

Bridging the Gap: Improving Science Communication in the San Francisco Bay Area Network

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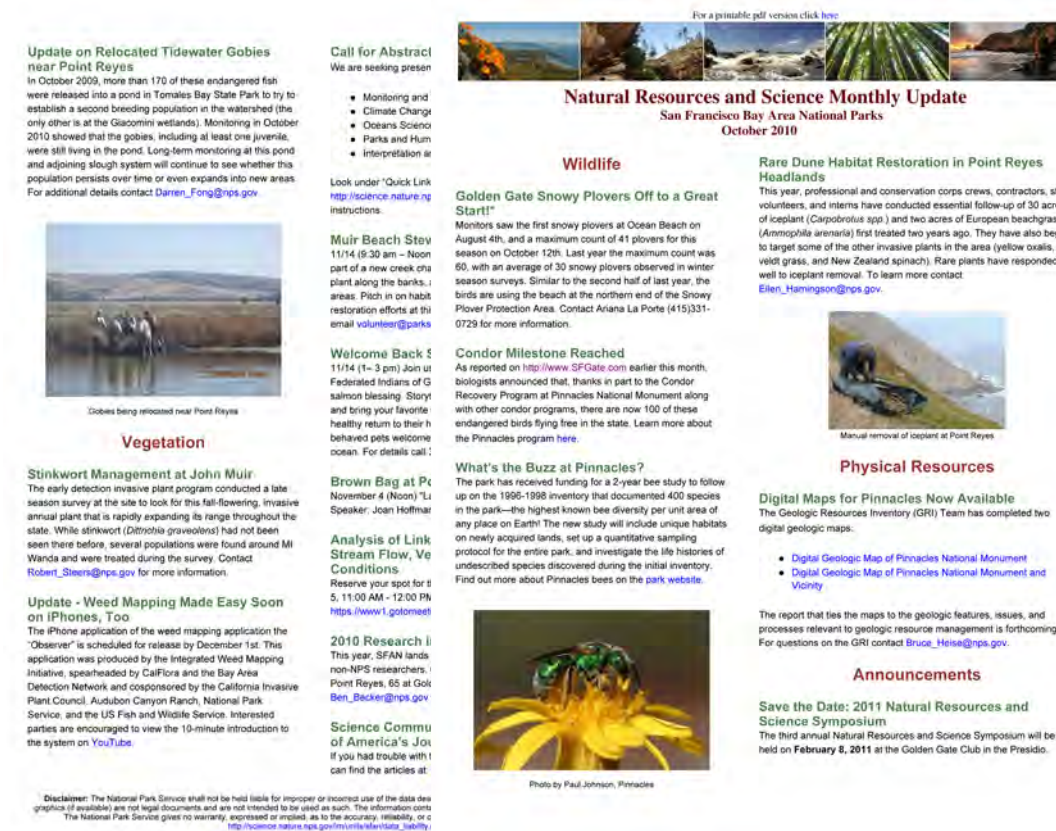
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A natural resource communication strategy completed in late 2009 (NPS/SFAN/NRR—2009/169) revealed many ways the San Francisco Bay Area Network could improve how science and natural resources information is shared among park staff and partner organizations. The survey-based strategy assessed existing communication methods, asked what obstacles people encounter when trying to get information, what kind of information they need, and the formats they most prefer.

