opportunity exists to demonstrate the powerful linkage between these innovative, sustainable agricultural enterprises; market recognition; and the continued, careful stewardship of an important cultural landscape. Here is a place that can reconnect people with their natural heritage through wilderness and recreational experiences as well as with the food they eat, the beauty of the cultural landscapes where it is grown, and the honorable labor of producing it.

Pasture-based food that is locally produced invites and inevitably satisfies the desire for a real sense of place. It connects us with the seasons and the natural world and ultimately, after invigorating the palate, fortifying the body, and stimulating conversation, resonates a genuine appreciation of life.

— David Evans, owner, Marin Sun Farms¹

From our house, we look out over the oyster beds and the estuary every day...It's a beautiful view and it's something that we love and cherish. We're deeply committed to that ecosystem and its protection.

— Kevin Lunny, owner, Drakes Bay Family Farms²

MORE ABOUT POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE

Point Reyes National Seashore, created by Congress in 1962, comprises more than 71,000 acres, including 33,000 acres of wilderness. Estuaries, windswept beaches, coastal grasslands, salt marshes, and coniferous forests create a haven of 80 miles of unspoiled and undeveloped coastline. Located just an hour's drive north of San Francisco, the park receives more than 2.5 million visitors annually. The cultural history of Point Reyes extends back some 5,000 years to the Coast Miwok people who were the first human inhabitants of the peninsula; more than 100 known village sites exist within the park. In the early 1800s, Mexican land grantees established ranches. These were followed by a wave of American agricultural operations, which continue to this day in the park's pastoral zone.

¹ See <http://www.marinsunfarms.com>.

² Quoted in Greg Cahill, "Putting the Oysters to Bed," *Pacific Sun*, July 14, 2006; http://www.pacificsun.com/story_archives/oysters.html.

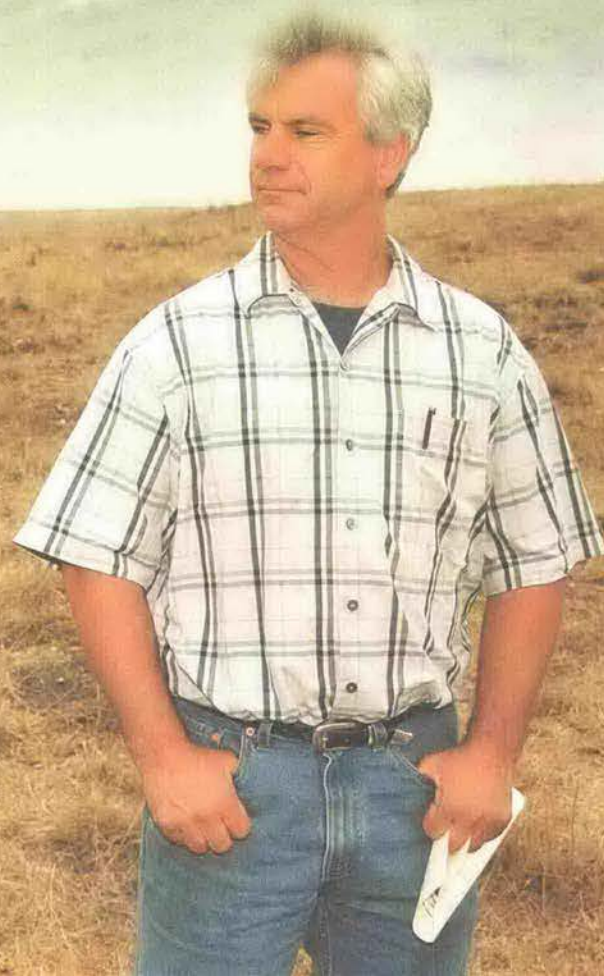


Star Route Farms



Point Reyes National Seashore

The high-quality pastures of Point Reyes make raising grass-fed beef possible and profitable. Dave Evans (left) and Kevin Lunny (right), fifth- and fourth-generation Point Reyes ranchers respectively, farm within Point Reyes National Seashore, and both have been recognized for their environmental stewardship and innovation. They belong to a growing number of West Marin farmers and ranchers committed to sustainable agricultural strategies. On his Marin Sun Farms, Evans practices pasture rotation, avoids antibiotics and growth hormones, and sells directly to consumers. Several years ago, he built moveable henhouses that allow the chickens to forage in the pastures. The free-range birds break up manure and fertilize the soil. Lunny has converted his herd to grass-fed and organic production. Both are diversifying; Evans has opened Marin Sun Farms Butcher Shop and Eatery in nearby Point Reyes Station and Lunny's Drakes Bay Family Farms now operates an oyster farm on Drakes Estero.



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