

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

D. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

2. ACQUISITION, STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

- a. Adopt the Name, “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50,” for the Future Regional Park at the Former Concord Naval Weapons Station: Concord Hills Regional Park (Holt/Kelchner)

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager recommends that the Board of Directors adopt the name “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50” for the future regional park temporarily named “Concord Hills Regional Park,” to be located at the site of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station.

REVENUE/COST

Aside from staff time, there are no costs associated with this naming action.

BACKGROUND

A. THURGOOD MARSHALL REGIONAL PARK – HOME OF THE PORT CHICAGO 50

On May 11, 2021, Board Executive Committee unanimously supported the staff recommendation that the future park at the former Concord Naval Weapons Station should be named “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50”. The Park Advisory Committee (PAC) considered and supported the name at its meeting on May 24, 2021. Additionally, the Concord City Council voted to support the name at their May 25th, 2021 meeting.

Staff supports a name that continues to educate the public about the deadly Port Chicago explosion, the bravery of the fifty men who took a stand against unsafe and unjust conditions, and the key role that the disaster and unjust mutiny trial played in the desegregation of the U.S. armed forces.

Further, staff recognizes the significant contributions of Thurgood Marshall in advocating for the Port Chicago 50 and challenging the segregation policies of the U.S. military, and the influence these experiences in the East Bay had in his judicial career.

During World War II, the U.S. military was segregated and Black sailors who signed up to serve their country were relegated to dangerous assignments such as loading munitions. The Port Chicago Naval Magazine operated on the waterfront north of the City of Concord as a major ammunition transshipment facility, where munitions were delivered by train and quickly transferred by hand directly onto ships headed for the front. With no onsite storage for munitions and high demand from the war front, the loading work was done 24 hours a day and was often rushed, with white officers holding competitions and pushing sailors to work faster. On July 17, 1944, these conditions led to disaster when two vessels loaded with ammunition exploded with the force of a small earthquake, blowing out windows as far away as San Francisco and instantly killing 320 men – mostly teenagers – and wounding 390 others. The explosion accounted for one-quarter of all African American deaths during World War II. Surviving Black sailors were ordered to return to work loading munitions not long after the explosion, and many refused. White officers who lived through the explosion were granted survivors' leave to overcome the trauma, while African American workers were sent to nearby Camp Shoemaker and naval barracks in Vallejo and immediately assigned shore side duties. Fifty men, who came to be known as the Port Chicago 50 (Attachment A), were unjustly charged with mutiny and ultimately dishonorably discharged. The trial and the national attention it garnered ultimately led to the desegregation of the armed forces with the signing of Executive Order 9981 by President Harry Truman in 1948.

The Inland Area of the Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS), where the future regional park is located, was acquired and added to the Port Chicago Naval Magazine to create safer working conditions by transitioning the site from a transit facility to a weapons storage depot in response to the Port Chicago explosion (Attachment B). The site continued to operate as one base through the end of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War periods until being placed in a reduced operational capacity in 1999.

The Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial was established by President Barack Obama in December 2009 through the signing of the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial Enhancement Act. The Act explicitly authorized the National Park Service to partner with the East Bay Regional Park District to establish a joint Visitor Center within the Inland Area of the former CNWS. The Port Chicago Naval Magazine Foundation Document identifies the Inland Area as an affiliated site where the history of Port Chicago is relevant. A Cooperative Management Agreement was signed by the National Park Service and the Park District in 2020.

The Port Chicago 50 wrote to Thurgood Marshall while he was serving as lead counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), requesting that he observe the unfair trial. Mr. Marshall sat in the proceedings, and afterwards published a series of articles, pamphlets, and public speeches that brought public attention to what he described as a trial not about the Port Chicago 50, but about the Navy being “on trial for its whole vicious policy toward Negroes¹.” His campaign to expose the racism in the trial of the Port Chicago 50 ultimately led to the desegregation of the military and was an early precursor to the broader civil

¹ Speaking to the press following the court proceedings, Thurgood Marshall declared “This is not 50 men on trial for mutiny, this is the Navy on trial for its whole vicious policy toward Negroes.”

<https://news.berkeley.edu/2014/07/10/remembering-port-chicago/>

rights movements in this country. President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981 ordering the desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces on July 26, 1948.

This history was not well known for many decades until Dr. Robert Allen, a professor of sociology at U.C. Berkeley, came across the pamphlet the NAACP produced calling for people to remember the history of Port Chicago². He began to research the history of the Port Chicago disaster and in 1989 published the book “The Port Chicago Mutiny,” detailing the history of the explosion, the events that followed and the desegregation of the military. Dr. Allen went on to become one of the founding members of the Friends of Port Chicago and was central to the establishment of the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial.

Designation of this park as “Thurgood Marshall – Home of the Port Chicago 50” honors the bravery of the fifty men who organized to protest return to work orders and challenged the U.S. government. Without their bravery, the story of Port Chicago would not be known, and the advocacy of Thurgood Marshall would never come to be. Further, the word “home” and the symbolic designation of this site as the “Home of the Port Chicago 50” is important to the African American community to acknowledge that the Black sailors at that time did not have a home at the base or within the neighboring town of Port Chicago, where they were explicitly not welcomed.