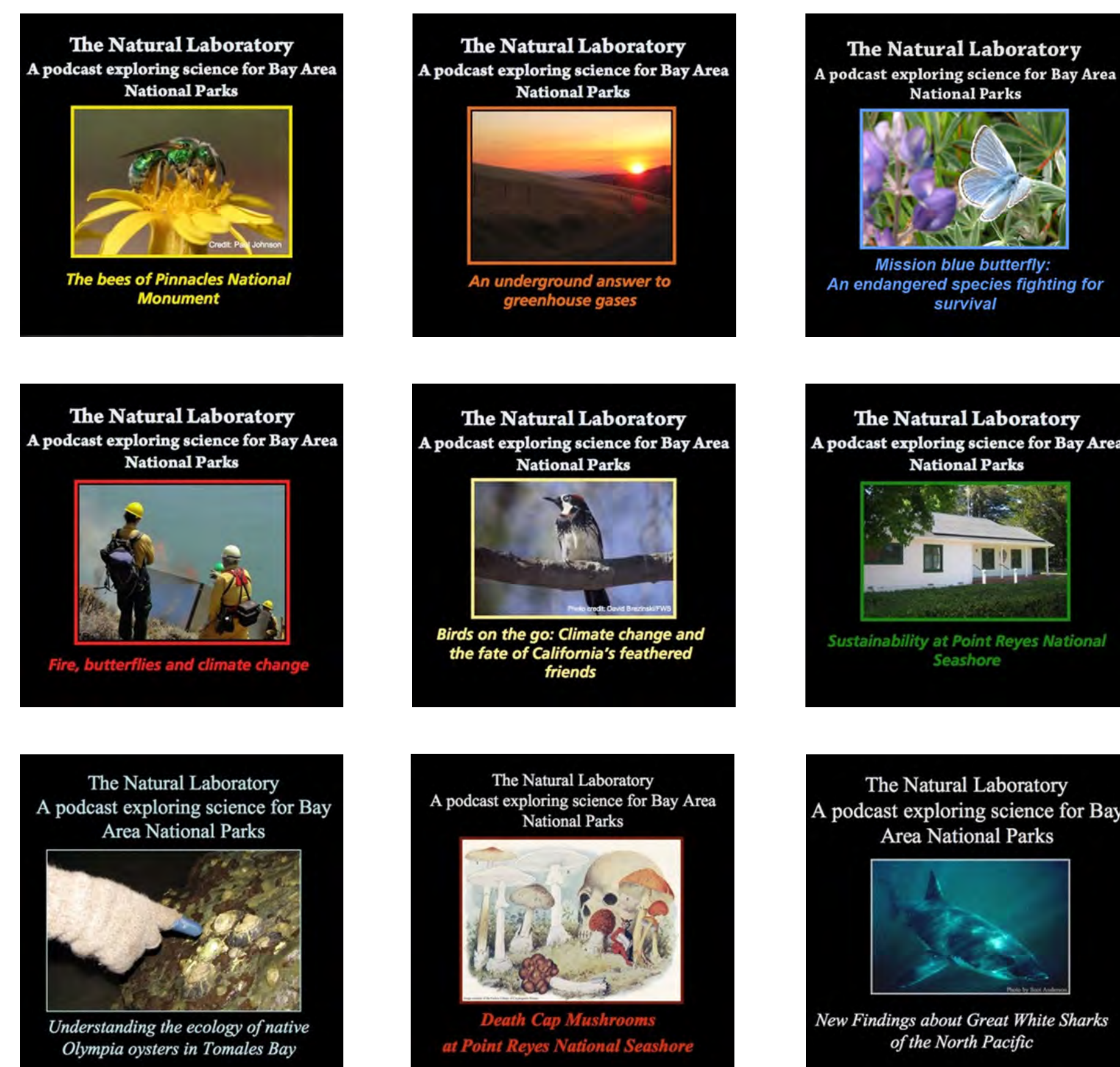
The overwhelming majority of people surveyed wanted information at different levels of technical depth, all housed in one place. Many thought available information was too technical, and a large number said they prefer interactive information sources like multimedia, brown bags, and symposia. We have been making great strides in trying to meet these needs through partnerships with natural resources and interpretation staff, the Inventory & Monitoring Program (I&M), the Pacific Coast Science and Learning Center, and park non-profits. Highlights include:

Increased use of digital media

Newsletters - I&M monthly updates have been reformatted, cover all natural resources and are more widely distributed



Multimedia - about 15 new podcasts and audio slide shows have been created



Social media - a draft social media strategy, developed by a tech-savvy intern, laid out a process for giving park partners appropriate information to distribute to their established Facebook and Twitter followers, and guidance on how to maximize the use of these tools

