EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, March 22, 2021
4:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF WILL ATTEND VIA TELECONFERENCE

Pursuant to Governor Newsom’s Executive Order No. N-29-20 and the Alameda County Health Officer’s current Shelter in Place Order, effective March 31, 2020, the East Bay Regional Park District (“Park District”) Headquarters will not be open to the public and the Park Advisory Committee and staff will be participating in the meetings via phone/video conferencing.

Members of the public can listen and view the meeting in the following way: Via the Park District’s live video stream which can be found at: https://youtu.be/HN131JLax3c.

Public comments may be submitted one of three ways:

1. **Via email** to Sharon Clay, Recording Secretary at sclay@ebparks.org. Email must contain in the subject line public comments – not on the agenda or public comments – agenda item #. It is preferred that these written comments be submitted by **Friday, March 19, 2021 at 5:00 pm.**

2. **Via voicemail** at (510) 544-2021. The caller must start the message by stating public comments – not on the agenda or public comments – agenda item # followed by their name and place of residence, followed by their comments. It is preferred that these voicemail comments be submitted by **Friday, March 19, 2021 at 5:00 pm.**

**Live via zoom.** If you would like to make a live public comment during the meeting this option is available through the virtual meeting platform: [https://zoom.us/j/93140775330](https://zoom.us/j/93140775330). Note that this virtual meeting platform link will let you into the virtual meeting for the purpose of providing a public comment. If you do not intend to make a public comment, please use the YouTube link at [https://youtu.be/HN131JLax3c](https://youtu.be/HN131JLax3c) to observe the meeting. It is preferred that those requesting to speak during the meeting contact Sharon Clay, Recording Secretary at [sclay@ebparks.org](mailto:sclay@ebparks.org) by 5:00 pm on Friday, March 19, 2021 via email or voicemail (510) 544-2021 to provide name and the subject of the public comment or item to be addressed.

Comments received during the meeting and up until the public comment period on the relevant agenda item is closed and will be provided in writing to the PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE, including transcribed voicemails. All comments received by the close of the public comment period will be available after the meeting as supplemental materials and will become part of the official meeting record. However, to ensure that the Committee members will be able to review your comments prior to the close of the meeting, please submit your public comment by no later than **Friday, March 19, 2021 at 5:00 pm.** Please try to limit your written comments to no more than 300 words. The Park District cannot guarantee that its network and/or the site will be uninterrupted. To ensure that the Park District receives your comments, you are strongly encouraged to submit your comments in writing in advance of the meeting.

For future meetings, the Park District is exploring additional ways for the public to submit comments. If you have any questions about utilizing the audio stream, please contact the Recording Secretary of the Committee, Sharon Clay at [sclay@ebparks.org](mailto:sclay@ebparks.org) or 510-544-2021. To ensure the best opportunity for Park District staff to address your question, please contact the Recording Secretary prior to **5:00 pm on Friday, March 19, 2021.**
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A copy of the background materials concerning these agenda items, including any material that may have been submitted less than 72 hours before the meeting, is available for inspection on the District’s website (www.ebparks.org), the Headquarters reception desk, and at the meeting.

Accommodations and Access
District facilities and meetings comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If special accommodations are needed for you to participate, please contact the Clerk of the Board at 510-544-2020 as soon as possible, but preferably at least three working days prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>STAFF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:00 pm</td>
<td>1. Roll Call (Virtual)</td>
<td>Recording Secretary</td>
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<td>2. Approval of the Minutes</td>
<td>February 22, 2021</td>
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<td>3. Board Member Comments</td>
<td>Boardmember Beverly Lane</td>
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<td>4. Foundation Update</td>
<td>Juliana Schirmer, Chief Administrative Officer</td>
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<td>5. Public Comments</td>
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Public comments may be submitted one of two ways:

1) Via email to Sharon Clay, Recording Secretary, at sclay@ebparks.org. Email must contain the subject line “Public Comments – not on the agenda or comments on the agenda” and indicate the item # followed by their name and place of residence, followed by their comments. It is preferred that these written comments be submitted by Friday, March 19, 2021 at 5:00 pm.

2) Via voicemail at 510-544-2016. The caller must start the message by stating’’ Public Comments – not on the agenda” followed by their name and place of residence, followed by their comments. It is preferred that these voicemail comments be submitted by Friday, March 19, 2021 at 5:00 pm.

If you are interested in speaking during Public Comments, please contact the Recording Secretary at sclay@ebparks.org for call in information by Friday, March 19, 2021 at 5:00 pm. Email must contain in the subject line, Park Advisory Committee meeting 03-22-21 call in request. If you would like to provide public comment through the virtual meeting platform, please use https://zoom.us/j/93140775330 to participate. Note that this virtual meeting platform link will let you into the virtual meeting waiting room and then into the meeting for the purpose to provide comment. Please use the YouTube link https://youtu.be/HN131JLax3c to observe the meeting when you are not providing public comment.
4:15 pm 6. Presentations
(I) a. Introduction of New General Manager Sabrina B. Landreth
   Sabrina B. Landreth, General Manager
(I) b. Strategy for Inclusive Community Engagement
   Carol Johnson, AGM Public Affairs
   Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs
   Lisa Baldinger, Legislative and Policy Management Analyst
(I) c. Shoreline Adaptation Overview
   Brian Holt, Chief of Planning, Trails, & GIS
   Chantal Alatorre, Senior Planner
(I) d. Public Affairs Strategic Work Plan 2021
   Carol Johnson, AGM Public Affairs

5:45 pm 7. PAC Member Comments
8. Report from Chair
   Rick Rickard, PAC Chair
9. Board Committee Reports
10. Old Business
11. New Business

6:00 pm 12. Adjournment

ATTACHMENTS
1. Strategy for Inclusive Community Engagement Memo
2. Shoreline Adaptation Overview Memo
3. 2021 Public Affairs Strategic Work Plan 2021 Memo
4. PAC Work Plan
5. Status of Recommendations
6. Articles & Correspondence

Park Advisory Committee Members
Rick Rickard Chair)
Carlyn Obringer (Vice Chair)
Erich Pfuehler, Staff Coordinator

2021 Meeting Dates
January 25
February 22
March 22
April 26
May 24
June 28

July 26
August (No Mtg.)
September 27
October 25
November 22
December 6 (Annual Dinner)

R - Recommendation for Future Board Consideration
I - Informational
D - Discussion
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**Unapproved Meeting Minutes**  
**PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
February 22, 2021

**MEMBERS**  
Best, Burke, Cary, Chang, Claxton, Corkin, Deschambault, Dieter, Gregory, Ho, Lacy, Mahadevan, Nason, Obringer, Rickard, Robinson, Sanwong, Skaredoff, Tsutsui, Williams

**REMOTE:** Lacy, Mahadevan, Nason, Obringer, Rickard, Robinson, Sanwong, Skaredoff, Tsutsui, Williams

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF:** Pfuehler, Victor, Johnson, Ciaburro, Kelchner, Schirmer, O’Connor, Reiff, Willis, Mason, Holt, Brede, Love, James, Erickson (PrimeGov), Clay, Barial-Knight

**BOARD:** Ellen Corbett

**PUBLIC:** Ole Ohlson, Richard Bangert

1. **Roll call:** The recording secretary took roll call. PAC chair Rickard opened the meeting. He stated consistent with Governor Gavin Newsom’s Executive Order N-25-20 issued on March 12, 2020 in response to the threat of Covid-19 and the Alameda County Health Department’s Order dated March 16, 2020, the Park Advisory Committee may utilize teleconferencing to remotely participate in meetings.