Despite years of advocacy by local elected officials and community organizations, the courageous young men of the Port Chicago 50 have never been exonerated.

This naming proposal has gained the support of numerous organizations including the Black Employee Collective, a self-identified group of individuals working at the Park District; the Citizens for Historical Equity; the Hawaii and California Chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); the Friends of Port Chicago; United Veterans Council of Pittsburg, California; AFSCME Local 2428; and numerous individuals and organizations (Attachment C).

Staff fully supports the name “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50” as a name that celebrates African American history, honors the history of the site and allows for deeper exploration of themes of equality, safe working conditions, social justice, and protest.

B. PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS

Since the closure of the Inland Area of the CNWS, the Park District has engaged throughout the reuse planning process to establish a new Regional Park on the site. In July 2019, the Park District took constructive possession of 2,540 acres of the former base for a new regional park (Attachment B). In July 2020, the Park District’s Board of Directors adopted the Concord Hills Regional Park Land Use Plan (LUP), guiding future development of the new regional park to

²“Mutiny” pamphlet prepared by NAACP in March 1945 <https://tminstituteldf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Port-Chicago-Mutiny-Pamphlet.pdf>

include over 22 miles of new trails, camping facilities, picnic areas, and a joint operated visitor center facility with the National Park Service.

The working name for the new regional park, which was included in the 2013 Master Plan Update, has been “Concord Hills Regional Park.” Park District staff solicited naming suggestions throughout the public planning process for the LUP. During the month of February 2020, a public survey of top naming suggestions was held with over 1,200 responses. The results of these exercises and surveys were presented to the Park Advisory Committee (PAC) as part of the LUP approval process on April 27, 2020. Key themes that emerged from the public surveys were an interest in Native American park names and open-ended suggestions that a park name should recognize the history of the events at Port Chicago.

At the April 27, 2020 PAC meeting, and subsequently at the Park District’s Board Executive Committee meeting of August 6, 2020, the Committee directed staff to consult with local Native American tribal leaders to research and consider a park name that would reflect the indigenous history of the site. Staff, in consultation with Native leaders and supported by retired Cultural Services Coordinator Dr. Beverly Ortiz, developed two potential names to reflect the park’s indigenous history: 1) “Caaco’ aanikssan Regional Park” (Miwok-language translation of “Place of our grandchildren’s future”), and 2) “Chupcan Territory Regional Park,” named for the indigenous people of the Concord area (Attachment D).

These names were presented to the Board Executive Committee on September 3, 2020, where several public commenters suggested that the park name should instead reflect the history of the Port Chicago explosion and its aftermath. The Board Executive Committee directed staff to engage in additional conversations with Native peoples and with the public commenters from African American communities who had spoken at the meeting regarding a name that reflects the history of Port Chicago and its aftermath (Attachment E).

Following several months of further conversations with community members, additional staff research, and significant public comment, the name for the future regional park – “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50” – has emerged as an important name honoring the history of Port Chicago, the men who bravely stood up to challenge the U.S. military, and the advocacy of Thurgood Marshall. It has also emerged as a significant symbolic name to the African American community to establish a public space where African American history is celebrated.

Staff recommends the name “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50” as a name that honors the history of the site and allows for deeper exploration of themes of equality, social justice, and protest. Further, staff supports adoption of a park name that welcomes all people to engage in the ongoing development of the park, storytelling in the park, and long-term stewardship and programming of the park.

C. RELATIONSHIP TO THE EXISTING PORT CHICAGO NAVAL MAGAZINE NATIONAL MEMORIAL

As noted above, the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial was established in 2009. The waterfront explosion site, operated by the National Park Service, is the memorial and the final resting place for those men who lost their lives in the Port Chicago explosion. Concerns have been raised that naming two park areas for this history may create confusion or perhaps dilution of the Port Chicago history.

However, the public's access to the Port Chicago Naval Magazine is severely limited due to its location on the active Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO) facility³. Staff believes that naming of a more accessible regional park facility will serve to advance the interest of a larger memorial site and increase the public's understanding of the history of Port Chicago. The establishment of the "Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50" will support the National Park site and increase sustained engagement and support for advancement of public facilities and narratives that will give the appropriate recognition of the history of the former base.

It has also been suggested that the park should be expanded onto the MOTCO property, and that this future expanded park area, rather than the Inland Area, should be named to honor the Port Chicago history. While this is a welcome concept, the U.S. Army has no current plans to end operations at MOTCO. Significant funds have been invested to develop improved facilities at the base, and even if the site were to be made inactive for military use now, it would likely be many decades before public access could be realized in this area. Staff recommends highlighting the history of Port Chicago today by naming the Inland Area acquired to create safer working conditions following the disaster, rather than waiting the decades necessary to do so at the waterfront site of the 1944 explosion.