A new, one-stop-shop science and natural resources website

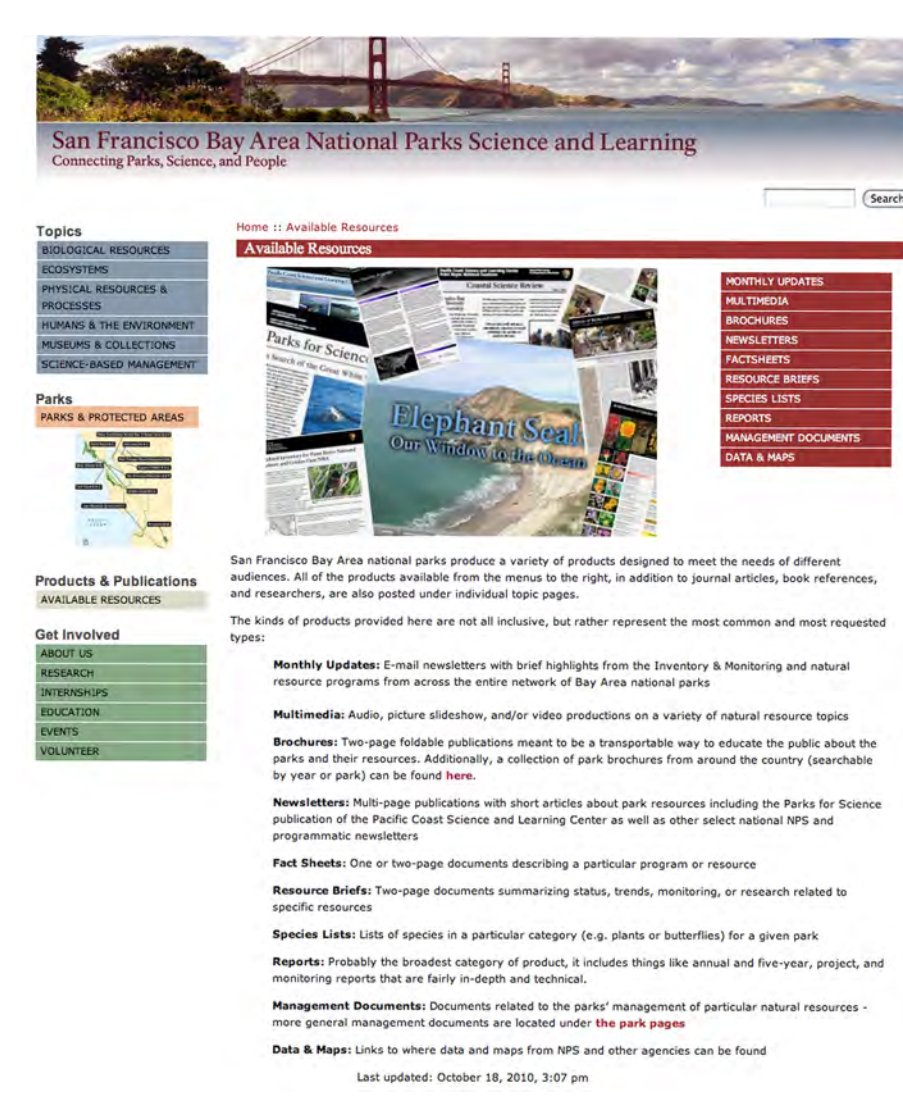
