

# Goldsworthy in the Presidio



# About The Presidio + The Presidio Trust



The Presidio is one of America's most surprising and visited national park sites, located within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It was created as part of the movement to establish urban national parks across the country, to bring these experiences closer to where most people live — in cities. Spanning 1,500 acres next to San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, its rare natural habitats, inspiring views, and world-class trails are a global attraction yet a bus ride away for millions of people.

The Presidio has a rich history. It is the traditional territory of the Yelamu, a local tribe of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples of the San Francisco Peninsula who maintain a strong connection to this land. It was also developed as a military post under three flags. As a result, the Presidio is much like a small town, with historic buildings reinvented as museums, restaurants, hotels, gyms, homes, and offices. Despite its urban setting, the Presidio is among the most biologically diverse parks in America.

The Presidio Trust is an innovative federal agency that stewards and shares the history, beauty, and wonder of the Presidio for everyone to enjoy forever, working in partnership with the National Park Service and with support from the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. The Trust pursues a triple bottom line of people, planet, and performance. It earns the funds to manage the Presidio by leasing homes and workplaces and offering visitor amenities.

The Presidio Trust is in the midst of a multi-decade effort to replace declining groves with young trees. To date, nearly 9,000 young trees have been planted across 53 acres. The forest and its rejuvenation are key themes in Andy Goldsworthy's Presidio works.

## ART IN THE PRESIDIO

The Presidio has welcomed a wide range of artists to bring their unique perspectives here to foster conversations about the place and create an inclusive environment for all. Since 2008, more than a dozen exhibitions have encouraged thousands of visitors to see the park through a new lens. Exhibits have included many ways for visitors to experience the Presidio, from self-guided exploration to curated programs to outdoor mural installations and performing arts.

**PRESIDIO  
TRUST**

[presidio.gov](http://presidio.gov)

**FOR-SITE FOUNDATION**  
*art about place*

[for-site.org](http://for-site.org)

# About the Artist

---



Andy Goldsworthy is one of the world's most renowned site-specific artists. In 2005, *Smithsonian Magazine* named him one of 35 people "who made a difference," saying that he uses "nature as his canvas [to create] work of transcendent beauty."

Born in 1956, Goldsworthy spent his childhood in Yorkshire, England. His work has been featured in a diverse array of open air spaces from the Yorkshire Dales to the North Pole and the Australian Outback. His works in the Bay Area include *Stone River* at Stanford University and *Drawn Stone* at the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park.

Goldsworthy draws his inspiration from place and creates art from the materials found close at hand, such as twigs, leaves, stones, snow, and ice, striving "to make connections between what we call nature and what we call man-made."

## Andy Goldsworthy + The Presidio

---

Renowned artist Andy Goldsworthy began his relationship with the Presidio when he first visited in 2006. As he discovered the Presidio's historic forest, architecture, and vistas, he became fascinated with the interplay of city and nature, people and place, the built environment and wild open spaces.

Goldsworthy has explored this complexity through four art installations — *Spire*, *Wood Line*, *Tree Fall*, and *Earth Wall* — created here between 2008 and 2014. The Presidio is now home to the largest collection of his works on public view in North America. The works, enjoyed by thousands of people each year, build on a long tradition of art within parks. They are fundamentally about place, derived from materials found here and designed to allow viewers to experience the familiar in a new way.

Goldsworthy's installations can be visited individually or enjoyed together via a three-mile hiking loop along the Presidio's trail network (view map on back page).

*I do love working in the same place, time and time again. I feel that I can make far stronger work. Spire that's exploring the sense of space. Wood Line [exploring] the surface. Tree Fall getting very subterranean. But that idea of getting underneath the surface - [Earth Wall] has pushed into territory that's new for me, and has opened up all sorts of new possibilities.*

*The human element in the Presidio is critical to how I think about the place. Because you know, my touch is an expression of the human presence in the place. What we're doing now is laying down another layer, upon which others will be laid in time, over ours. It's been a huge honor to be allowed to make so many works here, and not just to leave an object, but a layer.*

