

TO: PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM: JULIE BUEREN, CHAIR

SUBJECT: PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

LOCATION: **East Bay Regional Park District Headquarters**
Board Room
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA

TIME: **REGULAR MEETING**

- 7:00 p.m. 1. Approval of Minutes – July 22, 2019
2. Introductions
3. Board Member Comments – Board Member Ayn Wieskamp
4. Foundation Update
5. Public Comments
- 7:15 p.m. 6. Presentations:
(I) a. Redwood Regional Park Renaming – Neoma Lavalle, Principal Planner
(I) b. Southern Las Trampas Land Use Plan Amendment – Kim Thai, Senior Planner
(I) c. Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve Land Use Plan Amendment –
Chantal Alatorre, Planner
(I) d. Measure FF Interpretive and Recreation Programming – Anne Kassebaum,
Chief of Interpretive and Recreation Services
- 8:45 p.m. 7. PAC Member Comments
8. Report from the Chair – Julie Bueren
9. Board Committee Reports
10. Old Business
11. New Business
12. Adjournment

Next Meeting: October 28, 2019

ATTACHMENTS

1. Redwood Regional Park Renaming
2. Southern Las Trampas LUPA Memo
3. Black Diamond Mines LUPA Memo
4. Measure FF Interp. and Rec. Programming Memo
5. Status of Recommendations
6. 2019 Work Plan Calendar
7. Articles & Correspondence

- (A) Action
(I) Information
(R) Recommendation

EXHIBITS

1. Redwood Regional Park Vicinity Map
2. Southern Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve
 - 2.1 Project Vicinity Map
 - 2.2 LUPA Project Components
3. Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve
 - 3.1 Easement & Legal Agreements Map
 - 3.2 Planning Areas Map

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Unapproved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
July 22, 2019

ATTENDING: Andrade, Best, Bueren, Brubaker, Corkin, Deschambault, Dieter, Godfrey, Gregory, Lacy, Nason, Rickard, Robinson, Skaredoff, Tsutsui, Williams, Yee

ABSENT: Burke, Ho, Obringer, Sanwong

STAFF: Pfuehler, Rasmussen, Barton, Bordtmann, Castile, Brede, Love, Kelchner, Cuero, Clay

BOARD: Dennis Waespi, Dee Rosario, Colin Coffey

PUBLIC: Mila Coffey, Kelly Abreu, Jeff Peters (Questa Engineering), Jana Sokale (Friends of Coyote Hills), Richard Bangert (Sierra Club), Carin High (Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge/Ohlone Audubon), Kwablah Attiogbe (Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District)

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Approval of the May 20, 2019 Minutes:** The May minutes were approved at the July 22, 2019 meeting. Motion made by PAC member Corkin. Seconded by PAC member Skaredoff. Passed unanimously.

Approval of the June 24, 2019 Minutes: The June minutes were approved with edits. Motion made by PAC member Williams. Seconded by PAC member Tsutsui. PAC members Bueren and Lacy abstained due to being absent.

2. **Introductions:** PAC Chair Bueren asked PAC members, staff and the public to introduce themselves.
3. **Board Member Comments:** Board Member Dennis Waespi reported he toured the parks on the 4th of July with Public Safety. He noted there were many people enjoying the parks. On July 13, the Park District held an event at the Concord Naval Weapons Station to celebrate the Navy's conveyance of 2,500 acres of land to the Park District. Waespi reported that at the July 16 Board meeting, the Board of Directors unanimously voted to discontinue the use of glyphosate at all picnic areas throughout the District and eliminate the use of glyphosate in developed park areas by the end of 2020.
4. **Foundation Update:** Erich Pfuehler, Government Affairs Manager gave the Foundation update. Pfuehler stated the 50th Anniversary Foundation Gala has sold out. Pfuehler said the Park District Survey in the field will be extended until after Labor Day. Of the 4,000 completed forms, 700 have submitted their e-mails to become members of the Regional Parks Foundation.
5. **Public Comments:**
Kelly Abreu passed a handout to the members regarding cleaning up sidewalks for Mission

Peak visitors on Antelope Drive in Fremont. He commented it took two years for the city to clear the sidewalk of grass and dirt for citizens to use.

6. Presentations:

(R) Coyote Hills Land Use Plan Amendment – Chris Barton, Environmental Programs Manager

Chris Barton, Environmental Programs Manager presented a PowerPoint about the Coyote Hills Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA). Barton explained Coyote Hills Regional Park is 1,200 acres. It is located in southern Alameda County in the City of Fremont along the San Francisco Bay Shoreline, and has been a park for about 50 years. In 2014, the Park District, through the Regional Parks Foundation, received its largest ever land donation, 296 acres, at Patterson Ranch protecting Coyote Hills Regional Park from the threat of urban development. This addition of land will expand the park by approximately 25 percent. The donation, valued at more than \$10 million, was the result of more than 25 years of negotiations between General Manager Robert E. Doyle and the Patterson family. Barton commented one of the main requirements of this donation from the Patterson family, which has a long ranching history, is for the agricultural heritage to be maintained for the future.

Barton thanked The Friends of Coyote Hills, Citizens' Committee to Complete the Refuge, and other local stakeholders actively involved in opposing multiple residential development proposals at Patterson Ranch. Barton stated recent projections show there will be a 30% population increase in the next 20 years. The boundary along the park is seeing more housing and commercial properties.

Barton explained proposed habitat restoration and enhancement types will include willow thicket, mixed riparian forest, oak savannah, seasonal wetlands and enhanced grasslands. Current existing site conditions include: 188.1 acres of ruderal grasslands, 0.96 acres of oak woodland, 11.6 acres of mixed willow riparian forest and 37.1 acres of freshwater seasonal wetlands.

Barton stated a flood management and habitat enhancement project covering about 100 acres in the southern part of the plan area will be constructed by Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The restored creek zone is a flood control area. Currently, the area being farmed is close to the Paseo Padre frontage area.

Barton gave a brief overview of the Coyote Hills LUPA which begins with the Master Plan and is a blueprint for how the park can be developed in the future. The current LUPA is still valid, but staff are working to amend the plan for the new 300-acre area. The other part of the project is the Park Development Plan, which is a companion piece to the LUPA. The Park Development Plan includes new facilities such as: a new entry kiosk, parking area, restroom and picnic facilities, entry area native landscaping, signage, over four miles of new hiking and multi-use trails, and wildlife observation platforms. It also includes approximately 150 acres of habitat protection, restoration and enhancement. Trail connections would be provided to the San Francisco Bay Trail, as well as a connection to the City's proposed Dumbarton Bridge to Quarry Lakes and other regional trails.

Bueren asked if the Board of Directors will make CEQA findings at the point when it comes before them for consideration. Barton replied they will consider certifying the EIR

and approving the project, as well as adopting CEQA findings, mitigation, monitoring and reporting programs.

PAC member Andrade asked for clarification about the south wetlands area. Andrade asked if Alameda County Flood Control's work is part of the project. Barton replied the LUPA allows Alameda County Flood Control to do their work as planned and use the area for wetland expansion. The area currently floods. Flood Control plans to make the depressions deeper for more flood control holding capacity. When overflows occur, the water will spill out into the channel then go into the larger marsh complex and eventually out to Alameda Creek.

Corkin asked if the LUPA calls for replacing the existing waste station, and if the replacement will be funded with Measure WW funds. Barton replied this LUPA includes a blueprint for coverage of any utility and sewage type lines which need to be installed along the main frontage near the Visitor Center. The waste station will be a different project. It may possibly become part of a Visitor Center study that is still in the feasibility stage.

Tsutsui inquired about the section in the LUPA, called Planning for Climate Change. It anticipates changes to shallow zone ground water levels and ground water salinity, as well as expected changes to rainfall and temperature. Tsutsui wondered about the ecological response to those changes and if the oak savannahs would convert to wetlands or will there be a need for future mapping of those regions. Barton replied the depth of ground water will fluctuate based on sea level rise. The District doesn't control recharge from the upper watershed. Staff has studied the topography and knows where the higher sitting lands are, which happens to be where the Oak Savannah is located. They are planned in areas that are higher, dryer and less susceptible to sea level rise. Barton continued the plant palette in the lower areas will include salt tolerant plants.

PAC member Yee asked about the new park entrance and how the decision was made to build a 20-car parking lot. Barton replied the smaller parking lot is to serve a farm stand. Staff anticipate most park users will want to park in the new main staging area where there is a larger parking lot with more amenities and the nearby Tuibun Trail. Yee said many visitors park outside of the park to avoid parking fees. Barton replied the LUPA doesn't speak to parking lot charges. It is a conceptual layout for the parking lot, but it allows operational staff and the Board of Directors to decide if parking fees will be charged.

PAC member Deschambault asked if there are any chemical hotspots on the property. Barton replied there are some residual agricultural chemical traces. They were reviewed through the EIR process and a course of action has been identified. It is primarily an ecological health risk. Mitigation measures are identified to make sure those levels are not going to be a problem for ecological receptors.

Williams asked about the agricultural operation. He wondered what will be grown there and if it would be a concessionaire to the District. Barton replied there is an existing lease with an agricultural operator. It is certified sustainable organic farming. It is spelled out in the LUPA and will not be the typical industrial farming operation.

PAC member Nason asked if anyone has expressed concern about the contractor's house. Barton replied it is within the City of Fremont's jurisdiction and falls under their historic ordinance. Once the project is ready to proceed forward, District staff will need to go before the city to seek approval from their historic resources commission.

Skaredoff asked if there will be restrictions on where park users can go based upon some of the cultural resource areas. Barton replied the trails have been laid out to avoid the sensitive areas.

PAC member Brubaker asked if there is a strategy for off leash dogs. Barton replied under the current LUP and operation at Coyote Hills, dogs are allowed on leash in the areas specified. The rest of the park, since it is mostly sensitive habitat, are fully protected areas and not open to humans or dogs.

Public Comments

Kelly Abreu, Mission Peak Conservancy commented about parking. He suggested the District should charge to park at Mission Peak, but not at Coyote Hills.

Carin High, Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge and Ohlone Audubon Society commented these organizations have fought to protect the lands at Patterson Ranch for two important reasons: (1) to protect the existing parklands and wildlife from aversive tracts of adjacent development, and (2) to protect the incredible opportunity to expand and restore the historic Willow groves that extend from within the park to Patterson Slough all the way to Ardenwood Farm. This is a significant area in terms of nesting, songbirds, resident birds, other animals and neotropical migrating songbirds. The major concern is the negative impacts of human disturbance to wildlife species and wildlife community composition. Their recommendation is the parking be moved to the south of Patterson Ranch Road to serve as a buffer.

Richard Bangert, Sierra Club suggested carbon sequestering crops should be farmed rather than planting and harvesting row crops. Crops that are deep rooted and aren't completely harvested or fruit trees would be better for sequestering carbon.

Jana Sokale, Friends of Coyote Hills and Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge stated she would like to see the special protection features designation over the entire restored area, not just Patterson slough as it exists. She suggested the Patterson Slough Lookout Trail and Observation Platform be eliminated from the LUPA.

Recommendation: Motion made by PAC member Dieter to recommend the Coyote Hills Regional Park Land Use Plan Amendment as presented by staff move forward to the Board Executive Committee. Seconded by PAC member Rickard. The recommendation was approved unanimously.

(I) b. Measure CC – Jeff Rasmussen, Assistant Finance Officer

Erich Pfuehler, Government Affairs Manager provided background information on Measure CC. He stated a decision was made by the Board of Directors to include all 83 projects in the ballot measure as voted on by the public. Those 83 projects are very specific, and can

only be changed by a vote of the Board of Directors. Measure CC is in its last year of funds, \$3.2 million per year, much of it has already been spent, so there is very limited flexibility with the remaining funds that will be spent this year and a little bit into next year.

Jeff Rasmussen, Assistant Finance Officer offered to answer any questions about specific projects. PAC member Yee recommended staff include the remaining balance of unspent funds in the document.

Williams asked about a comment from the last PAC meeting about monies being distributed to serve low-income areas. Rasmussen replied this list was approved by the voters in 2004 and focuses on the parks in the most urbanized part of the Park District. Pfuehler added there was funding added in Measure FF for naturalists and recreation services to be based at Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline and Point Pinole, to purposely serve the disadvantaged communities.

Nason stated the intent was not to affect the Measure CC spending plan, but to remind the Board that this is an ongoing concern.

Recommendation: This was an informational item only.

7. PAC Member Comments

PAC member Rickard attended the Concord Hills Conveyance event. It was the largest, most exciting event he'd been to in a long time at the Park District.

Deschambault attended the Board of Directors meeting. She was impressed with how effective the Board is in handling and acting on issues.

PAC member Tsutsui attended the Concord Hills Conveyance event. He commented about wildfire smoke and staffs' exposure to it. He said there was confusion about whether there is a policy to protect worker's health and safety. Corkin replied it has been raised at a Board meeting. She believes it is being addressed by both the Board and staff. Board Member Waespi replied he shared in the PAC member's concerns and stated staff and Board members are working on this issue.

PAC member Best said it was great to attend the Concord Hills Conveyance event. She is pleased to see the project moving forward.

Board Member Rosario said he was impressed with the PAC members and the questions they've asked at this meeting.

