

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, May 6, 2014

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

6. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

b. Natural and Cultural Resources Committee (03/11/14) (Dotson)

Committee Members: Whitney Dotson, Beverly Lane, Carol Severin

EBRPD Staff: Diane Althoff, Matt Graul, Nancy Kaiser, Denise Defreese, Doug Bell, Isa Polt-Jone, Anne Kassebaum, Paul Miller, Davio Santos, Beverly Ortiz, Raphael Breines, Tammy Mueller, Jim O'Connor, Emily Hopkins, Mona Koh

Guests: Amelia Marshall, Sheila Barry, Judi Bank

A meeting of the Board Natural and Cultural Resources Committee was held on Wednesday, March 11, 2014 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. Using Social Media to Understand Public Perceptions of Cattle Grazing in Parks (Barry)

Sheila Barry, UC Cooperative Extension Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor, recently published a study that explored the use of personal photography in social media to gain insight into public perceptions of livestock grazing in public spaces. Traditional public input methods yield a constrained picture of people's attitudes toward cows and public land grazing. Public meetings, hearings, and surveys, the most commonly used mechanisms for public land managers to solicit public opinion, tend to foster participation of organized special interests or, in the case of surveys, focus on a specific topic. General public input is limited. Key findings of this study conclude that many people recreating in grazed San Francisco Bay Area parks shared views, interests and concerns about cows and grazing on the photo-sharing website Flickr™ that seldom show up at a public meeting or in surveys. Results suggest that social media analysis can help develop a more nuanced understanding of public viewpoints useful in making decisions and creating outreach and education programs for public grazing lands.

Public perception of grazing is more positive than often presented by media and public forums, but fear of cattle is a concern. Planning where cattle are during peak public

usage can be a responsibility of ranchers. A grant has been funded for UC Berkeley to work on signage to address grazing in the parks. Director Lane requested to see the grazing poster when it's done.

2. Golden Eagles, Wind Farms and Environmental Sustainability (Bell)

Wildlife Program Manager Doug Bell reported that environmental sustainability as a goal is difficult to achieve and hard to measure. While wind farms may represent a sustainable source of energy, they may have unsustainable impacts to wildlife populations. The eastern San Francisco Bay Area harbors one of the densest nesting populations of golden eagles in the world. Yet, the nearby Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA), with its old wind turbine infrastructure, is responsible for such high mortality rates among golden eagles that it represents a population sink. In other words, the local population of golden eagles cannot reproduce enough young to compensate for the loss of eagles in the APWRA. This situation is unsustainable for the local golden eagle population. The East Bay Regional Park District and associated colleagues are researching ways in which to lessen the impact of wind energy production on golden eagles in the APWRA by using eagle flight behavior combined with digital elevation modeling to create risk maps for use in the repowering of wind farms. Repowering is the process of replacing old generation wind turbines with new generation "mega" wind turbines. It is imperative to site these new wind turbines using the best available science to lessen their impacts to golden eagles and other wildlife and thereby create a more environmentally sustainable situation.

Director Lane asked what other type of information would be gained from these studies. Wildlife Program Manager Bell answered that golden eagles are avoiding urban landscapes. This is important information for moving forward to save open space and especially the areas of Livermore within in the Diablo Range that the eagles prefer for their nests.

3. Introduction of Cultural Services Coordinator Beverly R. Ortiz, Ph.D. (O'Connor)

Assistant General Manager Jim O'Connor introduced Cultural Services Coordinator Beverly Ortiz and provided a brief overview of the overall job duties and tasks to be undertaken in the coming months. One of the most important aspects of the position is providing technical assistance to park staff in protecting cultural resources. Another important aspect is acknowledgment of the Native American community, and other resources of historical value.

4. Future Agenda Items
(Althoff)

Director Lane requested periodic reports from the Cultural Services Coordinator. Chair Dotson requested updates on the Golden Eagles and their protection. Wildlife Program Manager Bell said he will be speaking at the next Fish and Wildlife Services meeting toward the end of March on the Golden Eagle take rule; the Obama administration has relaxed the permit from five to thirty years. Stewardship Chief Matt Graul suggested the Western Pond Turtle and the research on dogs and erosion in Wildcat and proposed additional protection.

5. Public Comment
(Dotson)

Judi Bank said she finds the Natural and Cultural Resources Committee meeting extremely beneficial and would like the PAC to know what this committee is all about. Stewardship Chief Graul said he is going to present an overview of what his department does in September. Amelia Marshall said these meetings are a “wellspring” for the Volunteer Trail patrols. Director Lane suggested the eagle and wind study as a perfect informative topic for them.

Chair Dotson adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.