

War in the Pacific

Connecting Guam's Natural Resources with its Culture and History

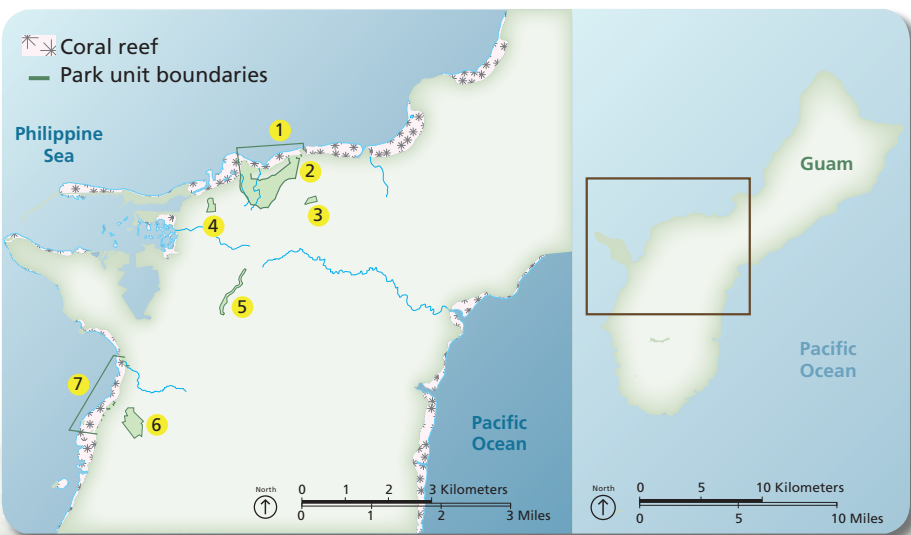
National Historical Park
Guam

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Park habitats support a diversity of life that has proven resilient to major change.

The historic sites preserved at War in the Pacific National Historical Park are inseparably tied to the natural resources of Guam and cultural traditions of the Chamorro people. Understanding how the reefs, grasslands, and forests were sustainably harvested and how they recovered from being a battlefield can help us preserve these resources for future generations.



Park units

- 1 Asan Beach 2 Asan Inland 3 Fonte Plateau 4 Piti Guns 5 Mt. Chachao/Mt. Tenjo 6 Mt. Alifan 7 Agat

