

Point Molate Beach Recreational History

<u>Time</u>	<u>History</u>
1930 to WWII	Although undeveloped and in private ownership, Point Molate Beach was a favored recreation site for Richmond residents. ¹
WWII to 1953	There was no developed beach park or picnic area. "The problem with a beach area anywhere on the base was the continual existence of an oil slick on top of the water all along the shore. No one would have thought of getting into the water during the war. It was too icky and the shore smelled bad." ²
Circa 1965 - 1968	Beach park was developed and maintained by the U.S. Navy for the benefit of Navy families living at Point Molate, as well as the public, without any fencing between the park and Western Drive. ³
Circa 1968 - 1975	The City of Richmond leased the park property from the Navy at \$1/year and took over maintenance at some point during this period. ⁴
1969 - 1985	Pacific Locomotive Association operated historic trains with public rides over the historic tracks of Castro Point Railway between the park and Western Drive. ⁵
Circa 1978	A security fence was installed along Western Drive, but public access to the park was maintained so that citizens of Richmond could enter and depart the park without passing through the Navy security gate. ⁶
2001	City of Richmond closed the beach due to severe budgetary constraints.
2003	City of Richmond takes title to most of the Naval Fuel Depot, including the beach park, with a payment of \$1 to the Navy.
2013	Beach park reopens on October 14 based on a plan for phased reopening approved by Richmond City Council on March 5.

Prepared by Bruce Beyaert October 14, 2013
based on information from former Navy and
City of Richmond employees as well as
Richmond residents who enjoyed using the park.

¹ Josephine Maslov Bastin

² Art Edwards, son of Navy Base Superintendent

³ Dwight Bohm, Navy Base Director 1976 - 1978, Willie Haywood, retired Richmond Public Works Director and others

⁴ Dwight Bohm, Navy Base Director 1976 - 1978, and Willie Haywood, retired Richmond Public Works Director

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Locomotive_Association

⁶ Dwight Bohm, Navy Base Director 1976 - 1978

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Josephine Maslov Bastin as related by Donald Bastin, 2/25/13: I visited Point Molate Beach yesterday with my mom, who will be 93 next month. She remembers going to this site when she was around 9, 10 or 11 years old, so that would be around 1930. Her uncle would take out the six children in the family, and sometimes neighbor kids, in his open Model T Ford. She remembers spending all day at the beach. She particularly remembers how sandy the beach was and how shallow the water was for a great distance. This made it particularly attractive to little kids. She also remembers the creepy feeling of sea grass on her legs and being afraid of stepping on a fish. In the evening, her uncle would make a fire on the beach and they would roast hot dogs. This was a summertime place to go, when the days got really hot. She does not remember the trees and grassy area that are there now, so they must be more recent.

Art Edwards: "I always enjoy talking about Point Molate, the base I grew up on during the war. My dad was superintendent of the base from 1943 to 1953. I do not remember a beach park anywhere on the base at that time. If there was one, it would have been just to the left after you drive through the main (south) gate. The families did picnic on the hillside on the right side of the road after coming through the gate. There was absolutely no beach or picnic area beyond the top of the hill heading toward the north gate. The problem with a beach area anywhere on the base was the continual existence of an oil slick on top of the water all along the shore. No one would have thought of getting into the water during the war. It was too icky and the shore smelled bad. No one was concerned about environmental damage in those days."

Dwight Bohm, Navy Base Director 1976 - 1978: "Yes, there was a beach park at Point Molate during 1976-1978. I am not certain when the beach park was established - the park predated my arrival. I believe the Navy funded creation of the park for the benefit of Navy families living in Point Molate Navy Housing as well as for the benefit of the citizens of Richmond, whose support the Navy was keen on cultivating. I will attempt to verify this. In ~1978, a security fence was installed along the public road that passed through Point Molate but public access to the park was maintained so that citizens of Richmond could enter and depart the park without passing through the Navy security gate. The City maintained the beach park during 1976-1978. The City's responsibility for the beach park was clearly established during my time at Point Molate. It was my understanding that Navy had no legal jurisdiction for matters occurring at the Beach Park. There must have been a formal agreement, such as an easement, lease or quit claim deed, governing the City's use and responsibility for the beach park."

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Wendy Mahler: "I was born and raised in Richmond (Atchison Village) in 1957, and have very fond memories of spending weekends with my family and friends at Point Molate. As a young child my mother would take me and my siblings fishing and whale watching. As a teenager, my weekends were spent enjoying the spectacular sunsets and views of Red Rock and Mount Tamalpais. My siblings and I share stories with their children and grandchildren of the great adventures we had hiking, biking, swimming, and easy & lazy afternoons."

Debbi Thornton: "My family grew up in Richmond and Atchison Village. Going to Point Molate was a really big deal for all us kids and all the other neighborhood kids as well. I can't begin to tell you all the things we saw and did there. (I learned how to water ski at that beach and met my first seal that day.) As we grew up, we took our children there and passed on the memories that we had as children. We would like to keep this tradition alive with their children. During those years we (friends & family) have planted trees at the beach as well."

Willie Haywood, retired Richmond Public Works Director: "The park at Pt. Molate was built and maintained by the Navy initially. I say this based on my relationship I had with the Navy in the early 80s prior to them giving the city care and control. "

Joel Penick, Jr.: "I was born of Brookside Hospital back in 1981, and within a week of my birth one of the first places my parents took me was Point Molate. Obviously I don't remember this but I have the pictures to prove it. The point was a regular spot for my dad and I to hang out when I was growing up, and was where we celebrated nearly every one of my birthdays up until it's closing in 2001. Now that I have a son I would like to share with him the same beautiful beach I grew up enjoying, and feel that since the funds have been appropriated for this purpose already and that it's already in great shape that it's reopening should happen swiftly"

BB, 2/25/13