PAC member Robinson attended the Concord Hills Conveyance event. She also attended the Board Field trip to Bay Point Regional Shoreline and learned about the restoration efforts there.

PAC member Skaredoff stated he is a commissioner on Contra Costa County LAFCo and they approved an out of service extension for water to install flush toilets at Bay Point Regional Shoreline. He also attended the Concord Hills Conveyance event and commented it was a great event.

Board Member Coffey thanked the PAC members for inviting the Board members to the meeting and barbecue.

PAC member Nason commented she attended the Concord Hills Conveyance event. She is pleased about the partnership with the people who work to educate the public about what happened at Port Chicago and the historic significance.

PAC member Williams mentioned he bought his granddaughter a bike and has been riding the Iron Horse Trail. He commented during the weekend it is extremely crowded at the Alamo/Danville portion of the Iron Horse Trail. He suggested it would be good to put extra signage out on the weekends.

8. **Report from Chair** – Bueren said during her vacation she visited parks in other countries.
9. **Board Committee Reports** – none.
10. **Old Business** – none.
11. **New Business** – none.
12. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

1. The PAC approved the May 20, 2019 minutes.
2. The PAC approved the June 24, 2019 minutes with edits.
3. The PAC recommended the Coyote Hills Regional Park Land Use Plan Amendment as presented by staff move forward to the Board Executive Committee.

PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting of September 23, 2019

TO: Parks Advisory Committee

**STAFF REPORT
PREPARED BY:** Neoma Lavalle, Principal Planner and Edward Willis, Acting Planner

SUBJECT: Renaming Redwood Regional Park

Neoma Lavalle, Principal Planner and Edward (Eddie) Willis, Acting Planner, will make a presentation on this agenda item.

BACKGROUND

The Park District proposes to rename Redwood Regional Park, an 1,833-acre regional park located in the Oakland hills, to Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park. The proposed name is in recognition of founding Park District Director, Dr. Aurelia Isabel Henry Reinhardt and her substantial contributions to the formation of the Park District.

Early History

Dr. Reinhardt had a long history of public service and advocacy for human and environmental rights. Born in San Francisco in 1877, Dr. Reinhardt grew up in Berkeley and graduated in 1898 from the University of California with a degree in English, after which she earned a Ph.D. literature from Yale University in 1905. In 1916 she was elected president of Mills College in Oakland - the only women's college on the west coast - and served there until 1943, building opportunities for women and lifting the school's reputation through two World Wars and the Great Depression.

As the United States celebrates the 100th anniversary of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment (1919-1920) to the U.S. Constitution, it should be noted that Dr. Reinhardt advocated for women's suffrage. As Mills College's President, she directed and starred in her school's performance of British suffragist Cecily Andrews' play *How the Vote Was Won* to Bay Area audiences of nearly 20,000, which was said to have swayed public opinion in favor of the women's suffrage movement. Dr. Reinhardt was also very active in Berkeley's College Women's Equal Suffrage Association and was part of the celebration in Sacramento after the California Legislature ratified the 19th Amendment on November 1, 1919.

In 1934 Dr. Reinhardt delivered the main address at the Garden Club of America Grove dedication at Humboldt Redwoods State Park for long-time family friend Mrs. (Jean) McDuffie who was the California Garden Club Chairwoman. Dr. Reinhardt captured the majesty of the Redwoods, and her spirituality, at that dedication:

“So our mountain slopes and canyons in California were dedicated to the Creator himself when [H]e caused to be sown the seeds of these great trees. We are here to be dedicated to a timely and significant task. Our dedication should be to an understanding of that great Architect and Builder whose master plan no human draftsman yet wholly comprehends, whose magnificent landscapes no mortal apprentice has yet proved capable of preserving in their pristine loveliness, or of rebuilding when man has blasted them.”
-Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt, May 20, 1934

She was involved in various environmental, civil rights, and religious organizations and was recognized as “one of ten outstanding women of 1940” by the publication *American Women* and as *California State Mother* in 1946 by the Golden Rule Foundation.

Park District Contributions

Dr. Reinhardt was one of five original Board members voted to represent the newly founded East Bay Regional Park District in 1934, a role in which she served until 1945. During her tenure, the Park District negotiated its first land purchase from East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) for \$656,000 for upper Wildcat Canyon, Temescal, and Round Top (which would later become Tilden, Temescal, and Sibley parks, respectively) allowing ownership and development of the Park District’s first three parks. Negotiations with EBMUD continued, and the Park Board approved a resolution on January 10, 1939 to purchase the Bridges Property for \$246,277 and resolved to open Redwood Park a year later on February 29, 1940. That same year the Redwood Park Master Plan map designated its redwood grove as the “Aurelia Reinhardt Redwoods” and this designation was included on park maps until 1961.

History of Naming Process

There were efforts to recognize Dr. Reinhardt’s connection to Redwood Regional Park dating back to the 1940s. The 1940 Master Plan map for Redwood Regional Park labeled the central 500-acre redwood grove the Aurelia Reinhardt Redwoods. A Redwood Park map from the 1950s shows the grove labeled as the Aurelia Henry Reinhardt Redwoods. Sometime after 1961 park maps were no longer printed with Dr. Reinhardt’s name attached. An attempt to correct this error came in 2004, during the Park District’s 70th anniversary, when the Park District and the Mills Alumni Association rededicated the redwood grove with a sign that displays “Aurelia Henry Reinhardt Redwood Grove”. In recent years, staff has heard from members of the Park District’s Board of Directors and the public to formally name the entire park after Dr. Reinhardt.

Property Background

Redwood Regional Park was opened in 1940 as the fourth established Regional Park. On September 24, 1951, a recently purchased 82-acre section of Redwood Regional Park was formally named Thomas J. Roberts Recreational Area after contemporary Board Member Thomas Roberts. Today, Roberts is operated as a separate park unit, but if considered with Redwood, both parks saw a combined 1,360,075 visitors in 2018. Redwood Regional Park is one of the most-visited parks in the Park District and is a destination for locals and world travelers who want to experience California’s state tree - *Sequoia sempervirens* - in its native habitat. In addition to native redwoods, the park contains oak woodland, chaparral, and rare serpentine grassland habitats.

RECOMMENDATION

None. This is an informational item.

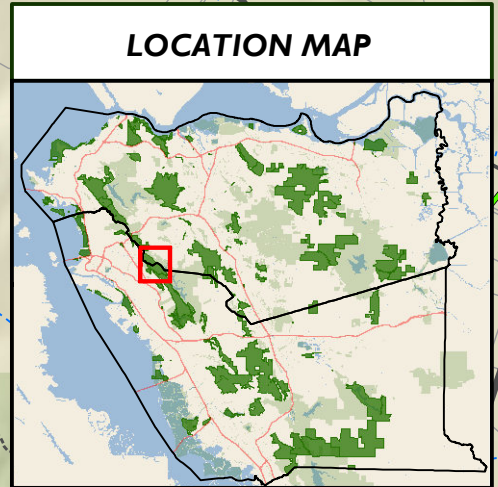
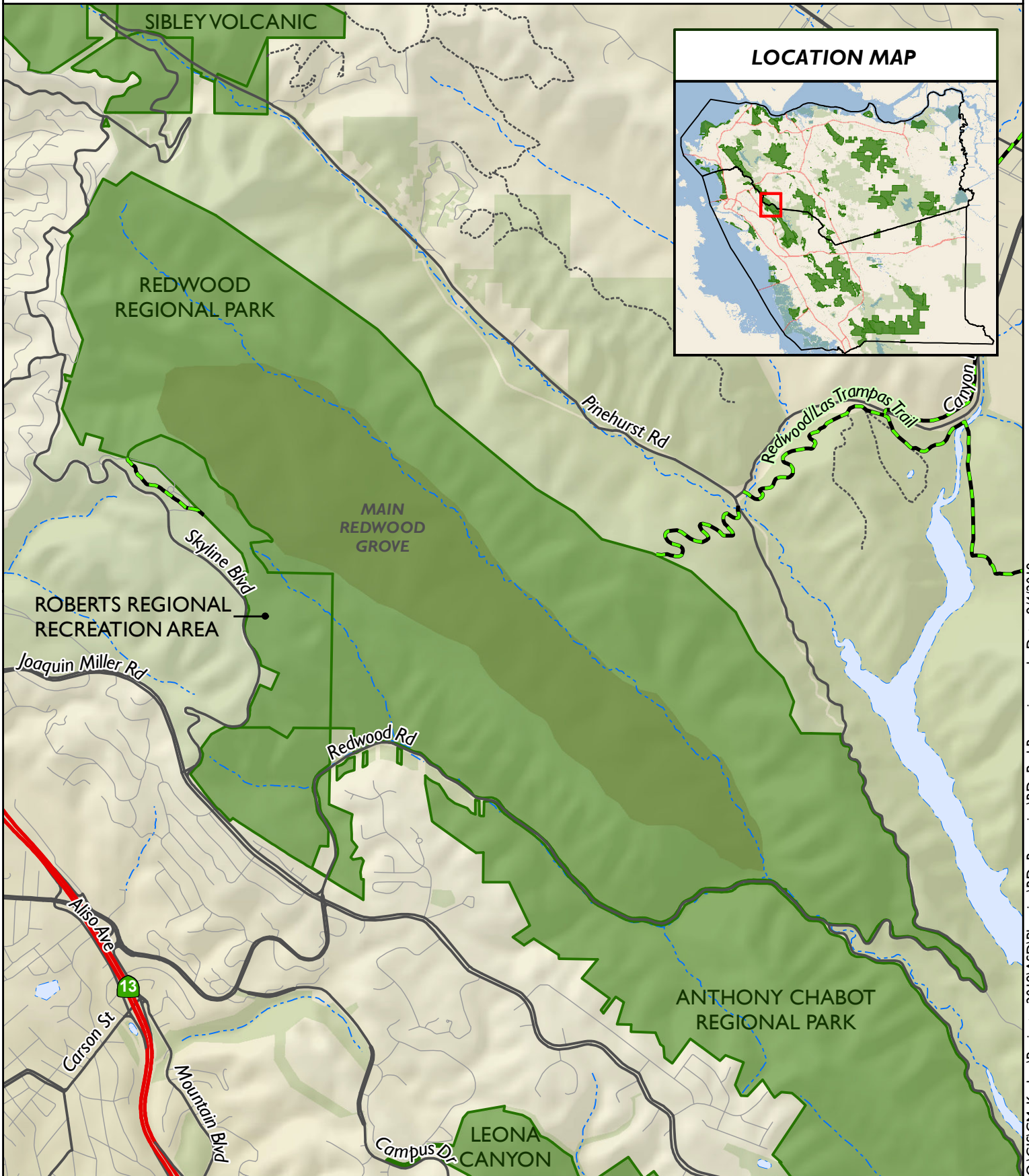
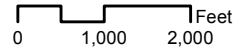
EXHIBITS

Exhibit I: Redwood Regional Park vicinity



Redwood Regional Park

Proposed Park Renaming
Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park



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PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting of September 23, 2019

TO: Parks Advisory Committee

**STAFF REPORT
PREPARED BY:** Kim Thai, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Southern Las Trampas Land Use Plan Amendment

Kim Thai, Senior Planner, will make a presentation on this agenda item.

BACKGROUND

The East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) is preparing a Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) for the southern portion of Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve to update the 1993 Land Use Development Plan, consistent with the Park District's 2013 Master Plan. A Focused Environmental Impact Report (Focused EIR) is the environmental document being prepared to support the LUPA and comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Project Location and Site Conditions: The southern portion of Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve is located in south-central Contra Costa County, on the western periphery of the San Ramon Valley within the City of San Ramon, Town of Danville, and unincorporated Contra Costa County. The project area is known for its steep topography and diverse natural resources. The steep and rugged hills with their many side ridges and valleys create a complex habitat for native species and provide a challenging experience for park visitors. The geographical center of the project area is Las Trampas Ridge, which rises 700 feet above Bollinger Canyon Road. In addition to the rugged topography, the project area includes numerous rock outcrops.

The project area encompasses a variety of habitats which support an array of resident and migratory species. Habitats within the project area include chaparral, riparian corridors, grasslands, rocky outcrops, oak savannah, and ponds. Chaparral habitat suitable for state and federal threatened species Alameda whipsnake encompasses a large part of the project area. Areas within the proposed project have been identified as breeding habitat for federally threatened California red-legged frogs and California tiger salamander.

Project Area: The project area consists of five parcels that will be appended to Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve and includes four that the Park District currently owns: Peter's Ranch, Chen, Elworthy, and Podva. The Elworthy parcel is currently open to the public, and park visitors can access the Elworthy parcel from a 0.5-mile trail connector through a 182-acre Elworthy private property scenic easement. A 12-car staging area on the Elworthy scenic easement was constructed by the developer prior to Park District acceptance of the Elworthy parcel and was opened to the public in 2015. The Peter's Ranch, Chen, and Podva parcels are currently in landbank status and are not open to the public. There is a 30-acre conservation

easement on the 96-acre Podva Parcel. The Faria parcel will be dedicated to the Park District as mitigation for a residential development project, with 136 acres of the 141-acre Faria dedication to be under a conservation easement. The long-term management plans associated with the conservation easements placed on these properties will be incorporated and referenced in the LUPA.

