



# San Francisco Tomorrow

Working to Protect the Urban Environment

**Issue 329**      *Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow*      **July 2009**

## **SELLING(?) STATE PARK LAND**

The SFT Board opposes State Senate Bill 792, which authorizes a public trust lands exchange as well as either the exchange or sale of Candlestick Point State Recreation Area lands that would include significant changes to the State Park in order to facilitate the redevelopment of Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick. SFT does not oppose the redevelopment project if carried out in an environmentally sound manner, but there are several problems with this legislation:

- The map of the proposed public trust swap is still in draft form, as negotiations of the final boundaries continue;
- The legislation does not provide assurances that if any shipyard land is conveyed to the Park under this agreement it will be adequately remediated;
- The proposed amended park boundaries significantly impair its habitat values;
- Much of the new parkland that might be conveyed under this agreement is low-lying, and subject to sea level rise;
- If the Director of State Parks decides not to accept Shipyard land because of its contaminated status (even if remediated) then the Director can sell off 23% of Candlestick Point State Park land for the Lennar development;
- Any changes that the Director may want to make in the sale or exchange of lands is possible only if financially feasible for the project (and it does not say who determines financial feasibility).

The proposal is to dramatically reduce the width and possible total acreage of the current park, and instead to provide a shoreline band along both the Candlestick and Hunters Point shorelines. This significantly reduces the habitat value of the park, at which 180 species have been observed.



Burrowing ground squirrels support a population of raptors.

Proposition P, approved by voters in 2000, asks the City not to accept property transferred from the Navy unless fully remediated. The legislation does not currently demand full remediation of transferred property.

The proposed new park land (i.e., the south shoreline of the Hunters Point Shipyard) is at a lower elevation than the current park. The Bay Conservation and Development Commission has produced maps showing shoreline inundation at both the low (16") and high (55") scenarios— and virtually all of the the new parkland will be under water in either case. (See map at [http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/planning/climate\\_change/maps/16\\_55/cbay.pdf](http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/planning/climate_change/maps/16_55/cbay.pdf))

Because the negotiations with state and federal agencies are incomplete, this bill is necessarily short on detail and long on flexibility. SFT thinks this bill is premature, and recommends that it not move forward until negotiations are complete.

SB 792 will be heard in the Assembly Local Government Committee on July 8, and will then go to the Assembly floor for approval.

SFT asks it members to contact their State representatives with their concerns:

Assemblyman Ammiano c/o [matt.bunch@asm.ca.gov](mailto:matt.bunch@asm.ca.gov) and Senator Mark Leno c/o [Carlos.Machado@sen.ca.gov](mailto:Carlos.Machado@sen.ca.gov)



## ***A ROSE might not be a rose . . .***

The Recreation and Open Space Element (ROSE) of the City's General Plan is intended to provide a 20-year vision and policy framework to guide the acquisition and use of our open spaces. The last update of the ROSE was in 1986. A draft of the proposed update was released in May and is available for public review at <http://openspace.sfplanning.org/>

Although the comment deadline isn't until the end of September, planners have already begun to draft an Action Plan to implement objectives and policies that have not yet been approved. The Action Plan will consist of five- and ten-year programs describing who, how and when specific measures should be taken – a very important thing to do, once we know what we are trying to achieve.

The draft ROSE update includes several improvements over the current element, but it backslides in at least one area. In its admirable emphasis on making the most of our existing parks and other open spaces, it has deleted any target for future acquisitions. The current policy calls for an increase in per capita open space above 5.5 acres per thousand residents. While having such a policy does nothing to assure adequate open space quantity (Mission Bay, for example, was approved with far less than the 5.5 ratio), the lack of a goal will make it less likely that we'll ever get the ordinance or code changes necessary to require sufficient open space in future developments.

The draft ROSE update fails to note that the need for more public open space per person is rising as new development includes less and less private open space. The ROSE needs to acknowledge the value of residential open space and provide the policy support for future regulations to protect rear yards from development – for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The proposed update includes, to its credit, language about biodiversity, but it is poorly presented, with significant gaps and misunderstandings of the natural world. A substitute version of the biodiversity objective, prepared by Nature in the City, should be adopted instead. Ocean Beach gets a lot of attention in the update, with calls for activating it as a "true urban beach" (however that differs from a non-urban beach) and a "grand civic space," while totally ignoring the presence of the Western Snowy Plover (listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act), along with many other avian species and the people who enjoy observing them.

The update mentions some good environmental measures, but fails to apply a comprehensive set of sustainability policies to the entire open space system and the way it is used. A new objective is needed to bring the ROSE into conformance with the City's Sustainability Plan and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

There are many more ways that the draft ROSE update can be improved. Please visit the website and make your views known.

## ***Senate Committee Votes to Renew Clean Water Act***



Recent Supreme Court decisions (*SWANCC* and *Rapanos*) have severely curtailed the scope of federal protection for the nation's streams, lakes and wetlands. The US EPA now estimates that over 60% of our streams are no longer protected by the Clean Water Act as a result of the court's decision that only "navigable" waters, that can be boated on, are subject to federal protections. Small ponds and wetlands will equally no longer be protected. That means, for example, that sewage treatment plants that discharge into small streams may no longer be regulated under the Clean Water Act. Industrial pollutant discharges into such small streams will also be free from federal regulation under the Clean Water Act.

Senate Bill S787, the Clean Water Restoration Act, would return federal jurisdiction to these waters by removing the word "navigable" from the Clean Water Act and letting the EPA regulate all the waters of the United States as it has since the 1972 passage of the Act. The bill does not extend federal jurisdiction beyond what it has been for those 37 years and does not create any new regulations.