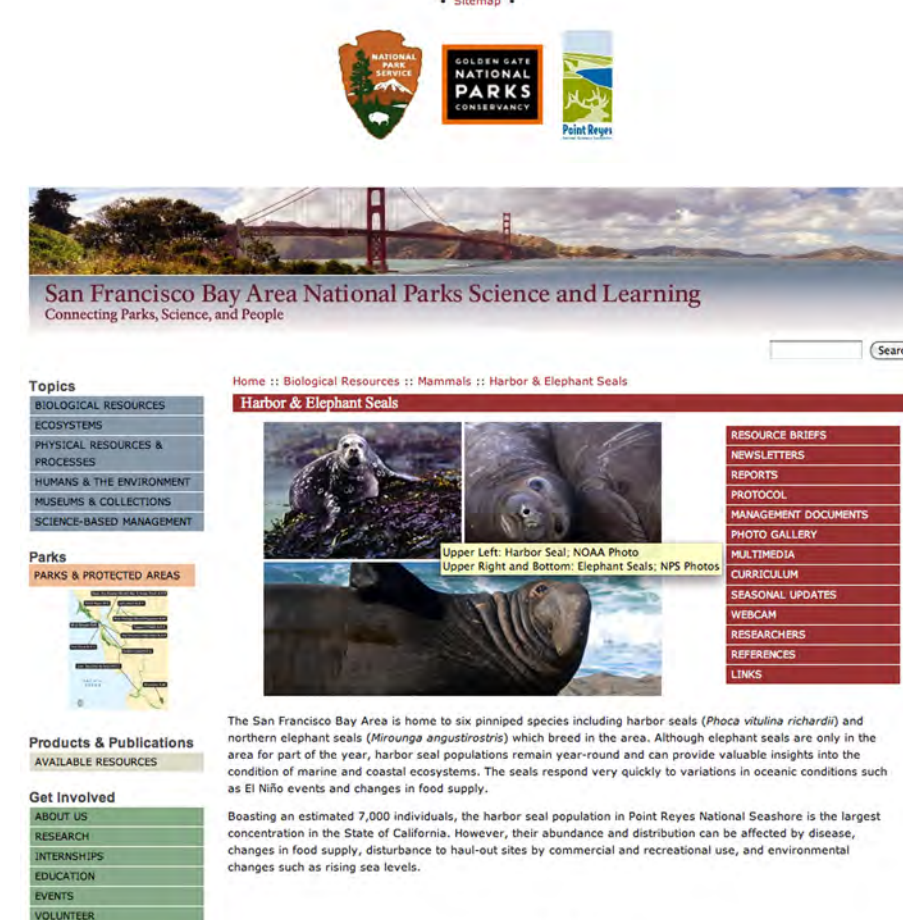
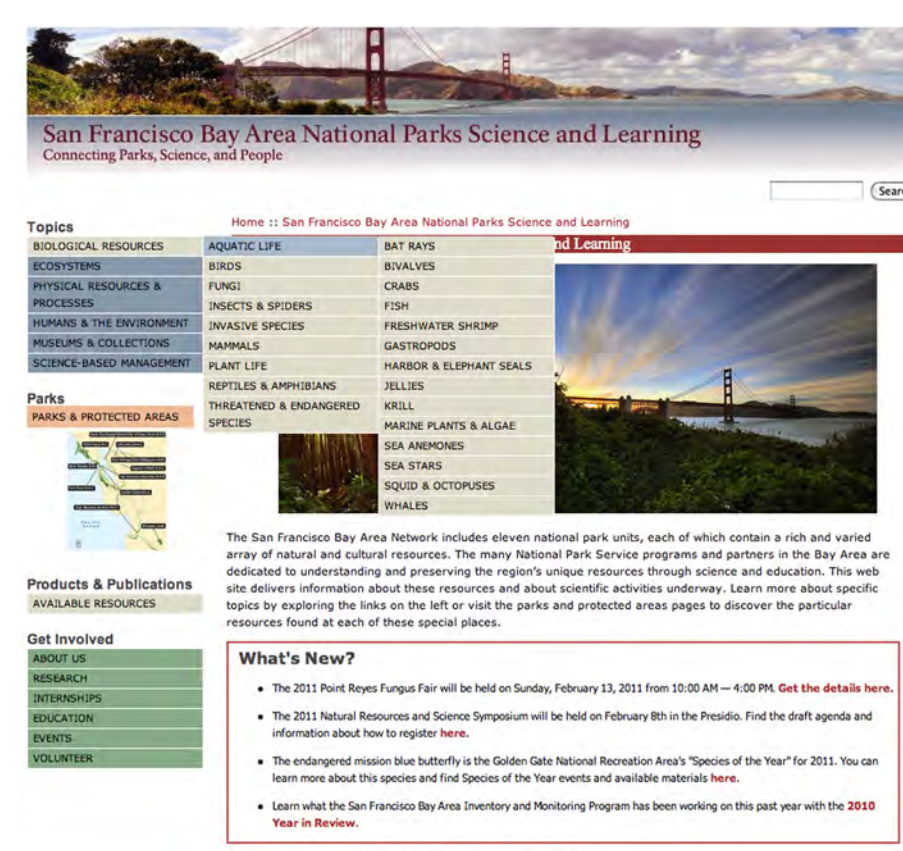
www.sfnps.org