Proposed Project: The primary goal for this LUPA is to provide a framework for natural resource management for the project area and associated public staging/access and trails in the southern portion of Las Trampas. Proposed project elements would include the following actions:

- Formally append approximately 756 acres of land into Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve, acknowledging that 232 acres of this area is already opened for public use. Recommend 141 acres to remain in landbank until it is safe and suitable for public access.
- Designate and develop a staging area on the Chen property to serve as the southern gateway to Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve, with all-weather parking to accommodate up to 25 vehicles, benches, restroom, trail connections, information signs and landscaping.
- Designate and develop one 1.1-mile all-weather access road to allow pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian and emergency vehicle and maintenance access into Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve from Bollinger Canyon Road via the Chen property to connect to existing roads and trails into the open parkland.
- Designate and develop one 0.8-mile loop trail on the Chen property from the proposed staging area, to be further evaluated in future planning.
- Designate and develop one 0.9-mile trail connecting the proposed 1.1-mile access road to the Las Trampas Ridge, to be further evaluated in future planning.
- Designate and develop one 0.8-mile trail connecting the Podva property to the Las Trampas Ridge Trail.
- Provide seeps, ponds, and wetland restoration and enhancements within the Chen property and Las Trampas open parkland.
- Designate a 0.5-mile access road as a natural surface, multi-use trail to allow pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian access into Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve from the Podva property.
- Develop one 0.8-mile natural surface, multi-use trail segment of the Calaveras Ridge Trail on the Peter's Ranch property to allow pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian, connecting future City of San Ramon public trails on an adjacent property to existing trails on the Elworthy property.
- Designate over 99 percent of the project area as a natural unit, with less than 1 percent as a recreation/staging unit.

Ongoing community outreach occurred in 2017, and input from a community meeting that served as a CEQA scoping meeting on June 7, 2017 was considered during the initial planning phase and helped to direct the level of environmental analysis for the project. Between 2017 and 2019, Park District staff hired consultants to conduct preliminary studies and analyses, the results of which informed the Park District's recommendations in the Southern Las Trampas LUPA. In May 2018, the Park District entered into a contract with LSA Associates to prepare the Focused EIR.

On August 1, 2019, Park District staff published a Notice of Preparation and accepted public comments over a 30-day public review period.

Staff's presentation will provide information to the Board Executive Committee regarding the LUPA recommendations, public input regarding the LUPA recommendations, status of the LUPA and Focused EIR, and schedule overview.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required from the Parks Advisory Committee. At a later date, the Draft LUPA and Draft Focused EIR will be brought before this committee for consideration and approval to forward to the Board of Directors.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 2.1: Southern Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve Project Vicinity

Exhibit 2.2: Southern Las Trampas Land Use Plan Amendment Project Components

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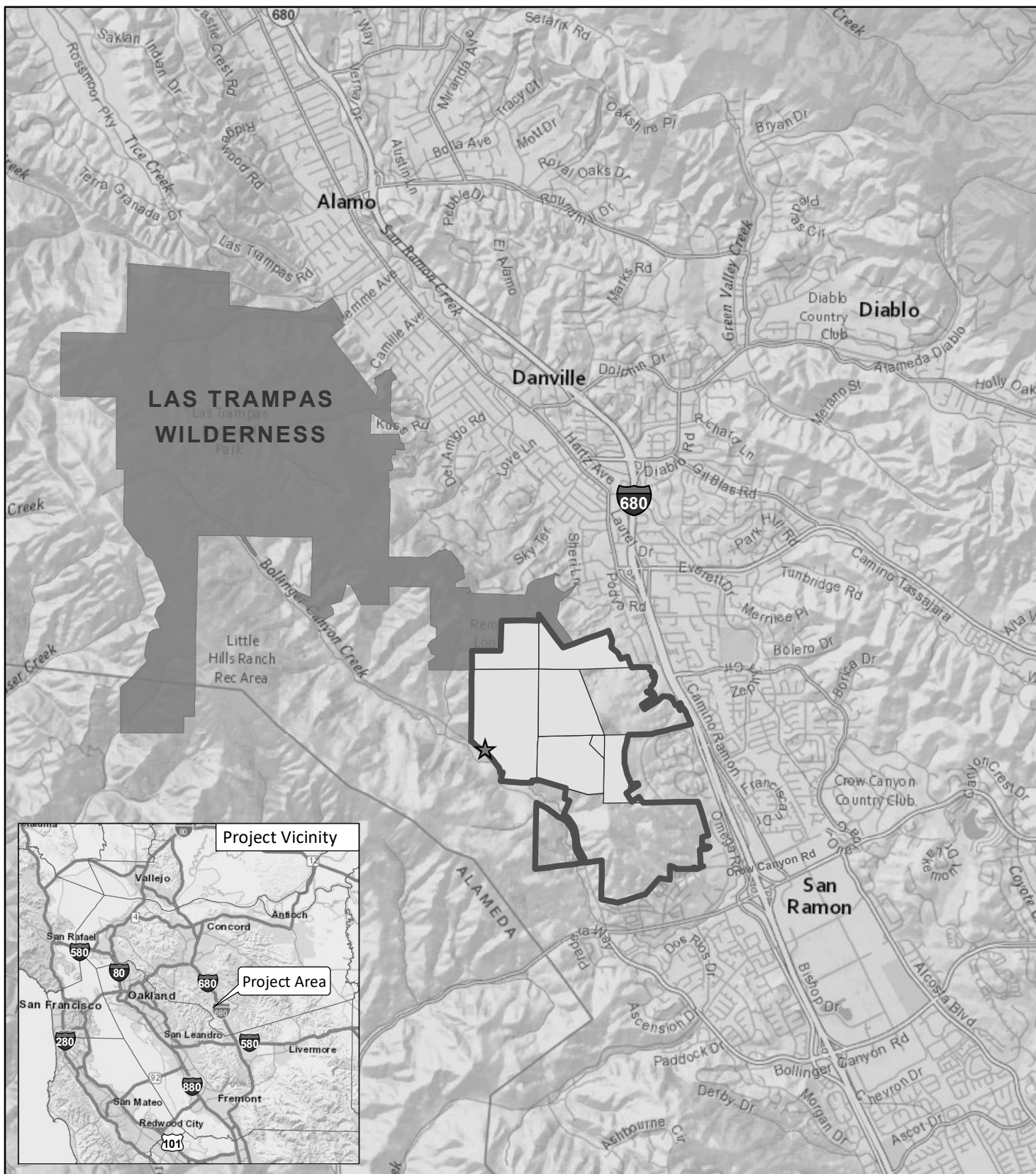



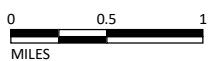


FIGURE 1-1

LSA

LEGEND

-  Project Area
-  EBRPD Lands
-  Chen Staging Area



SOURCE: Esri National Geographic (2018) and World Street Map (2018) Services.

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Southern Las Trampas LUPA NOP/IS
Project Location and Regional Vicinity Map

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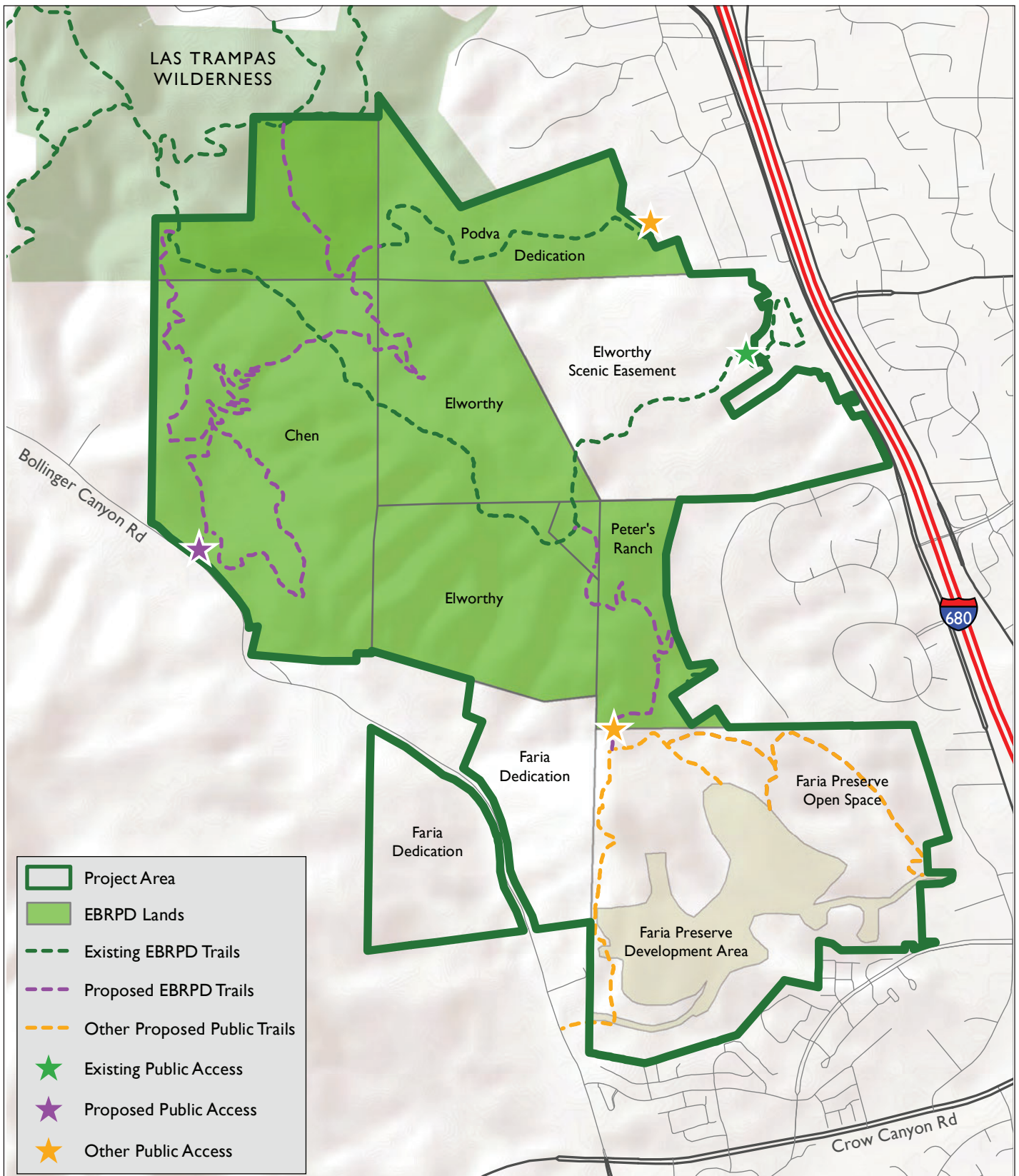


FIGURE 1-2

LSA

NOT TO SCALE



SOURCE: EBRPD, 2019.

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Southern Las Trampas LUPA NOP/IS
Project Area, Trail Connections, and Access Points

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PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting of September 23, 2019

TO: Parks Advisory Committee

**STAFF REPORT
PREPARED BY:** Chantal Alatorre, Planner

SUBJECT: Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve Land Use Plan Amendment

Chantal Alatorre, Planner, will make a presentation on this agenda item.

BACKGROUND

The East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) is preparing a Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) for Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve to update the 1977 Land Use Development Plan, consistent with the Park District's 2013 Master Plan. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the environmental document being prepared to support the LUPA and comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Project Location and Site Conditions: Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve is located in eastern Contra Costa County, in the northern foothills of the Diablo Valley Range, immediately south of the cities of Antioch and Pittsburg and east of the City of Clayton's urban limit line. This expanse of protected open space now forms an almost six-mile wide block of open space that preserves one of the East Bay's largest intact ecosystems of native biota and provides habitat for resident and migratory wildlife. The habitat value of the preserve is further increased by its connection to over 76,000 acres of public land, forming the largest contiguous open space in the East Bay. The planning area comprises a dramatic landscape of high ridgelines and canyons covered with grasses, shrubs, chaparral and oak woodlands that contain natural resources recognized statewide. The planning area also contains significant cultural and geologic resources. Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve has a rich cultural history and the Mount Diablo Coal Field is listed on the state and national historic registers. Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve is located within an area that has been designated a high priority preservation area by the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (Conservancy), which is a partner with the Park District in this project (Exhibit 1).

Project Area: The LUPA outlines the project area as two separate planning areas: Northern and Southern Planning Areas – see Exhibit 2. The Southern Planning Area, also known as Clayton Ranch, comprises 4,199-acres open space land acquired over twenty years in 12 separate land transactions – eight of which were purchased in partnership with the Conservancy and are subject to their guidelines. There are two conservation easements totaling 188-acres within the Southern Planning Area and all of the Southern Planning Area is currently in Landbank status. The Northern Planning Area consists of six landbank parcels (Arata Ranch, Suncrest, Seeno, Newry, Panhandle, Thomas Central) that total 803 acres that will be appended to the 4,461 acres of existing open Parkland. Thomas Central was purchased in partnership with the Conservancy and is subject to

their guidelines. There are two conservation easements recorded in the Northern Planning Area totaling 290.15-acres.