Marine habitats in the park

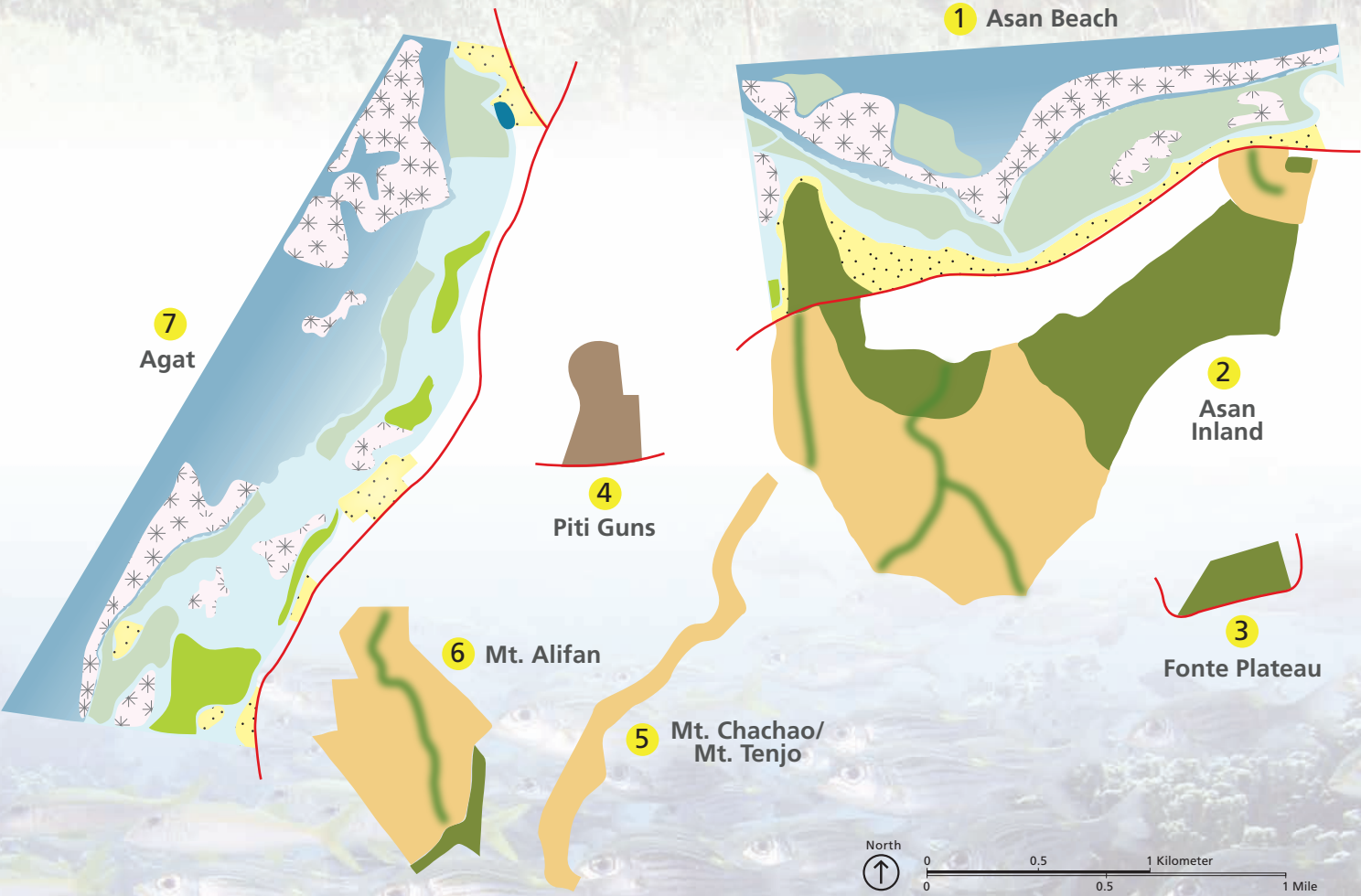
- coral
- seagrass
- macroalgae

Terrestrial habitats in the park

- coastal strand
- wetland
- ravine forest
- limestone forest
- mahogany forest
- savannah

Other areas

- reef flat
- reef front and deepwater slope
- road



- **WARNING:** Be aware that strong, unpredictable currents can occur on reef flats.
- **WARNING:** Do not disturb any ammunition you may find offshore - call 911 and report its location to a park ranger.

Rich marine life and unique forests are found in the park's many natural habitats.



Diverse and abundant corals lay the foundation for Guam's marine life.



Tropical seagrass beds provide specialized habitat for many marine animals.



Algae create energy at the base of the reef ecosystem.



Saltwater-tolerant, coastal strand (beach front) plants bridge the land and sea.



Native eels, shrimp, and gobies wind their way through Guam's streams.



Wetlands are prime habitat for culturally important species such as nipa palms.



Formed from ancient corals, this limestone forest is unique in Pacific national parks.



Due to annual fires, native forests have been replaced by savannah grasslands.



Mahogany trees, originally introduced to Guam for lumber, now form a tall forest.

Connecting Guam's Natural Resources with its Culture and History

For thousands of years, the Chamorro people have traditionally harvested Guam's abundant natural resources for food, medicine, and to build shelters and canoes.



Fishing for numerous varieties of reef fish was a communal activity and catches were shared within the village.



Now threatened with extinction, seeds of the fadang palm (*Cycas circinalis*) were pounded into flour.



Bikkia (*Bikkia tetrandra*), "torch weed," was broken off and set on fire to use as hand-held torches.



Foraging and fishing on the reef flats still provide a wealth of food including small fish, seaweed, octopus, and shellfish.



Aga'te'lang (*Eugenia palumbis*), a shrub found in limestone forests, has medicinal uses and wood used for tool handles.



Ifit (*Intsia bijuga*), Guam's territorial tree, has been overharvested due to its beautiful termite-resistant wood.

"Food plants that had nourished Chamorus over the centuries, some of which were the products of wild trees and vines, followed in later times by tubers of more refined nature... might have continued to nourish us for a longer period of time but for a great historical incident, the discovery of the western hemisphere."

—Palomo, José R. 1992 *Recollections of Olden Days*. Mangilao, MARC.

During World War II, Asan and Agat reef flats were ideal for amphibious landings of U.S. troops and supplies, while steep hills and cliffs above structured ensuing battles. Massive environmental changes occurred as reefs and hills became battlefields.



Gently sloping beaches and shallow reef flats allowed rapid landing of U.S. troops.



Hillsides and cliffs were used by the Japanese to build defensive structures.



"Nearly half my old company lies dead on the barren slopes of Chorito Cliff.... They attacked up a 60-degree slope, protected only by sword grass, and were met by a storm of grenades and heavy rifle, machine-gun, and mortar fire."

—recounting of U.S. troops' advance on Asan's steep, difficult terrain from Sgt. Cyril O'Brien, combat correspondent, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division.



Many battles took place along coastal areas, leaving visible scars on reef flats.

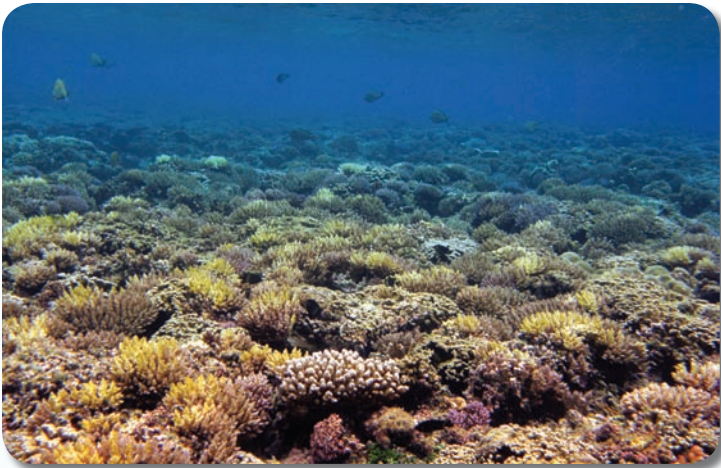


Vehicle and troop movements, fires, and trenches destroyed forests and savannas.



Explosions and bombs left huge craters both on shore and in the water.

The island's natural resources rebounded from the effects of war. They are vibrant once again, but continue to face man-made and environmental challenges.



Guam's reefs support a rich diversity of over 400 coral species and over 1,000 nearshore fish species.



Guam's native forests, adapted to withstand frequent typhoons, hide the scars of war.

How will modern development, wildfires, climate change, and the spread of non-native species alter our natural and cultural landscapes? It's up to everyone to protect and preserve Guam's heritage for future generations to enjoy!