Staff also notes that the history of Port Chicago is dispersed throughout the Bay Area and the nation. While the explosion happened on the waterfront within the current MOTCO property, there are several associated sites that are relevant to the history of Port Chicago. The surviving sailors, including the Port Chicago 50, were ordered to return to work loading munitions at Mare Island in Vallejo. The mutiny trial of the Port Chicago 50 occurred on Treasure Island in San Francisco. There is a space dedicated to those who lost their lives at the Port Chicago explosion at the National Cemetery in the City of Colma, California. The explosion that occurred on the waterfront at Port Chicago had reverberations that were felt throughout the Bay Area and beyond. The story is both intensely local and personal, with deep impacts on local residents and their families, and undeniably national, as an origin story of a civil rights movement that shook the country.

³ Now operated by the United States Army, this facility is the Department of Defense's primary ammunition seaport supporting the Pacific area.

D. RELATIONSHIP TO THE TOWN OF PORT CHICAGO

A number of public commenters submitted written comments about the name “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50” at the Board of Directors meeting of May 18th, 2021 advocating for a name that acknowledged the Town of Port Chicago.

The Town of Port Chicago was a town located on the southern banks of Suisun Bay on the site of the current MOTCO facility. The area was first settled by Anglo Americans in 1850 and continued to be occupied after the establishment of the Port Chicago Naval Magazine. The town suffered significant damage from the explosion at Port Chicago on July 17, 1944 when over 300 buildings were damaged and 100 people were hurt.

In 1968, the U.S. Navy acquired all of the property within the Town of Port Chicago and demolished all of the buildings to form a safety zone around the Concord Naval Weapons Station loading docks. Former residents and descendants of the Town of Port Chicago have long advocated that the history of the town needs to be highlighted.

The future Regional Park site does not include the former town site. Staff understands the former town resident’s perspective and feel that the history of the Town of Port Chicago would be an appropriate story to include in the future visitor center and interpretive programming.

E. ADDRESSING THE LOSS OF INDIGENOUS LAND, HISTORY, CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND RECOGNIZING THE ONGOING CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS

The interest of the PAC and the Board Executive Committee in exploring a name that reflects the indigenous history of the site is in keeping with the Park District’s responsibility of stewarding over 125,000 acres of land that are the ancestral homelands of the Native peoples in the East Bay. This interest was acknowledged in the various naming exercises and surveys that were completed, demonstrating that there was substantial public interest in using the naming of this future regional park to acknowledge the Native history.

The loss of Native American history - cultural, institutional, and personal - has occurred across our society over the course of the past centuries. A more contemporary awareness of the history of colonialism, the Spanish Mission system, Anglo American exceptionalism, and active resistance by Native people in our post-industrial society is now being emphasized in modern day education and naming recognitions.

As stewards of significant portions of traditional indigenous lands, the Park District has a unique responsibility to address the loss of Native American land, history, culture and language. The need to recognize the history of Native peoples and their ongoing presence and contributions to our community has increasingly led to a recognition that park planning, naming, interpretation, and design all need to recognize and facilitate education about the Native history of the East Bay region.

Throughout this naming process, staff has continued to communicate with Native communities to keep Tribal representatives informed and seek their engagement through consultations. Based

on the consultations with the Tribal leaders and the Native American community, staff recommends that working potential programs to provide more substantive and inclusive opportunities to highlight Native ancestries and address concerns regarding erasure of indigenous culture than the naming of a single park⁴. Potential opportunities for ongoing partnership between the Native American community and the Park District could include joint stewardship opportunities at sacred sites now owned by the Park District, naming of other park features within the future park at Concord Hills, future naming of other new regional parks currently in planning, and other programs that may emerge from ongoing consultation with Native peoples.

F. ACTIONS TO RESULT FROM NAMING DECISION

Upon Board adoption of the naming recommendation, Park District staff will complete the following actions:

- Park website, printed brochures and other information will be updated to reflect the name change and interpret park history.
- Planning and GIS staff will add this name to the Park District's list of names to avoid future naming redundancy.
- GIS staff will update the park database to reflect the name change.

ALTERNATIVES

No alternatives are recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Names of the "Port Chicago 50"
- B. Project area Map
- C. Letter recommending "Thurgood Marshall Regional Park - Home of the Port Chicago 50"
- D. September 3, 2020 Board Executive Committee Report
- E. Native Peoples of the East Bay Map

⁴ Conversations with Native tribal leaders were conducted informally, using best practice tribal consultation methods, such as broad and inclusive invitations, sharing meeting notes and consensus meetings. The tribal entities that staff leaders consulted with are: Association of Ramaytush Ohlone; California Indian Water Commission; Confederated Villages of Lisjan; Costanoan Rumsen Carmel; Himre-n of Ohlone, Bay Miwok and Plains Miwok; Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan People; Lone Band of Miwok Indians; Ohlone Indian Tribe; Muwekma Ohlone Tribe; Wilton Rancheria.

