

Notes for the Drakes Bay Historic and Archeological District Powerpoint

Slide 1: Introduction Slide

Slide 2: The Drakes Bay Historic and Archeological District is a nationally significant sixteenth-century landscape that includes 15 California Indian sites that provide material evidence of two of the earliest European contacts and interactions with native peoples on the west coast of the United States; the generally accepted site of Francis Drake's 1579 California landing, and the site of a sixteenth-century Spanish shipwreck, the Manila galleon San Agustín of 1595. The property is nominated under Criteria 1, 2 and 6 under the National Historic Landmark thematic framework theme of Peopling Places. The period of significance is 1579 to 1595.

The land area of the district is located in Point Reyes National Seashore, 30 miles north of San Francisco, California. The water area of the district is located directly offshore of Point Reyes National Seashore in an area managed by both the National Park Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Slide 3: Under Criterion 1, the property is nationally significant in the areas of maritime history and exploration. Documentary and other evidence points to this area as the site of Francis Drake's 1579 California landing and the first English claim to land which would eventually become the United States of America, during the first English circumnavigation of the globe. Also included in the district is the wreck of the Spanish Manila galleon San Agustín. The San Agustín, under the command of Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño, was heavily salvaged by the Coast Miwok, the native group occupying the area during the contact period. Both Drake's landing and the wreck of the San Agustín mark early moments of European-native interactions that were to shape the relations between these groups in the western United States for centuries.

Further, Drake's and Cermeño's voyages, and their landings here, were dramatic events in the long political, economic and religious struggle in which Britain wrested control of the seas from Spain, eventually creating the conditions for a British-colonized North America.

Slide 4: Under Criterion 2, Drakes Bay Historic and Archeological District is the property which best represents the nationally significant figure, Sir Francis Drake. Drake circumnavigated the world, returning to England in 1580. This feat strengthened England as a maritime power and gave England a stake in western North America. While Drake made contact with our shores four other times, those visits were brief and left no lasting, visible evidence. Drake's Cove, the white cliffs, for

which Drake named the region *Nova Albion*, and the Native American sites associated with his visit are tangible reminders of Drake's Port of *Nova Albion*. They constitute the best representative site in this country associated with Sir Francis Drake.

Slide 5: Under Criterion 6, the district is nationally significant for its archeological potential in the area of historical archeology. The archeological resources here have the potential to yield information of major scientific importance, shedding light on early intercultural relations between Europeans and native peoples in the far west.

Studies of these resources include research that focuses on a number of issues including how this interaction shaped the contact period in the west, the role of disease in cross-cultural encounters, the material consequences of these brief visits, and continuity and transformations in traditional native lifeways based on introduced material culture.

Slide 6: Establishing the location of Drake's Port of *Nova Albion* has been a century-long endeavor involving a diverse array of researchers reaching back to the earliest American sailor-scholar on the west coast, George Davidson, and including historians, anthropologists, archeologists, cartographers, navigators, biologists, zoologists, art historians, and ship historians.

The process of identification involved analyses of many elements of historic and modern evidence. These studies progressively narrowed the search until Drakes Bay was identified as the generally accepted location of Drake's sheltered anchorage, and Drake's Cove within the mouth of Drakes Estero as the harbor and carenage site of the Golden Hind.

This process was largely completed a quarter century ago, and additional scholars have studied the work and commented on it over those last twenty-five years.

Slide 7: Since 1982 the National Park Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have worked cooperatively to locate the *San Agustin* as well as other shipwrecks in Drakes Bay. Technological advances since that time have allowed these agencies to define the most likely location of the wreck using a cesium magnetometer, digital side-scan sonar and sub-bottom profiler, and single-beam bathymetry, all positioned with a differentially-corrected global positioning system, with results accessible in a Global Information System.

The data from these tools as well as three independent lines of evidence have allowed researchers to further narrow the location, seen as the boundary that extends into the bay on this image. This evidence includes historical documentation, distribution of 15 indigenous archeological sites with porcelains, stonewares and spikes from the San

Agustín, and the distribution of beach-collected porcelain documented in Drakes Bay from 1965 to the present.

Slide 8: The once-numerous Coast Miwok villages described by both Drake and Cermeño disappeared in the early- to mid-nineteenth century. Today, the remains of these sites have been archeologically surveyed or investigated, and 15 are so closely connected to the Drake and Cermeño visits by finds of Chinese porcelains and other artifacts dated to the late-sixteenth century that they are included in this nomination because they can provide nationally significant information about these interactions. These archeological investigations span almost a century and have identified features such as house floors, fire lenses and storage pits. In addition to rich Native-American artifact assemblages, including many bone tools in excellent condition, obsidian and chert projectile points and bifaces, agate drill bits, and abalone pendants, the sites are notable for clamshell disk bead manufacturing evidence from shell blanks to finished beads, as well as sixteenth century porcelain sherds, some of which were worked by the Coast Miwok, producing pendants, bead blanks, and scrapers, thereby adapting these exotic materials from the Drake and Cermeño visits to their own purposes.

Slide 9: On this slide we have enlarged the boundaries map shown previously to show the relationship between the physical sites and the boundaries. This area encompasses the carenage site of the Golden Hind, the meeting place of the Coast Miwok with Drake and his men, the location of the confrontation between Coast Miwok and the Spaniards over salvaged timbers from the San Agustín, the location of much of the flora and fauna described by Drake's chroniclers, the debris field and most likely location of the San Agustín, the locations of beach-collected sixteenth century porcelains, and the fifteen Native-American sites which were occupied at the time of this first English and Spanish contact and have yielded significant numbers of European artifacts.

The contributing sites and boundaries were determined from cartographic, documentary, and archeological information and based on the physical extent of the archeological resources.

Slide 10: The landforms in this district are essentially the same as they were during the sixteenth century except for the cyclical shifts of the estero-mouth sand spits and some sand fill in Drakes Cove. Relative sea level has not changed measurably in that time. This remarkable cultural and natural landscape has excellent visual integrity and continues to capture the feeling of the sixteenth century. Likewise, the 15

contributing archeological sites all contain significant amounts of undisturbed midden with excellent archeological integrity. Collectively, they retain high potential for producing further nationally significant information about the Coast Miwok and their relations with the Europeans during the sixteenth-century.

Thank you.