Launched on November 15, 2010, this website is based on the virtual learning center model developed by the Greater Yellowstone and Southwest networks. The site addresses one of the network's biggest communication hurdles by bringing together science and natural resources information for all San Francisco Bay Area national parks in one place. It also provides that information in a number of ways, including by:

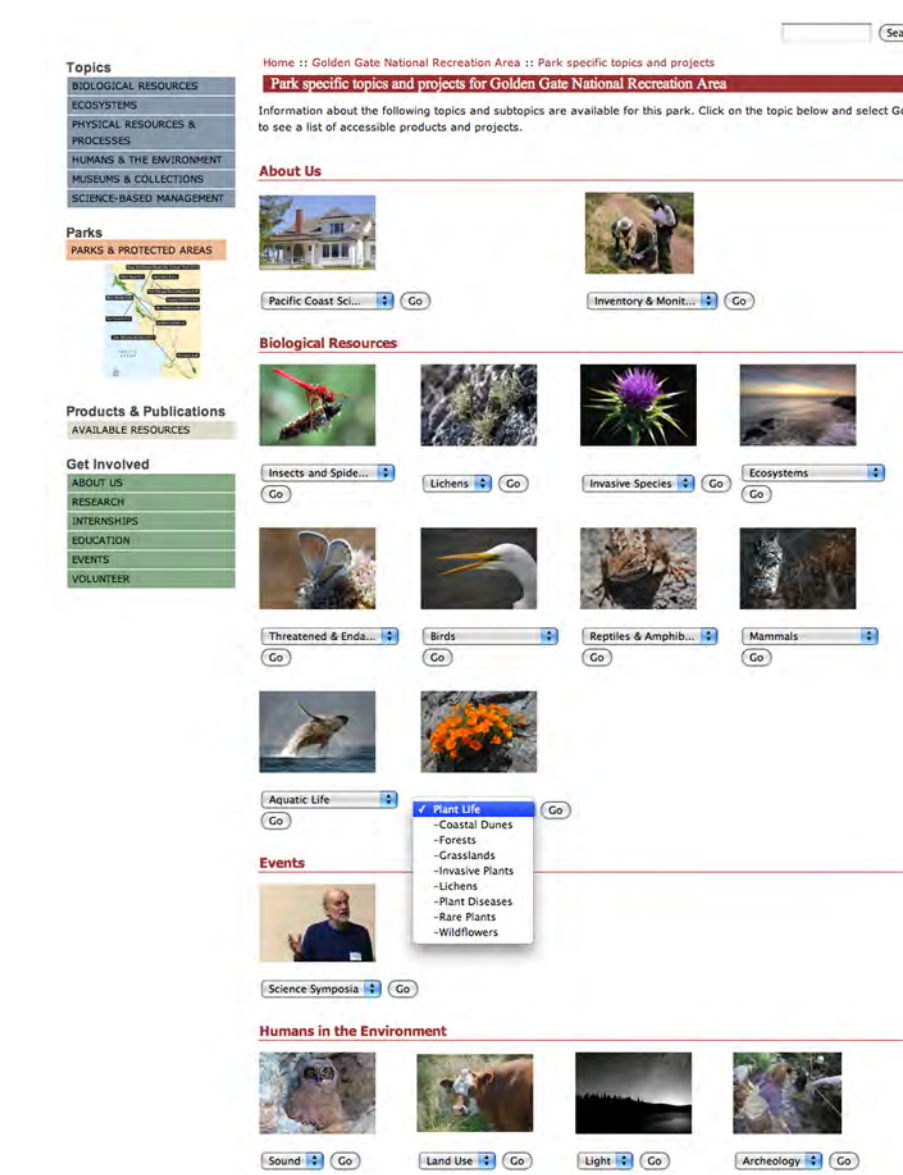
Topic - subject-specific information is organized in increasing levels of detail

All available information on a given topic, researchers, references and links are in the menus on the right

