



SIERRA CLUB SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER

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EAST BAY PUBLIC LANDS SUBCOMMITTEE

REPLY TO 802 Balra Drive, El Cerrito, CA 94530

October 15, 2001

John Sutter, President and Members of the Board
of Directors for the East Bay Regional Park District
Box 5381
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA 94605-0381

Rusty Areias, Director
Dept. of Parks and Recreation
State of California
Box 94296
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Dear President Sutter and Members of the Board:

The Club wishes to express its deep concern regarding issues related to the new Eastshore State Park. First, the Club has become very concerned that there is little, to no, enforcement of regulations against off leash dog walking on areas of the proposed park, especially on the Meadow in Berkeley, the Albany lands, and areas of the park in Richmond. Nor is there any signage to inform people that walking a dog off-leash is not allowed. As a consequence, advocates for off-leash dog walking are now stating that off leash dog walking is "allowed." They are demanding that this "allowed" use remain in place as one of the "allowed" uses for the park.

The notion that off-leash dog walking is currently allowed on these lands is simply not true. Both the Park District and State Parks must take responsibility for rectifying this situation and ensuring that people understand that off-leash dog walking is prohibited everywhere except at Point Isabel Regional Park and Berkeley's Cesar Chavez Park. The Sierra Club must request in the most vigorous manner that the public agencies take action immediately.

The second issue concerns fact that the Park District and State Parks have continued to allow the leasing of concessions for Halloween pumpkin and Christmas Tree sales on the Berkeley Meadow. This is just outrageous. After years of work to save the Meadow and after group after group have called for preserving the Meadow as habitat, wetlands, and open space, the public agencies still lease a portion of this land for a commercial use that is simply incompatible with the wildlife and open space values of this land. We now have lights on all night and a large inflated synthetic jumping structure on the Meadow. Nothing justifies the continued lease for these uses on the Berkeley Meadow. This leasing demonstrates a true lack of sensitivity to the issues involved with this property.

Sierra Club Letter to Park District and State Parks, 10/15/2001
Re: Off-leash Dog use and Leasing on the Meadow, page 2

The planning team has identified the Meadow as a place for the preservation of wildlife habitat and passive recreational uses. At the latest planning meetings, the overwhelming plan for the Meadow was as a wildlife habitat area with limited human intrusion.

The Sierra Club again most vigorously requests that the lease be terminated immediately and not be carried over for the Christmas Tree sales. We also request that no further leasing take place on the Meadow.

Please note that this concern is not directed to the other concession that is on the North Basin Strip since the Club and planners have identified this area as an area for more intense use and the current leased site is adjacent to Golden Gate Fields.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norman La Force". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Norman La Force, Chair

cc: Don Neuwirth, Planning Team
Larry Tong, Interagency Planning Manager, EBRPD
Dwight Steele, Citizens for the Eastshore State Park
Arthur Feinstein, Golden Gate Audubon Society



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October 18, 2001

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of Directors for the East Bay Regional Park District
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2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA 94605-0381

Rusty Areias, Director
Dept. of Parks and Recreation
State of California
Box 94296
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Re: Eastshore State Park

Dear Director Areias and President Sutter:

This letter is in addition to the Club's letter of October 15, 2000 regarding the Eastshore State Park. It follows a meeting of the Citizens for the Eastshore State Park on October 17, 2001. At that meeting additional information was learned that makes all the more urgent the need to enforce a prohibition of both off-leash and on-leash dog activities on the Berkeley Meadow.

At the CESP meeting, the Park District's representative stated that the Park District in and the State have allowed uses that existed on the newly acquired properties prior to their acquisition to continue until the planning process was completed. Although Sierra Club believes that prior uses can be and should be prohibited during the planning process, nevertheless, the prior uses on the Berkeley Meadow did not allow for any activity whatsoever.