2. **Approval of Minutes – January 25, 2021 Minutes:** The January 25, 2021 minutes were approved at the February 22, 2021 meeting. The motion was made by PAC member Obringer and seconded by PAC member Best. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Board Member Comments:** Board Member Ellen Corbett thanked the PAC for their work in crafting the dog policy. She stated the Board is grateful for the committee’s work. Corbett reported on Thursday, February 25 there will be a Zoom webinar to celebrate Black History month. The conversation will be led by many of the black employees to highlight people’s paths, experiences and their contributions to the Park District. Corbett noted one very significant action of the Board was to pass a resolution supporting people of color and denouncing racism. What grew out of that was the hiring of a consultant to help the District ensure diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

   * Director Corbett’s comments came at the end of the meeting after the other presentations were made.

4. **Foundation Update:** No update.

5. **Public Comments:** No public comments.

6. **Presentations:**

   a. **Year in Review – Carol Victor, Interim General Manager**  
   Chair Rickard introduced Carol Victor, Interim General Manager. He acknowledged Victor stepped in during a difficult time for the District. Rickard stated Victor has done a great job holding things together and moving the organization forward. The PAC, District staff and the East Bay community owe her a debt of gratitude.

   Carol Victor, Interim General Manager stated 2020 was obviously shaped by Covid-19. Despite that, the District was able to accomplish much in 2020. All meetings switched to virtual platforms. The District worked with both county public health officers for guidance about parks
as an essential service during the Covid-19 pandemic. Measures were taken to protect Park District staff. An operational handbook for the bulk of the Park District workforce and one for Public Safety were created. Park use increased during the pandemic. The parks were deemed essential.

Victor reported accomplishments for the year included the opening of the Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline park; the restoration of the marsh, restrooms and trail improvements at Bay Point in Pittsburg; the completion of the San Francisco Bay Trail to close the gap between Buchanan and Gilman in Albany. Other noteworthy accomplishments included the adoption of the Land Use Plan and Environmental Impact Report for the 2,500 acre Concord Hills Regional Park, the addition of almost 400 acres of land for a total of 125,313.59 acres of Park District lands, the leveraging of over $11 million from external acquisition grants and funds, and the secured purchase options or other agreements to acquire an additional 626 acres of future parklands. Conservation partnerships and acquisitions included 13 completed park and trail projects totaling $41 million. Phase 1 of the site stabilization began at Tidewater Day Use Area. The Districtwide Sanitary Sewer Assessment report was completed.

Victor reported 2020 was the worst fire season in California history. In August, there was a storm with over 12,000 lightning strikes which started fires throughout the state. The lightning strikes resulted in an unprecedented number of fires on District parklands. Five parks were burned as part of the SCU Complex: Del Valle, Morgan Territory, Round Valley, Sunol and Ohlone Wilderness.

Digital Learning brought the parks to people. Over 2,000 pre-recorded programs reached 344,782 people. Public Affairs expanded social media programs to bolster community support and outreach on park use and safety, closures, dog owners, grazing and Covid-19 social distancing messages.

Victor outlined some of retired General Manager Robert Doyle’s 47-year career accomplishments. Under his leadership, the number of permanently protected parklands doubled between 1985 and 2020 to 125,186 acres, and 20 new regional parks were opened. The country’s largest urban regional trail network of over 200 miles was created. Urban shoreline parks were expanded to cover 55 miles. Importantly, Doyle helped to secure over $1 billion for improvements and programs through grants, bond measure and state funding.

PAC member Gregory inquired about tree die off and asked for updates about the issue. Victor replied the District is working with regional partners, CAL FIRE and CalOES. The die off appears to be an opportunistic fungus that is attacking the trees. It is believed drought stress and climate change has contributed to the ability of this fungus to take hold. PAC member Nason asked if the fungus is attacking more than one species. Victor replied it was her understanding it’s affecting acacia, eucalyptus, bay and pine.

PAC member Corkin asked if an environmental damage assessment has been done for the recent Chevron Refinery oil spill in Richmond. Victor replied the damage assessment is being undertaken with the Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR). They have taken the lead on the natural resource damage assessment. OSPR will work with the Fish and Wildlife Service both at the state and federal level, NOAA and the Park District Stewardship staff to assess damages. They will facilitate compensation from Chevron for staff response, cleanup, impact to the beaches and park closures, loss of recreation income incurred, and environmental damages.
**Recommendation:** This was an informational item.

(I)  b. **Regional Parks Foundation Annual Report for 2020 – Carol Johnson, AGM of Public Affairs and Juliana Schirmer, Chief Administrative Officer**

Juliana Schirmer, Chief Administrative Officer reported 2020 was the tenth year of consecutive growth for the Foundation. With the $3.1-million-dollar contribution from the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy endowment, the Foundation raised over $5 million. Schirmer stated the membership program, individual and corporate donations, bequests and the year-end appeal all exceeded the Foundation’s mid-year revised goals. Schirmer explained the Foundation Board launched a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee in 2019. It is comprised of Foundation members, staff and Park District liaisons. A new initiative was created on Juneteenth. The Foundation is committed to providing free memberships to underserved communities – 10% of new membership revenues will fund the program.

Schirmer reported through the grants the Foundation provides to the Park District, relationships have been established with several nonprofit organizations such as Girls, Inc., Brothers on the Rise, YES – Nature to Neighborhoods, etc. The Foundation is also working to develop relationships with external partners such as Outdoor Afro, Latino Outdoors, MLK Freedom Center, and the Girl and Boy Scouts of America. Schirmer highlighted in 2020 the Foundation was able to provide $620,000 to the Park District to purchase 1,812 life jackets, 906 jackets for the Life Jacket Loaner Program, serve 1,210 through the Youth Job Fairs, Multicultural Wellness Walks, the SHINE Program and Multicultural Diversity Training. Due to Covid-19 the Foundation reallocated transportation and onsite food funding to toolkits for distanced learning.

Obringer asked what types of activities are offered to the various youth groups. Schirmer replied it is a free family membership good for one year. The purpose of this program is to serve low income individuals with a specific focus from the Foundation board on black, brown, indigenous and people of color. Foundation staff are reaching out to program partners to find if they serve one or both counties, provide equal services to boys and girls, and ensure everybody has equal access. PAC member Robinson inquired if the Bay Point area is the furthest east in Contra Costa County this program will reach. Schirmer responded she would have to check, but welcomed suggestions from Robinson about potential partners.

**Recommendation:** This was an informational item.

(I)  c. **Dog Owner Education Program – Dave Mason, Public Information Supervisor and Alan Love, Support Services Captain**

Alan Love, Support Services Captain stated in 2018, the PAC undertook a study aimed at understanding dog engagement, dog use and how it affects the Park District. The PAC published a report in 2018 which outlined some of the key findings from stakeholder engagement and made several recommendations. The PAC interviewed key stakeholder groups such as professional dog walkers and groups opposed to dogs in the parks aimed at gaining an understanding of how dogs are being used and viewed in the Park District. Staff worked to develop a program based on this report to educate park users about following of the District’s dog rules.

Dave Mason, Public Information Supervisor explained the Park District is known as one of the most dog-friendly in the country because of its dog policy and high volume of dog owners utilizing the parks on a regular basis. The Pup Pro campaign was designed to be consistent
with, and further, the District’s brand, image and reputation in the community. It is also an opportunity for fun and friendly engagement. Circlepoint Communications was hired to help staff develop an educational campaign. External dog owner stakeholder groups were included in the process.

Mason explained simple messages and photos of actual park users with their dogs are being used effectively and are aimed at encouraging dog owners to follow the rules, be respectful of other park users, and keep dogs safe by leashing them around cattle and horses. Park signage, brochures, posters, Regional in Nature, District website, social media, dog groups and shelters have all been utilized to spread the message.

PAC member Tsutsui inquired if there are plans aimed at following up after the campaign launch to assess increased compliance and reduced conflicts targeted by the campaign. Mason replied the plan is to pick one park as a pilot, inundate it with the various messaging strategies, then check with park rangers, other staff and park users to see if there have been noticed improvements in behavior. Best thanked staff for the great report. She noted her favorite campaign photo was of the cattle with the fire helmets. Best considered it an instantaneous way to message dog users to leash their dogs around grazing cattle.