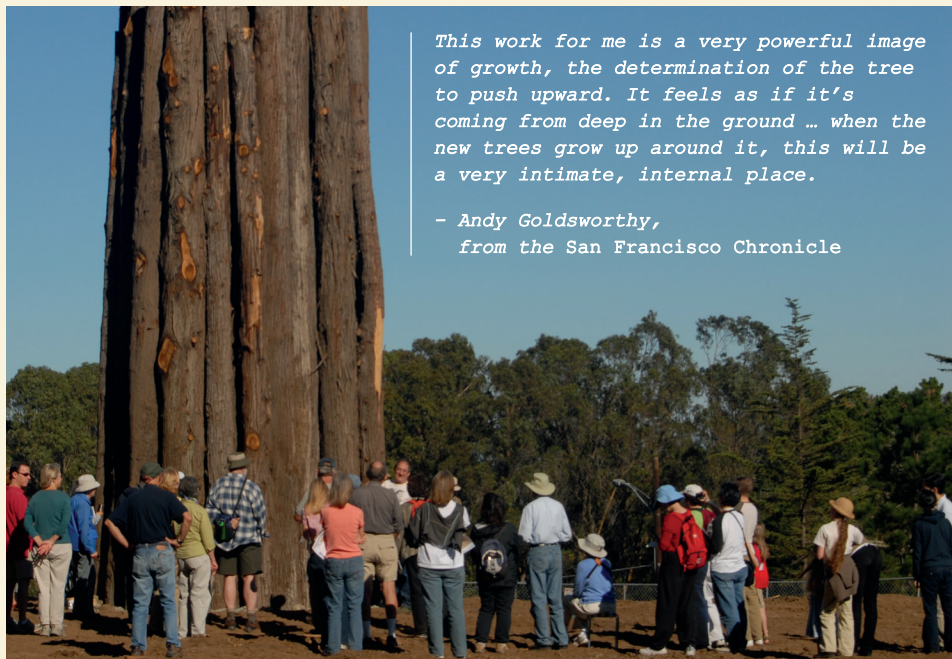
*- Andy Goldsworthy*



# Spire

*Spire* was Goldsworthy's first Presidio installation. The idea was sparked in 2006 when he visited the Presidio for the first time, learning about the park's historic forest and the Trust's effort to revitalize it for future generations.

Two years later, he returned to create *Spire*. Working with the Presidio Trust forestry crew, he selected 37 large Monterey cypress trunks from the declining trees felled at the site and meticulously fastened them together. *Spire* is 15 feet wide at its base and stretches 100 feet into the sky. It not only references the architecture of nearby trees but also buildings visible from the site, including the Transamerica Pyramid and church spires. The sculpture is fated to fade into the forest as young cypress trees planted at its base ultimately grow to obscure the piece — like the old forest welcoming the new. In 2020, *Spire* was damaged by fire and emerged changed but beautiful, as enduring as the forest itself.



*This work for me is a very powerful image of growth, the determination of the tree to push upward. It feels as if it's coming from deep in the ground ... when the new trees grow up around it, this will be a very intimate, internal place.*

— Andy Goldsworthy,  
from the San Francisco Chronicle

Located along the Bay Area Ridge Trail just north of the Presidio Golf Course Clubhouse, near the Arguello Gate (see map on reverse).  
Open to the public daily.

# Wood Line

In 2010 and 2011, Goldsworthy found inspiration in the Presidio's largest contiguous eucalyptus grove, located adjacent to the Presidio's oldest footpath, Lovers' Lane. In the late 1800s the Army planted eucalyptus with rows of Monterey cypress periodically interspersed. Conditions did not favor the cypress and they quickly died out, leaving open gaps in the forest floor.