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

RESOLUTION NO.: 2021 – 06 -

June 1, 2021

ADOPT THE NAME,
“THURGOOD MARSHALL REGIONAL PARK – HOME OF THE PORT CHICAGO 50,” FOR
THE FUTURE REGIONAL PARK AT
THE FORMER CONCORD NAVAL WEAPONS STATION:
CONCORD HILLS REGIONAL PARK

WHEREAS, the Port Chicago Naval Magazine was originally established in 1942 as a munitions transfer depot; and

WHEREAS, the Port Chicago Naval Magazine operated as a segregated facility and concerns about unjust and unsafe working conditions were regularly noted by African American sailors; and

WHEREAS, on July 17, 1944, an explosion occurred that instantly killed 320 men, two-thirds of whom were African American, while loading two ships from the same pier; and

WHEREAS, on July 17, 1944, the deadliest home front disaster of World War II took place when a huge explosion occurred at the Port Chicago Naval Magazine, a major munitions transshipment facility in California, killing 320 men (of whom 202 were African American) and wounding 390 (of whom 233 were African American); and

WHEREAS, all of the men loading ammunition at Port Chicago were black and all of the officers were white; and

WHEREAS, the African American enlisted men were subject to systemic racial discrimination and segregation; and

WHEREAS, there was no formal training in safe methods of ammunition handling given to enlisted men or the officers at the base; and

WHEREAS, work methods introduced by the officers included competition between work crew in loading ammunition; and

WHEREAS, such competition led to rushing and rough handling and increased the dangers of the work; and

WHEREAS, a court of inquiry was unable to determine the specific cause of the explosion, although it listed rough handling as a possible cause; and

WHEREAS, 258 ammunition handlers engaged in a peaceful work stoppage rather than return to work under the same officers and the same unsafe working conditions; and

WHEREAS, 50 of these men were unjustly charged with mutiny, although none had engaged in acts of violence and they obeyed all orders except to load ammunition; and

WHEREAS, all 50 were found guilty and sentenced to prison; and

WHEREAS, NAACP Chief Counsel Thurgood Marshall, speaking in defense of the sailors, argued that the mutiny charge and conviction were racially motivated and not supported by the facts; and

WHEREAS, the sailors' protest shined a light on racial injustice in the Navy, in 1945 the Navy began a process of desegregation of all of its facilities, leading the way to the general desegregation of the U.S. military ordered in 1948 by President Harry Truman; and

WHEREAS, in 1946 the convicted sailors were released from prison under a general amnesty, but the mutiny convictions remain on their records, and

WHEREAS, a review of the trial record and related documents reveals that the accused sailors had no intent to commit mutiny and did not conspire to do so; and

WHEREAS, the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) has been working closely with the City of Concord, the United States Navy, and the National Park Service on the establishment of a new regional park on a portion of the land of the inland area of the closed Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS); and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service operates the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial at the Military Ocean Terminal Concord operated by the United States Army and in current military use; and

WHEREAS, the Park District is working to establish a visitor center within the new regional park on the Concord Naval Weapons Station that will work to meet the education and public awareness goals for the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial; and

WHEREAS, the exoneration of the convicted Port Chicago sailors and the correction of their military records, is an important step towards reconciling the painful racial discrimination and social injustice that the events of Port Chicago represent; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Congressman George Miller initiated a Joint Use Study with participation from Contra Costa County, the City of Concord, and the Park District to identify joint use of the property where the concepts developed focused on park and open space use of the property and were presented to the Navy, but never implemented due to security concerns in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommended closure of the CNWS in 2005; and

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2007, the Navy declared approximately 5,028 acres of property at the former CNWS to be surplus to the needs of the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the City of Concord adopted the Concord Community Reuse Project in 2010 that designated 2,387 acres as “open space” for the establishment of a new regional park to be conveyed to the Park District through a Public Benefit Conveyance (PBC) through the Federal Lands to Parks Program; and

WHEREAS, on July 28, 2017, issued a Finding of Suitability to Transfer (“FOST”) where the Navy determined that 2,216 acres of the PBC area is environmentally suitable for assignment to NPS for deed transfer to the Park District; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2019, the Navy issued a letter formally assigning the Phase I PBC property to the National Park Service. The Phase I assignment consists of the 2,216 acres found suitable for transfer through the Phase I FOST; and

WHEREAS, on July 2, 2019, the Board of Directors authorized the Park District to accept the Phase I Public Benefit Conveyance of 2,216.02 acres through a no cost Public Benefit Conveyance through the National Park Service Federal Lands to Parks program (Board Resolution No. 2019-07-176); and

WHEREAS, on July 7, 2020, the Board of Directors adopted the Land Use Plan and certified the environmental documents for the “Concord Hills Regional Park,” with the recognition that the Board of Directors would select a new name for the park in a separate resolution (Board Resolution No. 2020-07-153); and

WHEREAS, the adopted Land Use Plan recognizes that there are many histories and stories on the property and future educational and interpretive efforts will seek to tell the properties full history including the Native American history, history of the Rancho Monte Del Diablo, history of the Town of Port Chicago, and the history of the Concord Naval Weapons Station through the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Cold War eras; and