**Recommendation:** This was an informational item.

(I) d. Roddy Ranch Golf Course Planning – Edward Willis, Planner and Devan Reiff, Principal Planner

Devan Reiff, Principal Planner introduced Eddie Willis, Planner and Project Manager who gave an update about the habitat restoration public access plan being developed for the 230+ acre former golf course at Roddy Ranch. Willis oriented the committee to the project location in Contra Costa County on the boarder of Antioch and Brentwood. It is part of a large swath of land purchased in 2018 by the Park District and East County Habitat Conservancy.

Through grazing and mechanical means, staff have been able to restore the golf course to a more natural landscape, which is primarily grasslands and 5% tree cover. Goals for this land include enhancement and restoration for sensitive species and habitat. Other goals include managing and enhancing water resources, supporting wetlands with stormwater drainage and installing green infrastructure. Recreation goals include providing passive recreation opportunities and a plan for eventual public access to Black Diamond Mines through trail connections. The goals also support a diversity of outdoor recreational activities including picnic areas, interpretive opportunities and restrooms. This land will be the first major access point to Habitat Conservancy preserve lands.

Next steps include the Environmental Review (CEQA), mandatory environmental studies and three public meetings beginning in March. Staff hope to bring the final plan for approval before the PAC and Executive Committee of the Board of Directors in the winter of 2021 or 2022.

PAC member Obringer asked about funding and the project timeline. Brian Holt, Chief of Planning, Trails and GIS replied much of the major infrastructure is in place, and most expenses will be related to restoration which is funded by the Habitat Conservancy.

**Recommendation:** This was an informational item.
7. **PAC Member Comments**
   There were no comments.

8. **Report from Chair** – Rickard reported he and PAC members Ho and Gregory attended the Trail Users Working Group last Friday to view presentations from the mountain biking community. It was an interesting discussion with a wide variety of opinions. It was a worthwhile meeting. Rickard announced the next meeting will feature equestrians. Several PAC members participated in the Center for Regional Change’s listening sessions in cooperation with the District. It was a robust discussion which provided feedback regarding the Park District on several areas.

9. **Board Committee Reports** – None.

10. **Old Business** – None.

11. **New Business** – None.

12. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Summary of Actions:
   1. The PAC approved the January 25, 2021 Park Advisory Committee minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Clay
Recording Secretary
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Assistant General Manager of Public Affairs Carol Johnson, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs Erich Pfuehler and Legislative and Policy Management Analyst Lisa Baldinger will present an overview of the East Bay Regional Park District’s *Strategy for Inclusive Community Engagement*. Building off information learned from the 2019 Park and Public Interest Survey and 2020 scientific follow-up, the *Strategy for Inclusive Community Engagement* ("Strategy") seeks to develop a coordinated and inclusive process to listen, understand and engage with diverse voices of the East Bay community. The Strategy consists of three focus areas: listen, coordinate and understand. To listen, the Park District has partnered with the UC Davis Center for Regional Change to host facilitated Community Listening Sessions and continued community surveying. To coordinate, the Park District seeks to build off multi-divisional community engagement goals and successes by working with professional consultant Shelana deSilva to establish an internal “roadmap” to guide external engagement. To understand, the Park District is preparing “Local Community Information Guides” with a team of Environmental Policy and Management masters students. The six guides, each focusing on a Park District Interpretive Zone, will map census information, park use data, and survey information to support Board, staff, elected and stakeholder entertaining of geographic community similarities and differences across the East Bay. The *Strategy for Inclusive Community Engagement* is a cross-divisional effort and is intended to establish a cross-divisional team to consistently implement and update the work.
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EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting of March 22, 2021

TO: Park Advisory Committee
FROM: Sabrina Landreth, General Manager

STAFF REPORT
PREPARED BY: Brian Holt, Chief of Planning, Trails, & GIS
Chantal Alatorre, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Shoreline Adaptation Overview

Brian Holt, Chief of Planning, Trails, & GIS and Chantal Alatorre, Senior Planner will make a presentation on this agenda item.

BACKGROUND

Since its inception, the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) has been committed to protecting and preserving the East Bay’s green infrastructure and has sought to lessen its impact on natural resources while stewarding ecological systems, natural and cultural resources, and outdoor recreation amenities. As one of the largest public park agencies in the United States, the Park District has a dual mission to preserve a rich heritage of natural and cultural resources while simultaneously providing recreational access to open space, parks, and trails. The Park District comprises nearly 125,000 acres in 73 parks, including over 1,250 miles of trails and 55 miles of shoreline which encompass parks and trails that serve as essential recreational spaces and critical commute corridors in a heavily urbanized region.

In 2013, the Park District’s Master Plan was updated to include the vision to “Monitor the effects of climate change on District resources and utilize adaptive management techniques to adjust stewardship methods and priorities to preserve natural, cultural and scenic values on the parks and trails.” Furthermore, the Master Plan calls out as a priority for the next decade the urgency to address the challenge of a changing climate as it relates to land use planning and management of public parklands. Most recently, the Park District identified planning for climate change resiliency as one of eight District-wide performance goals to support positive actions around resiliency and carbon neutrality.

In 2018, the Park District’s Board of Directors adopted a resolution to Establish a Policy Framework for Managing Park Resources in a Changing Climate (Climate Policy Framework) which set clear guidelines for environmental sustainability and climate action planning by reclaiming the green infrastructure found on Park District lands and supporting its ecological functions; integrating large scale collaboration to build resiliency by increasing biodiversity and interconnectivity; and reducing environmental impact through sustainable operations, design, decisions and management at every level of the organization.
Since the adoption of the Climate Policy Framework, Park District staff has pursued grant funding and partnership opportunities with other local jurisdictions to help create a more resilient and adaptive shoreline that continues to be accessible.

Staff will provide an update to the Park Advisory Committee of the risk that sea level rise presents to the Park District’s shoreline parks and trails, and the many projects currently being implemented to provide for a resilient shoreline. Staff will also provide a summary of the various regional efforts that the Park District participates in to address adaptation strategies necessary to respond to sea level and will highlight the results of two recently completed grant funded adaptation studies: the San Francisco Bay Trail Risk Assessment and Adaptation Prioritization Plan (RAAPP) and the Hayward Shoreline Adaptation Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required. This is an informational item.
March 29, 2021

**TO:** Park Advisory Committee

**STAFF REPORT PREPARED BY:** Carol Johnson, Assistant General Manager, Public Affairs

**SUBJECT:** 2021 Public Affairs Plan

AGM Carol Johnson will present on this item.

**BACKGROUND**

Annually the Parks Advisory Committee receives a presentation on the strategic initiatives planned by Public Affairs to educate and inform Alameda and Contra Costa County residents about news, activities and events occurring within the Park District.