At the time the State acquired the Berkeley Meadow, Catellus had posted "No Trespassing" signs. Many people can attest to the existence of these signs. In addition, from time to time, Catellus sought to keep people and their animals off the Meadow. The only exception to this was the use of a portion of northeast corner of the Meadow for a pumpkin and Christmas tree sales lot. Hence, using the State and Park District's logic, no access should be allowed on the Meadow because the prior legal use was no use.

The Sierra Club believes it is imperative that "No Trespassing" signs be posted immediately on the Berkeley Meadow. In addition, signage should be posted that states that any kind of dog activity on the Meadow is prohibited. Park District police and staff should begin an immediate enforcement of the ban on access to the Meadow both by those with and without but especially those who take their dogs to the Meadow.

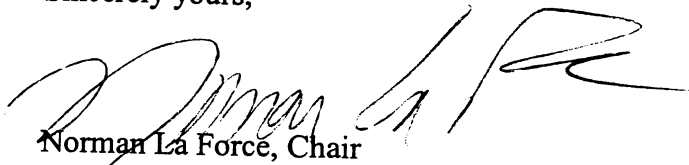
Sierra Club Letter to Park District and State Parks, 10/15/2001
Re: Dogs on the Meadow, page 2

It is imperative that this action be taken to protect the Meadow. As I stated in my letter of October 15th, advocates of off-leash dog use continually state at public meetings that they are allowed to walk their dog off-leash and on-leash on this property. They also state that no signs exist to tell them that walking their dog on the Meadow is prohibited.

The Club has written and spoken in the past about the wildlife habitat values of the Berkeley Meadow. Many raptors which are rarely seen in the populated area of the East Bay, use and rely on the Meadow for nesting and feeding. The literature on the impact of dogs, both in terms of their impact on chasing birds and the impact from their urine and feces, demonstrate beyond reasonable scientific certainty that dogs have tremendous negative impacts on wildlife and habitat.

The Club intends to follow up on this and to make this an issue during the rest of the planning process. It is simply outrageous that the Park District and State allow the massive Knapp "put and take" operation to continue on the Brickyard on the grounds that this was an existing use at the time of the purchase of the property, but will not take the necessary steps to protect the Meadow habitat and wildlife from human access by enforcing the prior use, which was to prohibit any access at all.

Sincerely yours,



Norman La Force, Chair

cc: Don Neuwirth, Eastshore State Park Planning
Larry Tong, East Bay Regional Park District
Dwight Steele, CESP
Arthur Feinstein, Golden Gate Audubon Society
Tom Bates



November 1, 2001

Norman La Force, Chair
 East Bay Public Lands Subcommittee
 Sierra Club
 C/O 802 Balra Drive
 El Cerrito, CA 94530

Re: **Eastshore State Park - Requests for Immediate Prohibitions**

Dear Mr. ^{Norman} La Force:

I have been asked to respond to your October 15 and 18, 2001 letters addressed to President John Sutter and Members of the Board regarding your requests for immediate prohibition of certain uses in portions of Eastshore State Park. My understanding is that you are requesting 1) immediate prohibition of dogs off leash, especially in the Berkeley Meadow, the Albany Beach, and the North Pt. Isabel areas; and 2) immediate prohibition of pumpkin/Christmas tree sales at the Berkeley Meadow.

As you are aware, a public investment of close to \$30 million has been made to acquire this area from developers, and the Eastshore State Park Planning Process has been designed to meet the Park's fundamental purpose of being a recreational facility harmonious with its natural setting. As part of the Planning Process, a Management Steering Committee has been formed with representatives from the Park District, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the California State Coastal Conservancy. The Steering Committee provides administrative direction and assistance regarding Eastshore State Park issues including interim land use issues such as this. The Steering Committee is scheduled to discuss your requests at its next meeting later this month.

Thank you for your comments, and we look forward to your continuing positive participation in the Planning Process.

Sincerely,

Larry Tong
 Interagency Planning Manager

cc: Board of Directors
 P. O'Brien
 D. Fassler
 Eastshore State Park Management Steering Committee
 D. Steele, Citizens for the Eastshore State Park
 A. Feinstein, Golden Gate Audubon Society
 T. Bates, California State Senator, Retired

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