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NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

February 27, 2020

12:30 p.m.

**EBRPD – Peralta Oaks Headquarters
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA 94605**

The following agenda items are listed for Committee consideration. In accordance with the Board Operating Guidelines, no official action of the Board will be taken at this meeting; rather, the Committee's purpose shall be to review the listed items and to consider developing recommendations to the Board of Directors.

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.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

If you wish to testify on an item on the agenda, please complete a speaker's form and submit it to the recording secretary. Your name will be called when the item is announced for discussion.

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

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>STAFF</u>
12:30 PM	1. Factors influencing the abundance of wintering Western Snowy Plovers at Crown Beach State Memorial Park	I	Rienschke
1:00 PM	2. Overview and Status Update on the San Francisco Estuary Invasive <i>Spartina</i> Project	I	Latta
1:30 PM	3. Open Forum for Public Comment <i>Individuals wishing to address the Committee on a topic not on the agenda may do so by completing a speaker's form and submitting it to the recording secretary.</i>	D	Dir. Lane

(R) Recommendation for Future Board Consideration

(I) Information

(D) Discussion

Natural and Cultural Resources Committee Members

Beverly Lane (Chair), Colin Coffey, Elizabeth Echols, Ayn Wieskamp (Alt.)
Kristina Kelchner, Staff Coordinator

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Robert E. Doyle
General Manager

AGENDA SUMMARY

1. Factors influencing the abundance of wintering Western Snowy Plovers at Robert. W. Crown Memorial State Beach (Rienschke)

Dave Rienschke, Wildlife Resource Analyst, will present on the abundance and current status of western snowy plovers at Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach (Crown Beach).

Shorebird populations are declining worldwide. Survival during the nonbreeding season, when mortality from food shortages and raptor predation is likely highest, can shape wintering shorebird habitat use patterns and population growth. The western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) is a small shorebird that is listed as a federally threatened species and as a California Species of Special Concern. Previous studies suggest that humans, dogs, crows, and other birds are the main sources of annoyance to plovers on public beaches. For over six years, we observed plover behavior and their responses to these disturbance factors at Crown Beach in Alameda. From 2014 to the present, the wintering population of western snowy plovers at this site has increased from six to over 54 individuals, after the establishment of the Plover Protection Zone (PPZ) and the volunteer "Plover Protection Patrol". Habitat choice and prey availability are vital to wintering western snowy plovers. We also examined the potential prey abundance within the PPZ, and in the areas directly north and south. Results showed that macro-invertebrate prey availability is greater in the PPZ and may be another important factor affecting wintering western snowy plover at this metropolitan beach.

2. Overview and Status Update on the San Francisco Estuary Invasive *Spartina* Project (Latta)

Marilyn Latta, Project Manager, with the California State Coastal Conservancy and staff from the Conservancy's lead consultant Olofson Environmental, Inc will share a status update on the San Francisco Estuary Invasive *Spartina* Project (Project), including specific actions to protect and enhance habitat for CA Ridgway's rail while moving forward with phased actions to complete the eradication of invasive *Spartina* from San Francisco Bay. The California State Coastal Conservancy and USFWS SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex partnered in 2000 to become the state and federal leads on the Project, a region-wide coordinated effort involving longstanding work by East Bay Regional Park District and more than 150 landowners and resource agencies baywide to eradicate invasive cordgrass from San Francisco Bay. Removal of invasive cordgrass is a key step to protect the substantial investment in regional wetland restoration projects and the native tidal marsh ecosystem baywide.

Spartina foliosa (Pacific cordgrass) is an important native species in SF Bay tidal marshes as the primary plant that naturally occurs at the low intertidal interface between bay waters and tidal marsh edge, where a variety of species hide from predators, forage, and nest. Invasive *Spartina* originally introduced from the east coast in the 1970's has hybridized with the native species (*Spartina alterniflora* x *foliosa*) and invades both tidal mudflats and marshes; it has been documented to change the physical structure and plant communities in these habitats, reduce biodiversity, and degrade values for native species. Treatment via targeted application of the herbicide imazapyr started in 2005 at East Bay Regional Park sites and additional locations in the full 70,000 acre, 9 county project area and is permitted by USFWS and other agencies.

As of 2019 treatment, the Project has achieved 95% reduction of the invasion and is approaching eradication. However, continued treatment of the remaining five percent of invasive *Spartina* is critical to make sure eradication is achieved. Several EBRPD are restricted from treatment due to concerns over CA Ridgway's rail. Passive recruitment of key native plant species is limited at some previously invaded marshes, and more than 475,000 seedlings and 62 island enhancements have been installed from 2012-2020 to enhance native habitat. Additional treatment, revegetation plantings and construction of high tide refuge islands are critical to reestablish vegetative structure that provides habitat, food resources, and high tide refuge for CA Ridgway's rails and other priority species. Healthy tidal marshes and mudflats are crucial not only for the survival and recovery of shorebirds, waterfowl and migratory birds, but also for many additional species that depend on tidal wetlands. The invasive *Spartina* treatment and native habitat enhancements are particularly important in the coming decades as sea level rises, providing native marsh vegetation a greater chance to establish and thrive, not only for habitat benefits but also to protect tidal wetlands and adjacent shorelines from wave action and erosion.

3. Open Forum for Public Comment (Dir. Lane)

Individuals wishing to address the Committee on a topic not on the agenda may do so by completing a speaker's form and submitting it to the recording secretary

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