

REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

D. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

6. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

d. Natural and Cultural Resources Committee (05/18/2011) (Sutter)

Committee Members: Whitney Dotson, Beverly Lane, Carol Severin

EBRPD Staff: Mike Anderson, Gayle Still, Neal Fujita, Pete Alexander, Jeff Wilson, Rick Parmer, Denise Defreese, Kelly Barrington, Steve Bobzien, Nancy Brownfield, Denise Defreese, Dave Amme, Kevin Takei, Celia McCarthy

Public: Eric Grijalva, Anna Marie Guerrero, Jacky Kehl

A meeting of the Board Natural and Cultural Resources Committee was held on Wednesday, May 18, 2011 at District Headquarters, 2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, CA. Chairperson Whitney Dotson called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. The following is a summary of the items discussed:

I. Brushy Peak Archaeological District and Special Protection Feature (C. McCarthy)

Park Planner Celia McCarthy updated the Committee on the Cultural District that was recorded with the State last summer. The Brushy Peak Archaeological District is the first recordation of bedrock mortar areas that has been completed in the San Francisco Bay Area. A Land Use Plan Amendment is being prepared to expand the existing Special Protection Feature at Brushy Peak to match the boundaries of the one-square-mile Archaeological District, and to incorporate management and resource protection guidelines. Interpretive and Recreation Services Manager Rick Parmer introduced Annamarie Leon Guerrero, who is doing her Master's thesis on Cultural Resources at Sonoma State. Although Morgan Territory is the main topic of her thesis, she went with Jeff Fentress to Brushy Peak. Ms. Guerrero said the proposed protection zone, combined with the District record and strong interpretation program, would provide for good interaction with Native Americans. She explained that the advantage of having the information recorded at Sonoma State is that developers and project planners can see what has already been recorded and use it as a predictor of additional resources there. Native American consultation for the Brushy Peak Special Protection Feature will be scheduled for early June. Chair Dotson and Director Lane asked to be included in the meeting. The decision ends up being the District's, but the consultation provides a clear path.

2. Non Native Spartina Control Program (P. Alexander)

The non-native Spartina control program is a Bay Area wide effort sponsored by the California Coastal Conservancy. A total of 11 agencies are participating in this control effort. Estimates of the Bay Area population of non-native Spartina peaked at approximately 1,500 acres in 2006 and in 2010 had been reduced to less than 400 acres. In 2010, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) treated a total of 173 acres of *Spartina alterniflora* hybrids within District holdings and adjoining properties on the eastern shore of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays.

Herbicide application rates in 24.4 of the 173 acres were adjusted by the District to accomplish “chemical mowing” of the spartina. Chemical mowing is used to prevent hybrid Spartina from going to seed while still allowing the bulk of the Spartina biomass to remain as habitat for California Clapper Rails. Although this method helps to protect habitat, continued chemical mowing raises the risk of plant resistance and continued seed dispersal.

Restoration of marsh areas where non-native Spartina has been significantly reduced was started in 2008 with the seeding of native grindelia in Cogswell, Oro Loma and Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline areas. In addition to EBRPD’s native seed dispersal, Save The Bay, (STB), planted 700 grindelia seedlings in the western section of Arrowhead marsh to assess the plant’s ability to survive in various elevations within the marsh. Restoration efforts will be ramped up in 2011 based on the results of the STB planting study and as a measure to replace habitat lost to a number of marsh dwellers including the California Clapper Rail.

The goal of the program is containment, control and eradication. Containment has been achieved, control is ongoing and eradication is expected within this decade. Director Lane suggested that this item be presented to the Board.

3. Point Pinole Oyster Reef Project (N. Fujita)

The Watershed Project is a non-profit group that has implemented a program called “The Living Shoreline” which is comprised of both education and restoration components. As part of “The Living Shoreline” program, The Watershed Project has approached the District proposing a project to install artificial oyster reefs near the fishing pier at Point Pinole. The purpose of these oyster reefs is to enhance native oyster populations and other species in San Francisco Bay and provide an educational opportunity. The artificial oyster reef will be comprised of grouped concrete “reef balls” which act as recruitment substrate for native oysters as well as other sub tidal species. The reef balls will also work as an outdoor classroom for local schools to learn about the San Francisco Bay ecosystem and the benefits native oyster beds provide.

Although providing benefits, the oyster reefs may pose concerns for park operations and could be problematic for boating and fishing. Director Lane would like the installation of reef balls to be done to look like they evolved there and are part of the landscape, instead of being installed in rows. The installation of interpretive panels explaining the reef ball project is being discussed with the Watershed Project.

4. Future Agenda Items

Director Lane would like an update on grazing management and the Serpentine Prairie progress at Redwood. Director Severin requested information on the Sea Level Rise Study and update on water trail camping.

5. Public Comment

Jakki Kehl, Mutsun Ohlone, asked if there would be Native American interpretation of the Pt. Pinole Oyster Reef Project. Ms. Kehl said it would be a great educational opportunity because almost every Native American site has oyster shells.

Regarding Brushy Peak, Ms. Kehl reflected back on the three or four years since she first came to the Board about Brushy Peak consultation on how the cultural sites there would be stewarded. She expressed her frustration that there has been very little follow-up. After two years, the first consultation meeting was in June 2010 and only three native people were able to come. It was a good meeting, but nothing that was discussed ever went further. Brushy Peak was registered as a District, but only for the value of the (archaeological) data. She said Brushy Peak qualifies for the National Register as a Traditional Cultural Place (TCP) because it is a sacred site where Falcon was born and an important place for the stories of native people. Brushy Peak is important to the Native American people and they want it protected. The trail should not have been able to be built with the permit that it had because the site map and database was incomplete. Native Americans want a voice in stewardship. Several people were opposed to capping the mortar that was damaged because it doesn't solve the issue of protection since the trail leads up to the area and the public can go off trail where the most damage can occur. Ms. Kehl suggested the idea of a "closed trail," where people, bikes, horses, or dogs on leashes would be prohibited from going off the trail. She regretted having a schedule conflict with the training session in December and complained that she has not been contacted about her availability for a second consultation meeting scheduled for June. Director Lane recommended that Ms. Kehl provide her email address to Celia McCarthy.

Ms. Kehl stated that the database (for the Cultural Atlas) is incomplete and a letter from SHPO pointed that out. She has never been able to get someone to come back and say what condition the sites are in. The photos from the Holman reports of 2001 and 2006 should be compared with current conditions to see if any damage has been done. Also, at the time that the pond was built, two big boulders with mortars were moved to a shed at Brushy Peak and CEQA states any items removed from a cultural site needs to be accessioned and recorded and that was not done. Chair Dotson asked Ms. Kehl how she would propose to improve the processes she has identified. She said to have some consultation meetings and keep notes on what is decided.

Ms. Kehl said the Native Americans would like to be consulted on the Master Plan. She is also concerned how the plan to take out and reinforce part of the dam at Los Vaqueros might increase access to the caves because of the trails being changed. Interpretive Parklands Unit Manager Kelly Barrington said that Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) is still working on a draft that has not been finalized, but that most of the trails would follow existing alignments and would be the same distance from the caves as now.

Ms. Kehl indicated that her main concern is that the Native people are still struggling to get consulted and have a voice in stewardship. At her request, a picture of a basket that wasn't Ohlone was taken off the District website, but another basket that has nothing to do with the cultural people of this area is still there on the website. She suggested that Linda Yamane would probably have some artwork that would be more appropriate.

Chair Dotson adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.