

REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

e. Natural and Cultural Resources Committee (5/20/09) (Sutter)

Committee Members: Whitney Dotson, Carol Severin (alternate)

EBRPD Staff: Mike Anderson, Brian Wiese, Gayle Still, Jessica Sheppard, Jack Kenny, Carol Victor, Jim Swanson, Kerry Berg, John Hitchen, Dave Amme, Dave Collins, Neal Fujita, Brad Gallup, Mark Ragatz, Ron Gartland

Public: Peter Rauch, Eric Folmer

A meeting of the Board Natural and Cultural Resources Committee was held on Wednesday, May 20th at District Headquarters, 2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, CA. Whitney Dotson called the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m. The following is a summary of the items discussed:

I. Recommendation to Approve Great Tree Tenders Inc. Proposal for Point Pinole Tree Thinning Project (Ragatz)

Point Pinole Regional Shoreline encompasses 2,315 acres of parkland consisting of grassland, eucalyptus forest, salt marshes, and shoreline. These habitats are home to a huge array of land, shore, and water birds and parts of the Point Pinole eucalyptus forests provide wintering habitat for monarch butterflies. The park is also a significantly important historical site. In addition, this park is popular with park users because of its 12 miles of hiking and riding trails, pier and shoreline fishing access, wildlife viewing and its scenic beauty.

As part of the ongoing efforts to reduce fire hazard, enhance monarch butterfly habitat and open up more space for coastal prairie restoration, the District prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) to find an experienced, reputable, and qualified contractor to selectively thin approximately 220 acres of mature and young eucalyptus stands. Small stands of Black Acacia and Siberian elm will also be thinned within these designated areas. In addition, ladder fuels such as low-hanging limbs and accumulated forest litter will be removed. Chipping to a maximum depth of 3 inches will be permitted within the forested areas.

The contractor will be responsible for the initial tree cutting and thinning on all sites and the appropriate disposal of the cut material. The contractor will also be responsible for the topical, hand-application of herbicides to cut stumps within the original project areas in order to prevent re-sprouting. The project will be divided into two phases. Phase 1 will be tree falling, ladder fuel removal, initial stump herbicide treatment, chipping, and removal of material. Phase 2 will be follow-up re-sprout herbicide treatment. This project will be funded by designated Measure CC funds of \$120,000 and Fuel Management fund transfer of \$135,000.

Fire Captain Brad Gallup gave the fire history at Pt. Pinole, at least one every year, and explained how the eucalyptus management will reduce the potential for high intensity wildland fires. Assistant General Manager Michael Anderson requested that the recommendation go forward. However, any action will be delayed until the June 17th Board meeting so the Sierra Club can make their proposals. Director Carol Severin requested small loop trails with signage that start from the staging area to accommodate people that can't use the larger trails. Peter Rauch stressed that the coastal prairie is a rare commodity and the opportunity to increase the size along the edges of the groves should be given the chance. He added that he has around twenty issues he would like addressed to fold into the plan, and suggested more time to address them. Planning/Stewardship and GIS Services Chief Brian Wiese emphasized that the Stewardship department and Fire department are working as a team to develop a plan for protection and enhancement of the parks resources. Staff requests that the Committee recommend to the full Board acceptance of the proposal from Great Tree Tenders, Inc. and approval to transfer budgeted funds from the Fire Department Fuel Management account for the selective thinning of the Point Pinole Eucalyptus forest, including small stands of acacia and Chinese elm. This project is consistent with plans for eucalyptus management in the 1976 and 1998 Land Use Plans.

2. The Restoration and Management of the Pt. Pinole Coastal Prairie (Amme)

Wildland Vegetation Program Manager David Amme pointed out that the Point Pinole peninsula has one of the best and most extensive native coastal prairies within the Bay. It is also a historical site where agriculture was once practiced and a munitions storage facility existed in the early to mid 20th century. Several large groves of eucalyptus were planted on the peninsula. Wildfires in the late 1980s have caused many of these groves to be extremely dense with thousands of new saplings blocking out sun light and accumulating many tons of understory fuel. In the past, the District has used prescribed fire and seasonal goat grazing to enhance and restore the grassland prairie areas; however, prescribed fire is not a practical option within the dense groves of young eucalyptus saplings, which are beginning to take over the open prairie grassland. In connection with the planned eucalyptus thinning program, which will cut back on future destructive fires and increase plant and wildlife diversity, the District is planning to enhance and restore the coastal prairie grassland areas using Measure CC funds. Peter Rauch recommended that the cut trees be chipped and left onsite for the District to use and leave some logs for amphibians. Jessica Sheppard said there has to be a balance between leaving logs for amphibians and fuel management. Speaking for the trees, Eric Folmer agreed that thinning is a good thing, but in order to sustain a healthy forest, a diversity of trees is needed and is not in the plan. He suggested leaving the seedlings from the small grove of red gum trees to develop

healthy new trees. Captain Gallup said there is flexibility to make changes and the red gum tree area can be marked to save.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Director Whitney Dotson adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.