Eight categories of initiatives are planned for action by Public Affairs in 2021, including:

1) **Focused Communication, Messaging and Education**
   - COVID-19 safety in parks
   - Fire Preparedness and Tree Mortality
   - Safe Trail Use: Dog Owner Focus, Grazing Animal Safety, User Conflicts and Etiquette
   - Endangered Species Protection: Feral cats in Parks

2) **Strategic Community Engagement**

3) **Multicultural Outreach**

4) **Signature Events and Park Dedications**

5) **Website Upgrade and Transition**

6) **Exhibit Completion and Signage**

7) **Fulfilment of Archive Assessment Needs**

8) **Regional Parks Foundation Funding**

The presentation will go into more depth about each initiative and staff welcomes feedback by PAC members. This is an information item and requires no formal action from the PAC.
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# PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2021 WORK PLAN

## 2021 PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

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<td><strong>Wildfire Protection / Climate Change impacts (I)</strong> – Thiele, Graul, Holt</td>
<td><strong>East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) update (I)</strong> – Kelchner, Reeves</td>
<td><strong>McKay/GSA Property – Crown Beach Scoping and Input (I)</strong> – Holt</td>
<td><strong>CAFR (R) – Auker</strong></td>
<td><strong>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion internal review (I) - Dudney</strong></td>
<td><strong>CAFR (R) – Auker</strong></td>
<td><strong>Trails Update (I)</strong> – Dougan</td>
<td><strong>Grants Update (I) – Hornbeck</strong></td>
<td><strong>Southern Las Trampas LUP (R) - Holt</strong></td>
<td><strong>Measure WW review (I) – Rasmussen</strong></td>
<td><strong>Measure FF Budget and Spending Plan (R) – Rasmussen</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Capital Projects update (I) - Goorjian</strong></td>
<td><strong>Trails Working Group update (I) – Holt</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mountain Bike, E-Bikes and Scooters in Other Jurisdictions (I) – Dougan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parkland Dedications (R) – Reeves</strong></td>
<td><strong>Review Volunteer Program (I) – Kassebaum, Bietz</strong></td>
<td><strong>2021 PAC Goals (R) – Rickard, Pfuehler</strong></td>
<td><strong>2022 Proposed Budget (R) – Auker</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clayton Ranch LUP (I) - Holt</strong></td>
<td><strong>Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (I) – Auker, Spaulding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Holiday Dinner</strong></td>
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Revised 2.18.2021
The following is a record of items, which have come from the PAC during the year beginning January 1, 2021.

1. The PAC recommended moving forward the 2021 PAC Goals to the Board of Directors for approval.  
   (January 12, 2021)

   **STATUS:** The Board voted to approve the 2021 Park Advisory Committee Goals.  
   (Resolution No.: 2021-01-005)
ARTICLES & CORRESPONDENCE
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Park It: East Bay parks district names first female leader

Oakland’s former City Administrator Landreth starts job as agency’s general manager on March 15
By NED MACKAY | PUBLISHED: March 7, 2021 at 5:00 a.m. | UPDATED: March 8, 2021 at 5:36 a.m.

Former Oakland City Administrator Sabrina Landreth answers questions previously during a news conference. The East Bay Regional Park District’s Board of Directors has appointed Landreth as the agency’s new general manager. Succeeding Robert Doyle, who retired at the end of 2020, Landreth is the first female and 10th general manager in the district’s 87-year history.

After a nationwide recruiting effort, the East Bay Regional Park District’s Board of Directors has selected East Bay native Sabrina Landreth to be the new general manager of the two-county public agency.

As general manager, Landreth will be the park district’s top administrator, overseeing the acquisition, management and preservation of 73 parklands comprising nearly 125,000 acres of public lands throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Landreth succeeds Robert Doyle, who retired at the end of 2020 after 47 years of service at the agency, including the last 10 as general manager. She is the first female and tenth general manager in the district’s 87-year history. Landreth is well known in the East Bay, having most recently served as city administrator for the city of Oakland and directing day-to-day operations of the city’s 25 departments and 5,000 employees with a $1.7 billion budget. Before that she worked as Emeryville city manager and Oakland’s budget director, legislative analyst and deputy city administrator.

As part of her duties, Landreth has had extensive experience working with the California State Assembly and various state agencies. She has also led creative and complex land-use partnerships in the East Bay. Landreth has a bachelor of science degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master’s degree in public policy from UC Berkeley. She and her husband are fifth-generation Bay Area residents. She will start her new job on March 15.

“I am honored to be appointed by the Board as the district’s next general manager,” Landreth said. “I look forward to continuing to build upon the great work the district does to improve the quality of life for our East Bay community, while adhering to its social and environmental responsibilities.”
Tree mortality: Along with some other public agencies in the state, the East Bay Regional Park District is experiencing a troubling onset of tree mortality and dieback (progressive death of twigs, branches, shoots or roots, starting at the tips) that was first noticed in October. Trees most affected are eucalyptus, acacia, bay and pine. The dieback has also been observed in the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Marin County, and San Diego. Regional parks most impacted are Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, Tilden Regional Park near Berkeley and especially Anthony Chabot Regional Park in Castro Valley because of its extensive eucalyptus plantation. In total, some 1,500 acres are affected in the regional parks alone.

The cause is not fully understood but is believed to be due to recent droughts related to climate change. Because of the serious implications for fire protection, the park district’s Fire and Stewardship departments are partnering with the U.S. Forest Service, UC Berkeley and resource managers from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in Sacramento to study the causes. Fire Chief Aileen Theile is the park district’s lead on the project.

The district has created a Tree Mortality Task Force including staff from the fire, stewardship and operations departments. The task force is developing a plan to treat some of the affected areas in the regional parks. The group will coordinate with other jurisdictions in Contra Costa and Alameda counties where the dieback has also been detected.
Police seek cyclist who left scene of trail collision with hiker at East Bay park

62-year-old woman was injured after she was struck from behind at Tilden Regional Park’s Nimitz Way trail around midday on February 26

By GEORGE KELLY | gkelly@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group
PUBLISHED: March 3, 2021 at 5:03 p.m. | UPDATED: March 4, 2021 at 6:22 a.m.

East Bay Regional Park District police are asking for the public’s help in finding a person who left an injury collision scene at a popular parks trail last week.

In a statement, police said officers responded to Tilden Regional Park’s Nimitz Way trail around midday last Friday and learned that a 62-year-old woman had been hiking when a bicyclist struck her from behind.

Both fell to the ground, but the bicyclist got up and asked the hiker if she was okay before riding away northbound on Nimitz Way.

Berkeley Fire Department firefighters also responded to the scene, treating the hiker for a small cut to her head before releasing her, police said.

Police released a limited description of the bicyclist as a white male in his thirties, riding a lighter green bicycle and carrying a dark navy-colored backpack.

Anyone who visited the park’s Inspiration Point or Nimitz Way between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., or who may recognize him, may call the parks police department’s anonymous tip line at 510-690-6521.

Parks spokesman Dave Mason said Wednesday that the parks system has seen about a 30 percent increase in visitors since last year’s start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with only “our normal amount of trail conflicts and safety issues.”

“This one is a good example,” Mason said. “Thankfully, she’s okay.”

Mason said most visitors have been heeding increased park signage for pandemic-safety restrictions, as well as a “pup pro” campaign meant to urge visitors to leash up dogs around cattle: “We all just need to be mindful in parks and follow the rules, slow down, follow speed limits and be aware for hikers, just be good visitors.”
Sabrina Landreth Named New East Bay Regional Park District General Manager
written by ECT
Mar 3, 2021

The East Bay Regional Park District’s Board of Directors today approved the appointment of **Sabrina Landreth** as General Manager. She is the first female and the tenth General Manager appointed in the Park District’s 87-year history. “Our Board is thrilled to have Sabrina join our organization,” said Dee Rosario, President of Park District Board of Directors. “She has all the right elements of urban public sector leadership experience and especially understands the diversity of the East Bay communities we serve.”

Ms. Landreth has deep roots in the East Bay as a 5th generation native who has held the top executive leadership positions managing the cities of Oakland and Emeryville. She is a U.C. Berkeley graduate with a master’s degree in Public Policy, in addition to receiving a B.S. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

“I am honored to be appointed by the Board as the District’s next General Manager. I look forward to continuing to build upon the great work the District does to improve the quality of life for our East Bay community, while adhering to its social and environmental responsibilities.”

Most recently Ms. Landreth served as City Administrator in Oakland from 2015-2020, where she is credited with strong fiscal management and developing a capital improvement program that included community equity goals and has become a model program for local governments around the country. She also worked for Oakland as Deputy City Administrator, Budget Director, and Legislative Analyst to the City’s Finance Committee.