Proposed Project: The purpose of the LUPA is to set forth a framework for land use and management that maintains a balance between conserving the planning area's significant resources and providing the public and staff with improved access and facilities and increased opportunities for low-intensity recreational use and interpretation. The following summarizes key recommendations of the LUPA:

- Open an additional 5,002 acres of land to public use, bringing the total acres of parkland in the planning area to 9,643.
- Establish the 5,444-acre Northern Planning Area and the 4,199-acre Southern Planning Area as separate park units.
- Designate over 99 percent of the Regional Preserve as a natural unit.
- Establish the Arata Ranch Recreation/Staging Unit as a destination facility in the Northern Planning Area to provide parking, public and staff facilities, and interpretive programs to enhance visitors' experience and contribute to environmental and historical education. Repurpose buildings for staff and interpretive use while maintaining the integrity of the Arata Ranch Historic District.
- Designate and open one access area/off-street parking and three trailhead/multi-use entry point in the Northern Planning Area to the public.
- Designate and develop the Clayton Recreation/Staging Unit located off Marsh Creek Road in the Southern Planning Area.
- Designate and open one access area/off-street parking and two trailhead/multi-use entry point in the Southern Planning Area to the public.
- Develop a pedestrian crossing of Marsh Creek Road to connect the Southern Planning Area and Mount Diablo State Park
- Develop the Over the Rainbow Backpack Camp in the Southern Planning Area.
- When built-out, the planning area will total almost approximately 72 miles of publicly accessible roads and trails including approximately 51 miles in the Northern Planning Area and approximately 21 miles in the Southern Planning Area. There are now more than 47 miles of trail now open to the public in the Northern Planning Area.

In June 2017, Park District staff published a Notice of Preparation and accepted public comments over a 30-day public review period. A community meeting that served as a CEQA scoping meeting was held on June 14, 2017. Between 2017 and 2019, Park District staff has coordinated with stakeholders and partner agencies to establish Park District's recommendations in the Black Diamond Mines LUPA.

Staff's presentation will provide information to the Park Advisory Committee regarding the LUPA recommendations, public input regarding the LUPA recommendations, status of the LUPA and EIR, and schedule overview.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required from the Park Advisory Committee. At a later date, the Draft LUPA and Draft EIR will be brought before this committee for consideration and approval to forward to the Board Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 3.1: Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve Easement and Legal Agreement

Exhibit 3.2: Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve Planning Areas

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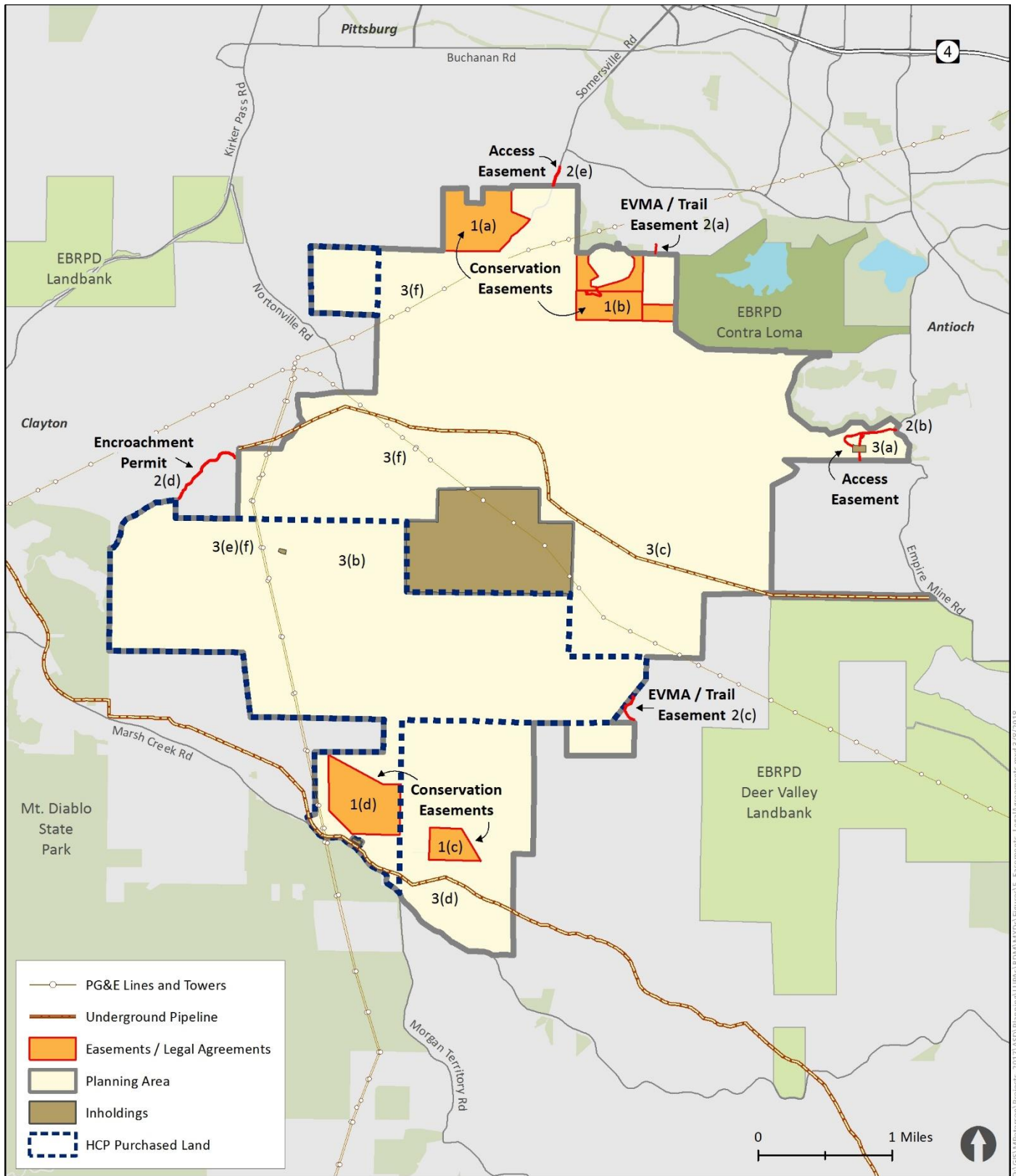


EXHIBIT I: BLACK DIAMOND MINES REGIONAL PRESERVE EASEMENT AND LEGAL AGREEMENTS

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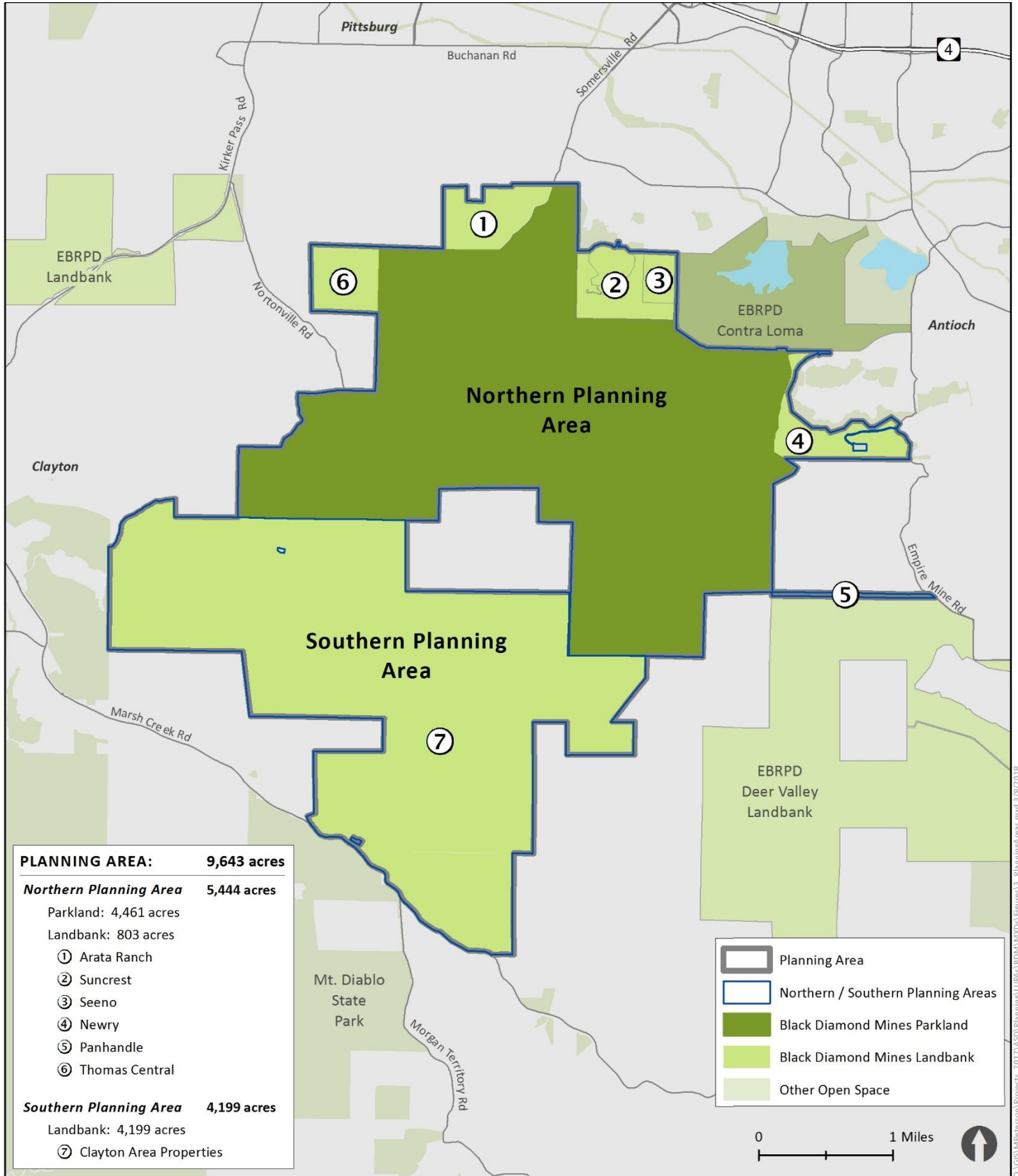


EXHIBIT 2: BLACK DIAMOND MINES REGIONAL PRESERVE PLANNING AREAS

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ATTACHMENT 4

DATE: September 23, 2019
TO: Park Advisory Committee
FROM: Anne Kassebaum, Chief of Interpretive and Recreation Services
SUBJECT: Measure FF Interpretive and Recreation Programming

Anne Kassebaum, Chief of Interpretive and Recreation Services, will provide an overview of programs and services provided in Measure FF areas. These will include: Interpretive/Environmental Education, Outdoor Recreation, Community Outreach/Engagement, Regional in Nature offerings and programs for community groups and volunteers. The District also works in partnership with the Regional Parks Foundation who generously provide grant funds to support the District's outreach efforts.

This presentation will highlight the following programs: Teen Eco Action, Community Outreach Outdoor Program (CO-OP) and Park'n It Day Camp. These programs also connect local community partnership organizations, who serve traditionally under-resourced communities, such as: Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP), Rich City Rides, Brothers on the Rise and YES, Nature to Neighborhoods.

In 2018, voters in western Alameda and Contra Costa counties overwhelmingly passed Measure FF with an 85.6% vote. Measure FF includes a variety of environmental education projects that will help communities to experience nature nearby, including interpretive and recreational staff at regional shoreline facilities, Redwood interpretation, and year-round operations at Crab Cove Visitor Center. Measure FF also provides for new interpretive/educational programs at Point Pinole and MLK Jr. Shorelines.

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PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2019 Status of Recommendations

The following is a record of items, which have come from the PAC during the year beginning January 1, 2019.

1. The PAC recommended the Bridge Yard concessionaire agreement move forward to the Board of Directors, but did not make a recommendation for a specific concessionaire.

(January 28, 2019)

STATUS: The Board selected Oakland Venue Management as the preferred concessionaire to operate the Bridge Yard Building.

(Resolution No.: 2019-04-075)

2. The PAC recommended the Miller Knox Regional Shoreline Plan as presented by staff move forward to the full Board.

(February 25, 2019)

STATUS: The Board voted to approve the Miller Knox Regional Shoreline Plan.

(Resolution No.: 2019-03-056)

3. The PAC recommended the Special Use Agreement for the Portuguese Water Dog Club move forward to the Board of Directors.

(May 20, 2019)

STATUS: The Board voted to approve the Special Use Agreement for the Portuguese Water Dog Club

(Resolution No.: 2019-06-126)

4. The PAC recommended to the Board of Directors approval of the proposed Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)

(June 24, 2019)

STATUS: The Board of Directors voted to approve the 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

(Resolution No.: 2019-07-175)

5. The PAC recommended to the Board of Directors approval of the overall Measure CC 2020 Budget and Spending Plan, with a request that attention be paid to providing access to low income communities within the Measure CC area.
(June 24, 2019)

STATUS: The Board voted to approve the overall Measure CC 2020 Budget and Spending Plan.

(Resolution No.: 2019-07-174)

6. The PAC recommended to the Coyote Hills Regional Park Land Use Plan Amendment move forward to the Board Executive Committee.
(July 22, 2019)

STATUS: The Board voted to approve the Coyote Hills Regional Park Land Use Plan Amendment.