WHEREAS, on May 11, 2021 the Board Executive Committee heard a staff report and public comment and unanimously recommended the park name be “Thurgood Marshall – Home of the Port Chicago 50” to the Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2021, the Park Advisory Committee heard a staff report and public comment and unanimously recommended approval of the name, “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50” to the Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors recognizes the significant contributions of Thurgood Marshall in advocating for the Port Chicago 50 and challenging the segregation policies of the U.S. military, eventually leading to the desegregation of the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Military and ultimately

through the Civil Rights movement, the entire country, and the influence these experiences in the East Bay had in his judicial career; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors supports a name that continues to educate the public about the deadly 1944 Port Chicago explosion, the bravery of the fifty men who took a stand against unsafe and unjust conditions, and the key role that the disaster and the mutiny trial played in the desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors support the name “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50” as a name that celebrates African American history, honors the history of the future park site and allows for deeper exploration of the interpretive themes of equality, safe working conditions, social justice, and protest;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District hereby authorizes the name of the former Concord Hills Regional Park be changed to “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50”; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District hereby directs staff to prepare park signage, brochures, maps and other communications that announce this name; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Manager is hereby authorized and directed, on behalf of the District and in its name, to execute and deliver such documents and to do such acts as may be deemed necessary or appropriate to accomplish the intentions of this resolution.

Moved by Director _____, seconded by Director _____, and adopted this 1st day of June 2021, by the following vote:

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

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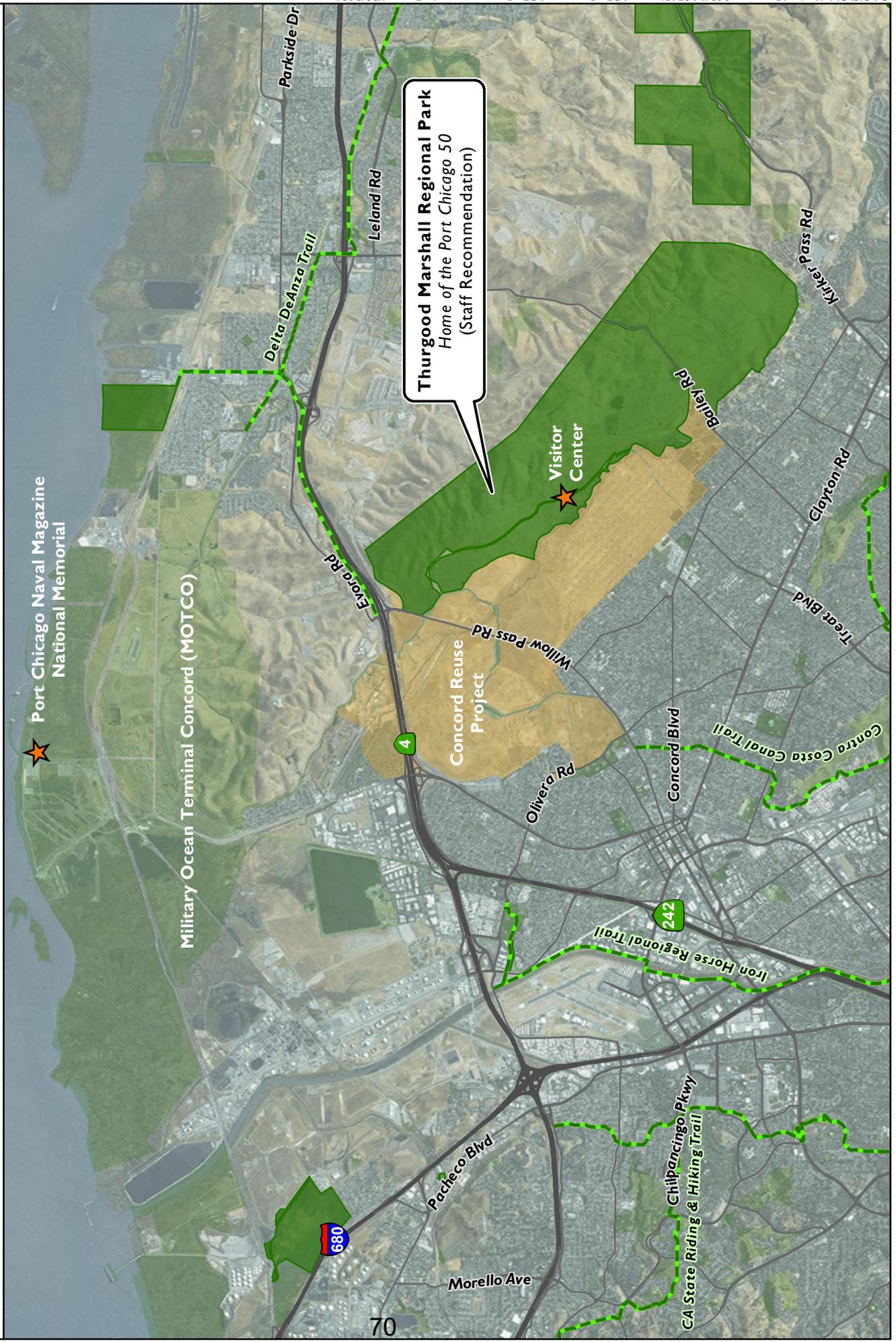
ATTACHMENT A