Previously Ms. Landreth served as City Manager of Emeryville and as staff in the California State Assembly advancing state and local legislative initiatives.

Ms. Landreth succeeds Robert Doyle, who retired as General Manager after a 47-year career with the Park District. She will begin her new position at the Park District on March 15.
FORMER EMERYVILLE CITY MANAGER PICKED TO LEAD EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Published On March 2, 2021 | By Press Release

The East Bay Regional Park District’s Board of Directors today approved the appointment of Sabrina Landreth as General Manager. Landreth served as Emeryville’s City Manager from 2013-2015 prior to being recruited back to the City of Oakland. She resigned from Oakland in 2019 after some notable clashes with Oakland councilmembers.

Landreth is the first female and the tenth General Manager appointed in the Park District’s 87-year history. “Our Board is thrilled to have Sabrina join our organization,” said Dee Rosario, President of Park District Board of Directors. “She has all the right elements of urban public sector leadership experience and especially understands the diversity of the East Bay communities we serve.”

Ms. Landreth has deep roots in the East Bay as a 5th generation native who has held the top executive leadership positions managing the cities of Oakland and Emeryville. She is a U.C. Berkeley graduate with a master’s degree in Public Policy, in addition to receiving a B.S. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

“I am honored to be appointed by the Board as the District’s next General Manager. I look forward to continuing to build upon the great work the District does to improve the quality of life for our East Bay community, while adhering to its social and environmental responsibilities.”

While with Oakland, Landreth is credited with strong fiscal management and developing a capital improvement program that included community equity goals and has become a model program for local governments around the country. She also worked for Oakland as Deputy City Administrator, Budget Director, and Legislative Analyst to the City’s Finance Committee.

While with Emeryville, Landreth helped the city recover from the loss of redevelopment by tapping into new revenue sources including a property transfer tax. She also served as staff in the California State Assembly advancing state and local legislative initiatives.

Ms. Landreth succeeds Robert Doyle, who retired as General Manager after a 47-year career with the Park District. She will begin her new position at the Park District on March 15.

The only park within Emeryville that is part of the East Bay Regional Park system is McLaughlin Eastshore State Park.
Park It: What to know about coyotes in East Bay open spaces

Until recent incidents, attacks on people had been rare; animals generally keep their distance.

By NED MACKAY | East Bay Regional Park District
PUBLISHED: February 28, 2021 at 5:00 a.m. | UPDATED: February 28, 2021 at 5:47 a.m.

A pair of coyotes appear previously at Briones Regional Park between Martinez and Lafayette. One of the more common animals throughout the East Bay Regional Park District, these adaptable and intelligent animals also prowl suburban neighborhoods near the parks.

There has been a lot of news lately about coyotes, especially the specific coyote that has been implicated in attacks on people in Moraga and Lafayette, so here’s some information about one of the more common animals in the regional parks and other open spaces. Coyotes range throughout the western United States and beyond. They can be found in almost every East Bay Regional Park District location, from the inland hills to the bay shoreline. Adaptable and intelligent, they also prowl nearby suburban neighborhoods, including mine in Pleasant Hill.

You may not see the animal itself, but you will often see its distinctive scat (droppings), which has a lot of fur mixed in with it from the small rodents that make up its basic diet. Through their eating habits, coyotes help to control the population of animals such as rabbits, ground squirrels, skunks and raccoons. They are pretty much omnivorous; they will also go for fish, birds, reptiles and even insects. Coyotes resemble smaller, skinnier versions of German shepherd dogs. Generally tan in color, they have long snouts and bushy, black-tipped tails.

Although they look like dogs, coyotes are wild and may occasionally be aggressive, especially if protecting a den. If you are walking with your dog and see a coyote approaching, it’s best to call your pet back to you and put it on leash. If a coyote follows you, make loud noises to scare it away. Until the Moraga and Lafayette incidents, coyote attacks on people had been very rare. I’ve seen them occasionally in the regional parks, and they’ve generally kept their distance.

By the way, cows do not differentiate between coyotes and dogs; they regard both as predators. This may account for cows’ sometimes-nervous behavior when you walk past them with your dog. If there are cows in the vicinity, your dog is supposed to be leashed. It’s best for both species if coyotes remain wary of humans. So coyotes should never be given handouts or fed unintentionally by leaving pet food or garbage where they can get to it. Especially if you live near open space, feed your pet indoors and use trash containers with lids that clamp shut.
It’s also advisable to keep pets such as cats, rabbits and small dogs indoors. If allowed to run free outside, they can become coyote prey. Large dogs should be brought indoors after dark and should not be allowed to run loose. Coyotes can and do mate with domestic dogs. Moreover, if you let your large dog run free outside at night, it can pack up with other free-running dogs and hunt wildlife in the parks. This is not a good outcome. For more information about coyotes, check out the California State Fish and Wildlife Department’s webpage on them at wildlife.ca.gov/keep-me-wild/coyote. There’s even more information at a webpage of the department’s counterpart in Washington state: wdfw.wa.gov/living/coyotes.html.

**East Contra Costa:** Round Valley Regional Preserve south of Brentwood, which had been closed because of fire-related damage, is now open again. The park is located on Marsh Creek Road about two miles east of Deer Valley Road in East Contra Costa County. It’s beautiful, essentially an expansive grassland in a valley between several high ridgelines. There’s abundant wildlife, including golden eagles. It’s also habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox, a rare and endangered animal. For that reason, dogs are not allowed in the park. So please leave your pooch at home.

The land was originally purchased in 1873 by Thomas Murphy, an Irish immigrant who established a ranch there. His grandson, Jim Murphy, sold the core 700 acres to the park district in 1988. The family wanted the property to be kept in open space for public enjoyment.

Maps of the parkland with information about its cultural and natural history can be downloaded from the park district’s website at ebparks.org. There’s no convenient public transportation to the somewhat remote park.

**A reminder:** the public meeting on regional park plans for the former Roddy Ranch Golf Course in Antioch, also in East Contra Costa, will be from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. March 11. You can learn about habitat restoration, recreation opportunities and public access. There will also be discussion of the property’s present condition, the project timeline and other ways in which the public can become involved. The meeting will be held online via Zoom. To attend the virtual meeting, go to ebparks.org/about/planning/roddyranch for the Zoom link. For more information, contact Eddie Willis, the project planner, at ewillis@ebparks.org.
‘We can’t shoot our way out of this’: East Bay parks district considers new policy after fatal cat shootings

Parks employees shot 13 felines for endangering wildlife

By ANGELA RUGGIERO | PUBLISHED: February 25, 2021 at 5:19 p.m. | UPDATED: February 26, 2021 at 2:45 p.m.

The district’s Natural and Cultural Resources Committee unanimously agreed at its meeting Thursday afternoon to pass the “Free-Roaming Cat Management Policy” to the full board at a later unknown date.

The policy states, however, that the district itself will no longer be responsible for the killing of the cats — but will likely use an outside agency, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s animal and wildlife service if needed.

East Bay Regional Parks confirmed its employees shot and killed 13 cats, part of an “out-of-control” colony in November 2020 that were threatening protected and endangered wildlife along the Oakland shoreline.

A cat named Sherbet sits on top of a car, waiting for food at the MLK Jr Regional Shoreline area in Oakland in an undated photograph. Sherbet was one of the cats shot and killed by the East Bay Regional Parks District for threat to endangered wildlife in the area.

After getting heat for shooting 13 cats in a nature preserve, East Bay Regional Park District will likely work more closely with feline rescue groups to trap and remove the cats, but is not ruling out lethal force if necessary.

About 30 “free roaming” cats (feral or previously domesticated cats) were living at the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, a sensitive ecological area with hundreds of bird species, some of which are at risk or endangered (such as the Ridgway’s rail, California black rail, burrowing owls and least terns), plus the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse, according to the district.