(Resolution No.: 2019-09-225)

PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2019 WORK PLAN

JAN 28	FEB 25	MAR 25	APR 22	MAY 20	JUN 24	JULY 22	SEP 23	OCT 28	NOV 25	DEC 9
<p>Director Rosario</p> <p>Grazing Review and Grassland Management (I) – Defreese</p> <p>Infrastructure Study report (I) – Barrington, Rasmussen</p> <p>Work Plan (R) – Buren, Pfluehler</p> <p>Review Bridge Yard RFP (R) – Waluch</p>	<p>Director Lane</p> <p>Year in Review (I) – Doyle</p> <p>Community Relations Plan (I) – Koh, Johnson</p> <p>Miller-Knox LUPA (R) – Hamlat, Reiff</p>	<p>Director Coffey</p> <p>Capital Projects Update (I) – Goorjian</p> <p>85th Anniversary – Foundation 50th Anniversary (I) – Johnson/Schirmer</p> <p>Legislative Priorities (I) – Pfluehler, Baldinger</p>	<p>Director Waespi</p> <p>Grants update and Prop. 68 Implementation (I) – Margulici</p> <p>Crime Prevention Security in Parkling Lots, Trail Heads, etc. (I) – Love</p> <p>Integrated Pest Management in the Parks overview (I) – Kelchner</p>	<p>Director</p> <p>Park and Public Interest Community Engagement Project (I) – Pfluehler/Baldinger</p> <p>Youth Employment and Engagement (I) – O'Connor</p> <p>Nighttime Bicycle Access to Transportation Trails (I) – Brede</p> <p>Review of Special Use Agreement for the Portuguese Water Dog Club (R) Hornbeck</p>	<p>Director Corbett</p> <p>CAFR (R) – Auker</p> <p>Measure CC and WW review (R) – Rasmussen</p> <p>East Contra Costa County Delta Atlas (I) – Lavalle, Thai</p>	<p>Director Waespi</p> <p>Coyote Hills LUPA (R) – Barton</p> <p>Measure CC (I) – Rasmussen</p>	<p>Director Wieskamp</p> <p>Redwood Regional Park Renaming (I) – Lavalle</p> <p>South Las Trampas LUPA (I) – Thai</p> <p>Black Diamond Mines LUPA (I) – Alatorre</p> <p>Measure FF Programming (I) – Kassebaum</p>	<p>Director Coffey</p> <p>Goals 2018 (R) – Buren, Pfluehler</p> <p>Districtwide Survey results (I) – Pfluehler/Baldinger</p> <p>Review Volunteer Program (I) – Kassebaum/Bletz</p> <p>Mountain Bikes and Other Jurisdictions report (I) – Dougan</p> <p>Dog Use Policy report (I) – O'Connor, Johnson, Love</p>	<p>Director Rosario</p> <p>2019 Proposed Budget (R) – Auker</p> <p>Review Trail Safety Patrol programs (I) – Giffilan</p> <p>Parkland Dedications (R) – Reeves</p> <p>Concord Hills LUP (R) – Holt</p> <p>Review of Special Use Agreement Tri-Valley Sailboat Club (R) – Margulici</p> <p>Trails Update (I) – Dougan</p> <p>Trail Design and Maintenance (I) – O'Connor, Dougan</p>	<p>DEC 9</p> <p>Holiday Dinner – Alameda County</p>
<p>Exec. Comm. Subcommittee Work Plan (R) – Pfluehler, Bueren</p>					<p>Finance Subcommittee CAFR (R) – Auker</p>	<p>BBQ Meeting – MLK Shoreline</p>		<p>Exec. Comm. Subcommittee Goals 2017 (R) – Pfluehler, Bueren</p>	<p>Finance Subcommittee 2017 Budget (R) – Auker</p>	

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ARTICLES & CORRESPONDENCE

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McGee Preserve would add 381 acres of new public open space in Danville. Sitting south of Diablo Road, and the community of Diablo, it would preserve 93% of the total 410 acres as open space. Save Mt. Diablo will continue to keep us all posted as this develops. Please see article on page 11. Photo by Caleb Castle.



View of McGee Preserve in Danville. Photo by Caleb Castle. Please see article on page 11.



Briones Regional Park

By Beverly Lane, President, East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors

his neighbor, and Briones agreed to help recover the animals. During the ensuing battle, he was struck by an arrow and killed.

His widow, Maria Manuela Valencia Briones, petitioned the governor for a grant to the land where the family had lived. The grant, covering three square leagues, was issued in 1842.

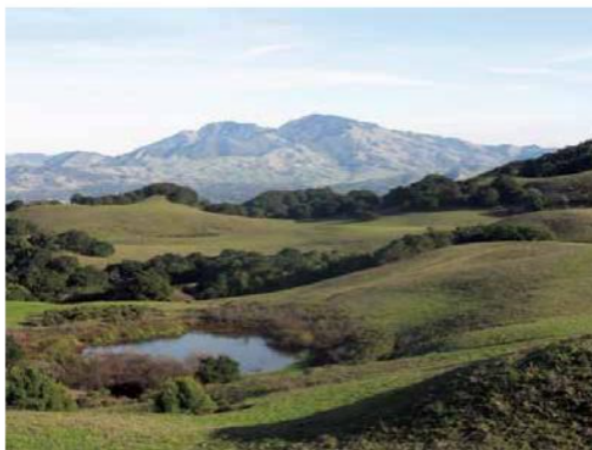
After California became part of the United States, the title was contested, but upheld by the U.S. District Court in 1860. At that time, much of the Briones rancho was purchased by Simon and Elias Blum.

Challenges to the boundary survey continued for many years, and it was not until 1876 that a patent to the 13,000-acre rancho was issued.

During the 1850s and '60s, the area was developed into orchards and vineyards, and became one of Contra Costa's most important fruit and walnut-growing regions. Other land uses have been cattle grazing and intermittent dry farming.

Hikers and riders on the Alhambra Creek Trail can see a water tunnel that was dug originally in the 1860s as a potential water supply for the city of Martinez.

That did not work out, because the flow was inconsistent. However the tunnel was later deepened, and the water obtained supplied a



number of local families.

One famous resident of the area was the noted conservationist John Muir, who married Louise Strenzel, daughter of a prominent family of ranchers and orchardists. Muir hiked often in the Briones hills.

In 1906 the People's Water Company began purchasing land in San Pablo and Bear Creek to secure watershed. The East Bay Water Company

acquired People's Water Company in 1916 and built San Pablo Dam in 1923.

In 1928 the newly formed East Bay Municipal Utility District acquired East Bay Water Company and sold lands outside the watershed as surplus. And in 1957 Contra Costa County and the Utility District agreed to a land conveyance that established a park in the Bear Creek watershed.

East Bay Regional Park District entered the picture in 1964, when voters in Contra Costa County approved annexation to the district. In 1965 the county agreed to turn over to the park district two

of its undeveloped parklands: Briones and Kennedy Grove in El Sobrante. The Briones transfer totaled just over 1,000 acres, to which was added a purchase of 1,155 acres from the Townsend family. Briones and Kennedy Grove both opened to the public in 1967. "It was a time when you could buy large amounts of land in Contra Costa for a reasonable price," said Jerry Kent, a retired

assistant general manager with the Park District.

Today Briones Regional Park totals more than 6,000 acres, with many miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. The five main park entrances are Bear Creek Staging Area on Bear Creek Road, the top of Old Briones Road south of Martinez, Alhambra Creek and Reliez Valley Staging Areas on Reliez Valley Road in Pleasant Hill, and Lafayette Ridge Staging Area on Pleasant Hill Road in Lafayette.

Within the park are picnic areas at Bear Creek and Alhambra Creek and three seasonal group campsites: Wee-Ta-Chi, Maud Whalen and Homestead Valley. The Briones Archers archery range is accessed via the Bear Creek Road entrance. For information visit www.brionesarchery.org.

Park District naturalists periodically lead hikes that highlight Briones' natural and cultural history. For instance, there's a walk at Briones to celebrate the equinox from 8:30 to 11 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 22, led by naturalist "Trail Gail" Broesder. Designed for ages eight and older, the hike will venture forth in search of signs of fall. For information, call 510-544-2233.

For information on all upcoming activities at the park, visit the district website, www.ebparcs.org. Or download a map at the website and explore one of the district's largest and most beautiful parks on your own.

Situated in Central Contra Costa County with easy access from surrounding cities, Briones Regional Park is a beautiful, semi-wild open space with abundant wildlife and miles of trails for hiking and riding.

Briones has an interesting history. The original inhabitants of the area were Native Americans, the Bay Miwok Saclan. There's no evidence of permanent Indian settlement within what now comprises Briones Regional Park, but the land was fruitful for hunting and seed and acorn gathering.

In 1829 a retired Spanish soldier named Felipe Briones built a home near what is now the park's Bear Creek staging area, where he settled with his family of 18, cultivated the land and raised cattle.

By the 1830s the native peoples were no longer peaceable, and when the missions closed and native peoples dispersed, many lived on the foothills of Mt. Diablo and did not welcome the new Mexican rancho grantees.

In 1839 a band of Native Americans took horses from

Magee Preserve Would Mean Almost 400 Acres of New Public Open Space in Danville

In the Spring of 2019 **Save Mount Diablo** decided to reaffirm our support of a conservation tradeoff associated with a project that we had influenced for years: Magee Preserve. The Danville Town Council approved this project this summer, but there may be a referendum that could decide the issue in March 2020. Whether a referendum happens or not, the key takeaway is this: in exchange for building 69 houses on 29 acres, we achieve the protection of 381 acres

(93%) of the beautiful Magee property in Danville.

About seven years ago, after lengthy negotiations, Save Mount Diablo agreed to support the conservation tradeoff of a project proposed by the Magee ranching family and Summerhill Homes. It was virtually the same one as we have now in 2019.

The project was approved by the Danville Town Council in 2013, but was challenged in court, delayed, and picked up by Davidon Homes. Today, Magee Preserve is a proposed development project

located within the city limits of Danville, south of Diablo Road and the community of Diablo. It would include 93% open space on 410 acres, virtually identical (in fact, slightly better) than what was approved back in 2013. After fixing the issue that the court demanded be reviewed (impacts of the project on bicycle safety), Davidon, with the help of Danville residents and Save Mount Diablo, again won project approval from the Danville Town Council.

The Project proposes fewer homes than allowed

by city zoning (the entire 410 acres of the property could be subdivided under current zoning), and clustered on just 7% of the total property. It would add two miles of new public trails to the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), protect the hills, slopes and ridgelines on the property, and safeguard the gateway to Mount Diablo State Park - over a mile of pristine land on the south side of Diablo Road and east of Green Valley Road. It would protect and enhance 1.5 miles of Green Valley Creek, protect views, and help local wildlife.

Magee Preserve also connects Sycamore Valley Regional Open Space and several Home Owner Association (HOA) open spaces, protecting wildlife and recreational corridors, and extends a new option to Danville to expand the paved biking and pedestrian trails along Diablo Road, making it safer for cyclists, runners, and walkers and their dogs.

We think a small development on 29 acres to protect 381 acres - more than 12 times as much land - is a good trade-off. There would be five layers of land protection: 1) ownership by an HOA, 2)

management and protection by a Geologic Hazard Abatement District, 3) restriction by a development agreement, 4) conservation by a protective conservation easement, and 5) public access and trails. The connections to open space and enhanced recreational opportunities sweeten the deal.

Opponents of the Project cite traffic, bike safety and fire concerns, but the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District has said the Project wouldn't affect their ability to service the area. In addition, traffic and bike path improvements proposed as part of Magee Preserve would make the current traffic situation better, not worse.

In August 2019, opponents submitted signatures to the County to try and necessitate a referendum on the Project, which if successful might mean that the approval of Magee Preserve would be decided at the March 2020 ballot box. We'll let you know how things develop. Save Mount Diablo, along with many Danville residents, the Town Council, and EBRPD, continue to support the conservation tradeoff offered by Magee Preserve.



RECREATION MANAGEMENT

IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR RECREATION, SPORTS AND FITNESS FACILITIES

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Parks

Planning, Programming and Staffing to Better Serve All Residents

By Chris Gelbach

As park managers strive to better serve their communities, the need for planning, programming and staffing that engages all constituencies equitably and inclusively has never been clearer.

For park districts, effectively achieving these goals often involves applying a broad definition of diversity that includes considerations such as race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, language, culture, national origin, religious and political beliefs, age and disability status.

Ava Holliday is a founding partner of the Avarna Group, which helps park districts, outdoors organizations and other clients develop and implement equity, inclusion, diversity and relevancy efforts. She often sees organizations, state parks and municipal parks start with this focus on diversity because they desire to both diversify their staff and appeal to a broader swath of the local populace.

"That's all well and good, except that it often comes from a place where they're not compelled to think about why historically—and today—there haven't been as many people of color or queer folks or disabled folks in their parks," Holliday said. "Leading with diversity isn't very effective, and we ask folks instead to lead with equity."

