

12/5/11

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102
Via: Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org

Mayor Edwin Lee
City Hall, Room 200
San Francisco, CA 94102
Via: mayoredwinlee@sfgov.org

RE: Support for Sharp Park Restoration Legislation (Avalos)

Dear Board of Supervisors and Mayor Lee:

Our City is writing to express our support for recently introduced legislation by Supervisor John Avalos to restore Sharp Park wetlands and create a new public park in partnership with the National Park Service. We believe repurposing Sharp Park demonstrates sustainability and our best opportunity to protect and recover endangered species. The National Park Service is our nation's most trusted steward for protecting our national treasures while making them accessible for public enjoyment. Their ability to fund restoration and create new recreational opportunities makes this partnership a feasible and attractive solution to the significant ecological and financial liabilities that plague Sharp Park golf course. As well known, the Sharp Park golf course loses tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars each year and the golf course operations inflict harm on imperiled wildlife.

We believe that the peer-reviewed scientific report and proposed restoration plan prepared by ESA-PWA with Dr. Peter Baye and Dawn Reis Ecological Studies in February 2011, *Conceptual Ecosystem Restoration Plan and Feasibility Assessment for Laguna Salada*, contains the best available science on the ecology of the Laguna Salada and surrounding natural features at Sharp Park, as well as the impacts of the management of the Sharp Park Golf Course on endangered species and their habitats at the site.

The restoration of Sharp Park is the best option to ensure the long term survival of the San Francisco garter snake and the California red-legged frog in the area.

Conversely, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department recommendation for Sharp Park is to maintain 18 holes of the golf course while making small changes in the course layout to address environmental concerns, maintain a seawall along the coast, and invest millions of dollars into course improvements. This would have negative consequences for endangered species and their habitats, incur significant costs to the City's budget, and increase the potential for flooding.

It is our conclusion that the minimal habitat enhancement proposed by the Park Department is inadequate to allow the recovery of the San Francisco garter snake and red-legged frog at the site, and is set up to fail with climate change and sea-level rise.

Sharp Park contains unique coastal wetlands habitat features and is important habitat for two interdependent federally listed species. The extremely endangered San Francisco garter snake, confined to six areas on the upper San Francisco Peninsula, is federally and state listed as endangered. The California red-legged frog, found in wetlands in lowlands in central California,

is federally listed as threatened. We concur with the ESA-PWA report that "Laguna Salada represents one of the best opportunities in the Central Coast region to improve and restore impaired lagoon wetland habitats for endangered species."

Sincerely,



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