The cat killings sparked a large public reaction: An online petition gathered nearly 70,000 signatures seeking a stop to the shootings.

After such huge outrage, the district’s general manager suspended staff authority to shoot the cats in December, and called for a review of the district’s program.

Cat supporters throughout the Bay Area and even out of state, called on the district to remove the use of lethal removal completely from its policy.
“We can’t shoot our way out of this,” said Holly Cuciz, of Brentwood, who helped organize a foundation against euthanizing animals. “Ultimately, it does not work.”

Nara Dahlbacka, who is on the board of Cat Town Oakland, said she was encouraged by the district’s response so far. “We would hope the district would consider potential moving further away, to not use lethal mode of control if at all possible.”

Animal rescue activist Cecelia Theis told this newspaper in December she was shocked to find out that some of the cats were shot and killed in November 2020, saying it was before she and others had an opportunity to trap them and find them new homes. The park district contends that, before workers took action, Theis was told that she needed to move the colony of cats and stop feeding them.

At Thursday’s meeting, she spoke out, at points her voice breaking on the verge of tears.

“It just hurts that no one contacted me to investigate this,” she said. “I need to know what really happened with my cats. They were really important to me. I hate reading they were hunted.”

The new policy also calls on the district to work closely with local animal agencies, and inform them when the district would be close to considering lethal removal as a last resort. It also calls for more education and signage on not feeding feral cats, and dumping unwanted cats at district parks.

The district has had a problem with people feeding the cats as well. As recently as just a few weeks ago, food for the cats was removed by the park district by 11 p.m., but by 5 a.m. the next day, more food had been placed out, according to Kristina Kelchner, assistant general manager at the parks district.

“If cats can be trapped, then we have a solved problem,” Kelchner said.

Some local animal services agencies, such as the Oakland Animal Services, and others from Berkeley, Fremont and Hayward, support the proposed policy. Oakland Animal Services Director Ann Dunn said as of a few days ago, they were working with the district to trap some of those cats at the MLK park.

In a letter sent to the district, and read during Thursday’s meeting, directors of various animal agencies asked that if the cats had to be euthanized on the field, the district comply with the American Veterinary Medical Association standards; this would require them to be brought to shelter to be checked for microchips. But Commissioner Colin Coffey pointed out that since the district wouldn’t be killing the cats, it would be up to other state or federal agencies to determine how to do that.

According to the district staff report, cats are known to play with their prey, and will capture animals even if they aren’t hungry. The district contends this makes the endangered species that live in the parks especially vulnerable.

“Outdoors, this means that any cat, even those that are well-fed and cared for, can kill native amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals,” the report stated.
Bay Area campgrounds reopening after being closed for most of the past year

Tom Stienstra
Updated: Feb. 25, 2021 4 a.m.

California’s campgrounds have been shut down for most of the past year because of the coronavirus pandemic and wildfires. But this month, hundreds of campsites across the Bay Area are opening in time for spring.

This week’s warm weather, combined with declines in coronavirus infection rates, has jump-started campsite reservations at state, county and regional parks. At least 883 sites at 19 campgrounds are open this week. Saturday night bookings are filling up through early summer at certain popular campgrounds, a review of reservation websites shows.

“Everybody is dying to go camping,” said Norma Gomez, who helps run the campsite reservation service for the East Bay Regional Park District. “Just to get out there, breathe some fresh air — that helps people.”

A few gems can still be found across the Bay Area. Last Saturday evening, for instance, both Pantoll and Bootjack campgrounds at Mount Tamalpais State Park had space.

When the coronavirus took hold a year ago, campgrounds were closed across most of California. Many remained closed through spring and into early summer, when a sprinkling of camps, primarily in the Sierra Nevada and managed by the U.S. Forest Service, reopened with limited services and camper quotas.

The state’s shelter-in-place framework, initiated in December, closed campgrounds statewide again. Many are just beginning to come back online now.

Some popular campgrounds at Bay Area parks remain closed, including walk-in sites at Angel Island State Park and the new walk-in sites at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area.

In addition, campgrounds located in the burn zones of last August’s wildfires remain closed.
indefinitely. That includes sites at Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Butano State Park, and Memorial and Pescadero Creek county parks. Other long-term closures include Glen and Sky trail camps at Point Reyes National Seashore, and in Santa Clara County east of Morgan Hill, eight formal trail camps and dozens of dispersed sites at Henry W. Coe State Park.

State Parks public information officer Jorge Moreno noted that “demand for camping and lodging sites often exceeds the available inventory,” especially for Friday and Saturday nights. “The public is advised to do some research and have alternate parks in mind in case the first choice is booked.”

Moreno also noted that rangers will continue to monitor that visitors are COVID-safe. Group sizes will be monitored, group campgrounds will remain closed, along with most public areas where people might congregate, such as visitor centers, he said. All visitors should carry masks and wear them when near others.

Here’s the latest, region by region:

**San Francisco Peninsula**
Two weeks ago, Half Moon Bay State Beach became the first major park on the coast to open its campground, with drive-in sites available by reservation only.

Portola Redwoods State Park has reopened its drive-in campground with limited facilities. According to district headquarters, the Slate Trail Camp at Portola Redwoods remains closed indefinitely.

The Midpeninsula Open Space District opened its trail camp in Monte Bello Open Space Preserve off Page Mill Road, the Black Mountain Trail Camp. A 1.5-mile hike leads to a designated campground, with nearby treks to sandstone formations and hilltop views of the South Bay.

**North Bay**
Marin County State Parks reopened campgrounds — walk-in only, no groups allowed — at three major parks: Samuel P. Taylor State Park on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, China Camp State Park on San Pablo Bay east of San Rafael and Mount Tamalpais State Park.

At the Marin Headlands, Bicentennial Walk-In opened in early February. Kirby Cove, Haypress and Hawk trail camps are scheduled to open March 12.

At Point Reyes, Wildcat Camp on the southern end of the Coast Trail, is open, booked most nights for spring and summer. Coast Camp is also open, on the northern end of the Coast Trail out of the Point Reyes Hostel area. Sky Camp and Glen Camp are in the fire recovery zone with no dates of reopening, and the Bear Valley Trailhead is closed.
East Bay
At Mount Diablo State Park, the Live Oak and Juniper Campgrounds are open.

In the East Bay Regional Park District, the camps — reservations only — opened at Del Valle, Anthony Chabot in Castro Valley, Sibley Backpack Camp in Oakland and walk-in sites at Sunol Regional Wilderness. Reservations are available four weeks in advance, with no drop-in reservations permitted.

Several backpack sites have opened in the Ohlone Wilderness, which extends from the backcountry of Del Valle Regional Park west through Sunol to Mission Peak Regional Park. These are: Eagles Springs No. 1 at Mission Peak; Oak View and Star’s Rest at Sunol Backpack Camp, and Doe Camp No. 1; Stewart’s Camp; and Boyd Camp No. 1 in Ohlone.

Santa Clara County
Drive-in campsites, yurts and walk-in camps are now open at Sanborn County Park, Joseph D. Grant, Mount Madonna, Uvas Canyon and Coyote Lake.

At Henry W. Coe State Park, the main campground at the headquarters/Dunne Avenue entrance east of Morgan Hill is open, along with trail camps in the vicinity of headquarters. Campsites in the park’s interior in the burn zone remain closed.
Cleanup of the Richmond Chevron refinery leak has ended, but questions remain

As investigations remain open, residents are calling to depend less on oil refineries

By ANNIE SCIACCA and GEORGE KELLY

PUBLISHED: February 23, 2021 at 10:15 p.m. | UPDATED: February 25, 2021 at 8:26 a.m.

The cleanup of an oil leak two weeks ago at the Richmond Chevron refinery has been completed, authorities said Tuesday, but questions remain from residents and environmentalists about what caused the leak and what was done to curb it.