While recreation managers should certainly work to understand and welcome the diverse audiences they serve, understanding and dismantling the barriers preventing people from accessing and using their parks and programming is even more critical. "And then, once they get into the parks and start working for the parks, how can they feel included?" Holliday said. "And then diversity often follows."

Bringing Equity to Park Planning

Achieving equity in parks is impossible without effectively collecting and considering the input of traditionally underrepresented communities during the park-planning process. In many cases, this may require park districts to conduct dedicated outreach to learn the views of groups that may be less likely to respond to a general survey.

For instance, Houston conducted a Master Parks Plan Survey in 2014 that produced results indicating that most respondents wanted their neighborhoods and parks linked to biking and walking paths. The city has since embarked on an ambitious Bayou Greenways 2020 project that will ultimately create a 150-mile network of continuous hiking trails, bike paths and green space running throughout the city.

The 2014 survey received criticism, however, since Houston is a highly diverse and segregated city, yet roughly two-thirds of respondents were white and had household incomes of at least \$75,000. In response, the parks and rec department funded a study by researchers at Rice University that surveyed African-American and Latino neighborhoods on their priorities for the city's parks. The results found that park users in majority-minority neighborhoods were most interested in better maintained, safer local parks with more and better infrastructure, and less concerned about the improved connections between parks and neighborhoods that the greenways project will ultimately accomplish.

According to Holliday, because gathering community information for park planning is a long process, there are many steps along the way at which people can either be shut out or invited into the conversation. To make sure that all voices are represented during the public comment period, Holliday recommends that you:

1. Make sure that you truly know the community you serve and the demographics and history of the community. This will help you craft an engagement process that makes sense for those community members.
2. Understand the other barriers different populations in the community are facing, as well as the diverse ways in which different communities have historically wanted to be outside.
3. Create engagement tools that are culturally relevant by making sure the public comment period is clear and gives people multiple ways to engage in the process.
4. Disseminate the information about the project in a culturally relevant way.

"You want the information to be available not just online, not just through words, but if you can talk about it through pictures, different people talking about it, through the mail, through community meetings, that can be really helpful," Holliday said. "To whatever extent different languages are spoken in the community, make sure you can translate the materials. All of that is really important."

To make the public meetings themselves more accessible, Holliday recommends:

- Making sure they're not during business hours so people who work 9 to 5 can attend.
- Allowing families and children to attend.
- Providing a meal if budget allows in return for asking people to give up their dinner and family time.
- Being clear about next steps and how everyone's feedback from the meeting will be used.
- Giving attendees a way to stay informed as the process moves forward.

Holliday noted that her organization is currently working with The Wilderness Society on a community and stakeholder engagement toolkit that will be



PHOTO COURTESY OF CALI GODLEY, EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT



PHOTO COURTESY OF MONA KOH, EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

free and publicly available soon, and is specifically focused on ways to successfully get a broader range of people engaged in these public comment periods.

Engaging Underserved Communities

To effectively engage underserved populations in their communities, many park districts and related organizations are realizing the need for proactive outreach.

"What we found in the past sometimes with our community engagement was that we'd tend to get the same people who tend to have disposable time and money to attend our meetings and get their voices heard," said Lisa Goorjian, parks planning and operations program director for Metro, which oversees 17,000 acres of parks, trails and natural areas across the Portland metropolitan region.

As part of an effort to better reach underserved communities, Metro sometimes engages leaders of culturally specific organizations as contractors to provide knowledge and input about their communities. "We're definitely getting some perspectives we hadn't heard before and different community groups we hadn't heard from before," Goorjian said.

In building new relationships with these community groups, Goorjian suggests that parks organizations understand that building awareness, trust and rapport takes time—and therefore to schedule accordingly. To build these relationships more successfully, she also places a premium on providing consistent communication to these contacts from your organization.

"Community members value consistent stable relationships, and sometimes in government, we tend to work in technical areas," Goorjian said. "We're learning that our staff has to be flexible working with other staff across the different work teams, so we're not just passing off different community contacts from one team to the next."

To gain broader perspectives from the diverse communities it serves, East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), a system of public parks and trails in California's Alameda and Contra Costa counties, holds an annual Multicultural Community Leaders Roundtable. The event gathers dozens of community leaders from the Asian, Latino and African-American communities, who represent senior centers, health clinics, faith-based groups, media, chambers of commerce and other organizations from the region.

Building from this outreach, EBRPD started regular outings in 2014 called Multicultural Wellness Walks, working with some of these community leaders to plan the walks. The walks serve to introduce these varied communities, many of which are most familiar with city parks, to the district's larger, more faraway parks in natural settings that include shoreline, redwoods, and lake and hill environments.

"We are reaching out to groups that are not familiar with the parks, and may have some nervousness regarding going far out into big woods like the redwoods," said Mona Koh, community relations manager for EBRPD. "So as part of it, we very intentionally create a safe, fun and interconnected experience in nature for the diverse folks we bring in. We really emphasize safety, so our walks are always accompanied by our volunteer trail safety patrol that are trained in trails and first aid. The walks are always led by a naturalist and a health practitioner."

Some of the leaders from the roundtable events help to bring members from their communities to the walks, which happen five or six times a year. Koh estimates that each walk has average representation from four or five ethnic and religious groups, with roughly 60 percent of participants being Latino and then the other 40 percent comprising Asian (Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Vietnamese), African-American and Middle Eastern (Indian, Pakistani and Iranian) groups.



PHOTO COURTESY OF USA SWIMMING

After saying "good morning" in different languages, the groups head out for the walk, stopping along the way to make bird calls and engage in other activities like chi gong or Zumba. The groups also eat together at the end. Koh estimates that the first walks attracted 35 to 40 people, and they have grown increasingly popular, with the most recent outing attracting 150 people. The program is effective in exposing different groups to the EBRPD's regional parks that they might be unfamiliar with, while also helping to build bridges between communities.

When it comes to building stronger relationships between a parks department and a specific community for more detailed programming, an individualized approach is often preferred. Metro, for example, has partnered with individual culturally specific organizations to provide opportunities for communities of color and low-income residents to experience nature through its Partners in Nature program.

"The unique part of this program is that we work together with each organization to co-create programming that meets the needs of each specific community," said Goorjian. "We recognize that these organizations

know their communities best. Instead of Metro asking each group to fit into our model, we're trying to be flexible in offering different types of partnerships that best serve each community's needs." The program is funded by a parks and natural areas levy that was approved by the region's voters in 2013.

By working with single-identity groups in this manner, parks organizations can give traditionally marginalized communities the opportunity to enjoy deeper, more culturally relevant experiences with nature by giving them the ability to gather in spaces for them and by them.

"Engaging these single-identity groups can also be really positive in that you then have a constituency that you have built some trust with," Holliday said. "And then when it comes to your next planning process, for example, those folks are already bought into your park and may have connections that you may not have had previously, and you can engage a broader swath of people."

To effectively engage underserved populations in their communities, many park districts and related organizations are realizing the need for proactive outreach.



PHOTO COURTESY OF USA SWIMMING

Finding community leaders who are themselves passionate about parks and the outdoors is particularly beneficial. "If there's somebody the community already trusts in place, whether it's a priest or physician or a business owner who believe in the mission and vision of the recreation department, now you've got a conduit," said Juan Caraveo, diversity and inclusion consultant for USA Swimming. "Now you've got an advocate in that community who's going to be a voice to promote your programming."

When engaging underserved communities through programming, it's also important to focus on offering high-quality, high-value programs. Caraveo sees a few common barriers preventing underserved communities from learning to swim, for instance. "What our business development department found is that lack of access to the physical pool is not as prevalent as the expense of the programming—maybe they're priced out of those communities," Caraveo said.

In fact, while USA Swimming research has shown that 64 percent of African-American, 45 percent of Hispanic/Latino and 40 percent of Caucasian children have little to no swimming ability, 79 percent of children overall who live in households with incomes less than \$50,000 have little to no swimming ability. But providing affordable swimming instruction is not enough.

Over the past two years of travel at the grassroots level as part of his job, Caraveo has also learned through speaking to many families that the quality of the programming is also a barrier. "I've had multiple conversations with families in the park, and I've asked them, 'Do you take your kids to swim?' And they say, 'Yeah, I took them to the city swim lessons. We stopped because we had 10 kids in the class and there was a 16-year-old who had no idea what they were doing teaching the lessons.'"

According to Caraveo, these families say that money is tight, but that they're willing to pay if the programming is good. "I think it would be in the interest of rec departments to really do an inventory of their programs," he said. He recommends evaluating both the pre-hiring and ongoing professional development of staff, whether the department even looks at swim teachers as a professional position, and at student-teacher ratios to make sure they're acceptable. "And ask perhaps the biggest question: If I had a child, would I want my kid to be in that lesson?" Caraveo said.

Single-Identity Outdoors and Environmental Organizations

Below are some examples of organizations that offer single-identity programming or that focus on specific communities and their relationships to the outdoors, conservation or environmentalism, as identified on a recent Avarna Group blog entry:

Single-Identity Programs

Conservation Legacy's Ancestral Lands Conservation Crews: 17 different programs operating nationally and at the local level to engage Native youth and young adults in meaningful conservation projects on Native lands.

www.conservationlegacy.org/ancestrallands

Northwest Youth Corps Queer Inclusion Crew: Gives queer youth and young adults work opportunities in the great outdoors in a fun team-based learning environment that emphasizes personal growth and stewardship.

Idaho Conservation Corps' Women's Crew: An innovative AmeriCorps program that provides hands-on training and experience to women interested in pursuing employment with conservation corps, land and water resource management agencies, and other outdoor careers. www.idahocc.org/OurPrograms/WomensCrew

Sierra Club's Military Family and Veteran's Programs: A variety of programs help foster development of a new generation of Sierra Club leaders and give service members, veterans and families the skills, exposure, knowledge and confidence to access the great outdoors. <http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/military/military-families-and-veterans>

Outdoor Organizations Focused on Specific Communities

Outdoor Afro: A network that celebrates African-American connections and leadership in nature, with more than 60 leaders in 28 states www.outdoorafro.com

Green Latinos: A national nonprofit that convenes Latino leaders to address environmental and conservation issues that significantly affect the health and welfare of the U.S. Latino community www.greenlatinos.org

Green Muslims: A source in the Muslim community for spiritually inspired environmental education, reflection and action that engages locally while serving as a national resource. www.greenmuslims.org

Black Freedom Outfitters: An organization that curates unique outdoor adventures that provide one-of-a-kind experiences for black people to explore and lead in the great outdoors www.blackfreedomoutfitters.com

Latino Outdoors: A Latino-led organization that connects Latino communities and leadership with nature and outdoor experiences as part of an effort to create a national community of leaders in conservation and outdoor education. www.latinoutdoors.org

Venture Out Project: An organization that brings the queer community together to experience the beauty and fun of the wilderness through a variety of trips run by queer people for queer people

OUT There Adventures: An adventure education organization committed to fostering positive identity development, individual empowerment and improved quality of life for queer young people through professionally facilitated experiential education activities www.outthereadventures.org

Women's Wilderness: An organization that strengthens the courage, confidence and leadership qualities of girls and women through the challenge and support of group wilderness and community-based experiences www.womenswilderness.org

Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Staffing

Park districts seeking to be more equitable and inclusive in their hiring and in attracting a more diverse mix of park-goers can have more success with the latter by addressing the former. "If a community can see that the staff is representative and looks like them, it does increase the odds of participation from that particular community," Caraveo said.

In fact, Caraveo often leads with the employment-related benefits of learning to swim in speaking to communities that traditionally under-participate in swim programs. "I don't necessarily speak to them about swimming as a sport, but swimming as a skill that can help develop a workforce for you," Caraveo said.

In lower-income communities where teens will often seek out minimum-wage jobs at age 15 or 16, he emphasizes how learning to swim and joining a swim team can then lead to a young person getting their Water Safety Instructor and Lifeguarding certification. They can then be prepared for a job in park districts that often have a desperate need for additional guards. "Now, you're getting a job that can pay \$2 or \$3 more per hour than your minimum-wage job. And if that can be in your community where you can walk, even better."

USA Swimming has several programs that can help park districts build this talent pipeline. By becoming a Make a Splash local partner of the USA Swimming Foundation, rec departments can become eligible for grant money for swim lessons and are subject to reporting to ensure lesson quality. Through USA Swimming, departments can also start a USA Swimming community swim team, joining more than 2,800 existing teams across the nation and gaining access to benefits such as coach education and development.

EBPRD, meanwhile, has a variety of initiatives aimed at exposing underserved communities to employment opportunities in the outdoors and conservation. These include a hands-on youth job fair where ages 12 to 21 can learn about different jobs in the park district such as interpretive, recreation, park ranger, maintenance and park police roles.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MONA KOH, EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

The EBPRD also has a two-pronged internship program. It includes academic internships tied to universities for which interns can get college credit, and field internships that trade school and high school students can participate in to build skills in park ranger, landscaping and other roles. Additional programs involve projects with at-risk youth who often continue in other EBRPD programs afterward.

To successfully attract interest from more diverse candidates, some parks departments are also reconsidering their job descriptions. "Our job descriptions are written to highlight the fact that we're looking for people who know how to connect with diverse communities," said Metro's Goorjian. "In fields where there isn't a diverse pipeline, we're doing what we can to help diversify that pipeline."

