



# REGIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

February 2006

## *RPA Board Members*

*President: Amelia Wilson, Vice-president: Joe Engbeck, Treasurer: Pete Wilson, Secretary: Judi Bank  
Tim Gordon Hulet Hornbeck, Kathleen Nimr, Carroll Williams*

## **A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY FOR NATURAL RESOURCES**

It was a golden day for Mother Nature February 7, when the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors voted 4-3 against any campground in Sibley Volcanic Preserve.

The January 2005 amendment to the land use plan prepared for Sibley, opening more recently acquired properties, had proposed a 300- person campground in the Caldecott Corridor area, with the access road, associated picnic table, rest room, and shower amenities to be developed. The outcry from almost every East Bay area environmental group resulted in a EBRPD staff revision reducing the size of the campground to 150.

That satisfied none of us. As RPA wrote in its January 10, 2005 response to the LUP, "The development proposals described in the Land Use Plan amendment would violate both the District's own district- wide Masterplan and the (current) Land Use/Development Plan for Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve....The Preserve designation (given by the ERBRD Board of Directors September 26, 1985) is a promise to the people of the region that the District is aware of and will protect 'the outstanding natural and cultural features of the parkland' and 'will hold development within the Preserve Unit to the minimum that is required for public safety and resource protection and enhancement.' "

That the campground's impact on the Preserve and the highly significant Caldecott Wildlife Corridor was of widely held concern was made clear at the February 7 board meeting. The room was full of those vigorously protesting the campground: Sierra Club, CNPS, Golden Gate Audubon, Friends of Creeks organizations, wildlife advocates, hikers, and yes, RPA – nearly 25 people spoke, only 2 or 3 of those in favor of the campground, pointing out its importance in getting people into the parks.

Then came discussion by EBRPD's Board. President Lane spoke first in favor of the amendment. Next was Ted Radke, making a reasoned and impassioned plea to remove the proposed campground. Director Wieskamp spoke next, agreeing with Radke and the many audience members that the impacts of the campground were significant and that she would vote to remove it from the plan, admonishing all that she would be very unhappy if the organizations fighting this Sibley proposal were to fight all campgrounds proposed by the District. Director Siri then spoke two words: "I agree."

But Directors Siden and Severin voted to accept the 150 person campground and the vote stood 3-3. John Sutter spoke last, and talked of his original belief that the proposal was a good one and of his intention to vote for the amendment with the campground. But after hearing the reasoned and fact-filled testimony from so many people and organizations that he respected, he believed that this was *not* an appropriate place for a campground; and with his vote, the campground was removed 4-3 from the LUP.

A close vote but a highly significant one. It protects not only Sibley but hopefully sets a precedent that the status of preserves must be protected, and that recreation development belongs in other parks designated for such uses. The vote also showed that public opinion can and *does* make an impact. Without the concerted time and effort expended by many organizations and individuals, the vote could easily have gone the other way and Sibley's preserve status would have been violated. RPA is deeply appreciative of Directors Radke, Wieskamp, Siri and Sutter.

Is RPA happy about the rest of the amendment? No, as we wrote in our January 2005 response: "Livestock grazing should be sharply reduced or completely eliminated from the preserve in order to allow natural processes to continue healing....Commercial livestock grazing is inappropriate in an officially designated natural preserve...the amendment should be revised so that neither its language nor its implied intent suggests that these lands are to be used primarily for the benefit of livestock grazing." RPA's still working on that goal, not just in Sibley but throughout the parklands. When next some one asks you to make a call and/or write a letter or email to protect the environment, remember this Sibley vote and never think your voice unimportant.

RPA board members attended the memorial for EBRPD Director Jean Siri February 10 at Miller- Knox shoreline park. Over 350 people attended the 2 hour program, with people from federal, state and local governments, environmental organizations and her many friends telling wonderful tales of this long-time activist and EBRPD director. One of the last votes Jean cast, 4 days before her death, was against the proposed campground in Sibley Preserve. (See previous article.) RPA extends its sympathy to Jean's family, and to the EBRPD directors and staff with whom Jean worked for nearly 14 years.

## **New Director to be Appointed**

The EBRPD Board of Directors will appoint a new Ward 1 director to fill Jean Siri's seat. Those interested in filling this seat must file a letter of interest with EBRPD by February 28 and those names will be available to the public March 1. An EBRPD board sub-committee will interview those candidates and recommend several to the full Board, which will interview and select the new director at a special public meeting March 14, at 2:00 p.m.

That is the time to let the subcommittee, chaired by Carol Severin, know your preference/criteria for a new director; the sub-committee will interview candidates March 8 and 9. The new director will serve until the November 2006 election and then run for the seat on the ballot. So find out about the candidates now and send your recommendation to EBRPD board members, addressed to each at East Bay Regional Park District. 2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, CA 94605



## **REGIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING**

***Picnic breakfast \*  
Sunday, April 30 10:00  
a.m.***

**Middle Harbor Shoreline Park  
– Oakland**

Near the foot of the Bay Bridge, built by the Port of Oakland and administered by EBRPD, this urban gem of some 38 acres was once the historic Oakland Naval Supply Depot. Now there are 2 miles of great flat shoreline pathways, shorebirds galore, stunning views of the Bay and San

Francisco, those "Star Wars" horse-like cranes behind us, an observation tower and picnic tables under a framework of steel.

Bring binoculars, cameras, \$2 for a light breakfast, dues if you have not yet paid and join us for a very special morning with RPA members, park naturalists and guests.

Directions: take 11<sup>th</sup> street exit off I-980 and continue straight onto Brush short way. Turn right on 7<sup>th</sup>. Continue on 7th (past Main Post Office) and past Maritime

Street to stoplight at Middle Harbor Road  
Go through stoplight and turn right into parking lot. Look for tall steel framework and we'll be there. Map available on EBRPD website – ask a friend if you don't have the internet access! There is public transportation hourly on weekends – call AC transit.

**All welcome, members and  
guests. See you Sunday,  
April 30! Think positive: –  
no rain that day!**