In a statement issued by a unified command group made up of the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Coast Guard, Contra Costa Health Services and Chevron itself said the cleanup and assessment teams found no trace of oil sheen on waters or the shoreline near the refinery within the last 48 hours.

The group said that a quarter-inch hole in a pipe “used to return a variety of excess oils and products to the refinery for processing” sent an estimated 500 to 750 gallons of “diesel/water flush mix” into the bay.

Immediately after the Feb. 9 leak, observers saw sheen and residue on nearby beaches, and the East Bay Regional Park Department staff closed its Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline for several days afterward.

Crews had seen no more signs of the oil sheen on open bay waters since Feb. 12, and no sign of impacted wildlife during their incident response, according to the command’s issued statement.

Trace sheen amounts seen in standing water led state officials to collect samples of water, sediment and mussels, but lab results are still pending, according to the statement at recoveredoilillineleak.com.
But questions are still outstanding about what caused the pipe to leak, how and when the pipeline had last been inspected, and whether the initial assessment and cleanup of the spill was done quickly enough or sufficiently.

At a meeting of the Richmond City Council following the spill, Randy Sawyer of Contra Costa County’s Health Services department, who oversees hazmat response, said his agency was notified at 3:45 p.m. of the spill. Investigators with environmental organization San Francisco Baykeeper, however, have said the leak likely started before 2:30 p.m.

Neighbors reported smelling gas before that, according to San Francisco Baykeeper attorney Ben Eichenberg.

Asked by Eichenberg and City Councilwoman Claudia Jimenez about the timing of the leak and the subsequent response and notifications, Chevron spokeswoman Linsi Crain said that multiple investigations are ongoing and would reveal those details in the future.

Sawyer said the county would hire an outside investigator to do an analysis of the leak and response, which would be overseen by an ad hoc committee of the county Board of Supervisors. That could take several months, however.

“Any amount of oil in the bay is too much,” said Eichenberg at a recent press conference hosted by Richmond residents and organizers with Communities for a Better Environment. “Oversight agencies need to revisit the response plans in a transparent way, so the public can review.”

Without clear answers, the incident has revived calls to find a way for the city to reduce its dependence on the refinery, which provides thousands of jobs in Richmond and contributes to the city’s revenues.

At the press conference, many spoke about the need for a “just transition” — a concept discussed among environmentalists that calls for companies and governments to gradually scale down oil refining and instead ensure workers can be trained to shift into new energy technology jobs.

“During COVID-19, Richmond residents have to deal with Chevron’s pollution on top of the pandemic,” said Miguel Diaz, a student at Richmond High School, during the virtual press conference. “What is the limit? Where do we draw the line and say enough is enough? When do we move past Chevron?”

Richmond Councilmember Eduardo Martinez agreed, noting the long list of health concerns faced by people in West Contra Costa County who have lived in the shadow of the refineries for decades, including high rates of asthma.

Sawyer, of Contra Costa County, said during the council meeting earlier in the month that the county investigators in the wake of the spill tested the air in the community for levels of toxic materials, but found nothing above a “background” level, and did not indicate any concerns about what they found.

But Martinez, in the press conference Tuesday, pointed out that people are concerned about the impact of pollution that has been weighing on them for so long.
Recent flaring incidents — the burning off of excess gases — have raised alarm. And according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency records, the refinery was slapped with almost 150 enforcement actions within the last five years.

“I realize government sets ‘acceptable’ levels of pollution, but there is no real acceptable level of pollution,” Martinez said. “It’s not as if we start each day with fresh lungs.”
Pittsburg approves plan to build 1,500 hillside homes
Critics said the hills, wildlife and views should be protected; others say project will bring tax dollars, jobs
By JUDITH PRIEVE

To allow Faria Land Investors to build homes on the hillside, the council had to approve its master plan, a development agreement and an amendment to the city’s general plan.

The council also signed off on environmental documents for the project, which envisions construction of homes on 341 acres clustered in valleys and the preservation of 265 acres of open space. Minimum lot size of the low-density project would be 4,000 square feet, though many would be much larger than that, according to Faria Land Investors, a Seeno/Discovery Builders Inc. company.

“We know this is going to be a very nice community,” Discovery Builders President Louis Parsons said, noting the ridge lines will be preserved.

As part of the deal, the project will also include long sought commercial development, a youth recreation center and trails that might connect to the East Bay Regional Park District’s future park at the former Concord Naval Weapons Basin, he said.

“It’s going to be a great location,” Parsons said. “It’s going to be nestled in these valleys and we think it’s going to be a great place for executives and people of all types to live.”

Plans to develop the hills date back to 2005 when voter-approved Measure P placed the Faria site within Pittsburg’s urban boundary. The city approved an agreement with Seeno that established guidelines for a permanent greenbelt buffer along the inner edges of the boundary.
The Concord-based developer filed an application in 2010, then modified it in 2014 and again in 2017 before resurrecting it in 2020. And although the Planning Commission recommended approval last summer, the hearing was continued shortly thereafter when a council member fell ill.

Then and now, critics have said the developer has not provided enough detail to assess the project’s impacts.

Opponents also said the project will destroy the natural beauty of the area, impact wildlife, snarl traffic and increase fire risks. Groups opposing it included the East Bay Regional Park District, Save Mount Diablo, Greenbelt Alliance and Pittsburg Youth Action.

Juan Pablo Galván, Save Mount Diablo’s land use manager, said the proposal lacks an adequate project description and enforceable mitigation measures.

“Hundreds of Pittsburg residents have submitted comments on this project pointing to the need to protect Pittsburg’s hills and wildlife habitat, address existing serious traffic issues and present to the public a complete description and analysis of this project,” he said. “… It shows a complete disregard for the environment.”

Galván and many others also warned of potential fire danger.

“It is an extremely windy area and you can’t have much even in the way of trees … and fire plus wind equals a bad situation,” he said.

Zoe Siegel of Greenbelt Alliance also strongly urged the council to reject the proposal.

“A lot has changed in the past 20 years and we know a lot more now about the impacts of climate change,” she said. “… Developments of this kind will put your community and our region at greater risks of climate change.”

Pittsburg resident Mark Linde pointed to the potential impacts on local owls, turtles, frogs and bees.

“Mitigation fees, developers fees and oversight just can’t remedy the insurmountable damage this development will do to the environment and mankind alike,” he said.

William Goodwin, a housing advocate, questioned the developer’s plan to build small accessory dwelling units or tiny homes instead of 150 affordable but comparable units, as the city’s inclusionary housing program mandates.

“Is it not enough that we are in the middle of an affordable housing crisis, a recession and a pandemic when many families are suffering?” he asked. “No, this developer wants to cut an estimated $60 million off their bottom line at the expense of affordable housing for the people of Pittsburg.”

Among those supporting the project was former council member Pete Longmire. “It will bring millions of dollars in impact fees that will support our basic infrastructure like traffic, fire, police and other contributions,” he said.
“This could be a turning point for our community to bring a lot of opportunities,” he added.

Also for the project were various unions and residents who noted it would bring good-paying construction jobs.

Some council members questioned whether the project’s open spaces would connect with the trails and staging areas of the future regional park over the hill in Concord.

“I want to make sure we comply on both sides to that commitment,” Councilman Juan Banales said, suggesting that such a pledge be included in the agreement while voicing his support of the project overall.

Mayor Merl Craft said the council must look at the entire community it serves.

“We want to see what others have in their communities and we want these amenities as well,” she said. “Upscale development means we can attract businesses, a grocery store. We will no longer be a food desert. Sometimes we have to say, ‘what about us?’”

Craft added that the city already has 1,098 affordable housing units. “We are always looking to expand our housing stock. We need to have dollars in our community.

The development is expected to generate about $2.75 million a year in property taxes for the city as well as $1.1 million a year for public safety, $122,000 for the fire district, $153,000 for landscape and lighting and $133,00 for park maintenance.