The department is doing that through programs such as its Youth Ecology Corps, where young people from low-income families get experience in natural resource centers. Many of the department's Partners in Nature program also focus on nature education and on exposing youth of color to careers in natural resources.

Metro additionally recognizes the importance of working with more minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses as contractors. It has recently held workshops in both English and Spanish to help these establishing businesses learn the ins and outs of the public procurement process. "We know it's not a level playing field, so we're trying to do things to make it more equitable," Goorjian said. The department is seeing results from the effort, with 17 of roughly 30 new contractors hired coming from minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses.

At the Avarna Group, Holliday often works with agencies to create more inclusive job descriptions and minimize bias in hiring. The group offers a free hiring toolkit online that describes a variety of tactics that can help organizations mitigate gender, racial and other hidden biases in recruiting, marketing, job descriptions, screening resumes, job interviews and candidate selection.

Tackling these and other issues can seem daunting. But they are individual steps that contribute to an ongoing process that results in park operations

that can continue to become more diverse, equitable and inclusive over time.

"I think that understanding that the work is iterative can be really helpful for folks — they don't have to do it all at once," Holliday said. "But knowing that they're going to continue to chip away at it and going to continue to learn is a helpful framework to be in."

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EAST BAY TIMES

Community News

Park It: District to mark 85 years with Fam Fest in Oakland

Fall Arts and Music Festival set for Sept. 28 in the refurbished Bridge Yard Building

By Ned MacKay | East Bay Regional Park District

PUBLISHED: September 9, 2019 at 5:00 am | UPDATED: September 9, 2019 at 5:06 am



Laura A. Oda/staff archives

The East Bay Regional Park District will celebrate its 85th anniversary Sept. 28 with their free FAM Fest event on the Sutter Regional Shoreline in Oakland in the newly refurbished Bridge Yard Building, above, which is at the eastern touchdown of the Bay Bridge.

The East Bay Regional Park District will celebrate its 85th anniversary with FAM Fest, aka the Fall Arts and Music Festival, from 1 to 5 p.m. Sept. 28 at Judge

John Sutter Regional Shoreline in Oakland.

The venue for the free event is the newly refurbished Bridge Yard Building at 210 Burma Road, which is off Maritime Street at the eastern touchdown of the Bay Bridge. The master of ceremonies will be Saul Paul, “a Musician with a Message,” who will introduce many local artists, musicians and other performers.

The park district was established in 1934 through a grass-roots effort led by community activists of their day who worked to preserve the East Bay’s beautiful open spaces for wildlife habitat and public recreation. From its modest beginnings, the district has grown to encompass 73 regional parks totaling 125,000 acres with 1,250 miles of trails throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

Also in Oakland: “Otter-ly Amazing” is the theme of a program from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Sept. 15 at Lake Temescal in Oakland. The slinky guys have been spotted in the past at Lake Temescal, so naturalist Susan Ramos will lead a search for signs of otters and other wildlife. Meet at the park’s north-entrance parking lot off Broadway in Oakland. For information, call Crab Cove at 510-544-3187.

Berkeley: The moon will light a hike from 7 to 9 p.m. Sept. 15 at Tilden Nature Area near Berkeley. It’s a full-moon walk to the top of Wildcat Peak, led by naturalist “Trail Gail” Broesder.” Traditionally farmers harvested the fields by moonlight, and the group will use moonlight for the evening walk. Flashlights are optional for the return. The program is for ages 8 and older. Meet at Tilden’s Environmental Education Center at the north end of Central Park Drive. For information, call 510-544-2233.

Martinez: Views of Carquinez Strait and beyond are the reward of a steep climb to a hilltop at Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline in Martinez. Meet the on-duty naturalist at 10 a.m. Sept. 15 at the Nejedly Staging Area on Carquinez Scenic Drive, just west of town past Alhambra Cemetery. Call 510-544-2750 for information.

San Ramon: Wednesday Walks are a series of naturalist-led explorations of various regional parks. There's a 3-miler on Sept. 18 at Las Trampas Regional Wilderness in San Ramon, led by Christina Garcia — a short but strenuous climb to the top of Las Trampas Ridge. Meet Christina at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot at the end of Bollinger Canyon Road, a few miles north of Crow Canyon Road in San Ramon. For information, call 510-544-3282.

Fremont: Online ticket sales begin at 8 a.m. Sept. 15 for the Haunted Railroad, a family-friendly, non-scary Halloween train ride through the woods at Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont. Live actors play silly characters. It's all designed for families with children younger than 12. The train will run at various times starting at 7 p.m. Oct. 18-20 and Oct. 25-27. It's a fundraiser for the nonprofit Railroad Museum at Ardenwood.

Tickets cost \$12 for ages 3 and older; the ride is free for kids 2 and younger and are available online at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) (search for "Haunted Train"). Tickets sell out quickly. Ardenwood is on Ardenwood Boulevard just north of Highway 84. For general information, call 510-544-2797.

Online: This is just a sample, as fall brings a harvest of great activities to the regional parks. For complete listings, visit the park district's website at [cbparks.org](https://www.cbparks.org). And remember, Fridays are free through the end of the year in celebration of the district's 85th anniversary.

Ned MacKay writes a regular column about East Bay Regional Park District sites and activities. Email him at nedmackay@comcast.net.

Get Used to Grazing Goats

These four-footed fire fighters protect the East Bay hills by grazing during the dry season.

By Ilana DeBare

Published: September 06, 2019



Photo by Paul Haggard

The moon was still out and the homes along Mastlands Drive were asleep when the move began. Oscar Espinoza made a trilling call and was answered with a chorus of bleats. Then a sound like a flowing stream cascaded down the steep hillside — hundreds of hooves trampling fallen oak leaves.

Goats.

Espinoza and six colleagues were moving a herd of 400 goats from a section of the Oakland hills near Montera Middle School to a brushy slope above the Shepherd's Canyon soccer field.

Herds of goats like these have become a key tool in the fight to prevent wildfires — an increasingly urgent battle as climate change brings more frequent droughts and higher temperatures to California.

Thousands of goats browse the grassy, brushy Oakland hills each summer. These urban herds have become a familiar sight in the East Bay, a feature of the landscape as beloved by many local residents as views of Alcatraz or the Campanile.

There's the initial wonder of glimpsing a herd of goats grazing just yards from busy Highway 24 or Interstate 580. There's the repeated pleasure of passing goats on a routine drive to the supermarket or to work.

“The most enjoyable part of this job is bringing agriculture to the city,” said Robert McGrew, co-owner of EcoSystems Concepts in Dixon, which has brought goats to the East Bay since the early 1990s.

But these goats aren't ambassadors for farm life or novelties in a petting zoo. They're working goats, doing what goats do best, which is eat.

A herd of 400 goats can clear between 0.5 and 1.5 acres of potential wildfire fuel a day. They eat tall grasses and weeds, including poison oak and invasive French broom. Unlike sheep, they browse on brush and low-hanging tree branches as well as grass.

Goats can access steep slopes that are off-limits to mowing equipment. They're also a bargain. It costs about \$2,500 to have a human crew hand-clear an acre of brush, while goats can do it for \$500, according to Vincent Crudele, supervisor of vegetation management for the Oakland Fire Department.

And if managed correctly, they're better for sensitive ecosystems. Areas with rare plants can be fenced off. Grazing can be timed to let wildflowers blossom and seed. The herding companies use terms like "RDM" — residual dry matter — to set goals and metrics for their work.

"Used in the right way, with a plan for the timing and duration, grazing can have environmental benefits," said Jim Hanson, East Bay conservation chair for the California Native Plant Society. "Goats have been used ... for controlling certain types of invasive weeds that otherwise can out-compete everything else."

Grazing wasn't always seen as environmentally optimal.

"There was a time in the '80s and '90s when grazing was considered bad for ecosystems," said Kristen Van Dam, an ecologist with the East Bay Regional Park District.

But then new research, including a study on grazing and vernal pools, showed it could have a positive effect.

And the Oakland hills firestorm of 1991 highlighted the danger of fire where homes abut wildlands — spurring public agencies including the City of Oakland to consider grazing.

Crudele, with the Oakland Fire Department, now reels off many instances where goats have helped prevent potentially disastrous fires.

"Just yesterday a stolen car was abandoned and torched on Skyline Drive," he said in a July interview. "We'd done roadside clearance with hand crews, and goats grazed the area three weeks ago. Because the fuels had been brought down to ground level, the fire couldn't travel up brush or trees. It bought us time [to put out the fire]. Had that fire occurred without grazing, we'd probably still be fighting it now."

Organizations that hire goats for East Bay vegetation management include not just the city and the regional park district but the East Bay Municipal Utility District, Caltrans, PG&E, and the Contra Costa Water District.

The East Bay grazing season runs from April through October, paralleling the dry season. During winter, the goats are moved to Central Valley agricultural fields or Delta levees — contracts that bring in little or no money for herd owners but keep the goats fed.

Herd owners typically employ shepherds from Peru who come to the United States on special agricultural visas. They stay for three-year stints, living in well-equipped trailers alongside the grazing sites and earning more than 10 times what they would likely have earned at home. The isolation of traditional herding has been reduced somewhat by technology: Oscar Espinoza talks with his three children in Junin, Peru, from his trailer every day via Facetime.

The shepherds move the animals from site to site with the strategic deliberation of a battle plan. Managers estimate the size of an area, the kind of vegetation, and the number of goats to determine how long to graze them there.

Herds are contained by 12-volt electric fences, which are reconfigured almost daily as the goats move through an area. Each herd has a companion dog charged with scaring away coyotes, mountain lions, and the occasional human who isn't deterred by the fence. The shepherds provide water and mineral salts, manage the fences, and keep an eye out for animals that are ailing.

When it's time to move, the mellow pastoral scene becomes a buzz of activity.

For the Mastlands Drive herd, the shepherds had built a temporary plywood corral between the hillside and the street. Robert McGrew and several workers fought morning traffic to drive two large livestock trailers down from Dixon by 6:30 a.m.

With Espinoza's calls and the help of two energetic border collies, they ushered the goats into the corral and then, in small batches, up a metal ramp into the trailers.

Ten minutes later, the process was reversed at Shepherd's Canyon. Trailer doors opened and goats trotted down the ramp, then dashed across the neatly mowed soccer field for the tall grasses of the hillside.

"I wish we had 5,000 goats available to us," Crudele said. "The only downside is not having enough."

East Bay Regional Park District examining Marsh Creek Trail extension

[Tony Kukulich](#)

Sep 5, 2019 Updated Sep 5, 2019



The East Bay Regional Park District is examining plans to extend the Marsh Creek Regional Trail three miles to Round Valley Regional Preserve.

Photo by Tony Kukulich

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is looking at options to enhance recreational opportunities in East County by extending the popular Marsh Creek Regional Trail.

Passing through Oakley, Brentwood and Contra Costa County, the trail currently runs for 9.2 miles from Big Break Regional Shoreline south to Concord Avenue. The EBRPD plan will

extend the trail south from the intersection of Vineyards Parkway and Miwok Avenue to Round Valley Regional Preserve, a distance of about 3 miles. According to Sean Dougan, trails development program manager with EBRPD, Shea Builders will provide a mile-long trail link from Concord Avenue to Miwok Avenue.

“The intent of this project is to identify the preferred route for a regional trail from Vineyards Parkway in Brentwood, through or next to John Marsh State Historic Park and all the way to the Round Valley Regional Preserve to the south,” said Dougan. “That leads into Round Valley, and eventually Morgan Territory if we can connect it.”

EBRPD developed three different trail alignments, and meetings were held in April and August to gather public input on the designs. Paved and unpaved options were developed for the multi-use trail that will accommodate hikes, bikers and equestrians. One of the principal features of the trail will be a safe way to get trail users across busy Marsh Creek Road.

“A real part of this study is how are we going to get across Marsh Creek Road,” said Dougan. “The state park is on the north side, (and) the Round Valley Regional Preserve is on the south. What is being suggested is a tunnel underneath the road. People drive way too fast on that road, so people crossing at grade does not seem like a safe option. Building a bridge over it is far more expensive.”

The trail will run through either the John Marsh State Historic Park property or through Contra Costa County Flood Control District land, and that requires the cooperation of a wide variety of interests. While the state park has not yet opened to the public, there appear to be opportunities that would be mutually beneficial for the trail and park.

“They’re very interested in the fact that we want to build an interpretive stop (in Marsh Creek State Historic Park),” said Rick Lemyre, executive director of the John Marsh Historic Trust.

Lemyre suggested that bringing visitors to the state park property could motivate the state to fully open the park.

“The guys on the ground, the rangers, the maintenance people – they want that park open,” said Lemyre.

While EBRPD is attempting to reach Round Valley, the county is in the early stages of developing a trail from Round Valley west through Morgan Territory and into the City of Clayton. That effort would add a trail segment approximately 13 miles long that hikers and riders could access at the end of the Marsh Creek Regional trail. Jamar Stamps, senior planner with the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development said the project is just beginning to develop base-level maps, and possible routes have yet to be considered.

“Following the finalizing of our base maps, we will begin our public outreach process,” said Stamps. “We intend for that outreach to be very extensive, because the corridor is very large, and there are a lot of interested parties along that corridor – public property owners as well as private property owners.”