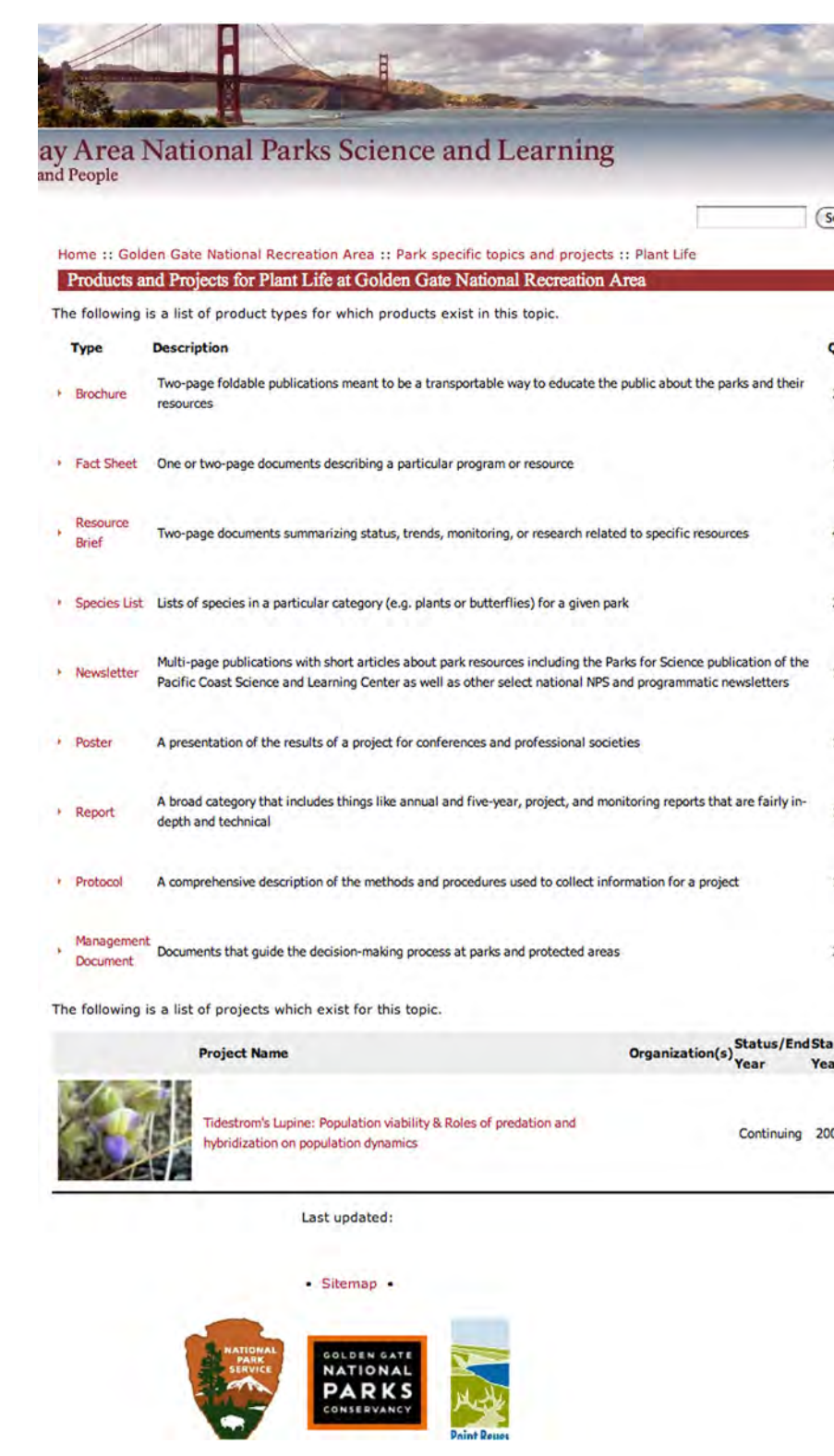
Resources - multimedia, fact sheets, resource briefs, species lists, reports etc... are also shown all together regardless of topic



Park - in addition to general information about each park site, users can search for information specific to each park by topic and subtopics



For example, a search of vegetation-related topics in Golden Gate links to available products, shows how many of each kind there are, and includes any featured research projects



Expanded interactive venues

Audience and range of speakers for the annual Science and Natural Resources Symposium have expanded and science topics are being included more in on-going trainings and brown bags



Dr. Will Travis, Executive Director of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, giving the plenary talk at the 2011 SFAN Science and Natural Resources Symposium

Redesigned 2-page briefings

2-page resource briefings are reviewed by interpretive staff members as well as subject matter experts to help increase their appeal and relevancy to a broader audience

