



History

Shell mounds found near the beach suggest that Coast Miwoks were one of the first human residents of the area. They thrived on local salmon, trout, mussels, and clams, building homes and boats of willows and tule reeds.

By 1822, California was claimed by Mexico. The beach and lagoon areas, named "Rancho Baulinas" for the local baleen whales, was given as a land grant to Rafael Garcia by 1836. Over the years, cattle ranching and an apple farm brought economic prosperity to the quiet region. However, with no roads leading

to the village until 1870, visitors were few and far between.

The town began to evolve in the 1890's, when Nathan and Rose Stinson began to set up tents among the beach-side willow trees. They were calling their new tourist destination "Willow Camp." In 1896, the Mill Valley and Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railroad brought rail service to nearby West Point Inn. Visitors could now ride a ferry and train from San Francisco and then catch a stagecoach down to Willow Camp, all within one day.

Transition & Tradition



Emma Reiman was an early winner in the Women's Dipsea "Hike," run from 1918-1922.

The community blossomed following the 1906 earthquake, when displaced families from San Francisco built some of the town's earliest businesses. Automobiles which made travelling to remote locals more accessible started appearing in the town renamed Stinson Beach in 1916. With the completion of the Panoramic Highway in 1928 and the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937, Stinson Beach became a popular weekend destination for weary San Franciscans.

During World War II, the threat of attack changed the quiet community. The surrounding hills bristled with gun emplacements and military personnel became a common sight. Following the war, the guns were removed, but many soldiers who served in the area stayed to make Stinson Beach their home.

Over the last century one tradition has endured — the annual Dipsea Race. Begun in 1905 and run each June, it attracts runners from all over the world. The rigorous and historic Dipsea Trail is over 7 miles long, from Mill Valley to Stinson Beach, passing through forests and meadows, hills and valleys. The race is the second oldest footrace in the United States.

Preservation

During the late 1800s, Stinson was part of a popular resort area, and continued to attract tourists. In 1839, the County of Marin purchased it for camping and picnicking, and the US Coast Guard used part of it during WWII. The beach was turned over to the State of California in 1950 to help preserve the quiet charm of Stinson Beach. By the latter half of the 20th century, modern transportation made the area easily accessible, and the pastoral setting was in danger.

Soon after the establishment of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1972, the beach, as well as much of the land east and north of town, came under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

Today, visitors continue to experience the pleasures of this quiet beach community. Whether hiking, enjoying a picnic, exploring the town, or relaxing on the beach, people continue to find Stinson Beach a great place to escape from the frantic pace of everyday life, just as it has been for over a century.



Recreational Activities



Stinson Beach lifeguards are on duty from late May to mid-September.



Great White Sharks attacks are known to occur at Stinson Beach. Please refer to the signs for more information.

(Photo courtesy: Scot Anderson)

Park Hours

Stinson Beach is open year round every day. The entrance gates open at 9:00 a.m. Closing times vary depending on season. Check the posted sign when you enter the parking lot.

Facilities

Stinson Beach facilities include rest rooms, showers, picnic areas, and BBQ grills. A snack bar is open during summer months at the base of the main lifeguard tower. Rest rooms are located along the beach adjacent to each of the parking areas. The shower (cold) is located at the central rest room building. Picnic facilities are available on first-come, first-serve basis.

Rules and Regulations

- Pets are not allowed on the National Park Service section of the beach
- Dogs are allowed on leash in the parking lot, picnic areas, and on the county beach
- Alcohol is permitted if you are over 21
- No kegs or glass containers of any type are allowed on the beach
- Fires are permitted in designated spots in the picnic area only
- No fires or grills are allowed on the beach
- Inner tubes and motorized recreational equipment are prohibited in swimming areas
- Fishing is permitted under California Fish and Game Guidelines
- Permits are required for large groups and special events
- Camping is not permitted

Safety

Swimming is only recommended from late May to mid-September when lifeguards are on duty. Watch your children and keep them in reach at all times. Never turn your back on the ocean. Unexpected large waves, called "sneaker waves," can wash farther up the shore than expected. People entering shallow water can be caught in rip currents and quickly pulled out into deep water. Rip currents are strong, swift-moving channels of water rushing from the shore out to sea. If you are caught in a one: stay calm and swim parallel to the beach until you are out of the current, then swim toward the shore with incoming waves. If you need assistance, wave your arms and yell for help.

Be aware of the potential for sharks close to shore in shallow water. Attacks have occurred here.

Directions

Stinson Beach is located about 20 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge. From US 101 exit at the Mill Valley/ Stinson Beach/ Highway 1 exit. Signs will guide you to Stinson Beach. The road is steep and winding; vehicles over 35 feet long are not advised.