Names of the Port Chicago 50

1. Julius J. Allen
2. Mack Anderson
3. Douglas G. Anthony
4. William E. Banks
5. Arnett Baugh
6. Morris Berry
7. Martin A. Bordenave
8. Ernest D. Brown
9. Robert L. Borage
10. Mentor G. Burns
11. Zack E. Credle
12. Jack P. Crittenden
13. Hayden R. Curd
14. Charles L. David Jr.
15. Bennon Dees
16. George W. Diamond
17. Kenneth C. Dixon
18. Julius Dixson
19. John H. Dunn
20. Melvin W. Ellis
21. William Fleece
22. James Floyd
23. Ernest J. Gaines
24. John L. Gipson
25. Charles C. Gray
26. Ollie E. Green
27. Harry E. Grimes
28. Harry Havis
29. Charles N. Hazzard
30. Frank L. Henry
31. Richard W. Hill
32. Theodore King
33. Perry L. Knox
34. William H. Lock
35. Edward L. Longmire
36. Miller Matthews
37. Augustus P. Mayo
38. Howard McGee
39. Lloyd McKinney
40. Alphonso McPherson
41. Freddie Meeks
42. Cecil Miller
43. Fleetwood H. Postell
44. Edward Saunders
45. Cyril O. Sheppard
46. Joseph R. Small
47. William C. Suber
48. Edward L. Waldrop
49. Charles S. Widemon
50. Albert Williams, Jr.

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Concord Hills Regional Park
Proposed Park Naming
Thurgood Marshall Regional Park - Home of the Port Chicago 50



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EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting of September 3, 2020

TO: Board Executive Committee

FROM: Robert E. Doyle, General Manager

STAFF REPORT
PREPARED BY: Devan Reiff, Principal Planner

SUBJECT: Concord Hills Regional Park Naming Selection

Devan Reiff, Principal Planner, will make a presentation on this agenda item.

BACKGROUND

On July 7, 2020, the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors adopted the Concord Hills Regional Park Land Use Plan (LUP) and certified the Environmental Impact Report, creating a new 2,500-acre park at the site of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS). At the May 7, 2020 Board Executive Committee meeting, after a staff presentation, the Committee directed staff to continue with consultation with native peoples of the East Bay and their tribal leadership regarding a name for the future park, and to bring the LUP to the full Board separately from the naming selection of the park. On August 3, 2020, after consulting with most tribal leaders in one on one meetings, staff brought an informational report to the Board Executive Committee, pledging to return on September 3rd, with a naming recommendation.

“Concord Hills Regional Park” has been the working name for the future park since 2013, when it was included in the Park District’s Master Plan. Staff solicited input on the name of the future park throughout the planning process during community engagement events for the LUP and through public online surveys. Summaries of these surveys are found in the staff report to the May 7, 2020 Board Executive Committee meeting.

Tribal consultation: With the assistance of former Park District cultural services coordinator, Dr. Beverly Ortiz, Park District staff started with a list of contacts from the California Native American Heritage Commission, which included federally recognized tribes, and tribes and tribal entities with cultural affiliations to Ohlone, Bay Miwok and/or Delta Miwok homelands. From that larger list, staff was able to contact and speak with several leaders of East Bay tribal entities, and all agree the new park in Concord should be named in recognition of the native peoples who lived in the Concord/ Mt. Diablo area, or a name that uses their language, to reflect their culture. The tribal leaders spoken with to date are from:

- *Association of Ramaytush Ohlone*

- *California Indian Water Commission*
- *Confederated Villages of Lisjan*
- *Costanoan Rumsen Carmel*
- *Him're-n of Ohlone, Bay Miwok and Plains Miwok*
- *Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan People*
- *lone Band of Miwok Indians*
- *Ohlone Indian Tribe*
- *Muwekma Ohlone Tribe*
- *Wilton Rancheria*

The *Amah Mutsun Tribal Band* declined to participate in the park naming conversation, as the Concord area is outside their traditional tribal territory.

Tribal entities which were contacted, but with whom staff did not speak by the date of this report:

- *North Valley Yokuts Tribe*
- *Santa Rosa Rancheria*

Staff held consensus meetings with all the tribal leaders previously consulted with (one leader did not participate in the consensus meeting). The leaders appeared to reach consensus on a name, “**Chupcan Territory Regional Park**” named for the Chupcan, the Bay-Miwok speaking people who lived in the area now becoming the park. As others tribal leaders had suggested “**Chupcan Regional Park**” be the park name, the choice by some to add the word “Territory” was explained as referring, in a general way, to the larger area where the Chupcan people lived at the time of European contact (see map as Attachment A). It was not intended to demarcate any specific boundary of the Chupcan people, because current representations of tribal boundaries are modern approximations, actual tribal boundaries were based on natural features, and fluid over time. There was a discussion of a non-western spelling of the name, to make sure the park name was linguistically accurate to the Bay Miwok language group, and “**Cupkan Regional Park**” or “**Cupkkaan Regional Park,**” were suggested.

