

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, September 7, 2010

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

b. Ecology Committee (6/09/10) (Dotson)

Committee Members: Whitney Dotson, Carol Severin, Mike Anderson, Gail Broesder, Britt Thorsnes, Anne Scheer

EBRPD Staff: Nancy Brownfield, Neal Fujita, Aileen Theile, Pete Alexander, Gayle Still, Mark Ragatz

Public: Peter Rauch, Tom Kelly, Jane Kelly

A meeting of the Ecology Committee was held on Wednesday, June 9, 2010 at District Headquarters, Oakland, CA. This meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by Chairperson Whitney Dotson. The following is a summary of the items discussed:

I. Review Current Status of the Tilden Golf Course Integrated Pest Management Program, 2010 (Brownfield)

IPM Specialist Nancy Brownfield provided an update on the progress to complete the Tilden Park Golf Course Integrated Pest Management Program this year. This is a collaborative effort between American Golf Corporation and the District's Integrated Pest Management Program. Current efforts are focused on incorporating new problems and/or changes in pest management practices into the revised IPM program. Ms. Brownfield also briefly discussed the current proposed repairs to Wildcat Creek Restoration Project and the proposed Wildcat Creek – Tilden Golf Course Surface Water Quality study evaluating potential impacts on turf management activities on this section of Wildcat Creek. Maintenance Chief Anne Scheer asked who on the District staff is responsible for the golf course. Unit Manager Mark Ragatz said that he was and that Tilden Park Supervisor Sergio Huerta is responsible for day to day operating issues. Peter Rauch asked if the changing nature of golf courses has to do with something substantive such as pests being tolerated. Ms. Brownfield said that Tilden is a PGA rated golf course, so gophers are tolerated in the roughs, but not the greens. Tilden is in a unique setting that lends itself to wildlife. Chair Whitney Dotson said that Tilden has an opportunity to become a state of the art golf

course. Director Severin asked when the American Golf Corporation lease is up. Mr. Ragatz said the 15 year lease was signed in 2000 with two five year options.

2. Progress Report on Development of an Annual District-wide Integrated Pest Management Training Program (Brownfield)

IPM Specialist Nancy Brownfield discussed the course content of a proposed District-wide training in the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policies, Practices and Implementation. Key components of the training stress what IPM is and is not, understanding pest biology, the value of monitoring, mappings techniques and strategies that can reduce impacts of weeds and vertebrate problems. Chair Whitney Dotson asked if IPM methods would include removal by hand. Ms. Brownfield said yes, even at the golf course, hand removal of weeds is encouraged, but mostly mowers are used. A field exercise will be included in the training. The training will be available to all interested, but mandatory for all new employees. Public Member Peter Rauch asked if the GIS information would increase the methods used. AGM Mike Anderson said the first step is to capture the data, then use that to structure the program. Resource Analyst Aileen Theile said she's been mapping and there are years of data, but the problem is that as the park district grows the staffing does not. The idea of the training is to get the park staff involved. Tom Kelly said park users could be beneficial for gathering information also. He was concerned about all the pesticides and herbicides in the Fire Management Plan and wanted to know how that is determined. Ms. Brownfield said all pesticides used have gone through a review for both human and environmental health and that the list of products is actually quite short. Mr. Rauch asked about the invertebrates, other than domestic rats, and the nature of the criteria for moles, voles, etc. Ms. Brownfield said it is not driven by numbers, but by the damage they are doing and if it is a public health risk. Ms. Theile said there is a site review process, such as sanitation efforts or cultural practices and then you go back to reevaluate. Ms. Brownfield asked the committee if there were any comments on additions or subtractions from the training. Chief of Maintenance Anne Scheer said she would bring it to the Operations Committee and get back to her.

3. Effects of the Invasive Spartina Program on California Clapper Rail Populations at District Shoreline Parks (Fujita)

Since 2003, the Invasive Spartina Program (ISP) implemented strategies to eradicate an invasive non-native eastern cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) throughout San Francisco Bay. It was perceived as a major threat to the ecosystem within the Bay. The Park District has been an active participant in the ISP collaborating on treatment strategies that have been highly effective at the eradication/control of non-native cordgrass along District shorelines. The California clapper rail is a state/federally listed shorebird that prefers non-native eastern cordgrass as habitat. Coinciding with the effective cordgrass eradication efforts of the ISP was a significant decrease in clapper rail populations due to the loss of habitat. An important question facing the District is whether to continue to fully support the ISP in its cordgrass eradication efforts to the detriment of clapper rail populations. Stewardship Manager Neal Fujita provided updates on the current status of ISP efforts, clapper rail populations, recent meetings between the ISP, District and other stakeholders and finally, the District's approach on this issue in the future. He focused on Martin Luther King

Shoreline and Arrowhead Marsh because of the large population of clapper rails. The east side is chemically mowed to leave some habitat for the clapper rail and the west side is fully treated with aerial spraying. The native pickleweed is coming back, but the clapper rail population has declined. Tom and Jane Kelley expressed their concern about the decline of the clapper rail population, and the chemicals used for the removal of the spartina alterniflora as a poor choice. Mr. Fujita explained that the choice of the ISP to return the marsh to its native environment has been successful in preventing a monoculture situation and that the historical population of the clapper rail is not known, so the goal is to achieve a balance. Mr. Rauch suggested the goal not be the clapper rail or getting rid of spartina, but creating a healthy, original marsh spectrum of habitat quality, because if that is not in the forefront, the marsh could be lost. Mr. Fujita said that is precisely the goal. For 2010, Stewardship plans to chemical mow new marsh to get rid of seeds, but maintain habitat for the clapper rail, then introduce native species and continue to monitor the clapper rail population and most importantly to frequently meet with researchers to make the best management decisions.

Public Comment

Public Member Jane Kelly, representing a small but growing group of park users and environmentalists who are concerned about the growing reliance on chemicals to combat invasive plants and animals asked for the District's support for a pilot project that will demonstrate it is possible to meet the goals of the District's Wildfire Management Plan without the use of chemicals. Ms. Kelley proposed pilot projects at two District sites – Redwood Park in Oakland and Miller Knox Regional Shoreline or Pt. Pinole in Richmond. The removal of invasive plants and the prevention of resprouting of eucalyptus would be conducted without the use of any chemical herbicides by volunteers organized by the Kelly's and supplemented by the Conservation Corps and other concerned groups and individuals. Chair Dotson said since this item was not on the agenda, it couldn't be discussed. AGM Mike Anderson said it's a wonderful offer, and we can comment. There is a volunteer project at Redwood for French Broom that gives a good example for a pilot volunteer project and would be a good place to start and expand from there. The Natural and Cultural Resources Committee would be the proper place for this item to be on the agenda or Operations, since they have something like that going on. Mr. Anderson will confirm with Operations AGM John Escobar that the June 17th Operations Committee would be the best place for this proposal.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:28.