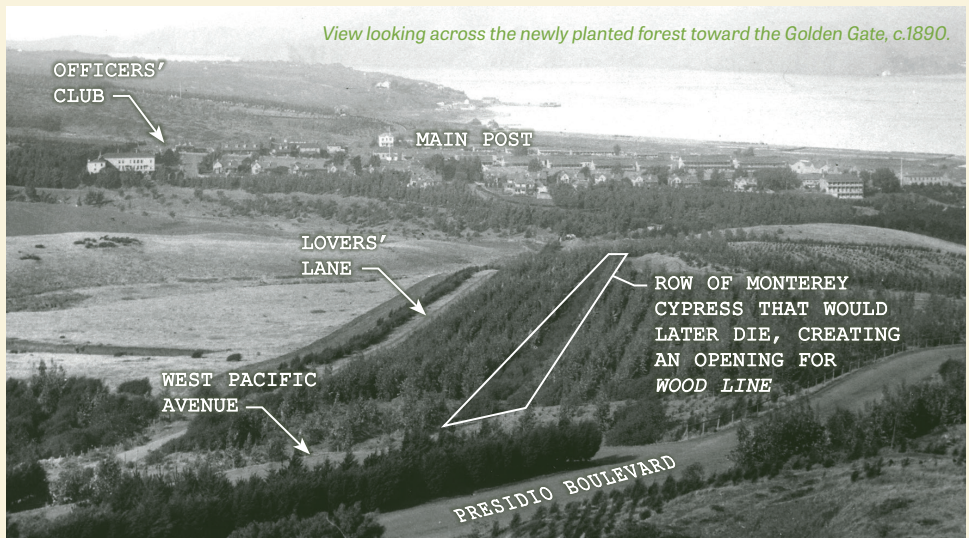


Goldsworthy filled one of these empty spaces with **Wood Line**, a quiet and graceful sculpture that extends more than 1,200 feet on the forest floor. Using eucalyptus branches sourced from the Presidio, the artist shaped a sinuous line that, in his words, "draws the place." Whereas **Spire** reaches upward, **Wood Line** flows elegantly into a valley in the Tennessee Hollow Watershed.

*Coming back [to the Presidio] is so important. It deepens my sense of the gradual transformation of the landscape. It's not just about drawing a line in the ground but seeing how its surface changes over time.*

- Andy Goldsworthy, from the New York Times

**Wood Line** invites interaction, and visitors can often be seen tracing the sculpture with their own steps. **Wood Line** will deteriorate over time and is not conceived as a permanent addition to the Presidio landscape.



Located along Lovers' Lane just north of West Pacific Avenue near the Presidio Gate (see map on reverse).  
Open to the public daily.



# Tree Fall



Created in 2013, *Tree Fall* was the first Presidio Goldsworthy installation to be created indoors.

Its backdrop is the historic Powder Magazine, constructed on the Main Post during the Civil War. The petite structure protected gun powder and munitions and is made up of four-foot-thick stone walls. Upon entering the structure there is a domed roof. The feature was built for the utilitarian purpose of minimizing damage in adjacent

areas in the event of an accidental explosion. One hundred and fifty years later, it inspired Goldsworthy's plans for *Tree Fall*. The building was used continuously by the Army until it departed the post in 1994. At the end of its military tenure, the building was used to store blank rounds for the daily 5 pm evening gun salute.

*Tree Fall* is comprised of a tree branch suspended from the domed roof so that the sculpture does not touch or alter the historic walls. The branch and ceiling were covered with clay, also from the Presidio, that dried and cracked into a beautiful organic pattern.

*My art is an attempt to reach beyond the surface appearance. I want to see growth in wood, time in stone, nature in a city and I do not mean its parks but a deeper understanding that a city is nature too – the ground upon which it is built, the stone with which it is made.*

– Andy Goldsworthy

The sculpture illustrates the relationship between the natural and built environments. When a visitor enters the chamber, illuminated only with natural light, the sculpture takes shape as one's eyes adjust. The feeling is one of entering not just a building, but a landscape.

*The Powder Magazine and surrounding American period structures, c.1900.*



*Tree Fall* is temporarily closed.  
Please check our website at [presidio.gov](http://presidio.gov) for updates.

# Earth Wall



*Earth Wall* was completed in 2014 inside the Hardie Courtyard at the historic Presidio Officers' Club. First established in 1776, the adobe walls of the Officers' Club stand testament to California's beginnings. It is the Presidio's oldest and most historic building. Today, it offers exhibitions on the Presidio's history open for free to the public. The building is also the backdrop for special events and celebrations, and a restaurant that welcomes the public daily.

*Earth Wall* explores what is happening beneath the surface. It is comprised of a six foot wide half sphere constructed of curved eucalyptus branches. The sphere was attached to the courtyard wall and then buried within a rammed earth wall. The artist then partially excavated the sphere, evoking the rich archaeological resources surrounding the site.

The rammed earth was made with excess soil taken from the courtyard site during renovation of the Officers' Club. A grove of historic eucalyptus can be seen in the distance behind the wall, serving as a backdrop for this poignant work.

*I feel all sorts of things when I stand in front of [Earth Wall]. And the people who've come in here and expressed opinions have also. One guy said this looks like the rendering of images of the core of the earth. And you know, it's the exact same thing that apparently is going on in the core of the earth, which is a beautiful idea - to go beyond the surface appearance of things. It's a very important one for me.*

*I know it's the [most recent] piece, but maybe it's where it all begins, with this really intense core - you know, what's happening here? What's happening in the Presidio?*

- Andy Goldsworthy



Located inside the Presidio Officers' Club, 50 Moraga Avenue (see map on reverse). Enter through the front door of the Presidio Officers' Club (when open) or through the Colibri Mexican Bistro entrance.

# Suggested Hiking Loop



## TRAIL LEGEND

- Pedestrian Paths & Trails
- Stairs

## DISTANCES

