

Arc Ecology

Environment, Economy, Society, & Peace

November 13, 2009

Mr. Phil Ginsburg
General Manager
San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department
501 Stanyan Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

RE: Sharp Park

Dear Mr. Ginsburg:

On behalf of Arc Ecology, I urge the City and County of San Francisco to close Sharp Park Golf Course and create a new public park at Sharp Park in partnership with the National Park Service. A new public park will protect our environment, return financial resources to San Francisco's neighborhood parks, and create recreational amenities that everyone can enjoy.

Sharp Park Golf Course has a long history of environmental problems, largely because of its poor design and unfortunate placement. The current operation of the golf course harms the habitat and causes take of two species protected by the federal Endangered Species Act: the California red-legged frog and the San Francisco garter snake. San Francisco is not permitted by the federal or state government to cause this harm.

Creating a new public park at Sharp Park and managing the property in conjunction with the adjacent landowner, the National Park Service, will reduce the City's exposure to legal liabilities and capital expenditures associated with the environmental problems at Sharp Park. San Francisco is currently exposed to massive civil penalties for harming endangered species in violation of state and federal law. The City is also responsible for tens-of-millions of dollars in capital improvements at Sharp Park to resolve the environmental liabilities caused by the golf course. By closing the golf course and managing the property with the National Park Service, city resources can be redirected to neighborhood parks in desperate need of financial resources, and a protracted and expensive legal action can be avoided. Closing the golf course is the most fiscally prudent method for retaining recreational uses of Sharp Park.

A new public park will also provide recreational amenities that modern Bay Area residents demand, rather than recreational amenities that fit the demographic of the Bay Area a century ago. A new public park will provide access to hiking trails, picnicking spots, camping facilities, and environmental educational opportunities; it will ensure the continued existence and abundance of endangered species that San Francisco is charged with protecting; it will improve public access to precious coastal resources; and it will make the coastline more resilient to the storm surges and flooding events that are expected to be exacerbated by global warming. These are the amenities that modern Bay Area residents consistently request in survey after survey, including surveys conducted by the Recreation and Parks Department.

Again, we request that the City close Sharp Park Golf Course create a new public park at Sharp Park in partnership with the National Park Service. Thank you for this opportunity to express our concerns and to give our support for a new public park at Sharp Park.

Sincerely,

Saul Bloom
Executive Director

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