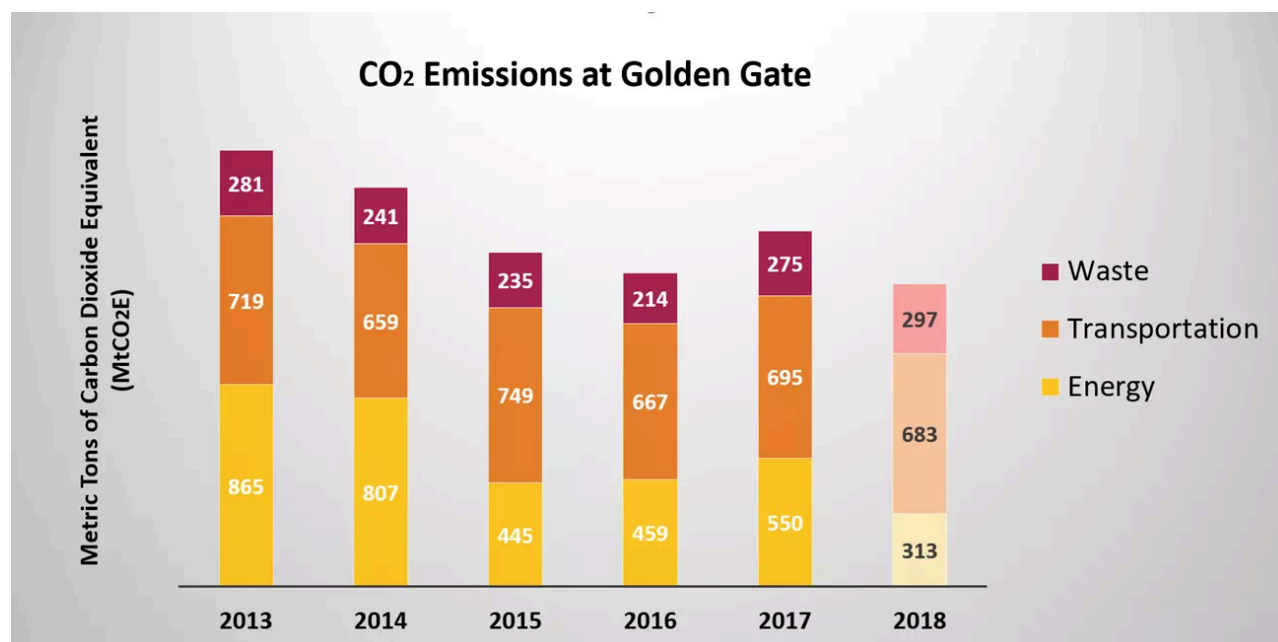




ARTICLE

Golden Gate's Journey to Carbon Neutral Park Operations

Alcatraz Island (<https://www.nps.gov/alca/>), Golden Gate National Recreation Area (<https://www.nps.gov/goga/>)



Golden Gate has been working to reduce its carbon footprint, mostly through generating and purchasing renewable electricity. Starting with 2018 emissions, the park has offset the remainder through the purchase of carbon offsets.

November 2019 - Golden Gate National Recreation Area has attained carbon-neutral park operations, arriving at a major milestone set forth in the park's [Climate Change Action Plan](#) (<https://www.nps.gov/goga/learn/nature/upload/2016-Climate-Change-Action-Plan-508.pdf>) a full year ahead of schedule! As of 2019, the park is using 100% renewable electricity and offsetting additional emissions from park operations by purchasing carbon offsets. Thus, the park currently contributes no net release of heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere.

The park achieved 100% renewable electricity through efforts like implementing a solar microgrid to power Alcatraz and shifting to Community Choice Aggregate utility providers like [Clean Power SF](#) (https://www.nps.gov/goga/learn/management/upload/2019-Sustainability-Newsletter_508-Final.pdf) and the [Marin NCE](#) (<https://www.mcccleanenergy.org/>). In terms of transportation, the park has improved the efficiency of its fleet by transitioning to electric and hybrid vehicles. However, the park still relies on natural gas, propane, and diesel for things like heavy equipment, heating, and backup generators. In addition, park operations still produce solid waste and wastewater that generate methane, a potent heat-trapping gas. In fiscal year 2018, the park began purchasing carbon offsets to balance out those emissions with funds from a grant from the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. Still, for Golden Gate's sustainability team, carbon offsets are not the ultimate solution. They are an interim measure as the park continues to strategize and seek out novel solutions to fully neutralize its carbon footprint.

Golden Gate's carbon footprint currently does not account for things like employee and visitor transportation to and from the park. If it did, visitors would represent the bulk of park's carbon footprint. But as the park continues to find ways to reduce its carbon footprint in-house, it aims to model sustainability for other parks, organizations, and the public so that its progress may ripple throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. Many actions may seem small on an individual scale, but when everyone in a park, organization, or

community chips in by taking more public transit or taking a few extra moments to sort their trash and recycling, it makes a powerful contribution.

Read more about Golden Gate's exciting milestone in the park's [Summer 2019 Sustainability Newsletter](https://www.nps.gov/goga/learn/management/upload/2019-Sustainability-Newsletter_508-Final.pdf) (https://www.nps.gov/goga/learn/management/upload/2019-Sustainability-Newsletter_508-Final.pdf).
[See more from the Bay Area Nature & Science Blog](https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/blog.htm).
(<https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/blog.htm>).



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