However, further clarification following the consensus meeting reiterated that for some tribal leaders, “Chupcan Territory” was their second choice, and their first choice was for using the Bay Miwok language in the park name, which is important to them to perpetuate their living culture. Tribal leaders considered several culturally-affiliated park names in the Bay Miwok language (see Attachment B). One idea which garnered the most interest for the leaders who wanted a Bay Miwok language name was to convey the past generations of elders and the generations to come in the future: “**Caaco’ aanikssan Regional Park**”—“place of our grandchildren’s future.” Other considerations were “**Wakaaceko’ oonimun Regional Park** – “Rivers coming together,” and “**Wile’weepa Regional Park**” –“Flower Hill.”

Staff noted that there will be naming opportunities for trails and park features in the future interpretive and trails planning for the Park. There was also interest from some tribal leaders in using the Park’s interpretive plan to present a history of native American participation in the

United States military, connecting the native presence on the land to the use of the land by the US Navy for the last 75 years. Also, to include interpretive signage of natural features of the park which includes names in the Bay Miwok language. Staff is working on this research for possible inclusion at a later date.

Park District Naming Policy: The Park District’s naming policy states, in part:

Regional Parks, trails, features, areas and facilities will be named after natural features such as plant and animal life, geographic, topographic or paleontological features or for cultural features such as archaeological and historic artifacts, historic persons, families or events Existing historically related names shall be respected.¹

A park’s name gives the public a sense of what they can expect at the park. Park names tell the cultural, historical, geological or biological stories of the land. For the new regional park in Concord, a name will tell about the location of this park, and of the people who have used this land during different periods of history. The name can assist with the interpretive program of the park – telling the stories of the many people who lived and used this land.

The 2004 Naming Policy guides the process by which the Park District selects a name, starting with coordination by the Planning department, either in an “appropriate planning document for the parkland unit or by separate Board Resolution.” Four steps follow in the Naming Policy:

- Staff will submit naming recommendations for review by the Board Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will make a recommendation to the full Board of Directors.
- The Park Advisory Committee (PAC) will review the Executive Committee recommendation and make its own recommendation to the Board of Directors.
- In a case where the PAC disagrees with the Executive Committee’s recommendation, the recommendation will be returned to the Executive committee.
- The full Board will consider the naming proposal.

As a part of the development of the LUP and naming process, staff conducted an online survey with the leading names suggested throughout the public outreach process to date. As tribal input had not yet been solicited, the survey did not include a native affiliated name. However, interest in a native name was a recurring theme in the “Other” category. The 1,200 votes from the four public surveys indicated a preference for the following four names and Other suggestions: “Concord Hills,” “Diablo Vista,” “Los Medanos,” and “Monte Del Diablo” and “Other.” The top selected names are listed below in alphabetical order, with staff’s evaluation of advantages (pro) and disadvantages (con) for each potential park name. In each case, the future regional park’s name would be “_____ Regional Park.”

¹ “Naming Policy and Guidelines.” Adopted on April 20, 2004, Resolution No. 2004-04-73.

1. Concord Hills: This has been used as a placeholder name for the Future Park during the land use planning process.
 - Pro: straight-forward name—lets people know where they are and what to expect at the park. This name was selected in a resolution by the Concord City Council a few months ago as their preferred name for the park.
 - Con: the name was made-up for the planning process and is not a previously recognized geographic name. The name does not reference the parks location with respect to the City of Pittsburg.

2. Diablo Vista:
 - Pro: name recognizes the view from the future park to neighboring Mt. Diablo
 - Con: not an official geographic, historic or topographic name. Also, it is the name of a school in Danville and a residential development in Livermore.

3. Los Medanos: Named for the 1835 Mexican land grant and ranch of Jose Mesa and Jose Miquel, which included today's communities of Pittsburg, Bay Point, and Antioch, this is the most widely recognized name for the range of hills between Concord and Pittsburg.
 - Pro: broadly recognized geographic name for the hills in the future regional park.
 - Con: future regional park is not actually located on land that was part of Rancho Los Medanos; and, the name is primarily associated with Los Medanos College in Pittsburg.

4. Monte Del Diablo: Name of 1834 Mexican land grant and ranch of Don Salvio Pacheco, land which includes today's City of Concord.
 - Pro: recognizes the period of Mexican history of the land.
 - Con: may be confused with nearby Mount Diablo State Park.

5. "Other": Individual responses from online "Other" suggestions which received more than a single vote were discussed in the May 7, 2020 Board Executive Committee report. In general, the "Other" suggested an interest in a native-affiliated name as well as names which honored the sailors who died or were injured in the Port Chicago explosion of 1944 and the "Port Chicago Fifty," who were convicted during the mutiny trial; military history, individuals associated with Concord, and geographic names, such as "Vista Diablo."

While the LUP contains suggested names of trails, roads, and natural park features, it will be during the park's development stages when individual park features are named. For example, the LUP contains proposed names recognizing the area's Native American heritage, such as "Chupcan Trail." It is during the park's implementation stage, at the time of the park opening, when these features will be given their final names.

ACTIONS TO RESULT FROM NAMING DECISION

Upon receiving a final recommendation from the Board Executive Committee, Planning staff will present the item to the full Board of Directors for consideration.