Stamps expects the first public meeting to discuss the county’s initiative will occur sometime early next year.

The EBRPD expects to select its trail route by the end of the year. By the mid-2020, the design should be complete and a cost estimate developed.

“We want to identify the preferred route,” said Dougan. “But then they’re also going to do environmental studies on the preferred route that we choose, hopefully adopt that document pursuant to CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) and get a pretty detailed design at the end of it – what we need to do there. It’s a feasibility study, but is a sort of design and environmental (study) as well. It’s a feasibility study plus.”

For more information, visit www.ebparks.org/about/planning/default.htm#MarshCreek.



News Releases from Region 09

U.S. EPA awards close to \$8 million to protect and restore San Francisco Bay and its watersheds

09/03/2019

Contact Information: Soledad Calvino (calvino.maria@epa.gov) 415-972-3512

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded almost \$8 million in grants to protect and restore wetlands and streams in the San Francisco Bay Area. EPA's Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest Mike Stoker made the announcement today at an event to celebrate the funding for the Three Creeks Parkway Restoration project in Brentwood, California.

“EPA is honored to be a part of the investments being made by our San Francisco Bay partners to revitalize and restore local watersheds,” **said EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Mike Stoker.** “Supporting these aquatic resources can improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, flood protection, and recreational opportunities.”

Regional Administrator Stoker was joined at the event by American Rivers, Contra Costa County Public Works, City of Brentwood officials and County Supervisor Diane Burgis’ office.

American Rivers received \$1,376,623 for its Three Creeks Parkway Restoration Project in the Marsh Creek Watershed. The funding will help restore 12.5 acres of floodplain and 4,000 feet of creek in east Contra Costa County that have been degrading due to rapid urbanization.

“With our fantastic partnership with American Rivers, and the assistance of EPA and other grants, we are able to expand our single purpose flood risk mitigation project into a multi-benefit project enhancing the habitat for local wildlife, creating a healthier environment, and providing recreational access for Brentwood residents,” **said Chief Engineer for the Contra Costa County Flood Control & Conservation District Brian Balbas.**

“This project will be a great example of how a healthy stream can provide so much value to our communities, from flood protection to salmon and wildlife habitat, to recreation opportunities,” **said California Director for American Rivers Steve Rothert.** “We are grateful to the EPA and our partners for seeing the potential in Marsh Creek. This is the type of multi-benefit project that we need to replicate across the region.”

The following organizations also received EPA grants for projects that benefit San Francisco Bay and its watersheds:

San Francisco Estuary Partnership – Transforming Shorelines Project, \$1,481,109
Funds will be used to provide vulnerable shoreline communities, wastewater treatment plants, and other managers of shoreline property with the tools they need to make infrastructure investment choices that adapt to climate challenges such as sea-level rise.

City of San Pablo – San Francisco Bay Stormwater Trading Pilot, \$680,000
The cities of San Pablo and Richmond will pilot a stormwater trading program to exchange water quality credits across jurisdictional boundaries, a current impediment to cities investing efficiently to reduce polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) loads to the bay.

East Bay Regional Park District – Alder Creek Restoration in San Leandro Creek Watershed, \$1,509,268

Funding will help restore Alder Creek by removing a set of failing culverts and daylighting the creek in a 2,000-foot section. The project will also create 4 acres of aquatic and riparian habitat benefiting the native rainbow trout.

County of Napa – Oakville to Oak Knoll Reach Restoration, \$740,000

Funds will be used to complete a series of restoration sites on the banks of the Napa River through the creation of 3.5 acres of floodplain. In addition, restoration of instream and riparian habitat will improve water quality for the benefit of salmon and steelhead trout.

Oro Loma Sanitary District – Microvi Nutrient Sidestream Treatment, \$1,000,000

The project will install additional Microvi technology to increase the wastewater treatment plant's ability to remove nutrients from the effluent that is discharged into San Francisco Bay.

County of San Mateo – San Mateo Regional Stormwater Project, \$500,000

Funding will help produce preliminary designs for two regional subsurface stormwater projects to treat stormwater and reduce flooding. Both projects will reduce PCB loads to the bay.

County of Marin – Marin County Trash Control Infrastructure Project, \$685,000

Funds will be used to install trash capture devices to intercept 11,000 gallons of trash annually.

San Francisco Bay is a designated "estuary of national significance" under the Clean Water Act. The bay and its tributary streams, situated in an urban area with more than seven million people, provide crucial fish and wildlife habitat at the heart of the larger Bay-Delta Estuary. The bay's users and nearby residents are all affected by threats to its ecological health, including legacy pollutants like mercury and PCBs, polluted stormwater, and the challenges of drought and climate change.

For more information about EPA's San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/sfbay-delta/sf-bay-water-quality-improvement-fund>

For more information about EPA's Wetland Program Development Grants, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>

Learn more about EPA's [Pacific Southwest Region](#). Connect with us on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#).

Concord weapons station has fraught history, but development concept has promise

John King Sep. 3, 2019 Updated: Sep. 3, 2019 12:23 p.m.



Former ammunition bunkers dot the landscape at the Concord Naval Weapons Station site. Photo: Michael Short / Special to The Chronicle

Considering that 130,000 people live there, Concord has a low profile in the Bay Area. It's the city above Walnut Creek in Contra Costa County, or the string of exits along Interstate 680 on your way north to the Benicia Bridge and points beyond.

But with the right mix of perseverance and imagination, in another decade Concord could stand out for a different reason — as home to our region's most nuanced yet ambitious experiment at fitting a sustainable model of 21st century growth into a traditional suburban frame.

The potential canvas is the Concord Naval Weapons Station, a vast terrain dotted with trees and dozens of partially concealed ammunition bunkers.

The emerging vision would place 13,000 housing units in structures ranging from multistory apartments above shaded colonnades to single-family homes on snug village greens. A transit corridor flanked by bicycle lanes would extend the length of the 3.4-mile-long site. Office buildings would cluster near the BART station at one end — parting to make room for a paseo-like footpath leading up to a ridgeline park.

The full plan and a draft environmental report aren't expected before winter. Any vote by Concord's City Council is likely to be at least a year away. But in a region hobbled by the challenge of finding ways to add sizable amounts of housing in a manner that feels humane, the scenario in Concord offers heartening promise on a truly large scale.

"We were attracted by the possibility of thinking about how to make suburban experiences more communal," said Craig Hartman, the architect leading the design efforts by the San Francisco office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. "You want the right kind of density in the right places. ... It's such an extraordinary site."

When the weapons station attracted attention in the past, tragedy often was the cause — such as when 200 African American sailors were killed by an explosion in 1944 while loading munitions onto ships or when antiwar activist Brian Willson was hit by a munitions train and lost his legs in 1987 while protesting weapons shipments. Otherwise, the rolling hillsides have served as a stark but scenic backdrop along Concord's eastern flank, part of the topographical ascent to Mount Diablo, the Bay Area's highest peak.

That's still the case today, long after the bunkers were last used and 12 years after the U.S. Navy declared its 5,000 acres south of Highway 4 to be surplus property.

During that time, Concord has wrestled with how to redevelop the land in ways that keep the sense of nature palpable, while making room for jobs and housing and such potential attractions as a four-year college. The city selected a master developer, Lennar, in 2016 after a long and politically acrimonious public process.

The project is now being managed for Lennar by FivePoint, which turned the city's wish list and conceptual plans into a formal proposal last year. When its design by the firm Hart Howerton was panned by the City Council, FivePoint brought in Skidmore to take a fresh look.

This wasn't an obvious choice, because the international firm is better known for designing skyscrapers than planning suburbs. But the San Francisco outpost has worked on district-scale remakes planned for Treasure Island and Parkmerced, so FivePoint reached out.

"We had all the ingredients for a good meal, but I didn't think the dish was going to taste great," said Kofi Bonner, a top executive at FivePoint. "We needed a better chef."

The current dish on the burner looks tasty.

Rather than start from scratch, Skidmore took the earlier plan and worked with landscape architect Tom Leader to make it more compatible with the existing terrain.

Streets were moved to allow ridges to retain a natural form. Bands of open space would emphasize the links between existing Concord neighborhoods and the 2,537 acres of former weapons station land being deeded to the East Bay Regional Parks District. The layout of the blocks near the BART station was reoriented so that the proximity to open hillsides is clear.

"The idea is that when you get off BART, you feel connected to the landscape," said Peter Kindel, an urban policy director at Skidmore. "We spent a lot of time on topological research, to minimize the amount of cut and fill to the existing terrain."

Architecturally, the tone in the denser districts would be a contemporary take on the region's past, with deep-set windows and colonnades or verandas that respond to the climate of central Contra Costa — it can be scorching hot during the day, then beguiling and balmy at night. Skidmore also sketched a lower-density residential area with small greens shared by multiple homes.

As for the ammunition bunkers that line rusty railroad tracks and often are engulfed by vegetation, designers would like to see at least a few of them preserved.

"They're such cool little elements," Hartman said. "We'd hope that some could be turned into beer halls or coffee shops."

Hartman is right: not all of the grimly functional relics should be removed. They're part of the cultural heritage, tinged with darkness though it is.

Plans at this stage often promise more than real life delivers. There's no shortage of infill "placemaking" efforts in recent years that are hollow shells of their initial hype.

Nevertheless, it's exciting to see a major firm focused on large-scale suburban futures — how to add density in a way that would take cues from its more settled surroundings while adding new layers to the scene.

The Bay Area's housing crisis is so complex that there's no single solution. But the approach being taken at the Concord Naval Weapons Station gets one thing right. We need to find models for growth that, if successful, might leave longtime residents wanting more.

Berkeleyside

As East Bay parks turn 85, the district asks visitors to weigh in on its future

By Natalie Orenstein Aug. 27, 2019, 1:30 p.m.



Photographing wildlife in Tilden, one of East Bay Regional Park District's 73 sites. Photo: Kathleen Costanza

Fish cleaning stations or farm stands?

East Bay Regional Park District is asking its millions of visitors to weigh in on what they want their parks of the future to look like. The massive system turns 85 this year, and the district is using the occasion to reflect on its offerings and hear from park goers. This is

the last week to fill out [an online survey](#), which closes Monday.

In the short survey, visitors are asked to share how they use the 73 parks, issues they've faced on the trails, and features they'd like to see strengthened or added across the system. The options the district includes in the latter category are intriguing: from off-leash dog areas and water bottle filling stations to a "bike skills area" and natural art installations — or you can write-in your own ideas.

With wildfire season looming, the district also asks about visitors' perceptions of the effects of extreme weather on the trails and parks.

"By completing this short survey, the public will help our board and staff to evaluate priorities as the Park District plans for a future with wide-ranging opportunities and challenges, such as wildfire prevention and climate change," said General Manager Robert E. Doyle in a press release.

While EBRPD brags on the survey that its annual visits total "more than the A's, Giants, Warriors, 49ers, and Raiders combined," it is a rare resident who is aware of, let alone personally familiar with, all 122,000 acres that make up the park district in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The 85th anniversary survey can also serve as a reminder of the array of open spaces and activities funded by, and available to, the public.

EBRPD says it will use the survey feedback "to maintain its relevancy to the recreational needs of the East Bay's evolving multi-cultural community."

The park district survey [is available online](#).

Electric bikes could soon be purring along the trails of national parks — not everyone happy



Peter Fimrite_Aug. 30, 2019 Updated: Aug. 30, 2019 7:13 p.m.

Comments



1of3Cyclists have been able to ride on national park roads since the 1970s, as here during the 2013 Tour of Utah through Bryce Canyon National Park. Nature lovers hotly oppose the notion that motorized e-bikes will soon show up on wilderness trails. Photo: Francisco Kjolseth / Associated Press 2013



2of3Janice Goodwin with her e-bike inside Acadia National Park. Photo: David Sharp / Associated Press



3of3On Sept. 23, 2018, a mountain biker pedals past a No E-bikes sign in the San Bernardino National Forest near Big Bear Lake, Calif. Motorized electric bicycles may soon be humming their way into serene national parks and other public lands nationwide. Photo: Brian Melley / Associated Press

Electric bicycle riders got the go-ahead from the Trump administration Friday to begin zipping around on trails in national parks, infuriating hiking, equestrian and outdoor user groups.

The new National Park Service policy would allow e-bikes wherever regular cyclists are permitted to ride in about 400 national parks and on federally managed open spaces, including the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Point Reyes National Seashore and Yosemite National Park.

It means e-cyclists can whir along fire trails, paved or hardened park trails, and areas designated for off-road motor vehicles as long as they continue pedaling.

“National parks should be responsive to visitors’ interest in using this new technology wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so,” said P. Daniel Smith, the park service’s deputy director.

Interior Secretary David Bernhardt on Thursday issued a directive classifying e-bikes as non-motorized vehicles and ordering agencies to develop rules allowing them on park roads. A public comment period will be held before the e-bike policy, which the park service announced Friday, is implemented.

Trail user groups, including the Pacific Crest Trail Association, American Hiking Society and the Back Country Horsemen of America, blasted the decision Friday for not including any analysis of the impacts to natural and cultural resources, trail conditions or visitors.