S. 787 passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on June 18, and next goes to the Senate floor. While committee chair Senator Boxer has been a champion of the bill, Senator Feinstein has not yet agreed to vote for it. Please take a moment to call or write to Senator Feinstein and urge her to support the Clean Water Restoration Act.

For more information please visit [www.cleanwaternet.org](http://www.cleanwaternet.org)

## MUNI: HITTING THE REFRESH BUTTON Rethinking the Central Subway

Weeks ago, the City and County of San Francisco announced staggering projected budget deficits: \$438 million in 2009, \$615 million in 2010, \$746 million in 2011. Now, with voters rejecting State budget measures, San Francisco stands to lose another \$175 million this fiscal year, as the State cuts state support and borrows local revenues.

Muni's current \$129 million deficit is just a precursor---with a series of annual deficits that fare increases and service cuts will not erase. Existing trains and buses already have a \$609 million deficit for basic maintenance. The new Muni Metro East Maintenance Facility has no budget for the foreseeable future. The Central Subway's EIR/EIS predicts cutbacks in surface buses/ trolleys of 76,400 hours annually in the Central Subway corridor---ostensibly for diversion of ridership underground but more likely to offset increased operational and maintenance costs.

**SaveMuni.com** is a new San Francisco organization dedicated to rendering the Central Subway project more useful to more people, thereby stimulating improvements to public transit throughout the City. The Central Subway's newly increased \$1.58 billion budget, or \$929 million per mile, can be San Francisco's transit salvation. Through wiser investment of the \$929 million per mile, \$3 million per mile could quickly transform 310 miles of roadway into transit-oriented streets. With \$1.58 billion, that's 526 miles of world-class streetscapes. Why wait for year 2018? Let's lubricate our streets **now** for public transit, pedestrians, bicycles, neighborhood beautification, smart stormwater management and economic benefits.

Unfortunately, the Central Subway was initiated and promoted through a political planning process instead of a transportation planning process. This has directed far more attention to maneuvering the project through the federal funding maze than in ensuring transportation benefits. However, because of a hiatus in the flow of State and Federal dollars, a new opportunity exists to reshape this \$1.58 billion allocation.

**SaveMuni.com** is urging elected officials to establish a blue ribbon committee of transportation experts, charging them to objectively evaluate the Central Subway proposal. The Central Subway concept needs an outside analysis, with special attention paid to the transportation benefit-to-cost

ratio and the project's impact on Muni's future operating and maintenance costs. Given the country's current economic crisis, transportation investments must provide short-term economic stimuli as well as long-term transportation enhancements. Through honest dialogue, San Francisco can make the most of this once-in-a-century opportunity to significantly improve Muni operations as a whole.

**You can make a difference!** The Central Subway's schedule has been delayed for two years, and the project cost has escalated. More dollars are being requested. Please write elected leaders and ask for a better transportation future!

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania  
Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20500

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office  
Building  
Washington DC 20510

Congresswoman  
Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232 US Capitol  
Washington DC 20515

Transportation Secretary  
Ray LaHood  
US Department of  
Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington DC 20590

Senator Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office  
Building  
Washington DC 20510

Mayor Gavin Newsom  
City Hall  
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Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Visit [www.SaveMuni.com](http://www.SaveMuni.com) for an analysis of the Central Subway Project.

### **JUNE SFT BOARD ACTIONS**

#### ***Election of Officers***

**President** – Jennifer Clary  
**Vice Presidents** – Chris Duderstadt, Arthur Chang, Arthur Feinstein, Jane Morrison  
**Treasurer** – Jim Lew  
**Secretary** – Denise D'Anne

#### ***Motions***

**Oppose** Governor's proposal to close 80% of state parks

**Support** retention of BCDC as a state agency with all current powers

#### **Other state budget recommendations**

- support repeal of 2/3 budget requirement
- support repeal of commercial portion of Jarvis-Gann (Prop 13)
- support restoration of 2% vehicle license fee
- support restoration of alcohol fee vetoed by Governor



Visit [www.sanfranciscotomorrow.org](http://www.sanfranciscotomorrow.org) for current updates on issues!

### ***GGNRA Personnel Changes***

Frank Dean was recently appointed as the Acting Superintendent of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to replace the late Brian O'Neill, and Craig Kenkel is the new Acting Assistant Superintendent taking the place of the recently retired Mai-Liis Bartling. Dean has worked for the Park Service for more than 30 years, and has worked in the GGNRA before. Kenkel is an expert in cultural resources.

### ***SFT Mourns the Loss of Brian O'Neill***

Brian O'Neill, superintendent of the GGNRA since 1986, died May 13<sup>th</sup> at 67 years young. Brian's commitment to parks and to young people began at an early age. While still in high school, he, his twin brother Alan, and their mother founded a nonprofit organization to take city kids to visit national parks.

Brian helped with the planning of the GGNRA when most of it was still under military control, and he convinced President Nixon to endorse the concept of a park in San Francisco. Amy Meyer, often referred to as the mother of the GGNRA, said that Brian was part of the park even before it was born.

He oversaw a number of additions to the GGNRA, including Mori Point, a 110-acre stretch of headlands adjacent to SF's Sharp Park in Pacifica. Under Brian's tenure, the number of park service volunteers grew to 20,000, the largest number of volunteer workers of any park in the world. His energies were most recently focused on luring young people out of the city and into the 118 square miles of open space that he had helped save.

At a moving celebration held at Crissy Field on May 29<sup>th</sup>, a wide spectrum of family, friends, colleagues, admirers remembered Brian for his dedication, accomplishments, warmth and humor. Few eyes remained dry as the huge crowd sang "When Irish Eyes are Smiling."



**Brian O'Neill**



*Annual SFT Picnic*



August 15th  
Noon to 3pm

Candlestick  
State Park

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