“All of these won’t happen without the Faria project,” she said.

“This was a big undertaking,” Councilman Jelani Killings said. “You aren’t taking away land. The reality is this was already designated by the voters of Pittsburg in the past (with Measure P)… The reality is it is development that pays for infrastructure.”

“Another thing is it is close to BART,” Councilwoman Shanelle Scales-Preston added. “I think the community benefit is huge compared to when this project was looked at 10 years ago.”
Park It: Fremont, Berkeley-area open spaces partially reopening
Ardenwood, Tilden locations allowing visitors at limited capacity on reservation-only basis
By NED MACKAY | East Bay Regional Park District
PUBLISHED: February 21, 2021 at 5:00 a.m. | UPDATED: February 22, 2021 at 5:42 a.m.

A wild turkey flies over a fence Nov. 10 as it follows its flock roaming around the Little Farm at Tilden Regional Park near Berkeley. The Little Farm, along with Tilden’s Regional Parks Botanic Garden and Fremont’s Ardenwood Historic Farm are three East Bay Regional Park District locations reopening from pandemic closures with limited capacity on a reservation-only basis.

The East Bay Regional Park District is beginning to reopen some of its facilities as progress continues on controlling the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest reopenings are at Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont and, at Tilden Regional Park near Berkeley, the Little Farm and Regional Parks Botanic Garden.

All three are reopening with limited capacity on a reservation-only basis. To make reservations, visit bayareane.ws/3pAmg3n online for links to make reservations at each of the facilities.

Tilden’s Environmental Education Center next-door to the Little Farm remains closed for now, as do all the district’s other visitor centers. Earlier the district reopened the family campgrounds at Anthony Chabot Regional Park near Castro Valley and Del Valle Regional Park south of Livermore, both at 50% capacity. There’s also limited backpack camping available at Sunol and Ohlone Regional Wilderness in southern Alameda County. For all of these, you need to make advance reservations on the park district’s webpage at ebparks.org/activities/camping or by calling 888-327-2757.

Meanwhile, all the pandemic-related precautions are still in place. Park visitors should keep 6 feet of social distance and carry masks to wear when maintaining distance isn’t possible on narrow trails or at trail gates. Some toilets are open, but group picnic areas are generally closed. Bring your own drinking water, as most fountains remain shut off.

‘Pup Pro’ campaign: In other news, the district has launched a “Pup Pro” campaign designed to encourage park visitors to cooperate with dog-related rules in the parklands. You’ll see signs at
park entrances. Among other things, people are asked to pick up their dog’s waste and deposit it in trashcans and place their dogs on leash when cattle are near.

Generally the park district’s dog rules are not onerous. Dogs can be off-leash in the backcountry, except where otherwise posted, as long as they are under their owners’ control. This means the dog will come when called. Dogs are supposed to be placed on leashes when livestock are near. Especially if your dog starts harassing wildlife and grazing cattle or has uninvited interactions with other park visitors, Fido has to be put on a leash.

**Antioch:** The park district is planning and developing a new regional park at the former Roddy Ranch golf course in Antioch. A public meeting is planned from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. March 11, at which you can learn about planning for habitat restoration, recreation opportunities and public access.

There will also be a discussion of the property’s present condition, the project timeline and other ways in which the public can become involved. The meeting will be held online via Zoom. To register, contact Eddie Willis, the project planner, at ewillis@ebparks.org. For more information and to view a post-meeting recording, visit the project website, ebparks.org/about/planning/roddyranch.

Rancher and rodeo legend Jack Roddy had owned the property as part of his extensive ranch near Brentwood since the mid-1970s. He opened the 230-acre golf course in 2001 and operated it for the next 15 years. In partnership with the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, the park district purchased Roddy’s property, including the golf course, in various transactions from 2014 to 2018. The former golf course is expected to be the first part of the future Deer Valley Regional Park to open to the public.
Bay Area Hikes During the Pandemic to Experience Shinrin-yoku (Forest Bathing)

By John Chen

How many of you have spent more of your time outdoors this past year? Raise your hand if you found yourself at one with nature, often to keep your sanity. Pump your fist if you got in better shape because you have become more active than ever. If you responded positively then somehow, in the most unlikely scenario, the pandemic has actually helped you to reshape and refocus your priorities. And, more likely, it has improved your overall health. If you answered negatively, then perhaps you may want to consider following what many of us are doing to keep us mentally, emotionally, and physically fit: hiking in the great outdoors!

On social media, now more than ever, I see many friends taking selfies and posting photos of their scenic hikes. Come to think of it, I have done the same thing. My friend Kyle Thompson, a science teacher, is one of many who has discovered nature and tells me, “Hiking is one of the few great activities available during the pandemic lockdown because it’s great to get outside and breathe fresh air, and do a little ‘forest bathing’ (Shinrin-yoku).” Another longtime friend, Tom Todd, said, “[My husband Boris and I] really enjoy urban hiking because it keeps us busy for hours so that we aren’t tempted to go do things that, let’s just say, may not qualify under COVID-19 safety protocols.”

We are fortunate to live in the Bay Area where natural wonders and beauty surround us amidst the concrete jungle. In fact, we don’t have to travel far to get away. Many of the best hikes are practically in our own backyards! For example, I really enjoy hiking the hills at Garin Regional Park in Hayward as well as Coyote Hills in Fremont. Both offer excellent views of the Bay once you reach the top. There are many other great hikes within a short drive or even walking distance to wherever you are in the Bay Area for you to discover. Here are some of my “pandemic-turned-avid-hiker” friends’ favorite local hikes.

**Leona Canyon Trial, Oakland** (recommended by Kyle Thompson)

Leona Canyon Trail is a somewhat lesser-known hiking trail in Oakland and is a favorite spot for Thompson, his partner, and his two dogs. He told me for the *San Francisco Bay Times*: “One of our favorite secret spots is the Leona Canyon Trail, where the steep canyon walls shield the trail from excessive heat in the summer, and the stream running along the trail keeps the ground wet year-round to support large bay laurel and California buckeye trees. The trail also has unique features, such as an abandoned homestead with only a mossy stone chimney remaining.”

**The Presidio, San Francisco** (recommended by Tom Todd and Boris Wang)
Many of you may have heard about The Presidio because it is a former military post that is now a National Park and a major recreation hub where people take in the history and the beauty that the city has to offer. Todd tells me that maybe it is time to go again and again. “[Boris] and I take every opportunity to hike The Presidio,” he says. “It is our little national park with miles and miles of trails through forests, defunct forts, and military barracks overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, and downtown. There is always something to see and do. We love it!”

Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve, Berkeley (recommended by Orlando Baez and William Bir)

Baez and Bir have been hiking all over the Bay Area every weekend since the start of the pandemic. Baez is especially enthusiastic about finding more challenging hikes through the “AllTrails” app (https://www.alltrails.com/) and recommends the scenic Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve that spans across Berkeley and the Oakland Hills. He explains, “This hike is fun because of all the hills and their ups and downs. Although somewhat of a strenuous hike, once we reach the top, we are rewarded with an amazing panoramic view of downtown Oakland and San Francisco as well as the 5-mile connecting bridge.” Baez also cautioned that “due to the elevation, this hike is probably for the more active and experience hikers. But, if you can do it, it’s well worth the effort!”

Alum Rock Park, San Jose (recommended by Thang Asia Vuong)

For those in Silicon Valley, my essential worker friend Thang Asia Vuong tells me that Alum Rock Park is the place for great hikes. The park has nearly 13 miles of trails ranging from easy walks on the valley floor to the most challenging climb to the ridge where you can see sweeping views of the Santa Clara Valley. Vuong says, “There are always beautiful views, especially during spring when wildlife and native plants come to life! I really like all the different view points that give you great perspectives on the South Bay. Just goes to show that you don’t have to leave the Bay Area for an amazing outdoor experience!”