Upon Board adoption of the naming recommendation, Park District staff will complete the following actions:

- Planning and GIS staff will add this name to the Park District’s list of names to avoid future naming redundancy;
- GIS staff will update the park database to reflect the change;
- The Park Supervisor will install park signage; and
- Public Affairs staff will include this update in the printing of the park brochure and update the Park District’s website.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board Executive Committee consider either “Chupcan Territory Regional Park” as the name of the future Park in Concord (with the further consideration of a linguistically accurate spelling), or, “Caaco’ aanikssan Regional Park,” and forward a final recommendation to the full Board of Directors. Aside from staff time, there is no cost associated with this naming.

ATTACHMENT

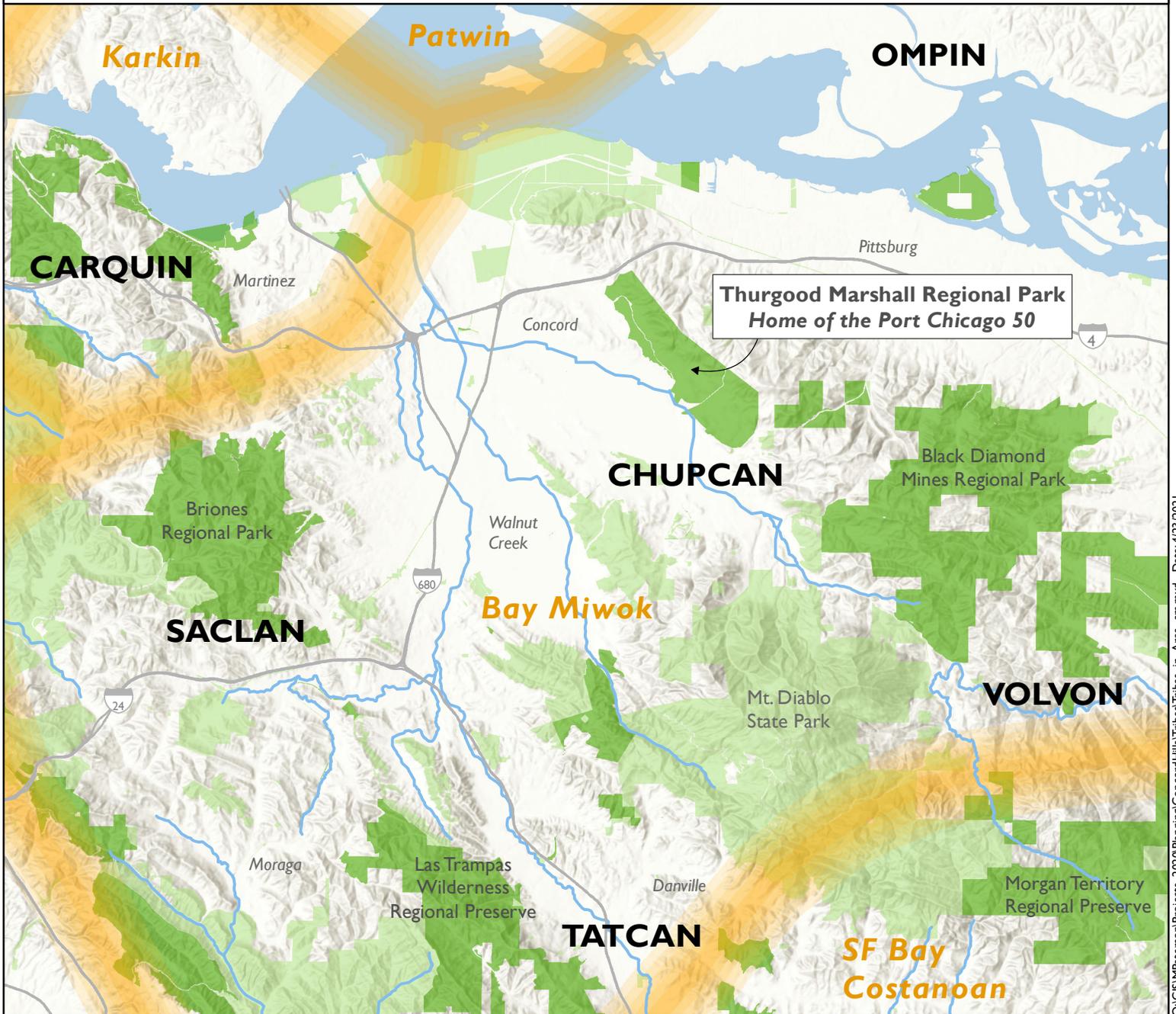
- A. Map: Native peoples of Central Contra Costa County
- B. Table: Native naming suggestions for the future Park

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THURGOOD MARSHALL REGIONAL PARK HOME OF THE PORT CHICAGO 50

Native American peoples of Central Contra Costa County

April 2021

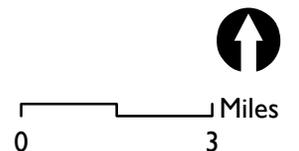


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LEGEND

- Language Areas
- EBRPD Lands
- Other Open Space



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